

Communism in albania

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The Communist Party had been created in 1941, by leader Enver Hoxha and a committee of men. Communism in Albania never had existed up until 1941. Communism in Albania was a triumph because no one was attacking Albania and Albania had alliances which benefited the economy.

Communism in Albania was a tragedy because Enver Hoxha took away people's rights and lots of people were killed from being in prisons and camps.

Albania was in an alliance with Yugoslavia, but Enver Hoxha decided to break away from Yugoslavia since he wanted to remain loyal to the Soviet Union. Albania would then gain help from China and the Soviet Union.

In 1948, Albania formed an alliance with the Soviet Union. Albania's alliance with the Soviet Union had a few advantages. Enver Hoxha established a Stalinist style economy which included: collective farming, the redistribution of land, no owning of any property that was private, nationalizing industry and placing, and all trade was under domestic control. Trading with the Soviet Union was important and was a great economic boost for Albania. However, due to the increasing anti Marxist-Leninist ideas held by the leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, Enver Hoxha, cut off ties with the Soviet Union in 1961.

Then, Albania formed an alliance with China which lasted from 1961 until 1978. China was interested in Albania since it was looking to gain a foothold in Europe. The relationship between the two nations were ideal and likewise trade between the two countries helped Albania's economy and industry. New power plants and new industrial enterprises were underway. In 1978,

relations with China came to an end and a new policy of closing the borders of the country preventing visitors from neighboring countries to come into the country was implemented.

Enver Hoxha took over Albania and he took most of the rights that people had. Intelligent people helped to create the Communist Party. Since they now had power, they made the Albanian population obey them, they restricted their freedoms, and overwhelming them with all sorts of propaganda.

The Communist Party took almost all of people's rights away. Albania ruled through tyranny for decades. When Enver Hoxha ruled for 50 years, Enver Hoxha didn't allow people to travel, he prohibited religion, and he forbade people to own any land.

In 1944, schools were being controlled and watched by the government. The communist party organized the education system and they also re-opened schools. The Communists wanted the school system to inform students about Communism, and the ideas and principles that the Communist Party had.

Klentina Mahmutaj, a woman who grew up during communism, talks about how students were taught to worship Enver Hoxha. She says " I excelled academically and was awarded the Communist red star in my first year and later on became a " pioneer of Enver." Life for her in school wasn't too difficult, but life for her parents was hard." They both worked hard hard to provide a good living and education for me and my younger sister", she said.

Her father hated communism, due to the lack of liberty and the harsh treatments that people received due to believing in free speech and disagreeing with the government. Her father had wanted to go west but he feared what would happen to his family, such as isolation and execution. So later in 1990, her parents were the first among thousands of Albanians to protest in the streets of the capital Tirana.

Klentiana also talks about how women were treated in terms of jobs. Women became farmers, mechanics, engineers, doctors, scientists, doctors and university professors. Women also joined the army and acquired high ranks. The Communists promised that women should be as equal as men when joining the workforce. The government encouraged women to embark on all professions, including "manly jobs". Women in their role at home were seen in the same way, and they weren't expected to take care of children or clean the house and cook." I remember my father, a good-looking alpha male, regularly cleaning the house, cooking, doing school runs and helping with homework," Klentiana says. Women faced no barriers of gender discrimination." I remember my parents and their friends frequently praising excellent female doctors and teachers," Klentiana states.

Media and communications in Albania were managed and limited by the government. At this time, there was only one radio station that people could listen to and that was "Radio Tirana." There was also only one television channel and that was TVSH. People could only watch the TVSH and not any other channels. People were forbidden from getting information from other countries. People who were caught not following the rules, were arrested.

Anyone who disobeyed his rules had cruel punishments such as execution and being in prison for a long time. Hundreds of people were executed just because they express their opinions, or because they asked for their rights. Enver Hoxha was remembered for building 23 prisons and 48 concentration camps. In an article from the Daily Sabah, one of the executed men, Skender Daja, who asked for forgiveness said, Even if I had 10 lives, all times I would have done the same thing. I would fight to be free. Bilal Kola, head of the Institute for the Integration of the Former Politically Persecuted said A total of 18, 000 people were imprisoned for political reasons and some 30, 000 were sent to internment camps within the country. Simon Miraka, a survivor of these camps talks about the tragedies of these camps. He had spent 45 years in a concentration camp, in the city of Tepelena between 1949 and 1954. These years were the harshest for his family, and about 400 children at this camp died, and the remains still are missing today. Miraka stated " Even today I think how i could survive [that camp] since so many children died there. Lots of people had died in this camp from diseases, hard work, inhuman conditions, ill-treatment and starvation.

In 1978, after Albania broke away from China, Albania entered into a state of isolationism. Enver Hoxha built thousands of bunkers because he was afraid of any invaders attacking. The building of these bunkers was bad for the economy since it took away lots of money for more important things, like housing and building of roads. There was propaganda going around at this time about how citizens needed to be defended and watch out for their enemy, and the construction of these bunkers served this purpose. At this time citizens were being trained in defense drills at least twice a month

which potentially lasted up to 3 days. These drills were intended to protect citizens. These bunkers were made of iron, steel and concrete. There were nuclear bomb shelters underground and that was for the Communist Party.

During the time of isolationism, there was a lack of food. During those years people got their food in portions. For a short period of time, the capital Tirana had no milk. In an article from the Christian Science Monitor it states, "I waited five hours,"" says Egerem Mete, who got out of bed at 1 a. m. to buy milk. "" And milk arrived – but only for families with children and old, sick folk – a liter per family."" There had also been a shortage of eggs and meat. The biggest markets in Tirana only had a few cans of fish and dried up goods. The markets had lacked vegetables and fruit. There was also a shortage of bread. Since Albania wasn't an alliance with a foreign nation due breaking away from China, they were going through an economic crisis. There needed to be democratic government and a market economy. The economy needed to be improved and the government needed to be changed so that the country won't suffer and the same mistakes won't happen again.

On April 11, 1985, communist leader Enver Hoxha died and Ramiz Alia took over for 6 years. He was the second and last leader of Communist Albania from 1985-1991. The first protests started in the city of Shkodra in 1990. In the summer of 1990, thousands of Albanians fought for their lives to seek for freedom in the German, Italian, and French embassies in Tirana. In early March 1991, an election was coming and thousands of Albanians left the country and they went to different cities by ship and they wanted to live a

better life. The elections in March 1992 ended communism rule which lasted for 47 years. Parliament then elected Salil Berisha as president.