

## Unit 12 f: Country Area Studies--Republic of Albania

### Objectives

At the end of this module, you will

### Be aware of the following

- Religious history of Albania prior to World War II
- Ottoman mission efforts
- Enver Hoxha's long term campaign to rid Albania of religion
- Drop in numbers of Roman Catholic clergy from 1944 to 1992
- Current secular orientation of many Albanian peoples
- Tribal, clan nature of much of Albanian family life
- High birthrate and low employment rate of Albanians in the Serbian and Montenegrin province of Kosovo

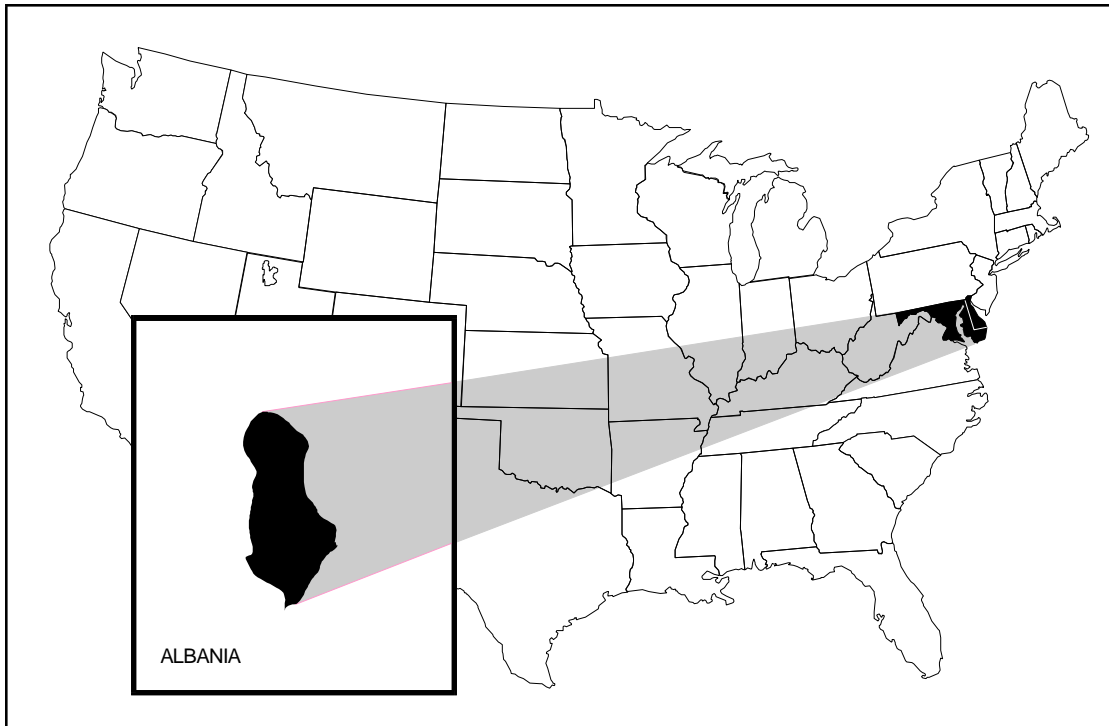
### Identify

- Shiptare
- Illyrian
- Bektashi
- Lik Dukagjin
- Raki
- Pyramid Investment Scheme
- Uniate
- Enver Hoxha
- Mother Teresa
- Dervish
- Gusle
- Kosovo
- Dowry
- Gegs and Tosks
- Lustration

### Realize

- Pragmatic, syncretic nature of Albanian religious practice
- Selected aspects of Albanian folk religious practice
- Revival of religion in the 1980's
- Tolerance allowed missionaries within Albania
- Background of Albanian difficulties in Kosovo province of Serbia and Montenegro
- Male dominated nature of Albanian society
- Albanian manners and customs

## Republic of Albania (al-BAY-nee-ah)



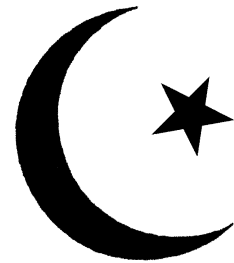
The name "Albanian" comes from the 2nd century B.C. town of Albanopolis, located in present-day Albania. "Shiptare" meaning "sons of the eagle" is another term to identify Albanian peoples. "Illyrian," (i-LEER-ee-ahn) another designation, refers to direct descendants of those who lived in the area from the 10th century B.C. The local long form of the country is Republika e Shqiperise, or Shqiperia for short.

<u>Population</u>	3,249,136
% under 15	34%
<u>Commo</u>	
TV	1:11
Radio	1:5
Phone	1:87
Newspaper	54:1000
<u>Health</u>	
Life Expectancy	65 male 71 female
Hospitals	1:173
Doctors	1:585
IMR	49:1000
<u>Income</u>	\$1,210 per capita
<u>Literacy Rate</u>	72%

## 1. Religious Groups

- a. Muslim (70%)
- b. Albanian Orthodox (20%)
- c. Roman Catholic (10%)
- d. Religious history--before 1944

(1) Islam "One of the major legacies of nearly five centuries of Ottoman rule was the conversion of up to 70 percent of the Albanian population to Islam. Therefore, at independence the country emerged as a predominantly Muslim nation, the only Islamic state in Europe. No census taken by the communist regime after it assumed power in 1944 indicated the religious affiliations of the people.



It has been estimated that of a total population of 1,180,500 at the end of World War II, about 826,000 were Muslims, 212,500 were Orthodox, and 142,000 were Roman Catholics.

The Muslims were divided into two groups: about 600,000 adherents of the Sunni branch and more than 220,000 followers of a Dervish order known as Bektashi, which was an offshoot of the Shia branch. Bektashism was regarded as a tolerant Muslim sect that also incorporated elements of paganism and Christianity" (Unless stated otherwise, quoted material comes from the Library of Congress Country Study--Albania).

### (2) Bektashis

Bektashis often do not distinguish between Muslim and non-Muslim members. Their monasteries gained popularity throughout Albania. The holy tomb of Saint Sari Saltik in Kruje became their center. In following dervish practice, Bektashis may participate in ecstatic observances--dancing, whirling, chanting or shouting.



**(3) Christianity** "Christianity was introduced during Roman rule. After the division of the Roman Empire in 395, Albania became politically a part of the Eastern, or Byzantine, Empire, but remained ecclesiastically dependent on Rome. When the final schism occurred in 1054 between the Roman and Eastern churches, the Christians in southern Albania came under the jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarch in Constantinople, and those in the north came under the purview of the papacy in Rome. This arrangement prevailed until the Ottoman invasions of the fourteenth century, when the Islamic faith was introduced.



In the mountainous north, the propagation of Islam was strongly opposed by Roman Catholics. Gradually, however, backwardness, illiteracy, the absence of an educated clergy, and material inducements weakened resistance.

Coerced conversions sometimes occurred, especially when foreign Roman Catholic powers, such as the Venetian Republic, were at war with the Ottoman Empire. By the close of the seventeenth century, the Catholics in the north were outnumbered by the Muslims.

**(4) Orthodoxy** After the Ottoman conquest, thousands of Orthodox Christians fled from southern Albania to Sicily and southern Italy, where their descendants, most of whom joined the Uniate Church [an Eastern church in union with Rome, which recognizes the pope but members have their own liturgy, discipline and rite], still constitute a sizable community.

Large-scale forced conversions of the Orthodox Christians who remained in Albania did not occur until the seventeenth century and the Russo-Turkish wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pressure was put on this group because the Ottoman Turks considered its members sympathetic to Orthodox Russia. The situation of the Orthodox adherents improved temporarily after the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji (1774), in which Russia was recognized as the protector of the Orthodox followers in the Ottoman Empire.

### (5) Muslim

*"The most effective method employed by the Ottoman Turks in their missionary efforts, especially in the central and southern parts of the country, was the creation of a titled Muslim class of pashas and beys who were endowed with both large estates and extensive political and administrative powers. Through their political and economic influence, these nobles controlled the peasants, large numbers of whom were converted to Islam either through coercion or the promise of economic benefits.*



*In the period from independence to the communist seizure of power, the Muslim noble class constituted Albania's ruling elite, but this group never interfered with religious freedom, which was sanctioned by the various pre-World War II constitutions. These constitutions had stipulated that the country have no official religion, that all religions be respected, and that their freedom of exercise be assured. These provisions reflected the true feelings of the people who, whether Muslim, Orthodox, or Roman Catholic, were generally tolerant in religious matters."*

**(6) Pragmatism** *"For generations, religious pragmatism was a distinctive trait of the Albanians. Even after accepting Islam, many people privately remained practicing Christians.*



*As late as 1912, in a large number of villages in the Elbasan area, most men had two names, a Muslim one for public use and a Christian one for private use. Adherence to ancient pagan beliefs also continued well into the twentieth century, particularly in the northern mountain villages, many of which were devoid of churches and mosques. A Roman Catholic intellectual, Vaso Pashko (1825-92), made the trenchant remark, later co-opted by Enver Hoxha, that "the religion of the Albanians is Albanianism."*

**(7) Folk religion** Pre-Christian traditional beliefs, centered in the dichotomy of light and dark, good and evil, are seen in symbols and figures used in myths, legends, fairy tales, tattoos and handicrafts. Vampires, witches and interpretations of signs and wonders also show this influence.

### **e. Enver Hoxha's (ruled 1945-1985) Communist impact**

**(1) Campaigns against organized religion** *"A dogmatic Stalinist, Hoxha considered religion a divisive force and undertook an active campaign against religious institutions, despite the virtual absence of religious intolerance in Albanian society.*

*The Agrarian Reform Law of August 1945, for example, nationalized most property of religious institutions, including the estates of monasteries, orders, and dioceses. Many clergy and believers were tried, tortured, and executed. All foreign Roman Catholic priests, monks, and nuns were expelled in 1946.*



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*In January 1949, almost three years after the adoption of the first communist constitution, which guaranteed freedom of religion, the government issued a far-reaching Decree on Religious Communities. The law required that religious communities be sanctioned by the state, that they comply with 'the laws of the state, law and order, and good customs,' and that they submit all appointments, regulations, and bylaws for approval by the government. Even pastoral letters and parish announcements were subject to the approval of party officials.*

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*Religious communities or branches that had their headquarters outside the country, such as the Jesuit and Franciscan orders, were henceforth ordered to terminate their activities in Albania. Religious institutions were forbidden to have anything to do with the education of the young, because that had been made the exclusive province of the state. All religious communities were prohibited from owning*

real estate and from operating philanthropic and welfare institutions and hospitals.

Although there were tactical variations in Hoxha's approach to each of the major denominations, his overarching objective was the eventual destruction of all organized religion in Albania.



In the late 1940s and 1950s, the regime achieved control over the Muslim faith by formalizing the split between the Sunni and Bektashi sects, eliminating all leaders who opposed Hoxha's policies, and exploiting those who were more tractable. Steps were also taken to purge all Orthodox clergy who did not yield to the demands of the regime, and to use the church as a means of mobilizing the Orthodox population behind government policies" (Unless stated otherwise, the following quotes come from the U.S. State Department Human Rights Report--1997).

**(2) Roman Catholic persecution** "The Roman Catholic Church, chiefly because it maintained close relations with the Vatican and was more highly organized than the Muslim and Orthodox faiths, became the principal target of persecution. Between 1945 and 1953, the number of priests was reduced drastically and the number of Roman Catholic churches was decreased from 253 to 100. All Catholics were stigmatized as fascists, although only a minority had collaborated with the Italian occupation authorities during World War II."

### **(3) Student antireligious missions**

"The campaign against religion peaked in the 1960s. Inspired by China's Cultural Revolution, Hoxha called for an aggressive cultural-educational struggle against 'religious superstition' and assigned the antireligious mission to Albania's students. By May 1967, religious institutions had been forced to relinquish all 2,169 churches, mosques, cloisters, and shrines in Albania, many of which were converted into cultural centers for young people. As the literary monthly Nendori reported the event, the youth had thus 'created the first atheist nation in the world.'"

**(4) Clerics** The clergy were publicly vilified and humiliated, their vestments taken and desecrated. Many Muslim mullahs and Orthodox priests buckled under and renounced their "parasitic" past.



*"More than 200 clerics of various faiths were imprisoned, others were forced to seek work in either industry or agriculture, and some were executed or starved to death. The cloister of the Franciscan order in Shkodër was set on fire, which resulted in the death of four elderly monks."*

**(5) Bans on religion** "All previous decrees that had officially sanctioned the nominal existence of organized religion were annulled in 1967. Subsequently, the 1976 constitution banned all 'fascist, religious, warmongerish, antisocialist activity and propaganda,' and the penal code of 1977 imposed prison sentences of three to ten years for 'religious propaganda and the production, distribution, or storage of religious literature.'

A new decree that in effect targeted Albanians with Christian names stipulated that citizens whose names did not conform to "the political, ideological, or moral standards of the state" were to change them. It was also decreed that towns and villages with religious names must be renamed. Thus, in the southern areas populated by ethnic Greeks, about ninety towns and places named after Greek Orthodox saints received secular names."



**(6) Clandestine faith** "Hoxha's brutal antireligious campaign succeeded in eradicating formal worship, but some Albanians continued to practice their faith clandestinely, risking severe punishment. Individuals caught with Bibles, icons, or other religious objects faced long prison sentences. Parents were afraid to pass on their faith, for fear that their children would tell others. Officials tried



*to entrap practicing Christians and Muslims during religious fasts, such as Lent and Ramadan, by distributing dairy products and other forbidden foods in school and at work, and then publicly denouncing those who refused the food. Clergy who conducted secret services were incarcerated; in 1980, a Jesuit priest was sentenced to 'life until death' for baptizing his nephew's newborn twins."*

**f. Religious history--Revival of Religion** *"In the 1980s, officials grudgingly began to concede that the campaign against religion had not been entirely successful, and indeed probably was counterproductive.*

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*A sociological study revealed that over 95 percent of the country's young people were choosing spouses of the same religious background, whereas, prior to the antireligious onslaught, marriages between Muslims and Christians were not uncommon. Albania's government also became more sensitive to the barrage of criticism from the international community."*

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**(1) Tolerant policies** *"Hoxha's successor, Ramiz Alia, adopted a relatively tolerant stance toward religious practice, referring to it as 'a personal and family matter.' Emigré clergymen were permitted to reenter the country in 1988 and officiate at religious services.*

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*Mother Teresa, an ethnic Albanian, visited Tiranë in 1989, where she was received by the foreign minister and by Hoxha's widow.*

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*In December 1990, the ban on religious observance was officially lifted, in time to allow thousands of Christians to attend Christmas services."*

**(2) Persecution impact** *"Religious leaders estimated that 95 percent of all mosques and churches had been razed or gutted during the years of communist rule. A few had been spared and designated as 'cultural monuments.' Others, such as the Roman Catholic cathedral in Shkodër, were converted to sports arenas.*



*The status of the clergy was equally appalling; the number of Roman Catholic priests, for example, had declined from 300 in 1944, when the communists took to power, to thirty by early 1992.*

*In 1992 plans were under way to restore the houses of worship, seminaries were being reopened, and several Islamic countries had sent teachers to provide religious instruction to young Albanian Muslims who knew virtually nothing about their religion. 'Hoxha destroyed the human soul,' an official of Albania's new noncommunist government observed, adding, 'This will take generations to restore.'*" (Library of Congress Country Study--Albania).

### **g. Freedom of Religion (1997)**

**(1) Policy** *"The Law on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms provides that 'freedom of thought, conscience, and religion may not be violated.' Citizens may freely change their religion or beliefs and may manifest them alone or in community with others, in public or in private life, and in worship, teaching, practice, and observance. The Government respects these provisions in practice. There is no law to control either violation of religious rights or so-called religious groups which may violate or abuse the rights of others.*

*The majority of citizens are secular in orientation after decades of rigidly enforced atheism."*



**(2) Faith groups** *"Muslims, who make up the largest traditional religious group, adhere to a moderate form of Sunni Islam. The Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches are the other large denominations."*

There appears to be a tendency for some to define themselves as catholic to show an identity with the West.

*"The Albanian Orthodox Church split from the Greek Orthodox Church early in the century, and there is a strong identification with the national church as distinct from the Greek church. The current archbishop is a Greek citizen, even though the Albanian Orthodox Church's 1929 statute states that all its archbishops must be of Albanian heritage, because there are no Albanian clerics qualified for this position."*

**(3) Mission activity** *"Foreign clergy, including Muslim clerics, Christian and Ba'hai missionaries, Jehovah's Witnesses, and many others freely carry out religious activities. The Religious Council of the State Secretariat, an office that functions under the Prime Minister's authority, but has no clear mandate and is unable to make decisions on its own, estimates that there are 20 different Muslim societies and sects with around 95 representatives in country. There are more than 2,500 missionaries representing Christian or Ba'hai organizations. No religious missionaries have suffered any acts of violence or been arrested because they are missionaries."*

**(4) Government handover** *"The government has not yet returned all lands and religious objects under its control that were confiscated under the Communist regime. Some warehouses in which church groups stored food and other basic commodities were seriously damaged and looted during the unrest. Each religion is slowly recovering old properties, but in cases where the sites or buildings were 'cultural monuments protected by the state,' the transfer of ownership continues to be problematic and slow. All major religious groups continue to complain of this slow pace of property return." (Human Rights Report--1997).*



**2. Ethnic/Racial Groups** *"There are two main minority populations, ethnic Greeks and Macedonians. While no recent official statistics exist regarding the size of the various*

*ethnic communities, ethnic Greeks are the most organized and receive the most attention and assistance from abroad. Unknown numbers of ethnic minorities fled the country during the extensive rioting and unrest in the first half of the year. A few thousand ethnic Macedonians remain as do a small group of ethnic Montenegrins and ethnic Serbs in the north. No discrimination was reported against the Vlachs, who speak Romanian as well as Albanian, or against the Cams, non-Orthodox ethnic Greeks. Both groups live mainly in the south. Roma (gypsies) are also present."*

### **a. Albanian (95%)**

**(1) Overview** *"Among ethnic Albanians are two major subgroups: the Gëgs, who generally occupy the area north of the Shkumbin River, and the Tosks, most of whom live south of the river.*



*The Gëgs account for slightly more than half of the resident Albanian population. Ethnic Albanians are estimated to account for 90 percent of the population.*

*The Gëgs and Tosks use distinct dialects; there are also linguistic variations within subgroups.*

*Well into the twentieth century, ethnic clans exercised extensive local authority, particularly in the north. Some progress was made during the reign of King Zog I (1928-39), however, toward bringing the clans under government control and eliminating blood feuds."*

**(2) Communist clan suppression** *"After taking power in 1944, the Communist regime imposed controls intended to eliminate clan rule entirely and waged a continuing struggle against customs and attitudes that were believed to impede the growth of socialism. Blood feuds were repressed. Party and government leaders, in their effort to develop national, social, and cultural solidarity in a Communist society, publicly tended to ignore ethnic differences."*

**(3) Tosk favoritism** "Communist leader Enver Hoxha, first secretary of the Albanian Party of Labor and head of state until his death in 1985, came from the south. He received the bulk of his support during World War II from that area, frequently gave preference to persons and customs of Tosk origin. Most party and government executives were Tosk speakers and of Muslim background. The GEGs, who had dominated Albanian politics before 1945, were educationally disadvantaged by the adoption of a 'standard literary Albanian language,' based on the Tosk dialect."

#### **(4) Geg culture persistence**

"Because of their greater isolation in the mountainous areas of the north, the GEGs held on to their tribal organization and customs more tenaciously than did the Tosks."



As late as the 1920s, approximately 20 percent of male deaths in some areas of northern Albania were attributable to blood feuds. Under the unwritten tribal codes, whose purview included the regulation of feuds, any blow, as well as many offenses committed against women, called for vengeance. Permitting a girl who had been betrothed in infancy to marry another, for example, could set off a blood feud. The besa, a pledge to keep one's word as a solemn obligation, was given in various situations and sometimes included promises to postpone quarrels. A man who killed a fellow tribesman was commonly punished by his neighbors, who customarily would burn his house and destroy his property. As fugitives from their own communities, such persons were often given assistance by others.

A man who failed to carry out the prescribed vengeance against a member of another tribe or that individual's relatives was subjected to ridicule. Insult was considered one of the gravest forms of dishonor, and the upholding of one's honor was the primary duty of a Geg.



*If the individual carried out the required act of vengeance, he was in turn subject to retribution by the victim's relatives. Women were excluded from the feud and, when a man escorted a woman, he too was considered inviolable. In other respects, however, a woman's lot in society generally was one of deprivation and subjugation.*

*The isolation from influences beyond his community and the constant struggle with nature tended to make the male Geg an ascetic.*

*Traditionally his closest bonds were with members of his clan. Obstinate and proud, the GEGs had proved themselves ruthless and cruel fighters. Visitors from outside the clan generally were suspect, but every traveler was by custom accorded hospitality."*

**(5) Tosk particularities** *"Less isolated by geography and enjoying slightly less limited contact with foreign cultures, Tosks generally were more outspoken and imaginative than GEGs. Contacts with invaders and foreign occupiers had left an influence and, before 1939, some Tosks had traveled to foreign countries to earn money to buy land, or to obtain an education. The clan or tribal system, which by the nineteenth century was far less extensive in the south than in the north, began to disappear after independence was achieved in 1912."*



**b. Greek (5%)** *"The Greek minority, Albania's largest, has deep roots in the country's two southeasternmost districts, Sarandë and Gjirokastër, in an area many Greeks call Northern Epirus. Estimates of the size of the Greek population in 1989 varied from 59,000, or 1 percent of the total (from the official Albanian census); to 266,800, or 8 percent (from data published by the United States government); to as high as 400,000, or 12 percent (from the "Epirot lobby" of Greeks with family roots in Albania).*

Greeks were harshly affected by the communist regime's attempts to homogenize the population through restrictions on the religious, cultural, educational, and linguistic rights of minorities. Internal exile and other population movements served as instruments of policy to dilute concentrations of Greeks and to deprive Greeks of their status as a recognized minority. Despite improvements in Greco-Albanian relations during the late 1980s and a significant increase in cross-border visits, reports of persecution, harassment, and discrimination against Greeks, as well as other minorities, persisted" (Human Rights Report--1997).



**c. Other** (2%--Vlachs, Roma, Serbs and Bulgarians)

"Smaller ethnic groups, including Bulgarians, Roma, Jews, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs, and Vlachs, altogether accounted for about 2 percent of the total population. Persons of Macedonian and Bulgarian origin lived mostly in the border area near Lake Prespa. The Vlachs, akin to modern Romanians, were most numerous in the Pindus Mountains and in the districts of Fier, Korçë, and Vlorë. A few persons of Serbian and Montenegrin derivation resided around the city of Shkodër. There were small Jewish communities in Tiranë, Vlorë, and Korçë; and Rome were scattered throughout the country.

During World War II, though occupied for a time by Germany, almost all of the small Jewish community in Albania survived. No list was broadcast of Albanian Jewish people. The underground ordered that any Albanian denying refuge to Jews, would be executed. No one was put to death for this reason and, in 1991, 350 Jewish people were allowed to emigrate to Israel."

**d. Albanians in Kosovo** "Estimates based on Yugoslav census data indicated that the number of Albanians in Yugoslavia in 1981 totaled more than 1.7 million, or almost 8 percent of the country's total population, of which about 70

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percent resided in Kosovo, a province of Serbia, 20 percent in Macedonia, and 9 percent in Montenegro.

The predominantly Albanian Kosovo had the highest birthrate in Europe and one of the highest in the world: 29.9 per 1,000 in 1987. Persons under twenty-seven years old accounted for 60 percent of Kosovo's total population, and students--a reservoir of political ferment--over 30 percent. In 1981 only 12 percent of the Albanian population in Kosovo was employed.

Student protests over living conditions in early 1981 led to bloody riots throughout Kosovo, which accelerated the exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins. The number of departures totaled 60,000 between 1981 and 1991. Haunted by the specter of secession, the Serbian government resorted to repressive measures, culminating in the revocation of Kosovo's autonomous status in July 1990. Hundreds of Albanian activists were tried and imprisoned, and a campaign was launched to entice Serbs to settle in Kosovo.

Serbian authorities suspended publication of the Albanian language daily Rilindja, alleging that it had become a 'mouthpiece' of Albanian nationalists. Thousands of students and parents protested the introduction of a Serbian-language standard curriculum for all middle and secondary schools. As a result of the curriculum's implementation, many Albanian-language schools had to be closed.

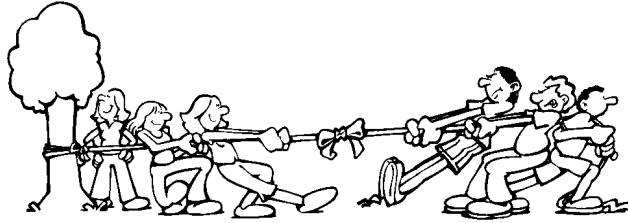


At Kosovo's University of Pristina, student placements were reserved, in disproportion to the population, for ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins--many from outside Kosovo. (Even though a number of these reserved places were not filled in the fall of 1990, Albanian applicants were denied admission to the university.) Discrimination against Albanians seeking employment or housing was rampant."

**3. Languages** There are two main Albanian dialects--Tosk, found south of the Shkumbin River and with Turkish ties and Geg in the north with Romance, Greek and Slavonic



influences. In 1908 to 1912, the language was standardized on the Tosk base and a Latin alphabet introduced.



#### 4. Gender Issues

*"The Law on Major Constitutional Provisions prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, language, or religion, but women and some minority groups complain that, in practice, discrimination continues."*

##### a. Domestic violence

*"Violence against women and spousal abuse still occur in this traditional male-dominated society, but the breakdown in police controls, coupled with the low level of concern that police showed in such cases in the past, means that most abuse goes unreported."*

*No government-sponsored program protects the rights of women, but one small shelter for abused women is found in Tirana. The shelter consists of a small room that can hold only one or two women for a limited time. The nongovernmental agency (NGO) that operates the shelter maintains a hot-line that women and girls can call for advice and counseling. Over 1,500 calls were received since October.*



*Many men, especially those from the north, still follow the old traditions, known as the kanun, in which the women are considered chattel and treated as such. The concept of marital rape is still foreign to many and is not considered a crime. In 1996, 1,901 cases of divorce were recorded in the courts; in the first half of 1997, even with the unrest, there were 1,116 cases. Women and girls continue to be lured into prostitution rings, especially in Greece and Italy."*

**b. Equality** *"Women are not excluded, either by law or practice, from any occupations, but neither do they typically rise to the top of their fields.*

*The Labor Code mandates equal pay for equal work; however, no data are available on how well this is implemented in practice. Women have suffered more from unemployment and discrimination in seeking jobs. Although women enjoy equal access to higher education, they are not accorded full, equal opportunity and treatment with men in their careers.*

*An increasing number of women are beginning to venture out on their own, opening shops and small businesses. Many are migrating along with Albanian men to Greece and Italy to seek employment.*

*A number of NGO's are devoted to women's issues. However, seminars, training courses, and counseling for women were on hold during the period of unrest. Groups are now attempting to restart or restructure previous programs. International foundations and NGO's give much-needed financial support to women's NGO's."*

*"Despite progress during the communist regime, significant inequalities remained. In 1990 only one full member of the ruling Politburo was a woman. In agriculture the predominantly female work force generally had male supervisors. Women were underrepresented in certain professions, particularly engineering. Furthermore, until 1991, abortions were illegal and women were encouraged to have 'as many children as possible,' in addition to working outside the home. Some traditional practices, such as the presentation of dowries and arranged marriages, reportedly were condoned by the authorities."*

**c. Traditional, historical practice** Rural practice saw marriages arranged by parents. Marriage required a dowry (goods brought by the woman to her husband at marriage). Wives often became regarded as the husband's property, as were the children born. Unmarried women were "property" of their fathers. Though communist practice prohibited many traditional marriage customs, some ancestral ways and attitudes still exist.



## 5. Conflicts *"International disputes:*

*The Albanian Government supports protection of the rights of ethnic Albanians outside of its borders;*

*Albanian majority in Kosovo seeks independence from the Serbian Republic; Albanians in Macedonia claim discrimination in education, access to public-sector jobs and representation in government; Albania is involved in negotiations with Greece over border demarcation, the treatment of Albania's ethnic Greek minority, and migrant Albanian workers in Greece" (CIA Factbook, 1997).*



## 6. Holidays/Observances

**a. Life cycle events** Birth, the first haircut or nail cutting, marriage and death are the focus of specific rituals. Traditionally, the swearing of an oath upon a rock, gravestone, altar, doorstep of a church, a natural phenomena (sun, moon, mountains), or the ending of a feud had strong ritual attachment. Blessing rites also received ceremonial significance.

### b. National holidays

(1) Independence Day 28 November (1912) is a nationwide celebration.

(2) New Year's Day, an important Communist era festivity, and May Day (1 May) remain meaningful.

## 7. Customs

### a. Traditional Social Patterns and Values

(1) Tribal heritage *"The social structure of the country was, until the 1930s, basically tribal in the north and semifeudal in the central and southern regions.*

*The highlanders of the north retained their medieval pattern of life until well into the twentieth century and were considered the last people in Europe to preserve tribal autonomy.*

*In the central and southern regions, increasing contact with the outside world and invasions and occupations by foreign armies had gradually weakened tribal society."*

## (2) Communist suppression



*"Throughout its existence, the communist regime persisted in its campaign against the patriarchal family system. In the mountainous north, where vestiges of traditional tribal structures were particularly prevalent, the local patriarchs were detained and the property of their clans was appropriated. Patriarchalism, according to party propaganda, was the most dangerous internal challenge to Albanian society."*

**b. Social control** A legal code attributed to 15th century Albanian leaders Lik Dukagjin and resistance leader against the Ottomans Skanderbeg, continues to influence Albanian behavior. Based on the concepts of honor and blood, a person had to guard the honor of his extended family. The honor of women and reputation of the family line--through the male lineage--became of utmost importance. Ensuring guest's remained secure also was valued.

**c. Settlements** *"Roughly 80 percent of the urban population lives in apartment blocks built under Communist rule.*



*In rural areas, houses enclosed with stone walls, built for defense, are common. The kula, a fortified house with slits for windows on the first floor and closeable windows on the top floor, is adapted from defensive schemes during the Ottoman period, which apply now to feuds."*

**d. Failed pyramid schemes** In January 1997, "pyramid" investment funding, involving financial speculations and reinvestment of funds not yet held, collapsed. Many Albanians lost their life savings. Promises of quick money--where funds would double in two or three months--fell through. Demonstrations against the government, anger, worry and violence resulted. Effects upon the economy continue to be felt.

**e. Lustration** This term identifies laws passed to prohibit former high communist officials from holding public office. The Albanian parliament enacted such a law in September 1995.

**f. Music** Epic poetry and songs became a traditional expression of oral history and family heritage. The one stringed gusle or lahuta often accompanies these epic tales.



**g. Medicine** Traditional doctors, Bektashi dervishes or wise old women would practice healing rites in addition to formally trained medical doctors. Sometimes Christian or Muslim saints--whether located in monasteries, tombs or at holy waters--were appealed to. Under Communism, modern medicine made inroads with development of hospitals, research institutions, and maternity stations.

**h. Manners and customs** The following guidance, adapted from SAIC Country Profile of Albania (pp. 43-44) and From Da to Yes, pp. 211-226), is helpful.

**(1) Directness** Many Albanians value direct, no-nonsense communication. Avoid ambiguous, hedging answers to questions. "Maybe" often is interpreted as a solid "it will be done." Strive for clarity and precision.



**(2) Nonverbal "yes" and "no"** Moving the head from side to side indicates "yes;" nodding up and down, "no." This is just the opposite of traditional American practice.

**(3) Male domination** Women should use the "buddy system" whenever traveling within Albania. Men must be cautious when talking with Albanian women in public; such discussion may be interpreted as a threat to the "honor" of the Albanian man who escorts the woman.

**(4) Photos** Outside of military installations, it is apparently popular with locals to take photos. Instant "Polaroid" type shots are especially welcome.



**(5) Normal discussion tone** Albanians often engage in discussions at a volume level which many Americans see as bordering on loud argument or forceful disagreement. Many times, such exchanges are part of normal Albanian discussions.

**(6) Diet and sanitation** Ensure all meat products consumed are thoroughly cooked. Sanitation and food inspection standards throughout the country are lacking. Drink only bottled water or canned beverages which you personally open or visibly see opened.

**(7) Safety** Pedestrians do not have the right of way. Driving is a new experience for many Albanians. Watch for common pedestrian hazards (electrical wires, manhole covers, ditches and construction dangers.)

**(8) Raki (RAH-kee)** This traditional alcoholic drink is extremely potent. Be aware of its inebriating qualities.

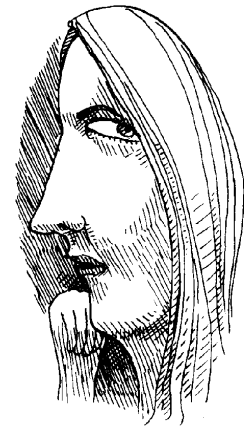
**(9) Money exchange** Street money changers normally offer the same rate of exchange as do more institutional vendors. Street transactions are legal.

**(10) Beggars** Ignore street beggars. Children and others given money will only pester you for more.

**(11) Friendships** Solid, long lasting, and based on deep trust, Albanian friendships are not casual happenings. Hospitality, with many handshakes and expectations of eating generous portions of food, is common, especially to visitors. When shaking hands, do so with everyone, beginning with the eldest first and working on down. The duty of hospitality, the "sacredness of the guest," is a strong tradition.

**(12) Privacy** In part due to the communal, extended family, clan tradition, discussions may be interrupted and privacy (as Americans understand it) ignored. Do not expect confidentiality with family or many personal matters. Rumors, fed by family discussions ("everybody seeming to know everybody else"), are commonplace.

**(13) Gender roles** Visiting women may be at a disadvantage as the status of women is low. Speaking loudly and forcibly, being demanding and aggressive at times, may assist in a woman's being taken seriously.



**(14) Gega and Toska** The animated, wordy and sometimes rowdy Gega project an image of the Albanian fighter. Their loud and forceful talk may appear (to the outsider) as anger. Toskas are generally more shy and gentle.

**(15) Religion** Many Albanians are a religiously tolerant people. Muslims, Christians and Jewish peoples have lived side by side here for centuries. The Albanian role in saving Jewish citizens during World War II is a noble one.

**(16) Besa** (bes-sah) A person's word of honor, trust and good faith is one of the highest values he can possess.

**(17) Time** Only rarely do Albanians show a sense of urgency. Expect long and repetitive negotiations.

## 8. Cultural Literacy Concepts/Terms

**Ismail Kadare** Born in 1939, this novelist focuses on traditional conditions in Albania and life under the Ottomans.

## 9. Combined Operations



**a. Partnership for Peace (PfP)** Albania was the 10th Central and East European nation to become a part of this program. Through USAREUR (United States Army Europe), U.S./Albanian PfP exercises take place.

**b. Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP)** USEUCOM (U.S. European Command) established this program to provide military liaison teams with former Communist states participating in PfP. Traveling contact teams (TCTs) involved U.S. personnel who visit Albania, providing a variety of presentations. Familiarization visits see Albanian military personnel observing and training at U.S. military facilities in CONUS (Continental United States) or Germany.

**c. National Guard State Partnership Program** This program pairs a state Guard or Reserve unit with a Central and East Europe or former Soviet Union nation. Albania is linked with South Carolina.

**d. International Military Education and Training (IMET)** To aid development of new, non-political professional officer and NCO cadres, IMET funds courses in many military subjects. Several Albanian force personnel have attended U.S. military schools under IMET.



## Vocabulary List: Country Area Studies-- Republic of Albania

**Bektashi** A dervish order Muslim group, an offshoot of the Shia branch, found in parts of Albania. It is a tolerant group, which incorporates elements of pagan and Christian thought and practice.

**Besa** Albanian pledge to keep one's word--a solemn obligation.

**Dervish** Members of Muslim ascetic orders who may participate in ecstatic observances--dancing, whirling, chanting or shouting.

**Dowry** Money, goods or property a woman brings to her husband at marriage.

**Dukagjin, Lik** 15th century Albanian leader who formalized a legal code based upon honor and blood, including the importance of one's extended family ties.

**Gegs** Ethnic Albanian subgroup who live north of the Shkumbin River. Gegs are primarily a mountain people.

**Gusle** One stringed musical instrument used to accompany epic poetry in mountainous Balkan regions.

**Hoxha, Enver** Stalinist Communist who ruled Albania from 1945-1985.

**Illyrian** (i-LEER-ee-ahn) Historical term referring to direct descendants of peoples who lived in the eastern area of the Adriatic Sea from the 10th century B.C. and onwards.

**Kosovo** (KOH-soh-voh) Province of Serbia and Montenegro, inhabited by roughly 2 million ethnic Albanians and 200,000 ethnic Serbs. It is a region filled with much strife due, in part, to its being the center of Serbian Orthodox history.

**Lustration** In formerly authoritarian ruled countries, laws which prohibit former high Communist officials from holding public office in new, more democratic governments.

**Mother Teresa** An ethnic Albanian Roman Catholic nun who founded the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta.

**Pyramid Investment Schemes** Dubious investment schemes for quickly doubling one's money--often in a two to three month period. In January 1997, many Albanians lost their life savings due to such fanciful practice.

**Raki** (RAH-kee) Traditional Albanian alcoholic drink, extremely potent and high in alcoholic content.

**Shiptare** Term meaning "sons of the eagle" used to identify Albanian peoples.

**Tosks** Ethnic Albanian subgroup who live south of the Shkumbin River.

**Uniate** (YOO-nee-aht-ay) Orthodox Eastern Church branch which pays allegiance to the pope in Rome as the supreme leader, yet keeps distinct Orthodox liturgy, discipline and rite.



"Treat yourself to a luxury."

## Review Quiz: Country Studies--Albania

**Part 1--True/False** Place a T or an F in the blank provided.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ Currently, missionaries from many faith groups carry out work in Albania.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ According to the 1997 Human Rights Report, religious missionaries routinely experience persecution, violence and arrest in Albania.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The ethnic Albanian Geg subgroup lives south of the Shkumbin River.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The Tosk ethnic subgroup, who live in the south part of Albania, generally have a history of more interaction with foreign cultures than do their Geg counterparts.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ According to the 1997 CIA Factbook, the Albanian government supports protection of the rights of Albanians outside of Albania proper.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Lik Dukagjin's 15th century honor and blood code continues to influence Albanian culture.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Under Communism, modern medicine did make inroads into Albanian society.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Many Albanians like an indirect, don't mean what you say, style of communicating.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The volume of many Albanian discussions appears much louder and more argumentative than that of most Americans.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ It is a good policy to give small change to beggars in Albanian cities.



**Part 2--Multiple Choice** Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ After decades of rigidly enforced atheism most Albanians are
  - a. deeply religious.
  - b. secular.
  - c. clandestine believers.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The two major minority ethnic groups in Albania are
  - a. ethnic Serbs and Bulgarians.
  - b. ethnic Greeks and Macedonians.
  - c. Roma and Serbs.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The two major subgroups of ethnic Albanians are the
  - a. Slavs and Romas.
  - b. Hatfields and McCoys.
  - c. Gegs and Tosks.
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Under Communist leader Enver Hoxha, the \_\_\_\_\_ received the bulk of his support.
  - a. Gegs
  - b. Pashas
  - c. Tosks
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Though estimates vary, the percentage of Albanians living in the Serbian and Montenegrin province of Kosovo is roughly
  - a. 30%.
  - b. 50%.
  - c. 70%.

## Unit 12 f: Country Area Studies--Republic of Albania

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6. \_\_\_\_\_ Violence against women and spousal abuse in Albania
- a. are practically nonexistent.
  - b. still occur.
  - c. receive quick, rigorous police attention.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ In traditional Albanian society, goods brought by the women to their husbands at marriage are called
- a. winning the lottery.
  - b. a dowry.
  - c. bribes.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ In 1997, the effects of the "pyramid" investment scheme brought Albanians
- a. a windfall of wealth and financial profit.
  - b. anger, worry and financial collapse.
  - c. renewed appreciation of historical Egyptian architecture.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The term \_\_\_\_\_ applies to laws which refuse to allow former Communist or authoritarian leaders to hold office in new, more democratic governments.
- a. revenge
  - b. lustration
  - c. voting right
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Epic tales, set to music, are often accompanied by the \_\_\_\_\_, a musical instrument used by mountain peoples.
- a. dulcimer
  - b. gusle
  - c. mouth harp



**Part 3--Fill in the Blanks** Fill in the blanks with the most correct word immediately following this text. Not all words listed will be used.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_, meaning "sons of the eagle," is a term used to describe Albanian peoples. (2) \_\_\_\_\_, another description, refers to original inhabitants of the region from the 10th century B.C.

The Muslims of Albania historically divided into two major groups--Sunnis and (3) \_\_\_\_\_. (4) \_\_\_\_\_ practice identifies Muslims who sometimes participate in ecstatic observances--dancing, whirling, chanting or shouting.

(5) \_\_\_\_\_, the Communist Albanian leader from 1945-1985, oversaw a long term campaign to eradicate religion from Albanian society. In the 1960's, (6) \_\_\_\_\_ led an antireligious mission assigned by the Communist party head. In 1976, the constitution banned production, distribution and storage of religious literature. Those who practiced their faith in secret, risked severe (7) \_\_\_\_\_.

In 1990, the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ on religious observance was officially lifted.

## Unit 12 f: Country Area Studies--Republic of Albania

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(9) \_\_\_\_\_, is an ethnic Albanian and founder of Calcutta's Sisters of Charity.

The status of Roman Catholic clergy declined from (10) \_\_\_\_\_ in 1944 to 30 in 1992.

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Bektashi	Illyrian	750
Enver Hoxha	Dervish	Shiptare
ban	punishment	300
Mother Teresa students	Dorothy Day	HOO-AH

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"The Army must always have capabilities to compel any adversary to do what he otherwise would not do of his own free will. These same capabilities also contribute to our ability to deter adversaries, to keep them from acting inimically to our interests in the first place. The employment of military forces without necessarily engaging in combat to reassure allies and friends promotes stability and contributes to our ability to influence international outcomes. Finally, our armed forces use their capabilities to support domestic authority in times of natural disaster, civil disturbance, or other emergencies requiring humanitarian assistance."

General Dennis Reimer, Chief of Staff--U.S. Army



## Resources for Further Study

### a. Books and articles

Curtis, Glenn. Yugoslavia, A Country Study. Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, DA Pam 550-99, 1992.

Doder, Dusko. "Albania Opens the Door." National Geographic, July 1992, pp. 66-94.

Kaiser, Phillip. Country Profile of Albania. Regional Security Division, National Security Studies and Strategies Group, Science Applications International Corporation, Contract MDA 903-92-D-0053, 26 Feb 1997.

Marmullaku, Ramadan. Albania and the Albanians. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books. 1975. Chamberlain: 949.650 Marm

A look at the political and social system in which the author gives "an all-around picture of Albania and Albanians." Includes a review of Albanian history. Author attempts to clear up misconceptions about Albania and its heritage.

Perlez, Jane. "Feuds Rack Albania, Loosed from Communism." New York Times, 14 April 1998, p. A3.

Description of blood feuds, medieval clan codes and weaponry resurrected in Albanian since the collapse of Communism.

Perlez, Jane. "In a Land Adrift, the Albanian People Drift Too." New York Times, 16 Jul 1997.

Informative account of dowry, parent arranged marriages, and male domination in current Tirana, Albania.

Richmond, Yale. From Da to Yes: Understanding the East Europeans. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1995.



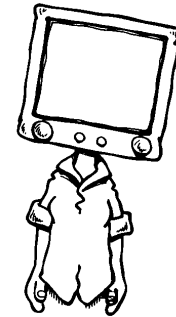
U.S. Department of State. Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 30 January, 1998. <[http://www.state.gov/www/global/hu...ights/1997\\_report/croatia.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/hu...ights/1997_report/croatia.html)>

U.S. Department of State. United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom: Focus on Christians. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs, 22 June 1997. <[http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/970722\\_relig\\_rpt\\_christian.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/970722_relig_rpt_christian.html)>

Zickel, Raymond E. and Walter R Iwaskiw, editors. Albania: A Country Study. Washington, D.C.: The Division: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O. 1994. Aiso: Alb 949.65 A326c

A formal overview of the political, social, economical, and military systems of Albania.

## b. WWW Sites



Romo, Andi. History: Socialist Albania. Albanian.com 1996  
<http://www.albanian.com/main/history/socialist.html>  
Date of Visit: 20 April 1998

A brief essay about the rise of socialism in Albania.

Albania.  
<http://www.albania.co.uk/>  
Date of Visit: 17 April 1998

Site about the country of Albania. Includes info on travel, history, culture, politics, news, leisure, business, etc. There are sites regarding the laws of the land and politics.

## Unit 12 f: Country Area Studies--Republic of Albania

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Analytical Briefs. "Albania on the Brink of Civil War"

<http://www.omri.cz/Publications/AB/Ab.970307-560.html>

Date of Visit: 17 April 1998

Analysis of breaking news in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Hellenic Resources Network. "Latest events in Kosovo, Albania and the Balkans."

<http://www.hri.org/news/special/albania.html>

Date of Visit: 17 April 1998

Links to latest news, State Department reports, Human Rights Practices reports and links to articles in the international press.

Holidays-Albania.

<http://www.smiley.cy.net/bdecie/Albania.html>

Date of Visit: 17 April 1998

Gives dates for national holidays as well as links for religious holidays.

Political Resources on the Net-Albania.

<http://www.agora.stm.it/politic/albania.htm>

Date of Visit: 20 April 1998

A page containing links to sites of political parties that exist in Albania, political articles, Albanian news, as well as other sites devoted to Albanian politics.

Albanian WWW Home Page

<http://www.ios.com/~ulpiana/Albanian/index.html>