

STATE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH RELIGIONS IN ALBANIA (1920-1967)

The first governments formed with the creation of the Albanian state preserved the status quo inherited from the Ottoman Empire for religious matters. The Orthodox maintained ties with the Patriarchate and the Catholics with the Vatican, while the Muslims severed relations with their center. After 1920, the Orthodox proclaimed the National Autocephalous Church of Albania, while the Catholic Church arranged their relations with the state through an agreement between the Vatican and the Albanian government.

During 1939-1943, the invaders tried to realize the old plans dating back to the end of the 19th century for the disintegration and fragmentation of Islam and the unification of the Orthodox. The religious conversions have always been present even after the formation of the Albanian state. The Muslim community, as the majority community, was quite careful about the high sensitivity that this issue had and did not allow conversions from other religions to Islam.

The Communist Party after the establishment of the communist regime in November 1944, pursued divisive policy among the clergy by executing and imprisoning clergymen whom it called “reactionaries.” The communist regime took advantage of clergy’s influence to convince the people of agrarian reform and agricultural collectivism. After achieving their goals, the regime gave the final blow to religious beliefs, clergy, and places of worship. The regime also banned religious holidays and filled the gap with holidays created by them.

During this process, the Albanian Labor Party took care of the atheist education of the masses and the creation of the ‘new man’. For this purpose, it strengthened the organizations they created, such as: Democratic Front of Albania, Albanian Women’s Union, Albanian Working Youth Union, Professional Unions of Albania, etc. The main task for the Writers ‘and Artists’ League was to activate more the people of literature and arts in the

center and districts, as well as the press and Radio-Tirana.

In the war against religion took part the mass of people who supported the regime, which propagated the “vanity and harm of religious beliefs.”