

ALBANIAN LIFE

50 p



№ 34

№ 1 1986

JOURNAL OF THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY

CONTENTS

National Meeting	1
Meetings in South Wales	2
"Enver Hoxha and the Liberation War", by Norberto Steinmayr	3
"Esmeralda", a short story by Filip Çakuli .	10
"The Development of Geography in Albania", by Mevlan Kabo .	13
"To a Faded Flower", a poem by Luigj Gurakuqi	17
"Painters Stimulated by Byron", by Ferid Hudhri	18
Correspondence	22
Holidays in Albania	24
"A Very Special People", by Mary Cawkell .	26
"The Tirana Circus", by Shaban Klloja . .	29
"Psychiatry in Albania", by Ashoka Prasad .	30
Book Review: Enver Hoxha: "Two Friendly Peoples:", reviewed by Steve Day	36
New Literature	38
Albanian News	39
Two Poems by Moikom Zeqo	45
Future Meetings	48

THE NATIONAL MEETING

A national meeting of the Albanian Society was held at the Bishopsgate Institute, London on Sunday, November 24th, 1985. Laurie Prescott spoke on "Two Friendly Peoples" (the Greek minority in Albania), a sketch "Amnesia International" was presented satirising Amnesty International's report on Albania, and the colour film "Skanderbeg" was screened.

The meeting adopted unanimously the following resolution, which was telegraphed to Tirana:

"This London meeting, organised by the Albanian Society, sends its warm good wishes to the Albanian people on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of Liberation and the 73rd anniversary of Independence. It congratulates the Albanian Party, State and working people on the momentous achievements which their country has made in recent years in the economic, social and cultural fields, and expresses its sincere hope that this progress may continue in peace".

The following telegram was received in reply from Jorge Melica, Chairman of the Albanian Committee for Cultural and Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries:

"We sincerely thank you for the warm good wishes that you sent to us on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Liberation of our Motherland and the victory of the People's Revolution. The activity of your Society in making known the progress and achievements of the Albanian people serves to strengthen the friendship between our two countries and peoples. We convey to you and to all members of the Society and friends of Socialist Albania best wishes and success in your noble work".

The meeting was followed by a social at which Dave Smith organised a concert of Albanian café music, Ted

Armstrong presented slides of Albania, and a video of the Albanian State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble was screened.

The above meeting was preceded by a Members' Meeting, presided over by the President, Martin Smith, at which the Secretary reported on the activities and finances of the Society since the last Members' Meeting.

The following Committee was elected:

Martin Smith (President)
Bill Bland (Secretary)

Barry Ackroyd;
Steve Day;
Lorna Gore Browne;
Ramsey Margolis;
Stan Marut;
John Newall;
Laurie Prescott;
John Puntis;
Dave Smith;
Norberto Steinmayr.

MEETINGS IN SOUTH WALES

On December 5th, 1985 Ron Gregory, Secretary of the South Wales Branch of the Society, spoke to the Bridgend Stamp Club on the history of Albanian stamps and showed colour slides of his recent visit to Albania.

On January 23rd, 1986 Ron Gregory spoke to the Penyfar Folk Dance Society on the musical traditions of the Albanian people and showed a colour video of the 1983 Gjirokastra National Folk Festival.

On January 26th, 1986 a meeting was held in the Bridgend Recreation Centre at which Ron Gregory spoke on his visit to Albania, illustrated with colour slides.

ENVER HOXHA AND THE LIBERATION WAR

by Norberto Steinmayr

All the successes achieved in socialist Albania in industry and agriculture, in education and science, as in every other field, besides the honour and prestige enjoyed by the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in the world, have their roots in the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War waged by the Albanian people under the leadership of the Communist Party of Albania, with Enver Hoxha at the head. The heroic events of that time are linked very closely - "like flesh to bone", as the Albanians say metaphorically - with the direct and decisive role played by Enver Hoxha as the founder of the CPA, as the organiser and leader of the National Liberation War and of the people's revolution, and as the commander of the National Liberation Army.

Still very young, Enver Hoxha took part in the 1924 June Revolution in Albania, before going to France and Belgium, where he became acquainted and sympathised with the European communist movement. In 1936 he returned to Albania and became one of the most active members of the Korça Communist Group, organising the anti-fascist patriotic movement all over the country and working to unite the communists, who were then divided in different groups. Having also been the main organiser of the big anti-fascist demonstration in Tirana on October 28th, 1941, Enver Hoxha was condemned to death in absentia by the fascist authorities and so was forced to go underground.

Among the Albanian communists, he was the first to understand the necessity of a single communist party in order to unite the people for national and social liberation. In those darkest days of foreign occupation, Enver Hoxha made a decisive contribution to the creation of the CPA, founded on November 8th, 1941. To achieve this, it

was necessary to overcome sectarian and opportunist stands. Together with other communists, Enver Hoxha fought against anarchic, trotskyite and social-democratic views which had struck root in the ranks of the various communist groups. He refuted and condemned the anti-marxist platform according to which there was no basis for the formation of a communist party because capitalism in Albania was undeveloped, because the Albanian peasantry was conservative and reactionary, because the proletariat was non-existent, etc. With mature ideological and political arguments, Enver Hoxha upheld the Leninist principle of the possibility of by-passing the stage of developed capitalism in order to establish socialism in a backward country like Albania. The leadership of the CPA, with Enver Hoxha at the head, constituted in fact the subjective factor which made possible the liberation of the country and the triumph of the people's revolution.

Between April 1939 and November 1944, the small territory of Albania was occupied by about 700,000 Italian and German troops. 70,000 Albanian fighters participated in the Anti-fascist war: 28,000 of them, representing 2.48% of the population, lost their lives. This liberation struggle was linked with the patriotic experience of the past: with the National Renaissance that led to national independence in 1912; with the battle of Vlora in 1920 against the Italian occupiers, with the democratic revolution of June 1924 and the workers' demonstrations of the '30s. Moreover, the Albanian National Liberation War had a dual character: it was anti-imperialist and anti-fascist, but was at the same time anti-feudal with the character of a social revolution. This dual character stemmed from the existence of two main contradictions: that between the Albanian people and the occupiers, and that between the majority of the people (the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and patriotic intellectuals) and the exploiting ruling classes (the landowners, the bajraktars, the reactionary bourgeoisie), which constituted the social support of the foreign occupiers.

Right from the outset, the CPA called on all people,

regardless of their political, social or religious differences, to wage an uncompromising war against the foreign occupiers in order

" . . . to fight for the national independence of the Albanian people and for a people's democratic government in an Albania free from fascism".
 ("History of the Party of Labour of Albania", 1982 edition, p. 69-70).

The combination of national with social tasks was achieved neither spontaneously nor instantly: it was a gradual process organised and led by the CPA, which numbered 200 members in 1941 and only 2,800 at the end of the war. The political, organisational, military and educational activity of Enver Hoxha was inseparable from the fundamental stages of this process.

The Conference of Peza (16 September 1942) laid the political and organisational foundations of the National Liberation Front, the people's state power, and the armed uprising. The meeting of the National Liberation General Council in Labinot (4-10 July 1943) unanimously agreed upon the formation of the General Staff of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Army. Enver Hoxha, General Secretary of the CPA, was elected Political Commissar of the General Staff. The 2nd National Liberation Conference in Labinot (4-9 September 1943) centralised and consolidated the democratic people's power of the national liberation councils as the only political power in Albania. The 1st Anti-fascist National Liberation Congress in the liberated town of Permet (24-28 May 1944) elected the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council as the supreme legislative and executive body in Albania, as the sole representative of the sovereignty of the Albanian people. The Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee, with the attributes of a provisional government, was also formed, and Enver Hoxha was elected President of this provisional government, besides being appointed Commander-in-Chief of the National Liberation Army. The 2nd Session of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council, held in the liberated town of Berat (20-23 October 1944)

unanimously transformed the Anti-fascist Committee into the Democratic Government of Albania. Enver Hoxha recalls:

"With this decision, the taking of political power by the working masses who had overthrown the old state power became a reality de facto and de jure".

(E. Hoxha: "Laying the Foundations of the New Albania"; p. 500).

Finally, the struggle was crowned with the complete liberation of the country on 29 November, 1944, and with the simultaneous triumph of the people's revolution. Enver Hoxha always stood at the head of all these historical events not as a spectator but as a commander and a determined fighter, sharing the problems, the difficulties and the aspirations of his own people.

In the military field Enver Hoxha followed attentively and contributed to the growth of the National Liberation Army from guerilla units and small partisan çetas into a regular army with battalions, brigades, divisions, army corps and its own General Staff (later the General Command). Therefore, the armed struggle could be led and organised with clear military and political aims. Regardless of any external factor, the entire Albanian struggle for national and social liberation was based on the principle of self-reliance: the people provided food, shelter and support while the weapons were captured from the enemy. Furthermore, the CPA and Enver Hoxha personally rejected all the attempts to subordinate the strategy of the war to the plans of the Mediterranean Allied Headquarters or of the so-called Balkan Staff, which would have placed the Anti-fascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people under Anglo-American control. After a profound military and political analysis, Enver Hoxha defined the most important strategic and tactical tasks of the war, from the first acts of sabotage against the Italian fascists to the final plan for the complete liquidation of the enemy forces in autumn 1944. It was then on the orders of Enver Hoxha that the 5th and 6th Divisions of the National Liberation Army pursued the

German troops as far as southern Bosnia, aiding the Yugoslav people in the liberation of their country.



In the political field, Enver Hoxha worked consistently for the implementation of the main tasks set by the CPA, namely: uniting the people in the National Liberation Front and setting up the new power of the national liberation councils, thus destroying the pre-war state apparatus. Many of Enver Hoxha's writings, and particularly "Laying the Foundations of the New Albania", testify to his personal contribution to the unity of the workers, the peasants, the intellectuals and all other patriots against fascism. The unity of the broad masses of the people, led by the CPA, represented the indispensable and decisive weapon which guaranteed victory over powerful enemies within a short period of time. Enver Hoxha's political determination in ensuring the leading and hegemonic role of the CPA in the Front was also displayed in the stands he maintained towards Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti, which, in the course of the war, opposed the National Liberation Front in order to collaborate with the Italian and German occupiers first, and with the British and Americans later. Despite the vain attempts to unite these two organisations in the struggle against fascism, in March 1943 A. Këlcyra, representative of Balli Kombëtar, signed a protocol of collaboration with the commander-in-chief of the Italian occupation troops, General Dalmazzo. In August 1943 Enver Hoxha, as General Secretary of the CPA, categorically rejected the Mukje

agreement between the representatives of Balli Kombëtar and of the National Liberation General Council, characterising the agreement as treacherous, as

" . . . a complete capitulation to Balli Kombëtar"
 ("History of the Party of Labour of Albania", 1982 edition, p. 127)

Indeed, the acceptance of the Mukje agreement would have had the same tragic consequences as the agreements of Lebanon, Caserta and Varkiza had for the liberation struggle of the neighbouring Greek people.

During the Second World War the CPA and Enver Hoxha also laid the foundations of the foreign policy of Albania. The National Liberation Movement in Albania was orientated towards the Soviet Union and the people who had risen in war against fascism, while the British and Americans were regarded only as temporary allies. As early as October 1943, Enver Hoxha instructed:

"We know who the British and Americans are, and never for a moment do we forget that they are capitalists, that they are against communism, against socialism; because they never forget who we are, neither do we forget who they are".
 (Enver Hoxha: "Works", Volume 1; p. 435).

During the war the CPA allowed none of the foreign missions to interfere in the internal affairs of the National Liberation War of the Albanian people. In reply to General H. M. Wilson, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean, demanding, in the summer of 1944, the cessation of all hostilities against the Legaliteti movement, allegedly to stop civil war, Enver Hoxha's clear-cut reply was:

"In Albania there is no civil war: there is only one war - the fight against the occupying forces and their collaborators".
 (S. Pollo & A. Puto: "The History of Albania"; p. 243).

Just the same principled stand was also maintained by Enver Hoxha in September 1944 when he compelled the British troops who had landed in Saranda to leave Albania immediately. In addition, Enver Hoxha resolutely opposed the pressure put by the Yugoslavs on the Albanian National Liberation movement. For this reason, at the 2nd Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPA held in Berat in November 1944, Enver Hoxha was violently attacked by the Yugoslav envoy V. Stoinić. Nevertheless, despite the critical situation created within the CPA until 1948, the Yugoslavs and the Titoite faction in the Albanian party and state, headed by K. Xoxe, could not succeed in liquidating the line of the CPA and in removing its General Secretary.

Today, more than forty years after that difficult and heroic period of time, Enver Hoxha's merits and contributions can be assessed and recognised even more clearly. Had he not implemented the general line of the CPA against Yugoslav interference, had he not opposed the Anglo-American plans with respect to internal Albanian reaction and the British military landing, Albania would not be what she is today: a socialist and independent state. She would be either the 7th republic of Yugoslavia or a NATO country with American missiles stationed on her soil. Following the National Liberation War, the activity and teachings of Enver Hoxha have continued and will continue to be a guide of decisive importance for the unstoppable advance of socialist Albania "higher and higher in the world".

ESMERALDA

A short story by Filip Çakuli

Long before our first child was born, its name became a matter of dispute not only between my wife Luli and myself, but between relatives, friends and neighbours. A long list was prepared of boys' names, and an even longer list of girls' names - but Luli would have none of them. Some were clumsy, some too common, some old-fashioned. For one reason or another, every one of them was unacceptable. And when the child proved to be a little girl, my wife insisted that we call her Esmeralda. She would listen to no alternative; it had to be Esmeralda!

"It is not an Albanian name", objected my father-in-law, and suggested many alternatives with a national flavour. But by this time my mother-in-law had already begun to address the baby as "Esma" - to the indignation of my wife who objected strongly to such abbreviations as "demeaning".

But neighbours and the nurses at the crèche had other ideas, and soon our daughter became known by various names - principally Eli, Merka, Esma and Ralda. Everything but Esmeralda! And the bigger the baby grew, the more confusion arose about her name. It continued to grow as she took her first steps. And with it grew my wife's concern about our daughter.

Esmeralda loved to play in the garden of the flats with other children of her age. But my Luli objected. "She will catch a germ", she declared firmly.

When she was allowed to go out, under my wife's watchful eye, Luli was careful to dress her warmly, with two jumpers up to her neck. She expressed horrified surprise whenever she saw our neighbour's son playing outdoors all day in a none-too-clean singlet. "He doesn't seem to come to any harm", I ventured to say. "Little girls are more delicate", my wife would reply.

One day, as I was tucking her up in bed, I tickled her and she began to squirm with laughter. Next day Luli reproved me. "She didn't get to sleep for hours", she scolded; "you mustn't excite her like that again!". . . .

But life does not always turn out as one wishes. Despite all our solicitude, one day Esmeralda fell ill with a feverish cold.

"How could this happen?", demanded Luli; "we have always dressed her warmly; we have kept her indoors in cold weather; she couldn't have had a more carefully balanced diet . . ."

My wife blamed the nursery school. "They must have let her play outside in the cold", she declared. Although I reminded her that there were fifteen other children there and none of them were feverish, Luli was deaf to such reasoning, but despite being kept in bed and the medicines which the doctor gave her, the child became worse and worse, and our anxiety spread to neighbours and relatives.

My mother, who had raised eight children, came to the house as soon as the news of Esmeralda's illness reached her. She had travelled over a hundred miles. She went immediately to Esmeralda's room and plucked the child most indelicately out of bed.

My wife screamed.

"Stop her!", she shrieked at me; "she'll kill the child!"

But there was no arguing with my mother, who completely ignored my wife's desperate pleas to "Put her back!". At the front door, with Esmeralda wrapped in a blanket in her arms, my mother turned and said brusquely: "You silly woman! You can come and see her in a month". And my wife could only watch, weeping, from the window as my mother carried the little bundle on to the bus . . .

We heard nothing, and at the end of the month we set off for the village where I had been born.

As we entered the yard of my mother's house, something struck Luli on the leg. We stopped. From behind a bush Esmeralda's head appeared. She ran towards us, laughing, holding the marbles with which she had been playing. She wore only a singlet, caked with mud, and there were crumbs at the corner of her mouth. But to our surprise her cough was quite gone, and her cheeks were as rosy as apples . . .



Young ballet dancers at the Jordan Misja School

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOGRAPHY IN ALBANIA

by Mevlan Kabo

Until the eve of Liberation geography was one of the most backward sciences in our country, although our great men of the Renaissance made important contributions to the geographical knowledge of Albania. In 1899 Sami Frashëri's Albania: What it Was, What it Is and What it Will Become gave an account of the physical, economic, demographic and political geography of Albania, assessed the great natural wealth of the country and suggested roads of development in accordance with the democratic, patriotic views of the author. In 1889-1898 the great Universal Dictionary of History and Geography, in Turkish in 5 volumes, analysed the geographical characteristics of the Albanian regions of the Ottoman Empire.

During the whole period of the Zog regime not one scientific work on the geography of Albania was published, with the exception of some newspaper articles. Only in the field of school text-books was there any publication worthy of mention: thus, in 1933 the teacher Ahmet Gashi published a Geography of Albania for schools - the first complete and systematic study of the subject by an Albanian author and one which played an important role in education.

In these conditions the geographical study of Albania became the monopoly of foreign scientists - Italian, French, German, etc., and their work was greatly influenced by the desires of companies in the states to which they belonged to exploit Albania's natural resources, and particularly its mineral wealth, for their own benefit. On the eve of the Second World War and during it, a considerable number of works on the geography of Albania appeared, chiefly by Italian authors. But none these were profound or comprehensive.

The Liberation of the country, the establishment of People's Power and the adoption of a programme for the construction of socialism demanded the creation of Albanian specialists in geography. Thus, immediately after Liberation, in 1946, the Higher Educational Institute was set up with a Historico-geographical Department for the training of geography teachers. In 1947 a Geography of Albania for general schools was published, and a new text-book with the same title for secondary schools in 1953. The latter was republished several times until it was replaced by a new work with the same title in 1970.

In 1951 the 4-year Institute of Higher Education was established, with its Faculty of History and Geography. A new stage in the development of geography opened with the inauguration of the University of Tirana in 1957; within the Faculty of History and Linguistics of the university the Department of History and Geography and the Chair of Geography were created. For the teaching programme of this Department special materials were prepared on general physical geography, geomorphology, cartography, general geology, world economic geography, the physical and economic geography of Albania, etc. Another important development was the creation of Departments of History and Geography in the Higher Institutes of Education in Shkodra and Gjirokastra. This was followed in 1967-68 by the first field studies by second- and third-year students.

But despite all this, and despite the importance of geographical studies for the economic and social development of the country, they continued to lag behind those in other scientific fields. An important step in overcoming this backwardness was taken in 1978, when the Sector of Geography of the Academy of Sciences was established. A further important measure was the creation, during the school year 1982-83, of a separate Department of Geography attached to the Faculty of History and Linguistics of the University of Tirana. It was understood that students graduating from this Department would be qualified theoretically and practically not only to teach, but also to

function as scientists in the field of geography.

The Party of Labour of Albania has always taken great interest in the development of geographical science. In his speech to the 17th Conference of the Tirana District of the Party in December 1968, Enver Hoxha proposed the correct orientation for this science in Socialist Albania:

"To undervalue physical geography means to build geography on air, without the essential natural and scientific basis. But to be lost in the fathomless depth of detail of physical geography to the detriment of economic and political geography means to belittle the ideological and political class education of students"

At the 8th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in June 1980, the necessity to overcome the backwardness in geography was emphasised. And at the meeting of the Secretariat of the CC in May 1983, Enver Hoxha stressed the need to strengthen the Sector of Geography of the Academy of Sciences in order to improve the organisation of geographical studies, to link these studies more closely with the needs of economic development, and to map out the fundamental tasks in the fields of the physical, economic and demographic geography of Albania.

One of the principal directions for geographical studies is that of the geomorphology of Albania. In this field comprehensive studies have been effected on the Albanian Alps, the Kurvelesh region of southern Albania, the hilly region of Mallakastra and several other regions. An intensive study is in process of being made of the features of the widespread Karstic terrains in Albania - features which have to be taken into account in the construction of hydrotechnical works, in fluvial erosion in the main hydrographical basins, and in subsidences and other geomorphological phenomena.

In the domain of demography, particular attention has been paid to the accentuated movements of population which

took place up to the beginning of the 60s, the process of urbanisation, etc.

Among the principal future tasks for geography are the drawing-up of a geomorphological map of Albania to a scale of 1:500,000 and, later, one to a scale of 1:200,000, as well as the preparation of monographs on the physical, economic and demographic geography of Albania.



"VIEW OF GJIROKASTRA" : Painting by Bashkim Ahmeti

TO A FADED FLOWER

A poem by Luigj Gurakuqi

(Luigj Gurakuqi, 1879-1925, was born in Shkodra. He attended the Jesuit College before obtaining his diploma in science in Naples. Journalist and poet, he participated in the insurrection in Kosova and raised the flag of independence alongside Ismail Qemali. He died in exile in Italy, assassinated by agents of Zog. His creative work included articles, aesthetic criticism, linguistic resaearch, an Albanian-French dictionary, translations and many poems).

My poor flower, who has plucked you,
parted you from your friends?
You have lost your beautiful colour,
my poor flower!

My exiled spirit too,
wilted and withered,
languishes far from home,
my poor flower!

But if one day a friendly hand
replants you,
you will bloom anew
to bring us joy!

And if my heart, that aches
with longing for Albania,
one lovely day returns,
my heart will blossom too!

PAINTERS STIMULATED BY BYRON

by Ferid Hudhri

In the National Portrait Gallery in London there is to be found one of the most popular portraits of Byron, the work of the painter Thomas Phillips. This picture, in which the poet is depicted in Albanian costume, has been reproduced in many books and is one of the most beautiful portrayals of Byron. The great popularity of this portrait was one of the factors which stimulated many foreign artists to treat the theme of Albania.

Byron expressed special admiration for Albanian costume not only in his literary works, but also in a letter sent to his mother in the year 1809. where he writes that "the Albanians have the most beautiful costumes in the world" and that he has acquired "some wonderful Albanian costumes". which are for him the most precious wealth of the country. (From "Correspondance de Lord Byron"; Paris; 1825; p. 118-133).

The bravery and courage of the Albanians, reflected in the the works of Byron, became the object of some pictures by the painters Eugène Delacroix, Alexandre Decamps, Ary Scheffer, Charles Cockerell, etc., while the beauty of the costumes and the landscapes of the country and the spirit of the Albanians appears in the works of Camille Corot, Edward Lear, Caton Woodville, Hugh Williams and many other painters.

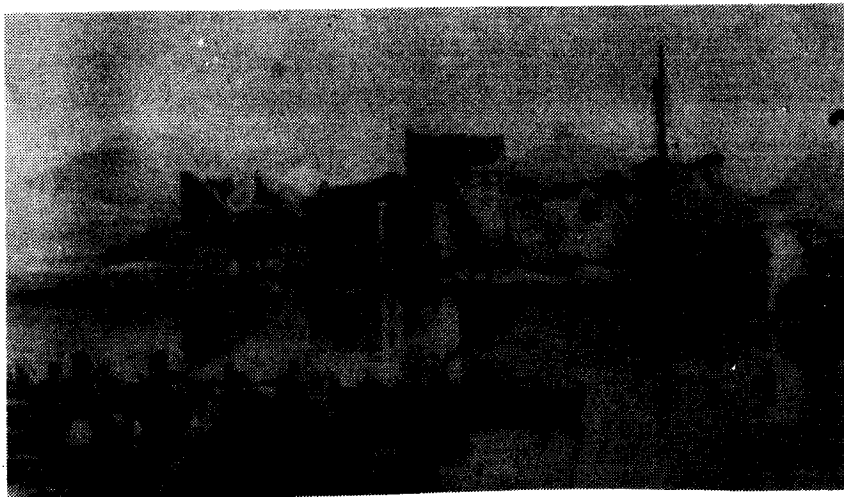
In the biographies of these artists, and in the notes associated with their works, the influence of Byron in the treatment of the Albanian theme is emphasised. Some other painters of the romanticist trend also, inspired by Byron's creativity, were stimulated by his work in the treatment of Albanian motifs. Many of these artists came to Albania and, after seeing for themselves what the poet had written about, portrayed it with affection in their pictorial works. In their notes to some of these

engravings and paintings they cite time after time verses from Byron to make the scene portrayed more convincing. In, for example, the notes to the engravings of Caton Woodville, in which Albanian types are depicted truthfully in their richly ornamented national costumes, it is written that the painter was stimulated by Byron's impressions of "the wonderful Albanian costume", with its fustanellë, with its embroidered robes and gold-plated weapons. Adorned with this red, white and gold magnificence, it is said further in on these notes, the Albanian pleases the eye just as at the beginning of the century when Byron visited the south of the country. Similarly the the views of the Albanian coast by the painter Hugh Williams are associated with the part of "Childe Harold" concerned with Albania. It follows that the poet's creativity served as the starting point for directing artists to Albanian nature.

Until recently we knew of the works of the English painter Edward Lear only the lithographs published in his book "Diary of a Landscape Painter in Albania" (1851). In that book it is written that the painter had also made drawings and portraits. Now we know also his works in oil. When he returned to his studio in San Remo and London with the sketches he had made during his travels in our country, he executed, apart from the lithographs, a number of large oil paintings, some of which are among his best works. One of these works is "Mount Tomorr" (122 x 166 cm.), in which the mountain is depicted in the background, in deep blue, while in the foreground - to which the gaze descends with the flow of the river and where rocks and high trees rise - men, women and children, dressed in national costumes, stand, talk and move about. This environment, portrayed realistically down to the tiniest detail, reminds us of the years when we fought for the independence of the country. The figures of armed warriors bring one into the atmosphere of meetings of outlaws in the mountains to unite in the struggle for freedom. The picture closely approximates the works of our artists of the Renaissance.

"The Coast of Albania" (122 x 186 cm.) is an oil painting by Edward Lear which depicts another majestic view of our nature. From the horizontal line of the sea high mountains rise like mighty waves or a wall of rock. The effects created by the rays of the sun in the west, the shadows of the valleys and the contrast between the twisting lines of the mountains and the straight horizontal line of the sea - all this makes the picture very attractive.

We are familiar likewise with other pictures of Edward Lear - with lithographs and drawings in pen and pencil which depict various aspects of our nature. But how many works on an Albanian theme did this painter portray? We do not yet know this precisely, but we believe from the following fact that there may be many: for the retrospective exhibition of Edward Lear which was held in London during the months of May-June 1985 were collected altogether 6,000 works in water colour, without mentioning works in oil, drawings, etc. Certainly a considerable number of these are based on motifs of our country since, as foreign scholars have emphasised, the Albanian theme played an important role in Lear's creativity.



"THE COAST OF ALBANIA" : Painting by Edward Lear

The well-known painter Caton Woodville was also stimulated initially by the works of Byron. He came to Albania in the years of the Albanian League of Prizren and, after travelling in the areas which were aflame with the fire of struggle, executed some beautiful engravings which were published in one of the well-known illustrated magazines of the time - Scribner's Monthly, (Volume 21; New York; 1881; p. 337-391). Even today they are regarded as the most beautiful pictures dedicated to the Albanian resistance of those years. But the painter was not satisfied with graphics alone. When he returned to his studio the Albanian motifs stimulated him to new works. And Caton Woodville realised pictures in oils, wood engravings and other works. In Woodville's pictures Albanians in various situations take a principal place - talking round the fire, diverting themselves at leisure, in characteristic bazaars and at intimate family moments - such as the picture which depicts the return home of the warrior. The works of Woodville are rich with many figures, with diverse details and decorations which give a vivid impression of the atmosphere and environment of the time. He portrays with consummate exactness our variegated costumes, decorated arms and artistic wood-carvings.

Stimulated by Byron's creativity, authors of albums and art books took the road to Albania with the aim of getting to know and depicting the beauties of nature and of the Albanian costumes.

After such a journey to Albania, the English painter Joseph Cartwright published in London in 1822 an album of selected Albanian costumes. This publication is still unknown to us, but we have discovered an interesting fact related to it - namely, that the drawing entitled A Woman and an Albanian Warrior was created by the distinguished French painter Eugène Delacroix on the basis of two pictures in Cartwright's album.

The painter Hugh Williams published in an album of selected views of Greece and Albania associated with the verses of Byron, engravings created on the basis of motifs

from our country during his travels there in 1820.

In the Albanological collection of our National Library is to be found another precious album which contains some views in colour of our country created by Henry Cook in 1853 - perhaps at the same time as Edward Lear. The publication is very large for an album - 47 x 64 cm. It shows views of both the northern and southern coasts of our country. These have historical as well as artistic value, since they document environments which exist no more.

The above are only some of the artists stimulated by Byron and, similarly, only a tiny part of those who have treated the theme of Albania, since the complete number of these and of their works is very large.

CORRESPONDENCE

Viki Kotelly Spear's letter (Albanian Life, No. 3, 1985) which claims that Albania

" . . . rose from darkness into bright light through its own efforts without the help of any 'big brother'"

is, in economic terms, unfortunately incorrect. To quote the 1971 edition of The History of the PLA (p. 369-370):

"The help rendered by the Soviet Union to the People's Republic of Albania at that time (i.e., 1952) aimed mainly at the development of the country's productive forces so that the people's economy could stand on its own feet. The Party valued this aid as an important external factor in the construction of socialism".

Furthermore, the Albanian trade deficit between 1945 and

1970 amounting to some 2,900 million leks at 1971 domestic prices indicates that two very big economic brothers had a hand in establishing Albania's post-war industrial base.

That Albania received this aid over the years yet eventually went 'self-sufficient', while being a major achievement politically on the part of the Albanian government, must not obscure the fact that it was only that previous aid that enabled Albania to embark upon her present economic course in the first place.

Philip Wynn,
Norwich

The Editorial Committee comments:

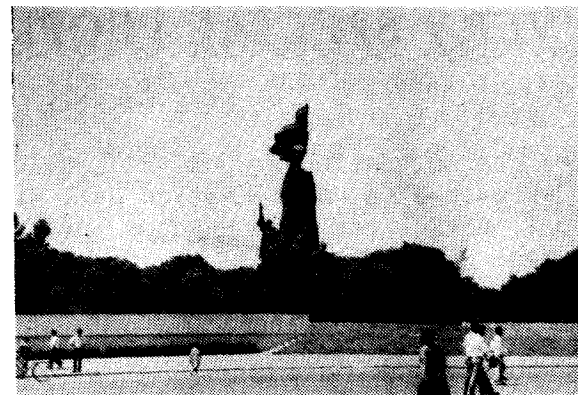
Mr. Wynn is, of course, quite correct in pointing out that aid from the Soviet Union and China contributed substantially to Albania's economic development until the 1970s.

Nevertheless, it does not follow from the fact that Albania's economic development was undoubtedly assisted and accelerated by foreign aid that, as Mr. Wynn says, "only that . . . aid enabled Albania to embark upon her present economic course", and Albanian economists have been at pains to refute the concept that foreign aid is an essential prerequisite at any stage to the development of a self-reliant socialist economy, even in a small state.

Furthermore, the Albanian government has frequently denied that its aims have been or are to make Albania "self-sufficient", i.e., autarkic. The official policy of 'self-reliance' has been defined as a repudiation of further foreign aid, but of seeking and developing foreign trade.



HOLIDAYS IN ALBANIA



JULES VERNE TRAVEL have arranged a number of five-day tours of Albania in 1986-7, embracing Shkodra, Lezha, Kruja, Tirana and Durrës, travelling by air via Titograd, departing London Heathrow at midday on Fridays:

October 10, 17, 24, 31.
November 7, 14, 21, 28.
March 6, 13, 20, 27.
April 3, 10, 17, 24.
October 9, 16, 23, 30.
November 6, 13, 20, 27.

The cost (including full board and excursions within Albania) is £185 (with a £40 supplement on departures in October and April).

Bookings (with a deposit of £50) to:

Travel Promotions Ltd.,
10, Glentworth St.,
London NW1.

(01-486-8080/8751/8752/8753.

SWAN HELLENIC have arranged a number of 17-day art treasure tours visiting Pogradec, Korça, Elbasan, Berat, Fier, Apollonia, Gjirokastra, Saranda, Butrint, Durrës, Tirana, Kruja, Lezha and Shkodra.

Departures from London Heathrow (via Skopje) at 1.20 p.m. on:

May 30th, 1986;
September 12th, 1986;
May 29th, 1987.

The cost (including full board in twin-bedded rooms, sightseeing and the services of a guest lecturer) is £891. No single rooms are available.

Full details are available from:
Swan Hellenic Art Treasure Tours,
Canberra House,
47, Middlesex Street,
London E1 7AL

(01-247-0401)

A VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE

by Mary Cawkell

"They are so gentle, so polite!", said my fellow-traveller as we waited in the reception hall at the border post of Han i Hotit for the customs officer to inspect our luggage.

"What did you expect?"

"I don't know. Officiousness, I suppose".

We are all surprised when we first visit Albania. The people we had been led to believe - although, if asked, we couldn't pinpoint who led us to believe: such is the subtlety of our anti-Albanian indoctrination - were cowed, repressed, deprived, are suddenly revealed to us as altogether different. From then on it is all delightful discovery.

We become like the explorers of old discovering a new land inhabited by people quite unlike ourselves. A land inhabited, however, not by a more backward race, but by one of higher development. Of all the new and wonderful things one can discover in Albania the most wonderful is the quality of human being that has evolved.

We cannot see this immediately. Arriving as we do with image-filled eyes, we look for expressions of the country's identity in the way we are accustomed - advertisements enjoining us to drink this and that, shop windows imploring us to wear this, use that. None are there. We feel in a strange world as we sit in the coach travelling through the Albanian night. What can we link to if there nothing to link to?

We pass a man cycling without lights. Dangerous that, the guide is told. "Our driver", he replies, "would not be a good driver if he did not take notice of the other users

of the road". As he explains we discover that road use in Albania is on a co-operative, not an adversarrious basis. All users have equality of use, but on major users, drivers of vehicles, there rests the responsibility of ensuring that lesser users, pedestrians or cyclists, can proceed on their way in safety. It is our first glimpse of the most important feature of Albania - the primacy of people as people.

A walk-about in Shkodra reveals more. Our guide, overhearing one of the party remark on the absence from the streets of any blue- or green-haired pedestrians, enquires what they are and is regaled with comprehensive details of the extravagant styles of dress visible on our streets. She asks the purpose and is told it is to enhance their appearance. She replies that to enhance the appearance externally is only decoration. Then, realising she is talking to foreigners, she smiles the gracious, radiant smile with which we were to become so familiar as we journeyed through Albania, and says: "I see. In your country it is so; in Albania it is different. It is necessary first to enhance the person. Everything comes after that".

We learn that people are not regarded in an individualistic sense separate from each other, but as an integral part of the community which, we are told, is a live, truly human identity, not an impersonal one. The aim is to make each person as complete a citizen as possible, so that each can contribute to the community to the fullest possible extent and receive in return maximum benefit from the community. To enable each person to develop to his or her full potential, particular attention is paid to environmental factors - living conditions, health and education. Especially education, because ignorance is the greatest handicap. When you enhance a person, you enhance everything about that person, including his or her appearance. It is a natural consequence.

Much else that we discover is a natural consequence

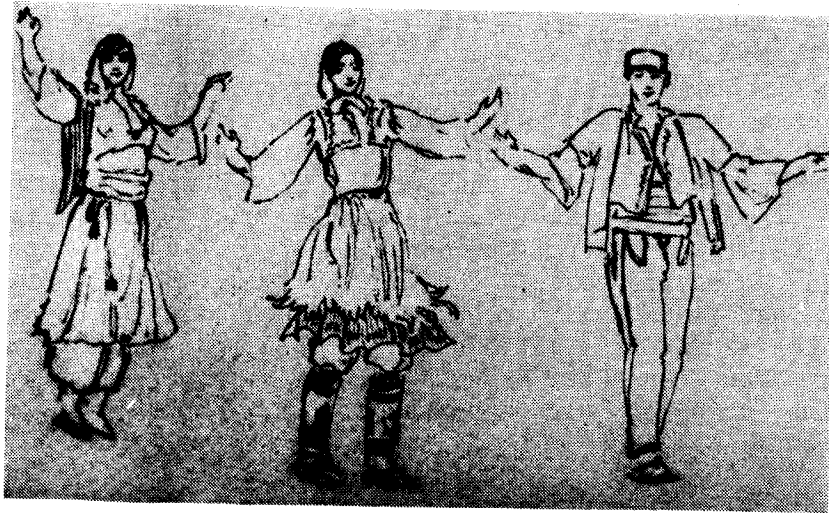
of this purposeful way of living - the innate dignity of the Albanians, their inner self-discipline, their independent spirit, their deep respect for and love of the country that is their heritage, their intelligent interest in the world and its affairs.

We discover that national assistance has a new meaning in Albania, where there is no opportunity to go hungry, to be out of a job, become a beggar. Unemployment is an unpermitted evil. Prostitution, gambling, drugs, pornography can find no soil to root in.

We notice also how strong are family relationships, and that the holding bond is one of mutual love and respect - there being no economic restraint compelling people to stay together. The hard-working people are neither puritanical nor austere, but full of natural gaiety, with a keen sense of humour.

We discover, in short, the pluses that can exist in a society when the minuses are removed.

We discover, in fact, that Albanians are a special people, the only truly civilised people in the world.



THE TIRANA CIRCUS

by Shaban Killoja

The circus in Tirana has just celebrated its 25th birthday. In this period it has presented more than 40 different shows in 8,164 performances before 5 million spectators.

It originated from a group of amateur acrobats who performed in the Ali Kelmendi Palace of Culture in Tirana. The foundation of the State Variety Theatre (now the Tirana Variety Theatre) in 1951 and the creation, shortly after, of the Army Variety Theatre, gave a new stimulus to the development of the circus, since they featured acrobatic turns in their shows, along with music, mime and satire.

In December 1959 the acrobats separated from variety and added some animal acts to form the first professional Albanian circus, which presented the première of "The Magic Stick"; this proved very popular and ran for more than 50 performances. Prominent among those who developed a wide repertoire with a high level of execution was the Honoured Artist Tahir Baçova. From year to year the circus presented new shows, such as "Sons of the Eagle" (1974) and "To the Heights" (1977). The latter saw the opening of a new ring with a diameter of 13 metres in a tent 12 metres high seating 800 persons. Later, particularly successful were "Festival in the Ring" (1978), "Heads on High" (1981), "Eagles in the Ring" (1983) and the last show, designed to honour the 40th anniversary of Liberation, "Flying through the Ring" (1984).

Our circus is extremely popular, especially with children, who have expressed particular appreciation of "The Circus Postman" and "Gishto and the Robot". It now employs 43 circus artistes, 12 musicians and 20 technical workers.

In addition to the Tirana circus, there is a second professional circus in Gjirokastra, and amateur companies in Patos, Bulqiza, Shkodra, etc.

PSYCHIATRY IN ALBANIA

by Ashoka Prasad

(Dr. Prasad is Kate Stillman Lecturer in Psychiatry at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, London)

The very mention of Albania conjures up the wildest fantasies. For years we have been hearing about this "most closed society in the world" where "people are locked up for watching football on television", the roads of which are "lined with horse-carts", the only place in the world "where you see no cars" and where dissent from the state is dealt with "by ruthless means".

In fact, the only positive aspects of this "mysterious" place that I seemed to recollect were Byron's flowing tributes to the "charming women of this region, perhaps the prettiest in the world" and the fact that the Nobel peace prize winner, Mother Theresa, was Albanian.

It was not surprising, therefore, that I embarked on this journey with a great many apprehensive notions. I expected to find a poor country where hunger was rampant, freedom of speech strictly curtailed and the inhabitants with the tense expression that you so very often find in countries ruled by authoritarian regimes. I had been warned that the border post has a barber to ensure that no-one with long hair or beard is let through. I had also been told not to carry religious literature or politically controversial material as it was likely to be confiscated at the border. The coach journey from Titograd to the Albanian border was often punctuated by dismayed calls from fellow passengers who had somehow forgotten to comply with these regulations.

To our utter amazement, what we found was a relatively prosperous country, self-sufficient in food and energy needs (it exports power to Greece and Yugoslavia) and exceedingly rich in minerals, where people wore a relaxed

expression and displayed a unique brand of friendliness. Indeed, there are no private cars, but it is not unusual to stumble across every European make (Mercedes seems to be the favourite), used for official purposes. There is also a ban on religious literature of any kind, as Albania is officially an atheist State. Television is widely popular, and there is no basis at all to the report that watching football is punishable. I did not see any barber waiting for us at the border post; incidentally, many in the party did have long hair and beard and passed through without hindrance.

All this confirmed my initial suspicions that it is very often imprudent to rely entirely on press reports - the facts are often quite different.

Whilst there are obvious disadvantages in not encountering many tourists, there are many positive facets to it as well! The unspoiled sandy beach in Durrës must rank as one of the finest in Europe - finer still because you do not find it invaded by ice-cream vendors! Perhaps Butrint is the only place in Europe where you can have the entire beach, with its lovely clear water, all to yourself - a pleasant contrast to Corfu, only four miles away and constantly in sight.

The history of Albania is a history of survival of the original Albanians - the Illyrians! For several hundred years the country was ruled by the Turks, and this occupation was to last until 1912, when the first national government was formed. The Italian invasion of 1939 overthrew the regime of King Zog.

The Communist Party of Albania, later renamed the Party of Labour of Albania, was formed by Enver Hoxha and his associates and has ruled the country from 1944. Hoxha died last year, but it is obvious that he is still revered in the country. His portraits are to be seen at every nick and quarter, and even the mountains are adorned with limestone reading "Parti Enver" (Enver's Party). Hoxha enjoyed Stalin's support, and the numerous statues of

Stalin that one sees in the country reflect intense loyalty to him. The country accuses Tito's Yugoslavia, Khrushchov's Russia and the post-Mao China of betraying Marxism-Leninism and adopting capitalistic philosophies. Despite his death, it is clear that Hoxha still remains the pivotal figure, and his writings and slogans are to be found in as diverse places as a carpet factory and the University of Tirana - now renamed the Enver Hoxha University.

I was aware of certain aspects of history. What I was curious to find out was whether this prolonged period of stability, unique in Albanian historical terms and certainly unusual even by Eastern European standards, had brought about tangible benefits to the populace at large.

Even the country's fiercest critics would be hard put to deny that it has made tremendous strides in industrial and economic terms. The Albanians are certainly very proud of this progress, and the achievement is even more remarkable when one considers that it has had limited contacts with other countries. One might contend that the price paid for this development has been the denial of religious freedom, and the conversion of mosques and churches to assembly halls and cinemas, but on the whole the Albanians that I spoke to seemed to be quite content with their lot.

In educational terms, the country has made remarkable strides to achieve an almost total eradication of illiteracy in the post-war generation. They have institutes for foreign languages affiliated to the University and the testimony to their training was my courier, a University academic who spoke flawless English, French and Italian. His English was far superior to many other countries I have been to where the language enjoys a far more widespread usage.

In 1938 there were about 10,000 people being looked after by a single doctor. In 1983 the figure was 580, which speaks for itself! The figure is comparable to any

advanced country.

Since 1947 the Ministry of Health has been publishing "The Bulletin of Medical Science" through the University of Tirana. There is also a "Bulletin of Translations from Foreign Medical Literature" and "The Medical Review", provided free of charge to every hospital library.

The psychiatric services in the country have to be assessed in the context of the overall health service structure. The speciality combines neurology as well, and hence is known as neuro-psychiatry.

The University Department is located in a large psychiatric hospital in the capital city, Tirana. It is headed by Professor Bajaraja Praha and Dr. Nestor Polimeri, who is the hospital superintendent. I was entertained in the department after my visit was cleared through the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries on the Albanian Society's recommendation. To my surprise, although most of the staff spoke English, there had not been any visit from a psychiatrist from an English-speaking country so far! The last Western psychiatrist to visit was Professor P. Pichot of France.

The hospital has a very well equipped Child Psychiatry Department, as well as an Occupational Therapy Department on which they are laying considerable emphasis. They also have a research programme with varying interests ranging from Dexamethasone Suppression Test to Childhood Depression and combination antidepressant therapy. There are three 600-page psychiatric text books written in Albanian which have imposing references (considering that they have to get every scientific paper translated).

Besides the hospital in Tirana, which caters to the needs of the entire country, there are other psychiatric hospitals in Shkodra and near Saranda in the south catering to local needs. The beds are roughly equally divided into psychiatric and neurologic patients. Of the former, schizophrenics dominate by 2:1 over affective disorder/

obsessive compulsive neurosis/other forms of neuroses.

I was impressed to see DSM-III being used quite freely, and they have a wide supply of international journals including "Psychological Medicine", "Journal of Psychiatric Research" and "American Journal of Psychiatry". The non-attendance at international meetings has certainly not handicapped the psychiatrists from utilising the latest findings in any way.

There was a well-equipped behavioural therapy programme commonly used for obsessive-compulsive disorder (the other preferred treatment being Clonipramine); the Stanford-Binet test has been translated into Albanian and is currently in favour. The psychiatric training starts after the medical graduate has completed his/her compulsory stint at a district hospital following graduation. It takes about four years and there is no examination at the end of it. Many of the trainees eventually get the opportunity to spend some time at the University Department in Paris, with which the Department has close relations.

Overall, the picture of Albanian society that I got was one of dogged self-determination and hard work and the Department of Psychiatry was certainly no exception. Whilst there are certain aspects - i.e., prohibition of photographing factories or soldiers, and lack of any religious institutions - which may appear unusual to an observer from the West, the society is clearly not as closed as it appears. An epilogue to this last statement: after having been lavishly entertained to the lovely Albanian traditional drink "raki", Professor Bajaraja Praha told me that he was in London during the War with the Red Cross and had then been introduced to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. "I saw her a few days ago on TV celebrating her eighty-fifth birthday", he said; "she hasn't changed at all - she's as lovely as ever".

I am sure the Queen Mother would be delighted to hear this compliment - somehow I do not know the means of communicating it to her!



"THE COVENANT" : Painting by Shaban Hysa

BOOK REVIEW

Enver Hoxha: "TWO FRIENDLY PEOPLES"

Reviewed by Steve Day

Enver Hoxha's new book, completed shortly before his death on April 11th last year, deals with relations between the Albanian and Greek peoples and governments from 1941 to 1984. Since the author was the principal architect of Albanian foreign policy in this period, this book is essential reading for any serious student of the subject. However, the scope of the book is much broader than this, dealing in detail with the policy towards the Greek minority in Southern Albania, assessing the contribution of Greek philosophy to the world and pointing out the ancient basis for the friendship between the two peoples.

In October 1940, Italy invaded Greece, supported by the quisling regime in Tirana. However, the Albanian conscripts refused to fight the Greeks; some went over, only to be treated as POWs by the Greek government, while others were interned by the Italians. Meanwhile, Albanian partisans harassed the fascist convoys and troops on the way to the front. Despite this, successive Greek governments have maintained the 'Law on the State of War with Albania'. This state of affairs has not, however, prevented the establishment of diplomatic relations (1971), or the signing of bilateral commercial and cultural exchanges.

Albania's main principle in foreign policy has been and is that of seeking relations with other states on the basis of equality and non-interference, particularly in the Balkans. This has been difficult with Greece from the outset, because of the British and US intervention there on behalf of Greek reaction. Albania, naturally, sympathised with the popular forces, without allowing the British and Americans the pretext they were seeking to invade and overthrow the newly-elected democratic government in

Albania. While it was necessary for Albania to issue stern warnings and to take practical measures for the defence of her borders, this was always coupled with the painstaking process of building links with Greek public opinion, with various cultural institutions and with Greek resistance fighters such as Manizelos Glezos and others. At the same time, the claims of the 'Northern Epirus' chauvinists towards Albania have always been properly refuted and denounced.

An important factor in this process was the existence of a large Greek minority in Southern Albania, who had played an important part in the Albanian national liberation struggle and had gained their emancipation after the war along with the Albanian people. The principled policy of the Party of Labour of Albania in assuring resources for their economic development and for the encouragement of schools teaching in the Greek language and for the promotion of their own traditions and culture, has been crucial in winning over Greek public opinion after numerous visits to the area by politicians, personalities, journalists, etc., from Greece. Despite this, as late as 1984, the reactionaries in Greece and elsewhere were shouting about 'repression' in southern Albania, a cry repeated from Belgrade in an effort to deflect criticism from the barbaric Yugoslav treatment of the Albanian minority in Kosova. These slanders received wide circulation in Britain, though in Greece they were quickly discredited.

Through her firm and principled policies, Albania now has good relations with her southern neighbour and the standing of Albania is growing daily as the Greek people learn of the achievements there, through press articles, cultural exchanges, and so on. With the US still entrenched in Greece, though extremely unpopular, and the Soviet Union waiting in the wings, the example of Albania in maintaining her freedom and independence, while building a just and thriving society, must be a source of inspiration to the Greek people, with their long and proud democratic and revolutionary traditions. This is in no

small part due to the wise and far-sighted policies of the author of this fascinating book.

NEW LITERATURE

*Albanian Society Publication Price (inc. postage)

E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 5
(1976-1980) £5.50

Z. Xholi: "For a More Correct Conception
of National Culture" £1

*L. Rexhepi & Q. Baroni: "Foreign Literature" £5.50

The translation of an Albanian school textbook, which gives an insight into the Marxist-Leninist analysis of world literature as it is taught in Albanian schools. The volume covers Classical Greek Literature (with a chapter on the Homeric epos), Renaissance Literature (with a chapter on Shakespeare), Classicism (with a chapter on Molière), Romanticism (with a chapter on Byron) and Critical Realism (with chapters on Balzac and Jack London).

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 5, 1985 50p

Ramiz Alia's Speech in Korça (August 1985); Proletarian Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship; the Relations of the Albanian National Liberation Front with the Great Powers; Socialist Development in Albania; New Roads in Education; Ethnic Problems of Albanian Ancient History; the Crisis between Western Europe and the USA.

NEW ALBANIA, No. 5, 1985 50p

Enver Hoxha - Architect of Socialist Albania; the 2nd Colloquium of Illyrian Studies; the Enver Hoxha University of Tirana; Rejuvenation of the Plains; Albanian Films at International Festivals; Borova; Contemporary Arbëresh Literature; Pashko Vasa; the Dinamo Works; the New Dictionary; Ancient Art; Ceramic Art; Albanian Roads in the Middle Ages.

ALBANIAN NEWS

(September-December 1985)

POLITICS

In September:

Activities were organised to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the battle of Vlora and (15th) the 43rd anniversary of the Conference of Peza.

In October:

The Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania decided (2nd) to set up the Enver Hoxha Museum in Tirana.

Scientific sessions and other social and cultural activities devoted to the work of Enver Hoxha were organised in the context of the 77th anniversary of his birth during the "Week of Enver Hoxha" (10-16 October).

Ramiz Alia, 1st Secretary of the CC of the PLA and President of Albania, was awarded (17th) the decoration "Hero of Socialist Labour" on his 60th birthday.

In November:

A meeting was organised (4th) in Berat to commemorate the 41st anniversary of the First Congress of the Women's Union of Albania.

Activities were organised to commemorate (8th) the 44th anniversary of the founding of the PLA, the 40th anniversary of the distribution of the first title deeds to land, (17th) the 41st anniversary of the liberation of Tirana, (28-29th) the 73rd anniversary of the proclamation of independence and the 41st anniversary of the liberation of the country.

A Plenum of the Central Council of the Trade Unions of Albania was convened (23rd) in Tirana.

In December:

A Plenum of the Central Committee of the Labour Youth Union of Albania was convened (23rd) in Elbasan.

The 13th Plenum of the CC of the PLA was convened (26-27th) in Tirana.

DIPLOMACY

In September:

The Albanian Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Jovan Antoni, presented his credentials to Vice-President Li Jong Ok, and the Ambassador to Bangladesh, Dhimitër Stamo, presented his credentials to President Hossain Mohammad Ershad.

The Burmese Ambassador, U Tin Sein, and the Congolese Ambassador, Albert Servais Obiaka, presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

In October:

The Ambassador to Cuba, Gëzim Arapi, presented his credentials to Vice-President Carlos Rodriguez.

In November:

The Ambassador to Tanzania, Mehdi Shaqiri, presented his credentials to President Julius Nyerere.

The Turkish Ambassador, Bilal Shimshir, the Laotian Ambassador, Vonguichit Vanhheuane, the Danish Ambassador, Christian Frederick Kisum, and the Vietnamese Ambassador, Le Ngoc Thanh, presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

In December:

The Ambassador to Peru, Pirro Andoni, presented his credentials to President Perez.

The Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Yemen, Ahmed Mohamed Al Shejni, presented his credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

The Diplomatic Dispute with Italy

Albanian media

On December 21st, the Albanian government announced that on December 12th six persons, two men and four women,

stated to be implicated in anti-state activity in the service of a foreign power, had entered the Italian Embassy in Tirana and requested political asylum.

The government, stressing its continuing desire for good relations with Italy, demanded that the individuals

concerned be handed over to the Albanian authorities and objected strongly to what it termed an abuse of diplomatic immunity, an illicit interference in the internal affairs of Albania and an encroachment upon its national sovereignty.

FOREIGN VISITORS

Among foreign visitors and delegations to Albania during the period under review were:

In September:

A French government delegation headed by Foreign Minister Jean-Michel Baylet.

A delegation of the Revolutionary Youth Organisation of Ecuador.

The Star Folklore Ensemble of Al-Bajad (Algeria).

A Cuban government trade delegation.

A youth delegation from Burkina Faso.

A delegation of the Albanian Society (Britain).

A delegation of the Turkish Education, Youth and Sport Ministry.

Foreign scholars to the 2nd Colloquium of Illyrian Studies.

The Prefect of Ioannina (Greece), Vasilis Brakacullas.

In October:

An Algerian parliamentary delegation headed by the Chairman of the National People's Assembly, Rabah Bitat.

The Alterna Folklore Ensemble of Copenhagen.

A delegation of the Austria-Albania Friendship Association.

A group of artistes of the Ankara Opera (Turkey).

In November:

A Yugoslav government trade delegation.
The Turkish conductor Rengim Gekmen.

In December:

A Romanian government trade delegation.
A representative of the Communist Party of Brazil,

Sergio Brito.

The rectors of the Universities of Samsun and Trabzon (Turkey).

FOREIGN VISITS

Among Albanians and Albanian delegations going abroad during the period under review were:

In September:

An Albanian delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Reis Malile, to New York to attend the 40th session of the UN General Assembly.

The violinist Tedi Papavrami to the 4th International Violin Contest in Gorizia (Italy), where he gained first prize.

In October:

A government trade delegation, headed by Minister of Foreign Trade Shane Korbeci, to Italy.

A delegation of the Labour Youth Union to Syria.
The Albanian Folk Song and Dance Ensemble to Italy.
A delegation of the Telegraphic Agency to Italy.

In November:

A delegation of the Labour Youth Union to Congo.
An Albanian delegation to Rome to attend the 23rd session of the Food and Agriculture Organisation.
A government trade delegation to Finland.
A delegation of the Trade Unions of Albania to

Ecuador.

A delegation of the Academy of Sciences to Greece.

In December:

A delegation of the Women's Union to Algeria.

A group of Albanian scholars to Sicily to take part in the 1st International Congress of Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities.

A delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Vietnam and Laos.

FOREIGN TRADE

In September:

Albania was represented at the International Fair in Salonika (Greece).

A protocol on cultural exchanges for 1985-6 was signed with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

A protocol on trade and payments for 1986 was signed with Hungary

An agreement on trade and payments for 1986-90 and a protocol for 1986 were signed with Cuba.

An exhibition of Albanian exports was opened in Ioannina (Greece).

In October:

Albania was represented at the 37th International Book Fair in Frankfurt.

A protocol on trade and payments for 1986 was signed with Czechoslovakia.

In November:

A protocol on trade and payments for 1986 was signed with the German Democratic Republic.

Trade agreements for 1986-90 and protocols for 1986 were signed with Yugoslavia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

A protocol on cultural, educational and scientific

exchange for 1986-8 was signed with Turkey.

In December:

Agreements on trade and payments for 1986-90 and protocols for 1986 were signed with Romania, Bulgaria and China.

An agreement on trade and payments for 1986-90 was signed with Hungary.

TRANSPORT

In September the Yugoslav section of the railway from Titograd to the Albanian border was completed.

On 14th October the Fier-Vlora railway line was inaugurated.

CULTURE

In September:

The funeral took place (14th) of the sculptor Odhise Paskali.

The 2nd Colloquium on Illyrian Studies took place (20th-22nd) in Tirana.

Albania was represented at the ethnographic exhibition in Volos (Greece).

A Vietnamese Film Festival was organised in Korça.

A meeting was held in Tirana to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the publication of the first issue of the newspaper Sporti popullor (People's Sport).

In October:

The funeral took place (6th) of the pianist Lola Gjoka, People's Artist.

A meeting took place (7th) to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Writers' and Artists' League of Albania.

The 6th Albanian Film Festival was held in Tirana.

A national conference of young talents (writers and artists) was held in Durrës.

In November:

Albania was represented at the 6th International Festival of Art, Culture and Information in Cairo.

The Museum of the Birthplace of the Kastriots was opened in Sina (Dibra district).

The 6th National Conference of Geology was held in Tirana.

The funeral took place of the composer Gapo Avrazi, People's Artist.

The house museum of Hasan Tahsini was opened in Ninat (Saranda district).

In December:

The 7th Conference of the Journalists' Union of Albania was held (18-19th) in Tirana.

The 24th Radio-Television Song Contest opened (26th) in Tirana.

TWO POEMS

by Moikom Zeqo

HOURS

They come always early
for our meetings,
pass always too fast
when we are together.

WHEN I RETURN

When I return to the land of my birth,
the branches of the poplars by the sea
wave to me, and grasp me
in the arms of their embrace.

ALBANIAN STAMPS

We offer extensive mint stamps covering all periods, plus many used stamps.

Approval selections fortnightly or monthly to suit all budgets. All stamps guaranteed. Refund if for any reason any should fail to satisfy. Access and Visa credit cards taken. Overseas orders accepted. PTS members.

EUROPEAN AND FOREIGN STAMPS,
Post Office Box 1,
Pontypridd,
Mid-Glamorgan,
CF37 5RA,
United Kingdom.



"LOOKING TO THE FUTURE"

A cartoon by Bardhyl Fico



LONDON AND SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND BRANCH

STUDENT PROGRAMME

The London and S. E. England Branch has organised a programme of talks for students on different aspects of life in Albania.

On Tuesday 4 February Steve Day spoke on "Democracy in Albania" at the LSE, the talk being followed by a vigorous discussion by the students, many of whom were hearing about the reality of Albania for the first time.

On Tuesday 18 February Norberto Steinmayr spoke on "Albania's Foreign Policy".

Future meetings - to be held at the LSE, in Houghton Street, WC2 (nearest Underground station: Holborn) - will include:

"The Albanian Economy", by Laurie Prescott, on Tuesday, 18 March at 6 p.m.

Non-student members are welcome to attend these talks.

Any students wishing to organise a meeting in their college should contact the Secretary, Bill Bland, on 01-590-9977.

FUTURE MEETINGS IN LONDON

Sunday, 13 April at 3 p.m.

FARMING POLICY IN ALBANIA

A video and a talk by Laurie Prescott

plus music and refreshments

Sunday, 15 June at 3 p.m.

ENVER HOXHA TUNGJATJETA !

(brief extracts from which were screened at a previous meeting)

plus music and refreshments

Both at

TOLMERS SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE,
Hampstead Road, London NW1

(opposite Capital Radio)

(Nearest Underground stations: Warren St. or Euston Sq.)

Scene from an
Albanian
production
of Puccini's
opera "La Bohème"

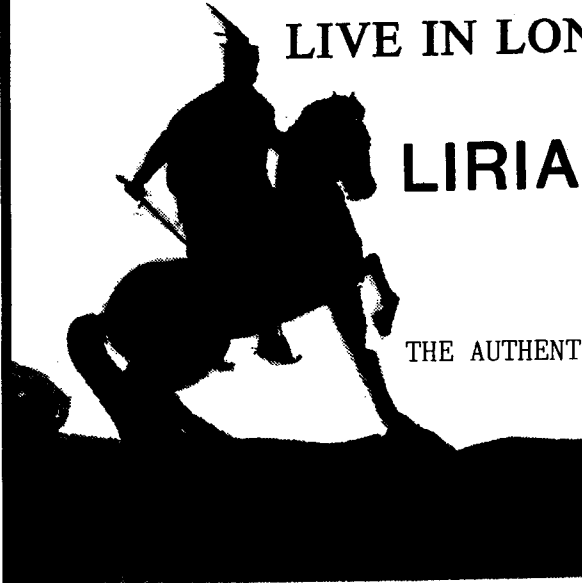


ALBANIAN LIFE is published three times a year by:

The Albanian Society,
26, Cambridge Road,
Ilford,
Essex,
IG3 8LU

It is sent by post to members of the Albanian Society,
annual subscription to which is £4.

**ALBANIAN MUSIC
LIVE IN LONDON**



LIRIA

THE AUTHENTIC SOUND OF ALBANIA

SATURDAY, MARCH 1st, AT 8 P.M. AT

THE TOWER TAVERN, CLIPSTONE ST., LONDON W1

(at the foot of the Post Office Tower)

Tube: Gt. Portland St. (Metropolitan and Circle)
Warren St., (Victoria line)

and

TUESDAY, MARCH 25th, AT 7.30 p.m. AT

THE ALBANY, CREEK ROAD, DEPTFORD, LONDON SE8

(as part of a benefit night for the Albany)