Report on the State and Measures for the Development and Further Revolutionization of Monumental Propaganda

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With the continuous care of the party and government for the preservation and further development of the patriotic and revolutionary traditions of our people, monumental propaganda acquires with us increasingly broader proportions for the immortalization of the most important events and figures, and is transforming into a powerful instrument for the reflection of the glorious history of our people and for the revolutionary and class education of the masses.

Nowadays, beside the placement of hundreds of commemorative plaques, dozens upon dozens of lapidars, busts, statues, and monuments have been erected everywhere, reminding the traveller and visitor that the Albanian, as comrade Enver has said, has – sword in hand – cut the road of history in two, and that Albania has turned into a country of lapidars and construction sites.

Especially during the last years monumental propaganda has not been developing badly. Partial data show that, except for the naming of 2900 institutions, cities, cooperatives, military wards, roads, and squares with names of persons and historical events, only after the liberation more than 12 monuments, 145 busts, and 590 lapidars have been erected, and 530 commemorative plaques have been placed.

The places where objects of monumental propaganda have been placed have become the most effective centers for patriotic and revolutionary education of the masses, especially of the young generation. They are used by the party and mass organizations, and especially on the occasion of celebrations and anniversaries, as centers for the organization of a range of mass-political activities such as conversations, excursions, admission to the pioneer and youth organizations, etc.

The organization of various activities near objects of monumental propaganda has inspired deep political emotions in the consciousness of the participants, which has contributed to the growth of the love of the masses for the work of the party. At the same time this shows the extensive militant role played by busts, monuments, lapidars, and other objects of monumental propaganda in the ideo-political and emotional education of the masses with the spirit of the party and the revolutionary and military traditions of our people.

Starting from these factors and with the aim of strengthening and further improving the educational and political role and level of monumental propaganda as a tool that is in continuous contact with the masses, the organizations of the party, its levers, and all other pertinent organs are faced with the duty to understand well and treat correctly the importance and militant effect of this powerful weapon in the hand of the party. There still remains much to be done in this direction.

What are actually the main problems that need to be addressed?

The issue of the erection and placement of monumental propaganda objects with the most correct political criteria is of special importance. To this aim, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the PPSH [Labor Party of Albania – trans.] has issued on August 8, 1961, a special decree “About the Criteria for the Erection of Monuments, Statues, Busts, and the Naming of Various Institutions.” Nevertheless, this decree, which provides clear and precise outlines of the political criteria and the way of placing monumental propaganda objects, has neither been adopted as it should nor has it always been considered by the party committees and pertinent organs. In a few regions there are cases showing ignorance about the criteria decided upon of local initiatives (for issues that are not their competencies) for the erection of 2–4 busts for some outstanding figures such as Mustafa Matohiti, Gjok Doçi, Kajo Karafili, Ali Demi, Avni Rustemi, and others, whereas for some other figures and important persons from the patriotic movements, from the National Liberation War, or from the post-liberation period, there is no bust at all. So, for example, until today

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1 AQSH, ф. 511 в. 1968 д. 27, pp. 2-12, dated February 1, 1968.
no busts have been erected in public for indispensable figures such as Qerime Galica (Shota), Ded Gjo Luli, Naum Veqilharxhi, Hasan Pritshtina, Alqi Kondi, Baba Faja, and others.

This doesn't mean that in the future no more than one bust will be erected for some outstanding figures. At issue here is to be more principled and careful in the precise implementation of the criteria, to correctly value the contribution of each important person in the service of the people and party. This problem has to be seen and treated with a political eye, lest we risk falling into subjectivism, err in the right appreciation of phenomena, arouse bad feelings, and as a result damage the party line in this field. Therefore, it is necessary to think about and work on this important problem according to the orientations of the party, in a programmatic way, based on studies that are serious and offer perspective.

Truly, good work in the placement of different monumental propaganda objects has been done from the liberation onward, and with a thematics that was to a certain extent well studied.

It is a positive fact that many places have been determined and demarcated that are of interest for the history and traditions of our people, although in the field there are still many unknown spots that, without losing time, need to be discovered, recognized, and for now demarcated.

This has to be seen also with regard to the issue of the division of monumental propaganda objects, because their distribution and placement, from the simplest objects to the most complex ones, has not always been done following correct criteria. So for example, while more than 70 lapidars have been erected in several regions such as Korçë and Vlorë, in several other regions such as Librazhd, Gramsh, and Pogradec there are no more than 5–10 or 15 lapidars. Just like the placement of other objects, the erection of lapidars is of course determined by the events that happened in one or the other region. But this has also to do with the insufficient political care and appreciation shown for this problem by the party committees and pertinent organs of local government.

This flaw is also to a certain extent noticed in the division and placement of large objects of monumental propaganda, whose situation can be presented as follows:

- 28 busts erected for important historical figures from before 1939;
- 77 busts erected for the heroes and martyrs of the National Liberation War;
- 25 busts erected for the classic figures of Marxism–Leninism and comrade Enver;
- 16 monuments erected in 10 regions for those three divisions, including those that have been placed before the liberation.

The above data show that the distribution of the large monumental propaganda objects according to the regions and periods is, as is also shown below, irregular, because there are important cities such as Durrës, Fier, or Lushnje that do not have any monument. But there are also regions such as Gramsh and Librazhd that have not placed any bust.

As regards the thematics of those objects, it is mainly dedicated to historical events, patriots, heroes, and martyrs of the National Liberation War, border guards, and martyrs that have fallen in struggles with groups of saboteurs. In the large genre of monumental propaganda represented through monuments and sculptural complexes, beside the monuments of Skënderbeg (in the city and the “Stalin” Textile Combines in Tirana) and of comrade Enver (at the United School), 5 monuments and sculptural complexes have been erected like the one of the first cooperative (in Krutje) [ALS–327], of the martyrs of the National Liberation War (in Permet) [ALS–244], of the Partisan (in Tirana) [ALS–1], etc., that symbolize events from the heroical past and present of our people. As such, the thematics of the large genre of monumental propaganda in the field of sculpture is still limited.

1. There are quite a few complexes missing that reflect the most important aspects of the great epic of the National Liberation War, and especially those in which the heroism of our current days is reflected and monuments that treat and generalize the work of the party. (To this end the Ministry of Culture has drafted a 15-year project.)

2. The state related to the representation of the thematics that pertains to the treatment of the Albanian woman is very unsatisfactory. In this direction, except for the bust of Zoja Çurre in Tragjas and Shejnase Juka in Shkodër, there is a total lack of objects that are dedicated to the memory of women in our cities and especially in the large cities where different monumental propaganda objects have been erected by the dozen. Therefore, in the future the thematics and treatment of the work and the figure of the Albanian woman in all types of objects of monumental propaganda remains to be represented. For now we think of taking urgent measures to erect busts of women and girls who have been declared heroines, and to gradually place memorials, and where possible, plaster and cement statues in parks, public gardens, and other places that symbolize the figure of the Albanian woman as a warrior that has played an important role in all periods of our people’s
3. Beside the representation of this theme it is necessary that more monumental propaganda objects are placed that treat the revolutionary activity of our children and pioneers, both of whom yesterday in the war and today in the construction of socialism have stood and stand side by side with their parents.

4. At the same time the gaps concerning the disappearance of the limitation in the thematics of memorials that are dedicated to events before 1939 or that have to do with names of persons or events of our days are to be filled. Especially in monumental propaganda we perform poorly in the representation of the theme of class struggle. Therefore the treatment of the role of the masses as moving force is to occupy a key place in this field, highlighting not only the struggle for national liberation, for the building of socialism and the victories that were won, but also for the struggle for social liberation waged by the masses in our country. This is to be represented through the placement of sculptural complexes, panels, murals, and other genres of this profile.

5. Special attention is to be dedicated to the erection of different monumental propaganda objects relating to the representation of current thematics, especially the revolutionary initiatives of our times that have exploded everywhere in our country, where in a special way the role and works of the masses for the further deepening of the ideological and cultural revolution catches the eye.

Another important problem that is related to the political and educational effect of monumental propaganda objects is the issue of their all-round presentation. Considering these objects from this point of view has as a result that in some them there is a lack in effort at national originality, and that some others are such that they do not attract and inspire respect in the visitor.

Quite a few monumental propaganda objects, especially lapidars, commemorative plaques, and occasional bust have been planned and placed badly. The majority of lapidars has been built the same, with bricks and ugly plastering, without any decorative motive or chiselled basrelief, and nearly all suffer from uniformity. With a few exceptions, the lapidars that commemorate the ancient past and those that commemorate the National Liberation War or the building of socialism are indistinguishable. What is meant is that each epoch has its own characteristic motives. From the other side there are lapidars that do not correspond to the aim for which they were erected, because they do not symbolize concrete events or actions. There are even lapidars that in fact are dedicated to the memory of specific martyrs, but which in reality are not recognized by the visitor because they have no inscription.

The inscriptions on a considerable part of monumental propaganda objects are not striking. The inscriptions suffer from a lack of emotional and political content and as such leave no impression in the visitor’s memory. The inscriptions are often lengthy, badly written, and with mistakes. On many objects they have become illegible and on several others they have been destroyed.

This situation speaks for the little care that still is shown for the maintenance of monumental propaganda objects to the extent that in a few cases some of them have been completely destroyed. This carelessness is also noticed in the maintenance of objects from strong materials, such as important monuments and busts, which are painted by incompetent workers of municipal organs. As a result, some of the outstanding figures are damaged and are losing their characteristics. Therefore, except the serious measures that will be taken by the pertinent organs in this direction, starting from the general presentation of those objects until the systematization and decoration of the surroundings, it is necessary that the issue of the maintenance of monumental propaganda objects is made the opinion and education of all masses and especially the new generation.

To this occasion concrete actions can be undertaken by the front and youth organizations by considering them as a factor in the revolutionary education of the masses. The actions that will be taken in this field are to serve, beside the restoration and maintenance of existing monumental propaganda objects, also the erection of new objects that are related to the most marked events of our people, foremost with those events that represent the theme of the National Liberation War, the appreciation of the theme of the building of socialism and of the deepening of the ideological and cultural revolution.

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It is known that monumental propaganda is not made solely from several specific genres, such as lapidars, busts, or sculptural complexes. Those are just some of its types. The issue is to fully awaken all other components of this branch of party propaganda, from slogans and banners to panels and murals of different types.

To make the role of monumental propaganda in the meanwhile more militant, the time has come to take measures for the development of several more effective artistic genres, such as the placement of basreliefs, different types of statues in parks, panels, murals, and so on. In the first place they need to be placed in those cafeterias, halls, theaters, work centers, military wards, squares, or public gardens that are frequented most by the masses.
On the other hand, the Ministry of Construction and its planning organs, in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the League of Writers and Artists, is to keep in mind prospective special locations for the most important works that will be built after, where eventually monumental propaganda objects can be placed.

The work for settling these issues not only needs to be closely connected to the need for the further revolutionization of monumental propaganda, but at the same time serves to obliterate all foreign influence of feudo-bourgeois and religious ideology that we inherit in this field from the past and that in one or the other form is active in the conscience of the masses. It is clear that we are speaking about the final obliteration or confiscation – on a case by case basis – of those objects (such as crosses, statues, etc.) that have a religious content and that are still placed here and there. On the other side, paintings that are made with an inadequate ideo-artistic taste and content are to be removed from bars, restaurants, train stations, etc. and gradually replaced with artistic works prescribed by the current spirit. Similarly, all products (cushions, embroidered pictures, etc.) with bad content that are put out on the artisanal market are to be recalled.

Parallel to the work for the further development of monumental propaganda, the issue of the systematic utilization of the objects of that propaganda for the continuous education of the masses acquires special importance. Until now, different activities have been organized in the places where those objects have been placed, but nevertheless the sporadic organization of those activities (only in the case of campaigns) shows that the usage of monumental propaganda objects is still not understood as a necessary requirement that contributes to the knowledge and appropriation of the revolutionary history and traditions of the people. This is the source of the limited and unattractive forms that are practiced as regards the utilization of monumental propaganda objects for the universal communist education of the masses, especially the youth. We are not speaking here of giving recipes about what forms and activities can be practiced afterward for the revolutionary education of the masses by means of lapidars, busts, monuments, etc. Each organization, work center, school, or military ward may solve this issue according to the conditions and possibilities it has, by applying various forms, from those the common ones to the military oath, the organization of concerts with revolutionary songs and poetry, the handing over of flags, etc., near monumental propaganda objects. What is important is that we systematize the work for the education of the masses on the side of monumental propaganda and that we closely connect it to the aim of the Marxist–Leninist ideological tempering of our new man.

To improve the situation and to give a stronger impulse to the development of monumental propaganda, we also propose the following measures:

1. At the occasion of the celebration of the large 25th anniversary of the liberation of the Fatherland a broad national campaign is to be announced for lapidars and other monumental propaganda objects, in two directions:
   a. Restoration and improvement of existing objects.
   b. Placement of new objects.

To this end, the Ministry of Education and Culture, in cooperation with local organs, is to take measures that within the most feasible deadline all lapidars that are positioned along national roads are covered in marble, and that at the same time inadequate lapidars are replaced.

From the other side, the Ministry of Education and Culture is to make prototypes (several variants) of lapidars that will be erected, keeping in mind the fact that each prototype contains the characteristic motifs of specific epochs from our people's history.

2. Beside the different monumental propaganda objects that will be erected to commemorate the important events of the history and work of the party and our people from the great epic of the National Liberation War and the construction of socialism, in the framework of the 25th jubileum of the liberation of the Fatherland thematical monuments and sculptural complexes are to be placed treating several of the most marked events of the class struggle waged by the popular masses for social liberation, highlighting the role of mass heroism.

Special care is to be given notably to the placement of different monumental propaganda objects (panels, murals, sculptural complexes, etc.) that represent the mobilization of the masses and their massive heroism in the struggle for the realization of revolutionary initiatives that have erupted everywhere in our country, as well as for their work for the further deepening of the ideological and cultural revolution.

In the way that the large needs that are presented in this field are to be confronted, as well as for the planning of lapidars and other memorials, the Ministry of Education and Culture, beside the engagement of sculptors and architects, is to instruct the State University of Tirana and the Higher Institute of the Arts that in their education requirements the students of the Department of Figurative Arts and
those of the Faculty of Engineering are charged with the work to do projects of sculptural complexes, lapi-
dars, and other monumental propaganda objects that are related to the representation of aforementioned thematics.

3. In the framework of the campaign for the improvement of the state and further development of monumental propaganda, no event is to remain without being commemorated and fixated in some monumental propaganda object, no matter how simple. On this occasion commemorative plaques are to be placed on each object where labor groups have been founded, schools, etc., so that they carry the names of martyrs or events.

4. All party committees and other pertinent organs are to study the state of monumental propaganda and to determine concretely the duties that follow from them for the solution of this problem. Special committees are to be formed for this issue.

5. To impose a better discipline on the issue of the placement of monumental propaganda objects, those objects that are under the nomenclature of the regions themselves are not to be erected without their project being seen and consulted with the masses and commissions.

6. All monumental propaganda objects are to be registered and identified and to be placed in the full care of the executive committees and local museums.

7. With the start of the campaign for the regulation of the situation and the further development of monumental propaganda there is to be written time after time in the central and local press.

8. On the threshold of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of the Fatherland, Publishing House “Naim Frashëri” is to bring out an album with the most beautiful artworks of monumental propaganda.

We think that the concrete determination of the masses for the further strengthening of the role of monumental propaganda becomes more necessary, especially at this moment when the ideological and culture revolution has entered in a new phase of development.