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Aug 63

ALBANIA

Enver HOXHA

First Secretary, Albanian Workers' Party



Hoxha, First Secretary of the Albanian Workers' Party (AWP), has been the leading Albanian Communist since the formation of the Party in 1941. Prominent during World War II as a Party and resistance organizer, he emerged in the postwar period as the undisputed leader of the Albanian government and Party. Since his accession to power Hoxha has eliminated all threats to his position, most notably the pro-Yugoslav faction under Koci Xoxe, who was executed in 1949. Hoxha's only rival within the present hierarchy is Mehmet Shehu, to whom Hoxha relinquished the Premiership in 1954, and although there have been continuing reports of friction between the two men, most observers agree that they have evolved an effective working partnership. They have collaborated successfully since the late 1940's to maintain absolute control over their small Balkan country, and recent studies indicate no likelihood of change in the Albanian leadership.

During the almost two decades of his virtual dictatorship, Hoxha has led Albania through a series of dramatic foreign policy changes. Although he was pro-Yugoslav during and immediately after the war, Hoxha became violently anti-Yugoslav and pro-Soviet following Tito's break with the Cominform in 1948. Since 1960, however, Hoxha has assumed an anti-Soviet, pro-Chinese attitude, defying Moscow's ideological and political authority, and aligning his country firmly with the Communist Chinese in the Sino-Soviet dispute. It is interesting to note that Hoxha's break with the Soviet Union has resulted in some measure of real popular support from the xenophobic Albanian people.

Enver Hoxha was born in Gjirokaster on 16 October 1908. His father, a middle-class textile merchant, was a Moslem of the Bektashi sect. Young Hoxha received his secondary education at the French Lycee in Korce. In 1930 he was sent on a state scholarship to study natural sciences at Montpellier University in France, but a year later his scholarship was withdrawn. Leaving the University, Hoxha went to Paris where he met Paul Courtourier, chief editor of L'Humanite, the organ of the French Communist Party, and wrote anti-Zogist newspaper articles under the pen name "Lulo Malesori." Unable to find permanent employment in France, Hoxha went to Brussels where he worked as a secretary at the Albanian Consulate from 1933 to 1936. He still maintained clandestine contact with Courtourier, and in the latter year he was dismissed from the Consulate for his political views.

Returning to Albania, Hoxha obtained teaching positions at the gymnasium in Tirana and later at the French Lycee at Korce. After the Italian invasion of Albania in 1939 he was discharged from the Lycee for his refusal to join

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Enver HOXHA (cont.)

the Fascist Party. He then moved to Tirana where he operated a tobacco kiosk which became a front for Communist cell meetings and resistance activities. Tried in absentia and sentenced to death by the Italian occupation authorities in October 1941, he went underground for the duration of the war.

At the clandestine founding conference of the Albanian Communist Party, held in Tirana during November 1941 under the guidance of two emissaries of the Yugoslav Communist Party, Dusan Mugosa and Miladin Popovic, Hoxha was named to membership on the Central Committee of the provisional Party leadership. In 1943, at the Party's First National Conference, held in Labinot, he was elected Secretary General of the first formally constituted Central Committee.

Hoxha was one of the principal organizers of the Conference of Peze, held in September 1942, in which resistance leaders of all shades of political opinion participated. This conference created the National Liberation Movement (LNC), with a Communist-controlled General Council of National Liberation, to which Hoxha was elected. At its conference of Labinot, held in July 1943, the LNC General Council created the General Staff of the Army of National Liberation of Albania (ANLA), and Hoxha became the Staff's political commissar. Thus the Communists, under Hoxha's leadership, dominated and controlled the partisan resistance movement, and as the war drew to an end, they consolidated their grip on the country and liquidated members of other resistance and opposition groups.

At the Congress of Permet in May 1944, which created the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation, Hoxha was named President of this Council and Commander-in-Chief of the ANLA, with the rank of Colonel General. The Congress of Berat (October 1944) transformed the Anti-Fascist Council into the Albanian Provisional Government, with Hoxha assigned the dual roles of Premier and Minister of National Defense. After the withdrawal of the German forces from Albania, the new government installed itself at Tirana on 28 November 1944, and the Communist take-over of the country was virtually completed. Upon the adoption of the new Albanian Constitution in March 1946, Hoxha gained the additional posts of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

In November 1948, when the Albanian Communist Party changed its name to the Albanian Workers' Party (AWP), Hoxha was re-elected Secretary General. He was elected to his present post of AWP First Secretary in July 1954, when a Central Committee plenum abolished the function of Secretary General, following the Soviet post-Stalin pattern. In July 1953, after having held the country's key military and governmental assignments for nearly a decade, he relinquished the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of National Defense, as well as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to his trusted lieutenants. A year later, in accordance with the Soviet-dictated principle of collective leadership, he gave up the Premiership to Shehu.

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Enver HOXHA
(cont.)

In recent years Hoxha has led his country into a uniquely important position in the Sino-Soviet controversy, largely in reaction to Tito's "revisionism" and Khrushchev's de-Stalinization. In the mid-1940's both the Albanian Party and government were under strong Yugoslav influence, and the country functioned as a sub-satellite of the USSR. In 1948, when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform, Albania gained the status of a full-fledged satellite of the Soviet Union after Hoxha vehemently denounced the Yugoslavs and embarked on a series of purges of so-called "Titoists." A new phase in Albanian foreign relations began with Khrushchev's reconciliation visit to Yugoslavia in May 1955. If he followed the new Soviet line, Hoxha faced the prospect of personal humiliation in retracting seven years of extreme anti-Yugoslav statements as well as the possibility of renewed Yugoslav influence over his country. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign added a further dimension to the situation, since the Albanian leadership utilizes Stalinist methods to maintain control of the country.

Hoxha then turned to China, which seemed both willing and powerful enough to protect him from Soviet pressure. However, it soon became apparent that, in return for Chinese protection, Albania would have to support China in her controversy with the Soviet Union, and Hoxha subsequently committed his country to this policy. At the first great debate on the Sino-Soviet ideological controversy, held in Bucharest in June 1960, which was attended by Khrushchev and all other European bloc Communist leaders except Hoxha, Albania was represented by Hysni Kapo, a member of the AWP Politburo, who espoused all the Chinese arguments against Khrushchev's policies. Hoxha also was the only European bloc Communist leader who did not accompany Khrushchev to the meeting of the UN General Assembly in September 1960; Shehu traveled to New York on that occasion. Hoxha did, however, attend the conference of the 81 Communist Parties held in Moscow in November 1960, where he strongly supported China's policy on war and co-existence.

During 1961 Albanian-Soviet relations continued to deteriorate; Soviet economic and technical assistance to Albania was suspended, replaced largely by Chinese aid, and in December diplomatic relations between Albania and the USSR were severed. Since then Hoxha's foreign policy has been directed toward cementing the protective ties with Peking, for Albania urgently needs continued aid as well as political protection. However, Hoxha, realistically aware of both China's geographic distance from Albania and her precarious internal economic situation, has recently attempted to improve relations with Albania's neighbors, especially Italy, to reactivate trade relations with Western Europe, and to develop trade with Near Eastern and African countries. Western observers are generally agreed that the Hoxha regime will face no serious conflicts as long as sufficient outside assistance and protection can be obtained.

Handsome in his youth, about six feet tall, Hoxha has a robust build with a tendency to stoutness. Intelligent, with a great deal of personal charm and a gift for oration, he is considered egotistical, unreliable, cunning,

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Enver HOXHA (cont.)

temperamental, ruthless and possessed of driving ambition. It has been said that he would subscribe to any sacrifice, immorality, crime, subservience and even personal humiliation in order to stay in power. Hoxha speaks French, Italian, Russian, English and Serbo-Croatian. Since 1945 he has been married to Nexhmije (Xhuglini) Hoxha; they have at least three children.

Since World War II Hoxha has frequently traveled outside his native country, although he has seldom left the Communist bloc. He has visited every East European bloc country at least once, and made frequent trips to the USSR before diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken in 1961. In September-October 1956, during his only known trip to the Far East, he stopped briefly in Mongolia and North Korea on his way to China, where he stayed for three weeks before returning to Tirana.

Since August 1945 Hoxha has been President of the Democratic Front, the country's main Party-backed political organization. He has been a deputy to the People's Assembly since 1945 and a member of its Presidium since July 1954. In 1949 he received the rank of General of the Army. The recipient of numerous Albanian decorations, Hoxha received the Yugoslav Partisan Star and the Yugoslav Order of People's Hero, both of which he later discarded. He has also been awarded the Soviet Order of Suvorov, first class, and the Garibaldi Star of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party.

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