

## THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND OF “LLAIKO VIMA” NEWSPAPER (1945-2012)

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to give a general view of the history of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper of the Ethnic Greek Minority in Albania from the year 1945-2012 in which will be mentioned the general characteristics of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper and mainly its purpose, its publishing team, its circulation, its personality and its ideology, the ideological action frame of its correspondents, its economics and circulation.

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**Keywords:** History, “Llaiko Vima” newspaper, circulation, editors, minority, ideology, economics, rubrics

### Introduction

We are going to present the importance of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper as a philological institution for the Ethnic Greek Minority in Albania. Through this article we are going to give a view of the rubrics and the characteristics, the style, the ideology that was used in this newspaper during communist period and after '90 that was the end of the communist period in Albania.

### Main Text

The first number circulated on 25 May 1945 as a weekly newspaper. It was an “Organ of Democratic Front of the district of Gjirokastra for the Ethnic Greek Minority”. For some years 1948-1954 the newspaper’s headquarters of the editorial office was sometimes in Gjirokastra and sometimes in Tirana. When it was transefered in Tirana from a weekly newspaper was changed into a biweekly newspaper. After the year 1954 the headquarters of the newspaper remained in Gjirokastra. In the pages of this newspaper often were published literature, poems, prose and even literary criticism. Most of the important works of the Ethnic Greek Minority, were published for the first time in the pages of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper. In 1956 was opened in the newspaper “Llaiko Vima” “The literature page”. In the year 1988, came out and was published the eight-page newspaper titled “The literary Llaiko Vima”, which circulated as a monthly and fifteen-day supplement of the newspaper “Llaiko Vima”. The newspaper “Llaiko Vima” on 26 August every year, mainly during the communist dictatorship period, celebrated in the same time even its foundation.

The newspaper “Llaiko Vima” was printed for the first time on 25 May 1945, the publication of the newspaper was covered by Filip Lico. He was also even its first editor. As in all the editorial offices of the time the publishers, the editors, journalists, the terrain reporters, so in all the staff were politicized people by one side and people with dreams and hopes that wanted to express their thoughts and contributed for a better and more beautiful future to the other side.



**The first page of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper 25 May 1945**

The “Llaiko Vima” newspaper reflects the press main formal characteristics of the time so in the beginning had a weekly circulation and later biweekly circulation, firstly it was with two pages, then with four pages, for a later period with eight pages, later on with ten pages and in the end with sixteen pages. It is written with a big responsibility and is characterised as one of the best provincial newspapers of the district that is the station of the Ethnic Greek Minority newspaper. The newspaper is a strong device of the Albanian Labour Party in the everyday war of marxist-leninist education of people. For this reason the editorial office of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper was congratulated by the region’s Party Committee for the important role that the Party had given winning the sympathy of mass workers.<sup>296</sup> In 23.05.1970 Enver Hoxha in the name of the Central Committee of the Labour Party of Albania wrote and sent wishes for all the editors and voluntary correspondents of the editorial offices of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper in Gjirokastra.<sup>297</sup>

“Llaiko Vima” newspaper tried to inspire the mass mobilisation and people’s integration in a wider, political-social and economical sphere and in this context, outside the ideological stratification, we can say that “Llaiko Vima”, in some aspects was a patriotic newspaper, democratic and popular.

Its first editor was Filip Liço and was followed by Thodhori Shano, Aleks Lapa, Vasil Çami and Thanas Suxho. After the year 1992 director and editor was Dhimiter Qiqi, the owner Vasili Jatro and nowadays the owner is Thoma Jani. The regular editors of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper were: Dhimiter Llavari, Kristo Vidhuri, Kosta Zavali, Pano Çuka, Menela Dhaliani, Jani Pilo, Vangjel Vozdho, Jani Thanos, Vasil Çami, Andrea Zarballa, Vasil Papa, Thanas Suxho, Niko Anagnosti, Mihal Naçi, Ziso Lluci, Kristina Cikolla, Vangjel Zafirati, Lefter Drazho, etc. and the orthographic writers Sulltana Bresho, Manuela Budri, etc.

“Llaiko Vima” newspaper during the communist regime circulated once a week, every Thursday, later on twice a week. After the year 1990 for a short period continued to circulate twice a week, later was made a biweekly newspaper, every Thursday. Initially the price of the newspaper was 2 leke per page, later 0.30 leke per page, in continuation 1 leke, later on 2 leke, then 5 leke, was done 10 leke, continued with 15 leke and today 20 leke. The first offices of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper included the editorial offices, the Summery of the editorial office material, Archives, and the guest rooms. In “Llaiko Vima” newspaper, in the

<sup>296</sup> “Llaiko Vima”: 29.05.1955, article: “Wishes of the Central Committee of the region for the editorial office “Llaiko Vima””, pg. 1.

<sup>297</sup> “Llaiko Vima”: 24.05.1970, article: “The newspaper “Llaiko Vima” is a living podium and militant of mass workers of the Ethnic Greek Minority”, pg. 1.

upper part of the title was written the slogan: “Death to fashists. Freedom to the people.” from 1945-1949. The physiognomy of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper as appearance and content was not much different from the Albanian newspapers of the time and reflects the same characteristics and problems as the contemporary newspapers of the Ethnic Greek Minority in Greek language as, “I foni tis Omonias” (1991), “Orama” (1997), “Romiosini” (1997), “Dhrys” (1999), “Dhimotiki foni” (2002), “Pirros” (2003) etc. “Llaiko Vima” is the first newspaper of Ethnic Greek Minority, and the first newspaper in Greek language that circulates till today.

This newspaper was printed in “Argjiro” typography of Gjirokastra. “Llaiko Vima” newspaper office was near the typography that had even a telephone connection. In the newspaper’s office were even the most needed typographic materials for the preparation of writings and a varied documentation of the distribution network, the financial bills and a number of other procedures. The distribution and circulation of the newspaper “Llaiko Vima” was done through the subscription system and in some cases free distribution. The consignment of the pages of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper was done by post. It was published continually from 25 May 1945 till today.

Some of the poets and writers of Ethnic Greek Minority were not paid for their cooperation with the newspaper, but they were morally contentment for their works that were published in the newspaper and this helped them to be honoured and well-known by the wide audience from which they always took warm thankings.

The newspaper’s pages were riched by news, writings or different rubrics that were compiled not only by the editors but even by their friends that were in different positions as for example directors, deputy directors, workers of state services, teachers, young people, simple citizens that were interested and registered events, debates or proceses which they sent to the editorial office of the newspaper. In the beginning the newspaper’s correspondents were presented with their pseudonyms such as “G. K”, “A. N”, “L.”, “K”, “Komentues”, “P. Kastriti”, “Alqi Anthuli”, “Drinioti”, “Axhiokami”, “Ritis Polamitis”, “Dhrinopolitis”, etc. The upper pseudonyms prove the footsteps of a voluntary work, full of pasion and satisfaction, who except from their duties and positions that they had in their everyday life, they played even the role of a public personality hidden under the pseudonyms.

As for the readers of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper we can mention the fact that the publishers willingness was at once even an ideological and political directive given by the communist state to influence as much as it could in the biggest number of the Ethnic Greek Minority readers. This was mainly in the format of a basic parametre, which secured the newspaper’s self-egzistence. In a way the page of each newspaper was a communication text between the editors and their public.

The communication of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper with the public, in this sense, has the meaning that the public was missed in the formulation of ideology which was declared by the publishers writings and their co-operators. Despite the fact that the thoughts exchange was missed, the confrontation of ideas, so it was missed the communication element with the reader, in the newspaper pages it was expressed for the first time the rubric with the title “Correspondence”.

One of the main purposes of “Llaiko Vima” newspaper was to bring in the work places the impact of the build of socialism and also to contribute in the creation of new relationships and the creation of a new social and politcal climate that dominated all over Albania. This purpose was accomplished even with organization of newspapers correspondents in workplaces, who were responsible to follow the good function of life in their enterprises but even to make visits and inspections in other enterprises.

“Llaiko Vima” newspaper gave a big importance to the events and big actions in people’s lives, as it was the collectivisation. The support and the excecution was made in

purpose to advance the Stalin's model that predicted the change of the peasants in land workers. The newspaper supported the politic program for production, material welfare and spiritual development of the workers. It approved without no hesitation the central directives to eliminate the land owners class, encouraged the thought for necessary changes, with all the ways, of the old rural agriculture structures. The collectivisation was presented as the only way for the development and the fast growth of agricultural production and the industrialisation of the country.

The newspaper presented Marxism-Leninism and Stalin's deeds as ideological base of socialism build supporting the theory that the theoretical founding for the creation of communist world outlook came from Carl Marx. According to "Llaiko Vima" newspaper Marx was able to find the code or to interpret the laws of the human society. The newspaper agreed with the saying that every phase of the economical development created new production relations, so in this way it can be found the nature and the contradictions of the capitalist system. The newspaper also created the theory of dialectal materialism, which was the key to understand the real history of the human society. Vladimir Ilitc Lenin and his leninism had a special place at the newspaper. Leninism was presented as a try for the renaissance of marxism and its liberation from uselessness. The values of Lenin and leninism speak about his contribution in the historical events that he lived and leaded but even at his theoretical contribution. The portret of Lenin together with fragments of his works were often published in the newspaper's pages. Lenin was presented as the symbol of war for a new and bright world.

Stalin's presence was realised too, through all the typical, graphic and journalistic characteristics, presenting him as a bright leader, inspirator and beloved parent, advocate of work class, expert of the highest knowledge, the guarantor of the right road and enemies punitive. His word was a source of hope for all the world. Stalin was the leader and the guarantor of the continuation of Lenin work. Often he was presented as Lenin equivalent. Stalin, Lenin and Marx created the admired ideological triple that determined the way inside which was developed the Ethnic Greek Minority life.

The newspaper supports the idea that the rurals won totally their freedom when in the agriculture sector were obliterated the feudal lords, the users, the capitalist monopoly and the land was given to its cultivators. In this way stopped the rural emigration. At the same time was banned the political action of the users as well their speech through press. In the pages of this newspaper were published actions like: the obliteration of illiteracy, the political backwardness, the distinction between the workers, rurals and intellectuals and the gap that divided the intelectual work from the hard works. It was supported the implementation of new laws in the primary education and middle education general and obligatory.

An important chapter of the newspaper was the refusal and prohibition of religion. The basic purpose of "Llaiko Vima" newspaper, from the years 1967 till 1991, was to show with articles and different writings the nature and reactionary character of reliogions with complains and antireligious poems in the cases of the expression of religious feelings. All this had as a basic purpose the tendency to replace religion with the socialist belief. For the newspaper the antireligious attitude was an understandable and a strong political one. In two opposite sides of the spectrum were communism and religion, by one side were the communists, who pretended for the justice of the new socialist society and by the other side were the christians and their caste, that according to propaganda of the time were institutions and organs of use, violence and backwardness.

The newspaper supported the communist concept for the education of the citizens according to the socialist ethics starting with young age. In this way was consolidated the revolutionary vigilance, the military thinking and centralisation spread inside the society circles creating very strong institutions that served the Party.

The newspaper was giving a lot of space to the cultural aspects of different forms as literature (poetry and prose), education, theatre and cinema. For “Llaiko Vima” newspaper different forms of art and education should have an educational character and to be subjected of tries for the education of rurals and workers. The objectives of cultural education and psychologic development of children was the strngthen of feeling of love for the socialist fatherland and the development of the sacrifice belief for fatherland protection.

The newspapers directives for culture people were too many, because the literature creations of the Ethnic Greek Minority creators should emphasise even the dangers that the society had by class enemies.

### **Conclusion**

“Llaiko Vima” newspaper, nowadays is a philological institution, representative that implies:

- an undeniable journalistic-historic fact
- varied and voluminous journalistic activity
- time itinerary covers almost more than half a century
- gathering around itself a wide community of text producers and readers
- varied human biography, directive and journalistic
- a specific status of EGM life outside mothercountry
- community efforts for identification, self-development and integration
- a specific stage of Greek language ethno-culture of origin

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