

# ALBANIAN LITERATURE

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1. The historical background - II. Attributes of modern Albanian literature - III. Literature of the post-war period - IV. Literature of the sixties, seventies and eighties - V. Albanian literature in Kosovo - VI. Perspectives for the future - VII. Chronology of modern Albanian literature

## 1. The historical background

Being at the crossroads between various spheres of culture has never been a gain to the Albanians as one might have expected. An Albanian national culture and literature<sup>1</sup> was late to develop and had enormous difficulty asserting itself between the Catholic Latin civilization of the Adriatic coast, the venerable Orthodox traditions of the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians and the sophisticated Islamic culture of the Ottoman Empire.

First non-literary traces of written Albanian are known from the 15th century, e. g. Bishop Paulus Angelus' baptismal formula of November 8, 1462. Beginning with the Missal (*Meshari*) of Gjon Buzuku<sup>2</sup> in 1555, the early Albanian literature of the 16th and 17th century with its primarily religious focus might have provided a foundation for literary creativity in the age of the Counter- Reformation under the somewhat ambiguous patronage of the Catholic Church, had not the banners of Islam soon been unfurled on the eastern horizons. The Ottoman colonization of Albania, which had begun as early as 1385, was to split the Albanians definitively into three spheres of culture, all virtually independent of one another:

- 1) the cosmopolitan traditions of the Islamic Orient using initially Turkish, Persian and Arabic as their media of expression and later Albanian in a stylized Aljamiado<sup>3</sup> literature, the so-called poetry of the *Bejtexhinj*<sup>4</sup>;
- 2) the lingering Byzantine heritage of Greek Orthodoxy in southern Albania which produced a number of religious and scholarly works in Greek script in the 18th century, and;
- 3) the awakening culture and literature of the Arbëresh (Italo-Albanians) in southern Italy, nourished by a more favourable social, political and economic climate and by the fertile intellectual soil of Italian civilization.

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<sup>1</sup> If not stated otherwise, every Albanian work mentioned in the text was printed in Tirana.

<sup>2</sup> *Meshari i Gjon Buzukut* (The Missal of Gjon Buzuku). Ed. E. Çabej. 2 vols. 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Aljamiado is a Hispano-Arabic term referring to a literature written in Arabic script but in a vernacular language, in this case Albanian, and strongly influenced by Islamic culture.

<sup>4</sup> Alb. *bejtexhi*, pl. *bejtexhinj*: term for a popular poet in the Moslem tradition, literally "couplet maker" from the Turkish *beyit* "couplet". An alternative term for these wandering minstrels is *ashik*, literally "lover". Main representatives were Nezim Frakulla (ca. 1680-1760), Hasan Zyko Kamberi (18th-early 19th century) and Muhamet Kyçyku Çami (1784-1844).

The rise of the nationalist movement striving for independence from the “Turkish yoke” finally laid the stable foundations for an Albanian national literature in the second half of the nineteenth century. The literature of the *Rilindja* period was one of romantic nationalism and provides an excellent key to an understanding of the Albanian mentality even today. As so often in the history of Albanian literature, writing in Albanian, by its very existence, constituted an act of defiance against the foreign powers ruling the country or dominating it culturally. Indeed, the Sublime Porte regarded most Albanian cultural and educational activity as subversive, and as such saw fit to ban Albanian-language schools and the publication of all books and periodicals in Albanian. With no access to learning in their own language, only a small minority of Albanians could hope to break through the barriers to literary creativity and intellectual thought.

The Catholic education facilities which the Franciscans and Jesuits had set up in Shkodra under the auspices of the Austro-Hungarian *Kultusprotektorat* paved the way at the beginning of the twentieth century for an intellectual elite in Albania which in turn produced the rudiments of a more sophisticated literature that expressed itself primarily in poetry. The culmination of Albanian literature before the Second World War can be seen in the works of the talented Franciscan pater Gjergj Fishta<sup>5</sup> (1871-1940), once lauded as the national poet of Albania, though from 1945 to 1990, for reasons more political than literary, ostracized from the Albanian Parnassus.

With the communist takeover under Enver Hoxha (1908-1985), the literature and culture of pre-war Albania was swept away and replaced by a radically socialist literature. In order to appreciate the reasons for the comparatively late blossoming of a written literature in Albania, one must keep in mind not only the stormy course of Albanian history, but also the fact that up to the not so distant 1950s, eighty percent of the population of the country, including virtually all the women, were de facto illiterate. The twentieth century arrived late in Albania. The country's situation must be compared with that of the Third World, and not with that of Europe.

## II. Attributes of modern Albanian literature

In view of the isolation under which Albania suffered for forty-five years following the Second World War, it is no wonder that Albanian writing has remained little affected by most foreign literary movements and by the ever-changing currents of European thought. The fabric of this literature is still woven of primarily domestic elements. Of these we may retain two features which have had a particularly pervasive and lasting influence:

1. The traditional spirit of nationalism and resistance of a people who have deeply felt the wounds of colonialism and foreign cultural domination. Conservative Tirana critic Koço Bihiku (b. 1927) argues not without reason that “patriotism is the most powerful and specific tradition of Albanian literature” which he asserts<sup>6</sup> is “pervaded by patriotic pathos”. By this, he wishes to emphasize patriotism as a criterion of literary merit, a notion quite absurd in Western literature and criticism. This approach was taken consciously and conformed to the party's stance that literature must serve the masses -

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<sup>5</sup> His best-known work is the historical epic *Lahuta e Malcís* (The Highland Lute). Shkodra 1937; *Lahuta e Malsisë*. Ljubljana 1990. German transl. *Die Laute des Hochlandes*, Munich 1958. See also: Lambertz, M.: *Gjergj Fishta und das albanische Heldenepos Lahuta e Malcís (Laute des Hochlandes)*, Leipzig 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Bihiku, K.: *A History of Albanian Literature*, Tirana 1980, p. 150-151.

- i.e. in Albania's case, that any valid literary production must serve the cause of national independence and consolidation.
2. Marxist teachings, which affected Albanian letters for more than forty-five years as thoroughly as they did Albanian politics and society. Liberalism, literary pluralism and freedom of expression were rejected in Albania (though by no means in the Albanian literature of Kosovo) from the outset. Just as government in Albania was in the hands of one omnipotent party allowing for no alternatives, literature there fell within the scope of one all-encompassing doctrine, that of socialist realism.

### III. Literature of the post-war period

The conscious break with the traditions of pre-war Albanian literature was a direct result of the political and social upheaval which had taken place in the country. As new forces came to power, a new generation of proletarian writers arrived on the scene, often with little formal education, but with a readiness to take part in the radical political and social transformation which was to take place in the Balkan country. They were inspired, if at all, by revolutionary pathos and an awareness of being the very first generation of a new literature and of a new Albania. The link between literature and Marxist politics was firmly cemented from the start with the foundation in October 1945 of the Writers Union (*Lidhja e Shkrimtarëve*).

Initially responsibility for cultural policies in post-war Albania was conferred upon poet Sejfulla Malëshova (1901-1971). Originally from southern Albania, Malëshova had spent a good deal of his life abroad. He studied in Italy and in 1924, at the age of twenty-three, became the personal secretary of Fan Noli in the latter's democratic government. Inspired by the October Revolution, Malëshova went to Moscow where he was trained in Marxist ideology. Most of the verse of this self-styled rebel poet was written in exile under the pseudonym Lame Kodra and was published in the now rare volume *Vjersha* (Verse), 1945. Malëshova became a member of the Central Committee of the fledgling Albanian Communist Party and organized the first congress of Albanian writers. As Minister of Education, he followed a surprisingly liberal and conciliatory course for the times in order to encourage the reintegration of non-communist forces into the new structures of power. In the hectic intrigues and juggling for power characteristic of the early years of communist rule, however, Malëshova soon fell into disgrace and was eliminated by Enver Hoxha in the summer of 1946. Strangely enough he survived his fall. This left-wing idealist who had once been a member of the Comintern, spent his later life in internal exile as a humble stock clerk in Fier where, for years on end, not a single inhabitant of the town dared speak to him. His only social contact was to play soccer with the children. Whenever anyone approached, he would pinch his lips with his fingers, betraying the vow of eternal silence which ensured his survival. Malëshova died of appendicitis on 9 June 1971<sup>7</sup> in unimaginable isolation.

Most other writers and intellectuals who had not left the country by 1944 suffered a similar or worse fate. The Catholic writers of the north were among the first to be eliminated by the new regime: poet Lazër Shantoja (1892-1945) was shot in the spring of 1945; poet Bernardin Palaj (1894-1947) died in prison in Shkodra; Vinçenc Prennushi (1885-1949), poet, folklorist and Archbishop of Durrës, was tortured to death in Durrës prison in February 1949; Ndoc Nikaj

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<sup>7</sup> On Malëshova's death, cf. *Drita*, 4 August 1991, p. 10-11.

(1864-1951), often called the father of twentieth-century Albanian prose, was arrested in 1946 at the age of eighty-two on the absurd charge of planning to “use violence to overthrow the government” and died in Shkodra prison five years later. But repression was not confined to the Catholics. Dramatist Kristo Floqi (1873-1951) died in 1951 after several years in prison. Talented short story writer Mitrush Kuteli (1907-1967), pseudonym of Dhimitër Pasko, was sentenced to fifteen years in prison and spent at least three years in Tirana jail and doing forced labour in the notorious swamp of Maliq near Korça. With him in Tirana was Andrea Varfi (1914-1992), later to be celebrated as a classic author of early socialist realism.

In October 1949, the third conference of the Writers Union set the course for socialist realism in Albanian literature, which was to remain in this initial phase throughout the fifties. All writers in Albania came under the surveillance and critical guidance of the party. They were encouraged to concentrate their creative energies on specific themes such as the partisan struggle of the so-called National Liberation Struggle and on the building of socialism. The political message was the essential for those who wished to survive. Subjects devoid of any redeeming educational value in Marxist terms were considered alien and taboo. Socialist realism gave writers the tools with which to create but, as an absolute value, it allowed them no alternatives and little freedom of expression.

Enver Hoxha was deeply suspicious of Albanian writers and intellectuals and remained so to the end of his days. The intellectual freedom which had existed, ironically enough, under the pre-war Zogu dictatorship and during the Italian occupation was snuffed out completely. The party demanded nothing less than absolute obedience. The simplest means of eliminating questionable writers was to deny them access to publication. As a result, many a talented quill turned nolens volens to translating. Pantheistic poet Lasgush Poradeci (1899-1987), a twentieth-century classic, is said to have preferred to break his pencil in two rather than to write the kind of poetry “they” wanted. Instead, he rendered Burns, Pushkin, Lermontov, Goethe, Heine and Brecht into fluid Albanian, before dying in absolute poverty. Respected intellectual Petro Zheji (b. 1929), spiritual father to a whole generation of Albanian intellectuals, is an admired translator of Aragon, Cervantes, Asturias, Goncharov and Sciascia, but never had access to publishing facilities for his own works imbued with symbolism; Jusuf Vrioni (b. 1916), Kadare’s talented translator into French, spent over a decade in prison because of his aristocratic origins before being allowed to work. A handful of pre-war authors did manage to adapt. Sterjo Spasse (1914-1989) from Lake Prespa, for instance, whose early novels *Pse?! (Why?!)*, Korça 1935, with its nihilistic overtones and *Afërdita*, 1944, portrayed the dilemma of the young intellectual in a backward rural society, wrote prose in the vein of socialist realism but never published anything convincing in his later years. The same is true of satirist Nonda Bulka (1906-1972).

The rigorous persecution of pre-war intellectuals and the break with virtually all cultural traditions created a literary and cultural vacuum in Albania which lasted until the sixties, the results of which can still be felt today. No one will ever know how many gifted writers and artists were dispatched to do menial chores in dangerous branches of industry, or banished to the provinces forever, to internment in some isolated mountain village with no hope of return.

Albania’s assimilation into the Soviet sphere during the fifties introduced Soviet literary models which were slavishly imitated. The verse, short stories and novels produced by this new generation of Albanian writers, whose works, later republished in large editions, were elevated to the position of modern classics of socialist realism, were nonetheless for the most part not literary publications at all. They were politically motivated tracts, educative in nature, often to

the point of being clumsily didactic. Patriotism and the “right” political convictions counted for much more than literary sophistication.

It was Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi (b. 1915) from Elbasan, now an influential historian, who set the rather sluggish pace in prose with the first attempt at a post-war Albanian novel, his two-volume *Çlirimtarët* (The Liberators), 1952, 1955, in which he painted a picture not only of the squalor and sufferings of the peasants before liberation but of the rise of class consciousness among them. The weakness of the novel, and one which was to prevail in most Albanian novels from the fifties on, lay in the undifferentiated black-and-white portrayal of characters, i.e. good guys versus bad guys. Shuteriqi, who was president of the Writers Union from 1946 to 1973 and has also written short stories and poetry, is now noted more for his research in the fields of literature, history and folklore, in particular for his standard histories and anthologies of Albanian literature. Another major writer of the period is Shevqet Musaraj (1914-1986) from the Vlora region. His two-volume *Para agimit* (Before the Dawn<sup>8</sup>), 1965-1966, chronicled the last years of the Zogu dictatorship and the growth of the resistance movement during the war as experienced among others by Emira Velo. On the Italian invasion of Easter 1939, Emira joins the resistance, but her prejudices against the simple people of the working class subsequently alienate her from the National Liberation Front. Another of his tedious novels *Belxhiku që këndon vënçe* (The Belgian Rifle that Sings at its Leisure), 1979, is set in the same period. Sterjo Spasse was one of the few Albanian writers to have survived the transition of power. In post-war novels such as *Ata nuk ishin vetëm* (They were not Alone), 1952, and *Afërdita përsëri në fshat* (Afërdita in the Countryside Again), 1955, he adopted socialist realism and had a substantial influence on the course of its early development. Among his later novels are *Buzë liqenit* (At the Lakeside), 1961, and *Zjarret* (The Fires), 1972, which analyse the psychological impact and ideological problems of collectivization, as well as *Zgjimi* (The Awakening<sup>9</sup>), 1974, set in an Albanian town in the last days of Ottoman rule. None of his post-war writing can match his pre-war production in quality. Fatmir Gjata (1922-1989) from Korça took up the theme of the National Liberation Movement in *Përmbysja* (The Overthrow), 1954, which focuses on the growth of political awareness in a peasant lad. Gjata's best known novel is *Këneta* (The Marsh<sup>10</sup>), 1959, a description of the draining in 1946 of the swamp of Maliq on the plain of Korça and of the dastardly aims of foreign and domestic enemies to sabotage the work. In *Këneta*, party secretary Stavri Lara, wounded during the war, is charged with organizing drainage operations. His former girlfriend Rina, whom he still loves, is now unhappily married to someone else. Jakov Xoxa (1923-1979) from Fier on the once marshy and mosquito-infested plain of Myzeqe decried the exploitation of the impoverished peasantry by ruthless beys in his *Lumi i vdekur* (The Dead River), 1965. This novel, modelled on the Russian *Tikhiy Don* (And Quiet Flows the Don), Moscow 1928, by Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov (1905-1984), is one of the rare works of the period with any semblance of literary merit. His second novel *Juga e bardhë* (The White South Wind), 1971, modelled on Sholokhov's *Podnyatnaya tselina* (Virgin Soil Upturned), Moscow 1932, dealt with the collectivization of agriculture on his native plain of Myzeqe after the war. In it, we encounter the corrupt Kiu Koroziu, domineering chairman of a co-operative farm, who opposes the amalgamation of “his” farm with others to form a larger unit. Prose writer Ali Abdihojha (b. 1923) from Elbasan was marked by his experience in the

<sup>8</sup> English transl. *Before the Dawn*, Tirana 1981-1982.

<sup>9</sup> English transl. *The Awakening*, Tirana 1980.

<sup>10</sup> English transl. “The Marsh,” in: *Albanian Life*, New Series No. 6 (Dec. 1971), p.7-23, 8 (May 1972), 10 (Jan. 1974), 11 (Nov. 1974), 13 (Dec. 1975); New Series 2 (April-June 1976), 3 (July-Sept. 1976), 6 (Winter 1977-1978).

resistance movement. His *Një vjeshtë me stuhi* (A Stormy Autumn), 1959, a complete imitation of *Molodaya Gvardiya* (The Young Guard), Moscow 1946, by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Fadeyev (1901-1956), centres on a group of youths assigned the task of setting up an underground press in occupied Albania. *Tri ngjyra të kohës* (The Three Colours of Tirne), 1965-1972, is a four-part novel again endeavouring to portray the rise of class consciousness among the peasantry during the National Liberation Movement.

Of the poets of the period, mention may be made of Aleks Çaçi (1916-1989), Mark Gurakuqi (1922-1977), Luan Qafëzezi (b. 1922) and Llazar Siliqi (b. 1924) who introduced political and didactic themes into lyric verse, though none of them was able to express any particular talent. Çaçi, born in Palasa on the Himaran coast, is best remembered for his *Ashtu, Myzeqe* (That's it, Myzeqe), 1974, about the transformation of the backward Myzeqe district, a theme which he took up again in later life in *Ti je, Myzeqe?* (Is that You, Myzeqe?), 1970. The Shkodra-born Siliqi in particular, son of the writer and nationalist figure Risto Siliqi (1882-1936), helped set the pace for revolutionary verse much as Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovski had done in post-revolutionary Russia, though with much less success. His passionate *Prishtina*, 1949, recalled the ordeals he and others suffered in Prishtina concentration camp in 1944. Later volumes such as *Mësuesi* (The Teacher), 1955, and *Ringjallje* (Resurrection), 1960, evinced his continued revolutionary pathos. The aforementioned Shevqet Musaraj was early to devote himself to satirical verse in his *Epopëja e Ballit Kombëtar* (The Epic of Balli Kombëtar), 1944, which was officially lauded for its unequivocal political message. With Labian humour and temperament he ridicules the conservative resistance movement which vied with the communists for power during the war.

The vast body of writing churned out in the fifties and sixties proved in general to be sterile and exceptionally conformist. The subject matter of the period was repetitious, and unelaborate texts were spoon-fed to the reader time and again without much attention to basic elements of style. Political education and fuelling the patriotic sentiments of the masses were considered more important than aesthetic values. Even the formal criteria of criticism such as variety and richness in lexicon and textual structure were demoted to give priority to patriotism and the political message.

#### IV. Literature of the sixties, seventies and eighties

Political convictions, though important within the context of Albanian society of the period, were not enough as a criterion of literary merit. It was the second generation of socialist Albanian writers who came more and more to realize that Albanian literature was in desperate need of renewal.

A turning point came in the stormy year 1961 which, on the one hand marked the political break with the USSR and thus with Soviet literary models and, on the other, witnessed the publication of a number of trend-setting volumes, in particular of poetry: *Shekulli im* (My Century) by Ismail Kadare, *Hapat e mija në asfalt* (My Steps on the Pavement) by Dritëro Agolli, and in the following year *Shtigje poetike* (Poetic Paths) by Fatos Arapi. It is ironic to note that while Albania had broken with the USSR to save socialism, leading Albanian writers, educated in the Eastern bloc, took advantage of the rupture to part not only with Soviet models but also with socialist realism itself. The attempt made by these authors to broaden the literary horizon in search of something new inevitably led to a vigorous literary and of course political

controversy at a meeting of the Writers Union on 11 July 1961. The debate conducted not only by writers but also by leading party and government figures was published in the literary journal *Drita* (The Light) and received wide public attention in the wake of the 4th Party Congress of that year. It pitted writers of the older generation such as Andrea Varfi, Luan Qafëzezi and Mark Gurakuqi, who voiced their support for fixed poetic standards and the solid traditions of Albanian literature and who opposed new elements such as free verse as un-Albanian, against a new generation led by Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli and Fatos Arapi, who favoured literary renewal and a broadening of the stylistic and thematic horizon. The road to renewal was given the green light by Enver Hoxha himself who realized that the situation was untenable and declared that the young writers of renewal seemed to have the better arguments.

The year 1961, though it brought no radical change of course, no liberalization or political “thaw” in the Soviet sense, paved the way for a quarter of a century of trial and error which has now led to much greater sophistication in Albanian literature. Themes and styles have diversified and more attention has been paid to formal literary criteria. Though one would certainly not characterize modern Albanian literature by its surfeit of non-conformists and eccentrics, it evolved to such an extent as to provide requisite scope within the framework of socialist realism for some individual creativity and originality.

This first attempt to liberalize Albania’s rigid literature and culture somewhat reached its peak in the early seventies in the wake of the Chinese cultural revolution, an echo of which had been felt in Albanian letters. Heading the so-called liberal movement were dramatist Fadil Paçrami (b. 1922), party secretary for ideological affairs in Tirana, and Todi Lubonja (b. 1923), director of radio and television broadcasting. They encouraged liberal trends and permitted some Western ideas and influence to penetrate Albanian culture (more interesting plays and the broadcasting of Italian pop music on radio). The 11th song festival on 25 December 1972 served as a pretext in this in actual fact rather harmless movement to keep writers and artists, and consequently the whole country in tow. At the 4th Plenary Session of the Central Committee on 26-28 June 1973, Enver Hoxha took the offensive and presented a report which must now be regarded as a hallmark in the annals of European obscurantism<sup>11</sup>. The liberal movement was swiftly crushed by a campaign reputed to be more the result of Nixon’s visit to China in 1972 than of any domestic cultural shortcomings, and its two figureheads were mercilessly condemned for their sins as deviationists and enemies of the people. Todi Lubonja was released from prison on 7 June 1987 and Fadil Paçrami was finally freed from Kosova e Madhe prison near Elbasan on 17 March 1991, just in time for Albania’s first multiparty elections.

From 1973 to at least 1975 there followed a virtual reign of terror against Albanian writers and intellectuals, comparable in spirit at least to the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. These years constituted a major setback for the development of literature and culture. Poets and prose writers began vying with one another in the proclamation of their revolutionary fervour and in their rejection of foreign and liberal influences. Those who were less convincing or whose publications were found to be tainted with liberality were banned to the provinces or landed in prison. The more fortunate simply lost their right to publish. Almost all major authors had a work withdrawn from circulation and “turned into cardboard”. Learning foreign languages was effectively banned and those who already had the misfortune of knowing French or Italian found

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<sup>11</sup> *Të thellojmë luftën ideologjike kundër shfaqjeve të huaja e qëndrimeve liberale ndaj tyre* (Let us strengthen the ideological struggle against foreign manifestations and liberal attitudes towards them), in: *Dokumente Kryesore të PPSH* (Principal Documents of the APL), vol. VI, Tirana 1978, p. 346-400.

themselves in dangerously embarrassing positions. Artists and painters such as Maks Velo (b. 1935), Edison Gjergo (b. 1938), Ali Oseku (b. 1944) and Edi Hila (b. 1946) were denounced at the 4th Plenary Session and sent to prisons and concentration camps like the notorious copper mines at Spaç for agitation and propaganda, i.e. for having expressed a vague interest in Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali or Max Ernst.

By 1982, the frenzy had largely subsided, but no deviation from the ideological course set by the party was dared until well after the death of Enver Hoxha on 11 April 1985. No Albanian writers, with the notable exception of Ismail Kadare, were allowed to express any criticism and very few were allowed to go abroad. In April 1986, prose writer Koço Kosta (b. 1944) raised an eyebrow or two when he published the first part of a realistic short story *Ata të dy e të tjerë* (The Two of Them and the Others) in the Tirana literary periodical *Nëntori* (November) which contained some indirect criticism of the system. The author disappeared, banned to the tiny village of Greshica near Fier and was denied rights to publish for three years, “pour encourager les autres”. The second part of his short story, scheduled for publication in the May 1986 edition, was torn out of *Nëntori* at the last minute and replaced with something more acceptable. The watchful eye of the party continued to channel all literary creativity in the “right direction” up to December 1990 which finally saw the first tentative steps towards pluralism and democratization in Albania. Though the constraints of socialist realism, Stalinist dictatorship and corruption at all levels of society were stifling, Albanian literature did make much progress in the seventies and eighties.

No doubt, the best example of creativity and originality in contemporary Albanian letters is Ismail Kadare (b. 1936), still the only Albanian writer to enjoy a broad international reputation. Kadare’s talents both as a poet and as a prose writer have lost none of their innovative force over the last three decades and his courage in attacking literary mediocrity within the system brought about a degree of flexibility in socialist realism which enabled it to survive.

Born and raised in the museum-city of Gjirokastra, Kadare studied at the Faculty of History and Philology of the University of Tirana and subsequently at the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow until 1960 when relations between Albania and the USSR became tense. From the start, Kadare enjoyed a privileged relationship with Enver Hoxha, also from Gjirokastra, which enabled him to pursue literary and personal objectives for which other writers would certainly have been sent into internal exile or to prison.

It was as a poet that he made his debut on the literary scene in the 1950s. His verse collections such as *Frymëzimet djaloshare* (Youthful Inspiration), 1954, and *Ëndërrimet* (Dreams), 1957, gave proof not only of his “youthful inspiration” but also of talent and poetic originality in the vein of Russian poets Yevgeni Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko (b. 1933) and Andrey Andreyevich Voznesenski (b. 1933). His influential *Shekulli im* (My Century), 1961, helped set the pace for renewal in Albanian verse. *Përse mendohen këto male* (What are these Mountains Thinking About), 1964, was one of the clearest expressions of Albanian self-image under the APL. Kadare’s poetry was less bombastic than previous verse and gained direct access to the hearts of the readers who saw in him the spirit of the times and who appreciated the diversity of his themes. In the sixties, Kadare turned his creative energies to prose, though he never abandoned poetry completely, as evinced by his subsequent verse collections *Motive me diell* (Themes with Sun), 1968, *Koha* (Time), 1976, and *Buzëqeshje mbi botë* (Smiles over the World), Prishtina 1980. He has indeed helped to bridge the gulf between poetry and prose.

Kadare’s international reputation up to the present rests entirely upon his prose, in particular his historical novels and short stories. His first prose work, and perhaps still his best

known, *Gjenerali i ushtrisë së vdekur* (The General of the Dead Army<sup>12</sup>), dealt with the immediate post-war years as seen through the eyes of an Italian general in the company of a priest on a mission to Albania to exhume and repatriate the remains of his fallen soldiers. The novel was published initially in 1963 and in a revised edition in 1967. After the success of the French-language edition (Paris 1970), it was widely translated (English, German, Italian, Romanian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Russian, Greek etc. and laid the foundations for Kadare's deserved renown abroad.

Kadare's works have at all times been a strict reflection of the vicissitudes of Albanian political life. In the seventies he turned increasingly to historical prose, a safer haven, and became an unrivalled master of the genre. *Kështjella* (The Castle<sup>13</sup>), 1970, a novel reminiscent of Dino Buzzati's *Il deserto dei Tatars* (The Tatar Steppe), Milan 1940, takes us back to the 15th century, the age of Scanderbeg, and in minute, carefully composed detail, depicts the siege of a mediaeval Albanian fortress, symbolic Albania itself, by the Turks during one of their numerous punitive expeditions to subdue the country. The allusion to political events of the sixties seen by many critics was not unintentional. In 1961, Albania had stubbornly broken ties with the mighty USSR, and after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, it felt the very real possibility of a Soviet incursion to bring the country back the fold. No Albanian reader at any rate could be unaware of the analogy construed between the Sublime Porte and the Kremlin.

It was in the seventies that Ismail Kadare published many of his better-known novels. *Kronikë në gur* (Chronicle in Stone<sup>14</sup>), 1971, is a forceful work set in his native Gjirokastra. *Nëntori i një kryeqyteti* (November of a Capital City), 1975, set in Tirana under Italian occupation in 1940, was, like *Dasma* (The Wedding<sup>15</sup>), 1968, less successful, a reflection of the 1973-1975 purge. *Dimri i madh* (The Great Winter), 1977, was a literary digestion of the traumatic rupture of relations with the USSR. In *Ura me tri harqe* (The Three-Arched Bridge), 1978, Kadare returned to the mythical origins of Albania's haunted history to one of the most awesome motifs of Balkan legendry, that of immurement. It has been interpreted as an Albanian response to Serbian Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andrić's *Na Drini uprija* (Bridge on the Drina), Sarajevo 1948. Kadare is at his best with Balkan themes.

His subsequent short stories and shorter novels were published in three major collections: *Emblema e dikurshme* (Sign of the Past), 1977, *Gjakftohtësia* (Cold-bloodedness), 1980, and *Koha e shkrimeve* (Epoch of Writings), 1986, the latter two volumes being decidedly non-conformist by Albanian standards. The shorter novels appeared here in the form of short stories for editorial reasons. Among the prose works contained in these three books are: *Kush e solli Doruntinën?* (Who Brought Doruntine Back?<sup>16</sup>), in which he once again evinces his delight in reviving his country's legendary past; *Sjellësi i fatkeqësisë* (The Bearer of Ill-Tidings), also known as the "Caravan of veils"; *Viti i mbrapshtë* (The Dark Year) set in the turbulent and ominous year of 1914, a cautious allusion to modern Albania; *Krushqit janë të ngrirë* (The Wedding Procession Turned to Ice<sup>17</sup>), a moving description of the Kosovo tragedy as

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<sup>12</sup> English transl. *The General of the Dead Army*, London 1971, New York 1972, 1991.

<sup>13</sup> English transl. *The Castle*, Tirana 1974, New York 1980.

<sup>14</sup> English transl. *Chronicle in Stone*, London & New York 1987.

<sup>15</sup> English transl. *The Wedding*, Tirana 1968, New York 1972, 1974, 1982.

<sup>16</sup> English transl. *Doruntine*, New York 1988.

<sup>17</sup> English transl. *The Wedding Procession Turned to Ice*, in: Robert Elsie: *Kosovo, in the Heart of the Powder Keg*, Boulder, Colo. 1997, p. 105-192.

experienced by a Prishtina surgeon; and *Prilli i thyer* (Broken April<sup>18</sup>) on vendetta in the northern highlands. In contrast to these shorter novels and short stories was the 700-page novel *Koncert në fund të dimrit* (Concert at the End of Winter), 1988, a monumental review of Albania's dramatic break with post-Maoist China in 1978, with overt criticism of the depersonalization of the individual under socialism. It returned to the epic proportions of "The Great Winter" with which it has many parallels. Ismail Kadare is also the author of literary studies on Aeschylus, *Eskili, ky humbës i madh* (Aeschylus, the Great Loser), 1990, and recently on the messianic Albanian poet Migjeni (1911-1938) who was first to abandon the long-standing tradition of romantic nationalism in Albanian verse to express a strong social ethic of outrage at injustice and squalor in his northern Albanian homeland, *Ardhja e Migjenit në letërsinë shqipe* (The Arrival of Migjeni in Albanian Literature), 1991.

Ismail Kadare did his utmost to emancipate Albanian literature over which, in view of his talent and his close personal relationship with Enver Hoxha, he reigned as an absolute monarch in the seventies and eighties. His unexpected departure from Albania and application for political asylum in France in October 1990 caused a good deal of comment but he will no doubt return to his homeland when the time is right.

Kadare's overriding position in contemporary Albanian literature, compounded by his international reputation has cast a shadow over all other contemporary Albanian writers. One of these who has had a far from negligible influence on the course of contemporary literature is Dritëro Agolli (b. 1931), head of the Writers Union from the purge of Paçrami and Lubonja in 1973 until 1992. Like Kadare, he made his name originally as a poet before turning to prose, and is widely admired in both genres. His first verse collections *Në udhë dola* (I Went Out on the Street), 1958, *Hapat e mija në asfalt* (My Steps on the Pavement), 1961, and *Shtigje malesh dhe trotuare* (Mountain Paths and Sidewalks), 1965, introduced him to the reading public as a sincere lyric poet of the soil and evinced masterful verse technique. One senses the influence of his training in the USSR in this early verse, the spirit of Eduard Georgievich Bagricki (1895-1934) and Dmitri Borisovich Kedrin (1907-1945) in particular. An attachment to his roots came to form the basis of Agolli's poetic credo, in particular in *Devoll, Devoll*, 1964.

Despite his political career and his representative functions as head of the Writers Union, Agolli, who delights in rhyme and unusual figures of speech, has managed to remain true to his rural roots. His fresh, clear and direct verse, coloured with the warm foaming milk of brown cows in the agricultural co-ops, with ears of ripening grain in the Devoll valley and with the dark furrows of tilled soil, has lost none of the bucolic focus which remains the poet's strength, and one which he cultivates consciously. With the volume *Baballarët* (The Fathers), 1969, his verse did, however, lose some of its spontaneity and tilt towards "official" poetry in the service of ideology. A prime example of such party panegyrics enjoying wide publicity and official acclamation was *Nënë Shqipëri* (Mother Albania<sup>19</sup>), Tirana 1974.

Like Kadare, Dritëro Agolli turned increasingly to prose in the seventies. His strength lay in the short story<sup>20</sup> rather than in the novel, although an exception must be made for his satirical novel *Shkëlqimi dhe rënia e shokut Zylo* (The Splendour and Fall of Comrade Zylo), Tirana 1973. Zylo is the epitome of the bureaucrat in a socialist society who uses his position to wield influence and to save his own skin. With subtle wit and often folksy humour, Agolli traces the

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<sup>18</sup> English transl. *Broken April*, New York 1990.

<sup>19</sup> English transl. *Mother Albania*, Tirana 1985.

<sup>20</sup> English transl. *Short Stories*, Tirana 1985.

day to day activities of Comrade Zylo and his companion Dema in all their absurdity. An earlier collection of his short stories, *Zhurma e erërave të dikurshme* (The Noise of Winds of the Past), 1964, had the distinction of being banned and “turned into cardboard.”

A writer currently being rediscovered is Petro Marko (1913-1991) from Dhërmi on the Himaran coast, who paved the road to modernity before Kadare. Marko began writing when he was twenty. His first short stories appeared in journals of the period with the help of his mentor Ernest Koliqi (1903-1975). Always something of a revolutionary and anarchist in spirit, Marko set off in 1936 for the Spanish Civil War with a group of forty Albanians. The consumptive Migjeni, who was soon to die in a sanatorium in northern Italy, called Marko’s departure for the Iberian peninsula his most beautiful poem. In Spain, the twenty-three year old Marko met Hemingway and other European writers who had volunteered for the International Brigades. His experience there formed the basis of his best-known novel *Hasta la vista*, 1958. In 1940, Marko was forced to return home from France, was arrested by the Italian occupants the following year and sent to the island of Ustica with six hundred other Balkan prisoners. The 380-page novel *Nata e Ustikës* (Ustica Night), 1989, is the literary digestion of this imprisonment. In October 1944, Marko returned to Albania as a partisan. After three years as editor of the periodical *Bashkimi* (Unity), he was arrested, by the communists this time, and imprisoned from 1947 to 1950 in Tirana. After the fall of Koçi Xoxe (d. 1949), he was released and allowed to teach in Tirana. In 1960 Marko wrote the surrealist *Qyteti i fundit* (The Last City), regarded as the first modern novel of Albanian literature, of which a Japanese translation exists. The novel *Një emër në katër rrugë* (A Name at the Crossroads), 1973, set in the Zogu era was banned and burned as was a volume of his poetry. Marko also lost his publication rights for eight years and in 1974 his son was sentenced to six years in prison for allegedly having insulted Enver Hoxha. Petro Marko, the author of eight novels, began publishing again in 1982 and is now considered by many to be the father of modern Albanian prose. Though some have criticized his telegraphic style, the passion of his search for new descriptive techniques and his treatment of original subject matter have met with wide approval.

Sabri Godo (b. 1924) from Delvina is a prose writer noted for his historical novels. His first work *Plaku i Butkës* (The Old Man from Butka), 1964, was a biography of Sali Butka (1852-1938), a minor nationalist figure and poet who led Albanian forces both against the Greeks and the Young Turks. His *Ali Pashë Tepelena* (Ali Pasha Tepelena), 1970, dramatizes the life of the “Lion of Janina” whose shrewd and ruthless sway held the Sultan and Napoleon at bay and so captivated the young Lord Byron. Best known of his works is *Skënderbeu* (Scanderbeg), 1975, an epic portrayal of the Albanian national hero from birth to death. This panorama of the age of Scanderbeg has become the epitome of the historical novel of recent years and offers an interesting contrast in its blend of reality and fiction to Ismail Kadare’s novel on the same subject, the above-mentioned *Kështjella* (The Castle), published five years earlier. Godo’s other prose works include the short story collection *Zëra nga burime të nxehta* (Voices from the Hot Springs), 1971, the partisan novel *Prova e zjarrit* (Ordeal by Fire), 1977, and a collection of literary wanderings and sketches entitled *Kohët që shkojnë, kohët që vijnë* (Times Come, Times Go), 1985. The latter is often regarded as something of a prelude to his first novel on a contemporary theme, the 500-page *Ujërat e qeta* (Tranquil Waters), 1988.

Novelist, short story writer, dramatist and scriptwriter Dhimitër Xhuvani (b. 1934), born in Pogradec on Lake Ohrid, worked in agricultural co-operatives, at the Bistrica hydroelectric power station and in the chemical industry in Fier before turning to journalism and writing. He was accused of bourgeois revisionism for his first novel *Tuneli* (The Tunnel), 1966, which

though among his best, was soon withdrawn from circulation. The party's reaction to "The Tunnel" frightened him away from any further experiments. His second novel, accordingly, *Përsëri në këmbë* (On his Feet Again), 1970, is a complete imitation of *Kak zakalialas' stal'* (How the Steel was Tempered), Moscow 1937, by Soviet novelist Nikolai Alekseyevich Ostrovski (1904-1936) and was not surprisingly better received in official circles. *Përsëri në këmbë*, which was awarded the Prize of the Republic, is the saga of Din Hyka, a young worker who loses both legs in a train accident and fights obstinately to regain his position in society as a normal human being and not as an object of sympathy and pity.

Among other writers who have made specific contributions to the development of contemporary prose in Albania are: short story writer Naum Prifti (b. 1932) from Kolonja; Skënder Drini (b. 1935) from Korça, much influenced in style by Kadare; the prolific Vath Koreshi (b. 1936) from Lushnja; Teodor Laço (b. 1936) from the Korça region; Kiço Blushi (b. 1943); the above-mentioned Koço Kosta (b. 1944) from the Lunxhëria region; Neshat Tozaj (b. 1943) from Vlora, whose novel *Thikat* (The Knives<sup>21</sup>), 1989, caused a flurry of political interest; Nasi Lera (b. 1944) from the Korça region, noted as an excellent stylist; Zija Çela (b. 1946), journalist from Shkodra; Betim Muço (b. 1947) of Tirana; Valter File (b. 1954) from Erseka; short story writer and poet Preç Zogaj (b. 1947); Teodor Keko (b. 1958); and short story writer Elena Kadare (b. 1943) and novelist Diana Çuli (b. 1951), no doubt the best among women prose writers.

The gradual refinement of style and the diversification of themes in Albanian prose of the seventies and eighties have been paralleled in modern poetry, too<sup>22</sup>. A pristine ear for linguistic harmony has by no means been the exclusive preserve of the rural bard lacking in formal education. The aesthetic appeal of poetic language, the relative freedom of expression offered by verse and the opportunity to pursue one's fantasies in a society which is seemingly obsessed with industrial output, manufacturing statistics and the construction of dams continue to attract a good number of Albanian writers to poetry rather than to prose. Publishing statistics reflect this penchant; in Tirana about 40 percent of literary publications over the past few years have been poetry, in Prishtina up to 70 percent, something quite unimaginable in the rational West. Such verse production in Albania is, however, far from an escape from reality. The social and political message, though couched in often subtler terms, has been no less present in poetry. The framework set by socialist realism provided of necessity the foundation for all publications in Albania.

By its very nature, nonetheless, poetry remains an individualistic matter and is often difficult to reconcile with a planned society. The position of the poet no less than the prose writer must, as a matter of course, conform to the function assigned to him or her by the powers that be. Conservative critic Dalan Shaplllo (b. 1928) defined the mission of poetry here as serving the masses, giving them spiritual sustenance and emotional satisfaction<sup>23</sup>. This goal is ubiquitous in modern Albanian verse, though fortunately now combined with enough individuality on the part of the poets to save contemporary Albanian poetry from the sterile panegyrics of the past which party dogmatists still occasionally long for.

The best known of the contemporary poets of Albania to have solved the dilemma of the poet with a fixed mission is Fatos Arapi (b. 1930) from the port city of Vlora, author of

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<sup>21</sup> French transl. *Les couteaux*, Paris 1991.

<sup>22</sup> English transl. Robert Elsie: *An Elusive Eagle Soars; Anthology of Modern Albanian Poetry*, London 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Preface to *Anthologie de la poésie albanaise*, Tirana 1983, p. 7.

philosophical verse, love lyrics and poignant elegies on death. He studied economics in Sofia from 1949 to 1954 and worked in Tirana as a journalist and until recently as a lecturer in modern Albanian literature. His first two collections, *Shtigje poetike* (Poetic Paths), 1962, and *Poema dhe vjersha* (Poems and Verse), 1966, evinced a more modern verse form than that of his contemporaries. Child of the Ionian coast, Arapi has never lost his fascination with the sparkling waters of the sea, the tang of the salt air and the intensity of Mediterranean light, all of which flood his verse. Indeed, beyond the echoing pathos of much of his revolutionary verse production on industrial and political themes in later volumes, his true poetic vocation can be seen in the creation of an equilibrium between the harmony of the waves and the rhythmic impulses of his being. Criticized in the 1973 purge for the volume *Më jepni një emër* (Give me a Name), 1973, which was “turned into cardboard,” too, he withdrew and fell silent as the poet he is until 1989.

One of the most talented and energetic poets of the eighties is Xhevahir Spahiu (b. 1945) from Skrapar in southern central Albania, the “enfant terrible” of Albanian letters. Spahiu’s verse is uncompromising and intense, but at the same time, it is a poetry of precise nuances, hues and shades of meaning. He delights in searching out the extremities of poetic language, in discovering just the right expression and, when the moment is opportune, in declaiming it on the streets in a most un-Albanian manner. Spahiu is the author of five collections of verse: *Mëngjes sirenash* (Siren Morning), 1970; *Vdekje përëndive* (Death to the Gods), 1977; *Agime shqiptare* (Albanian Dawns), 1981; *Nesër jam aty* (I’ll be there Tomorrow), 1986; and *Poezia shqipe* (Albanian poetry), 1990, and much more is certain to follow in the years to come.

From the other geographical extreme of Albania comes Ndoc Papeleka (b. 1945) who became a popular poet in the eighties. Born in Tropoja in the northern Albanian alps, he has retained something of the individualist temperament of the wild Gheg mountain tribes of the past. Papeleka studied language and literature in Tirana and now works as a teacher. Not unlike Arapi’s fascination with the sea is Papeleka’s orientation to river themes and dam building in his isolated northern homeland. The fresh imagery and lively, almost heroic expression of his first volumes, *Zëri im* (My Voice), 1971, *Ecim* (We’re off), 1974, and *Njatjeta diell* (Hello, Sun), 1976, gave his verse a note reminiscent of the vitality of the frontier cycles of Albanian oral epic poetry. *Arkitektura e dritës* (The Architecture of Light), 1981, was centred on the construction of the “Light of the Party” (*Drita e Partisë*) hydroelectric power station. Subsequent volumes: *Djepi i klithmave* (The Cradle of Lamentation), Prishtina 1982, *Rrathët e lisit* (The Circles of the Oak), 1984, and *Lumi e di ku buron* (The River Knows Where it Rises), 1988, have evinced his eternal search for new forms of expression. It must be noted, however, that some of his euphoric “industrial verse” is rather devoid of reality, as any worker in the living hell of the sooty metallurgical combine in Elbasan will confirm.

Bardhyl Londo (b. 1948) from Lipa near Përmet has also built up a reputation as a leading Albanian poet of the eighties. He studied language and literature at the University of Tirana, taught school for some years in his native district of Përmet and now works for the literary journal *Drita* (The Light). Londo’s lyrics depart from the concrete: details and moments of existence he has experienced, lived through intensely and transformed into verse in a controlled, erudite manner. His poetry, which is in standard meters and mostly rhymed, melodiously echoes the rich traditions of Tosk verse to the extent that Tirana critic Razi Brahim (b. 1931) has placed him at the crux between the classical *Rilindja* poet and thinker Naim Frashëri (1846-1900) and the influential poet of the soil Dritëro Agolli. It has appeared in four collections: *Krisma dhe trëndafila* (Shots and Roses), 1975, can be dismissed as the product of

the 1973-1975 purge; *Hapa në rrugë* (Steps in the Street), 1981; *Emrin e ka dashuri* (They Call it Love), 1984; and *Si ta qetësoj detin* (How Can I Calm the Sea), 1988, which was awarded the 1989 Migjeni prize. Londo, like a good wine, has improved with age.

Rudolf Marku (b. 1950) of Lezha edits *Drita*. He is an intellectual poet, one of reflection and sage judgements. Among his verse collections are *Shokët e mi* (My Friends), 1974, for which he was banished to the countryside; *Rruga* (The Road), 1977; *Sërishmi* (Once Again), 1982; *E dashur* (Beloved), 1985; and *Udhëtim për në vendin e gjërave që njohim* (Voyage to the Place of Things we Know), 1989, which was well received.

Other leading poets are: Koçi Petriti (b. 1941) from Korça; Kosovo-born Adem Istrefi (b. 1942) whose more traditional poetry is imbued with the epic traditions of Kosovo oral verse; Ndoc Gjetja (b. 1944), a transparent lyric poet from Lezha whose finely structured political and satirical verse is reminiscent of Brecht or Agolli; Natasha Lako (b. 1948) of Korça; archeologist Moikom Zeqo (b. 1949) of Durrës whose highly intellectual and metaphoric verse has been inspired in good part by the lost grandure of his ancient Dyrrhachium; Agim Isaku (b. 1955) of Korça, and short story writer and poet Preç Zogaj (b. 1956). Of the poets of the younger generation who have made a promising start, mention may be made of Mimoza Ahmeti (b. 1963) from Kruja, Erind Pajo (b. 1972), and Ervin Hatibi (b. 1974), both of Tirana.

## V. Albanian literature in Kosovo

The literature of Albania itself is only half the story of Albanian literature. In former Yugoslavia, Albanian as a language was second only to Serbo-Croatian. In Kosovo, the Albanians with their extremely high birth rate now make up over 90 percent of the population, the other 10 percent being primarily Serbian speakers. Other large communities of Albanian speakers are to be found in Macedonia (ca. 25-40 percent of the population), Montenegro and throughout southern Yugoslavia in general. Skopje (Alb. Shkup) which, much to the distress of the Macedonians, is now rumoured to have the largest Albanian population of any city on earth, serves as a secondary centre for Albanian publishing and culture, though it is far less important than Kosovo's capital Prishtina itself, which up to now has been able to vie with Tirana in every way as a focal point of Albanian literary and cultural activity and as a publishing centre for Albanian literature. The future of Albanian culture in Yugoslavia is however uncertain.

The Albanian literature of Kosovo was late to develop. It was the founding in 1949 of the literary periodical *Jeta e re* (New Life) which gave voice to the young generation of Albanian writers in Yugoslavia and served as an initial forum for literary publication. While some monographs were published in the fifties, it was not until the mid-sixties that Albanian and Kosovo Albanian literature began to appear in print in Yugoslavia on a significant scale. Because of the extreme political divergence between Yugoslavia and Albania, the preservation and fostering of Albanian culture in Yugoslavia under often hostile conditions was of necessity to be the concern of Yugoslav Albanians themselves. The formidable problems posed by widespread illiteracy and dire poverty among the Albanians in Kosovo, as in Albania, were compounded substantially by an unwillingness on the part of the Serbian authorities in Belgrade for many years to give the Albanians access to education and cultural facilities in their own language. Full cultural autonomy was first achieved after much delay under the constitution of 1974, though only in Kosovo itself. In 1989-1990, however, Kosovo de facto lost its limited autonomy and freedom and was placed under direct Serbian military occupation. Immediately after the

dissolution of the Kosovo Parliament in the summer of 1990, the only Albanian-language daily newspaper was banned, as was all Albanian radio and television broadcasting in Kosovo. The situation has been particularly dire for Albanian writers and intellectuals there. They constitute the greatest threat to Serbian rule over the region under the populist leader Slobodan Milošević who has shown nothing but contempt for the demands of equality and human rights for the Albanian minority.

Nonetheless, this rapidly developing literature, though lacking the rich literary traditions of Slovenian, Serbian and Croatian, can now easily keep pace with the other Yugoslav literatures. By the next century, the Albanian language will no doubt be the second most important vehicle of literary expression in the successor states of the Yugoslav federation. The modern literature of Kosovo is just as dynamic as that of Albania proper and, with regard to the diversity and expressivity of its poetry often surpasses that of the motherland. Without the severe ideological constraints which were imposed on literature and culture in Tirana, the literature of Kosovo has been able to flourish relatively free of dogma. It is thus more experimental and offers the reader a much wider range of styles, subject matter and ideas. Though the level of formal training for prose writers in Kosovo has not yet reached Tirana standards, the fact that virtually all Kosovo intellectuals are fluent in Serbo-Croatian has given them access not only to the diverse and creative literatures of the other peoples of Yugoslavia but also to many more works of world literature than are presently available in Albanian translation.

Desiring to overcome the cultural isolation from which it suffers and which has increased dramatically since the repression of the 1981 and 1989 uprisings, the present generation of young Kosovo writers is eager to lap up foreign influence and currents of contemporary European thought which were often rejected off hand in Tirana. At the same time, this much more eclectic literature has lost surprisingly little of its traditional Albanian flavour. Its strength and dynamism are a direct result of the need perceived by Kosovo Albanians to defend their cultural values in a region plagued by ethnic conflict, political turmoil and economic collapse. Despite the overwhelming problems, Kosovo Albanians always enjoyed and took full advantage of intellectual freedom and liberty of expression at the cultural level which has enabled Albanian culture in Kosovo to develop much more rapidly and freely over the last two decades than in Albania itself.

Among the classic prose writers of the first generation in Kosovo were humourist Sitki Imami (1912-1983) from Gjakova, Hivzi Sulejmani (1912-1975), born in Mitrovica, who helped bring early Kosovo literature out of its regional focus and provinciality, Ramiz Kelmendi (b. 1930) from Peja, and writer and dissident Adem Demaçi (b. 1936) of Prishtina, who was finally released in April 1990 after twenty-eight years in Serbian prison camps.

One of the leading contemporary prose writers of Kosovo is Rexhep Qosja (b. 1936), who is not only one of the most eminent and prolific literary critics in the Balkans, academician, and former director of the Albanological Institute in Prishtina, but also author of anthologies and numerous scholarly monographs including a three-volume history of Albanian literature of the Romantic period. Qosja has published one of the most widely admired and translated novels of recent years, *Vdekja më vjen prej syve të tillë* (Death Comes from Such Eyes), Prishtina 1974. It is a work of original narrative technique and composition, "thirteen tales which might constitute a novel." The protagonist, Xhezairi i Gjikës, is a professional writer caught up in a frightening web of political intrigue, secret police, interrogation and torture, a world evincing definite yet subtly couched political allusions to the very real desperation felt by present-day Albanian intellectuals in Kosovo.

Among other prose writers of talent are the hermetic Anton Pashku (b. 1938); Nazmi Rrahmani (b. 1941), a prolific and popular novelist of Kosovo village life; Teki Dërvishi (b. 1943) of Gjakova who, like Pashku, has penetrated the psyche of modern man with his novels and short stories; Mehmet Kraja (b. 1952) of Kështenja in the coastal Kraja region of Montenegro; Musa Ramadani (b. 1944) from Gjilan; humourist Arif Demolli (b. 1949) who since his imprisonment for a couple of years after the 1981 uprising has been able to publish little of his prose on the realities of Kosovan life; Zejnullah Rrahmani (b. 1952) from Ballovc near Podujeva whose novel *Sheshi i Unazës* (Ring Square), Prishtina 1978, centred on the Kosovan obsession with liberty, on death and the resurrection of a city-state; and Jusuf Buxhovi (b. 1946) of Peja whose novel *Shënimet e Gjon Nikollë Kazazit* (The Notes of Gjon Nikollë Kazazi), Prishtina 1982, evoked the figure of the eighteenth-century Gjakovan scholar who discovered the only surviving copy of the first Albanian book, Gjon Buzuku's so-called *Meshari* (Missal) of 1555. The principle motif of the work is, however, not the life of Kazazi but the dramatic spread of the plague in eighteenth-century Gjakova, an account not unsimilar to Albert Camus' *La Peste* (The Plague), Paris 1947.

Poetry<sup>24</sup> has always been the vanguard of literature in Kosovo and has enjoyed more popularity among writers and the reading public there than prose. The spheres of this poetic fantasy have solid roots in the soil, in the land and its people, their aspirations, sufferings and dreams. The poetry of Kosovo has never lost touch with the people as a living organism. Up to the early eighties, about 70 novels, 40 collections of short stories and 50 plays had been published in Kosovo as compared to 300 volumes of poetry. The reasons for this, by Western standards extreme penchant for verse lie no doubt in the lack of a strong prose tradition in Albanian literature in general and perhaps also in the relatively recent acquisition of mass literacy in the province. The transition to written poetry with the essentially oral appeal of its rhythms and rich sonority is more evident than to longer works of prose.

The writer widely considered to be the father of modern Albanian poetry in Yugoslavia, Esad Mekuli (b. 1916), was not born in Kosovo itself but in the legendary Montenegrin village of Plava on the Albanian border where national traditions are still held high. In 1949, he founded the above-mentioned literary periodical *Jeta e re* whose editor-in-chief he remained until 1971. Mekuli is a committed poet of social awareness whose outrage at social injustice, violence, genocide and suffering mirrors that of the pre-revolutionary verse of Migjeni (1911-1938) of Shkodra. His first collection, *Për ty* (For You), Prishtina 1955, was dedicated to the people of Kosovo.

Din Mehmeti (b. 1932) is among the best-known classic representatives of modern verse in Kosovo. He was born in the village of Gjocaj i Junikut near Gjakova and studied Albanian language and literature at the University of Belgrade. He has lectured at the teacher training college in Gjakova. Although he has published some prose, literary criticism and a play, he is known primarily for his figurative poetry which has appeared since 1961 in twelve volumes including *Rini diellore* (Sunny Youth), Prishtina 1966, *Mallkimi i gjakut* (The Blood Curse), Tirana 1972, *Ikje nga vdekja* (Flight from Death), Prishtina 1978, *Fatin tim nuk e nënshkruaj* (I do not Seal my Fate), Prishtina 1984, and *As në tokë as në qiell* (Neither on Earth nor in Heaven), Prishtina 1988. Mehmeti's verse is one of indigenous sensitivity. He relies on many of the figures, metaphors and symbols of northern Albanian popular verse to imbue and stabilize his restless lyrics with the stoic vision of the mountain tribes. Despite the slight breeze of

<sup>24</sup> English transl. *Roads Lead Only one Way: a Survey of Modern Poetry from Kosova*, Prishtina 1988.

romanticism which transfuses his verse, as critic Rexhep Qosja once put it, this creative assimilation of folklore remains strongly fused with a realist current, at times ironic, which takes its roots in part from the ethics of revolt in the tradition of Migjeni and Esad Mekuli. Mehmeti's poetic restlessness is, nonetheless, not focussed on messianic protest or social criticism but on artistic creativity and individual perfection.

The most typical representative of modern Albanian verse in Kosovo and certainly the Kosovo poet with the widest international reputation is Ali Podrimja (b. 1942) of Gjakova. Like many other Kosovo Albanian literati of his age group, Podrimja studied Albanian language and literature in Prishtina. Author of over a dozen volumes of verse since 1961, he has now found his niche in the literary establishment of Kosovo and is recognized both there and in Albania itself as a leading and innovative poet. Podrimja's first collection of elegiac verse *Thirrje* (The Calls), Prishtina 1961, was published while he was still in secondary school in Gjakova. His second volume, *Shamija e përshëndetjeve* (The Handkerchief of Greetings), Prishtina 1963, followed in more or less the same vein. *Dhimbë e bukur* (Sweet Pain), Prishtina 1971, title reminiscent of Migjeni's "proud pain," introduces new elements of the poet's repertoire, a proclivity for symbols and allegory. Subsequent volumes up to the mid-seventies, *Sampo*, Prishtina 1969, *Torzo* (Torso), Prishtina 1971, *Folja* (The Verb), Prishtina 1973, and *Credo*, Prishtina 1976, evinced him as a mature symbolist at ease in a wide variety of rhymes and meters. After *Sampo 2*, Prishtina 1980, and *Drejtpehimi* (Balance), Prishtina 1981, it was his collection *Lum Lumi*, Prishtina 1982, in particular, which marked yet another turning point in contemporary Kosovo verse, introducing an existentialist preoccupation with the dilemma of being, with elements of solitude, fear, death and fate. Podrimja's volume, *Fund i gëzuar* (Happy Ending), Prishtina 1988, is yet another outburst of his Sisyphean obsession with the destiny of mankind, his unceasing and ironic attempt to grasp the needle of existence in a haystack of allegorical dichotomies - the past versus the present, the peripheral versus the nuclear, myth versus reality, the specific versus the general. Other recent volumes include *Poezi* (Poetry), Tirana 1986, and *Zari* (The Die), Prishtina 1990. Despite his vast production, Podrimja is a laconic poet. His verse is compact in structure, and his imagery is direct, terse and devoid of any artificial verbosity. Every word counts. What fascinates the Albanian reader is his compelling ability to adorn this elliptical rocky landscape, reminiscent of Albanian folk verse, with unusual metaphors, unexpected syntactic structures and subtle rhymes. Metaphors abound in his work. Dritëro Agolli once said of Podrimja that he spreads metaphors as you would spread sugar over a plate of *baklava*.

Among the other "classics" of modern verse in Kosovo are: the pensive Enver Gjerqeku (b. 1928) of Gjakova; Abdylazis Islami (b. 1930) of Macedonia; Besim Bokshi (b. 1934) from Gjakova; Jakup Ceraja (b. 1934) of the Shala region; tender lyric poet Adem Gajtani (1935-1982) of Podujeva; Muhamed Kërveshi (b. 1935) from Mitrovica; Bedri Hysa (b. 1935) and Fahredin Gunga (b. 1936), both of Mitrovica; Azem Shkreli (b. 1938) from the Rugova mountains near Peja who was head of Kosovo Film Studios in Prishtina; and Rrahman Dedaj (b. 1939) of Podujeva.

Of the other Kosovo poets who have established a firm poetic reputation in recent years one may mention: Beqir Musliu (b. 1945) and Ibrahim Kadriu (b. 1945), both from the Gjilan area; Agim Vinca (b. 1947), leading poetry critic and poet from Veleshta near Struga in Macedonia whose popular lyrical verse is firmly anchored in the soil of his place of birth and of his childhood; Eqrem Basha (b. 1948) from Dibra in Macedonia; Nexhat Halimi (b. 1949); Sabri Hamiti (b. 1950), critic and poet with an affinity for the pantheistic mysticism of Lasgush Poradeci; Adem Gashi (b. 1953) who worked for Prishtina television; and two of the first

generation of Kosovo women poets, Flora Brovina (b. 1949) from the Drenica region and archeologist Edi Shukriu (b. 1950) of Prizren, whose verse finds its inspiration in the Illyrian past.

## VI. Perspectives for the future

In ex-Yugoslavia, where the situation is now eminently precarious for the very survival of Albanian culture, writers and intellectuals have taken the lead, as elsewhere in eastern Europe. Literary critic Ibrahim Rugova (b. 1945) has been elected as president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosova, and Rexhep Qosja has *nolens volens* become father figure and spokesperson of the psyche of the nation. Over the past ten years since the 1981 uprising, Albanian writers and intellectuals in Yugoslavia have been intimidated, humiliated, physically mishandled and imprisoned with or without trial on an almost systematic basis. Should multi-party elections and a democratic government ever come to Kosovo, which at present seems doubtful, these two writers could once again evince the predominance of literary and cultural activity in the process of democratization and renewal in eastern Europe.

In Albania itself, anticipating the inevitable political evolution to democratization was the campaign underway in literature and the arts to overcome the mediocrity, schematism (i.e. stereotyping) and timidity produced by decades of socialist realism and narrow-minded political control. In the forefront of this battle was Ismail Kadare, not originally as an opposition dissident despite his application for asylum in France in October 1990, but as a figure of renewal from within the system. With the introduction of pluralism, many writers have begun to take an active part in politics. Novelist Sabri Godo heads the Republican Party of Albania; prose writer Teodor Laço, head of New Albania Film Studios (*Kinostudioja Shqipëria e Re*), is a founding member of the Social Democratic Party of Albania; Minister of Culture in the first coalition government of June 1991 was poet Preç Zogaj who has been active in the Democratic Party of Albania. In a definite sense, therefore, literature is at the vanguard of change in the country.

Has there ever been dissent in modern Albanian literature? Yes and no. In a “pro memoria” addressed to Enver Hoxha, writer Kasëm Trebeshina (b. 1927) warned the Albanian leader as early as 5 October 1953 that his cultural policies were leading the nation down the road to disaster. After seventeen years in prison, a comparatively light sentence as he noted, and twenty years of silence, Trebeshina has now resurfaced with a handful of other writers and artists [among whom Lazër Radi (b. 1916), Kapllan Resuli (b. 1935), Frederik Reshpja (b. 1941), Visar Zhiti (b. 1952) and Bashkim Shehu (b. 1955), a son of Mehmet Shehu] to see his prediction come true. Dissent there was - rare such acts of self-destruction and unspoken thoughts in the hidden recesses of the minds of every intellectual. But opposition? No. In an interview with the Voice of America in February 1991, Dritëro Agolli stated that all Albanian writers were conformists. In a sense he is right, and understandably so in view of the level of political control over the actions and very thoughts of all intellectuals, a control unparalleled in Europe and perhaps anywhere on earth. Every volume of poetry went through the hands of ten to fifteen politically vigilant reviewers before publication, every drama at least thirty (which helps explain the absence of good Albanian theatre). Never was there an Albanian *samizdat* or even a publishing house in exile. Ties with the outside world were reduced by the party to an absolute minimum and virtually no Albanian writers, with the exception of Ismail Kadare, were ever permitted to go abroad. The “opening” of Albania is now leading to contacts between Albanian

and foreign intellectuals and writers, to a freer flow of ideas in both directions, to a liberalization of cultural policies and to a decrease, perhaps even to an elimination of political interference in literature and the arts. In many respects, Albanian has never been Eastern Europe, but a world of its own and its literature will continue to reflect the individuality of its culture. For 45 years, Albania was a different planet, cut off from the world we know. Splendid isolation? No! There is now so much to catch up on and many uncertainties about what the future holds. But one thing can be said for sure. The most interesting period in the history of Albanian literature has just begun.

## VII. Chronology of modern Albanian literature

- 1944 NOVELS: Sterjo Spasse: *Afërdita* (Afërdita).  
POETRY: Migjeni: second edition of *Vargjet e lira*, Tirana 1944 (Free verse); Shevqet Musaraj: *Epopeja e Ballit Kombëtar*, Tirana 1944 (The epic of the National Front); Arshi Pipa: *Lundërtarë*, Tirana 1944 (Sailors).
- 1945 7 October 1945: first Writers' Conference and the foundation under Sejfulla Malëshova of the Albanian Writers' Union with an initial 74 members, both communist and non-communist.  
POETRY: Lame Kodra (= Sejfulla Malëshova): *Vjersha*, Tirana 1945 (Verse); Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi: *O Ptoleme*, Elbasan 1945 (O Ptolemy).
- 1946 11 January 1946: the People's Republic of Albania formally established; 21 February 1946: fall of Sejfulla Malëshova as Minister of Education. Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi becomes president of the Albanian Writers' Union until 1973.  
June 1946: Second Conference of the Albanian Writers' Union leads to the elimination of non-communist authors.  
POETRY: Vehbi Bala: *Shtigje drite*, Shkodra 1946 (Paths of light); Dushko Vetmo (= Francesco Solano): *Bubuqe t'egra*, Buenos Aires 1946 (Wild buds).
- 1947 POETRY: Aleks Çaçi: *Ashtu, Myzeqe*, Tirana 1947 (That's it, Myzeqe).
- 1948 September 1948: foundation of the *Teatri Popullor Krahinor i Prishtinës* (People's Regional Theatre of Prishtina).  
POETRY: Aleks Çaçi: *Me ty, Stalin*, Tirana 1948 (With you, Stalin); Fan Noli, *Albumi*, Boston 1948 (The album).  
DRAMA: Besim Levonja: *Prefekti*, Tirana 1948 (The prefect).
- 1949 1 May 1949: first Albanian-language performance at the *Teatri Popullor Krahinor i Prishtinës* (People's Regional Theatre of Prishtina); May 1949: fall of Koçi Xoxe and end of the witch hunts in Albania; October 1949: Third Conference of the Albanian Writers' Union and introduction of Zhdanovism and Soviet literary models; End of Yugoslav-Albanian alliance; Foundation of the Migjeni Theatre of Shkodra; Founding of Kosovo literary periodical *Jeta e re* (New life).  
POETRY: Luan Qafëzezi, *Poezi*, Tirana 1949 (Poetry); Llazar Siliqi: *Prishtina*, Tirana 1949 (Prishtina).
- 1950 POETRY: Llazar Siliqi: *Rruga e lumtinitis*, Tirana 1950 (The road of happiness).  
DRAMA: Kolë Jakova: *Halili e Hajrija*, Tirana 1950 (Halil and Hajrija).

- LITERARY STUDIES: Gaetano Petrotta: *Svolgimento storico della cultura e della letteratura albanese*, Palermo 1950 (Historical development of the Albanian culture and literature).
- 1951 22 June 1951: foundation of the A. Z. Çajupi Theatre of Korça.  
POETRY: Mark Gurakuqi: *Kangë për jetën*, Tirana 1951 (A song for life).
- 1952 NOVELS: Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi: two-volume *Çlirimtarët*, Tirana 1952, 1955 (The liberators); Sterjo Spasse: *Ata nuk ishin vetëm*, Tirana 1952 (They were not alone).  
POETRY: Nonda Bulka: *Në dritën e yllit*, Tirana 1952 (In the starlight).
- 1953 11 January 1953: foundation of the Aleksandër Moisiu Theatre of Durrës; 5 October 1953: Pro memoria of Kasëm Trebeshina addressed to Enver Hoxha.  
POETRY: Martin Camaj: *Nji fyell ndër male*, Prishtina 1953 (A flute in the mountains).
- 1954 Foundation of *Nëntori (Nëndori)* (November), literary monthly of the Albanian Writers' Union in Tirana.  
SHORT STORIES: Sitki Imami: *Drejt ditëve të reja*, Prishtina 1954 (Towards new days).  
NOVELS: Fatmir Gjata: *Përmbysja*, Tirana 1954 (The overthrow).  
POETRY: Ismail Kadare: *Frymëzimet djaloshare*, Tirana 1954 (Youthful inspiration); Martin Camaj: *Kânga e vërrinit*, Prishtina 1954 (Song of the lowland pastures).
- 1955 NOVELS: Kin Dushi: *Udha e Velanit*, Tirana 1955 (Velan's road); Sterjo Spasse: *Afërdita përsëri në fshat*, Tirana 1955 (Afërdita in the countryside again).  
POETRY: Llazar Siliqi: *Mësuesi*, Tirana 1955 (The teacher); Esad Mekuli: *Për ty*, Prishtina 1955 (For you).  
DRAMA: Kolë Jakova: *Toka jonë*, Tirana 1955 (Our land); Sulejman Pitarka: *Familja e peshkatarit*, Tirana 1955 (The fisherman's family).  
LITERARY STUDIES: Stuart Mann: *Albanian literature, an outline of prose, poetry and drama*, London 1955.
- 1956 POETRY: Loni Papa: *Fillo këngën çifteli*, Tirana 1956 (Begin your song, mandolin).
- 1957 16 September 1957: foundation of the University of Tirana; Merging of Writers' Union with Artists' Union to form the present *Lidhja e Shkrimtarëve dhe e Artistëve të Shqipërisë* (Albanian Union of Writers and Artists); First congress thereof; Foundation by Ernesto Koliqi of the literary periodical *Shêjzat / Le Pleiadi, Revista culturale, sociale ed artistica* (The pleiad, cultural, social and artistic review), in Rome.  
NOVELS: Sinan Hasani: *Rrushit ka nisë me u pjekë*, Prishtina 1957 (The grapes have begun to ripen).  
POETRY: Enver Gjerqeku: *Gjurmat e jetës*, Prishtina 1957 (The traces of life); Ismail Kadare: *Ëndërrimet*, Tirana 1957 (Dreams).  
STUDIES: Faik Konitza: *Albania, the rock garden of southeastern Europe and other essays*, Boston 1957.
- 1958 NOVELS: Martin Camaj: *Djella*, Rome 1958 (Djella); Adem Demaçi: *Gjarpijt e gjakut*, Prishtina 1958 (The snakes of vendetta); Petro Marko: *Hasta la vista*, Tirana 1958 (Hasta la vista).

- POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Në udhë dolla*, Tirana 1958 (I went out on the street).  
 DRAMA: Sulejman Pitarka: *Trimi i mirë me shokë shumë*, Tirana 1958 (The good hero with many friends); Ndrekë Luca: *Shtatë Shaljanët*, Tirana 1958 (The seven from Shala).
- 1959 NOVELS: Ali Abdihoxha: *Një vjeshtë me stuhi*, Tirana 1959 (A stormy autumn); Fatmir Gjata: *Këneta*, Tirana 1959 (The marsh).  
 SHORT STORIES: Hivzi Sulejmani: *Era dhe kolona*, Prishtina 1959 (The wind and the column).  
 POETRY: Ernest Koliqi: *Kangjelet e Rilindjes*, Rome 1959 (Songs of rebirth); Arshi Pipa: *Libri i burgut*, Rome 1959 (Prison notebook); Drago Siliqi: *Këngë e re për dashurinë e vjetër*, Tirana 1959 (A new song for an old love).  
 LITERARY STUDIES: Giuseppe Schirò: *Storia della letteratura albanese*, Florence 1959 (History of Albanian literature); Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi, Koço Bihiku & Mahir Domi (ed.): *Historia e letërsisë shqipe*, Tirana 1959, 1960 (History of Albanian literature).
- 1960 NOVELS: Ernest Koliqi: *Shija e bukës së mbrûme*, Rome 1960 (The taste of sourdough bread); Petro Marko: *Qyteti i fundit*, Tirana 1960 (The last city); Azem Shkreli: *Karvani i bardhë*, Prishtina 1960 (The white caravan).  
 POETRY: Llazar Siliqi: *Ringjallje*, Tirana 1960 (Resurrection); Azem Shkreli: *Bulzat*, Prishtina 1960 (The buds).
- 1961 1 January 1961: first issue of *Drita* (The light), literary weekly of the Albanian Union of Writers and Artists; 11 July 1961: literary controversy at a meeting of the Albanian Union of Writers and Artists leading to a change of course in Albanian literary policies; December 1961: rupture of relations with the Soviet Union.  
 SHORT STORIES: Anton Pashku: *Tregime*, Prishtina 1961 (Short stories).  
 POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Hapat e mija në asfalt*, Tirana 1961 (My steps on the pavement); Ismail Kadare: *Shekulli im*, Tirana 1961 (My century); Adem Gajtani: *Drita në zemër*, Prishtina 1961 (The light in the heart); Fahredin Gunga: *Pëshpëritjet e mëngjezit*, Prishtina 1961 (Morning whispers); Ali Podrimja: *Thirrje*, Prishtina 1961 (The calls).  
 DRAMA: Spiro Çomora: *Karnavalet e Korçës*, Tirana 1961 (The carnivals of Korça); Andrea Skanjeti: *Nora, heroina e bjeshkve*, Tirana 1961 (Nora, heroine of the mountain pastures).
- 1962 POETRY: Fatos Arapi: *Shtigje poetike*, Tirana 1962 (Poetic paths); Rahman Dedaj: *Me sy kange*, Prishtina 1962 (With eyes of song).
- 1963 NOVELS: Ismail Kadare: *Gjenerali i ushtrisë së vdekur*, Tirana 1963 (The general of the dead army).  
 SHORT STORIES: Ramadan Rexhepi: *Kumbonaret*, Prishtina 1963 (The belltowers).  
 POETRY: Adelina Mamaqi: *Ëndrra vashërie*, Tirana 1963 (Girlhood dreams), first volume of verse published by a woman in Albania; Ali Podrimja: *Shamija e përshëndetjeve*, Prishtina 1963 (The handkerchiefs of greeting); Azem Shkreli: *Engjujt e rrugëve*, Prishtina 1963 (The angels of the road).
- 1964 SHORT STORIES: Dritëro Agolli: *Zhurma e ererave të dikurshme*, Tirana 1964 (The noise of winds of the past).

- POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Devoll, Devoll*, Tirana 1964 (Devoll, Devoll); Martin Camaj: *Legjenda*, Rome 1964 (Legends); Ismail Kadare: *Përse mendohen këto male*, Tirana 1964 (What are these mountains thinking about).
- ANTHOLOGIES: Enver Gjerqeku (ed.): *Panoramë e letërsisë bashkëkohore shqipe në Jugosllavi*, Belgrade 1964 (Panorama of contemporary Albanian literature in Yugoslavia).
- 1965 SHORT STORIES: Azem Shkreli: *Sytë e Evës*, Prishtina 1965 (Eve's eyes).  
NOVELS: Shevqet Musaraj: two-volume *Para agimit*, Tirana 1965-1966 (Before the dawn); Jakov Xoxa: *Lumi i vdekur*, Tirana 1965 (The dead river); Nazmi Rrahmani: *Malsorja*, Prishtina 1965 (The mountain girl).  
POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Shtigje malesh dhe trotuare*, Tirana 1965 (Mountain paths and sidewalks); Aleks Çaçi: *Ëndrat e mia*, Tirana 1965 (My dreams); Beqir Musliu: *Rima të shqetsueme*, Prishtina 1965 (Anxious rhymes).
- 1966 Winter: 'revolutionization' of Albanian culture in the wake of the Chinese Cultural Revolution which had begun in November 1965; July 1966: Brioni Plenum of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the denunciation of Rankovi .  
SHORT STORIES: Ismail Kadare: *Përbindëshi* (The monster); Bilal Xhaferi: *Njerëz të rinj, tokë e lashtë*, Tirana 1966 (Young people, ancient land).  
NOVELS: Kapllan Resuli: *Tradhëtia*, Tirana 1965 (Treachery); Nazmi Rrahmani: *Malsorja*, Prishtina 1965 (The mountain girl); Dhimitër Xhuvani: *Tuneli*, Tirana 1966 (The tunnel).  
POETRY: Besim Bokshi: *Në pritje*, Prishtina 1966 (In expectation); Enver Gjerqeku: *Tinguj të zgjuem*, Prishtina 1966 (Awakening sounds), *Blerimi i vonuem*, Prishtina 1966 (Late verdure); Din Mehmeti: *Rini diellore*, Prishtina 1966 (Sunny youth).  
DRAMA: Ibrahim Uruçi: *Doktor Aleks*, Tirana 1966 (Doctor Aleks).
- 1967 POETRY: Martin Camaj: *Lirika mes dy moteve*, Munich 1967 (Lyrics between two ages); Sulejman Mato: *Shtegu i blertë*, Tirana 1967 (The green path); Ali Podrimja: *Dhimbë e bukur*, Prishtina 1967 (Sweet pain); Bilal Xhaferi: *Lirishta e kuqe*, Tirana 1967 (The red glade).  
DRAMA: Loni Papa: *Cuca e maleve*, Tirana 1967 (The mountain lass); Muhamet Kyçyku's *Erveheja* (Ervehe) adapted for stage in Kosovo by Muharem Qena.
- 1968 April 1968: Conference on Language in Prishtina abandons use of literary Geg in Kosovo in favour of standard literary Albanian.  
SHORT STORIES: Kapllan Resuli: *Ushtima e Korrabit*, Tirana 1968 (The echo of Korrabi).  
NOVELS: Ismail Kadare: *Dasma*, Tirana 1968 (The wedding).  
POETRY: Rrahman Dedaj: *Simfonia e fjalës*, Prishtina 1968 (Word symphony); Adem Gajtani: *Ti kangë, ti zog i largët*, Prishtina 1968 (Thou song, thou distant bird); Ismail Kadare: *Motive me diell*, Tirana 1968 (Themes with sun); Arshi Pipa: *Rusha*, Munich 1968 (Rusha); Frederik Reshpja: *Rapsodi shqiptare*, Tirana 1968 (Albanian rhapsody).  
DRAMA: Minush Jero: *Njolla të murrmë*, 1968 (Grey stains); Fadil Paçrami: *Tri drama*, Tirana 1968 (Three dramas).
- 1969 April 1969: end of 'revolutionization' campaign in Albania.

- 24-26 April 1969: Second Congress of Albanian Union of Writers and Artists; November 1969: inauguration of the University of Prishtina.
- NOVELS: Nazmi Rrahmani: *Tymi i votrës së fikun*, Prishtina 1969 (The smoke of an extinguished hearth); Hivzi Sulejmani: *Fëmijët e lumit tim*, Prishtina 1969 (The children of my river).
- POETRY: Bernardin Palaj: *Opere*, Rome 1969 (Works); Arshi Pipa: *Meridiana*, Munich 1969 (Meridiana); Ali Podrimja: *Sampo*, Prishtina 1969 (Sampo); Azem Shkreli: *E di një fjalë prej guri*, Prishtina 1969 (I know a word of stone).
- DRAMA: Anton Pashku: *Sinkopa*, Prishtina 1969 (Syncope); Azem Shkreli: *Fosilet* (The fossils).
- 1970 NOVELS: Dritëro Agolli: *Komisari Memo*, Tirana 1970 (Commissar Memo); Sabri Godo: *Ali Pashë Tepelena*, Tirana 1970 (Ali Pasha of Tepelena); Elena Kadare: *Një lindje e vështirë*, Tirana 1970 (A difficult birth), first novel published by a woman in Albania; Ismail Kadare: *Kështjella*, Tirana 1970 (The castle); Dhimitër Xhuvani: *Përsëri në këmbë*, Tirana 1970 (On his feet again).
- POETRY: Aleks Çaçi: *Ti je, Myzeqe?*, Tirana 1970 (Is that you, Myzeqe?); Rahman Dedaj: *Baladë e fshehur*, Prishtina 1970 (Hidden ballad); Fahredin Gunga: *Mallkimet e fjetuna*, Prishtina 1970 (Dormant curses).
- DRAMA: Fadil Paçrami: *Edhe tri drama*, Tirana 1970 (Another three dramas).
- 1971 February 1971: establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Yugoslavia brings about a thaw in cultural relations between Albania and Kosovo.
- NOVELS: Ismail Kadare: *Kronikë në gur*, Tirana 1971 (Chronicle in stone); Teodor Laço: *Tokë e ashpër*, Tirana 1971 (Rough land); Jakov Xoxa: *Juga e bardhë*, Tirana 1971 (The white south wind); Ramiz Kelmendi: *Heshtja e armëve*, Prishtina 1971 (The silence of weapons); Anton Pashku: *Oh*, Prishtina 1971 (Oh).
- POETRY. Ali Podrimja: *Torzo*, Prishtina 1971 (Torso).
- DRAMA: Naum Prifti: *Mulliri i Kostë Bardhit*, Tirana 1971 (The mill of Kostë Bardhi).
- 1972 20-25 November 1972: Tirana orthography congress approves standard literary Albanian (*gjuha letrare*) as the unified literary language of Albania and of Albanian speakers in Yugoslavia; Foundation of the Albanian Academy of Sciences.
- NOVELS: Teki Dërvishi: *Pirgu i lartë*, Prishtina 1972 (The high tower); Frederik Reshpja: *Zëri i largët i kasolles*, Tirana 1972 (The distant voice of the cottage).
- POETRY: Natasha Lako: *Marsi brenda nesh*, Tirana 1972 (March within us); Enver Gjerqeku: *Ashti ynë*, Prishtina 1972 (Our bone); Sabri Hamiti: *Njeriu vdes i ri*, Prishtina 1972 (Man dies young).
- 1973 26-28 June 1973: Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee crushes the 'liberal movement'; Fadil Paçrami and Todi Lubonja condemned as deviationists and enemies of the people. Dritëro Agolli replaces Dhimitër Shuteriqi as president of the Albanian Union of Writers and Artists.
- SHORT STORIES: Anton Pashku: *Kjasina*, Prishtina 1973 (The oozing).
- NOVELS: Dritëro Agolli: *Shkëlqimi dhe rënia e shokut Zylo*, Tirana 1973 (The splendour and fall of comrade Zylo); Nazmi Rrahmani: *Toka e përgjakur*, Prishtina 1973 (The bloodstained earth).

- POETRY: Fatos Arapi: *Më jepni një emër*, Tirana 1973 (Give me a name); Rahman Dedaj: *Etje*, Prishtina 1973 (Thirst); Ali Podrimja: *Folja*, Prishtina 1973 (The verb); Frederik Reshpja: *Në këtë qytet*, Tirana 1973 (In this town).
- 1974 Yugoslav constitution guaranteeing autonomy of Kosovo.
- NOVELS: Rexhep Qosja: *Vdekja më vjen prej syve të tillë*, Prishtina 1974 (Death comes from such eyes); Zejnullah Rrahmani: *Zanoret e humbura*, Prishtina 1974 (The lost vowels).
- POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Nënë Shqipëri*, Tirana 1974 (Mother Albania); Rudolf Marku: *Shokët e mi*, Tirana 1974 (My friends).
- 1975 SHORT STORIES: Dushko Vetmo (= Francesco Solano): *Tregimet e lëmit*, Corigliano Calabro 1975 (Tales of the threshing floor).
- NOVELS: Dritëro Agolli: *Njeriu me top*, Tirana 1975 (The man with a cannon); Skënder Drini: *Shembja e idhujve*, Tirana 1975 (The fall of the idols); Sabri Godo: *Skënderbeu*, Tirana 1975 (Scanderbeg); Ismail Kadare: *Nëntori i një kryeqyteti*, Tirana 1975 (November of a capital city); Teodor Laço: *Përballimi*, Tirana 1975 (The face-up); Ramiz Kelmendi: *Shtatë persona ndjekin autorin*, Prishtina 1975 (Seven persons pursue the author).
- POETRY: Sabri Hamiti: *Thikë harrimi*, Prishtina 1975 (Knife of oblivion).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Mensur Raifi: *Fan S. Noli dhe Migjeni*, Prishtina 1975 (Fan S. Noli and Migjeni).
- 1976 NOVELS: Sabri Hamiti: *Njëqind vjet vetmi*, Prishtina 1976 (A hundred years of solitude).
- POETRY: Ismail Kadare: *Koha*, Tirana 1976 (Time); Karmell Kandreva (= Carmelo Candreva): *Shpirti i arbërit rron*, Cosenza 1976 (The Arbëresh spirit lives); Ali Podrimja: *Credo*, Prishtina 1976 (Credo).
- DRAMA: Anton Pashku: *Gof*, Prishtina 1976 (Explosion); Ruzhdi Pulaha: *Zonja nga qyteti*, Tirana 1976 (The lady from the city).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Dhimitër Shuteriqi: *Shkrimet shqipe në vitet 1332-1850*, Tirana 1976 (Albanian writing in the years 1332-1850).
- 1977 Foundation of the *Teatri Popullor* (People's Theatre) of Gjakova.
- PROSE: Ismail Kadare: *Dimri i madh*, Tirana 1977 (The great winter), *Emblema e dikurshme*, Tirana 1977 (Signs of the past); Zejnullah Rrahmani: *E Bukura e Dheut*, Prishtina 1977 (The Earthly Beauty).
- POETRY: Adem Gajtani: *Amfora e fundosur*, Prishtina 1977 (The sunken amphora); Enver Gjerqeku: *Pengu*, Prishtina 1977 (The pledge); Fahredin Gunga: *Psalmet e gurta*, Prishtina 1977 (Stone psalms); Dushko Vetmo (= Francesco Solano): *Te praku*, Trebisacce 1977 (At the threshold).
- 1978 29 July 1978: rupture of the Sino-Albanian alliance. Founding of *Les Lettres albanaises* (Albanian literature), quarterly periodical of the Writers' Union in Tirana.
- SHORT STORIES: Elena Kadare: *Nusja dhe shtetrrrethimi*, Tirana 1978 (The bride and the state of siege); Anton Pashku: *Lutjet e mbrëmjes*, Prishtina 1978 (Evening prayers).
- NOVELS: Martin Camaj: *Rrathë*, Munich 1978 (Circles); Skënder Drini: *Midis dy kohëve*, Tirana 1978 (Between two epochs); Ismail Kadare: *Muzgu i perëndive të stepës* (The twilight of the gods of the Steppes), *Prilli i thyer*

- (Broken April), *Ura me tri harqe*, Tirana 1978 (The bridge with three arches); Nazmi Rrahmani: *Rruga e shtëpisë simë*, Prishtina 1978 (The street of my home); Zejnullah Rrahmani: *Sheshi i Unazës*, Prishtina 1978 (Ring Square).
- POETRY: Martin Camaj: *Njeriu më vete e me tjerë*, Munich 1978 (Man by himself and with others); Enver Gjerqeku: *Pengu i dashurisë*, Prishtina 1978 (The pledge of love); Din Mehmeti: *Ikje nga vdekja*, Prishtina 1978 (Flight from death).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Koço Bihiku (ed.) *Historia e letërsisë shqiptare të realizmit socialist*, Tirana 1978 (History of Albanian literature of socialist realism); Arshi Pipa: *Trilogia albanica*, Munich 1978 (Trilogia albanica).
- 1979 SHORT STORIES: Zija Çela: *Pëllumbat e janarit*, Tirana 1979 (The doves of January).
- NOVELS: Murat Isaku: *Plagët*, Tirana 1979 (The wounds); Ismail Kadare: *Kush e solli Doruntinën?* (Who brought Doruntine back?).
- POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Poezi*, Tirana 1979 (Poetry); Ismail Kadare: *Poezi*, Tirana 1979 (Poetry); Natasha Lako: *E para fjalë e botës*, Tirana 1979 (The world's first word); Sabri Hamiti: *Trungu ilir*, Prishtinë 1979 (The Illyrian stock).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Ibrahim Rugova & Sabri Hamiti: *Kritika letrare. Tekste, shënime, komente*, Prishtina 1979 (Literary criticism. texts, notes, comment).
- 1980 SHORT STORIES: Ismail Kadare: *Gjakftohtësia*, Tirana 1980 (Cold-bloodedness); Vath Koreshi: *Dasma e Sakos*, Tirana 1980 (Sako's wedding).
- POETRY: Rrahman Dedaj: *Gjërat që s'preken*, Prishtina 1980 (Things intangible); Adem Gajtani: *Kënga e mjellmës*, Prishtina 1980 (Swan song); Ismail Kadare: *Buzëqeshje mbi botë*, Prishtina 1980 (Smiles on the world).
- LEXICOGRAPHY: *Fjalor i gjuhës së sotme shqipe*, Tirana 1980 (Dictionary of the modern Albanian language).
- 1981 March/April 1981: popular uprising in Kosovo for republic status; 17 December 1981: mysterious death of Enver Hoxha's rival Mehmet Shehu.
- NOVELS: Teki Dërvishi: *Herezia e Dërvish Mallutës*, Prishtina 1981 (The heresy of dervish Malluta); Elena Kadare: *Bashkëshortët*, Tirana 1981 (The spouses); Ismail Kadare: *Nëpunësi i pallatit të ëndrrave*, Tirana 1981 (The official of the palace of dreams); Mehmet Kraja: *Moti i madh*, Prishtina 1981 (The great age); Nasi Lera: *Gjaku i prillit*, Tirana 1981 (The blood of April).
- POETRY: Esad Mekuli: *Midis dashurisë dhe urrejtjes*, Tirana 1981 (Between love and hatred), *Brigjet*, Prishtina 1981 (The hills); Azem Shkreli: *Pagëzimi i fjalës*, Prishtina 1981 (The baptism of speech); Xhevahir Spahiu: *Vdekje përëndive*, Prishtina 1981 (Death to the gods).
- 1982 Assassination of Kosovo poet and journalist Jusuf Gërvalla in Germany.
- NOVELS: Jusuf Buxhovi: *Shënimet e Gjon Nikollë Kazazit*, Prishtina 1982 (The notes of Gjon Nikollë Kazazi).
- PROSE: Beqir Musliu: *Mbledhësit e purpurit*, Prishtina 1982 (For the collector of purple).
- POETRY: Eqrem Basha: *Atleti i ëndrrave të bardha*, Prishtina 1982 (The athlete of white dreams); Ali Podrimja: *Lum Lumi*, Prishtina 1982 (Lum Lumi); Vorea Ujko: *Këngë arbëreshe*, Tirana 1982 (Arbëresh songs).
- 1983 SHORT STORIES: Naum Prifti: *Njëqind vjet*, Tirana 1983 (A hundred years).

- NOVELS: Musa Ramadani: *Ligatina*, Prishtina 1983 (Ligatina).
- POETRY: Rrahman Dedaj: *Jeta gabon*, Prishtina 1983 (Life makes mistakes); Abdylaziz Islami: *Majë malesh*, Prishtina 1983 (Mountain peak).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi (ed.): *Historia e letërsisë shqiptare*, Tirana 1983 (History of Albanian literature).
- 1984 SHORT STORIES: Ismail Kadare: *Sjellësi i fatkeqësisë - Islamo nox* (The bearer of ill tidings - Islamo nox).
- NOVELS: Miço Kallamata: *Asnjënjësia e Zotit Lulo*, Tirana 1984 (The neutrality of Mr Lulo); Mehmet Kraja: *Udhëzime për kapërcimin e detit*, Prishtina 1984 (Directions for crossing the sea).
- POETRY: Natasha Lako: *Këmisha e pranverës*, Prishtina 1984 (Spring shirt); Bardhyl Londo: *Emrin e ka dashuri*, Tirana 1984 (They call it love).
- LITERARY STUDIES AND ANTHOLOGIES: Nebil Duraku (ed.): *Shkrimtarët e Kosovës '43-'83*, Prishtina 1983 (The writers of Kosovo '43-'83); Rexhep Qosja: *Historia e romantizmit 1-3*, Prishtina 1984, 1984, 1986 (History of Romanticism 1-3).
- 1985 11 April 1985: death of Enver Hoxha who is succeeded Ramiz Alia.
- NOVELS: Vath Koreshi: *Rrugë për larg*, Tirana 1985 (Road to a far-off destination); Ndoc Papleka: *Gjaku i tokës*, Tirana 1985 (Blood of the earth).
- POETRY: Dritëro Agolli: *Udhëtoj i menduar*, Tirana 1985 (I travel pensively); Fahredin Gunga: *Mallkimet e zgjuara*, Prishtina 1985 (Awakened curses); Sabri Hamiti: *Leja e njohtimit*, Prishtina 1985 (Identity papers); Muhamed Kërveshi: *Lojë në vazhdime*, Prishtina 1985 (Game in progress).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Agim Vinca: *Struktura e zhvillimit të poezisë së sotme shqipe 1945-1980*, Prishtina 1985 (The structure of the development of modern Albanian poetry 1945-1980).
- 1986 PROSE: Koço Kosta: *Ata të dy e të tjerë* (The two of them and the others); Ismail Kadare: *Koha e shkrimeve*, Tirana 1986, (Epoch of writings).
- NOVELS: Diana Çuli: *Rrethi i kujtesës*, Tirana 1986 (The ring of memory); Fatos Kongoli: *Ne të tre*, Tirana 1986 (We three); Mehmet Kraja: *Sëmundja e ëndrrave*, Prishtina 1986 (The illness of dreams); Ymer Shkreli: *Rapsodi Kosovare*, Prishtina 1986 (Kosovo rhapsody).
- POETRY: Xhevahir Spahiu: *Nesër jam aty*, Tirana 1986 (I'll be there tomorrow); Eqrem Basha: *Udha qumështore*, Prishtina 1986 (Milky way); Azem Shkreli: *Kënga e hutinit*, Prishtina 1986 (The call of the owl).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Robert Elsie: *Dictionary of Albanian Literature*, New York 1986; Zejnullah Rrahmani: *Nga teoria e letërsisë shqipe*, Prishtina 1986 (From the theory of Albanian literature).
- 1987 12 November 1987: death of Lasgush Poradeci.
- SHORT STORIES: Zija Çela: *Eklips dhe proza të tjera*, Tirana 1987 (Eclipse and other prose).
- NOVELS: Martin Camaj: *Karpa*, Rome 1987 (Karpa); Skënder Drini: *Njerëzit dhe deti*, Tirana 1987 (Men and the sea); Teodor Laço: *Të gjithë lumenjtë rrjedhin*, Tirana 1987 (All the rivers flow).

- POETRY: Rrahman Dedaj: *Fatkeqësia e urtisë*, Prishtina 1987 (The misfortune of wisdom); Beqir Musliu: *Libri i anatemave*, Prishtina 1987 (The book of anathemas); Agim Vinca: *Arna dhe ëndrra*, Prishtina 1987 (Patches and dreams).
- DRAMA: Edi Shukriu: *Kthimi i Euridikës*, Prishtina 1987 (The return of Eurydice).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Ibrahim Rugova: *Refuzimi estetik*, Prishtina 1987 (Aesthetic refusal).
- 1988 NOVELS: Valter File: *Nata e kuajve të bardhë*, Tirana 1988 (The night of the white horses); Sabri Godo: *Ujërat e qeta*, Tirana 1988 (Tranquil waters); Ismail Kadare: *Koncert në fund të dimrit*, Tirana 1988 (Concert at the end of winter); Dhimitër Xhuvani: *Shpirtin nuk e shes*, Tirana 1988 (I won't sell my soul).
- POETRY: Mimoza Ahmeti: *Sidomos nesër*, Tirana 1988 (Especially tomorrow); Bardhyl Londo: *Si ta qetësoj detin*, Tirana 1988 (How can I calm the sea); Din Mehmeti: *As në tokë as në qiell*, Prishtina 1988 (Neither on earth nor in heaven); Ndoc Pappleka: *Lumi e di ku buron*, Tirana 1988 (The river knows where it arises); Koçi Petriti: *Të dashurova ty*, Tirana 1988 (I loved you); Ali Podrimja: *Fund i gëzuar*, Prishtina 1988 (Happy ending); Ilirian Zhupa: *Mos më pyet ku kam qënë*, Tirana 1988 (Ask me not where I have been).
- DRAMA: Sabri Hamiti: *Futa*, Prishtina 1988 (The kerchief).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Koço Bihiku (ed.) *Studime për letërsinë shqiptare II. Probleme të letërsisë shqiptare të realizmit socialist*, Tirana 1988 (Studies in Albanian literature II. Problems of Albanian literature of socialist realism).
- 1989 SHORT STORIES: Besnik Mustafaj: *Vera pa kthim*, Tirana 1989 (Summer of no return).
- NOVELS: Jusuf Buxhovi: *Libri i të mallkuarve*, Prishtina 1989 (The book of the damned); Petro Marko: *Nata e Ustikës*, Tirana 1989 (Ustica night); Neshat Tozaj: *Thikat*, Tirana 1989 (The knives); Dhimitër Xhuvani: *E nesërmja e një gruaje*, Tirana (A woman's tomorrow); Preç Zogaj: *Vonesa*, Tirana 1989 (Delay).
- POETRY: Fatos Arapi: *Duke dalë prej ëndrrës*, Tirana 1989 (Leaving a dream); Eqrem Basha: *Brymë në zemër*, Prishtina 1989 (Frost in the heart); Ervin Hatibi: *Përditë shoh qiellin*, Tirana 1989 (I look at the sky daily); Rudolf Marku: *Udhëtim për në vendin e gjërave që njohim*, Tirana 1989 (Voyage to the land of things we know); Xhevahir Spahiu: *Heshtje s'ka*, Tirana 1989 (There is no silence); Moikom Zeqo: *Njëqind zemra*, Tirana 1989 (One hundred hearts).
- LITERARY STUDIES: Sabri Hamiti: *Vetëdija letrare*, Prishtina 1989 (Literary self-knowledge).
- 1990 24 April 1990: release of Kosovo prose writer Adem Demaçi from three decades of imprisonment in Yugoslavia; Summer: complete Serbian military takeover in Kosovo bringing the region to the verge of civil war, suspension of *Rilindja* daily newspaper and of radio and television broadcasting in Albanian; July 1990: thousands of Albanians take refuge in foreign embassies in Tirana and are allowed to leave the country; 25 October 1990: Ismail Kadare seeks and obtains political asylum in France. 11 December 1990: introduction of political pluralism in Albania.
- SHORT STORIES: Skënder Drini: *Rruga e njeriut*, Tirana 1990 (Man's way); Preç Zogaj: *Shetitorja*, Tirana 1990 (The boulevard).

NOVELS: Kiço Blushi: *Koka e prerë*, Tirana 1990 (The severed head); Diana Çuli: *Dreri i trotuareve*, Tirana 1990 (The stag of the sidewalks); Sabri Godo: *Koha e njeriut*, Tirana 1990 (The age of man); Ismail Kadare: *Dosja H*, Tirana 1990; Teodor Keko: *Loja*, Tirana 1990 (The game); Mehmet Kraja: *Net bizantine*, Prishtina 1990 (Byzantine nights); Teodor Laço: *Pushimet e kolonelit*, Tirana 1990 (The colonel's holidays).

POETRY: Lindita Aliu: *Ndoshta do të ishin më të mëdhenj*, Prishtina 1990 (Perhaps they'd be bigger); Fatos Arapi: *Ku shkoni ju, statuja*, Tirana 1990 (Where are you going, statues); Adem Gashi: *Realiteti objektiv*, Prishtina 1990 (Objective reality); Sabri Hamiti: *Kaosmos*, Prishtina 1990 (Chaosmos); Teodor Keko: *Zemra nuk është këmishë*, Tirana 1990 (The heart is not a shirt); Natasha Lako: *Natyrë e qetë*, Tirana 1990 (Quiet nature); Bardhyl Londo: *Ditë njerëzore*, Tirana 1990 (Human days); Erind Pajo: *Sikur pranë të kisha një zog...*, Tirana 1990 (As if I had a bird nearby); Ali Podrimja: *Zari*, Prishtina 1990 (The die); Vorea Ujko: *Hapma derën zonja mëmë*, Tirana 1990 (Open the door mother); Ilirian Zhupa: *Pema e ëndrrës*, Prishtina 1990 (The dream tree).

DRAMA: Teki Dëvishi: *Pranvera e librave*, Prishtina 1990 (The springtime of books), *Zhvarrimi i Pjetër Bogdanit*, Prishtina 1990 (The exhumation of Pjetër Bogdani); Ymer Shkreli: *Trilogjia e re*, Prishtina 1990 (New trilogy).

LITERARY STUDIES AND ANTHOLOGIES: Rexhep Ismajli: *Poezia e sotme arbëreshe*, Prishtina 1990 (Modern Arbëresh poetry); Ismail Kadare: *Eskili ky humbës i madh*, Tirana 1990 (Aeschylus, the great loser); *Ftesë në studio*, Tirana 1990 (Invitation into the studio); Agim Vinca: *Orët e poezisë*, Prishtina 1990 (Poetry hours).

1991

20 February 1991: statue of Enver Hoxha toppled in Tirana; 17 March 1991: release of remaining political prisoners, including a number of writers (Fadil Paçrami, Bashkim Shehu etc.); 31 March 1991: first pluralist elections in Albania; February/March 1991: removal and alleged destruction by Serbian forces of the Kosovo Archives in Prishtina; Autumn: suspension of teaching in Albanian at the University of Prishtina.

SHORT STORIES: Martin Camaj: *Pishtarët e natës*, Prishtina 1991 (The torches of the night); Adem Demaçi: *Kur zoti harron*, Prishtina 1991 (When God forgets); Teodor Keko: *Lajmëtarja e vdekjeve*, Tirana 1991 (The harbinger of deaths); Kasëm Trebeshina: *Stina e stinëve*, Prishtina 1991 (The season of seasons).

NOVELS: Diana Çuli: *Rekuiem*, Tirana 1991 (Requiem).

POETRY: Martin Camaj: *Në hijen e gjarpnit*, Prishtina 1991 (In the shadow of the snake), *Palimpsest*, New York 1991 (Palimpsest); Ndoc Gjetja: *Kthimet*, Tirana 1991 (The returns); Xhevahir Spahiu: *Kohë e krisur*, Tirana 1991 (Mad age).

ESSAYS: Ismail Kadare: *Nga një dhjetor në tjetrin*, Paris 1991 (From one December to another), *Pesha e kryqit*, Paris 1991 (The weight of the cross).

LITERARY STUDIES: Arshi Pipa: *Contemporary Albanian literature*, New York 1991.

1992

31 January 1992: Dritëro Agolli retires as president of the Albanian Union of Writers and Artists; 22 March 1992: victory of Democratic Party under Sali Berisha in the general elections in Albania; 24 May 1992: Literary critic Ibrahim

Rugova elected as President of the 'Republic of Kosovo'; June 1992: Bardhyl Londo nominated as president of the Albanian Writers Union.

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