

INFORMATION SECTION

JB#
3105

12/15/51

XI STOCKHOLM 268

3628

ALBANIA

POPULARITY STRUGGLE BETWEEN HODJA AND SHEHU

Enver HODJA, Communist chief in Albania, is reported to be involved in a bitter "popularity struggle" with Russia's new favorite, (General) Mehmet SHEHU, according to a recent reliable report.

Reason for the struggle, which is closely guarded, is a unique one in Soviet satellite countries. HODJA, founder of the present Communist Party in Albania, made a name for himself as an underground resistance leader during the war. Much like TITO he has been a comrade in arms with many of his countrymen. To aid his personal ambitions, as well as to fortify his government after Yugoslavia broke with the Cominform, HODJA started to publicize himself as another SKANDERBEGS, Albania's national hero who defended the country against the Turks some 500 years ago. As a result of his successful campaigning, Albanian Communism has been more and more personified by one person--HODJA.

Russia, meanwhile, viewed HODJA's increasing popularity with some misgivings, since she prefers to distribute power in satellites among several Communist leaders who would, to a certain extent, compete with each other. Though HODJA ruthlessly purged all Titoist elements from the Albanian Communist Party, his personal similarity to TITO as far as his popular appeal is concerned has remained a target for Soviet suspicion. Moreover, HODJA's former close cooperation with Yugoslavia--during the war and immediately after the war--are likely to be held against HODJA by the Russians whenever they wish to promote their own favorite--SHEHU.

(During the war, Albanian partisans in the strength of two divisions once rescued TITO's trapped forces. In the postwar era, Yugoslav hegemony over Albania was an open fact which found expression in the many joint Yugoslav-Albanian development companies, Yugoslav experts working in Albania, and finally, in TITO's offer to merge the two country's currencies into one--the Yugoslav dinar was to replace the Albanian currency.)

General SHEHU is not burdened with such a political past, although he has occupied several cabinet posts under HODJA. Less intelligent and not nearly so well educated as HODJA, SHEHU is

(MORE)

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)

- (2)(A) Privacy
- (2)(B) Methods/Sources
- (2)(G) Foreign Relations

Declassified and Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 2005

page 2 -- #3628

openly supported by the Soviet legation in TIRNA which more and more considers him a confident, especially in military matters.

This internal struggle between SHEHU and HODJA has been cleverly kept from the Albanian people--who are not aware of it at all.

(RIC: Reliable and excellent background)

E W

E W