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Meaning and Symbolism of Industrial Architecture in Albania

Znaczenie i symbolika architektury przemysłowej w Albanii

Abstract

Industrial architecture represents the evolution of technology, the growth of industry and the presence of new urban forms in the context of the city. The Albanian industrial history dates back to 19th century. The country's industrial sector has experienced significant growth and transformation particularly during the socialist period from 1945 to 1990. Industrial facilities and complexes built over 50 years impacted the urban and social development of Albanian cities. Their architecture is characterized by a mix of different styles, including socialist realism and functionalism. These styles reflect the political, social, and economic history of Albania. The buildings, which include factories, mines, and power plants, are scattered throughout the country and their symbolism is multifaceted. They represent Albania's aspirations to modernize society and build socialism. Moreover, industrial architecture in Albania has been the subject of different approaches and attitudes. Some argue for its preservation as part of the country's cultural heritage, while others advocate its demolition and replacement with more modern structures. In this context, this paper investigates the meaning and symbolism of industrial architecture in Albania and its impact on the country's identity and cultural landscape, referring

to the city of Tirana. Industrial architecture in Albania plays a significant role in the country's cultural landscape and identity. Its symbolism is complex and multifaceted, representing both the achievements and the challenges of Albania's industrial past, as well as the communist doctrine. As Albania continues to evolve and modernize, the preservation and interpretation of its industrial heritage will remain a crucial issue for its people and policymakers.

Keywords: industrial heritage facilities, industrial architecture, historical memory

Abstrakt

Architektura przemysłowa reprezentuje rozwój technologii i przemysłu oraz obecność nowych form urbanistycznych w kontekście miasta. Historia przemysłu w Albanii sięga XIX wieku. Sektor przemysłowy kraju doświadczył znacznego wzrostu i transformacji szczególnie w okresie socjalizmu od 1945 do 1990. Obiekty i kompleksy przemysłowe budowane przez 50 lat miały wpływ na rozwój społeczny i urbanistyczny albańskich miast. Ich architekturę charakteryzuje mieszanek różnych stylów, w tym socrealizmu i funkcjonalizmu. Style te odzwierciedlają historię polityczną, społeczną i gospodarczą Albanii. Budynki, do których zaliczają się fabryki, kopalnie i elektrownie, są rozproszone po całym kraju, a ich symbolika jest różnorodna. Reprezentują one aspiracje Albanii do budowy socjalizmu i modernizacji społeczeństwa. Co więcej, architektura przemysłowa w Albanii była przedmiotem różnych podejść i postaw. Jedni opowiadają się za zachowaniem jej jako części dziedzictwa kulturowego kraju, inni są za wyburzeniem i zastąpieniem jej nowocześniejszymi konstrukcjami. W tym kontekście, nawiązując do Tirany, artykuł analizuje znaczenie i symbolikę architektury przemysłowej w Albanii oraz jej wpływ na tożsamość kraju i krajobraz kulturowy. Architektura przemysłowa w Albanii odgrywa znaczącą rolę w krajobrazie kulturowym i tożsamości kraju. Jej symbolika jest złożona i wieloaspektowa i przedstawia zarówno osiągnięcia, jak i wyzwania związane zarówno z przemysłową przeszłością kraju, jak i z dziedzictwem ideologii komunistycznej. W miarę rozwoju i modernizacji Albanii ochrona i interpretacja jej dziedzictwa przemysłowego pozostaną kluczową kwestią dla jej obywateli i przywódców politycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: obiekty dziedzictwa przemysłowego, architektura przemysłowa, pamięć historyczna

Introduction

Throughout history, industrialization has had significant and wide-ranging impacts. In the majority of nations that have undergone industrialization, it has had the greatest significance in terms of both economic and social outcomes. Just like Capitalism is the result of industrialization, Communism and Socialism are also products of industrialization. Similar changes in urban, architectural, economic, social, and political character can be found in all countries that have gone through the process of industrialization. Of course, there are differences depending on the specific conditions and circumstances of each country and society, as well as the time and period when the process of industrialization began. This process, in terms of time and progress, has not been the same for all countries. The Industrial Revolution originated around 1750/60 for Britain, 1795 for Germany, 1850 for Russia, and 1953 for China.¹ Industrialization initially spread to Western and Northern Europe, and during the twentieth century, it spread to Eastern and Southern Europe. In countries that embraced communist ideology, industrialization had specific characteristics and became the development motto for socialist bloc countries, of which Albania was also a part. The process of industrialization in Albania has undergone various stages, which were influenced by geopolitical and economic factors. Its origins can be traced back to the late 19th century, but it took shape in the 20th century and acquired a distinct political and economic dimension after the establishment of the communist regime in Albania, following World War II. The communist government considered industrialization and the construction of industrial facilities of great importance. The industrial development of the country was understood and evaluated as a necessary tool for achieving economic growth and consolidating the power of the communist regime. The architecture of industrial facilities and complexes was not only a reflection of the technological advances of the time but also conveyed the ideology and values of socialism through it.

Historical overview of industrial facilities in Albania

The built environment serves as a tangible reflection of the political and socio-economic changes that have taken place over the years. It is

1 James Douet (ed.), *Industrial Heritage Re-Tooled: The TICCIH guide to Industrial Heritage Conservation* (Lancaster: TICCIH by Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2012).

a tool that enables us to comprehend the dynamics of societal growth, its accomplishments, and the various processes that it undergoes. Through the language of its time, the built environment communicates the reality of the era in which it exists, and its layers represent the society that has solidified its values, philosophies, and achievements. By exploring the industrial buildings of the past, we can unearth evidence and references to the significant events that shaped our world, as well as the ideologies and philosophies that drove them, as expressed through urban planning, architectural style, details, and construction techniques. To fully understand this intricate relationship, it is necessary to classify these buildings into different periods. Their roles in urban, architectural, social, economic, and political development have varied across different historical periods, closely tied to the process of industrialization. Based on this approach, we can classify these periods into three main phases: 1912–1944, 1945–1978, and 1980–1990. This paper does not address the period following the 1990s, which is characterized by distinct political and economic developments.

Phase 1912–1944

The first traces of industrialism in Albania can be found in the second half of the 19th century, a time period which coincides with the “Second Industrial Revolution”. Production in the country until this period was characterized by artisanal techniques that were developed inside the traditional dwellings (Fig. 1). Ground floors or designated rooms were utilized for various artisanal production processes, such as weaving fabrics or carpets, processing tobacco, producing olive oil, or milling wheat. As the city developed and its infrastructure expanded, the role of craftsmen, who had previously worked from home, shifted to dedicated spaces in suitable areas throughout the city. The first industrial facilities in Albania were initially simple, designed for utilitarian purposes. They were not initially formed as factories but rather as small workshops that accommodated artisan work processes.

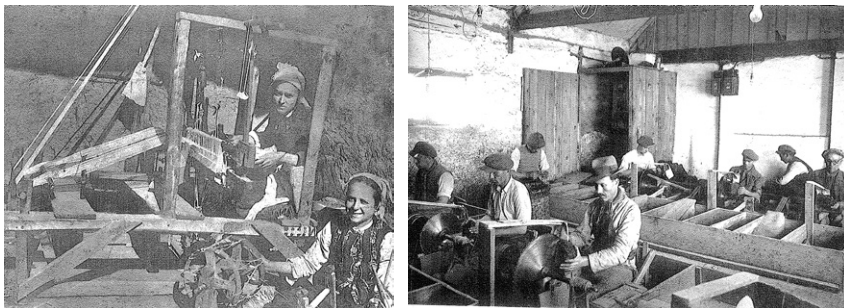
Towards the end of the 19th century, the first workshops began to emerge, including those focused on weaving silk, producing flour, soap and cigarettes, etc.² Artisanal production methods characterized the Albanian context until 1912. The industry was represented by some simple

2 Ilir Parangonic, *Arkeologjia Industriale. Një vlerësim i trashëgimisë industriale në Shqipëri* (Tiranë: Albanian Heritage Foundation, 2012).

mechanical equipment and workshops.³ The implementation of simple mechanical production processes was carried out through mills that operated using water power. Until 1912, traditional production methods were prevalent in Albania, with the industry mainly relying on workshops and basic mechanical equipment (Fig. 2). The country's industrial development was in its infancy at the beginning of the 1920s, but it began to take shape as foreign investments and collaborations, particularly with Italian companies, increased. During this time, there was significant growth in the construction and transportation sectors.⁴

The earliest concepts of industrial buildings can be traced back to modest manufactures constructed in the early 1920s, which served as forerunners to modern factories. These structures were typically one-story and made of stone or clay walls with tiled roofs. They had simple designs both in plan and in the facades. Since these spaces developed as a necessity for the development of craftsmanship and the extraction of this function outside of the home, they often resembled simple residential architecture (Fig. 2). The first manufactures appear to be one of the most elemental industrial constructions. Their architecture was a reflection of the industrial development of that period. The layout of the industrial facilities was a straightforward representation of the functional and technological scheme of the artisanal or lightly mechanical operations carried out (Fig. 2).

Figure 1. Artisanal Techniques of Production. Workshop in Shkodra



Their role in the urban context of the time was insensitive. The workshops were positioned either inside the city bazaar as in Tirana, Shkodra, Kruja, etc., or near the homes of the workshop owners. The

3 Hasan Banja, *Ekonomia e Shqipërisë në rrjedhat e historisë të shekullit XX* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese “Emal”, 2017).

4 *Ibidem*.

latter was logically positioned since the function had just shifted outside the dwellings.

Albania in the years 1925–1939 did not reach the stage of developed industrial capitalism.⁵ Despite that, several foreign and local shareholder companies were created which with their investments influenced the growth of the industrialization rate and the construction of the first factories in the country.⁶ Joint stock companies such as General Electric SITA&SESA in Tirana, STAMPLES in Tirana and Durres, SESA in Shkodra, built factories in several cities of the country, such as the Tobacco Factory in Tirana and Durres, the Cement Factory and Tobacco “Tarabosh” Factory in Shkoder (Fig. 7, 8), the Beer Factory in Korce, etc.

During this period, Tirana was declared the capital of Albania, and the focus of investment for establishing factories was primarily in the city. Small workshops in Tirana that produced goods such as ice or soft – fresh drinks were consolidated into larger production facilities. As a result, an industrial complex was constructed on Durres Street in 1928. This complex comprised of several factories, including an ice factory, a soap factory, an alcohol factory, a perfume production laboratory, and a soft drink factory.⁷ These facilities not only provided economic benefits but also had a significant impact on the urban development of Tirana as they were among the first large-scale industrial buildings in the city.

Also, the SITA company built in 1927, the Substation for electricity supply in Tirana (Fig. 4). These facilities were the first production facilities and represent the context of the country’s industrialization.

5 *Ibidem.*

6 Monitor, “100 vjet ekonomia shqiptare ne 1921–1924”. *Revista “Monitor”*, 28th November 2012, <https://www.monitor.al/100-vjet-ekonomia-shqiptare-ne-1921-1924/> (access: 10th May 2023).

7 Spiro Mëhilli, *Tirana 1920–1944* (Tirana: Mediaprint, 2012).

Figure 2. Urban Plan of Tirana 1921 and Views of Tirana in the beginning of 20th century

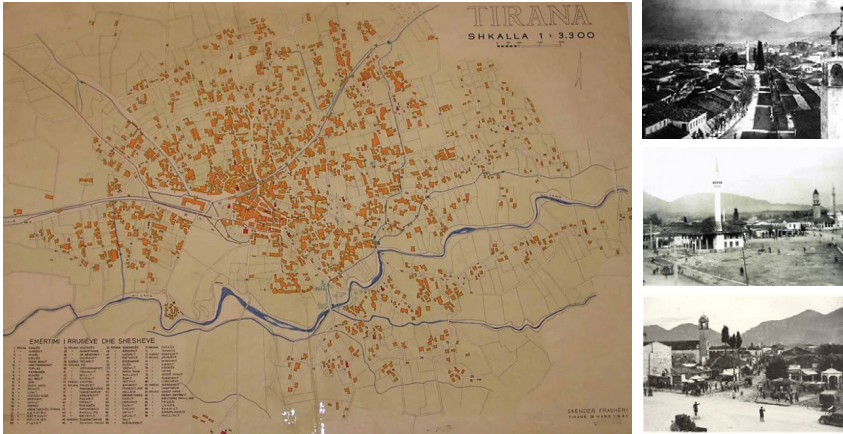


Figure 3. Substation for electricity supply in Tirana, 1927



Figure 4. “Stamles” Factory in Tirana Figure 5. “Stamples” Factory in Durres



At the turn of the 20th century, the city of Tirana inherited a sprawling and fragmented urban structure that lacked any cohesive planning or design (Fig. 3). This irregular urban stratification categorized into two distinct zones: residential and commercial, with a network of narrow streets.⁸ The chaotic and seemingly endless nature of this urban environment was a reflection of the historical and cultural developments that had shaped Tirana over time.

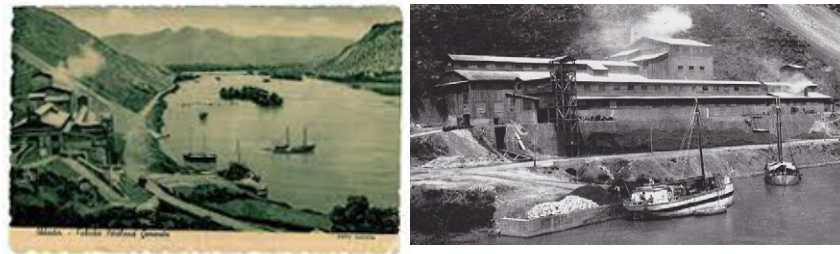
When examining the urban growth of Tirana and other cities in Albania during the mid-20th century, it becomes clear that industrial facilities played a significant role in the expansion and development of these urban centers. Due to their size and the functions, these buildings left an indelible mark on the cityscape and acted as early indicators of the urban development in the late 20th century. In this way, the industrial buildings of this period served as important seismographs for the city's overall progress and were a key part of the city's evolving identity.

8 Aliaj Besnik, Lulo Kejda, Myftiu Genc, *Tirana-Sfida e zhvillimit Urban* (Tiranë: Co-Plan&SEDA, 2003).

Figure 6. Tabacco Factory in Shkodra City



Figure 7. Cement Portland Factory in Shkoder



The industrial buildings of the years 1925–1930 in the city of Tirana formed for the first time on the map of the city the industrial area, in modest dimensions and scope for the urban development of the city in that period. This area was located at the end of the “Durrës” road, an area which due to the development of the city could be considered a peripheral area. Now the industrial buildings in the city of Tirana, unlike those before 1920s, had a significant impact on the urban development of the city. They consisted of the most massive buildings and their architecture was not treated as a poor architecture, instead, great attention was paid to both the façade and the overall volume. They were no longer 1-floor production workshops, but were developed on several floors. Nevertheless, their architecture resembled that of housing and they did not have an expressive industrial architectural language and this comes from the close connection that production had with individual dwellings (Fig. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). This is an important feature of the industrial architecture of these years, not only in Tirana but in other Albanian cities.

Phase 1945–1960

After emerging victorious from the World War II, the communist government needed to exert its power and implement its ideology throughout the country. To accomplish this, they decided to embark on a massive building campaign that would not only stimulate the economy but also involve the working class in a physical, economic, and ideological process. The building program was seen as an effective tool for achieving social transformation and promoting the ideals of socialism. By putting the working class at the forefront of the building process, the communist government hoped to promote a sense of ownership and pride in their country's progress. This approach aimed to unify the population under the banner of communism and create a new national identity based on shared values and goals.

Under this philosophy, with the establishment of the communist totalitarian regime, industrial constructions gained increasing importance, as all the building and development of the country relied on industrialization. The industrialization process became the target of communist government through the plans for Economic and Industrial development of the country.⁹ After the state ownership of existing factories, intensive investment in industry led to the urban growth of industrial facilities in Albania, initially during the 1950s and 1960s. To meet the demand for labor force, the urban population increased, resulting in the expansion of housing areas, service zones, roads, and other infrastructure and buildings. This growth was primarily focused on the peripheral areas of cities, mainly to capital city, leading to the expansion of road infrastructure and creation of new industrial areas.

The architectural aesthetics of this period bear the influence of classical USSR architecture (Fig. 10). Following this dogma, the “Stalin” Textile Factory (*Kombinati i Tekstileve “Stalin”*) was constructed as an archetype of Stalinist architecture and philosophy and is a representative model of this period. Located in the western outskirts of Tirana as a satellite city, the “Stalin” Textile *Kombinat* embodied the socialist city model.¹⁰ After the establishment of the totalitarian regime, this complex became the largest industrial facility built during this era, funded by the Soviet government. Although the *Kombinat* was inaugurated in 1951, its

9 Adrian Civici, “100 vjet: Ekonomia shqiptare gjatë regjimit komunist (1945–1990)”. *Revista “Monitor”*, 12th November 2012, <https://www.monitor.al/100-vjet-ekonomia-shqiptare-gjate-regjimit-komunist-1945-1990/> (access: 10th May 2023).

10 Eled Fagu, *Qyteti Socialist në Shqipëri. Kombinati i Tekstileve “Stalin”*. Dizertacion per fitimin e Gradës Shkencore “Doktor” (Tiranë, 2021).

construction continued even after the breakdown of relations between the Albanian government and the Soviet Union.

What was “Kombinat”?

In his book “Storia e vita quotidiana di un quartiere simbolo di Tirana”, the author Luigi Za states:

The *Kombinat* more than a neighborhood is a story. Not all neighborhoods, including those of Tirana, have something to show or know how to show it. Some of them are lost in the anonymity of time, without trace and without glory, others stutter to leave temporary signs of existence; some are made only of memory holes, simple urban expressions, and others rest around the center, but without identity. *Kombinat*, on the contrary, has all the ingredients for a great story: beginnings, characters, heroes, conflicts, plots, activities and conclusions. All this in a well-defined, easily recognizable and describable space and location.¹¹

Thus, the *Kombinat* would serve as the embodiment of communist philosophy in both the architectural and societal realms.

Kombinat was designed as an area with an integrated urban configuration (Factory-residential) in which not only an agglomeration of factories with housing (Fig. 9, 10) but a new social model would have to be born. The architecture of *Kombinat* seeks to influence the “new social model” through the evocation of history. In the chapter “Manifestations of ideology and propaganda through architecture” the author E. Fagu writes:

In the case of the Stalin Textile Factory in Tirana, the urban center comes in the version of a medieval city with gates, towers and arched lodges. The historicism of the urban environment was seen as a solution that would ensure the immediate cohesion between the new working class and the urban center [...] giving life to the material forms of the time that unifies the built environment.

The entrance of the *Kombinat* where the administrative buildings were located is conveyed by a symmetrical monumentality, decorated with both plastic and material values of a scenic space. In front of the

11 Luigi Za, *Storia e vita quotidiana di un quartiere simbolo di Tirana* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese “Besa”, 2012).

administrative buildings lies a square where the imposing monument of Stalin was located. It is impossible to describe *Kombinat* without acknowledging the towering statue of Stalin, with his arm extended, confidently pointing the way to socialism. The monument served as an inseparable element of the neighborhood’s identity, encapsulating the spirit of the times.

Figure 8. View of the main square and Regulatory plan of the residential center of “Stalin” Textile Kombinat

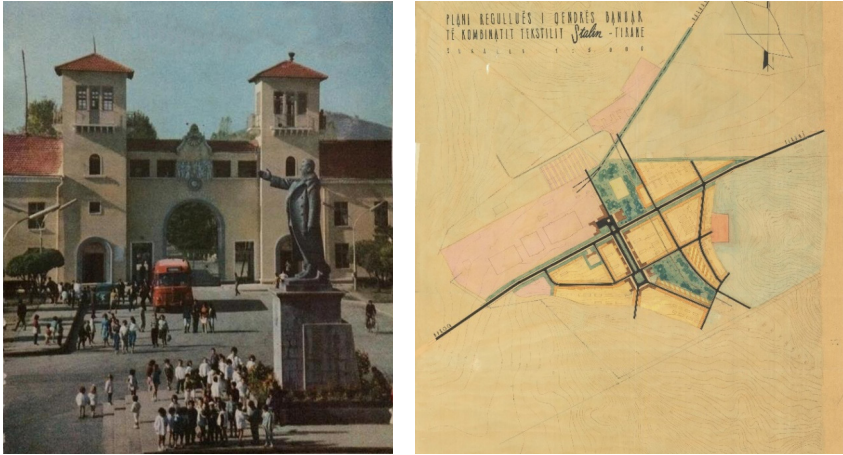
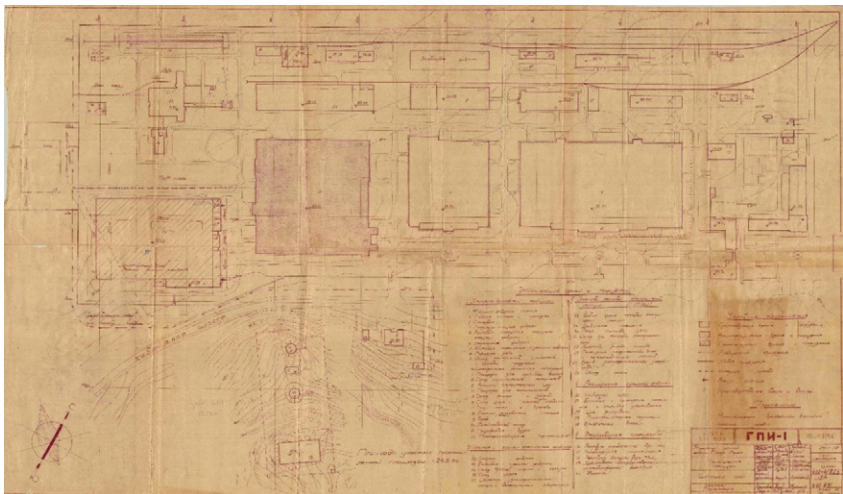


Figure 9. General plan of “Stalin” Textile Kombinat



Through the architectural language used, the object failed to create the cohesion of the architectural language with the functionality of the object, but it created the first Albanian model of the application of urban policies in the development of social relations.

The 1950s saw a surge of industrial buildings in Tirana, with the Textile *Kombinat* being just one of many. Another industrial structure in Tirana was the “Lenin” Hydropower Plant, which was inaugurated in 1951 as a work of special significance. The state-owned industrial enterprise of printing houses, known as “Mihal Duri”, was also constructed between 1957 and 1960. These buildings, like many others of the time, were characterized by an architectural language and naming that reflected ideological influences.

In the case of the printing house, its name paid homage to a national hero of the anti-fascist national liberation war. The building’s location in a residential area on Kavaje Street, rather than in a suburban area, was a departure from the norm. The design architects, A. Lufi, E. Dobi, and S. Luarasi, were influenced by the classical architecture of the Soviet Union, resulting in a more simplified classical language. The grandeur of the volume and symmetry of the main facade were emphasized by the high columns and arches, which added to the building’s monumental character. Its shape and form, massiveness, the rhythm of the facade, the window frames, materials and the play of light made it a dominant feature of the urban space in which it was located.

Figure 10. State-owned industrial enterprise of printing houses, “Mihal Duri”, Tiranë



During the years from 1949 to 1960, Albania underwent significant transformation under the influence of the Soviet Union's "turning the country from an agricultural to an industrial one".¹² This ideology found its expression in the architecture of the era, particularly in the industrial buildings that came to embody the nation's industrialization. In keeping with the prevailing Stalinist architectural style, the industrial structures of the period eschewed the use of national motifs in their design. The intention was to suppress any tendencies towards nationalism and instead foster a unified socialist cultural identity, as exemplified by the slogan "Nationalist in form, but socialist in content".¹³

Phase 1961–1976

The IV Congress of the PPSH, which convened on February 20, 1961, concluded that the economic foundation of socialism had been established both in urban and rural areas, signifying the country's entry into a phase of complete construction of the material-technical basis of socialism.¹⁴ Albania's break from the Soviet Union led to the replacement of pre-1960 agreements with new agreements signed with Communist China, under Mao Zedong. To complete the remaining unfinished industrial buildings, Chinese financing and engineering were utilized. In this period, industrial buildings can be classified into two typologies:

Typology 1: Individual buildings, where different production operations were carried out in separate structures.

Typology 2: Massive buildings, where all production processes were consolidated in a single structure.

After the 1960s, the second typology became more prevalent. Such buildings offered greater flexibility and were cost-effective due to the minimal need for dividing interior walls. To support the vast, open production spaces, wide-span reinforced concrete structural grids were utilized, while overhead lighting structures allowed natural light to enter through the roof. Projects left unfinished by the Soviet Union were completed with the support of Chinese engineers. The industrial buildings

12 Banja, *Ekonomia e Shqipërisë në rrjedhat e historisë të shekullit XX*.

13 Fagu, *Qyteti Socialist në Shqipëri. Kombinati i Tekstileve "Stalin"*.

14 Banja, *Ekonomia e Shqipërisë në rrjedhat e historisë të shekullit XX*.

of this period are characterized mainly by single-story constructions with a large spatial extent. The most typical industrial buildings are the one-story, distinguished by their roof-type lanterns, openings, and equal spaces for the unrestricted development of production processes in both directions. The structural grid is designed as a multiple of 3m for spaces up to 18m, and a multiple of 6m for spaces over 18.¹⁵ These buildings are characterized by the dominance of the structure, which allows for the creation of free and modulated spaces. In contrast to the influence of Stalinist architecture, the industrial buildings constructed with the financial backing of the Chinese government abandoned the classical language and instead embraced a dominant focus on the structure and massiveness of the volumes. The classical decorations were stripped away from architecture, and the focus shifted towards function as the key factor.

The architecture of these complexes was designed in accordance with the ideology that socialist realism architecture has a significant impact on the aesthetic education of society (Fig. 12). In order to gain a deeper understanding of this, it is crucial to refer to the proceedings of the First National Meeting of Albanian Architects, which took place on May 6th, 1971, also the XV Plenum of K.Q PPSH in November 1965. The published discussions among the architects in the November issue of Magazine No. 6 shed light on various topics, including the role of architecture and its impact on society. In all of these references, the ideological importance of architecture is present. Ark K. Miho states that "...architecture conceived and resolved on the principles of our socialist realism plays a great ideological role in the education of our people".¹⁶

The influence of ideology was inevitable even in the meeting itself, which took place after the XV plenum where the leader of PPSH, Enver Hoxha in the XV Plenum emphasized:

[...] before art in the narrow sense of the word, it is architecture, which exerts the first and inevitable aesthetic influence on the masses. Wherever we go, we will encounter different buildings, ensembles, parks and gardens, [...] All these affect the aesthetic education of our fellow citizens.

This ideology and philosophy would continue to shape the architecture of the years to come, inevitably leaving an imprint on the design of industrial buildings as well.

15 Robert Kote, *Godinat Industriale I* (Tiranë: Universiteti i Tiranës, Fakulteti i Inxhinierisë, 1974).

16 Sokrat Mosko, "Takimi Kombëtar i Arkitektëve", *Revista "Nëndori"* 6 (1971).

The intensity of industrial constructions in Tirana continued to be fast and important industrial complexes in Tirana continued to be built, such as the “Stalin” Textile *Kombinat*, the “Ali Kelmendi” Food *Kombinat*, the “Misto Mame” *Kombinat*, Glass Factory, (Fig. 12, 13, 14, 15) etc.

Figure 11. Interior of one factory of “Stalin” Textile *Kombinat*



Figure 12. “Stalin” Textile *Kombinat*, Tirane

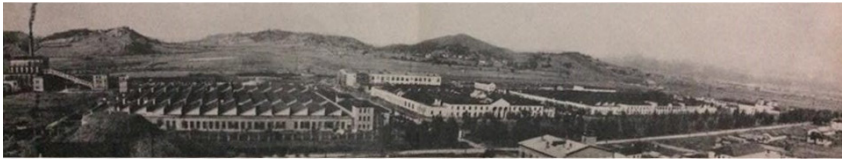


Figure 13. “Ali Kelmendi” Food *Kombinat*

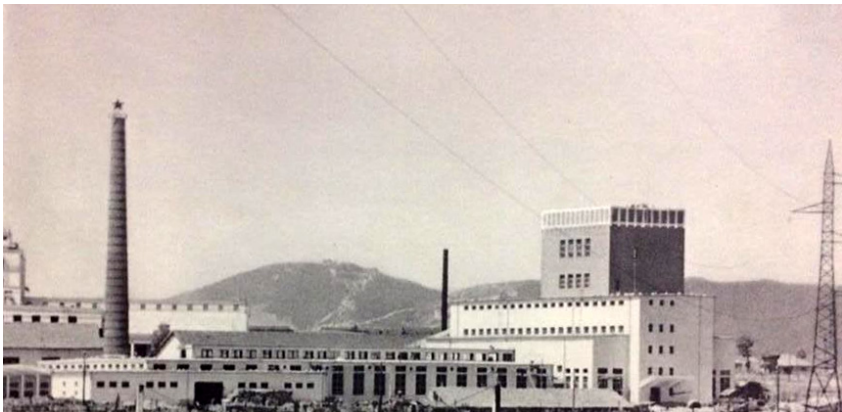


Figure 14. Glass Factory



More than architecture, these buildings contained the doctrine and spirit of the time. These complexes served as the supporting infrastructure of the doctrine. The architecture of the industrial buildings was simple, stripped of decorations, proportionate and very large. They were placed in the peripheral areas of Tirana, bringing expansion of the city and the infrastructural network.

Phase 1977–1990

The 6th five-year plan was approved at the 7th PPSH Congress in November 1976, with the goal of continuing the socialist construction of the country at a rapid pace. This plan aimed to transform socialist Albania into an industrial – agricultural country with advanced industry and agriculture, based on the principle of “*support in one’s own forces*” for the strengthening of economic independence, the improvement of socialist relations in production, and also the increase of the cultural level of the working masses.¹⁷

Due to the breakdown of relations with the Chinese government, the implementation of the 6th five-year plan faced financial and technical obstacles for the completion of factories, mines, and industrial complexes that were already under construction, as well as for the construction of

17 Insituti i studimeve M-L, pranë Kq të PPSH. Historia e partisë së Punës e Shqipërisë (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese “8 Nëntori”, 1981).

new industrial facilities. Following the difficult economic and political situation of the country, the construction of industrial buildings continued under the motto “we build with our own forces”.

To achieve this, the most powerful tool used by communist was “propaganda”. Architecture was part of this propaganda.

The industrial facilities designed and built already in the city of Tirana and throughout Albania were an “urban phenomenon” as much as social and cultural. The architects’ concern was the architecture of industrial buildings, construction technologies, the creation of human comfort such as lighting and ventilation, their positioning in cities in relation to the climate to control environmental pollution, as well as the aesthetic impact of this architecture on the education of the working masses. Kostaq Sahatciu in “Industrial Buildings and Architecture” writes:

In addition to the great development of our socialist industry, a new architecture previously unknown in our country is growing, industrial architecture. [...] Architects should not forget that in the workplace is spent more than the half of the active part of life, so removing the elements that creates conditions of comfort, that increases the taste of aesthetics, that creates conditions for increasing productivity at work, therefore removing architecture from industrial works would be a wrong concept.¹⁸

To enhance the visual appearance of industrial buildings, the integration of applied arts was suggested. K. Sahaciu stated, “In the realm of industrial architecture, applied arts can be effectively employed to achieve both architectural effects and to foster education and propaganda, as well as to cultivate aesthetic sensibilities”.¹⁹

18 Kostaq Sahatciu, “Takimi Kombëtar i Arkitektëve”, *Revista “Nëndori”* 6 (1971).

19 *Ibidem*.

Figure 15. “We build with our own forces” and propaganda



Conclusion

Buildings and industrial complexes were constructed over the years expanding and adapting to production lines, market needs as well as changing industry technologies. These production complexes built in Albania mainly during the years 1945–1990 have had a special and very important role in the urban and architectural shaping of the area to which they belonged. The massive volumes, the transport routes, the industrial landscape as a whole created not only the physiognomy of the area in the urban context, but also in the social one. The industrial building was planned and built as an “urban phenomenon” which was supposed to have visual significance and naturally built and surrounded by people. The important industrial-urban centers visually dominated not only the area to which they belonged, but also were reference points and powerful nodes of the city’s development. In the vocabulary of daily

communication, the areas of the Tirana city were named after industrial facilities, “Oxhak area”, “21 December”, “Kombinat area”, etc. terminology that continues to be used today, despite the fact that the “glory” of the industrial age has already ended. Industrial architecture in Albania has played a significant role in the country’s cultural landscape and identity. Its symbolism is complex and multifaceted, representing both the achievements and the challenges of Albania’s industrial past. As Albania continues to evolve and modernize, the preservation and interpretation of its industrial heritage will remain a crucial issue for its people and policymakers.

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