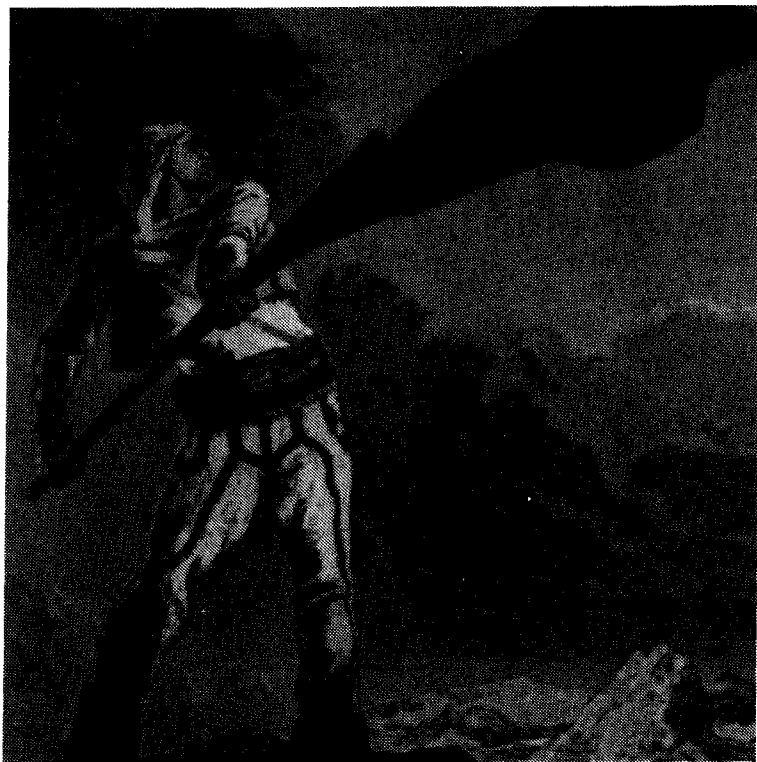


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The picture on the front cover is of the painting
"For Freedom", by Çlirim Ceka.

THE CORFU CHANNEL INCIDENT

by Norberto Steinmayr

Forty years ago, on 22 October 1946, four British warships were sailing through the waters of the Corfu Channel, coming within one mile of Saranda harbour, without having previously notified, or having been authorised by, the Albanian authorities. They were sailing northwards in spite of the fact that their destination was the Greek island of Cephalonia, which lies a hundred miles south of Corfu. The warships hit mines: one officer and forty-three ratings lost their lives, while three officers and thirty-nine ratings were injured. The destroyer Saumarez had to be written off, but the destroyer Volage was found to be repairable. Following this incident, London took the unilateral decision to sweep the Corfu Channel, including Albanian territorial waters, without the consent of either Albania or the Central Mine Clearance Board. The British minesweeping operation, named "Operation Retail", was carried out on 12 and 13 November by some thirty warships, supported by aircraft: a minefield of twenty-two mines of German manufacture, of "Y" type, was discovered off Saranda. Some years later, this minesweeping operation would be unanimously characterised by the International Court of Justice as "a violation of Albanian sovereignty".

The Corfu Channel incident of 22 October 1946, together with the subsequent proceedings about it at the United Nations Security Council in New York and at the International Court in The Hague, must be analysed and assessed not only on the basis of judicial considerations. Account should also be taken of the general background of "cold war", particularly bitter against Albania, which Washington and London wrongly identified as "the weakest point" of the socialist-orientated camp, and of their conspiracies to overthrow the so-called "Hoxha régime". Even before the Corfu Channel incident, Britain and the USA had pursued an extremely hostile policy towards the newly-born Albanian Republic: they had opposed her admission to various

international bodies and halted moves to establish diplomatic relations, while the US Senate had officially supported the Greek claims on southern Albania through the "Pepper resolution".

The documents relating to the Corfu Channel incident have been made available to the public at the United Nations and at the International Court of Justice, but only partially at the Public Record Office in London. Indeed, a considerable number of Foreign Office and Admiralty records on this incident have been withheld beyond the thirty-year limit. Nonetheless, it has now been ascertained that on 22 October 1946 the British Admiralty was bent on determining "whether the Albanian Government have learned to behave themselves" in relation to the passage of British warships through Albanian territorial waters. In spite of the official acknowledgement that the evidence pointing to Albania's responsibility was "necessarily only circumstantial", Britain formally accused Albania of responsibility for the incident before the Security Council and, following the referral of the dispute, before the International Court.

Proceedings before the Hague Court lasted from November 1948 until April 1949, when the Court found, by eleven votes to five, that Albania was "responsible under international law" for the Corfu incident. The British suggestion that the minefield had been laid by Albania was not supported by the court, which found that "the authors of the minelaying remain unknown". In fact, the court found Albania responsible neither for laying the mines, nor for complicity or connivance in this act. The majority of the judges found Albania responsible only in the sense that "the laying of the minefield . . . could not have been accomplished without the knowledge of the Albanian government", and five of the judges dissented from this majority decision.

After a detailed and scientific study of the case, the Secretary of the Albanian Society in Britain, William Bland, reached the conclusion that

" . . . the Corfu Channel case was a miscarriage of justice in which the People's Republic of Albania, as it then was, was wrongly 'convicted' of a crime against international law on the basis of impermissible legal irregularities and the misrepresentation of expert evidence on the part of a majority of the judges".

(Miscarriage of Justice, p. 51).

For their part, from 1946 until today, the Albanian leaders have continued to deny any prior knowledge of the presence of mines in the Corfu Channel. As Ramiz Alia expressed it in a speech in Korça in August 1985:

"Albania does not accept any responsibility".

ADVANCE NOTICE

On the afternoon of Saturday, November 29th the Albanian Society will present in London the reading of a dramatisation of the Corfu Channel proceedings before the International Court of Justice, entitled

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

Members who would like to read parts in this production - alas, the participants were almost exclusively male - are asked to contact the Secretary:

William Bland,
26, Cambridge Road,
Ilford,
Essex,
IG3 8LU.

The reading will be followed by a social, with live Albanian café music by the LIRIA Ensemble.

THE AGRARIAN REFORM

A poem by Dhori Qiriazi

Armed with a rope, the peasant ran
to measure out the land with love:
"So much per head, so much per mouth,
and so much for the landlord's grave!"

ALL COMES TO US IN SONG

A poem by Betim Muço

We poets, we are privileged,
for each day that we live
all comes to us in song.

We chat with you,
then with another;
we work as all men do
among the people,
and every day
there comes to us the lovely bird
that is the world,
the bird of poetry
hatching from its egg.

No need of solemn moments
for new songs to burst forth,
for song and work
are beautiful and twins.

We poets, we are privileged,
for each day that we live
all comes to us in song.

FARMING POLICY IN ALBANIA

by Laurie Prescott

In 1944 agriculture, like the rest of the Albanian economy, was extremely backward. Farming methods had made few advances in centuries, and the peasantry lived in conditions of grinding poverty, and of harsh oppression by the landlords. As with so many countries where people live in constant fear of starvation, the bulk of exported goods consisted of agricultural produce.

Before Liberation, Albania was still between two historical epochs: feudalism was declining and capitalism emerging. 85% of the population lived in the countryside, and there was a highly uneven distribution of land: 40% of the available land was owned by 3% of the rural population, while 14% of the rural population owned no land at all. The situation in the countryside presented many difficult problems for the new government to face.

The Albanian government acted swiftly by annulling all rent arrears, reducing rents and nationalising the irrigation system. In August 1945 the land reform was carried out, with large estates being confiscated and redistributed free to the peasantry. Furthermore, all renting of land was forbidden.

Behind this legislation and action was the all-important political question of strengthening the alliance between the workers and peasants, and in particular of mobilising the poor and middle peasantry. Capitalist development in the countryside was thus curtailed, but the land reform was regarded as a transitional measure to open the way to the socialist transformation of agriculture. The Albanian view, that of Marxism-Leninism, was that small-scale production combined with the existence of private property still contained the ingredients for the development of rural capitalism. They set off on the path taken previously by the Soviet Union of collectivising the land on a

voluntary basis.

In November 1946 the first agricultural cooperative was set up in a village in Lushnja district. By 1955 collectivisation had become a mass movement, and by 1961 the main agricultural areas had been collectivised on a village basis. During a 3-month period of 1966, after the call of the Party: "Let us turn to the hills and mountains, and make them as beautiful and as fertile as the plains", collectivisation was completed.

The average size of the agricultural cooperative has increased as many villages have pooled their resources to greater effect. Each cooperative is administered by a committee elected by its members. Its income, obtained from the sale of its produce directly to the state, is distributed according to the amount of work done by each member - an important socialist principle which is never forgotten in Albania. Although the main property and land has been collectivised, each family retains a small personal plot to work on and supplement their income. By decision of the members, as their socialist consciousness has increased the size of these personal plots has been reduced over the years.

Collectivisation took 20 years of protracted ideological struggle to carry through, and it is important to understand the slow patient work of the government to achieve this important objective. The Albanians have not tried to achieve increased production merely by making available more machinery, tractors, etc., but have concentrated on political questions. By changing the social basis of production they have paved the way for a far greater increase in production at a later stage.

State farms have played an important role in the development of agriculture and were created immediately after Liberation from some of the larger confiscated estates. These farms have always applied the most advanced agricultural techniques and have mechanised almost all of the various processes of work. They have

served as models of socialism in the countryside. In order to stimulate the movement for collectivisation, peasants were bussed out to the state farms on Sundays. Here they learned important lessons on the benefits of large-scale farming and of the use of machinery that could not be used on their small plots, on the increased incomes, shorter working hours, holidays and amenities such as health and cultural centres and shops.

Today many of the state farms have developed into agrarian towns. The surrounding cooperative farms benefit from their advanced experience, since these farms function as centres for the distribution of seeds, fruit-tree saplings and pedigree livestock. At present they account for a quarter of total agricultural production.

Unlike the state farms, the agricultural cooperatives do not own their own large means of production. Alongside the state farms the government created Machine and Tractor Stations from which the cooperative farms can hire larger machines as required. Since these MTS are owned by the state, defined as the machinery of rule of the working class, and (as with state farms) their staff are wage-workers, members of the working class like factory workers, they embody the principle of working class leadership within the worker-peasant class alliance.

In order to close all possible paths to capitalist regeneration, the Albanians work ceaselessly to improve the social relations of production, and to transform the group property of the cooperative farms into the property of the whole people. Their perspective is to convert all cooperatives into state farms, so that all the peasantry become merged into the working class. This view had previously been put forward by Stalin in the Soviet Union, but the principle remained unapplied.

At the 6th Party Congress in 1971 a new initiative to form higher type cooperative farms was adopted.

Certain coops in the plains with high yields and efficiency were selected to receive direct investment from the state and exclusive use of an MTS. The state thereby becomes a partner in the enterprise. The higher type coops have been highly successful, and some have now made the transition to state farms.

An important initiative came from the peasantry themselves when, in 1975, the coops in Pogon (in Gjirokastra district) combined all the sheep and goats belonging to the families into joint herds. This idea was taken up throughout the whole country. Now a large number of districts have family cows in joint herds as well. These developments have not only struck further blows to the psychology of private property, but carry all-round benefits for the people. The children, the elderly and especially the women have been freed from unnecessary work, the unity of the peasantry has been further consolidated, more leisure time has been created and more possibilities made available for rearing the animals on a scientific basis and for breed improvement.



Raising the Standard of Living in the Countryside

One of the important tasks of socialism, as the Albanians see it, is to narrow the distinctions between town and countryside. The government has made enormous strides in this direction through large investment schemes in the countryside and judicious operation of the pricing mechanism. Because all agricultural produce is bought directly by the state, the income of the peasantry can be raised by paying higher prices for this produce. There are also differential prices, whereby the coops farming the difficult hilly regions are paid more per unit of produce than those farming the fertile plains. (This does not, of course, affect the prices paid by the consumer - these are uniform throughout the country, and only go down). The standard of living of the peasantry is steadily catching up with that of the urban working class, and is currently rising three times as fast as that of the working class.

The policy of the government is to establish industry in the countryside, distributing it throughout the country. In this way the material-technical base of socialism becomes more widespread, industry is moved closer to the sources of primary materials and fuels and the working class, as the backbone of the people's power, is disseminated everywhere, and the links between industry and agriculture are strengthened. It is not unusual to find workers and peasants within the same family, with some working in local mines or factories and others in the fields.

The Albanians are rightly proud of their achievements in raising the overall standard and quality of life in the countryside, and contrast this with the drift - in some countries, flood - of the population away from the rural areas into the cities. In the period 1970-79 7.3 million farmers in France, Italy and Germany were forced to abandon the land, while in the Soviet Union the figure was a staggering 17 million. Even in Albania there was in 1979-80 a small physical

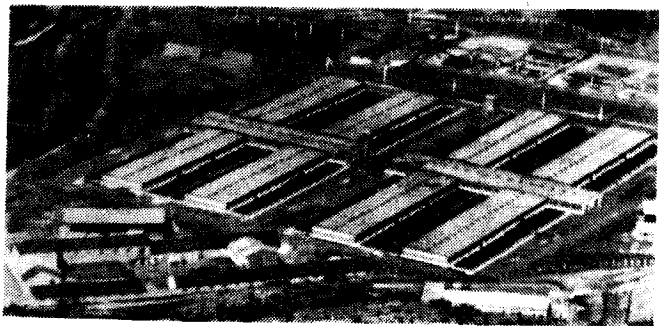
movement to the towns, but with correct centralised planning this was swiftly checked.

Farming Methods and Achievements

From the moment of Liberation, farming management and technique began to be revitalised. The inherent problems were enormous. Large tracts of the lowlands were swamps, and only 10% of the sown area was irrigated. The level of mechanisation was incredibly low, there being only 30 tractors in the country and most of these were defective. The livestock was of poor quality and had been decimated during the war.

Within ten years 50,000 hectares of land had been reclaimed and 4,200 km of irrigation canals opened. The number of livestock was quickly increased - for example, the number of pigs increased four times. During this period, too, schools were opened to train agricultural specialists of all disciplines and two scientific research institutes opened in Tirana and Shkodra.

Collectivisation laid the basis for further objective advances in the regionalisation, specialisation and intensification of agriculture. Agricultural science, too, became more widely disseminated and utilised on a mass scale. Any visitor to Albania cannot fail to notice the beautifully terraced hillsides as new land is continually broken in. However, intensification has now reached the stage where it contributes 90% of the increases in production.



Livestock Raising Complex at Maliq

Land Mechanisation and Irrigation

During the months October to March Albania receives 70% of its rainfall. The heavy storms and torrents are of record intensity in Europe. The rainfall pattern frequently hampers and delays the autumn and spring sowing. The problem of the high rainfall is compounded by the relief of the country: 70% is classified as hilly or mountainous. These two factors produce rapid soil erosion rates unless the sloping land is protected. Complex land reclamation and irrigation schemes have been designed to protect the highlands, and thereby the plains.

Huge artificial reservoirs have been created in the hills and mountains, along with extensive irrigation canals, dams and water pumping stations. The extent of these projects are unknown elsewhere in Europe and seldom surpassed anywhere in the world. At present 55% of the arable land is under irrigation.

One state farm managed to advance the spring sowing by two to three weeks by using the method of deep pipe drainage, the land thereby needing less fertiliser, etc. In the last Five Year Plan 50,000 hectares of land were drained by the buried pipe method.

Soil Studies and the Use of Chemicals

In 1954, on the basis of scientific methods which see the land as a dynamic living organism, studies were made of the basic characteristics of the types and kinds of soils and their agrochemical properties. A pedological (soil) map of the country was made.

Further detailed studies were made for the zones that were to be improved, including those with acid soils, and those set apart for citrus plantations, vineyards and specialised agricultural enterprises. These studies provided information for the successful regionalisation of crops.

The work of the research institutes already mentioned, together with hundreds of organised studies and experiments carried out at production level, brought to light a series of questions and made valuable recommendations for the rational utilisation of chemicals as fertilisers and for the fight against diseases, pests and weeds. Outdated practices were eliminated and better rules established for calculating doses of fertilisers, and the timing and manner of spreading them according to the different plants, soils and ecological zones.

A large nation-wide soil study was completed in the record time of three years, between 1971 and 1973. Every agricultural enterprise and piece of land was studied, and information collected about the nutritive qualities, and about the humus, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium content of the soil.

The results of these detailed studies were used to improve the effectiveness of fertiliser by 20-30%. Nowadays the land is systematically studied on a national scale every four to five years. The scale employed in drawing the map is highly detailed (1:10,000), whereas the equivalent British maps are only 1:25,000. It is also of interest to note that the British soil survey is in desperate financial difficulties due to inadequate government funding.

The Albanians have had good results in improving the fertility of their soil. Even salt soils have been successfully improved and worked by the large-scale application of limestone, gypsum and other agents. In the last ten years the area of salt soil has been reduced by more than three-quarters.

Mechanisation

Most aspects of farm work are now aided by machines. The ratio between motor power and animal power has advanced to more than 9:1. The number of tractors has increased from 30 in 1944 to around 19,000

today; there are now 15,500 tractor and autocombine drivers, 12,000 repairmen and more than 1,030 operators of heavy reclamation machinery. Each year 400 agricultural machinery operators are trained at four special secondary schools.

Albania has developed the necessary material base and intellectual forces to cope with intensification successfully. Nowadays 6 institutes, 10 scientific research stations and over 30 university chairs work to achieve success in the agricultural sector and organise the research of thousands of specialists and productive workers.

The successes of the farming policy are many. The rate of development in agriculture has surpassed the world average. Since 1976 Albania has been self-sufficient in bread grains and even during the severe drought of 1982 the highest ever agricultural production was recorded. The actual yields per hectare, amount of milk per cow, number of eggs per hen, etc. have constantly increased and compare favourably with many other countries. For example, the average amount of milk per cow exceeds that in Yugoslavia and Greece, and the highest values of 4,000 litres per cow approach the high British average. The average Albanian wheat yield is 3.1 metric tons per hectare - less than half the British yield of 6.4 but more than double the world average of 1.2 and the Australian, Canadian and Soviet yields, and almost double the American yield of 1.67. Another interesting example is the yield of sugar beet (a new crop since Liberation); in Albania this averages 39 metric tons per hectare, higher than the British yield of 37.7.

Like all aspects of Albanian life, farming does not stand still but is always moving forward. I conclude with some perspectives laid down for the future:

a) Improved seed selection: Work is in progress to develop new hybrids with higher productive capacity and better resistance to disease and pests;

b) Improved feeding for livestock: Forage crop production is to increase by 2-3 times and a better combination of silage and food concentrates for the animals is being investigated;

c) Concentration and specialisation are now the order of the day; in animal husbandry large centres are being set up for cattle, pigs and poultry, and the specialisation of sectors within the enterprises for the production of milk, eggs and meat is to be deepened;

In the recent past there has been a tendency for so-called "mosaics" to develop, with the production brigade trying to produce everything. From producing six or seven crops, the brigades now cultivate two or three. The importance of crop rotation is always being stressed, and it is not uncommon for neighbouring cooperative farms to rotate crops together.



On the beach at Durrës

BOOK REVIEW

W. Bland & I. Price: A TANGLED WEB (London; 1986)

Reviewed by Norberto Steinmayr.

The title A Tangled Web refers to the history of Anglo-American relations with Albania since she first gained national independence in 1912. The authors of this book, William Bland and Ian Price, have long had a great interest in Albania and are active respectively in the Albanian Society in Britain and in the Albania Friendship Society of Southern California in the USA.

Proceeding from the desire to present the reader with an objective and scientific historical analysis of post-1912 Anglo-American relations with Albania, the authors intend neither to emphasise any personal viewpoint nor to draw any specific ideological or political conclusions. Indeed, through a careful and comprehensive selection of British, American and United Nations sources, they let quotations and relevant extracts speak for themselves. It is thanks to this method, and on the basis of incontestable official documents, that the reader becomes acquainted with the particularly hostile colonialist and imperialist policies of London and Washington towards this small Balkan country during the 20th century. The subject matter of A Tangled Web has, to a considerable extent, been covered by Enver Hoxha in his book The Anglo-American Threat to Albania. References to this book and to other Albanian sources are also made, confirming in almost every detail the "tangled web" which emerges from the available British and American records. And this despite the fact that many incriminating records have, in fact, been destroyed, withheld or retained in their departments of origin.

A Tangled Web consists of twenty-six chapters relating to the period 1912-1955, and a brief epilogue bringing the story up to date. The initial attempts to

partition the Albanian nation and to impose foreign rule on the newly-formed Albanian state are followed by the plans to create "an American republic in Europe" on Albanian soil after the First World War. When the British-owned Anglo-Persian Oil Company tries to secure a monopoly oil concession in Albania through diplomatic manoeuvres, inevitable Anglo-American rivalry comes to light. Then British and American support for the Zog dictatorship dominate the story. The influence of the various British officers in Zog's Gendarmerie, together with American penetration into the country through treaties and conventions and in the fields of education and health, gradually decline in the late thirties with the increasing Italian domination of Albania. Afterwards, the implications of the British policy of appeasement with reference to the 1939 invasion of the country are dealt with. Then follows a detailed analysis in four chapters of Anglo-American relations with Albania during the Second World War from the initial subversive attempts of the British officers in Albania to the campaign for an Albanian government-in-exile, from the stands of the Anglo-American military missions towards the National Liberation Front to the unsuccessful British landing near Saranda in September 1944.

After Liberation and the gradual establishment of socialism in Albania, London and Washington intensify their efforts to influence the situation in the country: all possible economic and diplomatic means are employed to threaten its new democratic régime and arbitrarily to ostracise Albania from international organisations. Of particular interest are the incidents in the Corfu Channel in 1946, the Anglo-American efforts to make Albania the scapegoat for the civil war in Greece, the organisation by British officers of the massacre of the Albanian-speaking minority in Greece, the story of the embezzlement of Albania's gold reserve and, to the background of the "cold war", the Anglo-American involvement in the protection of Albanian war criminals, in supporting the various exile groups, and in directly organising an armed invasion of Albania in

order to overthrow her government. A short reference to the state of present-day British and American relations with Albania, to the travels of self-appointed "King Leka", and to some recent events in Albania brings the story to an end.

Anyone interested in Albania or in modern history and politics cannot but find A Tangled Web a book full of gripping, vivid and, most important truthful events involving two major Western powers on one side, and little Albania on the other.

A Tangled Web, published jointly by the Albanian Society and the Albania Friendship Society of Southern California, is available from the Albanian Society at £7.50, (including postage).

M. Camaj: ALBANIAN GRAMMAR;
(Verlag Otto Harrassowitz; Wiesbaden; 1984).

reviewed by Bill Bland

This grammar in English comprises 337 pages devoted to the parts of speech, syntax and a chrestomathy of selected passages going back to the 16th century.

Martin Camaj is Professor of Albanian Studies at the University of Munich, and so unfortunately detached from present-day mainstream Albanian culture. His grammar (well translated into English by Leonard Fox) almost ignores the standardisation of the language brought into operation in both Albania and Yugoslavia in 1972. It is based primarily upon the Geg dialect, and is thus of little assistance to those wishing to learn the contemporary Albanian language. It also contains errors, such as the confusion of the possessive pronoun with the possessive adjective, and the statement on page 103 that the latter remains

unchanged whether it qualifies a noun in the definite or in the indefinite form. It would, however, be of use to anyone wishing to specialise in the Geg or Arbëresh dialect.

Albanian Grammar is obtainable from the publishers, Verlag Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, West Germany, at DM 98.

Jon Halliday (Ed.):

THE ARTFUL ALBANIAN : The Memoirs of Enver Hoxha
(Chatto & Windus, London; 1986)

Reviewed by Bill Bland

The title which Jon Halliday has chosen for his book, is revealing. "Artful" is one of those coloured English adjectives like "I am firm; you are obstinate; he is pig-headed"; it is used not so much to mean "clever", as "wily" and "crafty", and this is indeed the impression which the editor seeks to convey in the sections of the book written by himself.

Hoxha is depicted as "observant" (p.2), "very cultured" (p. 6), "unusually well-read and intelligent" (p. 7), but as "brutal" (p. 10), "extremely suspicious" (p.10) - although Halliday admits (p. 2) that "there was plenty to be suspicious about" - and "mendacious" (p. 2).

While Halliday has obviously taken pains to read with care a vast amount of historical material relating to Albania and his factual background notes are valuable, it is clear that his comments arise from a political attitude towards recent history that is little different from that of a journalist on The Sun. For example, he finds it impossible to understand how Hoxha could admire Stalin, and should oppose the rehabilitation of Xoxe, who was executed for treason as a

Yugoslav agent in 1949, when the post-Stalin leadership in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries have denounced Stalin as a "monster" and "rehabilitated" similar figures to Xoxe. One is reminded of the historians who for so long accepted at face value the assessment of Richard III presented, for propaganda purposes, by his Tudor successors. Halliday's political naivety is typified by his characterisation of Tito as "on the left wing of the world Communist movement" (p. 4).

Like many contemporary intellectuals, Halliday appears frightened to draw conclusions, even where the facts presented lead to them, which might result in his being accused of being "left-wing". For example, in a note on the former Prime Minister, Mehmet Shehu, he writes:

"That Mehmet Shehu was a secret agent of the Americans and served them, is also borne out by . . ." (p. 376)

When, however, in a personal conversation with him, I said that I was interested to read that he endorsed the charges of treason made against Shehu, he was at pains to deny that the passage above carried this implication.

The passages from Hoxha's works which form the core of the book concern primarily the relations of the National Liberation Front and post-war Albania with foreign states - particularly Britain, the United States, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China. As such, it is no doubt of value to have these interesting extracts within the covers of a single book.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN ALBANIA

by Thoma Kromidha

Albania inherited from the past great backwardness in every sphere of life, including that of telecommunications.

Prior to Independence in 1912 only the simplest means of telecommunications were in operation - signals, couriers, etc. It was the Albanian government established in Vlora in this year which organised the first posts and telegraphs.

The primitive telecommunications system organised at this time was destroyed during the First World War, and was reconstructed only after the Battle of Vlora in 1920. In 1922 the State Communications Administration was set up, attached to the Ministry of Public Works, and this became a member of the International Union of Telecommunications. In 1924 the Union of Post and Telegraph Workers was formed.

Under the feudal-bourgeois dictatorship of Zog, no significant measures were taken for the development of telecommunications. In 1938 there was, outside the capital, only one manual telephone exchange with a capacity of 50 telephones, and a number of smaller exchanges with a capacity of 10 telephones; this system served almost exclusively for official communication with local authorities; in Tirana there was a manual exchange with a capacity of 130 numbers, used for communication between Ministries. In this year there were in the country only 2,886 kilometres of telephone lines, all above ground, and most communications between the capital and the provinces were carried out by telegraph. As far as communication with abroad was concerned, 95.5% was by post, 4.5% by telegraph and 1% by telephone.

During the War of National Liberation the

telephone network was severely damaged. 4,257 km. of telephone lines, 130 manual exchanges and an automatic exchange installed in Tirana during the German occupation with a capacity of 1,000 telephones, 1,160 telephones, 37 teleprinters, 120 Morse machines and 2,000 telephone poles, 1,500 tons of wire and other material, were either destroyed or looted by the Germans. Such was the state of telecommunications at the time of Liberation in 1944.

Immediately after Liberation, the new state, under the leadership of the Party, began to take steps to remedy the extreme backwardness of telecommunications. The whole system was nationalised, the destroyed telegraph and telephone lines were replaced, and by February 1945 it had been restored to the pre-war level. All the state and Party organs in the capital were linked to a central manual exchange, and by 1946 the telegraph and telephone service had been extended to all the main towns, and linked with the outside world via Peshkop.

In 1947 the telecommunications system was brought within the sphere of state planning, and in this year the General Directorate of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones was established, attached first to the Ministry of Public Works, later to the Ministry of Communications. In the same year an automatic telephone exchange with a capacity of 800 telephones was installed in Tirana.

By the end of the Two Year Plan (1949-50) the telephone and telegraph system was twice the size of pre-war, and every line had been duplicated to permit simultaneous telephone and telegraph communication. Teleprinters were now in use in every district, connected directly to Tirana.

During the First Five Year Plan (1951-55) radio-telegraphic communication was brought into use alongside that making use of wires, the first production of wires and telecommunications apparatus began, organised

steps were taken for the training and qualification of communications workers, and the transfer of telephone and telegraph wires underground began.

By 1967 the telegraph-telephone lines had reached 17,312 km., of which 7,084 were above ground and 10,228 km. underground

By 1973, a year ahead of schedule, every village in the country had been linked to the telephone system, and most exchanges had been automatised. Today the telegraph service is 11.8 times as large as in 1938, the telephone service 220 times; the number of telephones is 12 times that in 1950; Telex communication has been established throughout the country and with abroad; and a system of radio stations has been established on the coast for communication with Albanian ships at sea.

“BUILDING CASTLES IN ALBANIA”

by Albert Doja

In the course of preparing a French-Albanian phraseological dictionary, our attention was drawn to several variants of the expression "building castles in Spain" - in the sense of "planning fanciful projects, such as the erection of castles on territory to which one does not have access". Numerous variants of this expression were employed between the 13th and 17th centuries, such as: "building castles in Brie" (Gautier de Coiney), "building castles in Asye" (Pierre Gringoire), "building castles in Spain" (Vauquelin de la Fresney). But the variant of particular interest to us is "building castles in Albania", used by Le Ducat in 1738.

The most popular variant of these expressions is related not only to the history of Spain during the Saracen occupation, but also to the fact that Spain was regarded in the mediaeval romances as the land of

marvellous adventures. And it was under the inspiration of Spain that one of the greatest French epics, La Chanson de Roland (The Song of Roland) was created.

The expression in question came into being when the knights were granted in fee castles in Spain, which they first had to take by force of arms. It embodies folk irony on the utopian character of such enterprises.

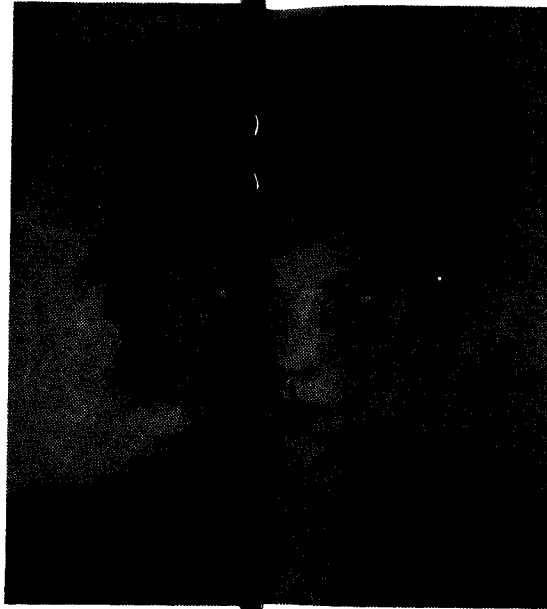
We know that Charlemagne did not return to Spain to avenge the extermination of his rearguard, and the imaginary episode of Baligant was added later to redeem the honour of the Franks. Many of the place-names in this episode relate to the Balkans, including south-east and central Albania. These include Ohrid, Kanina, Kepi i Gjuhëzës, Bishti i Pallës and Albania itself; the last-named appears as "Albeigne" in the Venice manuscript of The Song of Roland, and as "Albanie" in the Chatoureau manuscript. The legendary episode of Baligant is linked with the Albanian expedition of Robert Guiscard in 1081-85. The first clash of the Norman with the Byzantine troops took place in the summer of 1085 not far from Buthratos, while the decisive defeat of the Byzantine troops commanded by Emperor Alexius I Comnenius took place in the plain of Durrës in the autumn of the same year. In the episode of Baligant these historical events are transplanted to Spain, and "Franks", "Saracens" and "Basques" must be read respectively as Normans, Byzantines and Arbanites. Thus, "castles in Albania" became synonymous in French mediaeval phraseology with "castles in Spain".

At the end of the 13th century, when the Anjous conquered Albanian territory, in part diplomatically, in part by coercive economic measures and in part by force, Charles I of Anjou proclaimed himself king of the "Kingdom of Albania", but this remained an unstable Angevin colony only until 1281, when the troops of Anjou were decisively defeated beneath the walls of Berat. Albania became once again, in French imagination a "castle in the air".

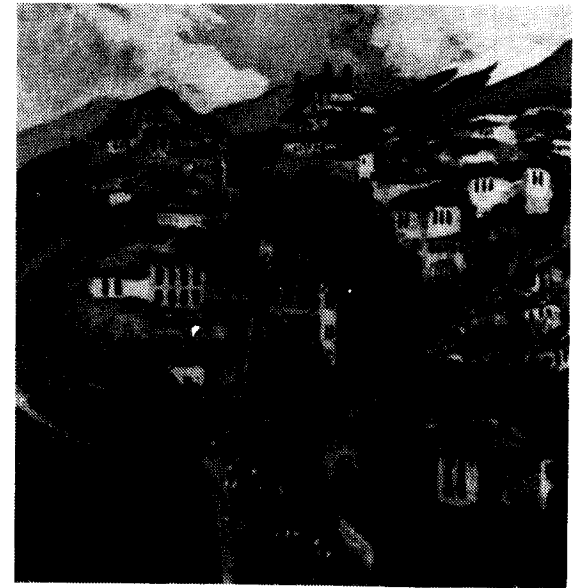
THREE PAINTINGS BY GJERGJ MARKO



By the Sea



Portrait of a Child



Gjirokastra

GJERGJ MARKO was born in Korça in 1940. After graduating from the Lycée of Art in Tirana, he pursued the course at the Higher Institute of Arts in Tirana, receiving a diploma in scenery painting. He is now attached to the National Historical Museum in Tirana and his work has featured in several national exhibitions. He is noted particularly for his landscapes, portraits and still lifes.

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF AUNT CHRISI

A short story by Agim Isaku

I held in my hand the piece of paper which the young postman had brought on his bicycle to the door of my hostel. I read it over and over again, and could not believe my eyes. In large printed characters, which seemed to avoid the emotions of handwriting, it told me: "AUNT CHRISTINE DEAD STOP FUNERAL TOMORROW AT 1530. DAD". I had been in her house only ten days before, and Aunt Chrisi had appeared as fit as a fiddle. Seated as usual on the sofa by the low window where the sewing machine stood, her hands folded in her lap, a restrained smile on her pale, wrinkled face spreading dignity and confidence through the little kitchen, she was a wonderful woman. She was delighted when my sister Nina gave her a cuddle. Indeed she appeared even younger and more jocular than usual. And there was a reason for this. A letter had recently arrived from Uncle Thani - as Nina and I called him, although we had never seen him since he had emigrated before Liberation, when Aunt Chrisi was no more than 18 and only two weeks married. It was written in an archaic Albanian by a hand trembling with age, and announced that he was preparing the necessary papers to return soon to Albania. "When will he come?" I had asked my father one evening before leaving the house. He had shrugged his shoulders and said that he would send me a telegram when he arrived. So when the telegram arrived, I naturally thought it was the notification of Uncle Thani's arrival. I had stuck the telegram in my pocket and gone quietly back to my room, and it was there that I learned not of Uncle Thani's return, but the sad news of Aunt Chrisi's death, that the place where she used to sit on the sofa would in future be empty for ever. I tried to recall some heart ailment which might have caused her sudden death, but as far as I could remember she had never had a day's illness in the last twenty years. Perhaps it had been a stroke, a fatal cerebral haemorrhage beneath her white hair, brought on by the

excitement of waiting.

I realised that these speculations were useless. I should learn the truth only when I reached home. For the moment, I knew only that Aunt Chrisi who had brought us up, who had waited so patiently for more than forty years for her husband's return from emigration, was dead and that her body, against which I had slept so many times, would be buried at 3.30 tomorrow afternoon.

Outside, night was falling. At the hostel opposite, which housed the girls of the Higher Institute of Arts, the lights were already on. From time to time there floated from it the faint sounds of an oboe. I glanced at my watch. It was almost six o'clock. The last train for Korça had already left, and it would be difficult to hitch a lift so late; yet if I took the first train in the morning, there would be a risk of not arriving in time for the funeral. So I put on my overcoat, on which Aunt Chrisi had sown a button only ten days before on my last visit home. I quickly picked up my umbrella, left a note on the table for my room-mates, who were at the cinema, and went out.

2

I sat in the little café sipping a cup of coffee, waiting for some lorry driver to pause there on his way south.

Outside the rain was pouring down in torrents. Under the table my shoes gave off a light vapour from the warmth of the café. The only sound was the hiss of the espresso machine. I recalled my childhood. I would play in the snow until late in the evening, and return home with feet soaked. Of course, I feared a scolding or that my mother would smack me (my father was gentle, and never did so) and I would wait in the yard until Aunt Chrisi came to find me. "Come in, child! Ah, what a state you're in!" And she would undress me and put my shoes by the stove to dry. Then she would tell me the

story of the little princess who played in the snow: "Once there was a little boy like you, called Gej, and a little girl, younger than Nina, called Gerta" But before she had got very far, I would have fallen asleep on her knee. Our grandmother had died young and, as was the custom, Aunt Chrisi, who was her sister, had replaced her as our benefactor. She was, therefore, really my great-aunt, but Nina and I never called her that.

I remember from my earliest years that many of her friends would visit us at home. They would take coffee and talk of their husbands in emigration. As a child, I was allowed to listen without hindrance to their conversation. For the most part young, in their thirties, they all wore black, and knitted things for other people's children as they talked. They all looked alike to me - except for Aunt Chrisi, who was the most beautiful and dignified, with her fine skin, large eyes and neat appearance. I shall not forget Ismeta, Leftëria, big Pandora, Dije (the wife of Man Mamli), Gjenka (I learned later that she was called Iphigenia), Maria - and Viktoria who smoked. They talked of their adolescent dreams, and of their marriages. They gave deep sighs, and lapsed into silence. Then, oppressed by this silence, they would begin to sing in low voices, as though fearing that someone would object. Even now I remember several verses of these songs which, for one reason or another, made a great impression on me: "I am neither married nor a widow, yet I did not go to church to become a nun! Were I a mole I would dig a tunnel to come to you" And I would grow sad, looking at their finger nails which seemed to grow longer and more pointed from one week to another.

Then the women would begin to curse those who had abandoned them and left them with empty cradles. Only Aunt Chrisi was silent. She always kept Thani's carefully dusted photograph by her bedside.

The years passed and we grew up. Now I slept no more with Aunt Chrisi; my place was taken by my sister

Nina. But the women continued to meet in our kitchen. Not all, however - only Aunt Chrisi and Leftëria, for their husbands alone had not returned from emigration. Big Pandore and Dije (the wife of Man Mamliu), Viktoria who smoked, Maria and Ismeta came no more. Their husbands had returned one by one, like weary storks. I used to see them in the steep streets of our little town, or seated on benches in the park, or in bars sipping a cup of coffee, in faded hats and clothes which hung on them like sacks Gjenka had disappeared. As a child I adored her. She never came without bringing me a gift - an apple, an egg or a caramel. She would embrace me affectionately. Pandora was quite different: she was always grumbling.

I remember the afternoon when Gjenka first failed to come. "Where's Gjenka?", demanded Aunt Chrisi, when all the other women were seated. "Don't speak to me about her!", said Viktoria, drawing on her cigarette. as though to hide her trembling chin in the smoke; "she's gone!". Aunt Chrisi raised her head from the coffee-pot and asked: "How so?" "She's gone away with a man", sniffed Viktoria; "she just packed up all her things and went off with him. And her husband still alive! It's wicked!" "Gone away!", sighed Dija, the wife of Man Mamli; "and living in sin!" "We might have guessed from those low-cut dresses she used to wear", said big Pandora disapprovingly. "That's enough!", said Aunt Chrisi; "we don't know enough to censure her. Let's not gossip about her. We have our own problems".

And indeed they did not speak of her again for almost a year, when Dije, the wife of Man Mamliu, said in a low voice as though speaking to herself: "Gjenka has had a little girl". The other women said not a word, and soon they got up to go as though they had suddenly grown old and sad. And I too was sad that it seemed that Gjenka would come no more.

Gradually, as I have said, most of the other women ceased to visit our house. Only Leftëria continued to visit Aunt Chrisi regularly. The photographs of Uncle

Thani, taken when he was a young man, grew yellow with age on the walls of the house, and Aunt Chrisi refused to allow them to be replaced. His letters from Argentina became less and less frequent, and their Albanian more and more distorted. The other women whose husbands had returned came occasionally to visit Aunt Chrisi - always alone, never with their husbands. They were sad, and complained incessantly of various maladies, the names of which they grossly mispronounced. They seemed shrunken, as though if one were to touch them with a finger-tip they would scream in terrible pain. It was as though their years of waiting had unrelentingly worn them away, like the moles who bored their tunnels in the song they used to sing.

Even Aunt Chrisi and Leftëria began to look old. Always neatly dressed, they visited and consoled each other more frequently. Aunt Chrisi continued to tend the flowers in the yard, to change each day the water in the goldfish-tank, to fill the glass vases on the round table in the hall with fresh flowers. From my earliest childhood years I remember this table and those vases, and the photographs of Uncle Thani. Were they still hanging on the wall now that Aunt Chrisi was no longer in this world?

I got up and went to pay for my coffee. Outside the rain was still pouring down. In my town in the south it would perhaps be snowing. I buttoned my overcoat.

"You're going out in this rain?", exclaimed the waitress.

I nodded my head. "I must to try and pick up a lift; I have to get to Korça".

"At half-past ten the bus to the mine will stop here", she added; "there you will find more lorries going south".

"Thank you, Good night!". And at these words I opened the door.

"Good night! Have a good trip!"

3

I managed the rest of my journey in only two stages, with the rain continuing to beat down. I arrived home at dawn, wet through and half asleep. Father, Mother and Nina met me the door, eyes wet with tears. As soon as they saw me, they burst into sobs and, as I embraced them, I too found myself weeping.

"Where is she?", I asked.

"Come!", said my father, leading the way up the stairs. He had on his dark suit, which I had hardly ever seen him wear. It had a pattern of thin white vertical lines.

"How did it happen?", I asked him as we climbed the stairs, which creaked beneath our feet.

"We don't know", he replied.

"But the doctor . . .?"

"He just says her heart grew tired".

The bed on which lay the mortal remains of Aunt Chrisi was surrounded by a group of old women, all dressed in black. I clasped their hands in turn, and they moved back to make way for me. I bent down to kiss Aunt Chrisi's forehead and was surprised to note a faint smell of moth-balls. Our faces were close together, as in the days of my childhood when we used to sleep in the same bed, but now her face was strangely altered. It was horribly wrinkled, and she was unable to disperse these furrows with her usual smile. Her hands, crossed over her chest, had withered in the space of ten days, her fingers seemed abnormally

long, and their many veins, once blue, had turned yellow. Aunt Chrisi was disfigured. I buried my face in her breast, sobbing. Two or three old women sighed deeply behind me. I felt a hand clutch my shoulder. I turned my head, sunk in sorrow, and saw that it was my father.

"Be a man!", he said in an almost inaudible voice.

I obeyed and left the room. Nina was crying in a corner of the landing. I stroked her hair.

"How is your son?", I asked her.

But she could only sob as though her heart would break.

"Go into the living room" - I recognised the voice of Uncle Fadit - "people want to pass here".

Outside, it had begun to snow, and the earth of the yard and garden were already covered with its white flakes.

"We've had a lot of snow this year", remarked one of the women, who kept passing by, now with a plate, now with a pan, in her hand.

Tears stung my eyes. As soon as I had gone through the low door into the living room, I could not avoid looking at the place where Aunt Chrisi usually sat, on the sofa, near the sewing machine and the little window at which the curtain remained half-drawn, as she had left it. Someone placed before me a cup of coffee. I gazed out at the fine snow which covered the ground. I smoked, sipping my coffee from time to time. Then, in a kind of fog, I heard the lid of the coffin being nailed down; I went to the cemetery, shook hands with those who were there, and, as soon as I was back home, fell with clenched fists into a dreamless sleep

During the night more snow fell. A strong wind blew. The road was now impassable, forcing me to put off for several days my return to Tirana.

All this time the house was filled with people coming to express their condolences. There came in turn Leftëria; Gjenka, whose daughter was now grown-up; big Pandora; Maria, who had gone blind and was led about by her twelve-year-old son; Dije, the wife of Man Mamli; Viktoria, who had given up smoking; Ismeta . . . All old women, but still alive - while Aunt Chrisi, the youngest of them all, the strongest, the most beautiful, mine, ours, was dead.

Late in the evening, when the family was alone in the house - including Nesti, Nina's husband - we spoke of her mysterious, incomprehensible death. For me, who lived far away, everything had happened in the space of the ten days since my last visit home. Her sudden decline puzzled me. What had suddenly aged her, destroyed her beauty? "How could this have occurred in only ten days?", I asked Dr. Njoril, with whom I had worked in a health centre before leaving to specialise in dentistry. "It sometimes happens during a long coma", he replied; "in this condition the patient may remain youthful and fresh for twenty years. Then, when she awakes, the organism ages with incredible speed. Perhaps your aunt had been in a kind of coma, and then something happened to wake her and frighten her . . ."

"And Uncle Thani, when is he due?", I asked one evening.

Father shrugged his shoulders. Mother said nothing.

"Soon", said Nesti, who had seated himself on a chair near the door.

"It's too late!", said Nina sadly.

"Petro, Leftëria's husband, has returned", my father said, turning to me; "the day after you left for Tirana".

"Hm!", exclaimed my mother. In the confined space of the living room this "hm" fell on me like a blow from a club.

"But they are together!", I said.

"After Petro came back", continued my mother, as if she had not heard what I said, "your aunt changed completely. She would shut herself for hours in her room - I don't know what she did there. Then she would go out without a word and visit Leftëria".

"The last time", interposed Nina, "she asked me to go with her. 'Is your child asleep?', she asked me. 'Yes', I said. 'Then come with me!' 'Where?', I asked. 'To Leftëria's'. 'I'd love to, Aunt Chrisi', I said. And so we went together to Leftëria's house. It's like ours, but bigger. There were some trunks in one corner. Leftëria appeared upset. 'What did Petro say to you?', Aunt Chrisi asked in a trembling voice. 'What could he say?'. Leftëria answered; 'he didn't even recognise me. I was waiting at the barrier; he glanced at me and then walked right past me as if I were a stranger'"

"From that day", concluded Nina, "she never left the house. As Mummy says, she shut herself in her room for hours at a time; she hardly ate or drank anything".

"Three days before her death", my father related, "we received a letter from Uncle Thani. It came from Italy. 'I shall be home in a week', it said"

I heard these words faintly, as though from a long distance. For now I knew the truth. Now I knew what Aunt Chrisi had been doing during those eight days between the return of Petro and her death.

She had waited for forty-two years, striving with

extraordinary tenacity to preserve her youth and conceal her age. But when her husband's return became a matter of days, she became panic-stricken. I imagined her in her room, opening the locked chest, putting on one of the dresses smelling of moth-balls, and gazing at herself in the glass. Then, unhappy with her appearance, she would have put on another, and another. Their colours would differ, but the smell of moth-balls would have permeated all of them. I imagined her changing her hair-style. But when Leftëria told her that her husband had failed to recognise her. she must have lost all her illusions.

"The night she died", sighed Mother, "she went up to her room saying she had a headache. There was a full moon, but it shone only faintly through the windows. When Nina took her a cup of coffee, she told Aunt Chrisi to put the light on. 'I prefer the moonlight', she replied. We found her next morning, her head resting on her dressing table".

What had Aunt Chrisi seen as she looked in her mirror for the last time?

5

"Aren't you going to wait for Uncle Thani?", asked my father.

I shook my head. We had received a telegram announcing his arrival in two days, but I had no wish to stay on. I arranged to leave the following day by the first bus.

"I have to go", I said.

Nesti sat as usual on the chair near the door, smoking a cigarette. He offered one to me.

We sat in silence. Nina's little boy was asleep on the sofa. Above our heads, we heard Mother's muffled footsteps, and a few moments later she came into the

room carrying a suitcase, which she placed on the table.

"These are Aunt Chrisi's bequests", she said and, to stifle her tears, her voice took on a cold, formal tone; "they are all wrapped in little parcels".

Inside the case were various little packets, each bearing a name written in big letters. We each took that intended for us, until only one was left at the bottom of the suitcase.

"What is that one", I asked.

"It must be for Uncle Thani", said Nina.

My mother took it from the case with a trembling hand. On it was written: "For Gjenka's daughter".

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|--------------------|------------------------|
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| 31, 42 metres | 17.30 - 18.00 |
| 31, 42 metres | 19.30 - 20.00 |
| 42, 215 metres | 21.30 - 22.00 |
| 31, 42, 215 metres | 23.00 - 23.30 |

CARTOONS

CARTOONS FROM THE ALBANIAN MAGAZINE "YLLI" (The Star)



On the Fists of Africa!



Capitalist: What are you complaining about? We eat from the same bowl.

ALBANIAN NEWS

(January - April 1986)

POLITICS

In January:

Activities were organised throughout Albania to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic (11th), and an amnesty was granted.

The 8th session of the 10th legislature of the People's Assembly held its proceedings.

In February:

Ramiz Alia visited the district of Mirdita.

The Plenum of the General Council of the Women's Union of Albania convened in Tirana (24th).

In March:

Ramiz Alia visited the district of Kruja.

Commemorative activities on Enver Hoxha were organised (11th).

Elections to the People's Councils and the People's Courts were held (27th). The participation in the elections was 100%, and over 99.9% voted for the candidates of the Democratic Front.

DIPLOMACY

In February:

The Belgian Ambassador, Jan Blanquaert, presented his credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

in March:

The Austrian Ambassador, Paul Leifer, presented his credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

FOREIGN VISITORS

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

In January:

Antonio Fernandez Gomes, Secretary of the Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist).

A government trade delegation from Greece.

A delegation of deputies of the Finnish Parliament.

In February:

A delegation of the Greek National Tourist Organisation.

The French violinist Gerard Poulet.

A delegation of the Algerian Ministry of Energy.

The State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turbjorn Froyanes.

A government trade delegation from Vietnam.

In March:

A government trade delegation from Austria.

FOREIGN VISITS

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

In January:

A delegation of the Executive Committee of the People's Council of Gjirokastra to Greece.

In February:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Reis Malile, to Algeria.

In March:

The violinist Ibrahim Madhi and the 'cellist Gëzim Laro to Austria.

A delegation of the People's Assembly to Algeria.

In April:

A trade delegation to Finland.

FOREIGN TRADE

In January:

A protocol on trade for 1986 was signed with Greece.

An agreement between Albanian and Vietnamese Radiotelevisions was signed.

Trade agreements for 1986-90 were signed with Czechoslovakia and Poland, and a protocol for 1986 with Poland.

In February:

A trade agreement for 1986-88 and a protocol for 1986 were signed with Turkey.

A trade agreement for 1986-90 was signed with Vietnam.

In March:

A trade agreement for 1986-90 was signed with Austria.

An agreement on civil air transport was signed with Switzerland.

In April:

A trade agreement for 1986-90 was signed with Finland.

CULTURE

In January:

Activities were organised on the occasion of the 518th anniversary of the death of Skanderbeg.

A French exhibition on communications and solar energy was organised in Tirana.

An agreement on scientific and educational cooperation for 1986 was signed between the Enver Hoxha University of Tirana and the Houari Boumédiène University of Algeria.

The National Festival of Instrumentalists was held in Tirana.

In March:

Albania was represented at the International Film Festival in Vienna and at the International Fair in Tripoli (Libya).

An agreement on cultural and scientific exchanges for 1986-88 was signed with Finland.

In April:

The 6th Festival of Albanian Documentary and Cartoon Films was held in Tirana.

The National Olympiads of mathematics, physics and chemistry took place in Durrës (23rd).

Books

Among new books published during the period under review were:

Enver Hoxha: "Works", Volume 48 (Jan.-May 1972).

Enver Hoxha: "On Women".

Enver Hoxha: "The Superpowers".

Dhimitër Grillo: "Arvanites and Albanians in the Liberation Struggle of the Greek People".

Institute of Marxist-Leninist Studies: "History of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War" (Volume 2).

NEW MAGAZINES AVAILABLE

Price
(inc. postage)

NEW ALBANIA. No. 6, 1985 50p.
Inauguration of the Koman power station; the right to work; coping with the drought; the inauguration of the Fier-Vlora railway; statement by Prof. Martin Smith; the Guri i Kuq nickel mine; rents; the care of orphans; the health service in the highlands; pheasant rearing; the Tirana circus; the sculptor Odhise Paskali; the mosaics of Apollonia.

NEW ALBANIA, No. 1, 1986 50p.
40th anniversary of the Republic; the Plan for 1986; copper; the Qemal Stafa secondary school, Tirana; the copper wire plant in Shkodra; the Albanian Riviera; the role of Skanderbeg; the pharmaceutical industry; hydrogeology; livestock-raising; the Radio/TV Song Contest; Gustav Meyer; Illyrian culture; treasures of antiquity; the national football championship.

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 6, 1985 50p.
The life and work of Enver Hoxha; urban life among the southern Illyrians; Foreign Minister Reis Malile's speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 1, 1986 50p.
40th anniversary of the Republic and the Land Reform; the inauguration of the Koman power station; the role of Marxism-Leninism in Albania; national repression in Macedonia.

ALBANIA TODAY. No. 2, 1986 50p.
Socialist industrialisation; foreign policy; socialist law; the role of Skanderbeg; the Institute of Marxist-Leninist Studies; Albanian folk culture; the development of agriculture; economic growth rates.

SOCIO-POLITICAL STUDIES, No. 2, 1985 £1

(This issue is devoted to the theoretical work of Enver Hoxha)

NEW BOOKS

Price
(inc. postage)

NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE WORK OF ENVER HOXHA £1

Enver Hoxha: TWO FRIENDLY PEOPLES £3
(on relations with Greece and the
the Greek minority in Albania)

Sotir Temo: EDUCATION IN ALBANIA £1.50

ALBANIA : FACTS AND FIGURES (1985) £1

NEW PUBLICATIONS OF THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY

THE PENAL CODE £1

THE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE £1

A TANGLED WEB: £7.50
A History of Anglo-American Relations
with Albania (1912-1955) (based on
official British, American and United
Nations records) (with an epilogue
covering the period 1956-1985).
by William Bland and Ian Price

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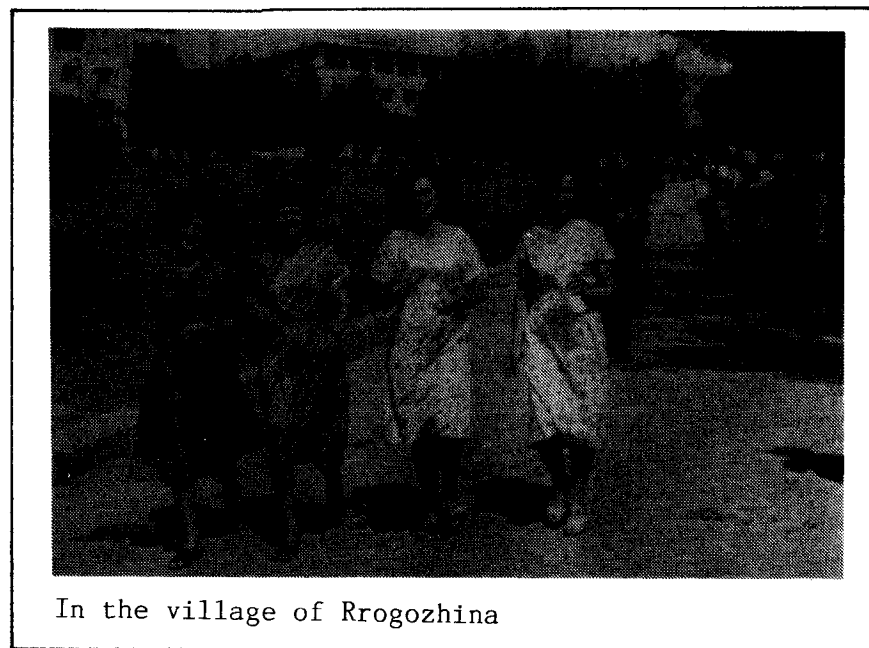
* Special Offers

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* Accessories

Range of specialised one-country albums, etc.

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In the village of Rrogozhina

THE SPIRIT OF EUROPE FOUNDATION

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has recently nominated two representatives to serve as Trustees on the Spirit of Europe Foundation. The principal aim of the Foundation, which is registered as a non-profitmaking charity in Austria, is to "celebrate the differences" between European nations and, accepting these differences, to promote trust and understanding between the nations of Europe as part of humanity. The President of the Foundation is Mr. Harley Miller of Moray, Scotland.

The Foundation will be holding shortly a European Humanity Gathering in Britain, and the Foreign Office has agreed to expedite applications for visas from Albanian delegates to attend the Gathering.

MEETINGS

On 9th April, 1986 the President of the Albanian Society, Professor Martin Smith, had a meeting in Bucharest with the Albanian Ambassador to Romania, Mr. Zoi Toska. Professor Smith presented Mr. Toska with some recent Albanian Society publications and asked him to communicate a message of warm greetings and best wishes from the Society to the Albanian Committee for Cultural and Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries and, through it, to the Albanian people. Mr. Toska expressed his admiration for the important contribution which the Society makes to better understanding of Albania in Britain and wished the Society and its members every success. There followed a wide-ranging, friendly and fruitful discussion of Albanian-British relations and of other matters of common interest.

On 1st March the "Liria" group presented a concert of Albanian light music at the Tower Tavern, Clipstone Street, London. This was repeated on 25th March at the Albany, Creek Road, London.

On 13th April Laurie Prescott gave a talk on "Farming Policy in Albania", illustrated with slides, at the Tolmers Square Community Centre, London. This was followed by a screening of a colour video of the Albanian documentary film "Fertile Land".

On 16th April Ron Gregory, Secretary of the South Wales Branch of the Society, gave a talk, illustrated with slides, to the Club Brynmenyn on his visit to Albania in 1985. This was followed by a screening of a colour video of the last National Folk Festival at Gjirokastra.

On 30th April Professor Smith gave a talk, illustrated with slides, entitled "Albania: The Wales

of the Balkans", to a meeting organised by the Marxist-Leninist Society at the University College, Cardiff. This was followed by a talk on "Political Economy in Albania" and the screening of a video of the feature film "Poppies on the Walls".

On 4th May a concert of Albanian music was given by Dave Smith and other artistes in the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham. The programme consisted of Tish Daija's Poem for Violin, Pjetër Gaci's Violin Concerto, Thoma Gagi's Borova and Dave Smith's Albanian Summer.



The composer Tish Daija

FORTHCOMING MEETING

The Albanian Society will present

on Sunday, September 14th at 3 p.m.

at the THEATRO TECHNIS, 26, Crowndale Road, London NW1
(off Camden High Street)

(Camden Town Underground Station)

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THE GHOST AT THE WEDDING

A play in three acts by William Bland

The central theme of the play is based on the novel The Wedding by the leading Albanian writer Ismail Kadare. The play is set in the construction site of a new town in a remote district of central Albania some years after Liberation, on the eve of the marriage of Katrina, a girl from the Highlands, to Xhavid, a young welder. But Katrina was betrothed as a child, and by her marriage is breaking the age-old Canon of the Mountains; her father believes that only by Katrina's death is it possible for the honour of the family to be redeemed

The reading will be preceded by a talk on

THE THEATRE IN ALBANIA

by Bill Bland



Young violinist Tedi Papavrami, who won first prize at the 4th International Violin Competition held in September 1985 at Gorizia, Italy.

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