

For [REDACTED] those [REDACTED] whose remains are still [REDACTED] [REDACTED] unknown

Marking the possible burial places of the missing not only shows the other Albania hiding the missing in its underground, but also shows us that some of us were able to turn the country into an arena of prisons, camps, tombs and fears that last to this day. The fates of the missing and the searching families, like Sisyphus with the heavy rock on his back, always starting from scratch, only testify to the continuation of the crime. If murder is a crime, hiding the body and failure to disclose such information are a crime on their separate accounts.

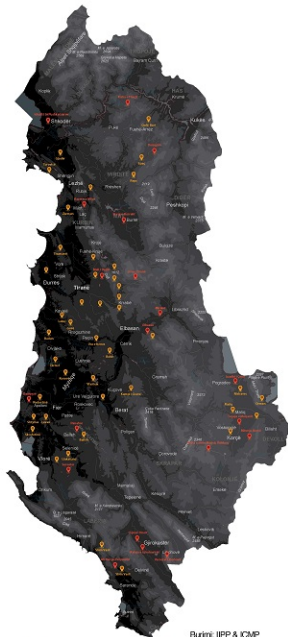
Hence, this exhibition is an attempt to raise awareness on the need for families to respond to the fate and whereabouts of missing persons. It is a small effort in the pursuit of social peace that cannot come without ending the suffering of those seeking family. It is an attempt to show all categories of the missing, from juveniles, to doctors, engineers, journalists, teachers, bankers, entire families, intellectuals and clergymen, from South to North. It is as much homage to the missing, as is a support voice to the survivors. The missing faces of about 6,000 people are our past that has not yet been finished, they are out far-from-perfect past.

Every unnamed tomb and every name without a tomb is a message that we must find and convey. Not to forget!

The European Parliament has adopted a new resolution in September 2019 on the importance of a common European memory, expressing respect for each victim of totalitarian systems, expressing support for their remembrance and concern for the use of regime symbols and their glorification. Given that memories of Europe's tragic past must be kept alive in order to honour victims, punish perpetrators and pave the way for reconciliation based on truth and remembrance, the EP resolution says remembrance of victims of totalitarian regimes, as well as recognizing and raising awareness of the common European legacy of crimes committed by Communist, Nazi and other dictatorships, is vital to the unity of Europe.

The Authority for Information on Former State Security Documents 1944-1991, since its establishment, in collaboration with its partners, has focused its work on shedding light on the past. Numerous initiatives have been undertaken in order to restore the dignity of the victims without guilt, to respect the right of family members to have a grave with the remains of the missing.

Marking the places of memory, encounters with survivors in camps, proposals to honour examples of resistance, gathering evidence, contributing and organizing study groups, declassifying files and making them available as well as this exhibition itself are targeted at once again raising the issue of missing Albanians, bringing also examples of families who have been able to find their missing ones, and aims to raise awareness, calling upon anyone with some information to do today what they could not do under the communist regime.



Burim: IHPF & IKMP

 **Vendvarrimet e Raportuara**

 **Burgje Kampet (Punë e Detyruar)**

The mothers with no children

Mrika and Gjele Gjikola, sisters-in-law, were imprisoned by the communist regime when their husbands took the mountain as opponents of the system. Gjela was a young mother to her three-day-old daughter and Mrika gave birth while she was on her way to prison. After four months of investigation, the two women with their two babies were interned at the Tepelena Camp, where they found extreme living conditions. Three years later, the two little girls died at night from lack of water, bread and disease. "We buried the little girls, we buried them by pouring soil and pebbles over their bodies. It was an Italian grave, we did so in the corner of that wall. We got permission from the commander, we went the shingle area, got some white egg-like stones, and we put them on the ground in a circular shape so that we wouldn't forget the grave ...".



When released, the two sisters-in-law lived alone, never again getting married and never again having children. In 2006, the two childless mothers returned to Tepelena to receive their girls' remains. "We went and dug out the graves. Nothing else was left but powder. Only a small piece of pine cradles was left ... We took the signs and sent them to St. Anthony Church". The mothers could not restore their lives, but they did restore their dignity.

In its years of operation, the Tepelena Camp has seen untold stories, with hopes that a day would come for them to be told. There were also mothers who, when released from internment, did secretly take their dead children with them. Drane Jakja was one of the mothers who lost her son, two-year-old Zef, in the frightening hours when over 30 children died overnight. She buried him using some boards to surround his body. Three months later, when she got the news that she was about to be released, she went out with her daughter at midnight, went to her son's grave, exhuming the grave by digging the soil with her fingers. She wrapped his body in white sheets and returned to the camp. She kept his body in the camp for seven weeks. She cleaned it up with raki so that no one would realize she was living with her dead son. When she found a car to return to Tropoja, she stopped in a market and bought her son new clothes. The journey from Tepelena to Tropoja took her seven days, but she was finally able to bury her son with dignity.

The survivors do painfully tell the story of a woman from remote mountainous area. The case of Cuklina is among the saddest. The unfortunate mother who lost her two children during the day, one in the morning and the other in the evening, managed to get out of the camp alive. But, the event turned into a tragedy. The sister of two young children, who had fled to Montenegro, killed herself when she heard the news. Whereas Cuklina, when released and returned alone to the tower where she once lived with 3 children, ended her life by extinguishing the family forever. No one asks for her children's remains. She is gone with the wound that she left her children far away ...



One grave for all

On February 19, 1951, at 18:00, some explosive was detonated near the USSR Embassy in Tirana. The event, known as the bomb at the Soviet Embassy, was used as a pretext for executing many opponents of the regime. A week later, at midnight, between February 25 and 26, 22 intellectuals of the country were taken out of prison cells and put on a truck heading for Ndroq. Residents of the area have seen a huge hole being dug those days in Menik, in vicinity of Beshiri Bridge. Around 12:30 -1:10 pm gunshots and screams were reported of being heard. The screams of a woman. (It is said to have been Sabiha Kasimati). That night, residents did not know that the lives were being taken away without a trial. One of them, who happened to run into one of the soldiers in the early hours of February 26, was ordered to say that tired horses had been executed a night before. The next day, the village council chairman passed by to see what had happened and saw shoes and clothes scattered all over the place. Given that the dead bodies were not well covered and dogs were attracted by the smells around the huge grave, he told superiors what was going on. He was ordered to remain silent. A few days later, an excavator levelled the site.

Despite the orders, the locals were aware that the frequent hailstorms of shots in the dark, the screams and truck movements during night time near the bridge meant lost lives. It was the last will of the landowners to use the land on that spot for nothing, except for planting trees. They knew that the land was home to countless graves of dictatorship murders.



The remains of 22 intellectuals executed in February 1951 were recovered thanks to the insistence of Hysen Shehu, the son of one of the victims. In 1993, he was able to gather information from witnesses and residents of the area, such as the family of former village council chairman Kadri Hysa. After identifying the site, after six months of digging in 5-6 pits, he found a ring, which served as the connector to the Soviet Embassy bomb. In June 1993 their exhumation was realised, as well as their subsequent burial at the Martyrs of the Nation Cemetery. Today, in their honour, a street is named "February 26".

With the proposal of AIDSSH, the President has praised Kadri Hysa, Faslli Hysa, Gezim Mullaji, Aleksandër Dhima, Hysen Shehu and Osman Kaceli with the award "For Special Civil Merits" as witnesses and contributors to the discovery, finding and restoration of justice for the 22 intellectuals executed without trial 68 years ago.

Parents in a “Drawer”

Një nga kamionët, në të gdhirë të datës 14 maj të 1949 gremiset në humnerën e fshatit Buz, bashkë me të internuarit



After two years in prison (1944-1946) and a few months at home, Fadil Petrela and his wife Xhuma (Abaz) Kupa and their four sons were interned to Berat. At midnight of May 13, 1949, a convoy of pickup trucks arrived in front of the camp. They were all ordered to be transferred to Tepelena.

One of the trucks fell down in the abyss of the village of Buz, along with the internees, on the dawn of 14 May 1949. Fadil and Xhuma were the only ones who lost their lives while the children were found alive in thorns. "The terrified women in that truck kept the four little children crying over their dead parents, while the men dug the grave as they could. The guards did not want to take the corpses with them. No tools could be asked from the villagers, so the tomb was opened by the street, literally with fingers", according to eyewitness painter Lekë Tasi. The internees present say they opened the graves by the roadside with



pot lids, a few meters from the scene of the accident and fled to Tepelena with their four sons, their aunt and grandmother. Fadil and Xhuma were left on the slope where they lost their lives for more than two decades.

23 years later, a resident of Buz arrived in Tirana looking for the home of the Petrela couple's sons. It was night when he knocked on their door. He did not introduce himself, he did not even show his face in fear, but in half darkness he murmured: "I have just come to notify you. The area at your parents' grave is being deforested to open new land; come get the bones so you don't lose them forever". It was 1972. The older son left for the Gorica Bridge with a relative. They dug where they thought Fadil and Xhuma Petrela were resting, until they found the remains. They took them with a sack and brought them secretly to Tirana. The boys kept the remains of their "parents in the drawer", marking in a very unusual way their missing encounters after so many years. A few months later, through an acquaintance working in Tufina, they were able to obtain a nameless tomb on an unnoticeable plot. It was only after 1990 that their second tomb was named and death was officially recorded. It took four decades for the two spouses to get their dignity back. The orphaned children, raised without parents between the camp and Tirana, managed to find a shelter for their parents, 40 years after going separate ways with them.

On August 30, the International Day of the Missing, upon the proposal of AIDSSH, the President of the Republic awarded with honorary titles "For Special Civil Merits" to the sons of the Petrela Family, to brothers Bujar, Ylber, Halil and Seit, and Shqipjon Topulli (after death), involved in the human treatment of the first victims of the Tepelena Camp, Fadil and Xhuma Petrela, a history of disappearance and long-standing solidarity, from 1949 to 1993, where, in the end, the dignity of the common people triumphed.

Stanislav Zuber

The underground gold



Quotation by Petro Marko:

"And here we were, both of both: - he turned into a miniscule fist, me a living skeleton loaded with bars. We exchanged some word occasionally with Zuber: - he, lying on the ground, - me, hanged. I asked him what he was murmuring about, and he would tell me: --- Now I am praying. I believe in ideas that have lived and will be living for thousands of years ... Right now, when I pray to Jesus, I say: - I too will endure and survive like you".

In Tirana of the late '40s he was known as the engineer of Coffee Splendid, the successor of a family of scientists from Poland, the discoverer of oil in Albania. The Polish hermit wandering between the small hotel room and the Ministry, between Albanian and foreign friends, the persecuted and the wiretapped ...

"He was a gentleman" – recalls Janina, his patriot, "of age, with an average built body, alive and energetic, which was somewhat contradictory to his hair. In the company we met, he could always be noticed surrounded by other attentive visitors".

Pat came to Albania with the Italian Firm AGIP in 1927 to search for oil and in his 20 years of living in the country discovered the Patos and Kucova oil fields and donated to the Central Archives of Geology and the Institute of Petroleum 551 scientific works and papers and 480 complete works. Prof. Stanislav Zuber is the author of the Tectonic Map, Geological Map and Mineral Map of Albania, which are still used today by our geologists.

A European scientist, he spent the war-time in Kucova, where he lost his wife in the Anglo-American aviation bombing. Zuber remained alone.

Arriving in Tirana after the war and awaiting repatriation, Zuber was called to serve as a geology adviser to the Council of Ministers and then as an advisor to Nako Spiro, the-then Minister of Economy. He strongly opposed sending of Albanian oil reserves to Yugoslavia.

The first official report denounces the Polish professor for "reactionary and agentura activity", dated 24 October, 1945.

While keeping in touch with Albanian friends and trying to find sources of water, from persecution, he got to meet with intellectuals, from "Ali Kaceli's shop where he used to write letters into, to Teodor Luarasi, to Filip Theodhosi - Dajti Hotel Director, to Alfred Ashiku with whom he eats lunches and dinners, from "Berat" cafe, to the occasional meetings with Besim Kokalari, Sabiha Kasimati and Eqrem Çabej. He meets with dissatisfied elements, hangs out with Italians, meets engineer Gjovalin Gjadri, always pays for himself and when he speaks, everybody listens".

His file notes that he did not help the partisans during the war, had friendships with the Germans, especially his wife Mitilde, and sabotaged the work. He is reported to have said that he expected the government of the time to collapse with the intervention of Anglo-Americans.

He was arrested on 15 June, 1947. With the accusation of being an agent and saboteur of the Socialist economy, Stanislav Zuber, a connoisseur of 12 languages, had to show up at the State Security offices in Tirana during June 1947. All his notes, books, notebooks and correspondence was seized. In the cell they asked him why hadn't he marked any gold spots on the map. He replied: "because there was none".

Genc Luarasi, the son of his friend, Teodor, recalls that his grandmother went to the Polish Ambassador to Albania, Mr Micel, at the Dajti Hotel, where they sought intervention to release Professor Zuber. "They went to jail several times to bring him food and clothing. They didn't know if they were given to him or not, up until one day when they were told that it was no longer needed".

Until 1991, no one knew of the tragic fate of his death under torture in Security cells. He named Albania's underground wealth by area, without knowing that he would be forever resting in an unnamed underground spot. The man who laid the foundations of oil research is still a lost man.

There is only one testimony that shows of his last moments, somewhere on the Mine Peza Street: the testimony comes from his cellmate, Petro Marko, who, in his book Clouds and Stones, has published a strong testimony from his memoirs from the cell of the Tirana Prison in the late hours of 18 October, 1947, after being beaten for finding no gold.

On October 17, 1991, the bust of the great professor was inaugurated in the town of Kucova. In 1992 he was awarded the Martyr of Democracy medal.

On October 17, 2011, Eng. Stanislav Zuber was awarded the Mother Teresa Order (after death).

Conclusion with Petro Marko
The door opened. A large policeman came in and shouted at Zuber. - What do you do? – I am the geologist who discovers the underground assets, Zuber said. The guard snapped a kick behind his ear saying, - Now go and discover the underground assets ...

The children who never grew up

If we were to try to visualize and then understand the odyssey of desperate search to give a dead child a decent burial, we would have to sit in front of a screen - alone - and watch the Hungarian film *Saur's Son* by László Nemes.

Although there are no official documents, according to estimates of former political prisoners, some 300 internally displaced children are believed to have died at Tepelena Camp.

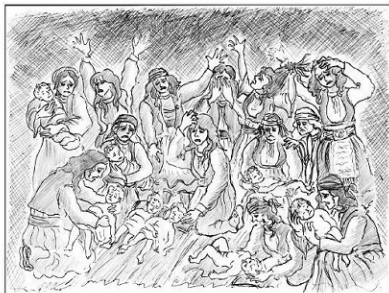
"33 children had died in one night alone. One of them survived. They started calling her 'Beba', and this is how we call her to this day" says Lek Pervizi, a 90-year-old painter who remembers everything he experienced in Tepelena. Beba is his wife and they grew up together in the camps. As a witness, he has drawn sketches of what the camp looked like in the '50s, 600 people in a barrack, 4,500 throughout the camp. His sketches still remain today the only footage showing how the 5 wards of the camp worked. At the same time, through his sketches, he has also highlighted the serious phenomena and events that have taken place in Tepelena, such as the death of many children.

"There was frost. The mothers washed us out. In the evening, we would go to sleep, but not all children would wake up in the morning. They were frozen in their sleep", recalls Simon Mirakaj, another survivor from Tepelena.

The former internees have called this the extermination camp, due to the large number of juveniles who lost their lives due to lack of food, malnutrition, hygiene, consumed water and lack of health care.

The camp, which functioned during the war as an Italian military barrack, had not been cleared of mines before the deportation of political exiles. Some children lost their lives playing with mines in the yard between the barracks, outside of adult attention. Hamit Balaj from Tropoja confesses that there, one of the children who lost his life was his uncle. "My mother's parents had escaped thinking of preparing the conditions and returning to receive their three children. But, the day after their escape, the children were sent to Tepelena. My mother, Mine Mulosmanaj, 13, had come to the camp with her 11-year-old sister and 9-year-old younger brother. One day they were all out. My mother heard of a mine noise. A child's body exploded in the air. There was only one sock left. The sock belonged to her brother, Shemsedin Cele Mulosmanaj. He was playing with mines and one of them had exploded in his hands".

"My brother was my supreme will. I was a mother to him. Ever since I went to camp, I had tried to at least satiate him with bread. That day I fed him with bread, at least. That calms me down a bit. He didn't leave hungry. I saw an explosion and I heard a noise. When I approached the spot, there was only one of his socks left. I didn't want to live any longer. I cried myself out ... I lost my brother in front of my eyes ...



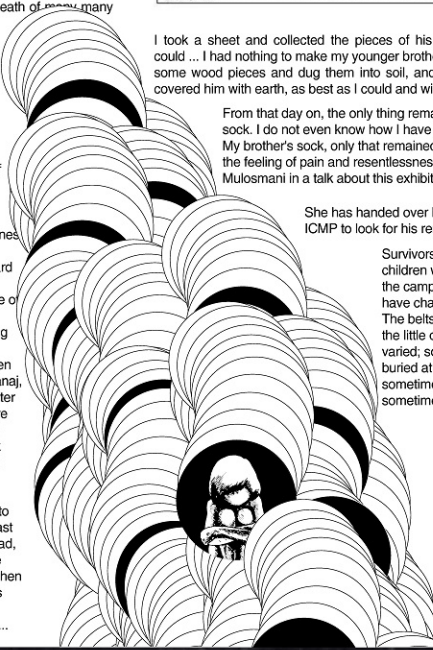
I took a sheet and collected the pieces of his body as much as I could ... I had nothing to make my younger brother a coffin. I gathered some wood pieces and dug them into soil, and put his body in it. I covered him with earth, as best as I could and with the little I knew.

From that day on, the only thing remained of him is his sock. I do not even know how I have managed to save it. My brother's sock, only that remained of him, as well as the feeling of pain and resentlessness ..." said Mine Mulosmani in a talk about this exhibition.

She has handed over her DNA sample to ICMP to look for his remains.

Survivors say the dying old children were buried outside the camp, but burial sites have changed three times. The belts of the land where the little ones were buried varied: sometimes they were buried at the bridge of Banca, sometimes by the river, and sometimes on steep slopes.

During the winter, the flooding river would take them away, taking away from parents the only memories they had of babies who never grew up. Lekë Pervizi's sketches also prove the innumerable burials.



Name over the Metal



"I have a tin with me. When they take me to Kiri to kill me, I would tie it on the foot and write my name over it, so it would be easier for you to find me"

- Mark Shllaku.

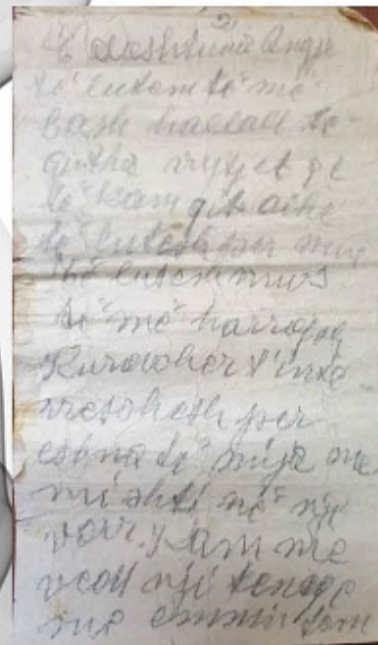
The teacher of the Puka and Shkodra Highlands, fond of painting and poetry, actor and prompter at the Migjeni Theater, Mark Shllaku "meets" his daughter, Juli, only in pieces of papers. He once fully memorized Lahuta e Malesise. Today, she touches the "Red Star" tobacco papers, wanting to meet her daddy's fingers, like when she was little and alive. 70 years have passed by – she is completely old, he is completely lost. The words are the same, the last will the same, too. Not observed though. "My dad was very gentle. He fulfilled all of our wishes. We even had a cage with rabbits, so we could play with them. He would take us to summer schools and we could hardly wait for him to come home", says Juli in tearing eyes.

One September day 1948, Mark Shllaku left for school. The morning of that day he knew he would never return home, alive or dead. He was arrested as the organizer of the Social Democratic Party cell in Shkodra. His brother had escaped and Mark's father had been interned to Tepelena. After 11 months of investigations, on 25 August, 1949, the Military Court in Shkodra decided to sentence him to death by firing. His daughter was then only 8 years old. She had just learned to write and read when she approached the head of the Shkodra Interior Branch. "He lived on one of these beautiful confiscated houses. Mom took me to the door and told me how to behave. I entered a large salon. I introduced myself and begged for a meeting with dad. He gave me a piece of paper", Juli recalls. That day she saw her dad through the bars. "We went with mom and we met him. Dad said he had written some letters and put them on the mattress so that we could get it. He said he had made a piece of metal, tin. "When they take me to the edge of Kiri, I will tie it on my foot. I've written your name on it, so i twill be easier for you to find me. He told me: do not worry and learn! Learning was what he cared the most", Juli recalls. Mark Shllaku knew well that the bodies of the killed ones had disappeared.

Among the school diaries, the teacher had left poetry letters. It is the only notebook escaping the Security controls after his arrested. "They thought it was mine," Juli says referring to her dad's notes. She opens and reads the poems dated in 1946, 1947. Among them is the poem Çinarët, dedicated to the place where the prisoners of communism were shot after the cemetery of Rrmaji. The verses of his poetry almost describe what happened at nights, telling us today that Mark knew that the city was under the power of fear, and that it might as well be his destiny.

The poetry bears no date, but sheets similar to the same inscription have the following note: Vraca, 20 April, 1947.

When, after the execution, his wife, Angje, was able to retrieve his personal belongings from the investigators, she found a paper on the mattress. The letter was addressed to Angje, the woman he loved, the girl he met at a young age, the woman he soon fell in love with and married, as if he knew he had no time to waste. He was only 22 when he became a father. In then tobacco papers, Mark, while expecting to die, remembers to list the debts for the house they had built together and leaves his last will. Almost prayerfully he asks for a grave. From the written testimonies, the convict feels completely killed, even without still being shot.

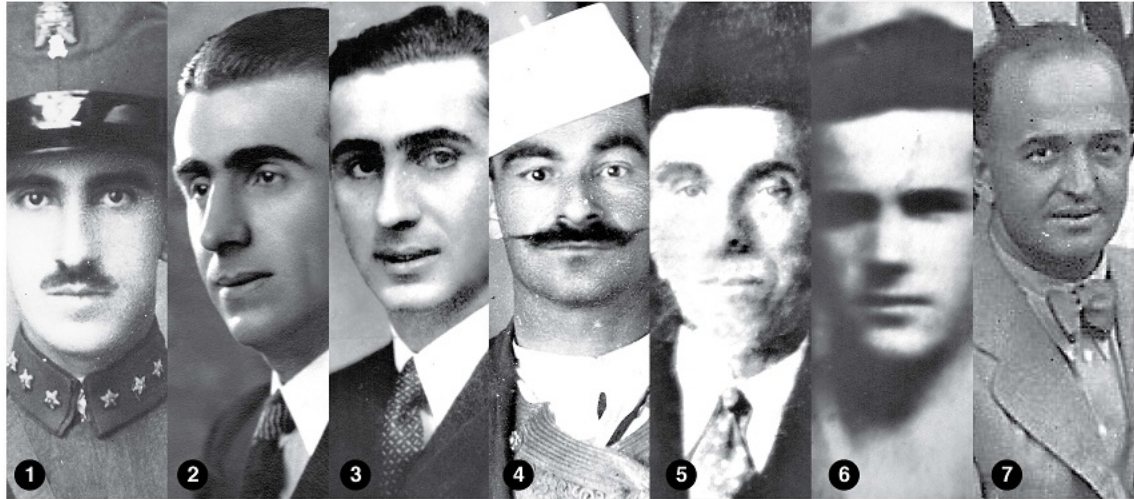


*"Dear Angje!
I am hooked. I still have a few hours left to live. I think of you and the baby who I could not enjoy. I am saddened by your faces so much so that I think of them all the time; they do not leave me die ... be strong ..."*

After the execution, Angje, a renowned nurse in Shkodra, pays a man to search for her husband's body. They seek for him in Kiri, but he was nowhere to be found. The regime did not provide data and, for 70 years, his family has not yet realised Mark's will, they still do not know where his body rests.

After 1990, Julie and her husband have asked former investigators at the time. Unconfirmed evidence mention Mount Renci on a rainy night and a shallow grave ...

7 Graves of one family



"Last night, at two o'clock after the middle of the night, we discovered the place where Jup Kazazi was located in the section. In the siege we made of his house and when he saw that we had found the basement where he was hiding, realising he had no chance of escaping, he killed himself. Rumours have it that he was killed by us (the document underlines the handwriting "Okay", which means they approve). We have found some documents, but the most important will be sent to you. Zoi Themeli".

The above document shows of the official stance held by the Communist regime on the death of Jup Kazazi, one of the organizers of the Postriba uprising, the first anti-communist uprising in Eastern Europe beginning to give life to the iron curtain.

On September 9, 1946, aiming that together with Postriba they would release prisoners and would take over the institutions, there was a pre-mature launch of the so-called Postriba Uprising, with several hundred opponents of the regime, among them the Kazazi brothers. Being fewer in numbers and weapons, the opponents failed as power became more ferocious, hence more than 1,200 people were arrested, opening 11 temporary prisons and killing dozens more. Jup escaped but was forced to hide and took refuge at his uncle's. On 17 September, the house where he was hiding was discovered after they tortured a knowledgeable witness. Not wanting to fall into the hands of the Communists, he called out "Long live Albania! I don't give up on Stalin's puppies!" and killed himself. Executives made his 16-year-old nephew, Ahmet Kopluku, enter the house to search for the deceased. Jup's son, Hamza Kazazi, says his father was also massacred, killed, while they sung and danced and exposed him in the city. Following the incident, 7 members and relatives of the Kazazi family were executed, committed suicide or died, while dozens were interned. The bodies of those killed were never returned to their families.

73 years later, the graves of the following are not yet uncovered:
 1- Halit Kazazi (older brother) - born on March 3, 1900, convicted in 1945 and executed in 1945 in Shkodra.
 2- Jup Kazazi (second brother) - born on October 6, 1905, kills himself and does not surrender, September 17, 1946.
 3- Sait (Seit) Kazazi (third brother), born April 9, 1913. Sieged at the home of Hafiz Adem Kazazi. He didn't give up and killed himself on October 6, 1946.

4- Abdullah Kazazi (uncle of Jup), arrested for the Posbrita Uprising, shot dead in Shkodra after 1946, at the age of 64.

5- Rifat Kopluku, uncle of Jup Kazazi. After being arrested on September 17, 1946 for sheltering his nephew, he was executed on February 24, 1947.

6- Osman Kazazi, the first cousin of Jup Kazazi, was arrested on September 17, 1946, sentenced to death and reportedly died at the age of 24 at the investigation office.

7- Asim Abdurrahmani (Shpuza), son of Jup Kazazi's wife's aunt. Engineer, chemist, sentenced to death as a spy. Arrested and executed in Tirana, June 8, 1947.



Jup's son, Hamza Kazazi, has begun searching for relatives' bones after 1990. He has dug along Kiri, according to the testimonies of a 13-year-old man who had gone to bathe in the river when he saw a man in his pajamas buried (as in Jup's dead photos), at the place where the Water Directorate was located, after Rrmaji cemetery. Hamza Kazazi, after many excavations, was unable to identify his father, but found some bones wrapped in a veladon, with a hand on his heart and a cross, thought to be the bones of a priest, and handed them over to Bishop Zef Simoni in Shkodra. While searching for the 7 missing persons for 30 years, he has come to realize that "the minutes contain misleading information". In June 2017, Jup Kazazi was awarded with the Citizen of Honour title by the city of Shkodra (after death) and the President of the Republic, Bujar Nishani, has awarded him The Golden Eagle Decoration (after death).

The cherry legend

Giuseppe Terrusi

There was once upon a time a cherry tree that bloomed every spring in the suburbs near Burrel Prison. Those who watched it used to say that its flowers fell on the ground where the bones of innocent prisoners rested. Every time the flowers blossomed, the living prisoners prayed for the dead and admired the cherry blossoming only for them. The tree, which does not longer exist, was almost a legend. Political prisoners who had spent part of their lives in that prison said that another Italian banker, Giuseppe Terrusi, was buried under its roots. He came to Albania in April 1926, working at the Bank of Gjirokastra, and latter served as the Director of the Bank of Vlora. The evidence show he was completely non-politicized. In 1945 he was arrested by the communist regime. They accused him of voluntarily handing over the bank to the Germans, though the evidence suggests otherwise. He was the father of a son, married to an Italian who he got to know in Albania and was the brother-in-law of an athlete who represented Albania. Aurelia Poselli, making use of the long-standing connections, goes to the Central Committee to meet Enver Hoxha to ask him to forgive her husband, but he did not receive her. It is 1948-1949. Giuseppe Terrusi, from Vlora, was taken to Burrel Prison. His family, son and wife were repatriated to Italy, while he remains alone in Albanian prisons.

Giuseppe dies in Burrel prison on 2 March, 1952. He is said to have been buried near the cherry tree where prisoners were buried until 1955.



Since 1993, his son, Aldo Renato Terrusi, who remembers his father as a man he has seen just once in prison, has come to Albania more than 10 times. He has only one major concern: to find his father's bones and send them rest next to his mother's bones, as per her last wish. He is still unable to find them, due to a missing permission to dig in Burrel. He recalls going to Burrel Prison in 2012 and Albanian administration officials debating technical issues before him, but he was not allowed to take the shovel in his hand.

"Cherry has become a legend because people were buried around it. Legend has it that this cherry was fed with the blood of the buried prisoners." (citation for the panel)

The golden knife

Venanzio Lozzi

"It was a gold knife, embedded in the dead body, however not in the usual direction, but in the opposite direction. The twinkling tip of the knife had penetrated from inside his abdomen, penetrating the body and ending up to the other side ...". Years ago journalist Ferdinand Dervishi had learned that this phrase contained in one of Ismail Kadare's works was not accidental. He appears to have been triggered by an event in Albania in 1946.

When the war was over and Europe began to divide East and West, Tirana was being liberated from one tyranny, but falling into the hands of another (tirany). The Italians left in Albania because of the war were almost being held hostage, claiming that "the work started had to be finished", or that "... they had to contribute to the rebuilding of the war-torn country" or that, "... we don't have enough specialists." Among them was a renowned doctor, Venanzio Lozzi, otherwise known as Doctor Losi, a name he was remembered with in Tirana until recently. He had arrived in Albania to practice the profession of the surgeon, around May 1939.

Professor Venanzio Lozzi, son of Andreas and Antonina Teça, born on 1 December, 1900 in Fagnano Alto, Aquila, Italy, resided in Tirana, was a surgeon at the General Civil Hospital and a consultant at the General Military Hospital, with a University education, married with three children.

The Italian diplomatic mission was expelled on 14 January, 1946. Arrests and shootings of Italians in Tirana for sabotage had began, and many of them started to leave secretly. His Italian colleague Franco Benanti later recalled that Prof. Lozzi had earned a good name among the capital's residents, but was accused of smuggling gold. "They had seen him visit the American Legate and the Bishopric of Durres. He was allowed to go visit his family in Italy, provided that he did not stay there for long. According to the prosecutor, he had put in the stomach of operated Italians valuables, such as gold, jewellery, etc."

When Dr. Lozzi was arrested with eight hospital staff members, he was accused of having "taken an active part in organizing the escape of the first group of Italians, consisting of Canavese, Collessanti, Morgante and Saraceni; for the plan he agrees to meet illegally and makes himself and his car available...; he has helped some Italians to leave Albania; he was preparing himself with others to leave." The allegations underline that Dr. Losi was aware of the illegal transportation to Italy of about 1,000 gold coins owned by an Italian. In addition, it is said that a large amount of gold has been sent to Italy, by hiding it in the coffin of the partisan commander of the "Antonio Gramsci" Battalion, fallen in Albania. The details of the ruling of the Tirana Military Court match Kadare's description of a gold knife on the body of a corpse.

At that time, the state had enacted a law to seize all gold and prohibit its removal abroad. Regardless of whom it belonged to, it was already considered state property.

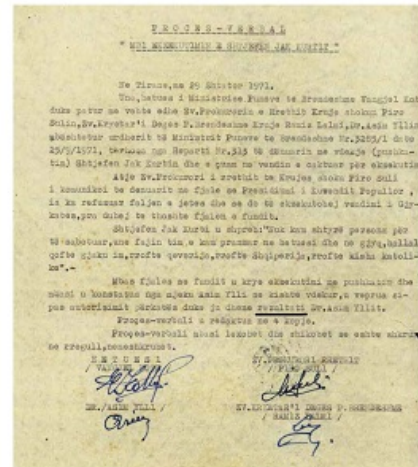
A decision of the Military Court of Tirana, dated August 3, 1946, sentenced Venanzio Lozzi to death penalty. 13 days later, on 16 August, the same verdict is given by the Supreme Court. In the decision, on the same day, is affixed Enver Hoxha's signature as well, in his capacity as the Minister of National Defence and Supreme Commander. Enver Hoxha's letter ends with the words: "Announce the execution date and their last words". "I am in your hands, possibly pardon me ..." reads the relevant document regarding the last words of the eminent surgeon, known as Doctor Losi.

According to Kastriot Dervishi's research, he was executed near the River Bank (Bregu i Lumit). The son, who lives in Australia, withdrew his father's file in 2011 and became interested in Dr. Losi's tomb through the Albanian Embassy in China. His burial site is still unknown.

CROSSES ABOVE NO GRAVES



Dom Shtjefen Kurti is just one of the Christian clerics who were executed during communism and still have no grave. Coming from Kosovo in 1930, in September 1943, he announced to the Archbishopric that he was baptizing Jews, likely to save them by the Nazis, because they received new Albanian names and passports. He was first arrested on 28 October, 1946 for agitation and propaganda and sentenced to 20 year sentence in prison. He had refused to be detached from the Vatican and was taken to Burrel, but did not surrender amidst all different sorts of torture. They brought him to open his grave, but he never accepted the charge. They returned him to his cell, where on Christmas Eve he was heard praying the mass, tearful. He was once released from prison. The churches were closed and he was taken to Gurrëz (Milot), where they were allowed to work as a cooperative warehouse keeper. He was arrested again on 11 June, 1970. The trial was due to take place at the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Gurrëz, a building converted into a cultural centre after the dictator's decision to stop religious beliefs was overturned. He was sentenced to death in "in odium fidei" for illegally baptizing a child. On a sad autumn day, 20 October, 1971, he was taken from his cell and put in front of the firing squad. When asked if he regretted his life, he said, "I'm sorry you're taking it way from me". The official charge had been sabotage. But time would shed light in the situation.



In 2011, his nephew, Nikolin Kurti, was able to meet the prosecutor seeking the conviction, Hajredin Fuga, and the judge who took the decision, Jani Vasili. Both have left him a handwritten apology for what happened to the priest. Nikolin Kurti published the papers in January 2019, respecting Fuga's and Vasili's desire for the papers to be published after their deaths. Hajredin Fuga and Jani Vasili have passed away a few years ago. After the fall of the communist system, they continued their careers in the justice system, serving as high up as in the Constitutional Court.



In his apology letter, Prosecutor Fuga said that the case for Dom Shtjefnin had begun with little grain stolen from the cooperative, for which the priest's name was included. In the letter he notes that at that time, the case was dropped by Kruja and taken over by the Interior Ministry, but added that according to his subordinate who had been present, the execution had taken place during night time. Fuga himself was unaware of data that could help in finding his bones.

Dervishi says that "in some cases, I suspect it may have been buried in the parcel of the Tufina prison hospital, where those who died while serving their sentence in Tirana were buried".

Researcher Kastriot Dervishi has recently published the record on the "execution of Shtjefën Jak Kurti", which states, inter alia, that "after the last word, the execution was carried out and after it was ascertained by Doctor Asim Ylli that he had died, he acted according to the relevant authorization, giving the result Dr. Asim Ylli/signed by Kote, Suli, Lalmi and Ylli". The term "result" given to Dr. Asim Ylli means that the lifeless body is given to one of the physicians who appears in other cases as well to have drawn the lifeless bodies of convicts for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine to teach anatomy.

Among the 38 martyrs recognised by the Vatican, 20 were shot and their bodies left without graves. The Ecclesiastical Court of Martyrs in Shkodra, set up to examine the file of 38 martyrs who were beatified by the Vatican after 9 years of investigation, found out that during the communist regime in Albania 31 clerics were shot, 8 others tortured, 3 killed without trial, 23 died in prisons and internment camps or shortly after torture and 66 other clerics came out of prison almost dead. Of the 135 clerics across Albania, 131 were martyred. All archives were used in order to collect such data, including those of the dictatorship and State Security, and the biggest problem was the lack of data and documentation for many persons who have been executed without trial. Certificates have been found, but the date of death has not been marked for many of them on the day they were executed.

Two days of freedom

SPACI UNREST

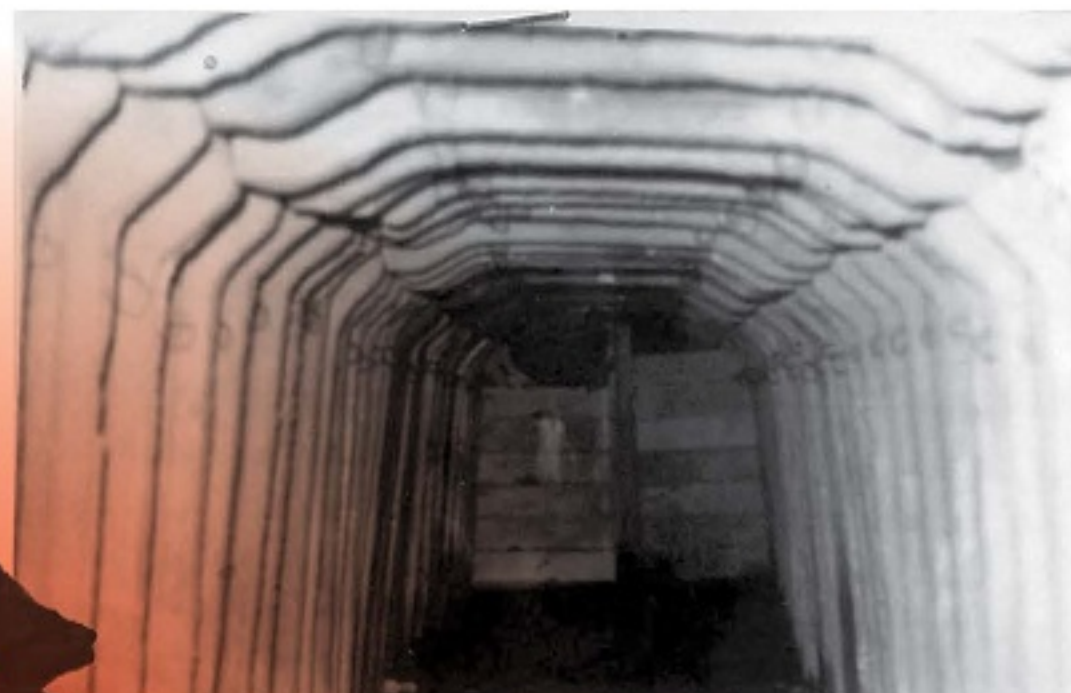
"The party cares more about cow stables than people". This sentence, carelessly uttered by Pal Gjergj Zefi from Rrushkulli, Durrës, in his thirties, led him to Spaç prison for agitation and propaganda. It was 1973, the time of "liberalism" was over. Pal Zefi arrives in the prison between the mountains, in a place where humanity's footsteps are no longer heard. He starts his 10-year sentence by refusing to work in the mine. He seeks to serve prison terms, not forced labour.

The command responds with isolation to his refusal. When he performs his first confinement in isolation, he objects again to work and is left in the wet dungeon again. Prisoners confined in isolation were sent to dark, narrow dungeons and were given only one piece of blanket at night.

At 5.00 am on May 21, 1973, the guardian enters in Pal Zefi's room to pick up the blanket. Zefi, who was for a long time staying in the dark, runs out of the isolation room, grabs a metal rod and climbs onto the terrace. The guardian calls on him to return to the prison cell, while Zefi asks him to stay away because he will hit anyone close to him.

While others come to the aid of the first guard, prisoners like Zefi are already in Zefi's help. A clash between political prisoners and 303 ward guards begins.

This is the starting point of Spaç Unrest, which escalated for two days. The convicts refused to hand over Pal Zefi, forcing the guards to withdraw from the prison area. They gathered their representations, demanded that their sentencing decisions be reconsidered, pardoned, working conditions improved and they reached political slogans such as "Down with Communism!" And "Long Live Free Albania!", "You Will come here and we will take your place", "The army is with us", "The people are with us". A group was set up to talk to the Command, as the days of the revolt marked the days of freedom in the camp: Gëzim Çela is remembered of having sung with a guitar, and for the first time the flag was raised without the red star. Even with the arrival of the Deputy Minister of Interior from Tirana, Feçor Shehu, they did not back down. The revolt was violently suppressed on the morning of 23 May, 1973, as army forces moved from Tirana to Spaç near Mirdita.



Many of the detainees were arrested, 12 of whom were brought to Tirana where the trial took place at 11 pm, among whom was Pal Zefi (32), Skender Daja (28), Dervish Bejko (27) and Hajri Pashaj (23), who were sentenced to death. At the meeting of the Presidium of the People's Assembly on 24 May, the President of the Supreme Court, Aranit Çela, said: "It is our decision to sentence them with death (firing) and not to execute their shooting before others or before the camp."

In the summoning at trial, neither of them betrayed their comrades: they did not tell who made the calls, nor who raised the flag. Their testimonies begin with "I don't know who did it, I didn't see it". Witness Xhemal Bali, a former inmate, said the four were "shot dead in the wee hours of the morning, in the high mountains and in the forests of Mirdita."

All four were executed after being asked to write their last letters, while 64 inmates, described as the most active in the revolt, were sentenced with many other additional years.

In the days of the revolt, Pal Zefi had said he would no longer return to the dungeon. They forced him to keep his word. The valley of horror took him away, and his body, along with those of his friends, was never found ...

SPACI

"Comrade Judge! I have not accused the accused of living in the Azona and La Rossa villa ... I have accused them that they all understood that they had to do with the Balkan Secret Service, with Fultz agents ... they cooperated with them and agreed to become their agents"- excerpt taken from the Prosecutor's pretence for Xhemal Farka and 25 others

The journalist of "VILA A la ROSSA"

There was a villa in Bari, known as "Azona a La Rossa" villa, where many Albanians met each other. In their meetings, there were often foreigners associated with Albania. Upon return to their homeland, 25 of those Albanians faced charges of being foreign agents, traitors and agents seeking to overthrow the popular power. From the state of the time they are known as "the group of spies of S.B.S Villa - Bari". One of them was a young happy-go-lucky man from Tirana. "Arbënia" Newspaper of the 1930s refers to the nickname Sula of Faja, Xh.F, Xhefar, while for friends he was the social-democratic satirical journalist Xhemal Farka. Born in 1913 in Tirana to a civic family. After graduating from the Harry Fultz Institute in Tirana, he graduated from the American University of Beirut with a scholarship awarded by Sotir Kolea to study the-there Albanian colony, had been a journalist at Radio Bari and worked for Voice of America in Jerusalem. Xhemal Farka used to write about the social problems that Albanian society was going through, such as the "Night Children" begging in the streets; in the Tirana dialect under the pseudonym it was implied that he supported the emancipation of the Albanian woman and carried out folklore research in the Tirana area. After studying, he returned to his homeland with the idealism of building the country, but he was faced with the regime twice, first because of helping Lef Nosi, and second as an agent and traitor.

In AIDSSH, among two faded away and almost illegible documents, there are also two records for him. The minutes of 15 September, 1945 read that he has first met with Lef Nosi in 1938, at a party in Elbasan where Ms. Haslluk was also present. In this case, Xhemal Farka had gone to the party as the translator of the American Professor Philip Mosley, who was invited. Apparently, when asked who brought Lef Nosi from Elbasan to Tirana (when he was hiding from the Communist government), Farka answers that he does not know. "Three or four days before I was arrested, I was met outside the Zog's Palace by an unknown person, who spoke calling my name, telling me he was Vasil Nosi's friend and wanted to go to Tirana". He was dressed in the same style as Golloborda's masters. Together with him we came to the bridge across the Neki Radoviksa's farm and we both took different roads". The letter noted that he had doubts that he was Lef Nosi, but did not dare to question him, or to denounce him. Given that the minutes do not include the questions asked by the investigator to the journalist, the phrases that he was eventually forced to sign remain suspicious.

In a record dated 17 September, 1945, he indicates that he had a friend from Beirut's time, Vasil Nosi, and that he knew that Lefi was declared wanted.



In three pages of the records he refuses to have housed Lef Nosi, but admits that he was asked to cross Lef Nosi from the "mill, to the checkpoint. I took Lef at the farm to escort him and take him inside the checkpoint in Tirana ... We arrived between the American Legate and the farm, where Vasil and Mark appeared in a cart. I don't know where they went ..."

Aware of the fact that the evidence was collected through torture, it is not difficult to see why Farka's testimony changed two days later.

Musine Kokalari, in her diary, notes that "one of the prisoners I saw through my little window in the prison yard told me that they were interrogating Xhemal Farka about me. I understood. He didn't say anything about me and I didn't say anything about him". Garrison Military Prosecutor Col. Faik Minarolli, on the other hand, writes that "it was established that the accused had (committed) the heinous crime of betrayal of Motherland making it and themselves pray of foreign agents". Of the 25 defendants, Xhemal Farka is one of five people sentenced to death. In addition to the help he has given to Lef Nosi, he was listed by the prosecution at the time as part of the "Azona Villa Rossa" group. Xhemal Farka was shot in 1948 as an English agent, charges that were never proven. In a communication for the exhibition, Zenita Farka, his granddaughter, has indicated that her father, Hasan, would often visit him in prison somewhere at "Selvia" to bring him food and clothing. "One day in February 1947, the gendarmerie threw away the food. He was told: "Go get him at Bregu i Lumit". Then her father realized that they had shot him. Together with aunt Emine they would go out at night to look for her". The granddaughter remembers how often she went to Durres with her father, Aunt Emine, to look at the river bank. They never found Xhemal, the journalist who, when he returned home, was received with honours by Omer Nishani because he had supported the war while working for the radio.

The doctor's olive tree



Lorenc Rasha

Lorenc Rasha, a former student of Innsbruck in Austria, Prof. Dr. of Linguistics, mastering 7 languages, Former Director of Gymnasiums and a nationalist, attends the Conference of Peza, marking his future with stain. In 1944 he was arrested in Tirana, declared a traitor of his ideas and sent to Paraspur, a remote village at the foot of Dajti. There he was placed in front of the firing squad. Villagers in the area know him and they ask the commander of the firing squad to forgive him because he has helped them, but the commander does not ask.

Two ropes for the engineer Kujtim Beqiri

A 32-year-old Vlora-born guy, a former Harry Fultz student who graduated with extinction for Civil Engineering in Vienna, ended up in drying Maliqi's wetland and was expecting to start work. He was married and became a father when, on November 6, 1946, he was handcuffed. In July, four months ago he had been appointed director of works.

Two days later, he and his friends, foreigners and Albanians coming from abroad, are brought to a made-up political trial. The review of the documents by the researchers has shown that the investigative-judicial files of these proceedings are completely manipulated by the regime because they have been obtained and developed under the most severe conditions of psychological and physical torture.

The verdict was announced on November 19, 13 days after his arrest and on the 21st November, with the stamp "Maliqi saboteurs", he and colleagues are transferred from Tirana cells to Korça, to be as close as Maliqi's Marsh as possible. On the way, Beqiri gave the money he had to the accompanying officer to buy him a package of cigarettes. He did not get back the rest, as if to say that he wouldn't need it in the other world.

The Court's decision was not to save their lives. For Kujtim Beqiri and Abdyl Sharra they decided to hung them on a rope. The decision was taken to execute them in Maliq on 22 November, 1946. The young man, Beqir, was put on a rope, stripped of his bench, and was waited to die when they saw him still alive. As they got closer they saw that the rope had caught the collar of the engineer's coat, but the life the rope saved was by no means going to be saved by the executors. His last words were: "History will show that I am being convicted and executed without guilt". Maliqi's marsh was dried out according to the specifications made by Kujtim Beqiri, because even the Russian engineers who were taken for more expertise and to blame the deceased did not change a thing in his decisions. Drying up the marsh could not be done differently.

That night his life faded away, but his body has yet to find peace. His son, Kadri Beqiri, for 73 years now is in search of finding where his father's remains are.

"We asked for a lot my father's remains in Maliq but, regrettably, there were no remains there. During the excavations we found only one man's hand, which we put in the small casket, just to have a grave for him".

Lorenc Rasha died somewhere near Dajti, among the people he once helped. Those who shot him took off his shoes and clothes, leaving him with only underwear, without burying him. When night fell, one of the villagers who had known him took his dead secretly and buried it in his yard, near the roots of an olive tree. No one knows why Lorenc Rasha was shot. In his house they had been waiting for months for him to return home alive, because they had not been informed of the execution.

Years later, his daughter, working for the Circus of Tirana, went to towns and villages for performances. In 1956, she was in Dajti for a show. Her name is Vitore Rasha. At the end of the performance, a man in national dress approaches Vitore.

"Looking me in the eyes, almost in tears, he says in a trembling voice: Are you the doctor's daughter? Yes, I said. I am going to tell you something, but you'll never tell it to anyone. Hence, it has to remain a secret between us. Your father has been buried by me, in the olive tree, inside his house. I live in Paraspur, a village at the foot of Dajti, west of it. I have it, but don't talk about it, today it is dangerous. But, one day everything will get to its proper place and you must know where he is".

50 years later, Vitore Rasha Sallaku, now a well-known acrobat, went to Paraspur. The man who had told her the secrets had passed away, and it was his son who helped them extract the bones, which already have a tomb and a name.



Akile Tasi, the uncle of Lekë Tasit

Akile, after Maliqi was taken to Burrel, in that ward of spirits fading into the midst. He died of cerosis after 17 years in prison in January 1961, sharing his best memories with the prisoners, always ready to help anyone who wanted to learn English. At the time of his illness, Leka's father was not in Burrel because they had been brought to Tirana for surgery. As soon as the brother left for Tirana, Akile got worse. When Koco Tasi returned to Burrel, he found his brother buried. The family had taken him medication, but did not manage to see him alive again. They received a telegram from the prison's office informing them that their man had died. Leke Tasi says he went to see the place where they had been put, but did not tell him. "This is how another unnamed tomb was added to a secluded courtyard inside the wires. We have only learned that in the last days, two men who were serving long sentences, Agim Llanaj and Tomorr Dosti, were serving Akile", recalls Lekë Tasi in his memoirs.

Skender Çela, the uncle of Mirush Kabashi

Famous actor Mirush Kabashi, after 18 years of research, eight years ago had begun excavations in the Qafë-Ploce of Pogradec to find the remains of two young Durrësi men, shot without trial in December 1946. They are Mark Toci and Skënder Çela, his uncle, two young men who were called anti-partisans. After many meetings and searches, with the help of renowned journalist Fatos Baxhaku, he had data and documents proving that the two young men had been executed by the Lake of Pogradeci, by the-then Security, and then their bodies were washed away in the Qafë- Ploce. Although the excavations took time, he could not find his uncle's remains.

Missing

The unsleeping soldier Sami Sulejman Aruçi

On 7 April, 1970, Sami Aruçi was commanded with probation service at the command of Military Ward No. 2820 in Fier. On 8 April, on a surprise visit by his superiors, he was not found in the designated location, so he was ordered to be taken to the battery. His absence was noted 11 days after the change of venue. It was his absence at the time when his name was called that made it clear that the soldier had left to an unknown direction. The Army's official documents state only that the soldier disappeared and that they have no record of his fate. Soldier Sami from Maminas, Durrës, is still missing to this day, while his family has not been "interned" and there have been no penalties, as was the case with fugitive families. His brothers and father then sent letters to the Minister of Defense and Enver Hoxha himself, never getting an answer as to where Sami fled. The 23-year-old knew several foreign languages and before leaving, left the service weapon in its proper place. Meanwhile, the family was able to receive an official letter in 2016 stating that "the incident investigation document is classified and cannot be served". Officially, the family was told that the young man had left the ward without permission and had left for an unknown direction.

Flowers in the air - Dajlan Zaimaj

When on 12 December, 1944, when knocks were heard at the Zaimi's door, no one knew that the following seconds would change their lives for ever. The homeowner had been summoned by the Skrapar Interior Branch to present himself at the Branch. Before leaving, his wife and three children were told "not to worry". Gramozi's son was 9 years old. He was the eldest child, having three younger sisters. It was the last time they saw his father, who never came back.

He was accused of being part of the National Front Forces. A year later he was sentenced to 101 years in prison. Two years later, the sentence was reduced to 25 years in prison. The state of the time seized the fortune of the barely surviving family. From prison, Dajlan Zaimaj sent letters to relatives asking them to go and see him. "Come see the sick man," his son recalls from his father's letters. On 2 June, 1949, after 10 years of loneliness, she died in prison of torture, illness, and hunger. His son, Gramoz, says he remembers his father as a somewhat chubby middle-aged man wearing a hat with a shelter. There is no picture of his. The body was not handed over to the family and nobody knows anything of it today. "I was told 'there is nothing here, but like everyone else, go and throw flowers, there because the blocks of flats have covered the burials. They have levelled the field there, building cemeteries, palaces, a sports field" - says Gramozi.

Former convicts in Burrel say the dead were all buried in the same place, "in front of the cell windows between the two enclosures, so that everyone could see what they would suffer. The clothes and other things were parted by the executioners - wrapped in blankets buried in rows, one after another, without a name and without any mark, this is how they ended up".