

I

THE POSITION OF ALBANIA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME

It is universally recognized that Albania, today, is not merely one of the satellite states that revolve about the Kremlin. It is more than that. Albania, by reason of her location geographically, her strategic and naval significance and her natural resources, is one of the countries placed by the Soviet Union in a primary position as to utilization and exploitation, from a dual point of view: militarily and economically.

It is possible to say without fear of exaggeration that 95% of the Albanian people are neither Communists nor Socialists in the Marxist significance of the terms. Traditionally, the Albanian is strongly attached to the ideas of faith, family, individual liberty and national independence.

From 1939-1944, during the time of the Italian and German occupation, Communism, in Albania, did not act in behalf of the Communist party, but simply as a movement of liberation. Communism lent to its activities the character of a war against foreign domination.

In this form of the establishment of a sort of popular democracy, proclaimed by Enver Hoxha and his intimate clique, were misled at one time, not only a considerable number of Albanians but also large democratic countries of the most enlightened experience: the United States and Great Britain with the diplomatic recognition they extended in 1945 to Enver Hoxha's government - as a government possessing a democratic front - increased its prestige within and without Albania.

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II

RELATIONS BETWEEN TIRANA AND  
BELGRAGE FROM 1944 - 1948

The government of Enver Hoxha, set up by a Communist clique and supported in the Albanian Communist Party organized from 1941-1944 by the experts of the Yugoslav Communist Party, after it was established in power and consolidated partly by force and partly by manoeuvres and deceits, according to the Moscow directives, was placed in a sphere of obedience to Marshal Tito. The government of Tirana tied Albania to Yugoslavia with fast bonds in the political and economic domain, even to customs unions and monetary solidarity.

The Albanian people who detest Communism and every act limiting freedom and especially the intervention of foreigners in their internal affairs, in 1945, 1946 and 1947 declared themselves opposed to Enver Hoxha's government. But these gestures cost them dearly: strong measures, concentration camps, imprisonment and the execution of many people.

In this period the Albanian people were confronted with an extremely vital problem: the need for defending its territorial integrity. Greece, ruled by no matter which government, claims the two southern provinces of Gjirokastra and Korca which she calls North Epirus, which represent one third of Albania in area and population.

Communism acquits itself with tact, profiting from every opportunity, from every situation, internal and external of the states, the nations and the peoples.

On the one hand, Marshal Tito - former student of Stalin, Stalin who at one time in 1918 was acclaimed as father of the charter of autodecision of the people -

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in order to satisfy all the Albanians, by the Constitution, November 29, 1945 in Art. 2, raised Kosova-Metohine to the position of an autonomous region within the framework of the Federated Popular Republic of Serbia. Later in 1949, he elevated it to the status of an autonomous province.

On the other hand, Marshal Tito, in agreement with Moscow, heralded himself as the defender of the territorial integrity of Albania within the boundaries set in 1913 against the revendication of Greece and entered into a treaty with Albania of mutual guarantee.

In fact, Moscow, undoubtedly in collaboration with Belgrade, employed itself, in the conference of the Deputy Foreign Ministers held in Paris on July 29 and October 15 of 1946, for the maintaining of the territorial integrity of Albania and in this manner with the intervention of American diplomacy, the discussion relating to the territorial requests of Greece from Albania were withdrawn from the days agenda.

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During the period from 1944-1948 the Albanian people were undergoing difficult tests. They were enduring the effects of the internal application of Communism which follows its own course, and the strong influences of Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia which had as objectives, the creation of premises, the preparation of the elements of fact and of rights, the unification of the Albanians for the entrance of Albania as a state into the Federated Popular Republic of Yugoslavia, F.N.R.J., dependent on Belgrade.

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Thus, the created situation is a tragic one. On the one hand, the Albanian people suffer under the tyranny of the Red regime of Enver Hoxha and are exposed to the possibility of being absorbed by Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia. But, on the other hand, there is also the necessity of defending their territorial integrity against Greek claims, which, in the estimation of many Albanians, cannot be assured except by the diplomatic methods and military force of Marshal Tito and the Soviet Union. Difficult alternatives, both of these! The Albanian people are sensible to the two.

Despite the perilous threat of the Greek revendications, the Albanian people are not deficient in expressing their hatred of Enver Hoxha's government.

### III

#### THE RUPTURE WITH MARSHAL TITO AND THE DIRECT LINK WITH MOSCOW

In June of 1948 when the crisis between Belgrade and Moscow arose, the government of Enver Hoxha, naturally depressed by the development of influences in Albania during the time of friendship, confirmed its rupture with Marshall Tito by nullifying all previous treaties and placed itself directly at the disposal of the Kremlin.

The Soviet Union which replaced Yugoslavia in prized positions and in the influence exercised by it, immediately guaranteed Enver Hoxha territorial integrity against Greek claims.

In this field of foreign politics the Kremlin seems

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to be a limitation of a guaranty of the borders given in who knows what form. It is not known if any formal treaties of a military nature have been signed between Moscow and Tirana.

IV

DIRECT RULE OF THE SOVIET UNION  
OVER ALBANIA

In the Communist system the principles of the sovereignty of the nation and the independence of the state have meaning quite different from that accepted by western democracies. However, in Albania, today, it may be said that the notion of independence has disappeared completely from Enver Hoxha's government.

Since June of 1948, when the rupture of Tirana with Belgrade occurred, the Soviet Union took the fate of Albania entirely into her own hands.

Totalitarian Russia controls all the political, administrative and economic mechanisms and in a special way, the military apparatus.

The Plenipotentiary Minister of the Soviet Union, with his broad staff, accredited in Tirana, determines and dictates the foreign policies of Albania and regulates diplomatic relationships between Enver Hoxha's government and all other countries. The Soviet Legation draws up the text of the laws and decrees of the state.

Russian functionaries apparently, with their titles of counselors and organizers, effectively command in all the branches of the internal administration of the state. They have taken over positions and offices of initiative and

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command. Albanian employees are obliged to obey them.

Russian technicians install and put into motion industries of every type.

V

EXPLOITATION OF THE MINES

It is common knowledge that the most valuable economic sources of Albania are the mines. Of first importance are petroleum, copper and chrome. All of these are exploited directly by the Russians. In particular, the zones of the oil wells of Kucove (now baptized with the name of "Stalin") and of Patos and of the copper galleries of Fuke are hedged in behind barbed wire. In these zones no one is admitted without the special permission of the Russians. Not only technical and administrative matters but also exploited materials are supervised by the Russians. The Albanians are employed only in digging with shovels and in the carrying of materials which cannot be conveyed mechanically. Albanian workers hired for these services are recruited, after careful screening, from those in whom the Communists have complete faith.

There is still more: It is said that in these zones, enclosed by barbed wire, of the exploitation of petroleum and copper, there are also deep cellars secreted underneath the ground. Into these, no Albanian - except perhaps Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu - is permitted to enter. It is believed that these catacombs serve as depositories for refined products: petroleum and copper. The guarding of these is entrusted to Russian soldiers of the Red army who stand day and night with drawn bayonets.

All are agreed that the Russians have attached special

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import to the petroleum in Albania and they exploit it using the most modern methods with the greatest intensity. Nonone is in a position to know the exact quantities in which it is produced.

Therefore, the Soviet Union potently exercises its influence in Albania, in foreign policies, in internal administration and in the exploitation of the economic sources of the country.

## VI

### SOVIET MILITARY STRUCTURE IN ALBANIA

For the Soviet Union, that which has the most value is the geographic configuration and necessarily the strategic and naval positions which Albania represents.

Stalin, heir of Peter the Great, in another form, having arrived at the final point of the releasing, politically, of Red Russia in the Mediterranean, of the mission of maintaining and strengthening of these valuable positions, trusted to the great Red strategists of land and sea. These men have not shirked their duty. They have given to Albania all the significance she merits. She has been treated as an area of military and naval operations which may be unloosed in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans.

The Soviet military mission in Albania, forged in a school of iron discipline, has proceeded energetically in plan and method. During the three years that it has commanded directly and effectively, military, naval and air bases have been created and a system of fortification of the seacoast and the mainland of Albania has been put into practice. It is said that on the Island of Sazan and the points extending along

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the gulf, roundabout it has been installed the most modern equipment that the Red Army has today at its disposition for use in the eventuality of a war in the Mediterranean area. The Military organization of Albania by the Russians is kept strictly secret. Today no one knows the truth. It may be said that the number of soldiers in the standing army, taking into consideration the various sources and the population of the country, is significant. It is estimated that between forty and fifty thousand men are inquadrated into four divisions of the Infantry.

In the field of military organization, Moscow, with its effective apparatus of the staff of her Red Army, exercises, in the most direct and exclusive fashion, her influence. Bearing this in mind particularly from this standpoint, Albania, today, should not even be referred to as a satellite state. It may be qualified as a military district of the U.S.S.R. This is a situation imposed by Moscow, not only against the will of the people but it may be said perhaps even to the point of being against the wishes of Enver Hoxha's government itself.

Officers, subordinate officers and ordinary soldiers of the Soviet Union recruit, train, organize and command the Albanian Army. In the smallest unit of the Albanian Army not only the control but also the command is exercised by members of the Red Army.

The masses of Albanian youth drafted into the army, present themselves and are retained in military service contrary to their wills from fear of the execution of strong measures against themselves and their families.

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In spite of this many of those called do not appear in answer to the draft. They take refuge in the mountains where they find others from the nest of resistance and add to their numbers. Of course, from time to time they encounter government forces and gunfire is exchanged. Many are killed! At the same time the family and supporters of these brave men of the resistance are hounded and persecuted.

In any case, the desertions from the military cadres are frequent. With all the severity of the measures taken to close the borders, by the military command, many of the soldiers find opportunities to escape to the mountains or cross the borders and enter Yugoslav or Greek territory. The desertions by the soldiers and the civilians might be more widespread if they were to find in Greece and Yugoslavia not only a better reception but also a more satisfactory political atmosphere.

The Albanian section of the staff of the Red Army, operates with tact and method. In league with other services of propaganda it exploits thoroughly the principle of the autodecision of the people in general thesis. As a result, it has known how to affect the most sensitive point of the Albanian of every tendency and still more strongly of the youth of draft age. The first article on the daily agenda in the moral and political education of Albanian youth in the schools and in the barracks is: "The Albanian Army is one of the elements of the Red Army which is destined to secure the fate of the Albanian nation and especially the defense of the territorial integrity of southern Albania threatened by Greece."

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Naturally, preaching of this kind, with so broad a political and national content, finds a free field to circulate. It places under an examination of the conscience, every Albanian soldier who deserts the task of guarding the borderlines with which he is entrusted, to enter, particularly, Greek territory where he must surrender his arms without having either security or even the promise that in the future the army of the neighboring country, where he flees to find asylum and cooperation, will not march to occupy Albania and especially the southern provinces which are being claimed.

VII

THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AGAINST ENVER  
HOXHA'S GOVERNMENT AND MOSCOW RULE

The Albanian resistance movement against the Communist founded regime has always been vigorous, energetic and spread out in all the regions of Albania. So it is today, but even stronger and more extensive against the agents, experts, counsellors, organizers and strategists of the Soviet Union who are in authority in Albania.

The Albanian people cannot endure the Red tyranny. They are not and do not desire to be responsible to history for the way in which the Soviet Union with strong political pressure and with its terrifying military force, prepares and organizes in Albania.

This movement of resistance is discernible in all sectors. It begins with the education of the children in the home, in the school, spreads to the employees of

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of the administration, to the ranks of the soldiers and reaches to those who are armed and fighting in the mountains.

In Albania, for centuries, the mountain has been an impregnable fortress for the people's freedom. Each mountain peak is a nest of the war for the defense of the liberty of the nation, of the traditions of the race, against every active occupier of every kind.

Unquestionably, the resistance manifested by Albanian democracy against every form of the Communist regime, has been expensive for this small peoples: interning and imprisonment, the torturing of tens of thousands, the execution of thousands, among whom were the three high prelates of the Catholic Church.

An episode can be recalled, occurring on February 10 of this year; in the Soviet Legation Palace in Tirana, a bomb exploded in what can be termed an attack against the Soviet Union. Immediately a state of emergency was proclaimed. Thousands were arrested in Tirana and elsewhere. Following a short procedure behind closed doors, at least forty persons were executed. Of these, approximately twenty names are known. On this occasion, a law was promulgated by virtue of which a sentence of death was passed against everyone participating in the resistance movement and particularly, against everyone who is found with arms either on his person or in his residence. To enforce the execution of this law the Peasant Councils are recognized as the competent authorities to make decisions from the first step to the last without any chance of recourse to trial.

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VIII

PERSECUTIONS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The puppet government of Enver Hoxha has recently carried out a revolutionary act in the religious field; it has declared the separation of the Albanian Catholic Church from every bond which ties it to the Holy See. The proclaimed break is not restricted to things relating to the internal administration of the property and incomes of the Church. It seems to be a radical break which extends to the regulating of the Church in the education and discipline of the clergy, in the ordination of priest, in the consecration of bishops and in their investiture.

A concordat has not existed between the Albanian state and the Vatican owing to historical reasons. However, from an ancient tradition, the Albanian Catholic Church has enjoyed a very broad autonomy as towards the Holy See so also towards the Albanian state. With the exclusion of a few Jesuit Fathers - who have been foreigners - all of the clergy, secular and regular, have been exclusively Albanian. Even the bishops themselves were chosen and consecrated in Albania from the Albanian race and blood by the clergy and the people - *clerus et populus*. Only the investiture of the bishop was performed by the Holy See from a list of two names of bishops freely chosen - by the clergy and the Albanian people - presented by the Archbishop of Shkodra, metropolitan of Albania.

Today, in Albania, the Albanian episcopate no longer exists. The Albanian Catholic Church has been the object of the most merciless persecution by the Albanian Communist

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government as when it was controlled by Belgrade so also in the direct rule of Moscow. Monseigneur Gjini, Archbishop of Shkodra, Monseigneur Zef Prenushi, Archbishop of Durres, great national poet, Monseigneur Voloj, bishop of Shkodra, the Provincial of the Franciscans, tens of other priests and many small boy students of the seminaries have endured the test of Calvary: they have been nailed to the cross. Unnumbered are the Catholic priests imprisoned and in concentration camps. The schools, the seminaries, the foundations are closed. Their property has been confiscated.

Enver Hoxha has put this revolutionary act of the schism of the Albanian Catholic Church from the Holy See as a free decision made by the Catholic clergy in a special meeting held in Shkodra. The reality is a completely different thing. The Catholic priests saved from the polygon of execution, from the prisons and from the concentration camps are very few. Even those few who have escaped are modest vicars living in isolated villages of the mountains, kept under close observation and obliged to act, in many instances, against their beliefs and will.

All the Albanians are of the opinion that this revolutionary act is not a decision of Enver Hoxha. It has been dictated to him by Moscow. Now the question is posed as to what is the true purpose of Moscow. It is a radical reform executed by a strong hand and destined to remain limited to a small area of Albania. Can this be possible? But the way the situation stands at present, no one can be stopped from thinking that the Kremlin by this gesture should not have as an aim - of immediate or distant fulfillment - the making of the first tests of the creation of a precedence - in a

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small place like Albania where the number of believers in the Catholic faith is not very large - which may be of value in the forcing of greater changes in larger countries behind the Iron Curtain against the Apostolic Church of Rome.

#### CONCLUSION

Although the Soviet Union does not have military power in Albania - as it has in some other countries - exercises force in a more direct and effective rule and command. To the Soviet Union today, Albania is the country which secures, even if in an indirect manner, its exit to the Mediterranean. An exit to the Mediterranean embodies the history itself of totalitarian Russia: the plan determined upon by the despotic Princes of Kiev to the last Czar of the Romanoff dynasty. These princes and dynasties have had for their program an exit into the warm sea of the Mediterranean, not only for free shipping navigation, a righteous thing, but to make felt in the world, the political, military and sea powers of totalitarian Russia.

But, Stalin, today, has exceeded the century-old plans. His strategy aims too high. It is apparent that he wishes to use the Mediterranean as a theatre of army and naval operations against the forces of democracy of western civilization, to assure the triumph of the five-pointed Red Star on the five continents.

The tiny but heroic Albanian people resist, fight, sacrifice for the defense of their liberty. They give their contribution towards the success of the Cause of western democracy which simultaneously is theirs also.

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But their war is that of David's against Goliath. The Red Colossus utilizes all its heavy political and military weight. Among other things is placed also the mirage of the guarantee of territorial integrity of Albania which is the closest thing to every Albanian's heart.

The Albanian war may grow to even greater proportions. It may conclude with the overthrow of Enver Hoxha in the collapse of this government and of course, in the ousting of approximately three thousand technical, advisory, military and civilian organizers, Red Russian employees who are ruling arbitrarily in Albania today and are working for the execution of their great plans in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans, if the Albanian people should find in the forces of international democracy an adequate material and political support and if they had assurance of the defense of their territorial integrity.

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