

Mehdi Elezi
Via Monaldi 8 r
Florence, Italy

April 30, 1955

Dear Mr. Dosti,

I wish to inform you that on April 22 of this year I had the good fortune to leave Yugoslavia and enter Italy. For the present I am in Florence and I believe I will remain here for a time.

With this letter I will give you a brief summary mentioning that my brother Cen Elezi has died as well as the sufferings of my family and myself personally.

From the year 1946 until August of 1948, I was in the mountains along with my brother Cen and some other friends. We fought in the mountains of Dibra against Communism. During this time we suffered because the pursuit was close. The fact is that the Security Police have mercilessly executed many of our friends. They employed the pretext that our friends had sheltered escapees like ourselves.

In June of the year 1948 when the Yugoslav government came out against Russia and the present government of Tirana, it created an organization which it could have at its disposition. Its program was uprising in Albania since the time was thought to be most favorable. The morale of the people and the army in Albania was extremely low.

In the month of July, 1948, we traveled the entire area of Peshkopia. We went to the mountains of Rechi, Dardh, Lur, Lum and others. We returned to the Slova area. We made contact and formed a staff in the village of Selane, an hour from Peshkopia, and quite a suitable spot. After this organization we were faced with the major need of finding guns and ammunition. Very rarely could there be found in a village one or two rifles. And these were usually rusty. Thus, in this critical situation, we were faced with the problem of arms and ammunition. We had no ties with western peoples. Nor had we news from the outside. Time would not wait for us.

The difficulty of the situation compelled us to contact, through Aqif Lleshi, the Yugoslav government to secure guns and ammunition. The Belgrade government greeted our proposal with satisfaction. Within two days they sent a delegation composed of three officers: one colonel, one major and one lieutenant, accompanied by Mustafa Lleshi, the son of Aqif Lleshi. The three Yugoslav officers were connected with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and were trusted men of Alexander Rankovic (?) and were concerned with the question of Albania. We met with them secretly in the village Sharmite near the Yugoslav border.

On our side were Cen, Dan Kalloshi and six other friends from the mountains. The Yugoslav colonel spoke. The interpreter was Mustafa Lleshi. The colonel welcomed them to Yugoslav soil. He said that he had been sent directly by the Ministry of Internal Affairs: by Rankovic himself. The Yugoslav government was ready to give guns and ammunition and any other assistance but with the condition that an agreement be signed in Shkupi. The agreement was to be signed on the Yugoslav behalf by a general sent directly to Shkup and on our behalf by Cen Elezi. The colonel spoke harshly

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of Russia and its policies and praised the Anglo-Americans. After the Colonel, the major spoke. He attacked Enver Hoxha strongly and the men in his clique. He praised Balli Kombetar and its leaders saying "we are closely united with the Americans. We have rejected the red star of Moscow along with the portraits of Stalin. In our armies we have American organizers."

At their proposal we went to Shkupi. On the following day we were invited to dinner (a banquet) given by the general from Belgrade. We were arrested. I will speak more broadly of this since I have much to say. I will tell you the truth. We were badly mistaken. We paid dearly for our mistakes. The betrayal was Aqif Lleshi's and his son's, Mustafa. If we had not entered Yugoslav soil we might have been able to play a great role in Albania which might have resulted in the organization of a resistance movement against Communism.

Ceni died in prison in Shkupi in May 18, 1949. Dan Kalloshi also died in prison in July of 1950. After them many other Albanian escapees died in Yugoslav territory. Some of them died because of their sufferings, we may say even for the lack of nourishment. I was freed from prison along with some others on February 22, 1951.

(A) Concerning the conditions imposed upon Albanians in Yugoslavia I will not write this time because in the village "llugor" of Gerove near Zagrebi I have seven nephews and many friends. They are vigorous young men, ready for action. Besides these in the "llugor" there are a great majority of the emigrants who are seeking to leave Yugoslavia. They live in misery. The conditions of foods, housing are miserable.

We beg that you intercede with the American friends so that these people might have the right to leave Yugoslavia and enter Italy.

(B) (C) I am prepared to give you a report of what the Belgrade government thinks of affairs in Albania. I am also able to report to you the activities of Dushan Mugoshi in trying to gain Albanian emigrants. In all of their conferences they speak against Balli Kombetar and the NCFA. I feel the absolute need of meeting you personally when ever you may plan to visit Italy. Please let me know. I am very depressed because of the ~~stagnant~~ condition of our friends still in Yugoslavia since they are not cared for. I am extremely grieved at learning here in Italy that there are misunderstandings and divisions among the groups and parties. These things are bad for us and pleasing to the governments of Tirana and Belgrade.

Concerning my own situation here, I beg that you will interest yourself since I am in very difficult financial straits. I appeal only to you because I have always had a great deal of respect for you.

I assure you, by my word of honor, that our Albanian homeland will always find me ready to rise for it at any moment.

I have recent news of Albania from a cousin of mine who lately came out of Albania into Yugoslavia. He was condemned to five years imprisonment in Tirana. I was not able to take notes as he spoke since I was afraid of being searched. He has fought vigorously against Dushan Mugoshi. I will inform you of everything. For the present I limit myself to this. My warmest regards.....

Mehdi Elasi

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