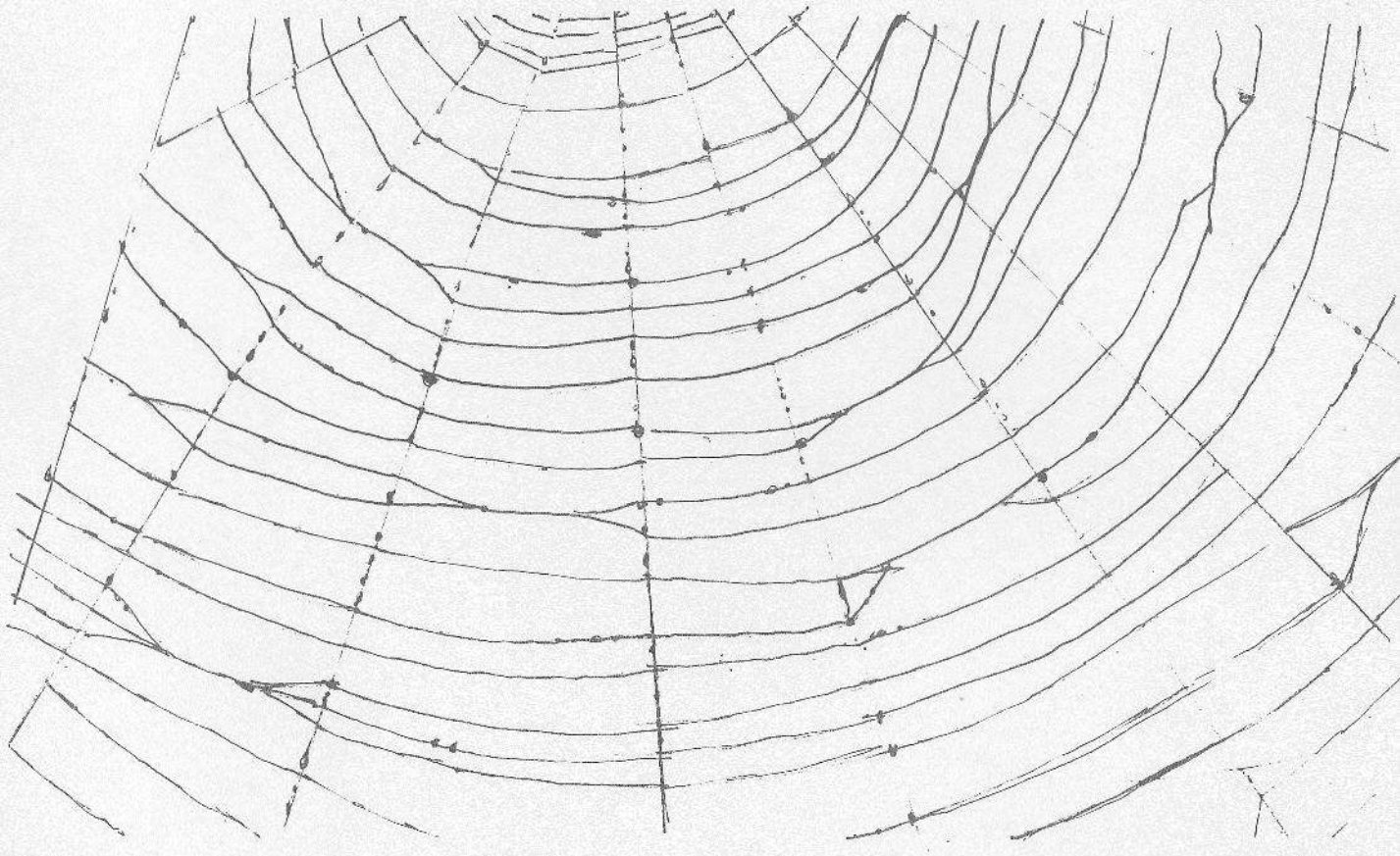
A TANGLED WEB

A History of Anglo-American Relations with Albania

(1912-1955)

by William Bland and Ian Price



"O, what a tangled web we weave,

When first we practise to deceive"

- Walter Scott

A TANGLED WEB

A History of Anglo-American Relations with Albania

(1912-1955)

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The Albanian Friendship Society of Southern California,
1727, N. Bronson Ave.,
Los Angeles,
Calif. 90028,
USA

and

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

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Bland, William and Price, Ian
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"The Albanian leaders are a sincere, patriotic group of individuals who are going to be difficult to deal with"

- Joseph Jacobs, Head of the United States Special Mission to Albania; 1945.

"Even if Albanian territory isn't violated, it deserves to be"

- Sir Anthony Rumbold, Head of the Southern Department at the British Foreign Office; 1949.

INTRODUCTION

The work which follows is a study of Anglo-American relations with Albania during the period from 1912, when Albania first became an independent state. Its subject matter has, to a considerable extent, been covered by the late First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, Enver Hoxha, in his book The Anglo-American Threat to Albania, published in Tirana in 1980.

While Hoxha's memoirs are based largely on bitter personal experience, however, A Tangled Web is based almost entirely on official British, American and United Nations documents. Many British and American records in particular have been heavily suppressed; yet even so the story which emerges confirms in almost every detail that presented in Hoxha's work. It is indisputable that the conduct of Britain and the United States towards this small Balkan country - both before and after the establishment of the present socialist regime in 1944 - has been one of the most sordid and discreditable in the history of these Powers. It is a story of the enforced partition of the Albanian nation; of the imposition of foreign rulers on the Albanian state; of the organisation by British officers of a genocidal massacre of the Albanian-speaking minority in Greece; of espionage and subversion; of the perversion of truth and justice in an effort to make Albania the scapegoat for the crimes of others; of the embezzlement of Albania's gold reserve; of concerted attempts to ostracise Albania from international organisations; of the organisation of an armed invasion of Albania in an effort to overthrow its government. . . .

British official records are at present available only up to 1955, but a brief epilogue brings the story up to date.

William Bland

Ian Price

1986

NOTES ON DOCUMENTS

AMERICAN documents (marked "A") are to be found either in the National Archives of the United States in Washington, or in the Washington National Records Center at Suitland, Maryland.

BRITISH documents (marked "B") are to be in the Public Record Office in Kew, London.

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE documents (marked "CP", "CJ", "GP" or "GJ") are to be found in the United Nations Information Centre, London.

CP: Pleadings, Oral Arguments, Documents: The Corfu Channel Case. (6 volumes)

CJ: Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders: 1949.

GP: Pleadings, Oral Arguments, Documents: The Case of the Monetary Gold removed from Rome in 1943.

GJ: Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders: 1954.

UNITED NATIONS documents (marked "U") are to be found in the United Nations Archives in Manhattan, New York.

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1

1912-1914 :

THE GREAT PLAYTHING

"Great Princes have great playthings" - William Cowper

On November 28th, 1912 the Albanian people threw off a thousand years of foreign oppression - the last five hundred under the rule of Turkey - when their first National Assembly in Vlora proclaimed the independence of Albania and set up the first national government headed by the patriot Ismail Qemali.

At this time Europe was still dominated by the six Great Powers of Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. To these Great Powers small nations were mere children, who must be guided by their wiser adults and, should they show disobedience, chastised for their own good. Thus, when the news of the Albanian proclamation reached London, Robert Vansittart (then a junior official at the Foreign Office, but later Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Lord Vansittart of Denham) commented contemptuously:

> "It is not Ismail Qemali who will settle the future status and extent of Albania". (1)

On December 17th, 1912, therefore, the Conference of Ambassadors of the six Great Powers began a series of meetings in London under the chairmanship of the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and a principal item on the agenda was "the future status and extent of Albania".

On March 20th, 1913 the Conference of Ambassadors arbitrarily drew the frontiers of Albania, not on any ethnical basis but so as to exclude from the new state more than half the Albanian nation. In particular, the rich Kosova region was detached from the country in the north, while the southern region of Çamëria was awarded to Greece.

Montenegro refused to accept the award of the town of Shkodra to Albania and besieged the town with its troops. In April the commander of the town's forces, Esat Pasha Toptani, surrendered Shkodra to the Montenegrins in return for promises of support in making him master of the country. He then moved the troops under his command to the Durrës region where, in August, he set up the "Senate of Central Albania" as a rival to the Vlora government.

Meanwhile, however, the Great Powers, insisting that their determination of Albania's frontiers be respected, had despatched warships to Bar and blockaded the Montenegrin coast. This "naval demonstration" (as it was officially called) was successful in forcing the withdrawal of the Montenegrin troops in May. An international force was then landed under the command of the British vice-admiral Sir Cecil Burney, and a military government established over the Shkodra district. Burney was succeeded in November by the British army officer Colonel George Phillips, who was given the title of Governor of Shkodra.

Finally, on July 29th, 1913, the Conference of Ambassadors recognised Albania - not as an independent state, but as an "autonomous principality". The new state was to have as Head of State a prince designated by the Great Powers; it was to be administered by an International Control Commission composed of one representative of each of the Great Powers and "a delegate of Albania"; and its "security" was to be in the hands of an international gendarmerie commanded by foreign officers:

"1. Albania is constituted as an autonomous principality, sovereign and hereditary by line of primogeniture, under the guarantee of the six Powers. The Prince will be designated by the six Powers.

2. All bond of suzerainty between Turkey and Albania is excluded.

3. Albania is neutralised; its neutrality is guaranteed by the six Powers.

4. The control of the civil administration and of the finances of Albania is entrusted to an international commission composed of delegates of the six Powers and a delegate of Albania.

5. The powers of this commission will continue for ten years, and can be renewed in case of need; . .

8. Security and public order will be guaranteed by an international gendarmerie organisation. This organisation will be entrusted to foreign officers who will have the higher and effective command of the gendarmerie". (2)

In October 1913 the delegates appointed by the Great Powers arrived in Albania and established themselves in Vlora. The British Commissioner, Harry Lamb, found Albania

" . . a country absolutely devoid of every element of civilisation", (3)

and his main concern was to ensure that the Commission, and the governments which stood behind it, recognised the Albanian government in Vlora merely as an "indigenous local authority". As he reported to the Foreign Office following the first meeting of the Commission on October 16th:

"We should avoid any action that might have the appearance of recognising it (the Vlora government - Ed.) as the Government of Albania". (4)

The Commission recognised as the "delegate of Albania" one Mufid Bey, Foreign Minister in the Vlora government. He immediately resigned from the government in order, as Lamb expressed it to London, that he could be

" . . recognised as being absolutely independent of Ismail Bey Qemali and his government", (5)

and was, in fact, described by Lamb as a

" . . paid agent of Austria". (6)

When the Dutch officers were on their way to take over command of the gendarmerie, Lamb bent his efforts to persuading his superiors to reject the claim of the Vlora government that this should be placed under its Ministry of War:

"The submission of the Gendarmerie organisation to the direction of the 'Minister of War' must be regarded as an indirect method of securing that recognition of the Provisional Government of Vlora as the central government of Albania which I understood you to have been good enough to agree with me in regarding as impracticable. . .

The Gendarmerie organisation should in my opinion . . stand upon the same footing as the Commission of Control, responsible only

to the guaranteeing Powers", (7)

on which Vansittart commented:

> "Mr. Lamb is pretty clearly right in saying that they (the gendarmerie - Ed.) should not be under the Ministry of War". (8)

And when, in November, the Vlora government granted a concession to an Austro-Italian banking group to establish a National Bank of Albania, Lamb successfully persuaded the Commission that such concessions were outside the government's powers:

> "My French and Russian colleagues are in agreement with myself . . that the Provisional Government of Albania . . was incompetent to grant definitive concessions engaging the economic future of the entire country". (9)

In November 1913 the Powers agreed upon the selection of a Head of State for Albania in the person of Prince Wilhelm zu Wied, a Prussian army officer from a small German principality centred upon the town of Neuwied, near Koblenz. Wilhelm indicated his willingness to accept the offer under certain conditions, the principal of which were that he should be offered the throne by "a deputation representing the Albanian people" and that the Powers should arrange a loan of 75 million francs to "his" new state and a Civil List for himself of 200,000 francs a year. The Powers having agreed to these conditions, Wilhelm formally accepted the deal on February 7th, 1914.

Meanwhile, on January 22nd, the International Control Commission brusquely informed Ismail Qemali:

> " . . that it was authorised by the Powers to accept his resignation and assume the administration", (10)

and on the 31st persuaded Esat to dissolve his rival "government" under the promise that he could lead the "deputation representing the Albanian people" which would formally offer the throne to the Prince. Reporting Esat's departure from Durrës on February 18th, Lamb noted:

> "The International Commission . . was compelled to pass the sponge over the abuses of his past administration, including his lavish expenditure of public moneys in the advancement of his personal ambitions". (11)

On January 27th a British army officer, Captain D. Heaton-Armstrong, nicknamed by Albania's British friend, writer and traveller Edith Durham

> " . . the chocolate soldier", (12)

was seconded to the Prince as his Private Secretary and Treasurer of the Household.

On February 22nd, Esat and his "deputation": formally offered the throne of Albania to Wilhelm at Neuwied, and in the same month the Prince paid official visits to London, Rome, Paris, St. Petersburg and Vienna. He reached Durrës on March 7th aboard an Austrian government yacht, escorted by British, French and Italian warships. Welcoming the Prince, Esat assured him that he

" . . would be a second Skanderbeg", (13)

a somewhat inappropriate reference to the 15th century Albanian prince who for twenty-five years led the national resistance to the foreign occupiers of the time. The reception of the Albanian people, however, was less warm - "The Times" heading its report of Wilhelm's landing:

"SCANTY GATHERING OF ALBANIANS". (14)

As befitting a professional diplomat, Lamb drew a more tactful picture in his report to the Foreign Office:

> "The demeanour of the population was .. not enthusiastic. Enthusiasm, it should be held in mind, is foreign to the native temperament". (15)

After talking with Wilhelm, Lamb commented two days later:

> "He appeared to be very ill-informed in regard to the veritable condition of affairs in this country". (16)

The Prince invited Turhan Pasha Përmeti, an Albanian in origin only and formerly Turkish Ambassador to St. Petersburg, to form a government, the dominant figure in which was Esat Pasha Toptani - given the key posts of Minister of War and of the Interior. In a report to London on March 8th, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Louis Mallet, noted that Turhan Pasha was officially designated by the Turkish government as

" . . a Turkish subject". (17)

By the beginning of June the attitude of the Albanian people could no longer be described as merely lacking in enthusiasm. A mass revolt against the Prince and his administration broke out and spread so rapidly that within a few days they found themselves besieged in Durrës. At this time the United States Minister to Greece, George Williams, visited Albania and informed the press of Europe:

> "I found a state of anarchy. . .
> Prince Wied has no more right than I have to Albania, and the blood of the murdered is on his head.
> I found a Prince, calling himnself a King, with no power, no territory, and no subjects except his wife and children. . .
> The Albanians appear to be regarded as mere chattels, to be disposed of by arbitrary methods. . .
> The departure of the Commission and the Prince is inevitable and, to save further bloodshed, should take place at once". (18)

On July 6th Colville Barclay, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, informed the Foreign Office:

> "President Wilson has asked for the resignation of Mr. George Fred Williams. . . His statements to the European press regarding Albania have, of course, been officially repudiated by the State Department". (19)

Meanwhile, on June 25th, the Foreign Office informed Lamb that Austria and Italy were prepared to authorise Colonel Phillips to form a military force

of some 3,000 Albanians, with officers drawn from the international force, in order to

> " . . ensure the Prince's position in the seaports and suppress risings". (20)

In a signal three days later, Rear-Admiral Ernest Troubridge, commanding the British 1st Cruiser Squadron in Albanian waters, reported that Colonel Phillips had endeavoured to parley with the insurgents investing Durrës, but

> " . . they refuse to accept the Prince of Wied", (21)

and said that Wilhelm

> " . . believed the only way that he could control his subjects would be by raising sufficient foreign volunteers to compel the submission of all those in rebellion to his rule". (22)

But on that very day, June 28th, 1914, the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo, and this became the pretext for the launching of the First World War. With war clouds gathering rapidly over the whole of Europe, any possibility of saving the Prince and his administration from the wrath of the Albanian people disappeared. Prime Minister Turhan Pasha left hurriedly for Italy on June 28th, to be followed within the next few weeks by the Dutch officers of the gendarmerie and the international force based on Shkodra. On August 17th, after war had broken out, British Commissioner Lamb left Albania "on leave", and on September 3rd the Prince himself departed on an Italian guardship.

1. B: FO371/1522/50952/51466.
2. B: FO371/1802/13799/37297.
3. B: FO320/1.
4. B: ibid.
5. B: ibid.
6. B: FO371/1807/14809/48910..
7. B: FO320/1.
8. B: FO371/1807/14809/50382.
9. B: FO320/1.
10. B: FO371/1890/769/4454.
11. B: FO371/1886/146/7402.
12. B: FO371/1896/32237/32237.
13. "The Times", March 9th, 1914; p. 8.
14. "The Times", March 11th, 1914; p. 7.
15. B: FO371/1886/146/11875.
16. B: FO371/1886/146/11876.
17. B: FO371/1893/12122/12685.
18. B: FO371/1889/352/31550.
19. B: FO371/1889/352/31816.
20. B: FO371/1885/33/28830.
21. B: FO371/1895/22521/30529.
22. B: ibid.

1914-1918 :

2

SPOILS OF WAR

"Laws are dumb in time of war" - Cicero

Despite the fact that the Great Powers of Europe had "guaranteed" the neutrality of Albania only a year before, despite the fact that a new National Congress in January 1915 reaffirmed this neutrality, with the outbreak of World War I Albania became a battlefield between the belligerent states. Its territory was invaded in turn by the troops of Greece, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro and France.

By the spring of 1915 rumours were widespread that the Allied states were contemplating the repudiation of the 1913 decisions in order to partition the territory of Albania among themselvers, leaving only a small central Albanian "state" which would be offered to Italy as a "protectorate" in return for her entering the war on the side of the Entente.

Americans of Albanian descent were particularly vociferous in their protests at such suggestions. They had greeted with joy the proclamation of Albania's independence in 1912, and in that year the local associations of Albanian-Americans had merged into the "Pan-Albanian Federation", known as "Vatra" (The Hearth). The newspaper "Dielli" (The Sun), founded in Boston in 1909, became its organ. Now, in a statement on March 15th, 1918, Vatra declared:

> "An Italian protectorate over Albania will be another name for annexation. . .
>
> An Italian protectorate over Albania will be the most dreaded solution next to Albania's partition, in the opinion of Albanians of all political shades. . .
>
> An Italian protectorate would be a distinct violation of the principle of nationality". (1)

The rumours proved to be only too true.

On April 26th, 1915 Britain, France, Italy and Russia signed the secret Treaty of London, the provisions of which relating to Albania were summarised by the British Foreign Office as follows:

> "Albania, as defined in 1913, was divided as follows:
>
> Vlora and its immediate neighbourhood to be given to Italy in full sovereignty.
>
> Central Albania to form a small autonomous state under Italian protection.
>
> Northern Albania to fall to Serbia and Montenegro, and Southern Albania to Greece". (2)

Although this treaty remained secret until it was published by the Soviet government in January 1918, the rumours and the protests continued. On August 21st, 1915, for example, Orthodox Bishop Fan Noli wrote on behalf of "the Albanians of America" to the United States Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, appealing to the American President

> " . . to use his moral influence to prevent partition of Albania", (3)

and on September 14th, the "Albanian Committee" in London, which had been founded by British friends of Albania in 1913, adopted a resolution stating that it

> " . . ventures to impress upon Ministers of the Crown our obligations towards Albania and urges upon them the duty of securing freedom for the most ancient nationality in the Balkan Peninsula". (4)

On the eve of the armistice, on November 6th, 1918, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, Colville Barclay, wrote to Lansing to say:

> "His Majesty's Government are of the opinion that . . nothing should be done to prejudice the consideration of the Albanian question by the Peace Congress", (5)

and asked for the opinion of the American government. Lansing replied on November 16th:

> "The United States Government is not contemplating any action regarding Albania pending the Peace Conference". (6)

When the Armistice was finally signed on November 11th, north-eastern Albania was occupied by the troops of Serbia, the central region by those of Italy, and most of the south by those of France. Shkodra was again under an international - now inter-Allied - military administration headed by the French lieutenant-colonel Joseph de Fourtou (later to be imprisoned for his part in the Stavisky swindle of the 1930s). The former Governor of Shkodra, George Phillips, now a brigadier-general, was back in Albania as

> " . . Head of the British Intelligence Mission . . operating in that country in liaison with the Italian and French troops there". (7)

The Albanian Committee in Britain had now become the "Anglo-Albanian Society" and, meeting in London on Armistice Day with traveller/historian Edith Durham as its Secretary, it adopted a resolution declaring its hope that the victorious Allied governments

> " . . will secure the integrity of Albanian territory and will assure to the Albanian people the right to choose their own form of Government". (8)

That this hope was, at least for a time, realised was due, however, not to the Great Powers, but to the actions of the Albanian people themselves.

1. B: FO371/3148/6163/110422.
2. B: FO371/3148/6163/199287.
3. A: M1211/1/875.00/5.
4. B: FO371/3148/6163/199287.
5. B: FO371/3148/6163/188042.
6. B: FO371/3148/6163/205299.
7. B: FO371/2238/129745/134705.
8. B: FO371/3148/6163/165532.

3

1918-1920 :

"AN AMERICAN REPUBLIC IN EUROPE"

"The huntsmen are up in America" - Sir Thomas Browne

In 1912 Europe had been a long way from the United States, and the proclamation of Albania's independence in that year aroused scarcely a ripple in official circles in Washington.

With the entry of the USA into the First World War in March 1917, however, certain of these circles began to look seriously at the possibility of gaining colonial-type rule over Albania. The Albanian community in America had learned from bitter experience that the attitude of the European Great Powers towards their homeland was a predatory one, but at this time large numbers of Albanian-Americans nursed the illusion that, in contrast, the USA was an "altruistic" state. This view is apparent in Vatra's statement of March 15th, 1918, already quoted, which went on to say that it was

> " . . believed to be the almost unanimous wish of the Albanians that, when their independence is restored, there shall be assigned to them the assistance and cooperation of some great nation with no political ambitions to subserve and no desire for territorial conquest. . . The United States seems to be the one nation to which the Albanians can look with perfect confidence. If an American commissioner or commission were to be designated by the United States to assist the Albanians in forming and constructing a successful state, every loyal Albanian would be satisfied". (1)

By 1918 the term "mandate" had been coined in an attempt to give a respectable veneer to post-war colonialism, and Vatra's view expressed the policy of a section of officials in the US State Department. A confidential document circulated within the Department in November 1918 under the title "Brief Recommendations regarding Albania" suggested that the US government might support

> " . . assignment of this territory to a mandatory, which must be a Great Power and should preferably be disinterested.
> The United States appears to be the only Power satisfying the ideal and which might accept the mandate". (2)

In March/April 1919, therefore, Joseph Haven, the US Consul in Turin, was sent on a special detail to Albania and, in his report to the State Department, stressed:

> "The FIRST choice and the universal demand throughout all Albania, without exception is for American administrative control". (3)

In the spring of the following year, 1920, Robert Hammond, the US Vice-Consul in Rome, was sent on a similar mission and reported in the same imaginative vein:

> "Albania is a splendid field for development, as it has good natural resources . .
> The Albanians as a whole worship and love the United States and American ideals to a fanatical degree. . .

I have gathered the following idea from every class of person within the country. . .
They want an American mandate over them". (4)

A limited press campaign boosted the idea. William Howard, Secretary of the Albanian Relief Fund, published an article in the Fund's organ, "The Christian Work", headed:

"AN AMERICAN REPUBLIC IN EUROPE", (5)

which proposed

"1. That President Wilson, acting in harmony with the Allies of the United States, proclaim the Republic of Albania.
2. That the United States give to Albania the same measure and character of guidance, help and protection that it has given to Cuba and the Philippines.
3. That a native Albanian government be formed, the officials of which shall be selected, as far as may be practicable, from the Albanians now living in the United States". (6)

This idea, however, never became official US government policy. It quickly became clear that, once the war was over, the victorious European Allied Powers had no intention of permitting the United States, at this time, to establish significant spheres of influence in Europe, and the USA relapsed into isolationism. Accordingly, on October 3rd, 1919, British Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Sir Eyre Crowe informed the Foreign Office that the United States, in conformity with the "altruism" in which Vatra had expressed such confidence, was prepared to go along with the European Powers' proposals for Italian domination of Albania:

"President Wilson . . is willing to . . consent to Italian mandate for Albania". (7)

1. B: FO371/3148/6163/110422.
2. A: M1211/1/875.00/35.5.
3. A: M1211/1/875.00/47.
4. A: M1211/1/875.00/51.
5. A: M1211/1/875.00/38.
6. A: ibid.
7. B: FO371/3510/123/136781.

4

1918-1920 :

AGAINST THE WIND

"Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner torn but flying
Streams like the thunderstorm against the wind" -
George, Lord Byron

At the end of December 1918 a new National Congress met in Durrës and, in an effort to give legalistic continuity to the Albanian state, elected Turhan Pasha once again as Prime Minister. It also appointed an Albanian delegation to attend the Peace Conference, due to open in Paris the following month.

The Peace Conference opened on January 18th, 1919 and in due course Italy, the newly formed Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Greece presented conflicting claims to Albanian territory.

Replying to a question in the British House of Commons on December 8th, 1919, Bonar Law, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House, declared:

> "I am unable to state when a decision will be taken with regard to Albania. . . It is not correct to say that the independence of Albania was agreed to . . in 1913":. (1)

On the very next day, however, after several months of negotiation between US President Woodrow Wilson and the Italian government, the delegates of Britain, the United States and France (respectively Sir Eyre Crowe, Frank Polk and Georges Clemenceau) signed a Memorandum which put into effect the main provisions of the 1915 Treaty of London. One part of this Memorandum, the Declaration, stated:

> "The United States, British and French Governments desire to recognise the independence of the Albanian State. They consider that the State of Albania will require . . 'the administrative advice and assistance of one of the Great Powers'. For this task Italy, by her geographical situation and economic capacity, is primarily indicated.
> The United States, British and French Governments are anxious, therefore, to entrust to Italy a mandate over the State of Albania". (2)

The other part of the Memorandum, the Decision, awarded to Greece the Gjirokastra district, leaving the rest of southern Albania for further negotiation, and declared:

> "Italy is to receive a mandate for the administration of the independent State of Albania, under the League of Nations. . . The frontiers of Albania, on the north and east, . . will be those fixed at the London Conference of 1913. . .
> The city of Vlora, together with such hinterland as may be strictly necessary to its defence and economic development, is to be granted to Italy in full sovereignty. . .
> The above . . points, in their general aspect, . . appear to afford to Italy full satisfaction of her historic national aspirations . .; they give her the absolute strategic control of the Adriatic". (3)

The Memorandum of December 9th, 1919 satisfied neither the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (by now generally known as Yugoslavia although the

name did not become official until October 1929), nor Greece. On January 14th, 1920, therefore, the Prime Ministers of Britain and France - David Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau - issued an amended declaration agreeing that northern Albania, including Shkodra, should be ceded to Yugoslavia, while the Korça district of the south should go to Greece. (4)

On February 10th, 1920 US President Woodrow Wilson despatched an angry note to London and Paris, complaining that the January Memorandum had been

> " . . negotiated without the knowledge or approval of the American Government", (5)

and that it

> " . . partitions the Albanian people, against their vehement protests, among three different alien powers". (6)

The British and French Prime Ministers - Alexandre Millerand had now replaced Clemenceau - thereupon, on February 26th, withdrew both the Memorandum of December 9th and that of January 14th.

As a result of all this wheeling and dealing among the Allied Powers, the Peace Conference ended on January 21st, 1920 without reaching any agreement on "the Albanian question". It was referred to a Conference of Allied Ambassadors to meet in Paris.

Meanwhile, the new intrigues against the independence and territorial integrity of Albania had aroused fierce resentment among the Albanian people. Since some members of the Albanian delegation had shown a tendency to compromise with the demands of the Powers, a new National Congress was held in Lushnja in January 1920: this established a Supreme Council of four persons as Head of State, a National Council or parliament, and a new government. The last-named addressed a strong protest to the Peace Conference against the proposals of the Allied Powers, and moved the capital from Durrës to Tirana.

The new government succeeded in negotiating the withdrawal of French troops from Albanian soil, but similar efforts in relation to the Italian forces failed. On May 20th, 1920, therefore, the government issued a national call to arms, and on June 5th a volunteer army launched a devastating attack on the occupying Italian troops. The Rome government found itself faced at the same time with anti-war strikes and demonstrations at home, and with a mutiny in the Italian army. As a British Foreign Office "Memorandum respecting Italy and Albania" expressed it:

> "Faced with a mutiny among the troops at Ancona who were ordered to Albania, Signor Giolitti (Italian Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti - Ed.) stated in the Italian Chamber of the 24th June that no more troops would be sent to Albania and that the Italians only desired the independence of the country and did not wish for a protectorate over it". (17)

The Italian Premier's statement was embodied in the Protocol of Tirana, signed with the Albanian government on August 2nd, 1920. By it the Italian government renounced all claims against the Albanian mainland and recognised the country's independence.

1. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 122; p. 898.
2. B: FO371/5726/580/C7684.
3. B: ibid.
4. "Correspondence relating to the Adriatic Question", in: "Parliamentary Papers", 1920, Volume 51; p. 28.
5. Ibid.; p. 34.
6. Ibid.; p. 34.
7. B: FO371/11205/391/C6276.

5

1920-1921 :

THE SMELL OF OIL

"In a diplomat's soul you may find iron ore, but it is usually oil" -
Francis Hackett

Albania now turned to the newly-formed League of Nations in the hope of safeguarding her integrity and independence. On October 12th, 1920 Albanian Prime Minister Pandeli Evangjeli applied to the Secretary-General of the League, Sir Eric Drummond, for his country's admission. Charles Tufton, British Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, commented on the application:

> "Albania, it is suggested, is in too indefinite a state at present to be admitted to the League". (1)

The Fifth Committee of the League considered Albania's application on December 6th. There was strong opposition to her admission, and by 13 votes (including Britain) to 1 the committee decided to recommend to the Assembly of the League

> " . . that the admission of Albania should be adjourned until the international status of the State shall have been definitely established". (2)

But the real position of the British government was not quite as it appeared to be on December 6th, 1920.

The occupation of Albanian territory during World War I had led to the discovery of oil in the country by Italian and Austrian geologists. On March 20th, 1920 Harry Eyres had arrived in the country on a "special mission" for the British Foreign Office, and he let it be known in official circles in Tirana that Britain was prepared to secure Albania's admission to the League of Nations if the Albanian government would promise a monopoly oil concession to the British-owned Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later the British Petroleum Company), in which the British government had acquired a controlling interest in 1914.

The Albanian government took the hint. The British government then fulfilled its pledge in a somewhat devious manner, in order that it should not appear to break faith with its "allies" too blatantly. When the Plenary Session of the League Assembly considered, on December 17th, 1920, the question of Albania's admission, this was supported by Lord Robert Cecil (South Africa), Newton Rowell (Canada) and Saiyid Ali Imam (India). The British representative, Herbert Fisher, then declared:

> "The British delegation has . . reviewed the position since the Report of Committee No. 5 was presented to the Assembly and it is now prepared to accept the motion of Lord Robert Cecil and to vote for the admission of Albania to the League". (3)

So strong, in those days, was the influence of the British Empire that the admission of Albania was thereupon approved by 35 votes to nil.

Eyres arrived back in Albania in mid-February 1921, and on March 25th an agreement was duly signed between the Albanian government and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company giving the latter the sole right to prospect for oil on

Albanian territory and, after exploration, to select such portion of the territory as it might desire for exploitation over fifty years. (4)

The British government's Petroleum Department noted in June 1921:

> "The Anglo-Persian Oil Company do not appear to have any anxiety as to the full ratification of their concession by the Albanian Chamber". (5)

But the company had miscalculated. Opposition from progressive forces within Albania, as well as from rival oil companies and their government backers, prevented ratification of the concession in its original form. On November 30th, 1921 the British Foreign Office informed the government's Petroleum Department:

> "Lord Curzon (British Foreign Secretary - Ed.) is led to believe that the difficulties experienced by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company are not unconnected with the opposition of the Standard Oil Company". (6)

1. B: FO371/4885/9/C9605.
2. B: FO371/4886/9/C14095.
3. B: FO371/7048/775/W786.
4. B: FO371/8531/235/C12195.
5. B: FO371/5727/580/C12114.
6. B: FO371/5734/580/C22300.

6

1921-1922 :

PROTECTION RACKET

"But who guards the guardians" -
Juvenal

One might have thought that Albania's admission to the League of Nations signified international recognition of the independence and territorial integrity of the Albanian state. This was not, however, the view of the British government.

Major Harold Temperley, specialising in Albanian affairs at the Foreign Office, minuted in March 1921:

> "The independence of Albania, as established in 1913, was terminated during - and as a result of - the war", (1)

and Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, referring to Albania, declared in May:

> "The admission of a State to the League of Nations by no means implies the recognition of that State by all the members of the League. His Majesty's Government . . do not see their way to recognise a State which has no definitely fixed frontiers". (2)

The Great Powers which dominated the League went along with this view by regarding Albania as a state "under the supervision of the League". Albert Calmes (Luxembourg) was appointed "financial adviser" to the Albanian government in July 1922, and Jan Hunger (Netherlands) "economic adviser" in April 1923.

In April Curzon had written to the Italian Ambassador in London, Giacomo de Martino, saying:

> "His Majesty's Government . . consider that the international existence of that country (Albania - Ed.) and the definition of its frontiers constitute matters of international concern which can only be dealt with by the principal Allied Powers acting in conference. His Majesty's Government would propose, therefore, that the question should be submitted to the Conference of Ambassadors sitting in Paris". (3)

This proposal was accepted by the French government as well as by the Italian government. When, therefore, "the Albanian question" came before the Council of the League in June, this

> " . . declined to deal with the question pending a decision by the Ambassadors' Conference". (4)

The Albanian government appealed against this decision to the Assembly of the League, which was due to meet in September.

On June 20th the Italian government demanded that the Conference of Ambassadors (consisting of representatives of Britain, France, Italy and Japan) should recognise Italy's "special interests" in Albania. As de Martino expressed it in a letter to Curzon of that date:

> "Italy . . has always desired, and now desires, to maintain towards the State to be established (Albania - Ed.) that special attitude which the Allied Powers have up to the present not failed to recognise", (5)

But, following the entry of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company on to the Albanian scene, the British government was now no longer willing to agree to the Italian protectorate over Albania which it had previously supported - and which had been renounced by Rome only the previous year. Charles Tufton commented on the Italian demand:

> "The Italians want their 'special interest' in Albania recognised, a solution which we are not prepared to adopt. This means presumably a sort of Italian protectorate from which all foreign commercial enterprise would be excluded". (6)

In order to overcome British resistance to its demand, the Italian government threatened to block all agreement by the Conference of Ambasssadors in relation to Albania unless its demand for "special rights" was accepted, thus raising the "danger" (as the British government saw it) of the matter being referred back to the League of Nations. In these circumstances the British government reluctantly agreed to a vaguely worded formula which it interpreted as giving Italy special rights in Albania in the political, but not in the economic, sphere.

When, therefore, Albania's appeal was considered by the Assembly of the League on September 2nd, 1921, the Great Powers ensured that it voted to

> " . . recommend Albania to accept here and now the decision of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers". (7)

In the same month Yugoslavia, to press its claims in northern Albania, carried out an invasion of this territory.

On November 9th, 1921 the Conference of Ambassadors issued its agreed Memorandum on Albania. This declared that the signatory governments

> " . . recognise the Government of Albania, constituted a sovereign and independent State", (8)

but agreed that, in the event of any attack upon Albania's territorial integrity which that country was unable to resist effectively, their representatives on the League Council would

> " . . recommend that the restoration of the territorial frontiers of Albania be entrusted to Italy". (9)

This meant, of course, that in the event of an Italian invasion of Albania, the Allied Powers would vote to entrust the restoration of Albania's territorial integrity to - Italy! When the fascist government headed by Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy in October 1922, it claimed, not unnaturally, that the Memorandum of Novemnber 9th, 1921 accorded to Italy a permanent mandate over Albania.

Oliver Hardy, 1st Secretary at the British Foreign Office, summed up the sordid history of this Memorandum as follows:

"Italy blackmailed HMG into giving her consent, as the only price at which she would allow the discussions of the frontiers and eventual recognition of Albania to go forward. We were anxious to get the question cleared up, especially as there was considerable danger of independent action by the League. . . We therefore reduced the Italian formula as much as we could to an anodyne form and finally agreed to sign. . .

The Resolution . . was in the nature of a private agreement, made over the head of Albania. . .

The wording . . is exceedingly vague and it is not impossible that the Italians read into it something in the nature of a permanent mandate . . involving semi-permanent occupation. . .

I venture to submit that we should carefully avoid committing ourselves to any indication that we do not support the Italian demand". (10)

The November 9th Memorandum also charged a new frontier commission with the task of amending Albania's northern frontier to the benefit of Yugoslavia.

In these circumstances, the Conference of Ambassadors was notified by Tirana on November 16th that

" . . the Albanian Government, in view of the invasion of the country, accepted the above decision of the Conference, at the same time protesting against the modifying of the frontiers to Albania's disadvantage". (11)

Meanwhile, on November 7th, the British Foreign Office had instructed Harry Eyres in Durrës

"Please inform Albanian Government that, in view of decision of Ambassadors' Conference regarding frontiers of Albania, His Majesty's Government now recognise present Albanian Government as de jure as well as de facto Government of whole of Albania". (12)

In consequence, Eyres was appointed on January 14th, 1922 the first British Minister to Albania, the Legation being situated in Durrës because of shortage of accommodation and lack of telegraphic facilities in the capital. And on March 28th Mehmet Bey Konica presented his credentials as first Albanian Minister to Britain.

In the meantime, by what the US Commission in Albania described as

" . . the coup d'état of December 7, 1921" (13),

control of the Albanian state had been seized by a clique headed by the reactionary chieftain Ahmet Bey Zogu:

"The Government's strength is mobilised behind . . Ahmet Bey Zogu, Minister of the Interior, an absolutist in politics. who might well say, in the words of more than one French King: 'L'État, c'est moi!'(The State, it is I! - Ed.)". (14)

1. B: FO371/5725/580/C5049.
2. B: FO371/5726/580/C9284.

3. B: FO371/5726/580/C7684.
4. B: FO371/11205/391/C7466.
5. B: FO371/5727/580/C12961.
6. B: ibid.
7. B: FO371/5734/580/C22044.
8. B: ibid.
9. B: ibid.
10. B: FO371/11205/391/C7400.
11. B: FO371/11205/391/C7466.
12. B: FO371/5733/580/C21371.
13. A: M1211/1/875.00.
14. A: ibid.

7

1922 :

AMERICA MOVES IN

"What a place to plunder!" -
Marshal Gebhard von Bluecher

By 1922 voices were being raised in the United States complaining that the absence of diplomatic relations with Albania was prejudicing American business opportunities there. Already in March of this year the State Department was noting that Kosta Çekrezi, who functioned as unrecognised Albanian Commissioner in the USA, had given

> " . . assurances on several occasions that Albania would be glad to give an oil concession to an American company if only the United States will recognise Albania"; (1)

and in the same month the Rev. Charles Telford Erickson - a missionary in Albania for many years, but now acting as representative of the Standard Oil Company there - was informing the State Department:

> "American capital could be very profitably and safely invested there, but it must have the good-will of the Government and this can only be established by recognition". (2)

In April the US Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, pressed the State Department on behalf of the Sinclair Oil Company:

> "I am wondering whether . . it would not be possible for you to give serious consideration to the recognition of Albania. . . This appears to be a clear case of where a little assistance by the government can go far in support of legitimate American enterprise abroad". (3)

On June 12th, 1922, therefore, an official US Commissioner, Maxwell Blake, arrived in Albania, and on the 25th the Albanian Prime Minister, Xhafer Ypi (who later headed the first puppet administration installed by the Italian occupation forces in 1939) wrote to the State Department promising that, if diplomatic relations were established,

> " . . American interests in Albania will receive the most favoured nation treatment.
>
> Furthermore, the Albanian Government is ready to show all kinds of facilities to the installation of American capital in Albania, as well as to accord concessions to American concerns". (4)

The "New York Times" noted later that it was clearly understood that these were

> " . . pledges made by the Albanian Government in 1922 in return for recognition by the United States". (5)

The United States accordingly recognised Albania on July 28th, 1922 and in September Ulysses Grant-Smith arrived in that country as the first US Minister.

1. A: M1211/3/875.01/185.
2. A: M1211/6/875.6363/20.
3. A: M1211/6/876.6363/21.
4. "Treaties and other International Agreements of the United States of America: 1776-1949", Volume 5; Washington; 1970; p. 11.
5. "New York Times", December 25th, 1925; p. 14.

8

1923 :

RIVALRY

"When thieves fall out, honest men come by their own" -
English Proverb

By the beginning of 1923 the Anglo-Persian oil concession had been placed on the agenda of the Albanian Parliament for ratification.

On February 24th, 1923 US Under Secretary of State William Phillips reported a conversation with the Italian Ambassador in Washington, who brought proposals from Mussolini

> " . . that the Governments of the United States, France and Italy could very properly take simultaneous steps with the Albanian Government looking towards the prevention of the approval of the contract by the Albanian Parliament"; (1)

and the Italian and French governments, in fact, lodged protest Notes against the proposed Anglo-Persian concession both in Tirana and London. These Notes demanded the application in Albania of

> " . . the open door principle". (2)

Harry Eyres, now British Minister in Albania, reported to the Foreign Office on March 5th:

> "This contract has aroused a constantly increasing opposition from competitors and from foreign Governments", (3)

and informed Whitehall of the arrival of a representative of the Standard Oil Company - significantly, on board an American destroyer:

> "A week ago an American destroyer arrived from Athens bringing an official of the Standard Oil Company. Four days later the American Minister presented a Note to the Government of a distinctly menacing character". (4)

On its side, the US State Department complained of the British government's

> " . . political pressure", (5)

and of its

> " . . threats bearing on Albanian territorial interests in endeavouring to prevent the granting of an oil concession to an American concern". (6)

A further report from Eyres dated April 12th recorded:

> "United States Minister is putting strongest possible political pressure on Albanian Government to prevent fulfilment of contract with a British company". (7)

and on May 4th complained of

> " . . American propaganda spread by subsidised newspapers", (8)

and hints from Washington

> " . . of the terrible penalties the Albanian Government would incur if the concessions were granted". (9)

A powerful campaign against the ratification of the British monopolistic oil concession was also waged by the opposition within the Albanian Parliament - an opposition now led by Fan Noli, who had returned to his homeland from the United States. By May 24th Eyres was warning London

> "It is possible that the Ministry might fall over question of Anglo-Persian oil concession. I am anxious to prevent this", (10)

and advising his masters in Whitehall to urge the company to agree to modifications to the concession so as to make it less unfavourable to Albania. The Foreign Office deemed it prudent to accept Eyres's advice and declared in a letter to the government's Petroleum Department on July 5th:

> "While His Majesty's Government are committed by no treaty engagement to the 'open door' policy in Albania, yet in view of the interest taken in that country by the League of Nations, it is important that no step should be taken which might be construed or misrepresented as inconsistent with the open door". (11)

Some days later, on July 13th, the Petroleum Department was able to tell the Foreign Office that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was, in the circumstances, prepared to abandon the monopolistic character of the concession originally granted by the Albanian government:

> "They are now prepared to select 200,000 hectares for exploration immediately on ratification of the agreement, and from this area to select within four months 50,000 hectares for exploitation". (12)

When, therefore, the Counsellor at the US Embassy in London called at the Foreign Office to protest that the Anglo-Persian concession

> " . . was in the nature of a monopoly, and contrary to the principle of the open door", (13)

the British officials were able to swear, with an air of injured innocence, that the concession was not monopolistic in character.

Despite these modifications, a special session of the Albanian Parliament, summoned for August 20th to consider ratification of the British oil concession, rose on September 30th without having taken any decision. On October 3rd Robert Parr, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Durrës, expressed to the Foreign Office the view that the successful opposition to ratification had been

> " . . inspired by the American interests and was designed to wreck the negotiations", (14)

and Harold Nicholson, 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented:

"This concession has been bitterly fought by the Americans, the Italians and the French, who have not hesitated to resort to methods of intimidation and bribery. . .

The representative of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company . . informed me confidentially that the geological survey had discovered deposits of a value equalled only by the Persian fields themselves. . .

If the preliminary survey of the Anglo-Persian Company's experts has, as they state, really discovered oil potentialities of such immense value in Albania, it is obvious that the question ceases to be merely commercial and becomes one of the highest political importance". (15)

1. A: M1211/6/875.6363/52.
2. B: FO371/8531/235/C11003.
3. B: FO371/8531/235/C5149.
4. B: ibid.
5. A: M1211/6/875.6363/72.
6. A: ibid.
7. B: FO371/8531/235/C6631.
8. B: FO371/8531/235/C8552.
9. B: ibid.
10. B: FO371/8531/235/C9216.
11. B: FO371/8531/235/C11003.
12. B: FO371/8531/235/C12195.
13. B: FO371/8532/235/C17157.
14. B: FO371/8532/235/C17796.
15. B: FO371/8531/235/C11003.

1923-1924 :

9

THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

"Louis XVI: Is it a revolt?
The Duke: No, sire, it's a revolution"
- Duc de la Rochefou-Cauld-Liancourt

In May 1923 the Albanian government appointed the British ex-army officer Colonel Frank Stirling, a former Governor of Jaffa in Palestine, as adviser to the Ministry of the Interior. In December of that year this government, now openly headed by Ahmet Bey Zogu, organised elections. But, despite a restricted franchise, the government gained only a minority of the seats. When, therefore, the new Assembly opened on February 2nd, 1924 Zog attempted to stage another coup. This was defeated, and Zog was compelled to give way as Prime Minister; he remained, however, as Eyres expressed it in a report to Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Ramsay Macdonald:

" . . the power behind the throne". (1)

With the aim of demonstrating that a "dictatorship of law and order" was necessary, Zogu organised in April the murder of two American visitors, Robert Coleman and George De Long, and of the progressive youth leader Avni Rustemi.

The role of the British in this situation was recorded by the United States Minister, Grant-Smith, in a report to Washington dated May 21st:

> "My British colleague has openly espoused the cause of the Government and urges the prompt use of drastic measures against the opposition to his friend, Ahmet Bey, for obviously, should the latter fall, the extension of British influence would suffer a decided check in Albania". (2)

On May 31st revolution broke out and the 4,000 government troops found themselves faced by 12,000 armed citizens, directed by a committee headed by Fan Noli. Zogu and his accomplices were forced to flee the country and, on June 14th, a new government representing the interests of the national bourgeoisie was established with Noli as Prime Minister. Two days later it adopted a programme of land reform and democracy designed to destroy the power of the semi-feudal landed aristocracy and transform Albania into a bourgeois state.

While a number of states, including the Soviet Union, recognised the new government, the British and United States governments refused to do so. Howard Smith, 1st Secretary at the British Foreign Office, minuted on July 21st:

> "Mr. Eyres has been consulted as regards recognition; he is opposed to it. . .
> I submit that the Albanian Government should not be granted formal recognition"; (3)

and Counsellor Miles Lampson noted on August 29th:

> "Our reports of Fan Noli are unfavourable, and I submit that he should not be encouraged". (4)

In similar vein the US Chargé d'Affaires in Albania, Trojan Kodding, telegraphed Secretary of State Charles Hughes in September:

"At no time since the Minister's departure have conditions been so changed as to justify on my part reopening the question of recognition". (5)

Meanwhile Zogu, in Yugoslavia, had been receiving assistance from the Yugoslav government to recruit and arm a force of mercenaries under the promise that, if his counter-revolutionary assault upon the Noli government was successful, he would make territorial concessions to Yugoslavia. On December 10th, 1924 this force invaded Albania.

The British and American governments were fully aware of the facts of the invasion. Indeed, the Italian Ambassador to Britain assured the US Chargé d'Affaires in London

" . . that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, with the knowledge and tacit consent of the British Government, had intrigued to restore to power . ." (6)

Zog and his clique.

Certainly Eyres reported to the Foreign Office from Durrës:

"It is perfectly clear that Serbia has actively supported Ahmet's invasion. Ahmet has been allowed to direct operations from the town of Dibra", (7)

while in London Lampson minuted:

"Ahmet Bey is the protégé of the Serbian government. If he gets back to power (as he probably will) I have no doubt whatever that he will pay Shën Naum to the Serbs as part payment of their support", (8)

and Nicholson commented:

"The Serbs have deliberately engineered and provisioned this revolution. If it succeeds, I do not think that we need be unduly disturbed. It will mean only that the Serbs receive Shën Naum". (9)

British Colonial Secretary Leopold Amery informed the Dominion governments secretly on December 22nd:

"The late Prime Minister of Albania, Ahmet Zogu, who was overthrown by the last revolution and who escaped to Yugoslavia, has for some time been preparing a counter-revolution for the purpose of driving out his rival, . . Bishop Fan Noli. His Majesty's Government were informed at the beginning of this month from Albanian sources that Ahmet Bey was receiving financial and military support from the Yugoslav government and was expected to invade Albania between the 10th and 20th December. . . The revolutionary movement was organised on Serbian territory and . . considerable support was given". (10)

The American State Department was similarly well informed. US Minister in Albania Grant-Smith reported:

"The Serbs will leave no stone unturned to accomplish the overthrow of the present Albanian regime. . .

> Yugoslavia, just as Italy, covets the entire oriental littoral of the Adriatic, an ambition which is understandable", (11)

and, describing the presence of White Russians among the invasion force:

> "Their presence in such force, as well as the character of their organisation, is ample proof, if any were needed, of the complicity of the Serbian authorities in the movement". (12)

Grant-Smith's analysis was confirmed by Percival Dodge, the US Minister in Belgrade:

> "Ahmet Bey Zogu . . was . . assisted by them (the Yugoslav government - Ed.) with funds, arms and uniforms and helped to enlist volunteers, among them a considerable number of Russians. Other assistance apparently given by the Yugoslav Government included trucks and other equipment. . . My French, British, Italian, Romanian, Czechoslovak and many other colleagues here are convinced of the active assistance rendered by the Yugoslav Government". (13)

Publicly, however, the British government professed to regard the invasion as "a purely internal commotion", following the advice of its Minister in Belgrade, Sir Alban Young:

> "I doubt how far it is politic that we should enquire into facts which, if proved, would give the colour of a foreign invasion to what is perhaps more desirable to treat as a purely internal commotion". (14)

On December 20th Albania made a formal appeal to the League of Nations against the invasion. The appeal was fruitless. The policy of the Great Powers towards this development had already been decided along the lines proposed by Nicholson on December 16th:

> "If Albania does in fact appeal to the League, we should temporise, . . dawdle a bit". (15)

By December 26th the members of the Noli government had been forced to leave the country, and Zog's forces had occupied Tirana. Lampson summed up the attitude of the British government on the following day:

> "We need not regret Fan Noli's elimination". (16)

1. B: FO371/9639/28/C9652.
2. A: M1211/2/875.00/148.
3. B: FO371/9640/28/C11443.
4. B: FO371/9640/28/C13772.
5. A: M1211/2/875.00/157.
6. A: M1211/7/875.6363/188.
7. B: FO371/9641/28/C19283.
8. B: ibid.
9. B: FO371/9641/28/C19116.
10. B: FO371/9641/28/C19257.
11. A: M1211/2/875.00/176.
12. A: M1211/2/875.00/177.
13. A: M1211/2/875.00/178.
14. B: FO371/9641/28/C19029.

15. B: ibid.
16. B: FO371/9641/28/C19300.

1925-1939 :

10

THE ZOG DICTATORSHIP

"During his office, treason was no crime,
The sons of Belial had a glorious time"
- John Dryden

His counter-revolution having succeeded, Zogu immediately established a dictatorship - declaring a state of siege and arresting those of his political opponents who had remained in the country. On January 5th, 1925 US Minister Grant-Smith reported to Washington:

> "Ahmet Zogu is admittedly dictator of Albania and, having foreign support, will doubtless remain so for some time.
> In view of his having been sentenced by a court, whose jurisdiction has not been questioned, as one of those responsible for the murder of Coleman and De Long, early instructions are respectfully requested as to the attitude to be assumed towards the new Government". (1)

The instructions were not long in coming. On January 31st, Secretary of State Charles Hughes telegraphed to the US Legation in Tirana:

> "You are authorised to extend recognition to the new regime in Albania". (2)

Meanwhile, on January 9th, Grant-Smith had informed Washington that he had felt compelled to lodge a protest with Zogu's government

> " . . concerning the release by his advance troops of the prisoner Elez Hasani, one of the convicted murderers of Messrs. De Long and Coleman", (3)

and three months later, on April 4th, Rexhep Berati, who had been Presiding Judge at the trial of those convicted of the murder - including Zogu, in absentia - wrote directly to Washington saying that he had been forced to flee abroad and that the judgment of the court had been

> " . . put aside" (4)

by the new government.

Meanwhile, on January 19th, Zogu had recalled the rump of the Assembly which had been elected in 1923, now purged of all but right-wing elements. Two days later this body proclaimed the "Republic of Albania" and, on the 31st, adopted a new Constitution under which Zogu became President of the Republic.

The modified Anglo-Persian oil concession was ratified on February 16th, 1925 while, following protest Notes from Rome and Washington, further concessions were granted to Italian and American oil companies in June/July.

In June Trojan Kodding reported the

> " . . engagement of the 'Vatra' band as the President of Albania's band on a contract of substantial terms", (5)

describing this as

" . . a further effort in the direction of winning Albanian-American support for Ahmet Zogu". (6)

In July 1925 the new regime paid its debts to Yugoslavia by ceding to that state the strategic districts of Shën Naum and Vermosh.

Three years after the establishment of the Republic of Albania, in September 1928, Albania was proclaimed a monarchy and Zogu became Zog I, King of the Albanians. Commenting on this step, the British Minister to Albania, Sir Robert Hodgson, declared:

"I believe gross mass of the population to be indifferent to the title worn by the head of state and fully aware that any change that will be carried out will be effected without any regard being paid to its feelings". (7)

A British intelligence report of July 1932 was even more blunt:

"The substitution of the monarchical for the republican form of government aroused small enthusiasm in the country, though great pains were taken to surround the event with the appearance of popular rejoicing. Whether they were governed by a King or a President is really indifferent to the Albanians, who have lived under so many regimes and have been so poverty-stricken under all of them that they are little interested in the title which the ruler of the present moment happens to bear". (8)

The British government was also, as Acting Foreign Secretary Lord Cushendun confidentially informed the French Ambassador in London,

" . . indifferent whether Albania remains a republic or becomes a monarchy". (9)

The monarchical regime was thus immediately recognised by both Britain and the United States, while President Calvin Coolidge sent a personal telegram of congratulations to Zog on his accession to the throne. (10)

In January 1938 Zog became engaged to the Hungarian countess Geraldine Apponyi, and the marriage took place in April. US President Franklin Roosevelt sent a telegram of good wishes, expressing the hope:

"May Albania continue to prosper under Your Majesty's reign". (11)

1. A: M1211/4/875.01/258.
2. A: M1211/4/875.01/265.
3. A: M1211/4/875.01/180.
4. A: 59/4806/375.1123 Coleman & De Long/19.
5. A: M1211/2/875.00/196.
6. A: ibid.
7. B: FO371/12845/1090/C6245.
8. B: FO371/22305/68/R87.
9. B: FO371/12485/1090/C6245.
10. A: M1211/2/875.001 Zog/18.
11. A: M1211/10/875.001 Zog/123.

1925-1939 :

11

OIL, GENDARMES AND CHARITY

"A policeman's life is not a happy one"
- William Schwenk Gilbert

"Charity shall cover the multitude of sins"
- St. Peter

The Zog regime pursued a policy of bringing Albania increasingly under the domination of fascist Italy, regarding this state as the one most suited to give the dictatorship the foreign support it needed to sustain it against the growing hatred of the Albanian people. British Minister to Albania Sir Andrew Ryan noted in his Annual Report for 1937:

> "Dependence on Italy is the most patent feature of Albania's existence", (1)

and a secret British "General Survey of Material Resources and Induatry" dated January 1939 reported:

> "The extension of Italy's economic influence forms the chief feature of interest at the present time". (2)

It was the increasing semi-colonialisation of Albania by Italy which was the main factor in gradually squeezing out the British and American influence which had been such a prominent feature of the first years of the Albanian state. It was, for example, mainly Italian opposition which prevented the Anglo-Albanian Commercial Treaty, signed in July 1931 after prolonged negotiations, from ever being ratified.

Following the ratification of its oil concession in 1925, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company began drilling in June of that year, and struck oil at Patos in July 1926. However, British Minister William Seeds reported to the Foreign Office in his Annual Report for 1926 that the discovery was

> " . . not under conditions to make commercial exploitation possible". (3)

At the beginning of 1930 the company abandoned all its Albanian holdings except for the small field of Patos, and in July of the same year ceased all operations even there. As British Minister Sir Robert Hodgson noted

> "The Albanians . . are inclined to attribute the unwillingness of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to produce oil to a desire to stifle the industry in Albania, and so prevent a competitor with the Company's other interests from appearing in the market". (4)

In March 1931 the Albanian government agreed that the company could suspend operations for three years without forfeiting the Patos concession. But when, in February 1934, the Company requested a further two years' period of grace, this was rejected by the Albanian government, and in the following month Sir John Cadman informed the British government's Petroleum Department on behalf of the company that

> " . . he had decided to relinquish the concession and he had so informed the Albanian Government". (5)

By far the most important British sphere of influence in Albania under the Zog administration was in the field of "law and order". In January 1925 Colonel Frank Stirling was transferred from his post as Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior to become Inspector-General of the three-thousand-strong Gendarmerie. In this capacity he recruited for its commanding positions a number of British ex-army officers. By the summer of 1926, however, Stirling's work had come to be considered unsatisfactory in both Tirana and London. Miles Lampson at the Foreign Office minuted in June of that year:

> "Colonel Stirling has been a complete failure", (6)

and British Minister Hodgson reported to Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson:

> "He (Stirling - Ed.) was extremely unfortunate in his selection and . . apart from two or three exceptions, the officers whom he brought out were anything but a credit to their country". (7)

In September 1926 the British ex-officer Major-General Jocelyn Percy, who had commanded the British land forces operating with the White Russians against the Bolsheviks, was appointed Inspector-General of the Gendarmerie, while Stirling was made Court Inspector, charged with rooting out incompetence and corruption among state officials. His investigations, however, led him to figures close to Zog. As Hodgson expressed it diplomatically to Whitehall in February 1931:

> "The task was an invidious one, for its discharge inevitably brought the inspector into collision with persons whose behaviour would not bear the light of investigation but whom, for one reason or another, it was impolitic to condemn". (8)

In 1930 the Albanian government transferred Stirling to a temporary and nominal post in the Ministry of the Interior, and the following year his contract was allowed to lapse.

Stirling's successor as Inspector-General of the Gendarmerie, Percy, was more successful. Geoffrey McDermott, 3rd Secretary at the Foreign Office, minuted in March 1938:

> "We regard General Percy and his assistants now entirely as useful agents of British influence in Albania", (9)

despite Hodgson's view that

> " . . the role of the British officers is . . rather a humiliating one. . . The Albanians find them a very convenient screen behind which they can hide the vices of their administration". (10)

However, principally as a result of the growing pressure from Italy, the number of British officers serving with the Gendarmerie was gradually reduced, and in February 1938 the Albanian government notified Percy that the contracts of the remaining four officers (who included a Lieutenant-Colonel Dayrell Oakley Hill) would be terminated from September 30th. Philip Nichols, 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented on Percy's redundancy as follows:

"We have no financial liability whatever in respect of his services in Albania or elsewhere. . . A KCMG (the decoration 'Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George' - Ed.) would best meet the case". (11)

Apart from the Gendarmerie, there was some British influence in Albania during the Zog regime in the spheres of charity, health and culture. Lady Carnarvon, widow of the 4th Earl, was engaged in charitable work in Albania until her death in 1929, founding in Tirana the Herbert Institute (a library and cultural centre) in memory of her son, the Hon. Aubrey Herbert - diplomat, Conservative MP and traveller, who had espoused the cause of the independence of the Balkan nations from the rule of the Ottoman Empire. British Minister Sir Andrew Ryan pointed out in his Annual Report for 1937 that

" . . the Herbert Institute at Tirana . . does much to promote British cultural influence in the capital". (12)

Lady Carnarvon also founded a hospital bearing her name in Vlora.

Ruth Pennington, sister of Lady Gurney of Walsingham Abbey, carried on charitable work in northern Albania among refugees from Kosova, largely with funds from the Carnarvon estate. A small Infant Welfare Centre was set up in Shkodra in 1931 by the Save the Children Fund and run by the wife of one of the British officers. And Margaret Hasluck was engaged ostensibly in a study of folklore in the Elbasan district - although, according to Enver Hoxha, this was a cover for espionage on behalf of British Intelligence:

"Lef Nosi (who became a puppet Regent under the German occupation - Ed.) . . lived and collaborated with an English woman, Mrs. Hasluck, who lived for some time in Elbasan where she occupied a house and had become his mistress. She was allegedly engaged in anthropological research, in collecting flowers, butterflies and folklore, but in fact, as was proved later, she was working for the British Secret Service". (13)

As the influence of fascist Italy became overwhelming, these British influences were eliminated step by step, so that as early as 1934 Hodgson was compelled to say in his Annual Report:

"There is little contact nowadays between the United Kingdom and Albania". (14)

1. B: FO371/22307/1285/R1285.
2. B: FO371/22305/68/R9615.
3. B: FO371/12070/2585/C2585.
4. B: FO371/15146/97/C97.
5. B: FO371/18340/688/R1582.
6. B: FO371/11209/1077/C8208.
7. B: FO371/15148/1053/C1053.
8. B: ibid.
9. B: FO371/22308/1575/R1959.
10. B: FO371/15148/1053/C4338.
11. B: FO371/22308/1575/R8113.
12. B: FO371/22307/1285/R1285.
13. E. Hoxha: "The Anglo-American Threat to Albania"; Tirana; 1982; p. 71-72.
14. B: FO371/19478/1515/R1515.

12

1925-1939 :

THE AMERICAN PRESENCE

"The mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation"
- William McKinley

A number of treaties and conventions were signed between the United States and Albania during the years of the Zog dictatorship. The most important of these were: a Treaty of Arbitration and Conciliation (1928); a Naturalisation Treaty (1932); an Extradition Treaty (1933) and a Nationality Convention (1933).

The US Minister in Albania, Herman Bernstein, assessed frankly the unequal character of the Naturalisation Treaty:

> "The signature of the naturalisation treaty with the United States introduces into Albanian jurisprudence a new principle, one that heretofore was contrary to Albanian concepts. The provisions of the naturalisation treaty grant to Albanian nationals the right to terminate all political relations without notice to the Albanian government, by the act of naturalisation as an American citizen. The signature of the treaty containing this provision was accordingly affixed . . not without a certain amount of reluctance. . . The statement may be safely ventured that the Albanian government was sincere in saying that it would refuse to enter into negotiations with any other nation for a treaty in which this principle is involved. . .
>
> It is believed that the Bill, if passed, will cause much popular discontent, both at home and abroad, because of its drastic character". (1)

On July 19th, 1925 a petroleum concession to the Standard Oil Company was ratified: this empowered the company to prospect over 80,000 hectares and exploit over 50,000 hectares. However, the American company did not even carry out any exploration work, as British Minister to Albania William Seeds recorded in his Annual Repprt for 1927:

> "The Standard Oil Company have made no efforts whatever, adopting a wait-and-see policy in face of the other exploitation companies". (2)

And in his Annual Report for the following year Seeds informed the Foreign Office that

> " . . the Standard Oil Company have definitely abandoned their holdings". (3)

If American commercial penetration was negligible, other forms of influence were not, however, insignificant - particularly in the spheres of education and health. The American missionary the Rev. Phineas Kennedy ran a Protestant mission school in Korça. The Qiriazi School for Girls, at Kambëz, near Tirana, was directed by the Albanian-American Kristo Dako, a representative of the (US) Sinclair Oil Company, and largely financed by the wealthy Charles Crane of Chicago. The American Junior Red Cross ran a Technical School for boys in Tirana, directed for most of its life by one Harry Fultz. The Rev. Charles Telford Erickson ran the Albanian-American School of Agriculture in Kavaja, this being taken over by the (US) Near East Foundation in 1930. And

the (US) Rockefeller Foundation operated a medical research institute (concerned mainly with malaria) directed by Dr. Lewis Hackett, with stations at Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan and Vlora.

According to Enver Hoxha, not all these enterprises and individuals were as benevolent as they appeared:

> "Zog also opened the doors to agents of the American espionage service who came as missionaries like Kennedy, as philanthropists and educators like Erickson and Harry Fultz. The latter became director of the Technical School in Tirana and was an important cadre in the American intelligence service". (4)

With the increasing Italian domination of Albania in the later years of the Zog regime, United States influence in the country virtually disappeared. Reporting in July 1939 the withdrawal of the Near East Foundation from Albania

> " . . under pressure". (5)

British Minister Sir Andrew Ryan noted

> "With the passing of the Institute . ., the last remaining American influence in the country comes to an end". (6)

And in his Annual Report for 1938 Ryan asserted that

> " . . Albano-American political relations amount to nothing". (7)

1. A: 59/4094/711.754/35.
2. B: FO371/12847/2191/C2191.
3. B: FO371/14304/5425/C5425.
4. E. Hoxha: "The Anglo-American Threat to Albania"; Tirana; 1982; p. 13.
5. B: FO371/23716/1699/R5798.
6. B: FO371/23716/1699/R8914.
7. B: FO371/23710/724/R724.

13

1939-1940 :

THE FRUITS OF APPEASEMENT

"Like great Statesmen, we encourage those who
betray their friends"

- John Gay

The Zog regime pursued over the years a policy of making one concession after another to fascist Italy, so that by 1939 Albania was effectively an Italian semi-colony.

Nevertheless, in the spring of that year the Italian government presented demands in the form of an ultimatum, which would have meant - in the words of the British Ambassador in Rome, Lord Perth (formerly Sir Eric Drummond) -

" . . Italian control over all essentials of Albanian life and . . the establishment of an Italian protectorate over Albania". (1)

Public opinion in Albania was so outraged that the government demurred at accepting the demands, and by the beginning of April it was clear that Italy was mobilising for invasion.

At this period ruling circles in Britain and France were of the opinion that the main threat to the British and French Empires came, not from fascist Italy or nazi Germany, but from socialism and the Soviet Union. On this basis they pursued a foreign policy which became known as "appeasement" - a policy of encouraging aggressive Italian and German expansion eastwards towards the Soviet Union, in the hope that, in the war which would almost certainly follow, Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union would so weaken one another that Britain and France would be able, after the war, to dominate the continent of Europe. It was in accordance with this "appeasement" policy that, on April 6th, 1939, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain gave the green light to Mussolini's projected invasion of Albania. Asked in the House of Commons whether Britain had any interest in Albania, he replied:

"No direct interest". (2)

The following day, April 7th, Italian troops invaded Albania and succeeded in occupying the country within a few days. Zog and his court fled the country. On the day of the invasion Mussolini sent a message to Chamberlain assuring him that

" . . the solution of the Italo-Albanian question will take place in such a form as not to provoke a crisis in Anglo-Italian relations or the international situation in general". (3)

On the day after the invasion, April 8th, a meeting of British Cabinet Ministers was held to consider the situation arising from this latest act of aggression. Chamberlain did not return from holiday in Scotland to attend the meeting, which was chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon. It was decided not to accede to the demands for the urgent recall of Parliament and to take no action except the recall of the British warships which were paying friendly visits to Italian ports - in order to avoid

" . . the possibility that embarrassing incidents might take place". (4)

On the afternoon of the same day Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax met the Leader of the Opposition Clement Attlee, who - according to Halifax - expressed agreement with the government decisions. (5)

The United States government expressed mild disapproval of the Italian invasion in a statement issued by Secretary of State Cordell Hull on April 8th:

> "The forcible and violent invasion of Albania is unquestionably an additional threat to the peace of the world. It would be short-sighted not to take notice of this further development.
>
> Any threat to peace seriously concerns all nations, and violates the will of all the peoples in the world that their Governments shall lead them, not toward war, but along paths of peace.
>
> It is scarcely necessary to add that the inevitable effect of this incident . . is further to destroy confidence, and to undermine the economic stability in every country in the world, thus affecting our own welfare". (6)

The Albanian government addressed an appeal, dated April 8th, to the League of Nations, but the League's Secretary-General, Joseph Avenol (France), rejected it on the grounds that it had not been sent at the earliest opportunity! (7) Asked in the House of Commons if the position of Albania was to be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Council of the League, British Foreign Under-Secretary Richard Butler replied on May 17th in the negative, adding:

> "Albania (i.e., the puppet government installed by the Italian occupiers - Ed.) has indicated a desire to leave the League". (8)

Drafting Butler's reply, Sir Andrew Noble, 2nd Secretary at the Foreign Office, minuted on May 16th:

> "The question of Albania is not on the agenda of the forthcoming Council meeting and, as Albania is not a member of the Council, there is no reason to suppose that the question will be discussed unless some member of the Council is so indiscreet as to raise it". (9)

When Parliament finally debated the new European situation arising out of the invasion, on April 13th, it was pointed out to the government that the Anglo-Italian Agreement of April 16th, 1938 provided that:

> "The two Governments disclaim any desire to modify or . . to see modified the <u>status quo</u> as regards national sovereignty of territories in the Mediterranean area". (10)

Chamberlain admitted that

> " . . His Majesty's Government find it difficult in the extreme to reconcile what has happened in Albania with the preservation of national sovereignty as contemplated by the Anglo-Italian Agreement", (11)

but went on to say:

"No doubt some would say that we should now declare that the Anglo-Italian Agreement must be considered at an end. I do not take that view myself". (12)

The policy which lay behind this declaration had been expressed bluntly by the British Ambassador in Rome, Lord Perth, to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Galeazzo Ciano, on April 9th:

"It might well be true that Anglo-Italian friendship was from a world point of view far more important than the Albanian question". (13)

As Noble minuted on April 19th, the British Minister to Albania, Sir Andrew Ryan, was instructed

" . . to enter into informal relations with the new Albanian authorities as the de facto rulers of the country". (14)

This was quite acceptable to the Albanian quislings and their Italian masters, as Ryan reported on April 19th:

"I told the Secretary-General (of the puppet 'Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' - Ed.) that I should be willing to maintain unofficial relations with him and perhaps even with the new Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Secretary-General accepted all I said as being perfectly reasonable". (15)

The diplomatic question was complicated on June 3rd, 1939 when, by a "treaty" between the Italian government and the Albanian puppet government, the Albanian "Ministry of Foreign Affairs" was formally abolished, and the privileges and immunities of foreign diplomatic representatives in Albania were withdrawn. On June 10th the American government instructed its Minister in Albania, Hugh Grant, to return to the United States with his staff. (16) The British government, however, met the situation simply by a change of title: on June 12th Chamberlain told the House of Commons that, as a result of the June 3rd decision,

"His Majesty's Representative will cease to have the title of Minister, but will continue as Consul-General, a rank he already holds". (17)

Noble commented on June 13th:

"Sir A. Ryan's position has of course been irregular ever since Albania and Italy became united". (18)

In fact, within a few days of its occurrence, the British Foreign Office was considering how soon the Italian annexation of Albania could be recognised without excessively outraging public opinion. On April 19th (only twelve days after the invasion) the Foreign Office was informing Sir Miles Lampson (now British Ambassador in Cairo):

"The question of recognition of the annexation of Albania is still under consideration here". (19)

Noble's opinion was expressed in minutes of April 19th:

"Sooner or later we shall have to recognise the Italian annexation of Albania and there is a good deal to be said for doing it now. . . But there are of course political objections to immediate recognition"; (20)

of April 21st:

"It would of course be greatly preferable that we should recognise at once the union of Italy and Albania; we shall have to recognise it sooner or later, and failure to recognise it now will have as its sole consequence the complication of Anglo-Italian relations. . . But I suppose the political considerations make it impossible for us to take this line"; (21)

of April 24th:

"We shall have to recognise the union of Italy and Albania sooner or later. . . Delay in taking this unpleasant step is a futile gesture. . . It is of considerable importance that our relations with Italy should not be more complicated than they are already". (22)

and of April 26th:

"We have not recognised yet, though only political considerations stand in the way". (23)

Edward Ingram, Counsellor at the Foreign Office, concurred with Noble's view in minutes of April 21st:

"If we do not recognise quickly, we shall land ourselves into all kinds of difficulties"; (24)

and of April 24th:

"We shall have to recognise eventually, and the sooner the better". (25)

Asked on April 26th if he would

" . . make it clear that the Government do not condone, and will take no action which amounts to condonation of, the Italian annexation of Albania", (26)

Chamberlain replied:

"That is too far-reaching an undertaking to give". (27)

On May 8th Sir Ronald Lindsay, the British Ambassador in Washington, reported to the Foreign Office an interview with US Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, at which he had inquired what effect British recognition of the Italian annexation would have in the United States - receiving the reply:

"There would probably be some fuss, but nothing that would not soon pass". (28)

Four days later, on May 12th, the British Embassy in Washington handed an Aide Mémoire to the State Department:

> "It seems evident to His Majesty's Governmert that sooner or later they will have to recognise the present situation in some form or other. . .
>
> From the purely practical point of view, therefore, His Majesty's Government feel that there is very little to be said in favour of withholding de jure recognition in the present case. To do so . . would greatly complicate relations between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government at a time when it is most important that these should not be more involved than they are already". (29)

On July 17th, 1939 Ryan left Durrës on his retirement from the diplomatic service, and the question of recognition became acute since, if a successor were appointed, this would require application to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the necessary authorisation. On August 9th, the War Office sent a secret communication to the Foreign Office, saying:

> "We should like to stress the value of having a British Consul there (in Durrës - Ed.) from the military aspect". (30)

A Foreign Office memorandum entitled "Position of Albania", dated September 18th, summed up the considered Whitehall view as follows:

> "Sooner or later we shall have to recognise the new status of Albania. Experience in other cases shows that there is little to be gained and a good deal to be lost by refusing recognition", (31)

and Frederick Gamble, the Acting Consul-General in Durrës, added support to this argument in a memorandum to the Foreign Office later in the month. This described the alleged

> " . . material benefits which are being brought to Albania by Italian rule". (32)

On October 21st, 1939 the British Cabinet approved the recommendation to recognise the Italian annexation of Albania and five days later, on the 26th, the Foreign Office instructed the British Ambassador in Rome, Sir Percy Loraine, to inform the Italian government of this decision, adding somewhat shamefacedly:

> "You should also . . intimate privately to Count Ciano that we shall be grateful if the Italian authorities would refrain from giving undue publicity to our action". (33)

On November 1st the War Cabinet - Britain had been at war with Germany since September 3rd - approved a Foreign Office proposal that the government should make

> " . . an unobtrusive announcement regarding our attitude to the status of Albania by means of an Answer to a Question in the House of Commons. . . It was hoped that the Answer would not need to be given orally, but would merely appear in Hansard". (34)

Later the same day, therefore, Chamberlain replied, in response to a planted question from a Member of Parliament on the appointment of a successor to Ryan:

> "It is proposed to appoint Mr. L. B. Grafftey-Smith, OBE, to be His Majesty's Consul-General at Durrës in succession to Sir Andrew Ryan. In order that he may be able to exercise his functions, it will be necessary to apply in the usual way to the Italian Government for an exequatur". (35)

Acting Consul-General Gamble reported back to London on November 6th that the announcement

> " . . has been received with gratification by the Italian officials in this country". (36)

The new British Consul-General in Durrës, Laurence Grafftey-Smith, asked the Foreign Office if he should

> " . . participate without reserve in the many and various functions and parades likely to be staged in celebration of the Italian occupation of April 7th", (37)

and was advised:

> "It would be correct and indeed politically desirable for you to participate". (38)

Less than three months later, on June 10th, 1939, Italy declared war on Britain!

1. B: FO371/23711/1335/R2350.
2. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series, Volume 345; col. 2995.
3. B: FO371/23711/1335/R2397.
4. B: FO371/23712/1335/R2564.
5. B: FO371/23713/1335/R2656.
6. "New York Times", April 9th, 1939; p. 34.
7. B: FO371/23711/725/R4481.
8. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 347; col. 1377.
9. B: FO371/23711/725/R4158.
10. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 346; col. 9.
11. Ibid.; col. 10.
12. Ibid.; col. 14.
13. B: FO371/23712/1335/R2489.
14. B: FO371/23713/1335/R2890.
15. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3100.
16. A: M1211/9/875.00/516.
17. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 348; col. 875.
18. B: FO371/23716/2066/R4845.
19. B: FO371/23713/1335/R2961.
20. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3352.
21. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3071.
22. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3583.

23. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3290.
24. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3071.
25. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3583.
26. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 346; col. 1112.
27. Ibid.
28. B: FO371/23716/2066/R3758.
29. A: M1211/10/875.01/373.
30. B: FO371/23717/2066/R6348.
31. B: FO371/23717/2066/R8149.
32. B: FO371/23715/1335/R8487.
33. B: FO371/23717/2066/R9376.
34. B: FO371/23717/2066/R9592.
35. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 352; col. 1755.
36. B: FO371/23715/1335/R10122.
37. B: FO371/24866/503/R2925.
38. B: ibid.

1939-1941 :

14

A FOOT IN THE WATER OF SUBVERSION

"Surely this is not cricket, even in Bulgaria"
- Bernard Newman

The Second World War broke out on September 3rd, 1939 between Britain and France on the one hand, and Germany on the other. However, the "appeasement" policy which had been pursued by the British and French governments - a policy which had led them to reject the repeated proposals of the Soviet Union for a collective security bloc with them against Italian and German aggression - did not end with the nominal declaration of war. For several months the war remained a "phoney" one, without serious military activities on either side. The real war was being fought in Finland against the Soviet Union.

This phase of the war ended in April-June 1940, when German forces invaded and quickly overran Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. The now obvious failure of the "appeasement" policy brought about, on May 11th, the replacement of the Chamberlain government by a "National Government" headed by Winston Churchill.

On June 10th, 1940, as Paris was about to fall, Italy entered the war on the side of Germany and the puppet government of Albania declared war on Britain.

On June 19th the British government left its hands free to repudiate its recognition of the Italian annexation of Albania when Foreign Under-Secretary Richard Butler informed the House of Commons:

> "In view of Italy's unprovoked entry into the war against this country, His Majesty's Government hold themselves entitled to reserve full liberty of action in respect of any undertakings given by them in the past to the Italian Government concerning the Mediterranean, North or East African and Middle Eastern areas". (1)

But "appeasement" still lingered on in the corridors of Whitehall. On July 2nd, 1940 a meeting of senior Foreign Office officials agreed that, despite the declaration of the previous month, Italy might be permitted, after an Allied victory, to retain possession of Albania:

> "It was generally agreed that in the modern world Albania would not be able to stand alone, but would always need the protection of some Great Power. . . It was also conceivable that, in the event of an Italian defeat, it would be found convenient to leave the Italians in possession of Albania". (2)

It was in this context that the Foreign Office opposed any idea of seeking to stimulate Albanian national resistance to the Italian occupation. Edward Ingram, Counsellor at the Foreign Office, minuted on August 3rd, 1939:

> "As to HMG (His Majesty's Government - Ed.) plotting to stir up trouble in Albania in the event of war, I am all against it", (3)

on which Sir Orme Sargent, Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, commented:

> "I agree". (4)

This position was continued even after Italy's entry into the war: on June 27th, 1940 Philip Nichols, Acting Counsellor at the Foreign Office, noted:

> "We do not yet wish to use Albanian nationalism publicly against the Italians, and it is just possible we never shall wish to do so". (5)

* * * * * * * * * * *

However, other departments of the British state apparatus were more interested in winning the war than in such political manoeuvring. On April 8th, 1940 Captain Thomas Davies of the War Office had sent a secret communication to the Foreign Office stating:

> "The question of possible action against Italy in the event of that country entering the war against the Allies has cropped up again and we have been asked by the General Staff to investigate projects for the conduct of irregular activities in either Italy or her Colonies". (6)

It was in this month that branches of what was then known as "D Organisation" (the function of which was to organise sabotage and subversion in enemy and enemy-held territories) were established for Albania - to be brought into action in the event of Italy's entry into the war on the side of Germany. One branch was set up in Belgrade to be responsible for activity in northern Albania; it was headed by Julian Amery, the son of Leopold, who had been until then Press and Propaganda Secretary at the British Legation in the Yugoslav capital. The other was established in Athens to be responsible for activity in southern Albania; it was headed by Margaret Hasluck, whose pre-war operations in Albania have already been noted. The two branches were coordinated in Istanbul by Colonel Frank Stirling, whose career in Zog's Gendarmerie has also been noted.

In July 1940 the "Special Operations Executive" (SOE) was brought into being; one section of this (SO1) was concerned with propaganda warfare, the other (SO2) with sabotage and subversion. D Organisation was now absorbed into the latter, and in August the Belgrade branch of SO2 was placed under Lieutenant-Colonel Dayrell Oakley Hill, who had also been an officer with the Gendarmerie.

A number of Albanians were recruited by the Belgrade office of SO2 for the proposed irregular warfare in Albania. The principal such figures were Gani Bey Kryeziu (and his brothers Seit and Hasan), Xhemal Herri, Abaz Kupi, Muhharrem Bajraktari and Mustafa Gjinishi.

Gani Kryeziu was the brother of Ceno Bey Kryeziu, who had married a sister of Zog and had been assassinated in 1927 in Prague, where he was Albanian Minister. The surviving brothers accused Zog of having organised Ceno's murder and were compelled to flee from Albania into neighbouring Kosova, where they had extensive estates. The US Minister in Albania, Herman Bernstein, reported in 1932:

> "The Kryeziu brothers have lived in Yugoslavia since 1928 and have been supported financially by the Yugoslav Government". (7)

In June 1932 Zog's Political Court sentenced Gani and Hassan to death <u>in absentia</u> for

" . . organising an anti-national secret committee with the object of disturbing internal order". (8)

Xhemal Herri had been head of Zog's secret police, and was popularly known as "Xhemal Horri" (i.e., rogue).

Abaz Kupi, after a lucrative career as a bandit, had been appointed commandant of Zog's Gendarmerie for the Kruja area where, according to Julian Amery, he

" . . ruled as a dictator". (9)

Muharrem Bajraktari, a chieftain from the Luma region of northern Albania, had been Commandant-General of the Gendarmerie, afterwards becoming Aide-de-Camp to the king. An intelligence report to Elizabeth Barker, Head of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, said of him:

"Muharrem Bajraktari was always looked upon as pro-Yugoslav before the invasion of Albania by Italy. He then acquiesced in this occupation". (10)

Mustafa Gjinishi was less well-known than the other recruits. The son of a democrat, he had attended the American Technical School in Tirana under Harry Fultz. Later he became a newspaper editor.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Zog was rescued by British forces from France just before its collapse, and arrived in Britain in June 1940 with a suite of some thirty people - including ex-queen Geraldine, the infant ex-crown prince Leka (born a few days before the Italian invasion), numerous other members of his family, Sotir Martini (styled "Minister of the Court") and Tajar Zavalani as press attaché.

A meeting of senior Foreign Office officials was held on July 2nd to discuss what should be done with the ex-king:

"The conclusion reached was that the King was discredited". (11)

In consequence it was decided that he was of no use to the British war effort and Sir Andrew Ryan, the British ex-Minister to Albania, was instructed to see him and recommend that he should move on to the United States. Reginald Bowker, 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, informed a firm of solicitors later in the month:

"King Zog is . . no longer regarded by His Majesty's Government as sovereign of Albania". (12)

However, Lord Halifax (who remained Foreign Secretary in the "National Government" until December 1940) demurred at asking the US government to receive Zog. Sir Orme Sargent, now Deputy Foreign Under-Secretary, reported on July 19th:

"We are already having difficulty in persuading the US Government to take in people like Negrin (former Prime Minister of Republican Spain - Ed.), who we do particularly want to get out of the country. The Secretary of State, therefore, does not wish to ask

the United States to receive people like Zog who, after all, won't do any harm if they do stay.

We should therefore let King Zog know privately that, provided he does not take part in any political activities without our authority, we are prepared to allow him to stay here for the present". (13)

Zog was in no dire financial straits, having managed to smuggle out of Albania several cases of gold and having in addition, according to Sir Andrew Noble,

" . . $2 million deposited with the Chase National Bank". (14)

Zog and his "court" were therefore installed in a luxury suite at the Ritz Hotel in London, where he was also provided with an underground bomb-proof shelter. Later the "court" moved to Ascot and, in the summer of 1941, to a 40-roomed house near Henley-on-Thames. Sargent summed up Zog's position bluntly in March 1941:

"He is entirely dependent upon us and is not likely, even if he does feel he is being slighted, to cut off his nose to spite his face". (15)

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The Albanian recruits to SO2 in Belgrade were later described by Amery, with much exaggeration, as

" . . a United Front of Albanian resistance to Italy. . .

The United Front was the fruit of long hours spent in patient planning in the extra-territorial security of the Legation and in conspiratorial meetings in dark corners of Belgrade". (16)

However, the participants in this "United Front" were at least united on one thing, according to Amery: they were agreed that

" . . Zog would make the best leader for the Albanian revolt". (17)

By the late summer of 1940, therefore, as a result of the formation of this royalist "United Front" in Belgrade, the Foreign Office had modified its original view that Zog was too discredited to be of use. In August/September Henry Hopkinson (Private Secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan) persuaded a reluctant Treasury to allow him to send money abroad

" . . to certain former officers of the Albanian army and former Albanian civil servants who are now in Turkey, Yugoslavia and Greece", (18)

on the grounds that the money could contribute to Albanian resistance to Italy, adding:

"We also think it is of some value to be able to meet the wishes of King Zog, who may in the future be of use to us". (19)

Meanwhile, pressure on the Foreign Office to support preparations for irregular warfare in Albania was coming not only from SO2, but also from civilian sources. On June 19th, 1940 Harry Hodgkinson (an "expert" on Albania who had been private secretary to the Leader of the Liberal Party, Sir Archibald Sinclair) sent a memorandum to the Foreign Office entitled "Britain, Italy and Albania" which urged

> " . . the creation under His Majesty's Government of an Albanian Bureau" (20)

to make contact with

> " . . trustworthy Albanians both inside and outside Albania" (21)

in order

> " . . to collate the information from this and other sources for the use of the Government" (22)

and

> " . . to create secretly within Albania a patriotic Fifth Column whose members would attempt to make Italy's position untenable by espionage and sabotage". (23)

However, the Foreign Office continued to resist. Pierson Dixon, Acting 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, minuted on August 25th:

> "We have obviously not yet reached the time when it is desirable for political reasons to set up an Albanian Bureau publicly". (24)

But on the previous day the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, General Sir Archibald Wavell, had given his approval to the SO2 programme for Albania (25), and the Foreign Office was compelled to give way. A memorandum entitled "Albania", prepared by Dixon and dated September 15th, declared:

> "As a result of recent discussions with the SOE it has been decided to inaugurate a more forward policy in regard to stirring up trouble for the Italians in Albania. The subversive side of these activities, including the formation of secret Albanian committees, . . will be in the hands of the SOE". (26)

So, on October 16th, 1940, Colonel Frank Stirling, the SO2 coordinator for Albania, was instructed to

> " . . proceed with formation underground committe Istanbul forthwith". (27)

and he telegraphed back on the 22nd that the formation of this committee was

> ' . . in progress". (28)

When it came into existence, Stirling's Albanian Committee was headed by Mehmet Bey Konica, a former Albanian Minister in London, described in a report from the British Legation in Durrës as

" . . definitely untrustworthy". (29)

It was stated that for some years prior to the Italian invasion he had been President of the British-sponsored Herbert Institute in Tirana, and

" . . was largely responsible for the mismanagement of its finances". (30)

Other members included Hiqmet Bey Delvina, a former Minister of Justice, characterised in a Foreign Office memorandum as

" . . drunken, illiterate and corrupt, only out to line his pockets", (31)

and Musa Juka, similarly described as

" . . cruel, corrupt, clever and much feared". (32)

It is hardly surprising that Dixon characterised the committee by the sarcastic epithet:

"Charming characters!" (33)

Nevertheless, in November 1940 Prime Minister Churchill considered it appropriate to send a message to this committee saying:

"HMG have the cause of Albania very much at heart". (34)

On October 28th, 1940 Italian forces invaded Greece from Albanian soil, but the invasion was a catastrophic failure. Within a few weeks the Greek army had pushed the invaders back over the frontier and had occupied the Albanian towns of Korça, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Saranda and Himara.

It was in these circumstances that, on November 8th, 1940 Zog proposed to Ryan (who functioned as a unofficial liaison officer between the ex-king and the Foreign Office) that he should be allowed to go to Istanbul and try to raise an army from the Albanian community there which would, with the approval of the Greek government, proceed to Albania and "raise an insurrection" there. The British Minister in Athens, Sir Michael Palairet, was instructed to seek the opinion of the Greek government on this project, explaining to it:

" . . that if it is decided to accept his offer, it will be made clear to Zog that we do not thereby commit ourselves to his restoration to the Throne or to the reconstitution of an independent Albania". (35)

Palairet replied on the 23rd:

"President of the Council (General Ioannes Metaxas - Ed.) . . would not welcome his (Zog's - Ed.) presence in Greece and I am sure it would be most unwise to press it". (36)

The Foreign Office had no intention of going ahead with the plan against Greek objections. Dixon minuted on November 24th:

"I am certain that it would be the greatest mistake to attempt to force this question in the face of Greek opposition", (37)

giving as his opinion of the real reason for the Greek opposition:

> ' . . that the Greeks themselves hope to occupy and retain Albania, and realise that if they supported King Zog they would run the risk of committing themselves to the restoration of an independent Albania". (38)

Palairet was consequently informed on November 26th:

> "in view of attitude of the President of the Council, plan to send King Zog to Greece has been abandoned". (39)

Palairet telegraphed the Foreign Office again on December 9th to say that the Greek government (and his own advisers) were, in fact, opposed to any attempts to stimulate a large-scale uprising in Albania:

> "Greek Military Authorities and my own advisers here do not consider in the present crisis that a general Albanian rising has as much importance as is apparently attributed to it in London. They recognise and advocate the use of small well-organised guerilla bands". (40)

Nevertheless, SO2 in Belgrade proceeded to draw up a new plan for stimulating a "rising" in northern Albania, without making use of Zog. It proposed, on December 17th, 1940, that Gani Bey Kryeziu should move into this territory with a force of Kosovars that would be equipped and financed by the British military authorities. According to the plan, this force would occupy the mountain town of Kukes, where it would set up a "royal national government". The British government would then issue the following prepared statement:

> "His Majesty's Government welcome the news, just received, that a revolt by Albanian patriots has taken place in the North of Albania against their Italian oppressors. For their part His Majesty's Government are ready to do all they can to lend their support to this movement and assist in the liberation of Albania". (41)

Again Palairet was asked to seek out the Greek reaction, and replied on the 21st:

> "I have every reason to think that the Greek government are most averse to the establishment of any provisional government", (42)

The new plan was, therefore, also abandoned. Philip Nichols, Acting Counsellor at the Foreign Office and Head of its Southern Department, declared in a memorandum entitled "Rising in Albania" and dated December 26th:

> "This is a matter in which we cannot act contrary to the wishes of the Greek Govt." (43)

With the abandonment of plans to make use of Zog to stimulate, directly or indirectly, a "trustworthy" uprising in Albania, the Foreign Office decided (as Bowker expressed it in February 1941) to keep him

> " . . in 'warm storage', realising that he may be useful later, particularly if things go badly in Albania as a result of German intervention'. (44)

By the end of February 1941 the Greek army was on the defensive on the Albanian front, and the Foreign Office now regarded the possibility of stimulating any effective Albanian resistance movement as "inconceivable". Sargent minuted on March 1st:

> "The chances of our being able to launch an Albanian movement are decreasing rather than improving. Such a rising is really only feasible as part of a successful Greek offensive in Albania, and the prospects of such an offensive are certainly rapidly declining. It is, to my mind, quite inconceivable that we should be able to get the Albanians to rise at a time when the Greeks were on the defensive or in retreat". (45)

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On April 6th, 1941 German forces invaded Greece and Yugoslavia, and this forced the hand of SO2 in Belgrade. On the following day Oakley Hill, the Kryeziu brothers, Kupi, Herri, Bajraktari and Gjinishi - along with some 300 armed Kosovars - infiltrated into northern Albania. They were unable to win the support of the local population, the mercenaries quickly deserted and

> " . . within a week Oakley Hill and his friends were fugitives". (46)

The leaders dispersed. Gani Kryeziu and his brother Seit were captured by the Italians and interned on the island of Ventotene, while Hasan returned to the family estates in Kosova; Kupi and Herri went to the Kruja area, Bajraktari to Luma, while Gjinishi went south to Korça, where he joined up with the Communists. Oakley Hill himself returned to Belgrade, where he

> " . . arranged an honourable surrender to the Germans through the good offices of the American Legation". (47)

The Belgrade and Athens branches of SO2 now ceased to exist, but Margaret Hasluck managed to escape to Istanbul, where she took the place of Stirling. In Amery's words, apart from this

> " . . the whole organisation which had grown up to promote an Albanian revolt was dissolved". (48)

The Foreign Office now discounted any possibility of Albanian resistance. Dixon minuted on July 8th, 1941:

> "The prospect of stimulating Albanian resistance to the Italians are much less real than they were before the collapse of the Balkans". (49)

But reality now began to dispose of the illusions of the British Foreign Office about Albanian resistance. On November 8-14th, 1941 representatives of the local Communist groups met in Tirana and merged to form the Communist Party of Albania, and this founding conference defined the strategic aim of the Party in the current period as:

> " . . to fight for the national independence of the Albanian people and for a people's democratic government in an Albania free from fascism". (50)

The Party now proceeded to organise and lead a guerilla movement of "partisans" to bring about the liberation of the country.

Meanwhile, the range of the Second World War had widened with the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22nd, 1941, bringing a new and powerful ally to the aid of beleaguered Britain. And on December 7th Japan entered the war on the side of Italy and Germany, drawing in the United States on the side of Britain and the Soviet Union by its attack on the US navy at Pearl Harbour.

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15

1940-1942 ;

THE MEANING OF "INDEPENDENCE"

"'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean'"

- Lewis Carroll

As we have said, a meeting of senior officials of the British Foreign Office on July 2nd, 1940 had agreed

> " . . that in the modern world Albania would not be able to stand alone, but would always need the protection of some Great Power", (1)

and had regarded it at this time as

> " . . conceivable that, in the event of an Italian defeat, it would be found convenient to leave the Italians in possession of Albania". (2)

Indeed, it was not until Britain had been at war with Italy for almost two years that this proposal was decisively rejected - on grounds of political expediency. On March 30th, 1942, Pierson Dixon, Acting 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, minuted:

> "In view of Italy's part as an enemy in the present war, she clearly will not be allowed to revert to her role of protectorship". (3)

Nevertheless, the view of the Foreign Office that the Albanian nation was "incapable" of genuine independence remained unaltered. When, in September 1940, the Foreign Office drew up directives for the BBC Albanian service, a key point of these was

> "Our propaganda must . . avoid committing us to the restoration of a free Albania". (4)

This service began in November, with Tajar Zavalani (formerly Zog's press attaché) and Anton Logoreci (formerly private secretary to General Percy, Inspector-General of Zog's Gendarmerie) as announcers. A new directive then emphasised:

> "AVOID . .
> Specific promises concerning the future restoration of Albania". (5)

Dixon commented on November 12th:

> "There seems to be no need to modify the view which we have hitherto held that an independent Albania would always need the support or protection of some other Power in order to maintain existence". (6)

In these circumstances, considerable discussion was aroused at the Foreign Office when, on November 22nd, 1940, the Greek Prime Minister, Metaxas, said in a broadcast speech:

"We are fighting not only for our own existence but . . for the liberation of Albania". (7)

Philip Nichols hastened to assert that this statement was entirely compatible with the attitude of the Foreign Office:

"'Liberation' is an entirely different word in Greek from 'independence', and there can be little doubt that all General Metaxas meant to imply was that Greece was fighting for the liberation of Albania from Italian rule, and in no sense intended to commit himself to the restoration of an independent Albania.

This is, of course, identical with the line which we are taking, and I need hardly say how important it is that we should keep in step with the Greek Government in our Albanian policy". (8)

Faced with the "threat" of a Parliamentary question on the post-war status of Albania, Dixon minuted on November 26th:

"It would be very undesirable to make any statement at the moment about Albania, since the whole question is at present very much in the melting pot", (9)

and the question was obligingly withdrawn at the request of the Foreign Office. Commenting two days later on a letter from MP Philip Noel-Baker which asked the British government to declare that it stood for the restoration of an independent Albania, Dixon declared:

"The disadvantages of committing ourselves to an independent Albania greatly outweigh the possible advantages. The line we are following at the moment, and which I think we should do well to follow, is that we stand for the 'liberation' of Albania from the Fascist yoke. This is what the Greek Government also say they are standing for". (10)

On December 2nd, 1940 a meeting between senior Foreign Office officials and representatives of SO2 was held to discuss "policy on the Albanian question". The SO2 representatives urged that a declaration promising support for Albanian independence after the war was necessary to stimulate Albanian national resistance to Italy. The Foreign Office objected, and won:

"It was generally accepted that no mention of an independent Albania should be made". (11)

Meanwhile, "The Times" of November 29th carried a letter announcing the proposed formation of a committee calling itself "The Friends of the Albanian People". The signatories included that long-standing friend of Albania, Edith Durham; former British Minister to Albania Sir Robert Hodgson; Lieutenant-Colonel Edward De Renzy-Martin, an ex-army officer who had served with Zog's Gendarmerie; and a number of MPs - Vernon Bartlett, Victor Cazalet, Geoffrey Mander, Philip Noel-Baker, Frederick Pethwick-Lawrence and Benjamin Riley. (12) The Foreign Office hastened to assure the Greek government:

"Proposal has no official backing". (13)

By December 8th, 1940, however, London was warning the British Minister in Athens, Sir Michael Palairet:

> "We are . . being pressed by a large body of opinion in this country who sympathise with Albania to make some pronouncement. . .
> In reply to a question whether His Majesty's Government have any statement to make on the subject of the future of Albania, it will be stated that His Majesty's Government wish to see Albania freed from the Italian yoke and will give the Albanians all the support in their power to that end. At the issue of the victorious struggle it will be for the Albanians themselves to decide on their future". (14)

The sting lay in the next sentence of the proposed reply:

> "At the same time safeguards will have to be devised to prevent the recurrence of such events as those which have of recent years reduced Albania to foreign vassalage and exposed her neighbours to the greatest danger". (15)

However, there was strong objection to the reference to "the Albanians deciding on their future", and even this ambiguous statement was not made. Asked in the House of Commons on December 11th whether he was able to give the House any information as to the form of government to be set up in post-war Albania, Foreign Under-Secretary Richard Butler replied curtly:

> "No, Sir". (16)

Dixon explained in a minute of the same date:

> "We have, I think, always gone on the basic assumption that we must avoid, in our Albanian policy, doing anything which might upset the Greeks". (17)

But the pressure for a declaration continued. Dixon noted on January 15th, 1941:

> "SO2 . . wished . . that HM Government should make a declaration in Parliament on the subject of the future of Albania", (18)

but commented:

> "It seems almost certain that General Metaxas will turn down the idea of a declaration by HM Government. I am sure myself that this is not the moment for making such a declaration and that our right policy at the moment is to say as little as possible of our Albanian policy". (19)

Five days later, on January 20th, SO2 passed to the Foreign Office a demand from Stirling's Albanian Committee in Istanbul that the British government should issue

> " . . a declaration . . stating that Albania shall be restored to its former state previous to April 7th, 1939" (20)

in order to stimulate Albanian resistance to the Italian occupiers. The new Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, commented sternly:

> "SO2 do not and must not conduct our foreign policy. They are our instrument, and not we theirs". (21)

Further pressure for a declaration on the projected post-war status of Albania came later in the month. On January 23rd Tajar Zavalani wrote to the Foreign Office declaring:

> "The Albanian people . . anxiously await a declaration by the British Government affirming that Albania will be restored to its independence and integrity after the extermination of Fascism and Hitlerism in Europe". (22)

On which Foreign Office official William Knight commented caustically:

> "A declaration . . is, of course, out of the question at present. Greece has the main say in the matter. . .
> BBC announcers should stick to their job". (23)

On January 27th the "Balkan Committee" (an unofficial body composed largely of MPs having special interest in the Balkans, with Sir Edward Boyle as its Chairman) adopted a resolution declaring:

> "The Balkan Committee . . looks forward to the restoration of complete Albanian independence". (24)

On which Knight commented irritably:

> "Balkan busybodies!" (25)

The committee followed up this resolution with a letter to the Foreign Office;

> "The Balkan Committee would be grateful if Mr. Eden would consider carefully whether it is not possible for the Government to put forward as one of its war aims the erection of an independent Albania after the war". (26)

To this William Mallett, Eden's Assistant Private Secretary (Diplomatic), replied with calculated vagueness:

> "For various reasons we have not as yet been ready actually to make such a declaration". (27)

As the pressure mounted, Dixon minuted on February 9th:

> "It seems likely that some time or other we shall be forced by pressure at home to make some kind of declaration about Albania", (28)

and six days later, on the 15th, Palairet in Athens was again warned:

> "Increasing pressure being put on His Majesty's Government by friends of Albania in this country.
> Parliamentary questions have up to date been postponed, but position cannot be held indefinitely". (29)

Stirling's Istanbul committee repeated, on February 25th, its demand of January. Knight declared:

> "There can be no question of a reply", (30)

and on May 5th expressed the view that

> " . . it is a very inopportune moment for any declaration about the future of Albania". (31)

As a result of the German invasion of April 1941, the Greek government was now a government-in-exile. This was headed as Prime Minister by Emmanuel Tsouderos who, in a speech in the summer, described the Albanian people as

> " . . semi-savages", (32)

a remark which Dixon felt compelled to describe as

> " . . unfortunate". (33)

Despite these developments, the Foreign Office continued to maintain that "the objections of Greece" were good reason for refusing to make any declaration on the future of Albania. Dixon commented on July 8th:

> "We have never supported the cause of Albanian independence and are even less disposed to do so now", (34)

and Knight wrote on August 29th, in connection with an appeal from Zavalani's wife Selma, a former lady-in-waiting to Queen Geraldine:

> "We cannot, of course, commit ourselves to the smallest degree on the subject of Albania's future", (35)

adding on September 6th:

> "The Greek Government has strongly objected to our making any public statement (on the subject of the post-war status of Albania - Ed.) and this objection has not been, and is not likely to be, withdrawn. The disappointment of the Albanians is fully realised, as also that of Albanian sympathisers in this country, but this cannot be helped", (36)

and on October 2nd:

> "The peace conference may have to settle, not a mere question of frontiers, but that of the existence of Albania after the war". (37)

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Meanwhile, on September 29th, 1941, the Greek government-in-exile had handed to the Foreign Office an Aide Mémoire formally making a territorial claim to "Northern Epirus", i.e., southern Albania. (38) Dixon commented on this the same day:

> "We have decided to keep our hands absolutely free as regards the future of the Balkans, and it is impossible to say whether there will be a place for an Albanian state in post-war Europe", (39)

and on October 9th:

"On ethnological grounds . . alone, the case will probably be found to go against the Greeks. But on wider grounds there are fairly strong arguments in favour of the Greek claim. . .

We shall certainly wish to reward the Greeks for the part they played in this war as our Allies. We cannot give them Cyprus. . .

A further difficulty is that at present it is quite impossible to decide whether it will be desirable to reconstitute an independent Albania or not. If the decision is in the negative, it would of course be much easier to hand over parts of Albanian territory to the Greeks and Yugoslavs". (40)

There were, however, political objections to the proposal for the blatant partition of Albanian territory between Greece and Yugoslavia. In August 1941 US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had signed the "Atlantic Charter", which declared that the United States and Britain

" . . desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. . .

They wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them", (41)

and the outright partition of Albania could in no way be reconciled with these pledges. The Foreign Office, therefore, adopted the plan of according to Greece and Yugoslavia parts of Albanian territory, while reconstituting a truncated Albanian state which would enjoy a purely nominal independence within a "Balkan Confederation" dominated by Albania's stronger neighbours. On January 6th, 1942 the Foreign Research and Press Association of the Royal Institute of International Affairs attached to the University of Oxford (which frequently functioned as a "think-tank" for the Foreign Office) sent to the latter a confidential memorandum which declared firmly:

"Albania's chances of survival as a State depend on her inclusion in a Federation". (42)

This view was reaffirmed in a second memorandum from the same body dated January 19th and entitled "The Albanian-Yugoslav Frontier":

"However the frontiers of Albania are drawn, it is unlikely that she will be able to escape ultimate partition between her neighbours, or occupation by one of them, unless she is placed under the special protection of a strong and disinterested outside authority or becomes a member of a larger unit". (43)

Meanwhile, on January 15th, the Greek and Yugoslav governments-in-exile had been encouraged by the British Foreign Office to sign an agreement in support of the concept of a Balkan Confederation. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden told the House of Commons on February 4th:

"I am convinced that the Greek-Yugoslav Agreemnent is very much in the right direction. . .

This Greek-Yugoslav Treaty is definitely to form the basis of a Balkan confederation". (44)

The campaign was carried further by Ryan when he told Zog on March 20th that he

" . . saw a future for an independent Albania only as a member of a Balkan federation or confederation". (45)

Ten days later Pierson Dixon submitted to the Foreign Office a long memorandum entitled "Albania: Present Attitude of His Majesty's Government", which argued:

"Unless we take the Albanian problem by the horns well before the end of hostilities, . . it is to be anticipated that, as soon as Greece and Yugoslavia regain their independence, Greek and Yugoslav forces will march into Albania and seize the slabs of territory which they covet", (46)

and this development

" . . would be fraught with danger for Greco-Yugoslav relations". (47)

The Greek claim to southern Albania was, declared Dixon's memorandum,

" . . historically and strategically well-founded", (48)

so that

" . . on all grounds we should be well-advised to reckon with the satisfaction of the Greek claim to Southern Albania. This . . would almost certainly entail the cession of parts of Northern Albania to Yugoslavia". (49)

This would leave Albania with only a

" . . truncated territory", (50)

comprising the central part of pre-1939 Albania. This would be capable of nominal independence only as a unit within a Balkan confederation:

"The question then arises whether the truncated country which would remain would be capable of inclusion as an independent country within a Balkan confederation", (51)

and

"There . . seems to be a <u>prima facie</u> case for making up our minds to the possible inclusion of an independent Albania as a unit in a Balkan confederation". (52)

Dixon's conclusion was that, although a declaration could be made which supported the reconstitution of such an "independent" Albania,

" . . in any declaration care would be needed not to commit ourselves either as regards
1) the future boundaries of Albania, or
2) the future government of the country". (53)

Sir Orme Sargent commented on Dixon's memorandum on April 3rd:

"I should have preferred to let sleeping dogs lie and to make no declaration about Albania at this stage. However, I recognise that with the signature of our treaty with the Soviet Government the Albanian question will be forced upon us". (54)

In fact, Josef Stalin had already proposed to Eden in Moscow on December 16th, 1941

" . . that Albania should be reconstituted as an independent State". (55)

Eden endorsed Dixon's conclusions on April 12th, 1942:

"Mr. Dixon's memo is a good one, and we can accept it as our Albanian policy". (56)

Nevertheless, the opposition to the issue of any declaration on the post-war status of Albania continued. Eden decided on May 10th:

"A declaration . . can wait". (57)

But the pressure for a declaration also continued. On June 2nd Lord Glenconner of SOE urged the Foreign Office that a declation was necessary to assist that body in its plans for organising an Albanian resistance movement. (58) However, a meeting of senior Foreign Office officials on July 10th concluded that a declaration should not be issued

" . . until there has been some fresh development". (59)

This decision was approved by Eden on the 12th. (60)

In August 1942 a new source of civilian pressure emerged in Britain in the form of "The Friends of Albania Committee". Its Chairman was Miriam Tildesley (formerly accountant at Erickson's school in Kavaja) and Harry Hodgkinson was its Secretary. Edith Durham was a member of the committee for some months, but withdrew because she regarded it as the creation of Zog's secretary, Qazim Kastrati. (61) Ruth Pennington confirmed, in a letter of May 1943, that it had been

" . . founded under Zog's patronage", (62)

and this was also the view of the Foreign Office. Denis Laskey, 3rd Secretary, described the organisation in a minute of June 24th, 1943 as

" . . rabidly . . pro-Zog". (63)

* * * * * * * * * * *

The year 1942 marked, in fact, the turning point of the Second World War. It was the year in which both the armed forces of the Soviet Union and those of Britain and the United States turned to the counter-offensive. On November 8th US forces landed in North Africa.

These international events, together with those within Albania itself, constituted the "fresh development" which at last persuaded the British Foreign Office that the time was ripe for a "guarded declaration" in favour of Albanian "independence" along the lines proposed in Dixon's March memorandum.

On November 15th Douglas Howard, Acting Counsellor at the Foreign Office, minuted:

> "I should be in favour of making a guarded declaration regarding the independence of Albania. . .
> I think the earlier the better, so that advantage may be taken of encouraging and winning the support of the Albanians. Guerilla activities within Albania may at some moment be useful". (64)

Eden finally agreed on the 20th:

> "Yes; please draft declaration". (65)

The United States Secretary of State, Cordell Hall, issued a statement on November 30th supporting the Albanian guerilla movement:

> "I think everyone realises that the innocent and non-offending people of Albania were suddenly and without remotest pretext invaded by Italian armies and seized, and some kind of pretended government was set up there by Italian authorities. In these circumstances it ought to be high duty of every Albanian . . to shoot on sight every Italian soldier he may find in that country depriving these people of their rights and liberties". (66)

On the following day, December 1st, Eden sent an explanatory memorandum to the War Cabinet concerning the declaration proposed by the Foreign Office:

> "We are now on the offensive in the Mediterranean, and a decision about the future of Albania would be interpreted in the Balkans as evidence of this offensive spirit. . .
> A declaration recognising Albanian independence would lead to an increase in resistance to the Italians in Albania, and would thus increase the commitments of the Axis forces in the Balkans. SOE consider that such a declaration would help them in their work among the Albanian guerillas", (67)

adding:

> "The statement is confined to recognising the 'independence' of Albania, nothing being said about restoring the pre-war boundaries in view of certain contingent territorial claims by the Greek and Yugoslav Governments". (68)

The War Cabinet approved the draft declaration on December 3rd, (69) and on the 7th the United States and Soviet governments were informed of the text of the proposed declaration, it being suggested that they could usefully issue similar statements.

On the following day, the 8th, the South African Prime Minister, Field Marshal Jan Smuts, told the Foreign Office that he had talked with King George II of Greece and the Prime Minister of the Greek government-in-exile, Emmanuel Tsouderos - who were then visiting Pretoria - and they had expressed the hope that

> " . . the northern boundaries of Greece in Epirus would be revised . . in the future peace arrangements. (70)

Smuts recommended the king as

" . . a true and loyal friend to Britain", (71)

and Greece as

" . . a valuable ally in the future in that fluid part of Europe". (72)

Although the draft declaration concerning Albania had been sent to Smuts, the latter urged that it should leave open the question of Albanian frontiers.

Dixon commented on the 10th:

"If General Smuts has read it (the draft declaration - Ed.) as implying recognition of the frontiers, others will do the same. This would lead to misunderstanding among the Albanians, who might later accuse us of having let them down", (73)

and therefore proposed that the draft declaration should have added to it an explicit disavowal that the restoration of Albania's pre-1939 frontiers was implied. Eden responded on the 11th:

"Very well; I am prepared to agree", (74)

On December 10th Cordell Hull released the American declaration:

"The Government of the United States is not unmindful of the continued resistance of the Albanian people to the Italian forces of occupation. The effort of the various guerrilla bands operating against the common enemy in Albania is admired and appreciated. The Government and people of the United States look forward to the day when effective military assistance can be given these brave men to drive the invader from their homes.

Consistent with its well-established policy not to recognise territorial conquest by force, the Government of the United States has never recognised the annexation of Albania by the Italian crown. The joint declaration of the President and the British Prime Minister made on August 14th, 1941, known as the 'Atlantic Charter', provides as follows:

'Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they shall live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them'.

The restoration of a free Albania is inherent in that statement of principle". (75)

Sargent commented sourly on the fact that the US government had issued its declaration first, alleging that this had been done

". . so as to be able to demonstrate to their local Albanians that the USA has taken the initiative". (76)

Two days after the issue of the American declaration, on December 12th, the Greek Ambassador in Washington, Cimon Diamantopoulos, handed to the State Department a Note protesting against it:

> "The Greek nation . . will be at a loss to understand a step in the direction of the restoration of Albania, without a clear simultaneous recognition of their own rights to the districts of Northern Epirus". (77)

To which US Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles replied:

> "The Secretary of State in his statement . . had made no reference whatever to territorial frontiers. . .
> The President believed that none of the United Nations should make any final decision with regard to territorial readjustments until the end of the war". (78)

Meanwhile, on December 11th the British government had formally communicated to the Greek and Yugoslav governments-in-exile the original text of the draft declaration it proposed to issue on the question of the future of Albania. On the 14th the Greek Ambassador in London, Thanassis Aghnides, warned Eden of

> " . . the very painful impression" (79)

which the proposed declaration would create in Greece. But, as has been said, by then it had already been decided to amend this text. Elizabeth Barker, Head of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, relates that

> " . . the draft British statement was therefore expanded to include a specific pledge that the frontiers of the Albanian State would have to be considered at the peace settlement". (80)

At the same time a second additional sentence was inserted in the draft declaration making it clear that the statement was not intended to prejudge

> " . . Albania's position in relation to such future arrangements as may be reached between the various Balkan States". (81)

As Sargent explained in a minute dated December 15th:

> "In adding this particular sentence to our declaration we had had in mind the possibility of Albania being absorbed into a Balkan Confederation if, as we hoped, Greece and Yugoslavia proceeded with their present plans for this purpose". (82)

On December 17th, therefore, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden made the delayed and amended declaration in the House of Commons:

> "His Majesty's Government sympathise with the fate of the Albanians, a people among the earliest victims of Fascist aggression. They wish to see Albania freed from the Italian yoke and restored to her independence. The form of regime and government to be introduced into Albania will be a matter for the Albanian people themselves to decide at the end of the war. What I have said does not in any way prejudge the question of Albania's position in relation to such future arrangements as may be reached between the various Balkan States. His Majesty's Government regard the question of the frontiers of the Albanian State after the war as a question which will have to be considered at the peace settlement". (83)

The US State Department noted:

> "The text of it had been very considerably changed after it had been shown to the Secretary. This change consisted of the two closing sentences of the British statement, which ruined the effect of the Secretary's statement by reopening the question of Greek and Yugoslav claims against Albania. . .
>
> The Secretary was annoyed. . .
>
> We subsequently learned that the Greeks had gotten wind of Mr. Eden's proposed statement, and had insisted on its revision. . .
>
> Naturally the Albanians and their friends were indignant and the effect of the whole statement has been rather deplorable", (84)

and on December 24th Hull protested to Lord Halifax, now the British Ambassador in Washington, about the alterations which had been made to the original draft declaration, complaining also that it

> " . . was so vague that it was virtually meaningless. . . The Ambassador said he was sorry". (85)

Meanwhile, the Soviet government had issued on December 19th its declaration, which pledged the Soviet Union to unconditional support for Albania's independence:

> "The Soviet Union fully sympathises with the courageous struggle for liberation waged by the Albanian patriots against the Italian invaders, and does not recognise any claims of Italian imperialism to Albanian territory. It wishes to see Albania freed from the yoke of the Fascist invaders and restored to independence.
>
> The Soviet Government is certain that the struggle of the Albanian people for its independence will merge with the struggle waged by other Balkan peoples oppressed by the Italo-German occupationists, and that these peoples, in alliance with all freedom-loving countries, will oust the invaders from their land.
>
> The problem of the future State system is a domestic affair and must be decided by the Albanian people themselves". (86)

1. B: FO371/24868/6586/R6586.
2. B: ibid.
3. B: FO371/33113/2125/R2125.
4. B: FO371/24867/998/R7766.
5. B: FO371/24867/998/R8827.
6. B: FO371/24868/6586/R8270.
7. B: FO371/24866/503/R8620.
8. B: ibid.
9. B: FO371/24867/998/R8857.
10. B: FO371/24867/503/R8783.
11. B: ibid.
12. "The Times", November 29th, 1940; p. 5.
13. B: FO371/24867/998/R9032.
14. B: FO371/24867/503/R8783.
15. B; ibid.
16. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 367; col. 891.
17. B: FO371/24868/6586/R8639.
18. B: FO371/29711/111/R919.
19. B: ibid.

20. B: FO371/29719/2123/R2123.
21. B: FO371/29711/111/R919.
22. B: FO371/29714/187/R702.
23. B: ibid.
24. B: FO371/29714/187/R824.
25. B: ibid.
26. B: FO371/29714/187/R989.
27. B: ibid.
28. B: FO371/29714/187/R702.
29. B: FO371/29711/111/R919.
30. B: FO371/29719/2123/R2123.
31. B: FO371/29711/111/R4583.
32. B: FO371/29715/534/R6773.
33. B: ibid.
34. B: ibid.
35. B: FO371/29711/111/R8010.
36. B: FO371/29711/111/R8165.
37. B: FO371/29711/111/R9083.
38. B: FO371/29715/534/R8768.
39. B: FO371/29711/111/R8687.
40. B: FO371/29715/534/R8768.
41. "Keesing's Contemporary Archives", Volume 4; p. 4739.
42. B: FO371/33107/184/R184.
43. B: FO371/33112/961/R961.
44. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 377; col. 1157.
45. B: FO371/33110/867/R1799.
46. B: FO371/33113/2125/R2125.
47. B: ibid.
48. B: ibid.
49. B: ibid.
50. B: ibid.
51. B: ibid.
52. B: ibid.
53. B: ibid.
54. B: ibid.
55. A. Eden: Report of January 5th, 1942, in: W. S. Churchill: "The Second World War", Volume 3; London; 1950; p. 558.
56. B: FO371/33113/2125/R2125.
57. B: ibid.
58. B: FO371/33112/961/R3710.
59. B: FO371/33110/867/R4493.
60. B: ibid.
61. B: FO371/31737/61/R956.
62. B: FO371/37138/61/R5267.
63. B: ibid.
64. B: FO371/33107/184/R7685.
65. B: ibid.
66. A: M1211/15/875.01/4-2243.
67. B: FO371/33107/184/R8174.
68. B: ibid.
69. B: ibid.
70. B: FO371/33107/184/R8415.
71. B: ibid.
72. B: ibid.
73. B: ibid.
74. B: ibid.

75. "Department of State Bulletin", Volume 7, No. 181; December 12th, 1942; p. 998.
76. B: FO371/33107/184/R8477.
77. A: M1211/15/875.01/459.
78. A: ibid.
79. B: FO371/33108/184/R8604.
80. E. Barker: "British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War"; London; 1976; p. 176.
81. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 385; col. 2114.
82. B: FO371/33108/184/R8604.
83. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 385; col. 2114-5.
84. A: M1211/16/875.01/4-2243.
85. A: M1211/15/875.01/460.
86. "Vneshnyaya Politika (Foreign Policy), Volume 1; Moscow 1946; p. 329.

16

1941-1944 :

THE CAMPAIGN FOR A GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

"Men in exile feed on dreams" - Aeschylus

Another development which followed the signing of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941 was that on the 29th of the following month Zog wrote to the Allied leaders as "King of the Albanians" requesting that the "legal" representatives of Albania be

> " . . given the same status as that given to the other nations which suffer and fight as it does". (1)

The American-Albanian Association Vatra had supported Zog since 1925, when its President, Faik Konica, was appointed by President Zogu to be Albanian Minister in Washington. It now recognised Zog as "national leader" of all Albanians, at least until the country had been liberated. A "Basic Handbook" on Albania issued by the British Foreign Office in 1943 pointed out:

> "The basis of agreement between Vatra and the King is that Zog is recognised as national leader until Albania is liberated. . . On this basis Zog has subsidised Vatra". (2)

On November 19th, 1942 Faik Konica and Fan Noli published a joint statement in which they reported talks they had had with "one of the United States Government offices":

> "We stressed the following points:
> 1. That only an Albanian united front including all the available Albanian personalities would have any chance of appealing to the Albanian people as a whole and be useful to the United Nations.
> 2. That King Zog is the foremost living Albanian personality, and his exclusion would rob the proposed movement of its strength. .
> .
> 5. That we are ready at all times to cooperate wholeheartedly with the Government of the United States". (3)

In 1942-43, as the tide of the Second World War began to turn decisively in favour of the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance, royalist Albanians abroad began an intensive campaign to try to secure from the Allies the promise of recognition of a royalist government-in-exile. The main feature of this campaign was a series of letters and telegrams to the Allied leaders from such people as Faik Konica, Vasil Pano (Acting President of Vatra following Konica's death in December 1942), Peter Kolonia (Konica's successor as Zog's unofficial representative in Washington, Sotir Martini (Zog's "Court Minister" in London) and Fan Noli. (4) The campaign was, naturally, also supported by the Friends of Albania Committee sponsored by Zog in London. (5) Already in January 1943 this campaign was being described by Denis Laskey, 3rd Secretary at the British Foreign Office, as

> ". . a bombardment". (6)

At this time Vatra, Kolonia and Noli were all in receipt of funds from Zog, as is made clear in a letter from Martini to Zog's "Treasurer" in the United

States, Shefqet Bença. (7)

The urgency with which this campaign was viewed by Zog and his "Court" is indicated in a letter from Martini to Kolonia in May 1943:

> "Our first aim must be for Albania to be represented at the Food Conference (to be held later that month in Atlantic Springs - Ed.) by a delegate officially appointed by the Head of the State". (8)

The Foreign Office in London, however, maintained its view that a genuinely independent Albania was "impracticable". A Foreign Office memorandum entitled "Notes on Albania", compiled in December 1942, concluded:

> "The Albanian administration . . will require the tutelage of a sufficiently powerful and disinterested state . . for supervising the administration. . .
>
> This should be regarded as a probationary period until such time as Albania is fit to take her place in a Balkan Federation. . .
>
> If the mandatory power was either Great Britain or the United States it is certain that it would be well received by Albania and her neighbours". (9)

Laskey minuted in February 1943:

> "If British or American capital is to be invested in the country, we should be in a position to exercise some control. . . I am not sure whether this should take the form of a British or American mandate. . . A sufficient degree of supervision might be maintained by means of advisers". (10)

and in April:

> "After the war . . it is clear that whether or not she (Albania - Ed.) is a member of a Balkan Confederation, she will be in no position to stand on her own feet". (11)

Similarly, a report of the Foreign Office Research Department in February 1943 entitled "Albania as an International Problem" declared:

> "It is doubtful if an independent Albania could survive for long in a system of sovereign States. . .
>
> Tutelage by a State or group of States will probably be required. . . Tutelage by Great Britain or the USA would probably be well received by Albania and her Balkan neighbours". (12)

and a British intelligence report of September 1944 entitled "Albania's International Relations" insisted:

> "ALBANIA cannot stand alone as a sovereign state. Even with KOSOVA, she will not have the resources necessary to support all the services and attributes necessary to a sovereign state . .; without KOSOVA she will always have to depend upon some foreign power". (13)

In view of the attitude of the British authorities, Zog turned his hopes of approval for a royalist government-in-exile primarily on the United States.

The Foreign Office informed the British Embassy in Washington in January 1943:

> "King Zog appears to be anxious to improve his position by forming a government in exile. We have reason to believe that he is contemplating the formation of this government not in this country but in America, with Fan Noli as the central figure". (14)

However, Noli had already refused to accept the leadership of the proposed government-in-exile in a telegram of December 24th, 1942 to Dervish Duma (formerly Secretary at the Albanian Legation in London), (15) and he confirmed this decision in a letter to Martini on May 27th, 1943:

> "I am ready to do my full share for the Albanian United Front under King Zog's leadership. . . I must make it clear that I can serve only in an advisory capacity on account of my American citizenship". (16)

Meanwhile, in February 1943 Zog had written as "representative of the Albanian people" to the US Ambassador in London, Anthony Biddle, declaring his readiness to accept "American direction":

> "If the American Government consents I am ready to send a representative to Washington to effect . . the reestablishment of normal relations between the United States and Albania. This . . will allow Albania's coordination under American direction". (17)

In fact, the attitude of the US authorities on the "impractibility" of a genuinely independent post-war Albanian state was little different from the official London view - except that the former had, naturally, an American slant. A State Department memorandum of October 1943 entitled "The Albanian Problem" stated:

> "Albania is predisposed by character and tradition to the monarchical form of government. . .
>
> There is considerasble doubt as to whether the Albanian people will recall Zog to the throne. . .
>
> If the monarchy is not restored, Albania will accept the republican form of government, for which she is ill-prepared in terms of political experience and stability.
>
> Certainly under a republic, and perhaps under a monarchical regime, Albania should have the benefit of outside guidance and counsel, and probably of foreign control and authority. . .
>
> If Albania is placed under a mandate or some other form of control by a single power, only the United States would be wholly satisfactory to the Albanians, although they might accept Great Britain.
>
> International control of Albania, in which . . the United States played a prominent or leading role, would probably provide the best solution", (18)

and a State Department report of April 1944 entitled "The Economic Basis of Albanian Independence" declared:

> "Under the circumstances, financial assistance must be advanced directly by disinterested powers in sufficient volume, for a fairly long period of time. . . This assistance mnust be coupled with competent advice and controls to ensure the proper use of funds. . .

> Albania appears to be so small and weak economically as to be unable, without impairing the present low standard of living of its people, to carry out those functions which are essential for the maintenance of an independent political existence. . .
>
> The problems faced by Albania are to a certain extent common to the other Balkan countries, suggesting a common solution, namely a Balkan Union. . . It is difficult to see how, in the future, it could escape economic vassalage to another power unless it joined in a partnership with its stronger neighbours". (19)

* * * * * * * * * * *

The desire not to "offend" the Greek and Yugoslav governments-in-exile - both of which had covetous designs on Albanian territory - was admitted to be a significant factor in British policy towards Albania by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in a letter to MP Leslie Hore-Belisha in October 1943:

> "It is quite true that the Greeks, and to a lesser degree the Yugoslavs, do feel strongly about Albania and, since they are our Allies, we are bound to consider their feelings. This factor cannot but be an element in our policy towards Albania". (20)

Nevertheless the Greek government-in-exile was always ready to seize upon any phrase in a British or American official document which might be interpreted as implying support for Albanian patriotism or territorial integrity. In June 1943, for example, the Greek Embassy in London complained of references in BBC broadcasts to "patriotic activities" by Albanian guerillas, asserting:

> "These activities, far from being patriotic, consist in beating up Greeks". (21)

Pierson Dixon dismissed this allegatiopn in a letter to Elizabeth Barker in July:

> "Our information does not confirm the allegations made by the Greek Government about the persecution of Greeks in Northern Epirus (i.e., southern Albania - Ed.)". (22)

Nevertheless, the Greek government-in-exile persisted in its charges - for example, in a Note of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the US State Department in October 1943:

> "The Albanian people have never until this day shown any common will of a national character. . .
>
> The present activities of the Albanian guerilla bands are never directed against the armies of occupation, but against the Greek population of Northern Epirus whom they persecute. . .
>
> We are certain that the primitive Albanians will hand over again their country to the Power which will in the future pursue imperialistic designs in the Balkan Peninsula". (23)

Nine months later, in October 1944, British military intelligence reported that the allegations of persecution of the Greek minority in southern Albania by the Albanian guerillas were

> " . . not substantiated in fact". (24)

Again in November 1943 the Greek Embassy in Washington protested at a published letter from the US State Department to Charles Hart - a former US Minister to Albania who had become President of a short-lived organisation called "The American Friends of Albania". This letter contained the statement that the US government was

> " . . aware of the struggle of the Albanian people to preserve the integrity and the independence of their country", (25)

and the Greek Embassy denounced the phrase "preserve the integrity" as

> " . . clear encouragement to Albanian pretensions to keep under their rule the Greek population of Northern Epirus who rightfully expect to be united with Greece". (26)

The State Department replied in December that it was

> " . . glad to confirm . . that the language cited . . was not intended and should not be construed as bearing in any way on questions of boundaries or territorial changes, or as indicating a departure from this Government's well-known policy of neither discussing nor judging such matters until after the war". (27)

There was, however, less concern about Albanian susceptibilities. A complaint from Philip Broad, of the British Resident Minister's Office in Bari (Italy) in October 1944 that the broadcast by the BBC of a speech by the Greek Minister of Propaganda, Georgios Kartalis, in which he made territorial claims upon Albania

> " . . has had particularly unfortunate repercussions in Albania", (29)

was contemptuously dismissed by the Deputy Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Orme Sargent, with the comment:

> "We can, I feel, face with equanimity the unfortunate repercussions in Albania". (29)

* * * * * * * * * * *

Their common view that a genuinely independent post-war Albania was "impracticable" led both the British Foreign Office and the US State Department firmly to oppose the setting up of any Albanian government-in-exile. This would undoubtedly have brought embarrassing demands for Albania's recognition as an Allied nation, and such recognition could not but present acute difficulties for the post-war plans of London and Washington with regard to Albania.

William Knight of the British Foreign Office commented on Zog's letter of September 29th, 1941:

> "This is an attempt by King Zog to force the issue and it must clearly be resisted. . . We do not recognise him as anything more than a private individual, and we have hitherto firmly declined to be drawn into any commitment regarding the future of Albania. . .
>
> We have decided to keep our hands absolutely free as regards the future of the Balkans, and it is impossible to say whether there

will be a place for an Albanian State in post-war Europe". (30)

Churchill, however, demurred at signing the reply to Zog drafted for him by the Foreign Office, saying:

"I should like to be a little more friendly than this", (31)

and baulked again at the revised draft:

"Why, this is even stiffer than the last". (32)

Foreign Secretary Eden wrote to Churchill in explanation on October 31st:

"It would be inadvisable to send a more forthcoming reply. There is no Albanian Government here to recognise and no material to form such a government, and even if there were it would be representative of nothing". (33)

Finally, a simple acknowledgement of Zog's letter was sent on November 4th.

Denis Laskey minuted on January 7th, 1943:

"The Declaration (of December 1942 - Ed.) does not mean that we recognise an independent Albanian State as now existing. . . There is no question of recognising any body of persons outside Albania as a Free Albanian Government. Albania cannot therefore become a United Nation", (34)

and on the following day:

"We should not wish to see an Albanian Government formed, since this would only complicate an already difficult position. Once the Government had been formed, we would certainly be asked to recognise it". (35)

Worried about the possibility of the formation of an Albanian government-in-exile in the United States, the Foreign Office was reassured by a letter from the British Embassy in Washington in February 1943:

"At the moment . . there is no intention on the part of the United States authorities to encourage any individual or organisation", (36)

and this reassurance was confirmed in a further report from Washington the following month after talks at the Embassy with Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the European Division of the State Department, on the question of a possible Albanian government-in-exile:

"Mr. Atherton said that the attitude of the United States Government coincided with our own". (37)

On April 30th, 1943 President Franklin Roosevelt finally wrote to Biddle in London with regard to Zog's appeal of February for the resumption of diplomatic relations:

"The resumption of diplomatic relations with King Zog would involve the recognition of an Albanian Government -in-Exile. I rather feel that it would not be appropriate to take up such a question at

this time". (38)

A British Foreign Office brief on Albania, prepared in September 1943 for Foreign Secretary Eden, affirmed:

> "We have . . so far refused to consider suggestions that Albania should be admitted to the ranks of the United Nations or even that a Free Albania Committee or other representative body should be set up. . .
> Such a move . . would certainly be strongly resented by the Greek and Yugoslav Governments"; (39)

and in the following month the Foreign Office informed the British Embassy in Washington:

> "We have at present no intention of setting up or recognising any free Albanian movement or committee". (40)

Seeing unity among Albanian exiles as presenting the "danger" of the formation of such an unwanted government-in-exile, both the British Foreign Office and the American State Department strove to foster disunity between the pro- and anti-Zog factions among the exiles. Laskey expressed this policy euphemistically in January 1943:

> "Our policy has been to try to hold the balance evenly between them". (41)

In the United States, with its much larger Albanian community, the main instrument utilised to foster the desired disunity was Kosta Çekrezi. Çekrezi had been a civil servant working for the International Control Commission until he went to the USA in 1914. There he became in 1921 Albanian Commissioner in Washington, and later Professor of History at the National University in Washington. Returning to Albania in 1925, he became first legal adviser to the US Legation in Tirana and then a newspaper proprietor. Charged with involvement in two plots against the Zog regime in 1932 and 1935 (in connection with the first of which he was given a prison sentence), he fled abroad and was eventually interned in Vichy France. Released from a concentration camp in the spring of 1941 on the intervention of the US Consul, he returned to the United States in October of that year. US Minister to Albania Herman Bernstein had described him in 1932 as

> " . . not a man of high ideals or of fixed principles"; (42)

and, according to the British Embassy in Washington, on his return to the USA in 1941 he entered the service of the US intelligence service, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS):

> "The OSS . . employ Çekrezi for certain purposes of their own". (43)

A State Department memorandum of August 1945 expressed this more diplomatically:

> "Mr. Çekrezi . . is well regarded by us and other agencies. He has been working rather closely, I think, with the OSS". (44)

The pro-Zog orientation of Vatra assisted Çekrezi to convoke, on December 25-27th, 1941 in Boston, a conference of republican Albanian-Americans at

which a rival organisation named "Free Albania" was set up. The founding conference defined its aims as

> " . . to enter into cooperation with the American Government. . .
>
> to obtain immediate recognition of a committee nominated or approved by Free Albania as an Albanian Government-in-Exile . . composed of democratic-liberal elements who will not recognise King Zog and who will work for the establishment of a liberal-democratic regime in Albania". (45)

Free Albania began to publish a weekly newspaper called "Liria" (Freedom), and its membership soon outstripped that of Vatra - 1,500 against Vatra's 300. Çekrezi became its President, and Tajar Zavalani its Vice-President and London representative.

Realising that a schism among Albanians abroad could only hinder the campaign for recognition of an Albanian government-in-exile, on April 7th, 1942 Zog issued a proclamation in which he pledged himself, after the liberation of Albania, to "urge" the people

> " . . to express again and freely its desire as to the political and social system which pleases it. We will obey its decisions. . . I therefore call all of you to a sacred unity in our decisive battle for a Free Albania". (46)

In July 1942 Sir Edward Boyle, Chairman of the Balkan Committee in London, wrote to Faik Konica (then President of Vatra), Kosta Çekrezi (President of Free Albania) and Fan Noli urging them to form a "united front" which could

> " . . approach the State Department in Washington and ask for recognition under the terms of the Atlantic Charter", (47)

asking them, at the same time, to

> " . . carefully consider whether they should . . ask the Americans to be prepared to take a Mandate for Albania after the war". (48)

At its annual conference later the same month, Vatra endorsed a policy of

> " . . working for a united front under the titular leadership of King Zog". (49)

In December 1942 Noli wrote to Anton Logoreci - now associated with Free Albania - in London, pleading:

> "I urge you and your friends to patch up differences with King Zog as the lesser evil until the next Peace Conference and join Albanian United Front, which is the only way of helping both Albania and the United Nations most effectively". (50)

Noli described Çekrezi as

> " . . an irresponsible, unprincipled, unscrupulous juggler. .

Now represents a negligible, misinformed minority in America and can be taken seriously as a champion of Albanian republicanism only by people who have no sense of humour". (51)

In April 1943 Zog repeated his pledge of the previous year:

"As soon as our territory is completely freed, a National Assembly elected freely and democratically by the Albanian people will at once be summoned to decide the political and social regime of the new Albania. . .

I am ready to collaborate with all Albanians who are willing to struggle for the independence and frontiers of our homeland", (52)

and in the following months sought to strengthen his position by obtaining Zionist support. Sotir Martini, Zog's "Court Minister", told a representative of the Anglo-Jewish Committee in May:

"When we go back, we shall want capital. . . We want it to be international, and the Jews are international. . . We have land for a very large number of Jewish settlers. . . There are industries to be created. We have mineral wealth. . . There is an opportunity for the Jews", (53)

and Zog himself informed another representative of the committee in July:

"We would be prepared to put 150,000 hectares at the disposal of the Jews on which they could settle up to 50,000 Jewish families, i.e., approximately 200,000 Jews. They would be given full civilian rights". (54)

The Foreign Office Research Department noted in January 1944 that this offer of settlement, etc., was conditional: it would operate only

" . . if the Jews would help him to recover his throne". (55)

In an effort to win over leading members of Free Albania, Noli proposed that this organisation's Vice-President, Tajar Zavalani, should be Prime Minister of the proposed government-in-exile. (56) To this proposal Zavalani replied:

"I am still against recognition Zog and would not serve in government recognising him". (57)

Nevertheless, the campaign for a "united front" did arouse very considerable support among the rank-and-file members of Free Albania. These noted that, no matter how this organisation crawled to the US authorities, the latter showed no sign of according it any more recognition than they were prepared to give to the royalist Vatra. Under this pressure, a joint meeting of the leading committees of Free Albania resolved on April 18th, 1943 that

" . . if Albania is not admitted as a member of the United Nations within two months . ., the Organisation must accede to a United Front under the leadership of King Zog". (58)

In a letter to US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Çekrezi explained that this decision had been brought about because the organisation had

" . . lost its prestige in the eyes of its own members because, even though it had loyally collaborated with every branch of the American Government that needed its services, . . the American authorities have not made any distinction between FREE ALBANIA and such other groups and organisations which . . are paying but lip-service to the Allied cause". (59)

Consequently, there

" . . remains nothing for me but to bow to the general demand for the adherence of my Organisation to a United Front under Zog's leadership". (60)

* * * * * * * * * * * *

In Britain the narrowness and strong pro-Zog orientation of the Friends of Albania Committee led, in February 1943, to the formation of the broader organisation which had been envisaged in the letter to "The Times" of November 1940. This was the "Anglo-Albanian Association", which regarded itself as a revival of the Albanian Committee formed in London in 1913 on the initiative of Aubrey Herbert. Its chairman was Mary Herbert (Aubrey's widow), and its Secretary Sir Edward Boyle of the Balkan Committee. The Friends of Albania rejected an invitation to be associated with the new society. The British Foreign Office regarded the new society with considerable unease:

"We may have some trouble with it", (61)

minuted Laskey in April - expressing two months later particular apprehension at reports that Sylvia Pankhurst, of suffragette fame, had joined the society:

"I sincerely hope that Miss Pankhurst does not take up Albania in a big way as she may cause an incredible amount of trouble". (62)

In memoranda to the Foreign Office of August 1943 and July 1944, the organisation called for recognition of

" . . a government-in-exile". (63, 64)

* * * * * * * * * * *

As it seemed that the campaign for a "united front" of the main organisations of Albanians abroad was on the verge of success, the British Foreign Office and the American State Department sought to divert it from working for the creation of a government-in-exile to working for the formation of an "Albanian National Committee:". As Denis Laskey expressed it:

"A Government in Exile would undoubtedly give us a great deal of trouble. The same objections would not necessarily apply to a National Committee and it might be worth our while to consider recognising such a body". (65)

Accordingly, hints were dropped - particularly to the more subservient Free Albania - that an Albanian National Committee might possibly be acceptable to the British and American governments. In April 1943 Çekrezi cabled Zavalani:

"We have assurances that National Committee constituted as indicated and centred in America would obtain early recognition as government-in-exile". (66)

and Zavalani confirmed these "unofficial hints" in a letter to Elizabeth Barker of October 1943:

"Some unofficial hints let us understand that the Allied Governments would preferably recognise some sort of 'Albanian National Committee' than a regular Government". (67)

On May 4th, 1943, therefore, Zavalani wrote to Zog proposing the creation of such a National Committee, in which Free Albania would be prepared

" . . to collaborate with the followers of Your Majesty". (68)

Martini replied indignantly on behalf of Zog on the 11th, firmly rejecting the idea:

"Such a Committee must be rejected on principle . . as damaging the national interests. Its acceptance would deny to Albanians the rights they have made their own by their 26 years of national life and independence". (69)

It was against this background that, on June 26-27th, 1943, a conference of Free Albania adopted a resolution calling for collaboration with Vatra and Zog

" . . for the purpose of establishing and obtaining recognition of an Albanian Government-in-Exile". (70)

But in June 1944 the US State Department was - according to Philip Adams of the OSS - still suggesting

" . . to Vatra and Free Albania that they might wish to form a joint American Committee . . to work with the American Government", (71)

believing that such a committee might be utilised as a counter to the Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee which had been set up with the attributes of a Provisional Government in the liberated town of Permet the previous month.

On July 2nd, 1944 an agreement was finally signed between Vatra and Free Albania forming a

" . . United Front under the leadership of Zog for the duration of the war". (72)

The agreement provided for the creation in Washington of an "Albanian-American Committee" to represent jointly the two organisations in relations with the US government, its aims being

" . . to cooperate with the Allied governments", (73)

and to bring about the formation of a Provisional Government-in-Exile, one-third of the members of which would be nominated by Zog, one-third would con-

sist of republicans, and one-third would be left vacant for representatives of the guerilla forces within Albania. Zog would be required to delegate his "legal authority" to this body and to agree that he would not return to Albania until there had taken place, after Liberation,

> " . . a plebiscite to be held under the supervision of an Allied Commission". (74)

A group of London exiles - Duma, Logoreci and Zavalani - were instructed to negotiate with Zog: if he did not agree to the conditions laid down, the "united front" would be formed without his participation. As Zavalani informed the Foreign Office, Zog would not agree to the conditions. (75)

On July 22nd, 1944 the British Embassy in Washington informed the Foreign Office that the US State Department was now

> " . . disposed to encourage such a committee" (76)

as that proposed in the Vatra-Free Albania agreement. Before giving official encouragement to the committee, however, the State Department wished to know the opinion of the British government. Armine Dew, Acting 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, poured cold water on the idea on August 15th:

> "Until we can get a clear picture of the way things are going to develop in Albania itself, it would in our view be a mistake to promote any Albanian National Committee or government in exile". (77)

But the Albanian-American Committee set up on July 2nd, 1944 had, before the end of that month, abandoned any idea of working to form a government-in-exile. By October an intelligence report was stating:

> "The cooperating organisations now consider that these proposals are dead". (78)

1. A: M1211/15/875.01/405.
2. A: M1211/15/875.00/8-3043.
3. "Dielli", November 28th, 1942; p. 1.
4. A: M1211/15/875.00/542, 552.
   M1211/15/875.01/427, 475, 483, 490, 500, 503, 518, 524, 527, 537.
   B: FO371/37136/52/3661; FO371/37137/52/R7962; FO371/37137/61/R524.
5. B: FO371/37136/52/R1489.
6. B: FO371/37138/61/R568.
7. B: FO371/37136/52/R2783.
8. B: FO371/37137/52/R4772.
9. B: FO371/37135/39/R39.
10. B: ibid.
11. B: FO371/37135/39/R1753.
12. B: ibid.
13. B: FO371/43553/39/R14615.
14. B: FO371/37136/52/R463.
15. B: FO371/37136/52/R52
16. B: FO371/37137/52/R5945.
17. A: 59/2051/711.75/20.
18. A: 84/5/710.
19. A: ibid.
20. B: FO371/37137/52/R9176.

21. B: FO371/37147/3972/R5616.
22. B: ibid.
23. A: M1211/15/875.01/554.
24. B: FO371/43553/39/R15933.
25. A: M1211/15/875.01/552.
26. A: ibid.
27. A: M1211/15/875.91/553.
28. B: FO371/43569/11507/R16085.
29. B: ibid.
30. B: FO371/29711/111/R8687.
31. B: FO371/29711/111/R9565.
32. B: ibid.
33. B: ibid.
34. B: FO371/37137/61/R428.
35. B: FO371/37136/52/R259.
36. B: FO371/37136/52/R2093.
37. B: FO371/37136/52/R2902.
38. A: 59/2051/751.75/20.
39. B: FO371/37144/1067/R10356.
40. B: FO371/37137/52/R9564.
41. B: FO371/37138/61/R428.
42. A: M1211/8/875.00/353.
43. B: FO371/33109/390/R5733.
44. A: 59/2051/711.75114/2.
45. A: M1211/15/875.01/527.
46. A: 226/22104.
47. A: ibid.
48. A: ibid.
49. A: 226/21485.
50. B: FO371/37136/52/R93.
51. B: ibid.
52. B: FO371/37136/52/R3231.
53. B: FO371/37138/61/R4820.
54. B: ibid.
55. B: FO371/43559/616/R1219.
56. B: FO371/37136/52/R2812.
57. B: FO371/37136/52/R3851.
58. A: M1211/15/875.01/514.
59. A: ibid.
60. A: ibid.
61. B: FO371/37136/52/R3099.
62. B: ibid.
63. B: FO371/37137/52/R7909.
64. B: FO371/43555/71/R11225.
65. B: FO371/37137/52/R7899.
66. B: FO371/37136/52/R3851.
67. B: FO371/37137/52/R10955.
68. B: FO371/37137/52/R4848.
69. B: ibid.
70. B: FO371/37137/52/R6924.
71. A: M1211/15/875.00/9-544.
72. A: 208/267.
73. B: FO371/43558/571/R13044.
74. A: 84/5/710.
75. B: FO371/43563/2179/R8668.
76. B: FO371/43558/571/R11805.
77. B: ibid.
78. A: 84/5/710.

1942-1944:

17

SOLDIERS AND "NATIONALISTS"

"Let him who wishes to be deceived, be deceived" - Plautus

The National Liberation Front

On September 15th, 1942 the Conference of Peza, convened on the initiative of the Communist Party of Albania, established a broad National Liberation Front (NLF), designed to draw into active and united participation in the War of National Liberation all patriotic elements, irrespective of their political views. Some local chieftains who had been carrying on guerilla warfare against the Italian occupation forces - such as Myslim Peza, active in the Peza district, and the Bektashi abbot Baba Faja, active in the Martanesh district - participated in the conference and were elected to leading positions in the General Council of the NLF. The British agent Abaz Kupi also took part and was similarly elected to the General Council. However, as Julian Amery (later a British Liaison Officer at Kupi's headquarters) points out:

> "Abaz Kupi alone preserved his independence. He refused to admit political commissars among his forces and treated those who were sent to him as no more than the Council's liaison officers". (1)

Later the same month a rival organisation, claiming to be a non-communist "nationalist" organisation, was set up in the shape of the "Balli Kombëtar" (BK)(National Front), under the leadership of Midhat Frashëri. Frashëri, son of the famous writer Abdyl Frashëri, had been Albanian delegate to the Peace Conference in 1919 and to the League of Nations in 1921, and Minister to Athens in 1923-26. The BK was formed from what Amery calls

> " . . conservative elements". (2)

A prominent part in the organisation of the BK was taken by the Zjarri (Fire) trotskyist group, led by Andrea Zisi.

On July 4th, 1943 the General Council of the NLF met at Labinot and set up a General Staff of the National Liberation Army (now 10,000 strong) with Spiro Moisiu as Commander, Enver Hoxha as Commissar, and the following members: Ramadan Çitaku, Ymer Dishnica, Baba Faja, Mustafa Gjinishi, Abaz Kupi, Haxhi Lleshi, Sejfulla Maleshova, Dali Ndreu, Myslim Peza and Bedri Spahiu.

The Allied Liaison Officers

In April 1943, in what was known as "Operation Consensus", a group of what came to be called "British Liaison Officers" (BLOs) was, after receiving some instruction on Albania from Margaret Hasluck, dropped in Greece with instructions to infiltrate into Albania and make contact with the National Liberation Front. The mission consisted of Major Neil ("Bill") McLean and Lieutenant David Smiley.

Denis Laskey, 3rd. Secretary at the British Foreign Office, commented on the news that the mission had made successful contact:

"The establishment of a British mission in Albania is a most useful step. It should greatly improve our knowledge of the situation". (3)

The first reports of the mission expressed some surprise at the apparent political orientation of the partisans:

"Albanian guerillas are as active and as anti-Italian as had been reported. . .

The first clandestine papers to be read cheered for the Soviet Union, England and America in that order. . .

The one major surprise . . is the pro-Russian sympathies of the guerrillas. . . The clandestine papers mention the Albanian Communist Party, political commissars, the people's army, clenched fists, partisans and other Red trappings. The partisans wear a 5-pointed red star as a badge. . .

The anti-Italian activities of the Albanian guerillas are incessant, considerable and susceptible of great expansion; coordination and supplies are lacking". (4)

In August 1943 four further British military missions were dropped in Albania, led respectively by mountaineer Major Harold Tilman, by Major Gerry Field, by Major George Seymour and by Lieutenant Peter Kemp.

In October 1943 a higher-level British military mission arrived at NLF headquarters, led by Brigadier-General Edmund ("Trotsky") Davies with Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Nicholls as his Chief-of-Staff. About the same time a subsidiary mission consisting of Major Richard Riddle and Captain Anthony Simcox was dropped near Dibra to make contact with guerilla bands operating in that area.

Regarding Albania as within their "sphere of influence", the British authorities did not encourage the American intelligence service to make independent contacts in the country. As Earl Brennan and Philip Adams, of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the precursor of the Central Intelligence Service (CIA), complained to the State Department in March 1943:

"The OSS had themselves attempted to communicate with the guerilla chieftains in Albania through the British . . without success. . . Mr. Brennan said that he was convinced that the British are attempting to keep us out of Albania as far as our intelligence activities are concerned". (5)

Nevertheless, in November 1943 an OSS mission, led by Captain Thomas Stefani, an American-Albanian ex-policeman, arrived in Albania and made contact with Skënder Muço, a Balli Kombëtar leader in the Vlora area, proceeding at the end of April 1944 to NLF headquarters at Helmës, in Skrapar district.

In this latter month (April 1944) a new British mission headed by Major Alan Palmer was dropped to NLF headquarters.

In August 1944 a Soviet military mission, headed by a Major Ivanov, arrived in Albania, accredited to the NLF. George Clutton of the British Foreign Office commented the following month:

"We should be much happier if there were no Russian mission in Albania". (6)

On November 4th, 1943 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill made a statement in the House of Commons on the Albanian guerillas:

> "Thousands of Albanian guerillas are now fighting in their mountains for the freedom and independence of their country. . .
>
> The British Liaison Officers who are with the guerillas have paid high tribute to their fighting qualities. We look to the Albanians to play their part in accordance with their ancient warlike traditions in the future military developments in the Mediterranean area. The policy of His Majesty's Government remains as explained by my right honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his statement of 17th December, 1942; that is to say, we wish to see Albania freed from the Axis yoke and restored to her independence. The frontiers will of course be considered at the Peace Settlement". (7)

The German Occupation

On September 3rd, 1943 Allied troops successfully invaded the Italian mainland, and five days later Italy surrendered. Although the Italian commander-in-chief in Albania ordered his troops to hand over their weapons to the Germans - 70,000 of whom poured into the country to take the place of the Italians - some 15,000 Italian officers and men surrendered to the Albanian Army of National Liberation, and 1,500 of them joined the partisans to form the Antonio Gramsci Battalion of the 1st. Brigade.

In October the Germans convened a puppet "National Assembly" in Tirana, which proclaimed the separation of Albania from Italy and set up a "Supreme Regency Council" as "Head of State". The four Regents were drawn from the four principal religious communities:

1) Mehdi Frashëri, a former Turkish Pasha in Egypt and Lebanon and a Prime Minister under the Zog regime, from the Bektashi Muslim community;

2) Fuad Dibra, from the Sunni Muslim community;

3) Father Anton Harapi, head of the Franciscan Order, from the Catholic Christian community;

4) Lef Nosi, a leading member of Balli Kombëtar, from the Orthodox Christian community.

At the outset, the British Liaison Officers had little understanding of the nature of guerrilla warfare, that is, the military strategy and tactics required to operate successfully against an initially more powerful enemy. This is clear from their early, somewhat contemptuous, reports. For example:

> "The Albanians . . have an inveterate tendency to run away during a battle. . .
>
> Their total ignorance of modern warfare makes the Albanians almost useless as soldiers. . .
>
> Unhappily the partisans . . have developed swollen head and think along the lines of grandiose action by their army . ., refusing to believe that such action is beyond their strength.
>
> The presence of political commissars with each partisan leader also militates against their efficiency. . .
>
> The ill-organised and ill-supplied Albanians would only commit suicide if they stood up to the Germans". (8)

According to Hoxha, in December 1943, when the Partisans were temporarily in a difficult situation, Brigadier-General Davies advised him:

> "Your forces have been routed. Now there is nothing for it except for us to leave and you to surrender. . . You have no hope; you have lost the war; you are encircled and are left with only two courses: either to kill yourselves or to surrender". (9)

British military intelligence reports confirm Hoxha's statement that (on January 14th., 1944 at Kostenja)

> "DAVIES asked to be taken prisoner" (10)

by a Balli Kombëtar band headed by Aziz Biçaku, who handed him over to the Germans. Philip Broad, of the British Resident Minister's office in Bari, confirms Hoxha's offer to exchange Davies for three captured German women, describing it as

> " . . this extremely generous action on HOXHA's part". (11)

Hoxha states that

> " . . the German command replied that when they asked General Davies whether he wanted to be exchanged, he had not accepted the proposal" (12)

Davies's own description of his next Christmas, that of 1944, when he was in detention at Colditz, is perhaps significant of his attitude:

> "It was a better Christmas than the last, when we were struggling against a blizzard on top of a mountain with no food and no prospects". (13)

Davies's Chief-of-Staff, Lt.-Col. Nicholls, did not surrender, but died in February 1944 near Tirana. He was posthumously awarded the George Cross.

The NLF and the BK

During the first months after the foundation of Balli Kombëtar, the CPA accepted this organisation as the non-communist "nationalist" organisation it claimed to be, and made every effort to win it over to a united struggle against the occupation forces. In January 1943 Hoxha was saying:

> "The Party has begun talks with Balli Kombëtar. . . We have hopes that the final result will be a positive one", (14)

and in February he was reporting to the Central Committee of the CPA:

> "Our task is to have discussions with them (BK - Ed.) to persuade them to collaborate in direct struggle against the invader". (15)

But in this month the Italian Governor of Albania, Francesco Jacomini, appointed Maliq Bushati, a leading member of BK, as puppet "Prime Minister" of Albania, and on March 15th. Ali Këlcyra, another leading member, signed an agreement with the Commander-in-Chief of the Italian occupation forces, Renzo

Dalmazzo, under which BK undertook to prevent any hostile action against Italian troops and to assist them in maintaining "law and order".

Nevertheless the CPA continued to hold that there were in the ranks of BK many honest nationalists who genuinely wished to take part in the struggle for national liberation, and in July 1943 the GC of the NLF approved a last attempt to persuade the organisation to renounce its collaboration with the enemy. As a result, a meeting was held between representatives of the NLF and of BK at Tapiza, near Tirana, on July 26th. and a second meeting at Mukje, near Kruja, on August 1st-2nd. The NLF delegation was led by Ymer Dishnica and included Mustafa Gjinishi and Abaz Kupi; the BK delegation was led by Midhat Frasheri. At this second meeting the NLF delegation agreed to the formation of a "Committee for the Salvation of Albania", composed of equal numbers of representatives of the two organisations, to replace the GC of the NLF as the supreme directing organ of the national liberation struggle and with the attributes of a provisional government.

The Central Committee of the CPA rejected the Mukje Agreement as one which

" . . completely violates our political line", (16)

and by the beginning of September 1943 Hoxha was reporting to the 2nd National Liberation Conference, held at Labinot on September 4-9th:

> "The National Liberation Front and the CPA, which leads it, . . have tried in every way and made sacrifices to persuade Balli Kombetar to join the war against the occupiers for the liberation of our people. But Balli Kombetar joined in the war against the people, against the Front, against the CPA; Balli Kombetar, or Balli Tradhetar (the Treacherous Front - Ed.), has united with the occupiers. Thus they have burned their bridges. We will fight them mercilessly, as the traitors and collaborators with the occupiers that they are". (17)

Balli Kombetar through British and American Eyes

In the books written about their experiences in Albania, the former British Liaison Officers' assessment of Balli Kombetar is naturally coloured by their political views. McLean, for example, became a Conservative MP after the war, while Amery - whose openly pro-Nazi brother John was, after the war, sentenced to death in Britain for treason - became a Conservative MP and Minister, and Kemp had fought in the Spanish civil war on the side of the fascists.

In his book "Illyrian Venture", Davies does not mention the collaboration of Balli Kombetar with the occupation forces - even though, as will be shown, he denounced this in the strongest terms in his report of December 1943. He refers only to its "inactivity":

> "Balli Kombetar (National Front) . . were not very active against the Germans. . .
> Balli was sitting on the fence, hoping to be safe whether the Axis or the Allies came through safely". (18)

Tilman, in his "Where Men and Mountains Meet", is somewhat more frank:

"Balli Kombetar . . preferred to husband its resources until the

war was over. Under an outward show of resistance they were prepared to temporise with the Axis powers. . .

Their only ambition was to keep themselves alive and their homes unburnt until the war ended, when they naively hoped for the coming of what they called a British 'political' mission. . . And, of course, since the Germans were opposed to Communism, it was only natural if occasionally they gave them a hand against the NLF". (19)

In his book "Sons of the Eagle", however, Amery does not scruple to place the blame for the clashes between the forces of the NLF and those of BK on the desire of the NLF leadership for "the liquidation of their political rivals":

"Enver Hoxha . . determined henceforth to devote the greater part of the energies of the NLF to the liquidation of their political rivals". (20)

Nevertheless, he admits the collaboration of BK, but places the term in inverted commas to express his view that this was justified and so should not be regarded as genuine collaboration:

"The Ballist leaders began, first surreptitiously and then more openly, to visit their friends in the Tirana Government and to seek their help to defend Albania from Communism. The Germans were quick to seize this opportunity of diverting Albanian energies into internecine channels; they . . accordingly made sufficient arms available through the Tirana Government to re-equip the Ballist bands and send them back into the mountains as counter-guerillas". (21)

In fact, the assessment of the NLF that Balli Kombëtar had become a traitorous, collaborationist organisation was amply confirmed at the time by numerous secret reports from British Liaison Officers on the spot. On leaving Albanias in November 1943 on the completion of his first mission, McLean stated:

"BALLI KOMBËTAR are ready to collaborate with the GERMANS. . . They intend to do the minimum possible fighting with their armed forces. . . The majority are drifting into collaboration with the GERMANS. From the military point of view supporting them would not yield any practical results". (22)

Davies, in his first report, dated November 19th,1942, recommended the continuation of official contact with, and military support for, Balli Kombëtar:

"I cannot recommend exclusive support of NLF at this stage. I hold a signed agreement from Balli Kombetar that they will fight the Germans, and until I have proof that this agreement is false, I propose to continue contacting the Balli Kombëtar Council". (23)

although even then admitting:

"Balli Kombëtar state that they disapprove of the pro-German Government, but the impression given me after a long talk is that they are associated with it and the general opinion in Tirana and the country is that the two are closely associated". (24)

On November 11th, 1943 Davies had an interview with Hoxha at his headquarters at Biza and asked the NLF General Council, through him, to cancel orders to destroy BK in view of the undertaking its leaders had given him (Davies) that they would fight the Germans. However, in the words of an SOE intelligence report:

> " . . the Council refused to comply, accusing Balli Kombëtar of bad faith and collaboration". (25)

But by the time of his second report, dated December 17th, 1943, Davies had come to accept the NLF's assessment of BK and consequently recommended a change of policy:

> "Now recommend a change. Situation developed recently so much imperative now denounce Regency Council collectively and by name. Also BALLKOM. . .
>
> All are cooperating with Germans, who are exploiting them with arms in large quantities, setting them to guard main roads, police towns and lead patrols, thus freeing German troops.
>
> All recent actions fought by NLF have met German-BALLKOM bodies, well-armed, German-trained. . . Have ample proof closest collaboration.
>
> BALLKOM . . promised me fight Germans actively, but not one action have they fought this past month, although there have been many chances for them to resist Germans. . .
>
> BALLKOM . . now publish expensive ambitious newspaper . .: obviously German set-up. . .
>
> I consider the ALLIES' attitude should be made public forthwith, showing Quislings, traitors and non-resisters to Germans will receive appropriate punitive treatment from the Allies in due course. . . I recommend an open declaration for the NLF". (26)

In June 1944 Lieutenant-Colonel Norman Wheeler, who had been a BLO with the NLF in southern Albania, reported:

> "The TIRANA Government and BALLKOM are collaborating actively with the GERMANS", (27)

and Captain Ian Black, a Naval Liaison Officer with the Balkan Air Force, was, in January 1945, even more blunt:

> "The real bad lads were Balli Kombëtar, who are, I think, similar in habits to the Yugoslav Ustachi. They are a mixed bag of Albanian criminals and Quislings, and create terror and havoc wherever they roam". (28)

The secret reports - to London and Washington respectively - of British and American military intelligence completely confirm the NLF's view that Balli Kombëtar was engaged in collaboration and treachery:

in September 1943:

> "BALLI KOMBETAR . . are obstructing the efforts of the guerillas by informing the ITALIANS of their plans". (29)

"Balli Kombëtar are putting every obstacle in the way of the Partisans, preventing demolition of vital points. They even help the Germans to repair those already damaged. The leaders are definite quislings". (30)

in November 1943:

"The political leaders of Balli Kombëtar are evidently collaborating with the Germans". (31)

in December 1943:

"One hundred Germans with the collaboration of four hundred Balli Kombëtar captured POGRADEC". (32)

"The Senior BLO found Midhat FRASHERI definitely pro-German". (33)

"According to the Senior BLO, the Germans are helped in their strict control of the roads by what he calls 'Albanian traitors', drawn from BALLKOM circles. These serve as police and so release German troops for more military purposes. . .

Midhat Frashëri's letter . . pleads that 'Albania . . must for the time being cease any kind of war against German forces. BALLKOM', he begged us to understand, 'collaborated with the Germans only because it had no other course'". (34)

in January 1944:

"The entire (Korça - Ed.) area is in GERMAN / BALLKOM control" (35)

"The BLO reports token arms sales made by the Germans to Ballkom in BERAT". (36)

"There is now ample proof of the collaboration of BALLI KOMBETAR bands with the Germans. . .

The Germans are using BALLI KOMBETAR members as patrols, as guards for the roads, and as police in the towns. . .

BALLI KOMBETAR is at present fighting with our enemies and against the only firmly anti-German party, the National Liberation Movement. Of this there is not the slightest shadow of doubt". (37)

"BALLI KOMBETAR have warned members of the NLF that they must return home by 25th January under pain of condemnation as traitors". (38)

in February 1944:

"There is clear evidence that in South and Central ALBANIA members of BALLI KOMBETAR are fighting with the Germans against the partisans. . . There is no doubt that the Germans derive considerable assistance from BALLI both in their drives against the partisans and in the policing and administration of cleared areas". (39)

"BALLI KOMBETAR are continuing to assist the GERMANS in their operations against the partisans. After a recent drive BALLI KOMBETAR bands . . pillaged and destroyed the villages of the SHEPR valley, including our Liaison Officers' HQ". (40)

in March 1944:

"The name BALLI KOMBETAR is linked with Collaboration. . .
BALLI KOMBETAR continues to benefit from GERMAN drives and assistance. . . Up to the present time, BALLI KOMBETAR have shown no active signs of resistance". (41)

in April 1944:

"Many of its (BK's - Ed.) leaders joined the new (puppet - Ed.) administration, and the rank and file seem to have adopted an attitude of watchful neutrality. . .
Ballkom . . is . . open to strong suspicion of pro-Germanism, and the evidence for this charge is quite imposing. . . Several of its leading members have served under the Germans, and its press and propaganda literature stigmatise the Partisans as alien-dominated communists. Ballkom troops have been known to join the Germans in fighting the Partisans, and Ballkom admits that its military staff has sentenced to death and shot men caught helping the Partisans. . .
Skënder Muço . . regretted collaboration with the Germans, but thought it the only way to break the Partisan movement, which he regards as his first enemy". (42)

in May 1944:

"The NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT . . is at present the only organisation which is fighting the Germans. . .
BALLI KOMBETAR . . is a term applied generally to collaborators and supporters of the (puppet - Ed.) government". (43)

in June 1944:

"The Ballists have taken sides against the Partisans". (44)

"In the south they (BK - Ed.) have become purely government militia. In the centre and north they . . will align with the government armed forces against the Partisans. Their name as collaborationists is too well-known for existence as a coherent party". (45)

in July 1944:

"In none of their (BK's - Ed.) leaflets or printed statements received to date have they condemned the German Army of Occupation, nor have they advocated action against the Germans. . .
The material . . is merely another example of the similarity of Balli Kombëtar propaganda to leaflets known to have been realised by the German Armed Forces in Albania". (46)

"There no longer exists any doubt regarding the collaboration between the Ballists and the Germans. . . Everything that may weaken the Partisans is supported and subscribed to. The Ballists offer

full cooperation in fighting the Partisans. . .

Formations of Albanians organised and equipped by the Balli Kombëtar with the aid of the Germans have fought openly with German army units in engagements against NLF Partisans. This working relationship of the Ballists and the Germans has the approval of the Central Government at Tirana. Documents carried by Ballist 'gendarmes' establish clearly this triangular relationship of the Germans, the Ballists and the Quisling Government". (47)

in August 1944:

"The Germans are still using Balli Kombëtar as informers and, in small groups, as military troops. Balli Kombëtar are officially accepted by the Germans and accompany them in attacks upon a vicinity, being left as a holding force after it has been captured.

Since the German occupation, the situation has been such that a line of demarcation cannot be drawn between Balli Kombëtar and the Government". (48)

in November 1944:

"The party (BK - Ed.) . . collaborated with the Germans to fight the NLF. . . Balli Kombëtar had no intention of fighting the Germans. . . These leaders of BK still hope that the British will disarm the Communists and call upon the old guard to govern Albania". (49)

"The Ballists, who have as a group been collaborating, are fleeing with the Germans". (50)

in February 1945:

"There was at this time the closest possible collaboration between BALLI KOMBETAR and the Germans at all levels. . . At BERAT the BALLKOM were responsible for issuing all passes. . . They provided the guards at all traffic control points at the approaches to the town, as well as providing armed patrols within the town". (51)

British Policy towards the NLF and BK

In 1943 the British Chiefs of Staff envisaged the liberation of Albania as being brought about primarily by the action of Allied forces. So they declared in a memorandum dated January 3rd, 1943 and entitled "American-British Strategy in 1943", which foresaw

" . . when the time is ripe, the despatch of Allied land and sea forces to act as a rallying-point for offensive action of insurgent forces in this area". (52)

Accepting this strategy, the British Foreign Office was unfavourably disposed towards the large-scale development of the national liberation struggle within Albania prior to the landing of Anglo-American troops in the country.

When, for example, the Senior British Liaison Officer in Albania appealed in July 1943 for broadcasts to encourage the Albanian struggle, Foreign Office

official Roger Allen commented:

> "PWE (the Political Warfare Executive - Ed.) should try to bring about conditions in the Balkans in which . . the civil population should remain quiet . . pending a general uprising against the Germans when we are in a position to support it". (53)

Acting 1st Secretary Pierson Dixon had written in March:

> "A general revolt . . at present would be premature. The time for a general call to arms will come when Allied troops are about to launch a full-scale attack on the Balkans". (54)

Consequently, faced with a similar appeal to that of July, Dixon replied in September:

> "We should wait and see first what happens to the Italians". (55)

In accordance with this policy, the Foreign Office found the National Liberation Front objectionable not merely because it was led by the Communist Party but also because it was very - and increasingly - active against the German occupation forces. On the other hand, it found Balli Kombetar quite acceptable: not only was it politically conservative, but it was quite inactive against the Germans. Support for BK, therefore, would - or so it was hoped - enable Britain, in collaboration with these elements, to ensure that the post-war regime in Albania was conservative and dependent upon Britain for its survival.

The policy adopted by the Foreign Office was, therefore, to aid principally the pseudo-nationalists (of the BK, for example). Only gradually and reluctantly - under pressure from the military - was aid also sent to the forces of the NLF. Alexander Kirk, US Political Adviser to Allied Headquarters in Caserta, summed up this policy in a report to the State Department of November 1944:

> "Aid in the form of gold or promises of support were mostly given to the so-called nationalist leaders who in the past had been the tribal chiefs, politicians and rulers of the country. The policy of aiding any groups who fought Germans was gradually applied (perhaps reluctantly at first) to the NLF's Army of National Liberation". (56)

When, in his first report of November 1943, Davies recommended continued contact with and support for BK, the Foreign Office hastened to declare:

> "We agree with his recommendations and will be guided by them until he suggests a change". (57)

But Davies's second report of December, which recommended denunciation of BK and other pseudo-nationalists as traitors, came as a shock to the Foreign Office, which succeeded in securing the rejection of these new recommendations but was forced by the military arguments to endorse a policy of aiding the forces of the NLF. A meeting of the Special Operations Committee on December 31st, 1943, although admitting that

> "Balli Kombëtar <u>are</u> collaborating", (58)

resolved:

> " . . 1) that it was undesirable in principle to declare in favour of NLF and break with Ballkom . ., but that His Majesty's Government should state that assistance would be given to any bands actually fighting the Germans; 2) that such assistance should be given". (59)

Of course, in order to sustain the policy of aiding BK, it was necessary that this organisation should be presented to the public as a genuine "nationalist" organisation which was actively fighting the German forces. In October 1943 the British Liaison Officers in Albania complained

> " . . that the London broadcast about three weeks ago calling Balli Kombëtar the chief movement of Albanian national liberation and praising Midhat Frasheri, caused the worst possible reaction in Albania. The NLF are losing confidence in the BLOs as they consider us the source of these lies despite our denial". (60)

Yet three months later, in January 1944, the Political Warfare Executive, while admitting that

> " . . BALLI KOMBETAR bands sometimes invoke German assistance against the Partisans (NLF) and even join in the anti-Partisan drives", (61)

was directing the BBC not to refer to this in its broadcasts:

> "Do not denounce BALLI KOMBETAR . . by name or as an organisation, or assert that they are collaborating.
> Do not suggest that the NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT . . is the only body which is resisting . . the Germans, or that it alone is eligible for our support". (62)

A similar directive four months later, in May, admitted that

> "BALLI KOMBETAR . . is a term applied generally to collaborators and supporters of the Government", (63)

but went on to say only:

> " . . BALLI KOMBETAR may now be mentioned as 'a collection of would-be Nationalists who have taken the wrong path'. . . Do not generally denounce it". (64)

The same propaganda line was continued in a directive of June 1944:

> "Do not attribute collaborationism specifically to BALLI KOMBETAR as such. . .
> Balli Kombëtar . . should still not be denounced as a Party". (65)

Meanwhile, on May 22nd, 1944, Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee had presented the same false picture to the House of Commons:

> "Guerilla activity is fairly widespread in Albania. . .
> There are three main organisatioins. The National Liberation

> Movement is the most active. It is predominantly Left Wing and its operations are mostly confined to Southern Albania. . . Balli Kombëtar or National Front (is) a more loosely-knit body of Albanian Nationalists". (66)

Captain Vandeleur Robinson, of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, commented on the final sentence of Attlee's statement in a letter to 2nd Secretary Edward Rose:

> "I hope the Partisans will not take this to mean that we are sending arms to BALLI KOMBETAR". (67)

Against which Rose wrote:

> "But we are!" (68)

On July 13th, 1944, however, a peremptory demand came from British military intelligence

> " . . to attack collaboration of Balli Kombëtar as a token that we are not by our silence supporting them in opposing the NLF. Request your immediate concurrence". (69)

On the following day, July 14th, therefore, the directive finally went to the BBC:

> "BALLI KOMBETAR is to be named as a collaborationist organisation and denounced as such". (70)

In the United States, however, the propaganda policy of implying that Balli Kombëtar was a genuine nationalist organisation which was actively fighting the Germans continued until the very eve of Liberation. A press statement issued by the State Department on November 15th, 1944 declared:

> "There are two or three resistance groups now fighting in Albania". (71)

Of course, the leadership of the NLF could not but quickly become aware of British official policy. By October 1943, Hoxha wrote later,

> " . . the British had dropped us nothing, apart from a few hundred rifles, a very small quantity of ammunition, and some used clothing - just enough to be able to say: 'You are being sent something'. However, those few rifles that we received from them quickly turned into scrap-iron, because the ammunition for them ran out. . .
>
> The policy of the British was clear to us. They were organising reaction against us . . so that the British forces would intervene as 'liberators' in the liberation of Albania and the new Ballist quislings would take power". (72)

* * * * * * * * * * *

A number of British agents had entered Albania in April 1941 along with Oakley Hill - among them Muharrem Bajraktari, Mustafa Gjinishi, Abaz Kupi and Gani Kryeziu.

Muharrem Bajraktari

With the dispersal of Oakley Hill's "expedition", Muharrem Bajraktari went to his own district of Luma, where he built up a guerilla band. In February 1943, however, the US Consulate-General in Istanbul was reporting to Washington:

> "In June 1942 MUHARREM BAJRAKTARI went to Montenegro in order to find General MIHAJLOVICH and discuss with him the question of concerted action. He did not find General MIHAJLOVICH, but he found one of his officers, with whom he reached an agreement for collaboration". (73)

But Bajraktari, described by Allied intelligence in October 1943 as

> " . . unstable and probably slightly mad", (74)

remained, like Mihaijlovich, inactive against the forces of occupation. Numerous British intelligence reports testified to this. For example:

in October 1943:

> "Bajraktari refused to fight anybody". (75)

in November 1943:

> "Muharrem Bajraktari is inactive and hostile to the NLF" (76)

and in February 1944:

> "Colonel MUHARREM BAJRAKTARI . . possesses an unbroken record of guerilla inactivity". (77)

But already in his report which reached London in December 1943, McLean was speaking of Bajraktari's contacts with the Germans:

> "Colonel MUHARREM BAJRAKTARI . . is reported to have contacts with the GERMANS and certainly has not yet fought against them", (78)

and by the late autumn of 1944 British intelligence reports were asserting that he was moving into collaboration:

> "Muharrem Bajraktari is now more inclined to support the Germans than to collaborate with the NLF". (79)

> "Muharrem Bajraktari of Luma . ., after playing a waiting game for five years, appears now to be definitely committed to the Germans", (80)

and was preparing to make a last stand against the advance of the NLF forces along with his friend Gjon Markagjoni, the Catholic-fascist chieftain of Mirdita - described in a US intelligence report of October 1943 as

> " . . pro-German and in their pay"; (81)

> "Muharrem Bajraktari and Gjon Markagjoni . . are reported to be determined to oppose the NLF with force in the protection of their own areas of influence and, with this end in view, are said to have

asked help from the collaborationists and the Germans". (82)

And in his final report, dated November 1944, McLean declared:

"MUHARREM BAJRAKTARI . . had an undefined agreement with the GERMANS whereby he refrained from attacking them on condition that they did not interfere in his area". (83)

Mustafa Gjinishi

As we have said, following the dispersion of Oakley Hill's expedition, Mustafa Gjinishi went south to Korça, where he joined with the Communists. According to Hoxha, his connection with British intelligence was discovered and he admitted that he

" . . had 'collaborated' with them". (84)

He was pardoned but, as British intelligence confirmed, was

" . . killed by the Germans in an ambush about August 26th". (85)

Abaz Kupi

As we have said, on the dissolution of Oakley Hill's expedition in April 1941, Abaz Kupi went to the Kruja district, where he had been a commander in Zog's Gendarmerie, and formed a guerilla band. He attended the Peza Conference in September 1942 and was elected to the General Council of the National Liberation Front. In July 1943 he was appointed a member of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army.

In August 1943 he was one of the NLF representatives at the Mukje meeting with representatives of Balli Kombëtar. Following the repudiation by the Communist Party of the agreement signed at this meeting, he declined to attend the 2nd National Liberation Conference in early September.

On September 18th, 1943 Kupi announced the formation of the "National Zogite Party", and on November 21st this was formally established at a conference of monarchists held at Zall-Herr under the name of "Legaliteti" (Legality), with Kupi as Chairman. The declared aim of the new organisation was the restoration of a "legitimate" independent Albania as it has existed prior to the Italian invasion of April 7th, 1939, that is, with Zog restored to the throne. In the words of the founding declaration:

"Our King . . is a legitimate ruler and his legality and rule continues". (86)

Philip Broad, on the staff of the British Resident Minister's office at Bari, characterised Legaliteti to Harold Macmillan, the Resident Minister with the Allied Forces in Algiers, as follows:

"Major Kupi's party consists mainly of former officials of the Zog regime who were not given employment by the Italians, and of those members of the Albanian gendarmerie, together with a number of Army officers, who escaped to Yugoslavia with Major Kupi in 1939", (87)

adding:

> "The Legality movement is immature and is not supported by the country". (88)

After ignoring three invitations from the NLF to discuss united action against the occupation forces, on December 7th, 1943 Kupi had a meeting with Hoxha at Shëngjergj, near Tirana, at which, according to Hoxha,

> " . . he (Kupi - Ed.) insisted that we should recognise Legaliteti and the despot Zog as king". (89)

These demands were confirmed by BLO Major George Seymour:

> KUPI . . held out for full recognition of the King. . . He would not fight unless we recognised Zog", (90)

by British military intelligence:

> "Major Kupi . . has demanded that the ALLIES first recognise King ZOG before he himself fights the GERMANS", (91)

> "At a conference with Major Seymour, . . ABAZ KUPI has said that he will take no action until the Allies recognise King Zog. . . Major Seymour considers that this policy is intended as an excuse for not fighting at all", (92)

and by Julian Amery, later a BLO with Kupi:

> "He could only repeat his demands for the recognition by the Allies of King Zog". (93)

This demand was, of course, completely unacceptable to the NLF and, as Hoxha wrote later,

> "There (at Shëngjergj - Ed.) we saw that we had come to the end of the road with him (Kupi - Ed.)". (94)

Immediately after this meeting, the Presidium of the General Council of the NLF expelled Kupi from the council and from the General Staff of the National Liberation Army, and denounced Legaliteti as "a traitor organisation".

After the surrender of Brigadier-General Davies in January 1944, Kupi, as Amery relates,

> " . . bowed before the storm and disbanded most of his forces to their homes, maintaining only a bodyguard of some two hundred men. . . Meanwhile he suspended operations against the Germans". (95)

Legaliteti's inactivity against the Germans was confirmed by the Political Warfare Executive in January 1944:

> "Major Abaz Kupi . . seems at present to be inactive"; (96)

by Philip Broad in June 1944:

> "It has proved impossible so far to get KUPI to offer any open

resistance to the Germans"; (97)

and by McLean in November 1944:

"KUPI's policy at the time of our arrival (April 1944 - Ed.) was one of non-belligerence". (98)

But already by the end of 1943 this "inactivity" against the Germans had become collaboration with the Germans, as a State Department report dated November 1945 relates:

"There is reasonably good evidence from both British and American intelligence that he (Kupi - Ed.) and his followers became involved in collaboration with the Germans and the Albanian puppet regime in Tirana after October 1943. . .

1944 January: KUPI ordered all NLF Partisans to leave his area. . .

1944 March: Had not offered any resistance to the Germans since he broke with the NLF in November 1943.

1944 April: Reported to have made non-aggression pact with the Germans". (99)

This collaboration was confirmed by BLO Brigadier-General Davies in his report of December 1943:

"ZOGISTS . . are collaborating with Germans, who are exploiting them with arms in large quantities, setting them to guard main roads, police towns and lead patrols, thus freeing German troops. . . Both BALLKOM and ZOGISTS now publish expensive ambitious newspapers, obviously German set-up", (100)

and by British Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Sir Orme Sargent in September 1944:

"Abaz Kupi . . has not taken effective action against the Germans for many months. . . He has undoubtedly been in contact with members of the former puppet Governments". (101)

It was confirmed also in various British and American intelligence reports. For example:

in April 1944:

"The GERMANS . . are reputed to have made a non-aggression pact with Abaz KUPI"; (102)

in June 1944:

"Kupi's influence is local. . . Many contacts prove collaborating with Quisling Government"; (103)

in August 1944:

"Kupi's 'Movement of Law and Order' is openly collaborating with the German-sponsored Tirana Government". (104)

"Midhat Frashëri . . told Brigadier Davies that Balli Kombëtar

and Legaliteti are root and branch of the same tree". (105)

"The Zogist party of Abaz Kupi . . is seriously compromised by its unwillingness to fight the Germans and by its intimate relations with the Quisling Government". (106)

"Kupi . . is according to most recent evidence undoubtedly collaborating"; (107)

and in September 1944:

"There is evidence that Kupi has not only been in contact with members of the German-sponsored Tirana Government and its supporters, but actually has planned and worked with it". (108)

McLean's Second Mission

One of the principal recommendations made by McLean in his report of December 1943, which followed his first mission to Albania, was that every effort should be made to persuade Abaz Kupi to return to the National Liberation Front in order to serve as a "rallying point" for "nationalists":

"ABAZ KUPI . . has not yet collaborated with the AXIS. . .
It seems in our interest to ensure that there are as many non-Communists in the NLF as possible. . . ABAZ KUPI . . could possibly be persuaded to return to the NLF and thus make himself a rallying point for all those Nationalists who are prepared to fight against the GERMANS". (109)

This recommendation was accepted by the British Foreign Office and for most of the next year Abaz Kupi became the principal figure in British strategy with regard to Albania. The policy was summed up by Alexander Kirk, in a report to Washington dated November 1944, as

" . . to try to create a nationalist bloc around Major ABAZ KUPI, with whom they had been dealing since 1940. . . Such a bloc would, after successfully fighting the enemy and enjoying British support, draw off moderates from the NLF and emerge as the future government of Albania". (110)

As with the Ballists, this required that the collaborationist role of Legaliteti had to be concealed. The Political Warfare Executive instructed the BBC in January 1944:

"Do not denounce . . Major ABAZ KUPI's pro-Zog Party by name as an organisation, or assert that they are collaborating", (111)

and again in June:

"Do not connect Major AAZ KUPI and his LEGALITY Party with collaborationism". (112)

In accordance with this policy, it was decided to send a special mission to Kupi, headed by McLean (now promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel) with instructions:

"1. To reorganise and coordinate the activities of the British Missions in Geg (northern - Ed.) Albania;

2. to raise the Gegs in general, and the Zogist forces of Abaz Kupi in particular, against the Germans;

3. to attempt to bring about cooperation between the Zogist movement and the NLF". (113)

In February 1944, before leaving England, McLean saw Zog and asked him for a letter to his "loyal follower" Kupi

" . . urging him to unite with NLF in common resistance to the Germans". (114)

Zog duly wrote the letter, but

" . . its text was not, however, entirely satisfactory" (115)

to the Foreign Office. Zog refused to alter the message, and McLean left without it.

The mission included, in addition to McLean, David Smiley (now Major) and Captain Julian Amery. It was made responsible to the Commander of the Balkan Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal William Elliot and through him to the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson. It was dropped by parachute on April 19th, 1944 at Shëngjergj, Tirana district, near Kupi's headquarters, where Major George Seymour had been for some time. Amery states:

"Our war-chest amounted to some four thousand gold sovereigns, . . but each of us carried besides a hundred sovereigns for emergencies or current expenses. Gold was our most powerful weapon". (116)

The mission was instructed to follow the line laid down by the Special Operations Committee in December, that assistance should be given to "any bands actually fighting the Germans" and to use the question of aid as a lever to bring Legaliteti into at least token activity against the German occupation forces and into some kind of agreement with the National Liberation Front. Harold Macmillan, British Resident Minister in Algiers, wrote to the Foreign Office in June:

"An essential prerequisite for giving Kupi any form of support is that he should reach an agreement with the NLF whereby they sink political differences and refrain from fighting each other. Though the result would probably not materially increase the strength of the resistance movement, it would be worth promoting on long-term political grounds as . . possibly forming the basis eventually of some reasonable Government". (117)

At the same time, as Amery relates, the McLean mission was urging Allied Headquarters to use the threat of cutting off supplies, and even of an invasion by British troops, in an effort to pressure the NLF into such an agreement with Kupi:

"We urged them (Headquarters -Ed.) . . to bring the necessary pressure to bear on Enver Hoxha. This would involve the cutting off of all supplies and of all propaganda in their favour, and at least

the threat of an eventual British occupation". (118)

The policy of the United States government was fully in line with that of London. A State Department report of July 1944 declared:

> "We should attempt to bring about a non-political agreement between Kupi and the NLF for common action against the Germans. We should make the point that Albania's cause in the eyes of the United Nations will be helped by a union of all resistance groups". (119)

In accordance with this policy, a State Department press statement of April 6th called on

> " . . the Albanian people to unite their efforts against the Nazi enemy, thus hastening the restoration to their country of the freedom they so ardently desire". (120)

The wording of the Special Operations Committee directive on aid, however, presented difficulties for the McLean mission, since Kupi adamantly refused to undertake any activity against the Germans before he received military supplies. In Amery's words:

> "Without supplies he could not and would not fight. . . If we insisted on the formula of 'No arms before action', he could only offer to escort us to the coast for evacuation". (121)

An OSS report of July 1944 pointed out the military inconsistency of Kupi's position:

> "Kupi has adopted the rather contradictory stand of stating that he has sufficient forces and means at his disposal to attack the Partisans, but at the same time he states that he will not have the arms and ammunition to attack the Germans unless the British supply him with them immediately". (122)

Several times during June, McLean urged his superiors to waive the condition of activity before the receipt of military supplies:

> "It is essential that cash and some supplies be provided before the action"; (123)
>
> "It would be over-sanguine to expect results if cash and all supplies withheld until action begins"; (124)
>
> "In principle Kupi agreed fight . . as soon as sufficient material available. . .
> Strongly recommend you send immediate supplies, LMGs (light machine-guns - Ed.), mortars, ammunition". (125)

But other British Liaison Officers - more concerned with winning the war as quickly as possible than with political manoeuvring - were expressing strong opposition to the policy of aiding Kupi and his ilk. For example, Major Alan Palmer, now Senior BLO with the NLF, argued:

> "Arms must not be sent KUPI as they would only be used against the Partisans and aggravate the situation. Surely by now KUPI's unwillingness to fight the Germans is clear. . .

Recommend immediate withdrawal of Missions with KUPI". (126)

A report by Lieutenant-Colonel Norman Wheeler, who had been Senior BLO with the NLF in southern Albania, declared:

> "It is exceedingly difficult to explain to the PARTISANS the reason why the ALLIES not only do NOT denounce these collaborators but give them supplies . . and continue to maintain MILITARY Missions with them. . .
>
> During the past six months, together with Majors TILMAN and PALMER, I have asked for a change in policy and submitted recommendations accordingly. The position has remained unaltered. Major LEAKE has spent TWO WEEKS in the country and submits almost identical views. . .
>
> I am a professional soldier not a politician, but from what I have seen of the NLF they are perfectly capable of running ALBANIA, and to the satisfaction of the populace". (127)

And in his book "When Men and Mountains Meet", Tilman describes as

> " . . the peculiar tragedy of Albania", (128)

the fact that the official British policy of supporting Legaliteti and Balli Kombëtar

> " . . was persisted in after it had become clear to most observers that . . only one of these parties (the NLF -Ed.) was fighting and suffering, while the other two were either actively hostile or feebly neutral. . .
>
> Even after two of the three parties had shown themselves to be useless and untrustworthy, we continued to sustain them morally by sending them missions, by refusing to denounce them by name, and by making only obscure references to the deeds and sacrifices of the NLF". (129)

In an effort to persuade Allied Headquarters to send supplies to Kupi in spite of his inactivity against the Germans, Kupi was persuaded to allow some of his men to take part anonymously in an act of sabotage organised by Smiley which would not involve them in direct conflict with German forces: the blowing-up of the bridge carrying the Tirana-Durrës road across the river at Gjole on June 21st. McLean, reporting the incident three days later, warned:

> "Sabotage will not be continued nor military action initiated unless supplies of cash and material are forthcoming". (130)

An intelligence report maintained that this somewhat symbolic act

> " . . could not be considered a wholehearted attempt by KUPI to throw in his lot with the Allies. . .
>
> KUPI refused to allow either his or the name of his organisation to be in any way connected with the action". (131)

But the British mission with Kupi, as Amery relates, was happy

> " . . to regard the destruction of the Gjole bridge as evidence that the Zogists were at war again". (132)

The Tirana Group

In fact, Abaz Kupi was striving to build up the unity of Legaliteti, not with the National Liberation Front, but with its adversaries. By the end of March 1944 British intelligence reports were stating that this had taken at least embryonic concrete shape as "the Tirana Group":

> "KUPI is in close touch with the pro-ITALIAN MIRDITA chieftain GJON MARKAGJONI, MEHDI FRASHERI of the Regency Council, and the notorious XHAFER DEVA". (133)

> "The trend of the political situation is towards the consolidation of an anti-communist Nationalist front, probably prepared to collaborate with anyone who will assist in the suppression of the NLF. The core of this movement is the ZOGIST party. . . The leader pf this party is Abaz KUPI, ex-bandit. . . The leaders of this new Nationalist movement are described as the TIRANA group and include, besides KUPI, the Catholic Gjon MARKAGJONI, hereditary chief of the Mirditi; Cen ELEZI, of the League of Dibra chieftains; . . the veteran patriot Mehdi FRASHERI, now a Regent of the ALBANIAN Government; and Fiqri DINE, Minister of the Interior in LIBOHOVA's Administration of January 1943". (134)

By the beginning of April, according to British intelligence, the Tirana Group had been enlarged:

> "The TIRANA GROUP is acquiring a more and more marked collaborationist tinge. . . Shefqet VERLACI, puppet Premier in ITALIAN times and the richest landowner in ALBANIA; and Skënder MUÇO, a BALLKOM leader in the Vlora area, are believed to come within its orbit". (135)

When McLean arrived later that month, he welcomed these developments enthusiastically, reporting on June 18th:

> "All Nationalists of all shades . . consider NLF . . to be their chief enemy. . .
> If the support is obtained of KUPI, MUHARREM (Bajraktari - Ed.), GANI KRYEZIU and MARKAGJONI, the rest of GEG ALBANIA will follow". (136)

At this time the puppet government headed by Rexhep Mitrovica was on the verge of collapse and three days earlier, on June 15th, a meeting had been held at Tufina, just outside Tirana. As OSS agent Harry Fultz reported, this had been attended by

> "Fiqri Dine . . . representing the so-called Dibra Union;
> Eqrem Vlora . . representing the Bajleri Group;
> Abaz Kupi . . . representing the Movement of Legality;
> Midhat Frasheri representing the Balli Kombetar;
> Gjon Markagjoni representing the Catholic-Fascist Group". (137)

Here

> " . . it was decided that the Mitrovica Government should resign and be replaced by a cabinet with Dine at the head. . .

As a result of this meeting for the new cabinet, Dine's has a representative from each of the groups mentioned above". (138)

The Dine government was installed on July 20th, with Mark Markagjoni (Gjon's son) as Minister of Popular Culture.

The Ultimatum

On June 26th, 1944 Commander-in-Chief Enver Hoxha ordered the 1st Brigade of the National Liberation Army to cross the river Shkumbin into northern Albania and liquidate the forces of Legaliteti. Reporting the northward advance of the Partisan forces into

" . . territory at present under the control of Kupi", (139)

Philip Broad stated:

"I have arranged that a warning should be sent to NLF that we cannot continue to send them supplies if these are going to be used in civil war", (140)

a decision which brought congratulations from Anthony Eden:

"Secretary of State is very pleased with way in which you are handling Yugoslav and Albanian questions". (141)

On July 4th Broad reported:

"Kupi . . will not allow further NLF penetration of his territory", (142)

on which McLean commented:

"KUPI's attitude in the crisis is reasonable and realistic". (143)

The Foreign Office formally endorsed Broad's decision in a directive dated July 5th:

"Essential take strongest possible line with NLF emphasising their strength due Allied supplies.
If they use for civil war arms given them to fight Germans, Allies will treat this action as abuse and will refuse further aid". (144)

A week later, on July 12th, Lieutenant-Colonel Alan Palmer, the Senior BLO in southern Albania, after being called back to Bari for instructions, handed the following Note to Hoxha:

"General Wilson will not tolerate the Albanian partisans interfering with his strategic aims through civil war, as the National Liberation Movement cannot control the whole of Albania and cope with the Germans without the aid of the Allies", (145)

adding verbally:

" . . that if Abaz Kupi were attacked by our (NLF - Ed.) forces, all the Allied aid to the National Liberation Movement would be cut off". (146)

The note was referred to the Presidium of the General Council of the NLF, and Hoxha replied to the Allied Mediterranean High Command on the same day:

"There are no internal quarrels in Albania and even less a civil war. There is only one quarrel and one war: war against the occupier in the first place, and against its traitorous tools. . . In Albania there is no political group or party outside the National Liberation Front fighting against the occupiers. Both Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti led by Abaz Kupi . . are collaborating directly with the German military command in Albania, and constitute the principal support of the quisling government of Tirana. . .

Bazi i Canës (Kupi - Ed.) . . is a traitor and collaborates with the Germans and the quislings of Tirana". (147)

This reply was regarded as a rejection of the Anglo-American ultimatum, and General Wilson immediately

" . . stopped the sending of supplies to the NLF":. (148)

But a few days later, on July 18th, Broad was reporting:

"German drive against 1st Division NLF forces is now imminent.

Partisan troops are short of ammunition and in the opinion of Lt.-Col. Palmer will, as a result, suffer severe losses in the coming fighting. . .

It has therefore been agreed that sending of supplies to NLF shall be resumed as soon as Hoxha despatches representatives from his headquarters for discussions in Bari.

Hoxha is not willing at the moment to meet Kupi or his representatives". (149)

On July 31st the Balkan Air Force reported to the US State Department:

"Kupi is determined to resist any Partisan move northwards through or near his area of Mat, north of Tirana, and is in fact receiving German support now in the form of transport, munitions and food supplies". (150)

The Bari Talks

On July 12th, 1944 Hoxha had written to General Wilson repeating his request to send an NLF delegation to Italy

" . . to reach an understanding on more organised cooperation against the German occupiers". (151)

This request was now agreed to, and an NLF delegation left Albania for Bari, along with Palmer, on July 26th. The delegation consisted of Lieutenant-Colonel Bedri Spahiu, Minister of Economy in the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee which had been set up following the 1st Anti-Fascist National Liberation Congress held at Përmet on May 24-28th, 1944; Lieutenant-Colonel Ramadan Çitaku, Minister of Finance; and Major Frederik Nosi, liaison officer between the NLF and the BLOs.

The talks opened on July 28th, the Allied delegation consisting of Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Harcourt, Air Vice-Marahal Elliott and Harry Fultz of the OSS. They ended on August 23rd with the signing of a military agreement:

> "It was agreed that the ALBANIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY was the only army fighting the Germans in ALBANIA. . .
> that a permanent Military Delegation of 2 persons would be attached to Allied Mediterranean Staff at Bari. . .
> that the General Staff of the ALBANIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY could not be responsible for accepting any ALLIED personnel who had previously worked with Major Abaz KUPI", (152)

while the Mediterranean High Command agreed to send supplies to the ANLA by sea and air.

Albanian requests that the Allies should

> " . . recognise the Anti-Fascist Liberation Committee as a Provisional Government for the duration of the war", (153)

that

> " . . Major KUPI and his 'Movement of Legality' be openly denounced as traitors to the ALBANIAN people and the ALLIED cause", (154)

and that

> " . . the Allies withdraw their Missions from Abaz Kupi, Legaliteti and other traitors", (155)

were rejected. These requests had been referred to the British Foreign Office, which had replied on August 17th:

> "At the present juncture it would be most unwise to commit ourselves irrevocably to the National Liberation Movement as against Kupi, and for the moment there must be no question of withdrawing our BLOs from the latter". (156)

The British Landing

On September 22nd, 1944, by agreement with the command of the Albanian National Liberation Army, a force of British commandos belonging to Land Forces, Adriatic was landed at Kakoma, near the southern Albanian port of Saranda. The declared aim of the operation was to assist the ANLA to liberate the town. According to Hoxha, it had been agreed to accept the condition that

> " . . once the action is over, your forces must withdraw immediately". (157)

The British plans were in reality, however, that this commando force should be the advance guard of an occupation force. Philip Broad, British Political Adviser to Allied Forces Headquarters in Italy, reported from Bari on September 29th:

> "Subsequent development of the operation depends upon a number of factors which cannot at present be assessed. But it is possible

that if everything goes well, we may be able to maintain a permanent footing on Albanian soil". (158)

Tajar Zavalani in London wrote to the Foreign Office expressing his

" . . deep satisfaction with the landing of British troops in Albania", (159)

together with the hope that the operation would

" . . have a moderating effect". (160)

Saranda was successfully liberated on October 9th, and on the following day British Liaison Officer Lt.-Col. Alan Palmer was advising General Wilson in Caserta:

"I . . pointed out the difficulties which would inevitably arise with the NLF out of any suggestion that this was a 'force of occupation'.

I suggested that if it was decided to get HOXHA out of ALBANIA, the best time might be just prior to a 'Liberation Force' being sent in, so that agreement to our military action could be obtained under favourable conditions for argument and, in case of serious difficulties arising, HOXHA's presence here in ITALY and not with his own HQ would weaken his position considerably.

General Wilson appeared to like this idea". (161)

On October 13th the Foreign Office instructed Harold Macmillan, Resident Minister at AFHQ:

"The invitation to Hoxha should be based on the need for military discussions". (162)

Hoxha, however, did not leave Albania. He states that he reminded Palmer that

" . . Saranda had been liberated and, in the terms of the decision, the British forces must be withdrawn as quickly as possible. . .

We waited for the British to withdraw, but . . they postponed their departure from day to day. Apparently, their aim was to remain there and have Saranda as their base on the coast. . .

In the end, . . I issued him an ultimatum, instructing him to transmit it immediately to the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters:

'If the British commandos are not withdrawn from Saranda by the given date, then war will break out between the partisans and the British'.

Eventually the British climbed into their boats and . . we were rid of them". (163)

By November 3rd Broad was gloomily confirming

" . . a pronounced unwillingness on the part of the NLF General Staff to give its formal approval to the use of British troops in Albania", (164)

and by the 10th an intelligence report, based on the interrogation of the BLOs who had been withdrawn from Albania, was assuming that a directly military

occupation force was no longer practicable:

> "Whilst the ideal mneans of turning to good account the pro-British feeling existing in ALBANIA would be the introduction of British troops, it must now be assumed that these will not be available". (165)

The Withdrawal of McLean

During August, as the Bari talks were proceeding, Hoxha had made a strong protest through the BLOs about the continuing presence of the British mission with Abaz Kupi, saying:

> "We shall make no distinction between the British officers and bandits like Abaz Kupi. If we capture your officers, we shall . . hand them over to the partisan court for trial as war criminals who have collaborated with the enemy". (166)

Allied Military Headquarters immediately ordered that the Albanian military delegation should be detained in Bari, but on receipt of an order to the delegation from Hoxha to return home immediately,

> " . . it was agreed it would be expedient not to insist on our decision". (167)

The report was received of an interview between Palmer and Hoxha on August 30th:

> "Hoxha has a strong dislike of McLean and Smiley, whom he accuses of improper behaviour and a hostile attitude towards the NLF. Palmer considers there mnay be some foundation for the charges. It is therefore clearly desirable to get these two officers out to report as soon as possible". (168)

It was, therefore, decided on September 8th that

> " . . it is advisable to get McLean and Smiley out as soon as possible to report fully on the situation". (169)

Alexander Kirk hastened to assure the US State Department that this face-saving manoeuvre did not constitute a breach with Kupi:

> "BAF policy committee decided to summon the two senior BLOs with Kupi to Italy to report. . . This is not to be regarded as a definite break". (170)

Two days later, however, he was informing Washington:

> "Withdrawal of all BLOS from Kupi is under consideration", (171)

and on September 14th:

> "The Policv Committee (of the Balkan Air Force - Ed.) decided that war material should not be sent to KUPI or those Nationalists with whom he is affiliated". (172)

The "Preza Government"

Meanwhile, as the position of the German occupation forces in Albania grew increasingly desperate, "Prime Minister" Fiqri Dine and General Prenk Previzi, Commander of the puppet "Albanian" armed forces, had visited Kupi's headquarters on August 18th

> " . . to sound him as to his hopes of British support and to learn whether they might still save their skins by rallying to his cause". (173)

On August 28th, the Dine puppet government resigned, and on September 21st, as Broad reported from Bari, a "congress" of "nationalists" was held in the mountains at Preza

> " . . with collusion of Colonel McLean's Mission". (174)

The participants included Midhat Frashëri, Ali Këlcyra and Hasan Dosti of Balli Kombëtar; Abaz Kupi of Legaliteti; General Prenk Previzi and Colonel Hysni Dema (commander of the puppet gendarmerie); Gjon Markagjoni, the Catholic-fascist chieftain of Mirdita; the Regent Mehdi Frashëri; and Muharrem Bajraktari - all described by Broad as

> " . . individuals who have consistently to a greater or lesser degree collaborated with the enemy". (175)

Here the remnants of

> " . . Balli Kombëtar and Legality amalgamated . . on a military basis", (176)

with Kupi as "Commander-in-Chief", and

> " . . a united Nationalist Government" (177)

was set up with Midhat Frashëri as "Prime Minister" and Mehdi Frashëri as "Foreign Minister".

In the words of Broad's report, the intention was that

> " . . should the Germans leave Albania before its dissolution, the Government will automatically claim to be the Government". (178)

In September 1944 the OSS agent Harry Fultz submitted to Washington a frank analysis of the social forces involved in this "united Nationalist Government":

> "A large percentage of the members of this group are essentially feudal in their outlook on social, political and economic relationships. These members understand little enough of the principles and techniques of western democracy. They care even less about a representative government which derives its power and authority from the people. They traffic in the land and in the people who live on it in conditions of virtual peonage. They believe in class stratification, with those in the lower strata knowing well their position in life. Being largely feudal in their outlook, in the past they have found it convenient and desirable to mix a great deal of modern

Fascism and Nazism with feudal methods. These seem to mix well.

It is not, therefore, by chance that these members of such a group have fallen so readily in with Fascist schemes of personal and national aggrandisement. It is not at all by chance that these have found, apparently with no great difficulty, common ground on which to stand with the Nazis and the 'friendly Germnan Wehmacht'. They distrust their own people on the pretence that they are ignorant and primitive, while at the same time adopting measures which are designed to keep them in conditions of ignorance, of poverty and of primitiveness. They prefer that people be docile and uncomplaining and they are not unfamiliar with all the cheap clap-trap and other methods for keeping them docile and uncomplaining. In the process of governing in the past they have have not hesitated, and do not hesitate now, to use the most vicious and violent means for keeping people in a proper state of subjection and fear. . .

Members of this group in positions of authority have not hesitated to brand as communism any expression of discontent or any expression of a desire for better conditions. . . They assume that they themselves know best, because of some supposedly inherited superiority which they alone possess.

What are the component elements of this group? They are:

a. the landowning BEYS of middle and south Albania: the Verlacis, the Vloras, the Libohovas, the Vrionis, and others;

b. the Muslim chieftains and bajraktars of the Mat, Dibra and Luma districts in the north: the Dines, the Elezis, the Bajraktaris and others;

c. the Fascist-Catholics of Mirdita, Shkodra, Dukagjin and other northern regions: the Markagjonis, the Krujas, the Bushatis, the Çobas and the Harapis;

d. the Ballist faction, most of which is drawn from the above-indicated groups, the lesser landowners and minor Bejleri, the professional officer (Army and Gendarmerie) caste and the professional office-holders, the well-to-do merchants and the favoured doctors and lawyers.

Among these four elements one finds with some exceptions most of the Fascist-Nazi-minded and the essentially anti-democratic influences of the country". (179)

Gani and Seit Kryeziu

Following the surrender of Italy in September 1943, Gani and Seit Kryeziu were released from detention and returned to the far north of Albania. Here they gathered a band of guerillas, to which Captain Anthony Simcox was attached as British Liaison Officer.

According to Hoxha,

"In the North, the British officer Simcox was preparing an alternative move with Gani Kryeziu, the feudal lord of Kosova. If the 'national government' of Preza failed, it would be Gani Kryeziu who would form the 'national government', in which Muharrem Bajraktari, Gjon Markagjoni and other refuse would take part". (180)

But on September 19th, 1944 the advancing Albanian National Liberation Army captured Seit Kryeziu and took Simcox into "protective custody". Next day Gani Kryeziu too was taken prisoner.

The British succeeded in evacuating Seit Kryeziu, who was considered to be

" . . in danger", (181)

on

" . . health grounds", (182)

On the insistence of the Yugoslav partisans, the ANLA handed Gani Kryeziu over to the new Yugoslav authorities, who sentenced him to five years' imprisonment.

The British Foreign Office endorsed McLean's assessment of the Kryeziu brothers:

> "Gani and Seit may be said to have supported BRITISH policy with more consistency and understanding than perhaps any other ALBANIAN". (183)

It paid Seit Kryeziu the sum of £1,000 for

" . . past services", (184)

and in December 1945 appealed to the Yugoslav government that Gani's sentence should be

" . . either quashed or considerably reduced". (185)

Liberation

By October 1944 the advance of the Albanian National Liberation Army had become irresistible.

On October 21st Philip Broad reported from Bari:

> "The Nationalist cause is in the last stages of disintegration. Kupi . . is believed already to have taken practical steps to disband his organisation", (186)

adding hopefully:

> "Muharrem Bajraktari and Gjon Markagjoni, however, are reported to be determined to oppose the NLF with force in the protection of their own areas of influence, and with this end in view they are said to have asked help from collaborationists and the Germans". (187)

And on November 13th Alexander Kirk was reporting from Caserta

" . . the collapse of all opposition . . to the NLF". (188)

The ANLA captured the capital on November 17th, 1944 and by November 29th the entire country had been liberated.

A New Foreign Office Policy

With the enforced withdrawal of British troops from Albanian soll and the

collapse of "nationalist" resistance, already by mid-September 1944 the British Foreign Office had been compelled to accept the fact that it was unable to prevent the NLF from gaining control of Albania.

A high-level meeting at the Foreign Office on September 19th, presided over by Sir Orme Sargent, concluded gloomily:

> "There is no alternative to accepting the prospect of an NLF Government in Albania after the war". (189)

In a report to the State Department the same day, John Winant, the US Ambassador in London, declared that the Foreign Office view was, however, that

> " . . if the NLF should remain far to the Left, a sort of civil war will take place and then Zog can manage to stage a comeback. . . Zog . . probably . . is the only suitable man, the only leader of quality who has emerged from the confused political scene in Albania and at the same time he is the leader of a powerful clan and a man of the people". (190)

The new Foreign Office policy which emerged in this situation was fundamentally as follows:

Firstly, to withdraw BLOs from all groups other than the NLF, since these now served no purpose except to irritate the latter.

A joint meeting on September 19th of reporesentatives of the Foreign Office, the War Office, the SOE and the military intelligence organisation MI6 decided to withdraw all BLOs from Kupi, and by October 28th the SOE was stating:

> "All of our missions have now been withdrawn from the Albanian Nationalists". (191)

Secondly, to evacuate from Albania the "nationalist" leaders for possible future use.

On October 23rd a fishing boat containing Midhat Frashëri, Ali Këlcyra, Fiqri Dine and Hasan Dosti arrived at Brindisi from Shkodra.

Philip Broad reported on October 27th an appeal by McLean (who had been evacuated from Albania on the 18th):

> "Abaz Kupi has asked to be evacuated from Albania with his two sons and three personal followers.
> I . . submit the strongest recommendation that his request be granted". (192)

Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden approved this request on the 31st:

> "I have . . instructed Mr. Broad to consult Colonel McLean as to ways and means of getting Abaz Kupi out of Albania without it appearing that His Majesty's Government have been involved in the operation". (193)

> "I hope he does get out", (194)

remarked George Clutton.

"So do I", (195)

added Counsellor Douglas Howard.

"The secrecy was thought necessary to avoid trouble with Hoxha", (196)

explained Elizabeth Barker, Chief of the Political Intelligence Derpartment of the Foreign Office.

But while the ways and means of getting Kupi out were being discussed, on November 6th he and his sons were, as Alexander Kirk informed the State Department from Caserta

" . . picked up in Adriatic by British vessel. . . They . . were found drifting in an open boat.
BLO with Hoxha has been instructed to notify Hoxha of this fact and to inform him that it is intended to treat whole party as political refugees". (197)

On November 23rd the SOE informed the Foreign Office:

"McLean feels that a lump sum should be paid to him (Kupi - Ed.)". (198)

However, it was found that he had brought with him a considerable sum in gold sovereigns,

" . . actually paid to Kupi by SOE but . . he had not put these in use to further the war effort", (199)

and so he was allowed to exchange these

" . . at free (black - Ed.) market rates". (200)

and retain the sum concerned.

Thirdly, to use all possible means - "aid", the question of diplomatic relations, etc. - to press the National Liberation Front to "broaden" its administration in such a way as to enable the British government to influence it.

The meeting at the Foreign Office on September 19th, already mentioned, decided:

"Our policy should be to accept the probability of NLF emerging as the dominant force in Albania after the war, and to attempt to strengthen our influence with them". (201)

Alexander Kirk reported to Washington on October 8th:

"Foreign Office . . proposed . . to invite Hoxha to confer with General Wilson in Italy. Attempt will then be made to persuade Hoxha to mollify his attitude towards other elements in Albania and to broaden base of his organisation as alternative to coalition". (202)

And Eden informed Prime Minister Churchill on October 9th:

"In these circumstances there is no alternative but to accept the plan of the NLF to obtain control over Albania after the war and to redouble our efforts to gain positions close to it, in such a way as to counterbalance Russian influence". (203)

This question is discussed in later chapters.

Fourthly, to use "aid" as a pretext for introducing a British occupation force into Albania.

This question is discussed in the next chapter.

1. J. Amery: "Sons of the Eagle"; London; 1948; p. 57.
2. J. Amery: ibid..
3. B: FO371/37144/1067/R4817.
4. B: FO371/37144/1067/R6557.
5. A: M1211/15/875.01/507.
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33. B: FO371/43549/39/R39.
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18

1944-1947:

"AID"

"Beware the Greeks, even though they offer gifts" - Virgil

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was established at a conference of representatives of 44 states held at the White House, Washington on November 9th, 1943, with the declared object of providing relief for the peoples of liberated countries of Europe and Asia and of assisting in the rehabilitation of the industry and agriculture of those countries. During the five years of its operation, three-quarters of its finance was provided by the United States, which consequently played the predominant role in the organisation.

UNRRA's first Director-General (from November 1943 to March 1946) was the American banker Herbert Lehman, a former Governor of New York; its second (from March to December 1946) was the American lawyer Fiorello La Guardia, a former Mayor of New York; its third (from January 1947) was the American army officer Major-General Lowell Rooks.

In April 1944 UNRRA set up a Balkan Mission with headquarters in Cairo, and with Sir William Matthews (Britain) as Chief of Mission. Later in the same month the Balkan Mission set up subsidiary missions for Greece and Yugoslavia and, in June, for Albania.

The post of Chief of the Albanian Mission was first offered to Harry Fultz, the American intelligence officer working with the OSS, who had directed the Technical School in Tirana prior to World War II. The OSS declined to release Fultz, and the post was then offered to Lieutenant-Colonel Dayrell Oakley Hill, now a British intelligence officer working with the Special Operations Executive (SOE), whose career in Albania has been noted earlier. The Director-General, however, overruled this decision and in September 1944 appointed an American, Dudley Haskell, as Chief of Mission, with (from October) Oakley Hill as Deputy Chief.

The Albanian Mission established itself in October 1944 at Ruvo di Puglia, near Bari in Italy, where Haskell arrived in November. Following the latter's removal in the spring of 1945 (under circumstances to be recounted) Oakley Hill was appointed Chief of Mission in April 1944. In May 1946 Richard Brown, Assistant Deputy Director-General, arrived in Albania as the personal representative of the Director-General to investigate the conduct of the mission. Oakley Hill regarded this as an expression of lack of confidence in him, and resigned in May. He was succeeded as Chief of Mission in August by Peter Floud.

Relations with Military Liaison

In the autumn of 1943, shortly before the establishment of UNRRA, the Anglo-American military authorities had set a joint organisation called "Allied Military Liaison" (ML), the declared aim of which was to provide relief to liberated countries until UNRRA was able to take over this function.

On April 3rd, 1944 an agreement was signed in Cairo between UNRRA and ML. This stated that

" . . during the preliminary period of military relief, UNRRA would provide staff to work with ML". (1)

A further agreement between UNRRA and ML, dated September 1944, laid down that

"UNRRA personnel will operate under the general direction and control of the Military Commander or his representative. . .
UNRRA personnel will . . be subject to military law". (2)

and this was emphasised in a circular from ML (Balkans) dated the same month:

"UNRRA will be completely under military direction and control". (3)

In September 1944 ML (Albania) moved from Cairo to Ruvo di Puglia.

The Invasion Plan

From March to September 1944 the strategic plan of ML (Albania) took the form of what can only be described as a military invasion of Albania.

A British War Office memorandum frankly entitled "Occupation of Albania" dated September 23rd, 1944 declared that the military occupation of Albania was likely to be "necessary" in order to establish "law and order" before relief supplies could be delivered:

"If left to themselves it is clear that the Albanians will be incapable for some time after hostilities cease of establishing law and order and of accepting the surrender of German forces. . .
Hence it may be necessary to introduce forces ashore to establish law and order before relief supplies can be delivered to the country. . . Sporadic and unorganised resistance may be encountered". (4)

Consequently Balkan Air Force and Land Forces Adriatic (the Anglo-American military organisations concerned with the region that included Albania) were directed:

" . . to prepare alternative plans to land a force in either the DURRES area or the VLORA area, for the purpose of establishing law and order in the vicinity of the port . . and of establishing a base area from which to deliver initial relief supplies. It was to be assumed that there would be no organised resistance to the landing of the forces. . . ML (Albania) was to be placed under command of, and to become part of, Headquarters Ground Forces in ALBANIA. . . ML (Albania) would enter ALBANIA as part of an occupation force". (5)

An ML (Albania) memorandum in October 1944 defined the size of the proposed occupation force:

"HQ Ground Forces (ALBANIA) . . will form a base in the vicinity of the Port for the purpose of maintaining an operational force approximately 4,000 strong . .
The plan for DURRES will be produced first, followed by that for VLORA". (6)

The directives of ML (Albania) during this period emphasised that the operation would be carried out without contact with or reference to the provisional authority established within Albania. This authority was, by October 1944, the Democratic Government of Albania, into which the Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee had been officially transformed at its meeting in Berat on October 20th - 23rd:

> "Planning must be carried out without reference to any representative of Albania". (7)

UNRRA was informed that

> " . . these operations would be conducted so as to avoid any contact with General Hoxha's Administration and that further details could not be disclosed 'for security reasons'", (8)

and the Deputy Chief of the UNRRA Albanian Mission, Peter Floud, wrote to his Chief of Mission, Dudley Haskell, in December 1944 to say that ML had informed the mission that the "offer" of "aid"

> " . . would be made by a naval landing party without prior consultation with or notification to the Albanian authorities or the Albanian Military Mission in Bari, and would be presented in the form of an ultimatum, allowing of no discussion, negotiation or modification". (9)

The Revolt of the UNRRA Staff

Clause 1 of the Founding Resolution of UNRRA had laid down:

> "In the case of a liberated area in which a government or recognised national authority exercises administrative authority, the Administration will operate only after consultation with, and with the consent of, the government or recognised national authority regarding the form of activity to be undertaken by the Administration within the whole or part of such area". (10)

ML claimed that this clause did not apply to Albania since no national authority had there been recognised by the American and British governments:

> "No Free Albanian movement is officially recognised; therefore planning must be carried out without reference to any representative of Albania". (11)

The staff of the UNRRA Albanian mission objected to this interpretation and

> " . . the officer-in-charge of the ML Rear Detachment at Ruvo called the whole Mission together and gave them a sharp talk on the necessity for absolute military secrecy concerning the forthcoming operation". (12)

Neither this lecture, nor the information that

> " . . all the ML officers were having to go through a short course in pistol-shooting" (13)

lessened the misgivings of the UNRRA staff.

On December 21st., 1944, therefore, the Commander of ML (Albania), Colonel D. B. Warner, addressed the staff of the mission:

> "His main point was to emphasise the need for obedience to orders.
>
> This short talk was immediately followed by questions from the Mission. . . It was quite plain that Col. Warner regarded the asking of these questions as an impertinence and, after giving a few entirely evasive answers, he called on Lt.-Col. Ryder, a United States officer on his staff, to say a few words on the question of military security". (14)

After the departure of the ML officers, an open forum of the whole UNRRA mission, and the voluntary workers associated with it, was held. This revealed

> " . . practically unanimous agreement that UNRRA should withdraw from any further participation in the ML plan". (15)

On the following day (December 22nd) a memorandum was drawn up which

> " . . expressed the unanimous opinion of all the 69 members of the Mission and Voluntary Societies" (16)

This declared:

> "That, as a consequence of the close integration of UNRRA and ML, the former had become involved in an operation which conflicted with the basic principle that relief should not be administered by force, or stealth, or against the better judgment of its beneficiaries.
>
> That this situation could only be remedied if the Director-General, or his authorised representative, were to make plain to the world and to the Albanian people that UNRRA had no part in this operation". (17)

Next day the Acting Chief of the Mission, Peter Floud, took the memorandum to Haskell, who was in hospital in Bari.

> "Quite unexpectedly, Mr. Haskell expressed his warm support for the point of view (expressed in the memorandum - Ed.) and insisted on writing out a covering note of his own to be sent to Cairo with the documents". (18)

The memorandum and Haskell's covering letter were accordingly sent to Cairo on December 24th, and following his discharge from hospital on the 26th Haskell sent copies of all the documents to Colonel Warner. The latter

> " . . was infuriated", (19)

and at a meeting on December 29th

> " . . criticised Mr. Haskell's handling of the whole situation very forcibly and more or less ordered him to send a cable and letter to Cairo immediately retracting his support for the Mission's apprehensions. This Mr. Haskell did". (20)

When the mission staff learned on the following day (the 30th) that Haskell had retracted his support for their position, an immediate crisis developed. On the 31st. all the Division Heads met and agreed that Floud should go to Haskell and request his resignation. Haskell, however, refused to resign and at a stormy meeting that evening declared

> " . . that any members who questioned his leadership would be sacked immediately and sent back to Cairo on the next boat". (21)

The meeting was unimpressed and agreed by 12 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions, to send a cable to Cairo demanding Haskell's immediate removal. This was done on January 1st., 1945.

On 10th January Sir William Matthews, Chief of the UNRRA Balkan Mission, summoned Haskell to Cairo for "consultations", and on the former's recommendation, Director-General Lehman dismissed Haskell, who left Cairo for the United States in mid-February.

The Plan For An Ultimatum

By December 1944 ML (Albania) had decided that its original plan of an unannounced invasion of Albania was impracticable.

On December 30th, 1944 the UNRRA Mission to Albania was informed

> " . . that ML had now scrapped their original plan for an unannounced entry into Albania". (22)

The line of "no negotiation" with the Democratic Government of Albania was, however, continued. On December 15th. British Liaison Officer with the National Liberation Front Lieutenant-Colonel Alan Palmer was instructed to inform Hoxha, now Prime Minister of the government, that

> "Military Liaison HQ (Albania) has been directed to introduce relief supplies into Albania, and the troop concentration date set at 3 Jan 1945.
> It is planned that the Durrës Harbour will be swept on approx. 27 Dec 1944 and ML (Albania) will follow immediately". (23)

The directive given to Palmer instructed him:

> "Only the briefest outline should be given him (Hoxha - Ed.). . . The ML Charter cannot be altered. (24)

Consequently,

> "It is not part of your function to negotiate in this matter". (25)

Hoxha, however, firmly rejected the ML ultimatum, and ML decided to send to Tirana an official delegation consisting of two of its officers, who arrived on January 9th to repeat the ultimatum delivered by Palmer:

> "Their plan was to present Hoxha with something in the nature of an ultimatum, stating that if he wanted relief he would have to accept the whole paraphernalia of a large ML force. . . There was to be no question of negotiation or discussion of any sort". (26)

As Peter Floud comments:

> "The modified plan was hardly less objectionable from UNRRA's point of view. . . It should have been obvious that this method of bringing relief to Albania was incompatible with the UNRRA Charter. As far as is known there was no other case where UNRRA was prepared to endorse, and in fact cooperate in, a scheme which involved pressing relief in the form of an ultimatum". (27)

Nevertheless it

> " . . was finally accepted by them (the Balkan Mission of UNRRA - Ed.) as compatible with UNRRA's aims". (28)

The officers met Hoxha on January 12th, 1945. According to the history of the UNRRA Mission to Albania:

> "General Hoxha had been cordial to the ML representatives, but had been quite firm on two points: firstly, as a matter of principle, he objected to being presented with a set of conditions which were not even subject to discussion, much less amendment; secondly, as a practical matter, he considered the number of men suggested by ML as being far more than were needed for the quantity of supplies to be brought in. He insisted that his authorities should take over control of the supplies at ship's side and should have sole responsibility for their distribution". (29)

Their ultimatum rejected, the officers arrived back in Bari on the 15th. A memorandum of Allied Force HQ three days of later commented:

> "Hoxha . . is suspicious of military infiltration under the ML pretext, and this suspicion has, of course, been strengthened by events in Greece". (30)

"Operation Duckling"

On February 26th, 1945 Hoxha made a formal request as Prime Minister for UNRRA aid.

Hoxha was informed, as Philip Broad reported from Bari, that

> "UNRRA are not prepared to function in Albania without a preliminary period of military relief", (31)

while ML (Albania) was instructed by AFHQ:

> "You should so word the agreement that no recognition is implied of the present Authorities as the Albanian Government". (32)

In the negotiations which followed, Hoxha continued to refuse to accept some of the terms demanded by ML (Albania). However, on March 28th. the Central Committee of UNRRA approved terms for their own agreement with the Albanian authorities which did not contain these unacceptable points and ML felt obliged to follow suit. On April 11th, therefore, Hoxha signed, as Commander-in-Chief of the Albanian National Liberation Army, an agreement with ML (Albania) which accepted that supplies would be issued from ML warehouses in Durrës and Vlora

" . .to the Albanian military authorities, which will thereafter be responsible for distribution within the country". (33)

No mention of the number of foreign personnel to be brought into Albania was made in the agreement, but Hoxha made it clear that permission would not be given for a number in excess of

" . . 130, to include UNRRA". (34)

In fact, the numbers

" . . never exceeded 125". (35)

The agreement left open the question of payment for relief supplies, but implied that they would have to be paid for:

"Settlement for the supplies imported by ML (Albania) is subject to subsequent agreement between the US and UK Governments and such Government of Albania as may hereafter be recognised by them. It is the general policy of the US and UK Governments that all relief supplies will be billed to the recipient countries". (36)

ML (Albania) accordingly began its operation, known as "Operation Duckling", on April 30th, 1945. Its final report stated:

"During the ML period 9,150 tons of supplies, 334 load-carrying vehicles, 9 ambulances and 24 agricultural tractors were handed over to the authorities . .

The supplies were distributed without any apparent instances of inequitable distribution and the presence of ML was undoubtedly known and appreciated throughout Albania", (37)

and an addendum declared:

"The distribution of ML supplies has been carried out by the Albanian authorities in a meticulously equitable manner, calculated to assure delivery in accordance with need. . .

ML Observers moved where and when they wished". (38)

The Agreement with UNRRA

Clause 6c of the Agreement signed between Hoxha and ML (Albania) had provided that UNNRA would

" . . take over the task of ML (Albania) as soon as possible, and ML (Albania) will withdraw as soon as UNRRA is able to assume this task. The period of ML (Albania) will not exceed approximately two months". (39)

A preliminary UNRRA Mission, headed by its new Chief, Oakley Hill, arrived in Tirana on May 2nd and began negotiations with the Government there. It found that Prime Minister Hoxha

" . . refused categorically to allow any ML personnel to remain to help UNRRA". (40)

The main obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement, however, was that the Mission was instructed to demand that Hoxha sign as Commander-in-Chief of the ANLA (as in the case of the ML agreement), which Hoxha refused to do:

> "We then came to the crucial question of the title to be used in the Agreement for the Albanian authorities. We stated that we had instructions to use the title Commander-in-Chief, Albanian Army of National Liberation. . .
>
> In reply, General Hoxha expressed the following views:
>
> There was no doubt that his administration represented in fact the Government of Albania. Therefore, if UNRRA called it by this title, we should merely be recognising the facts as they are. . . General Hoxha had no intention of using the Agreement with UNRRA as evidence that the member Governments of UNRRA had recognised his Government. . .
>
> The fact that the ML Agreement was signed with the Commander-in-Chief of the Albanian Army was irrelevant to the UNRRA Agreement, as the former was an agreement between two military commanders, whereas UNRRA is a civilian agency concluding an agreement with the civil authorities, in which the latter assume obligations that only a government can fulfil". (41)

Since this point had not been resolved by the time the ML Agreement was due to expire on June 13th, Hoxha agreed to extend this until July 1st. but refused any further extension. As ML prepared to leave Albania, the Chiefs of the British and American Missions that were now in Albania - Brigadier Edward Hodgson and Joseph Jacobs respectively - pressed the UNRRA personnel to withdraw with them:

> "The presence of our US and British civilians in Albania . . was an embarrassment to them and they recommended that they should be withdrawn now . . along with ML". (42)

Ivor Pink, Acting 1st. Secretary at the British Foreign Office, commented indignantly:

> "It seems to me absolutely intolerable that a pack of Communist Albanian brigands who are offered relief supplies free, gratis and for nothing should have the impertinence to say that they will accept our help subject to their own conditions". (43)

On July 5th, therefore, UNRRA personnel left Albania along with the ML Mission, a decision characterised later by Floud as

> " . .the final and cardinal blunder in UNRRAS's relations with ML". (44)

Later in the month, however, Oakley Hill wrote to Hoxha that he was now authorised to sign the agreement with the Democratic Government, and was invited to return to Tirana, where the Agreement was signed on August 1st. As Floud commented:

> "The Administration climbed down twice and finally accepted exactly the form that Hoxha had insisted on from the start. The only result of the Administration's stand in this case was to delay the signature of the Agreement for many weeks and to reduce its prestige in the eyes of the Albanian Government". (45)

The Albanian government's insistence on the strict limitation of the number of foreign personnel coming to Albania was met in a covering letter from Oakley Hill, which stated:

> "UNNRA will limit the number of the Mission staff as far as is compatible with discharging the Administration's responsibilities. . . With this intention, the number of the foreign personnel of the Mission who will be initially brought to Albania will be approximately forty. Should the development of relief activities in Albania require any substantial alteration of this figure, this would be done in consultation with you". (46)

The UNRRA Agreement, like that with ML, was vague on the question of payment for relief supplies, as Floud noted:

> "It would probably have been better to have made it clear to the Government from the start that there was no question of their having to pay for UNRRA supplies. The somewhat equivocal and complicated financial section of the Agreement probably gave the Albanian Government . . the impression that they might one day suddenly find themselves presented with a huge bill which they would not be able to pay". (47)

The UNRRA Mission's Relations with the Albanian Government

On August 7th, 1945 the UNRRA Mission was officially established in Tirana. The Mission's day-to-day relations with the Albanian government were carried out through the Inter-Ministerial Commission for UNRRA Supplies set up the same month - at first within the Ministry of Economy but transferred to the Prime Minister's office in April 1946.

The UNRRA records do not disguise the fact that the relations of the Mission with the Albanian government were, from its inception to at least the end of 1946, bad. As Floud declares:

> "The Albania Mission has been notorious among all UNRRA Missions for its constant difficulties with the Albanian Government". (48)

These records admit, however, that these difficulties were in no way because the Albanian government failed to fulfil its obligations under the Agreement it had concluded with UNRRA. The official history of UNRRA states:

> "The Mission, and visitors from Headquarters and ERO (European Region Office - Ed.) had little criticism for the efficiency with which the Government established and enforced a food rationing system in a country which had never experienced such a central control. . .
>
> No obstacles were put in the way of their inspecting whatever warehouse, factory or ration store they wished". (49)

In March 1946 the Director-General of UNRRA, Herbert Lehman, stated

> " . . that he wished to have it fully understood that Albania had lived up to its agreements with the Administration". (50)

and in April 1947 his successor, Major-General Lowell Rooks, after a personal

tour of inspection, told Prime Minister Hoxha that

> " . . he was convinced that distribution of UNRRA supplies had been fair and equitable in Albania". (51)

The official history of UNRRA states that relations were clouded by the Albanian government's suspicions concerning the role of the Mission:

> "The Mission . . was never able to overcome the Government's suspicion that it was simply a front for some nefarious Anglo-American purpose", (52)

but the records admit that this suspicion was not baseless:

firstly, by reason of the close initial links between UNRRA's Albanian mission and Military Liaison (Albania), with its invasion plan:

> "To this (suspicion - Ed) the Mission's early connection with ML . . lent colour". (53)

secondly, by reason of the close initial links between UNRRA's Albanian mission and the British Military Mission which arrived in Albania in March 1945:

> "One very unfortunate effect of having to rely so closely on the technical facilities of the British Military Mission was the fact that the consequent close relations with the Mission naturally tended to identify UNRRA with the British Government in the eyes of the Albanians", (54)

- links which it is admitted were quite unnecessary:

> "UNRRA could certainly have taken steps to avoid the use of the British Military Mission's radio. . . When the Military Mission finally withdrew in March 1946, the Mission was compelled to rely entirely on the Albanian Commercial Telegraph Agency for all communications with the outside world. Experience showed that these communications were, on the whole, faster and more accurate than the BMM military link". (55)

thirdly, by reason of the almost entirely American and British composition of the staff of the mission:

> "To this (suspicion - Ed.) . . the almost 100% Anglo-American composition of its staff, lent colour". (56)

fourthly, by reason of the appointment of Haskell and Oakley Smith as the first two Chiefs of Mission. Haskell, was unanimously regarded by his own staff as

> " . . in the pocket of ML and could not be relied on to stand up for UNRRA's principles in any case where these might conflict with ML's intentions". (57)

The appointment of Oakley Hill was characterised by Floud as "disastrous":

"In the eyes of the Albanian government there could not have been a single Britisher or American whose past record in Albania was more questionable. Mr. Hill had been intimately connected for ten years with the establishment and training of the Albanian Gendarmerie, one of whose main tasks before the war had been the hunting down of Communists, including members of the present Albanian Government. . . To make matters worse, Mr. Hill had been sent into Albania in 1941 . . and had made his main contacts with the well-known Zogist Abaz Kupi, who later became known as the 'Mihajlovich of Albania' and was regarded by the present Government as one of its worst enemies. . .

If the point of view is taken that it was essential for UNRRA to dissociate itself from ML, then Mr. Hill's appointment must be regarded as disastrous". (58)

fifthly, by reason of the "unsuitability" of many of the employees of the mission:

"Many of the personnel originally recruited for the Albania Mission were entirely unsuitable for work in Albania, and . . some of them were unsuitable for any work.

Apart from the obvious misfits referred to above, there were at least three separate categories of recruits who turned out in practice to be unsuitable for various different reasons.

The first of these categories consisted mainly of American men. . . Few of these had any interest in UNRRA as such, or in its ideals, and most of them were concerned solely with their own advancement. . . Most of them proved pretty useless in the field. . .

The second category . . consisted of people recruited from the British Army. . . Some of these recruits were quite unsuitable for the work. They had no interest in UNRRA as such. . . They had been overseas in the Services so long that they had automatically picked up the worst characteristics of the occupation armies. They drank too heavily, tended to dabble in black market activities (though there was very little opportunity for this in Albania) and adopted a very overbearing and irresponsible attitude towards the 'natives'. This category did a good deal more harm to the Mission than the young Americans already mentioned, for the British were far more in need of the money and therefore had to be sacked instead of resigning of their own accord.

There was a third category which differed from the two already mentioned in that they would have been suitable for employment in most Missions, but not in the Albania Mission. This category consisted of those with strong conservative or anti-Communist political views. . . The inevitable political complications of a position where UNRRA supplies were bolstering up a Communist Government . . made it inevitable that anyone with strong right-wing convictions would sooner or later be discouraged and disgusted with the position. . . Unfortunately most of them stayed on in Albania, faced with a conflict between their loyalty to the Administration and their lack of sympathy for the Albanian Government. This inevitably led to serious difficulties inside the Mission and between the Mission and the Government". (59)

A letter from the Chief of Mission admitted:

> "I am now entirely satisfied in my own mind that a large part of our difficulties with the Government have been caused by the gross irresponsibility of a group in the Mission who take their cue from Halsall. This conduct has consisted principally in three things: firstly, wild and irresponsible anti-Government talk in front of Albanians; secondly, flouting of Government orders, particularly concerning passes . .; and thirdly, extremely irresponsible and damaging intrigues with suspected Italians". (60)

In March 1946, for example, three UNRRA Mission members were involved in trying to assist two Italians named Lozzi and Petrasi, wanted by the Albanian security police, to escape from Albania:

> "Lewis, Hurley and Swain had been completely implicated in irresponsible acts which were clearly illegal and which were calculated to do very serious damage to the Mission. We realised in particular that if Lozzi and Petrasi told what they knew to the Government investigators, the position of the Mission would be seriously affected". (61)

Two of the staff members involved in this case were permitted to resign, the third was reassigned.

sixthly, by reason of the deficiencies in the Albanian relief programme, relative both to the agreed schedule and to the programmes actually operated in other countries:

> "Much embarrassment was caused to the Mission in the early days by delays in the arrival of supplies. . . These supply problems go a long way to explaining the hostility of the Government and the weakness of the Mission when faced with this hostility". (62)

> "The serious delays in the arrival of much needed supplies during 1945 had a disastrous effect on relations with the Government". (63)

> "During the first year of the Mission's work, the frequent delays in the supply schedule and the fact that the Albanian programme limped along for month after month behind all the others, seemed to confirm the Government's natural belief that it was the victim of an international conspiracy of discrimination and that the Mission was really in Albania for some sinister ulterior motive and never had any intention of bringing into the country more than a small part of the supplies promised". (64)

As late as March 1947 (the Mission withdrew in June)

> " . . only 57% of the Industrial Rehabilitation programme had arrived, and the figure for the Agricultural Rehabilitation programme was about the same". (65)

Further, the UNRRA records admit that the cause of the delays was at least partly political:

> "It can hardly be denied that these delays were in part due to political factors", (66)

and that there was

> " . . lack of sympathy with, or at least indifference to, the Albanian programme in Headquarters and ERO", (67)

together with outright obstruction on the part of the United States government. In October 1946 a disastrous flood ruined many young plants, and the Director-General approved an emergency grant of $250,000. However,

> " . . the United States Government refused to allow export of grain to the country; the Administration failed to find another source for procurements". (68)

This obstruction was at least partly the result of recommendations by the Chief of the American Mission in Albania, Joseph Jacobs:

> "Mr. Jacobs sent a number of strong cables to Washington during the spring of 1946 questioning the justification for some of the important items in the programme". (69)

This antagonism towards UNRRA's Albanian programme was increased after George Henderson replaced Jacobs as Chief of Mission in October 1946:

> "He (Henderson - Ed.) was extremely suspicious of all the Mission's activities. . .
> Before withdrawing Mr. Henderson made it clear that he would do his best to see that UNRRA withdrew also". (70)

and was shared by the Chief of the British Military Mission and most of its officers:

> "Brig. Hodgson in particular, and most of his officers, . . were strongly opposed . . to an organisation which, in their view, was bolstering up this regime with the use of British and American funds". (71)

> "Hodgson emphasised harm that had been done to US and British policy in Albania by UNRRA activities. He said present Govt. . . had been greatly helped in the exercise of authority because of these supplies. Hodgson felt most strongly that further UNRRA shipments to Albania should be immediately discontinued". (72)

seventhly, the rejection in March 1946, under pressure from the United States, of Albania's application to join UNRRA.

This will be discussed in a later chapter.

The Crisis of November/December 1946

The Agreement between UNRRA and the Albanian government contained the following clause:

> "The Administration will ensure the good conduct, integrity and moral character of its personnel, and will discharge or recall such of its personnel who violate these standards. The Government is entitled to request the Administration to discharge or recall such of the Administration's personnel who violate these standards". (73)

During the period of operation of the UNRRA Mission in Albania (August 1945 to June 1947),

> " . . the Government requested the expulsion of six foreign personnel". (74)

In October 1945, for example, the Albanian government requested the removal of a British Observer, Ruth Pennington, on the grounds that

> " . . she has strongly criticised in public the system of our distribution of the relief supplies; she has tried to cause discontent among the people and create and develop a distrust of the people towards their leaders and their Government". (75)

Although the Chief of Mission denied the charges against Pennington in a letter to the Albanian government, UNRRA records show that this denial was somewhat hypocritical:

> "Mrs. Pennington was not sympathetic to the new Government of Albania, and she was apt to be very indiscreet". (76)

> "There can be no doubt that Mrs. Pennington was quite unsuitable as an observer and was most indiscreet in her conversations with Albanians. Despite her unsuitability, it would have been extremely difficult for the Chief of Mission to have terminated her or asked her to resign, for she had considerable prestige and a large number of influential connections at home. In a sense, therefore, the Government's request for her removal came as something of a godsend, and though Mr. Oakley Hill sent a vigorous letter to the Government repudiating the charges against Mrs. Pennington, he was in reality somewhat relieved when she finally left the country". (77)

In March 1946 the Albanian government requested the expulsion of New Zealander Eric Winter, an Observer/Photographer with the Mission, on the grounds that he

> " . . has tried to discredit our regime.
> He has shown himself authoritative and overbearing with our Prefecture authorities and has spoken to the people against our leaders". (78)

Here again UNRRA records show that the charges had considerable substance, Peter Floud reported to the Chief of Mission, Oakley Hill, who was in hospital in Bari:

> "The Government have asked for Winter's removal on the grounds that he criticises the Government while out observing, and adopts an overbearing and domineering attitude. Unfortunately there is some truth in what they allege". (79)

But the most serious crisis in the relations between the UNRRA Mission and the Albanian government occurred in November/December 1946.

On November 8th, 1946 the trial opened in Tirana of a number of Albanian engineers charged with, and eventually found guilty of, sabotage in connection with the project for the drainage of the Maliq marsh near Korça. In their

evidence to the court the accused implicated two American UNRRA officials, Allen Jones, Assistant to the Director of Industrial Rehabilitation, and Frank Woodard, Director of Agricultural Rehabilitation.

On November 11th the government requested that Woodard be expelled from the country and that Jones, then in the United States, should not return to the country.

At a meeting with Hoxha on the 13th, Acting Chief of Mission Peter Floud told Prime Minister Hoxha that he took such a serious view of the above letter that he

> " . . felt compelled to cable Mr. La Guardia (Director-General of UNRRA - Ed.) stating that the Mission should be withdrawn from Albania. I have also cancelled all shipments of supplies". (80)

Hoxha replied that he objected very strongly to this decision:

> "The Government and the Albanian people realise the benefits which they have obtained from UNRRA and they appreciate the importance of UNRRA as an international organisation which has provided assistance to many countries in need. The Government's letter refers only to two individual members of the UNRRA Mission and makes no reflection whatever on the Mission itself or on UNRRA as an organisation". (81)

He said that, in view of the statements made at the trial implicating these two UNRRA employees,

> " . . the Government believed that the Mission's work would be made easier if Mr. Woodard and Mr. Jones were withdrawn"; (82)

nevertheless, he added,

> "If you assure me that you believe that Mr. Woodard and Mr. Jones have always acted correctly, then I naturally accept your assurance. I am glad that it has been possible to settle this matter amicably between us". (83)

However, Floud demanded

> " . . a categorical statement from the Government itself exonerating not only the Mission as such, but all its individual members from all the charges made at the trial". (84)

That, replied Hoxha,

> " . . would be impossible". (85)

to which Floud rejoined:

> "Under those circumstances I have no alternative but . . to recommend withdrawal". (86)

On the following day, November 14th, Floud reported by cable to Washington on his meeting with Hoxha, and stated:

"I suggest immediate cable La Guardia to Hoxha via Floud firmly endorsing my stand and stating that you will withdraw Mission unless Government quickly issues exonerating statement satisfactory to you". (87

The cable reported that he had placed an embargo on the shipment of all UNRRA supplies to Albania.

On November 15th Hoxha protested by letter against the embargo and confirmed that the Government would make no public statement exonerating UNRRA.

However, the Director-General rejected Floud's recommendation and on the 17th. Spurgeon Keeny, Chief of UNRRA's Italian Mission, arrived in Tirana as his personal representative. At Keeny's meeting with Hoxha, a six-point agreement was verbally concluded. The Albanian Government agreed to withdraw in writing its request for the removal of Woodard and Jones, while UNRRA

" . . agreed that it would not be necessary to insist on a categorical statement by the Government exonerating the Mission from the Maliq accusations". (88)

There was some difference of interpretation concerning the question of the scope of the right of UNRRA to inspect government records, and it was not until December 17th. that the government felt able to confirm in writing the six-point agreement made with Keeny. UNRRA supplies to Albania were then resumed.

Conclusion

From the time of the settlement of this crisis on, relations between the UNRRA Mission and the Albanian government greatly improved:

"The final period in the Mission's history runs from January 1947 until the end of the Mission's operations. This period passed without any serious difficulties with the Government. . .

By the time it was ready to withdraw, it can be said that relations with the Government were more friendly than would have been thought possible a year previously". (89)

According to UNRRA records, the total aid delivered to Albania by UNRRA during its period of operations (August 1945-June 1947) consisted of

"Food	70,199 tons.
Clothing, textiles and footwear	2,727 tons.
Medical and sanitation	2,019 tons.
Agricultural rehabilitation	19,857 tons.
Industrial rehabilitation	32,571 tons
Takeovers from military authorities . .	2,675 tons
	130,048 tons" (90)

to a total value equivalent to

" . . $26,250,900" (91).

When Prime Minister Hoxha received the Director-General of UNRRA, Major-General Lowell Rooks, on April 9th., 1947 he said:

> "The Government and people of Albania appreciated and were grateful for the aid given to them by UNRRA". (92)

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3. B: Ibid,
4. B: WO204/9514.
5. B: WO204/3023.
6. B: WO204/9514.
7. B: WO204/9478; p. 29.
8. U: P. C. Floud: op. cit.; p. 15.
9. U: Albania Mission Correspondence, December 1944; p. 3.
10. G. Woodbridge: "UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration", Volume 3; New York; 1950; p. 43.
11. U: B: WO204/9478; p. 29.
12. U: P. C. Floud: op. cit.; p. 20.
13. U: Ibid.
14. U: Ibid.
15. U: Ibid.; p. 21.
16. U: Ibid.
17. U: Ibid.; p. 22.
18. U: Ibid.; p. 23.
19 U: Ibid.; p. 24.
20. U: Ibid.; p. 25.
21. U: Ibid.; p. 29.
22. U: Ibid.; p. 28.
23. B: WO204/3020.
24. B: WO204/8566.
25. B: Ibid.
26. U: P. C. Floud: "Appraisal and Controversial Issues", p. 3.
27. U: Ibid.; p. 2-3.
28. U: P. C. Floud: ibid.; p. 2.
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31. B: FO371/48096/1101/R5760.
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33. U: "Agreement between ML (Albania) and Col.-General Enver Hoxha"; p. 1.
34. U: Incoming Telegram from UNRRA Mission, Tirana, May 15, 1945.
35. B: FO371/48097/1101/R13281.
36. U: "Agreement between ML (Albania) and Col.-General Enver Hoxha"; p. 1.
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39. U: "Agreement between ML (Albania) and Col.-General Enver Hoxha"; p. 1.
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41. U: A. H. Robertson: Report on Visit to Tirana, 6th - 9th June, 1945; p. 1-2.
42. U: Agreement File: D. Oakley Hill: "Report on the Withdrawal of the UNRRA Albania Mission from Albania"; July 1945; p. 1.
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45. U: Ibid., p. 6.
46. G. Woodbridge: op. cit.; p. 246.

47. P. C. Floud: "Appraisal and Controversial Issues"; p. 7.
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49. G. Woodbridge: op. cit., Volume 2; p. 182-3.
50. U: P. C. Floud: "General History of Relations with the Government"; p. 3.
51. U: L. H. Clemetson: "Chronicle of History of Relations with the Prime Minister"; p. 6.
52. G. Woodbridge: op. cit., Volume 2; p. 174.
53. G. Woodbridge: ibid.
54. P. C. Floud: "Relations with Foreign Diplomatic Missions at Tirana", p. 2.
55. Ibid.
56. G. Woodbridge: op. cit., Volume 2; p. 174.
57. U: P. C. Floud: "History of the Mission prior to Entering Albania"; p.29.
58. U: P. C. Floud: "Appraisal and Controversial Issues"; p. 10, 11.
59. U: ibid., p. 12-13.
60. U: Letters to and from Chief of Mission concerning Duty Visits outside Albania : P. C. Floud: Letter to Chief of Mission, March 27th, 1946; p. 5.
61. U: Ibid.; p. 2.
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63. U: Ibid; p. 19.
64. U: Ibid; p. 20.
65. U. Ibid; p. 23.
66. U: Ibid; p. 20.
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70. U: Ibid.; p. 5.
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78. U: E. A. Bouvady: op. cit.; p. 5.
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80. U: "Relations with the Government: The Crisis Nov-Dec 1946"; p. 1.
81. U: Ibid.; p. 2.
82. U: Ibid.; p. 3.
83. U: Ibid.
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87. U: L. H. Clemetson: "The Crisis with the Government 11th November to 17th December 1946"; p.3.
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89. U: P. C. Floud: "General History of Relations with the Government"; p. 3.
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1944-1946 :

19

TOWARDS RECOGNITION

"So near, and yet so far" - Alfred, Lord Tennyson

As has been mentioned, on May 24-28th, 1944 the 1st Anti-fascist National Liberation Congress, held in the liberated town of Përmet, elected an Anti-fascist National Liberation Council (ANLC) and proclaimed it to be the supreme legislative and executive body of the Albanian state. The ANLC, in turn, set up an Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee with the attributes of a provisional government. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of Albania, Enver Hoxha, was elected Chairman of the Committee - a post equivalent to Prime Minister.

When the news of this momentous event reached the Albanian-American community in America, many of those who had supported the campaign for a "united front" under the leadership of Zog changed their position to support recognition of the Përmet government.

In July, as Kosta Çekrezi cabled Tajar Zavalani in London, the American-Albanian Commmittee, set up jointly by Vatra and Free Albania,

> " . . decided to scrap united front resolution and ask instead recognition of Përmet set-up". (1)

Before coming out publicly in favour of the Përmet government, Çekrezi (President of Free Albania) and Gerim Panariti (President of Vatra) had a meeting on August 11th with officials of the State Department and

> " . . asked the Department's advice as to whether they should proceed with the organisation abroad or should consider that the need for such an organisation was met by the formation of the new 'government' in Albania". (2)

The officials

> " . . gave no encouragement to the delegation in their desire to obtain some form of official 'recognition'". (3)

On October 7th, however, Çekrezi and Panariti called again on the State Department and urged US recognition of the Përmet government. The request was firmly rejected on the grounds that such recognition would constitute

> " . . interference in the internal affairs of Albania", (4)

in line with a decision of the State Department adopted the same day:

> "The United States government . . will not accord any form of political recognition or support to a particular group since such action would constitute intervention in the internal affairs of the country". (5)

Nevertheless, over the next few months a campaign was mounted in favour of recognition of the new provisional government - a campaign which grew in

intensity after the 2nd session of the ANLC, held in liberated Berat on October 20th-23rd, transformed the Anti-fascist Committee into the Democratic Government of Albania. This campaign mainly took the form of letters and telegrams - principally to the US Secretary of State Cordell Hull and his successor Edward Stettinius, and to the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden - from Fan Noli, from BLO Lt.-Col. Alan Palmer, from Tajar Zavalani, from Vatra, from Free Albania, from the Albanian community in Argentina, from the Albanian community in Queensland (Australia), from the Albanian Orthodox Church in America, from the Albanian Muslim community in America, from the Albanian community in Cuba, etc., urging recognition of the new Albanian government. (6)

A counter-campaign, urging the Allied governments not to recognise the new Albanian government, was, naturally waged by such people as Peter Kolonia (Zog's personal representative in the USA), by Midhat Frasheri in the name of Balli Kombetar, by Sali Muftija in the name of Legaliteti, etc. (7)

On the side of this counter-campaign the Greek government threw its weight. In December 1944 the Greek Ambassador to the United States, Cimon Diamantopoulos, read to State Department officials a telegram from the Greek government

> " . . expressing its vigorous opposition to the formation of a Government in Albania by Hoxha". (8)

Nevertheless, the campaign for recognition of the Albanian government aroused such concern in London that on October 29th, 1944 the British Foreign Office felt it necessary to communicate with the British Embassies in Washington and Moscow, saying:

> "Please inform Government to which you are accredited that in the present confused situation in Albania we do not propose to recognise the provisional government set up by NLF. You should express the hope that the Government to which you are accredited will concur in this course". (9)

The State Department replied to the inquiry of the British Embassy in Washington on November 21st.:

> "The Department of State concurs in the view of the British Government that any request for recognition of the provisional government formed at Berat which may be received at this time should not be granted. . . The Department will be disposed to give sympathetic consideration to a request for de jure recognition by an Albanian Government only at such a time as it may be able to demonstrate that it is non-Fascist in character, that it has established its authority over the country, that it represents the will of the people and is prepared to fulfil its international obligations". (10)

On January 12th, 1945 the British Embassy in Washington, on behalf of the British government, thanked the State Department for its memorandum of November 21st, and said:

> "His Majesty's Government agree that before de jure recognition can be granted to any Albanian Government, it should be in a position to fulfil the conditions which the State Department have

put forward". (11)

While these exchanges between London and Washington were proceeding, the British Foreign Office had been pursuing a policy of seeking to "broaden" the Albanian government so as to make it more acceptable in London. On November 21st, 1944 the Foreign Office proposed to the Resident Minister's office in Caserta:

> "Hoxha might be warned that if and when the time comes for His Majesty's Government to consider recognising any NLF Government, much will depend on whether we can feel assured that it broadly represents the Albanian people and that he would therefore be well advised to associate with the NLF such persons as the Kryeziu brothers who have given outstanding proof of their patriotism". (12)

This was followed by a directive to BLO Alan Palmer, urging him to strive to secure the inclusion in the NLF

> " . . of such a man as Gani KRYEZIU and others", (13)

since, as a BLO in Berat pointed out,

> " . . this family . . is genuinely pro-British and has always worked on our behalf". (14)

On January 2nd, 1945 Prime Minister Hoxha addressed formal Notes to the governments of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union requesting

> " . . that the Democratic Government of Albania be recognised by the great Anglo-Soviet-American allies, and that diplomatic relations be established between your governments and our government". (15)

Duggald Stewart, Administrative Assistant at the British Foreign Office, summed up the official British attitude on this question in a minute of March 14th:

> "It seems that we shall have to rely on withholding political recognition or on attaching conditions to it as our only means of overturning or modifying Hoxha's regime". (16)

The British Military Mission

The British government had decided on December 24th, 1944

> " . . to withdraw the few British Liaison Officers at present with NLF and to send in their place a military mission headed by a Brigadier under the orders of AFHQ". (17)

and in January Brigadier Edward Hodgson was appointed to head the mission.

British Liaison Officer Lt.-Colonel Alan Palmer saw Prime Minister Hoxha on January 30th and asked for the Albanian government's approval for the mission to enter Albania. This was given on March 6th.

Following a request from the Democratic Governmnent of Albania that it should be invited to attend the San Francisco Conference - due to be held in

April-June 1945 to set up the United Nations Organisation, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was asked in the House of Commons on March 14th:

> "Whether he has yet received a request for the recognition of the Albanian Government set up in Tirana under General Enver Hoxha; and whether it is proposed to invite this government to send a representative to the Conference at San Francisco". (18)

Eden replied:

> "His Majesty's Government have recently received such a request. They consider, however, that the situation in Albania is at present too obscure to justify recognition of the present administration as a Government. The answer to the second part of the question is 'No, sir'. . .
>
> A British Military Mission is shortly to arrive in Albania which will keep His Majesty's Government informed". (19)

US Secretary of State Edward Stettinius confirmed on April 7th that invitations to the San Francisco Conference were being extended

> " . . only to members of the United Nations, which include only recognised governments. . . In view of these considerations, . . it (the State Department - Ed.) is not in a position to support his request for Albanian representation at the forthcoming conference". (20)

The British Military Mission arrived in Tirana on March 21st and was

> " . . enthusiastically welcomed by large crowds". (21)

Brigadier Hodgson met Hoxha on March 22nd and reported that the latter was

> " . . most friendly and appreciative of past British assistance", (22)

and had assured him

> " . . that he wanted Brigadier Hodgson to go anywhere he liked and that there would be no restriction of any kind". (23)

According to the Head of the OSS Mission in Albania, Thomas Stefani, by the end of April Hodgson had already made up his mind to recommend that the Democratic Government should not be recognised:

> "Brigadier Hodgson has informed me that he is convinced that the present government as now organised should not be recognised. . . I am convinced that the British decision has been made already so far as Hodgson is concerned". (24)

On April 30th Hodgson reported on the prospects of the British Government's demands for the inclusion of opposition elements in the Democratic Government, implying that military force should be employed to force acceptance of the demands:

"The NLF would be unlikely to agree to such Allied demands. . . The backing of armed force or the threat of armed action by the Western Allies would probably be necessary to force their hand in the event of RUSSIA not being willing herself to present the demands. . .

Any armed opposition by NLF, which would be so inferior in quality to Allied force and so unsympathetically regarded by the bulk of the Albanian people, should not be of long duration". (25)

In its first report, dated May 19th, 1945, the US Mission noted:

"There . . seems to be a general feeling of suspicion against the British in Albania, as the Albanian authorities consider them almost as spies for the opposition. In view of the fact that Brigadier DEP Hodgson of the British Military Mission talks about Allied military intervention in Albania either to overthrow the present regime or to compel it to accept certain opposition members in the government, this attitude towards the British is not strange. . .

The Brigadier was very outspoken in his opposition to the present regime which, he stated, the people of Albania do not want and are praying that Great Britain and the United States will intervene to bring about its downfall. . . He said that . . if the United States and Great Britain sent a few troops into Albania, he was certain that the opposition would join in and the present regime quickly eliminated". (26)

Hodgson expressed this view more bluntly to the Chief of the United States mission, Joseph Jacobs, as the latter reported to Washington on May 28th:

"The Brigadier then said that . . he was sure that if a small force of Allied troops landed in Albania there would be a grand uprising and the present regime overthrown". (27)

and Stefani of the OSS reported similarly on the following day:

"Since the Brigadier's return from Caserta, we note his emphasis . . on the need for armed intervention". (28)

On June 6th Jacobs was again reporting:

"Brigadier Hodgson . . is definitely opposed to recognition and not only believes that it (the Albanian government - Ed.) will fall because of Albanian opposition and internal dissension, but also that assistance should be given to bring about that downfall". (29)

An OSS report of May 30th. pointed out that the OSS could find no trace of the "powerful opposition" to the Democratic Government alleged by Hodgson to exist:

"Information from OSS observers completely discredits this, although diligent efforts were made to check it". (30)

and this was confirmed by Jacobs on June 8th:

"My office and that of OSS have so far failed to find as much evidence as the British Military Mission seems to have found. As everyone connected with the British Military Mission is outspokenly

against the present regime, . . we have a feeling that the British reports on this subject are based more on a desire to discover opposition than on concrete facts. . . Our findings have failed to reveal any group that is definitely organised for opposition purposes; the opposition consists rather of various dissident segments of the population which are not organised". (31)

Meanwhile, elements opposed to the Democratic Government were beginning to organise in Britain. On May 23rd, 1945 Sir Andrew Ryan had an interview with Zog, who told him that he had been approached by Mary Herbert and

" . . a group of Albanians in this country" (32)

regarding the possible creation of

". . an Albanian Committee". (33)

On this development Ryan commented:

"It seemed fairly obvious that the idea was to foment opposition both at home and abroad to the HOXHA regime". (34)

An intelligence report in July declared

"The following persons might be said to constitute the nucleus of an anti-Hoxha movement:
Tajar ZAVALANI;
Selma ZAVALANI, his wife;
Anton LOGORECI;
Perlat BOGDO;
Dervish DUMA;
Katin Paskal SARAÇI" (35)

But by mid-June 1945 the British Foreign Office had reached the conclusion that military intervention in Albania was impracticable. The British Embassy in Washington informed the US State Department of this decision in an Aide Memoire of June 21st:

"The view of the Foreign Office is that, although there are ample reasons for disliking the Hoxha regime and its methods, His Majesty's Government would not be justified in intervening against it". (36)

Nevertheless, the British Military Mission continued to develop contacts with opposition elements and to reduce official contacts with the Albanian authorities to the minimum. On July 5th the OSS reported from Tirana:

"Hodgson and his aides are still contacting elements who are unsympathetic to the regime. No efforts are being made to undertake a serious study of the situation. At no time has Hodgson or anyone else from BMM approached the various Ministers relative to securing information on the conduct of the country". (37)

On July 6th Jacobs was equally critical of the British Military Mission:

"Allowances should be made for a very definite trend of opinion on the part of the members of that Mission that the present regime

in control in Albania should not be recognised and that, therefore, the Mission reports only the worst side of the regime, which it at times exaggerates. In other words, the Mission is inclined to find no good whatsoever in the activities of the present regime". (38)

The United States Mission

In contrast to London, Washington decided not to send a military mission on the grounds that

> " . . Albania lies outside the sphere of United States military interest. . .
> The OSS party now in readiness to go into Albania is adequate for intelligence requirements". (39)

However, on March 16th, 1945 US Secretary of State Edward Stettinius told a press conference:

> "In order for the United States Government to consider the matter of recognition it would have to have detailed information upon the conditions and developments in Albania", (40)

and for this purpose,

> " . . representatives of the State department would visit Albania". (41)

The request for the reception of such a civilian mission was made to the Albanian government on March 20th, and accepted

> " . . with satisfaction". (42)

On May 8th, 1945 the US Special Mission arrived in Tirana. It was led by Special Service Officer Joseph Jacobs. Harry Fultz, formerly with the OSS in Bari, was a member of the Mission.

In its first report, dated May 19th, the Mission presented an impression of the situation in Albania which was generally favourable:

> "Having seen all but one of the members of the cabinet, I must say that I am favourably impressed with their sincerity and definite interest in the welfare of their country. They are intelligent persons. . .
> A crowd of several thousand persons appeared in front of the Legation building, shouting and cheering. . . There were many cheers for President Truman and some shouting for recognition. A small group of representatives from the crowd came into the front yard of the legation to express their joy over the victory and appreciation of the part played by the United States". (43)

Back in the United States, a convention of Free Albania was held in Boston on May 20th, 1945. Membership of the organisation had fallen off sharply, and Çekrezi announced that he was withdrawing from active participation in in it. Zog told Sir Andrew Ryan on May 23rd that Çekrezi was opposed to Free Albania's support of the Democratic Government in Albania. (44) According to a memorandum of the British Embassy in Washington in August, Çekrezi had been "ousted" from the leadership. (45)

On May 24th Jacobs characterised the officials of the new regime as

" . . a sincere, patriotic group of individuals who are going to be difficult to deal with". (46)

In a report dated June 20th, 1945 Jacobs attempted an analysis of the opposition elements within Albania:

"Opposition to the present regime . . seems to centre in those elements which profited most in a material way from the Italian and German occupations - merchants, former government officials, army officers, large landowners and other propertied classes who find their personal interests and fortunes threatened by the announced objectives of the NLF programme. . . They now suddenly find themselves bereft of such outward support and on looking inward they find little or no support among their own people, who long since have learned how little they can expect from them.

Lacking the support of Italian and German force of arms, they now seem to turn in desperation to Allied intervention and pray for the British and American armies to come in and protect them in the comfort and enjoyment of whatever accumulations resulted to them from the previous regimes, and to restore to them privileges which once were theirs. . .

It is an opposition based, not on political principles, but on personal advantages and privileges. The issue of free elections does not enter into its thinking. . .

They profess adherence to principles of western democracy because it now seems expedient to do so, not because they believe in such principles". (47)

On July 1st the US Mission noted in its preliminary report:

"The NLF regime enjoys greater popular support than any opposition group. Opposition elements are poorly organised and have no positive programme.

The NLF is the only movement which effectively resisted the Fascist invaders.

Generally speaking, the NLF leaders are patriotic and well-intentioned. They are more considerate of the well-being of the people than was any previous Albanian regime. That they have done as much as they have thus far is remarkable, considering their inexperience in government." (48)

Agreement on Conditional Recognition

As it became clear that the US Special Mission in Albania was adopting a generally favourable view of the situation in Albania, the British Foreign Office expressed concern in its Aide Memoire to Washington of June 21st:

"His Majesty's Government consider that they are under no obligation to support Hoxha and if . ., as has been suggested in Brigadier Hodgson's report, . . British recognition would have a decisive effect in maintaining Hoxha's regime in power, the Foreign Office would see no reason for hastening recognition. . .

His Majesty's Government are most anxious to concert with the United States Government their policy in regard to recognition and support of the present Albanian Government". (49)

On July 1st the US Mission submitted its preliminary report which recommended, if possible, simultaneous British, US and Soviet recognition of the Democratic Government of Albania on two conditions, namely:

> " . . a) . . on condition . . that elections according to some prescribed formula will be held within a reasonable time . ., and b) provided that . . guarantees are given by the Albanian authorities . . respecting diplomatic and consular rights, privileges and immunities". (50)

The State Department replied to the British Aide Mémoire on July 30th:

> "The United States Government shares the desire of the British Government that their respective policies on the question of Albanian recognition should be concerted. As yet the Department of State has not received the final report of the head of the American Mission in Albania, Mr. Joseph E. Jacobs. . . In these circumstances, the Department is not now in a position to offer any definite statement of views concerning recognition of an Albanian Government". (51)

On August 14th the Greek Ambassador in London, Thanassis Aghnides, complained to Sir Orme Sargent at the Foreign Office that Joseph Jacobs's

> " . . impartiality is open to question" (52)

in relation to his report on conditions in southern Albania. Denis Laskey commented on this allegation:

> "The real reason for their (the Greek government's - Ed.) complaints is obviously that Mr. Jacobs does not bear out their own allegations about the persecution of the Greek minority in Southern Albania. Our information is equally unfavourable to the Greek case". (53)

The US Mission issued its final report on August 15th. Its principal recommendation was almost identical with that made in its preliminary report:

> "The present regime should be recognised by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union and recognition should be accorded simultaneously at the earliest possible date, subject to the following conditions and restrictions:
>
> FIRST, the regime recognised shall undertake to hold a general election . . in an atmosphere of perfect freedom and that all parties and all persons, whether for or against the government, shall be permitted to participate without threats or fear during or after the elections; . .
>
> SECOND, there should be an exchange of notes in which the Albanian authorities shall undertake, pending negotiation of treaties, to guarantee to the diplomatic and consular representatives of the three powers diplomatic rights and privileges usually extended under international law". (54)

The British Foreign Office took the global view that Britain, greatly weakened by the Second World War, must in the post-war period move into a position of "special relationship" - in practice, subservience - to the United States. It was also bound by the decision of the Crimea Conference of Feb-

ruary 1945 between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. which had pledged the Allied Powers to seek to bring about the formation of

> " . . interim Governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements and pledged to the earliest possible establishmnent through free elections of Governments responsive to the will of the people". (55)

On October 4th, 1945, therefore, Cavendish Cannon, a State Department official in London for the meeting there of the Council of Foreign Ministers, accompanied by Joseph Jacobs, met at the Foreign Office with William Hayter, Chief of its Balkan Section, and Denis Laskey, Desk Officer for Albania and Greece. The British officials were asked whether, if an approach were made from Washington for the conditional recognition of the Albanian government along the lines recommended by the US Mission, there would be

> " . . serious objections" (56)

in London.

As Jacobs reported:

> "Much to my surprise, we found that they were prepared to go along with us on the recognition of Albania as expeditiously as possible. . . We had very smooth sailing in our discussions". (57)

After the meeting, the Foreign Office confirmed to the US Delegation to the Council of Foreign Ministers that

> " . . if such an approach were to be made to us, it would be favourably received". (58)

The Foreign Office, however, had reason to doubt that the condition of "free elections" would be fulfilled, basing themselves on Brigadier Hodgson's declared view that

> " . . the NLF movement . . obtains its authority in the country purely by force of arms. . .
> Elections . . would be so controlled that the Communist Party would gain an overwhelming majority. No elements opposing Hoxha would be allowed even a chance". (59)

On October 13th, therefore, US Secretary of State James Byrnes instructed the US Embassies in London and Moscow to inform the governments to which they were accredited that it was the intention of the US government to recognise the existing authorities in Albania as the Provisional Government of Albania provided that

> " . . the Albanian authorities have engaged themselves to hold free elections . . to a constituent assembly". (60)

and proposing a common approach to the Albanian government along these lines.

Hayter replied accepting the US proposal, but adding:

"We suggest . . that the Greek Government should be informed in advance, and should also be told that recognition will not prejudice the future settlement of territorial questions between Greece and Albania", (61)

while Andrei Vishinsky, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, accepted on behalf of the Soviet government, but proposed that the recognition should be unconditional:

"In the opinion of the Soviet Government there is no basis for demanding that the provisional Albanian government undertake any obligations to the Governments of the Allied Powers in respect of methods of conducting the forthcoming elections". (62)

On November 2nd Byrnes informed the US Embassies in London and Moscow that

" . . agreement having been reached among Soviet, Britain and US governments on basic point that recognition should be accorded present Albanian regime, . . Department suggest that respective Allied notes be communicated to Hoxha on November 10". (63)

This date was accepted by the British Foreign Office and the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs on November 7th. (64, 65).

On November 8th the US State Department instructed its Acting Representative in Tirana, Harry Fultz, to present a Note to the Albanian government as follows:

"The Government of the United States .. has instructed me to inform you of its readiness to enter into diplomatic relations with the existing regime in Albania. . .

The United States Government . . requests assurances that the forthcoming elections for a constituent assembly shall be held on a genuinely free basis, with secret ballot and without threats or intimidation; that all democratic individuals and groups in Albania shall enjoy freedom of speech and the right lawfully to be present and support their candidates; and that foreign press correspondents shall be permitted to enter Albania to observe and report freely on the elections and the work of the constituent assembly". (66)

However, the American directive added a new condition to those which had been agreed with the British Foreign Office:

"The Government of the United States also desires that the Albanian authorities shall confirm that treaties and agreements which were in force between the United States and Albania on April 7, 1939, remain valid. . .

Upon receipt of the assurances requested, the government of the United States will be prepared to proceed with the exchange of diplomatic representatives". (67)

This directive was formally conveyed to the Albanian government on November 10th, along with a British Note which read:

> "His Majesty's Government have . . decided to accord such recognition to present Albanian Administration on the understanding that it is their intention to hold free elections at an early date so that a truly representative government may be formed. . .
>
> On receipt of assurances on above points, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to resume diplomatic relations with the Albanian Government and to exchange diplomatic representatives", (68)

adding the usual reservation about Albania's frontiers:

> "His Majesty's Government desires it to be understood by Albanian Administration that their decision to recognise the Albanian Administration as Provisional Government of Albania in no way prejudices the eventual separate consideration of other questions of an international character which might affect Albania". (69)

A Soviet Note offering unconditional recognition was handed over independently.

The Soviet and British proposals were accepted by the Albanian government on the following day, Prime Minister Hoxha writing to Hodgson:

> "We received with great satisfaction the notification of the decisions which HBM Government has made to accord recognition to our Democratic Government and its readiness to exchange diplomatic representatives", (70)

and giving the requested assurances concerning elections and the admission of foreign correspondents.

The Foreign Office informed Ryan on November 26th that, in view of British recognition of the Tirana government, it was no longer appropriate for him to act as the FO's liaison officer with Zog. (71) Calling on Zog on the 28th to inform him of this decision, Ryan was told by the ex-king that he wished to move to Egypt with his "court". (72)

On December 10th the Albanian government notified Hodgson orally that they were

> " . . pleased to accept Mr. Rapp (Thomas Rapp, then Consul-General in Salonika - Ed.) as His Majesty's Minister", (73)

as proposed by the British government.

The British government's action of November 10th, 1945 was interpreted by the Foreign Office as an official act of recognition:

> "HMG recognise the Albanian Government both de facto and de jure". (74)

Greek Opposition to Recognition

The Greek government was indignant at the moves towards recognition of the Albanian government, protesting to London and Washington on November 1st:

"The Greek government has learned with astonishment of the impending recognition of the regime of Enver Hoxha, contrary to previous assurances. Such action will inevitably provoke an understandable disappointment of the Greek Government and people. . .

The Greek Government requests the Allied Governments to reconsider the matter of Hoxha's recognition". (75)

Later in the month further protests were made in Notes expressing the Greek government's objections to the holding of elections in southern Albania:

"At the very least, Northern Epirus should have been placed under Allied military control, pending its incorporation in the State of Greece. The mere act of holding elections in that province - such elections to be ordered by the Albanian State - constitutes a violation of Greece's rights". (76)

On December 12th. the State Department addressed a memorandum to the Greek Embassy in Washington, saying:

"The United States Government has at no time given the Greek Government assurances . . with regard to recognition of the existing Albanian authorities. . .

The United States Government assures the Greek Government that the United States proposal looking to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Albania in no way prejudices consideration of Greek claims in Southern Albania (Northern Epirus). . . The United States Government also considers that the elections which were held in Albania on December 2, 1945, do not in any way prejudice consideration of Greek claims to this territory". (77)

The Elections

The elections for a Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution for Albania took place on December 2nd, 1945. According to official figures, 90% of the electorate took part in the voting, of which 93% voted for candidates of the Democratic Front. (78)

The United States Mission reported:

"These elections appear to have been conducted in a satisfactory manner and can, therefore, be accepted as an expression of the will of the majority of the people of Albania who took the trouble to express their views in this election. This is not only the opinion of this Mission but also of the press correspondents who came to Albania to observe the elections, as well as the opinion of the British Military Mission here". (79)

while Jacobs himself reported to the State Department on December 12th.:

"I am of opinion that assurances requested . . and given in Hoxha's reply . . with respect to elections have been fulfilled. . . Election was conducted by secret methods without evidence of threats or intimidation and, although opposition presented no candidates, it could have done so. Moreover, in absence of opposition candidates regime, in order to give opposition opportunity to register dissent, provided special ballot box for that purpose at every polling booth". (80)

The British Military Mission concurred in the American assessment:

"During the voting no intimidation whatever was noticeable. The authorities responsible for organising the booths obeyed the election laws conscientiously. . .

The system of voting worked well. . .

No armed personnel were permitted on the voting premises.

It became apparent a week before the elections that the Opposition lacked the courage, programme, organisational powers, unity and finally the time to express itself in any way. . .

The actual laws for the elections were well devised and fairly executed". (81)

"British Mission were given freedom to observe the elections and . . members of his Mission visited many polling booths from Shkodra to Vlora.

The voting proceeded in a cheerful and orderly manner and was strictly according to laws. There was no sign of intimidation at polling booths and a high per cent of the electorate voted". (82)

1. B:FO371/43558/571/R11785.
2. A: M1211/15/875.00/8-1144.
3. A: ibid.
4. A: M1211/16/875.01/10-744.
5. A: ibid.
6. A: M1211/16/875.01/10-744, 11-2644, 11-2944, 11-3044, 12-144.
   B: FO371/43556/71/R21988.
   FO371/43558/571/R17936, R19047, R20468.
   FO371/43654/2179/R20900.
   FO371/48078/46/R984, R1606, R1607.
   FO371/48079/46/R3264.
   FO371/48080/46/R6900, R7575, R7663.
   FO371/48083/46/R15900.
   FO371/48098/1475/R1475.
7. A: 59/2051/711.75/10-2444.
   59/2052/711.79/10-244.
   B: FO371/48078/46/R1751.
8. A: M1211/16/875.01/12-644.
9. B: FO371/43564/2179/R17142.
10. A: M1211/16/875.01/11-364.
11. A: M1211/16/875.01/1-2545.
12. B: FO371/43571/13194/R18570.
13. B: FO371/43556/71/R21836.
14. B: FO371/43571/13194/R17111.
15. E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 1; Tirana; 1974; p. 416.
16. B: FO371/48096/1101/R4566.
17. B: FO371/48078/46/R46.
18. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series, Volume 409; col. 213.
19. Ibid.
20. A: 84/5/910/4-745.
21. B: FO371/48078/77/R5566.
22. B: FO371/48078/77/R5647.
23. B: ibid.
24. A: 84/7/801/4-2945.

25. A: 59/6866/875.01/5-2345.
26. A: 59/6866/875.01/5-1945.
27. A: 59/6866/875.01/6-245.
28. A: 84/7/OSS Reports and Messages/5-2945.
29. A: 59/6865/875.00/6-645.
30. A: 84/7/Tirana Mission 1945-46/5-3045.
31. A: 59/6866/875.01/6-845.
32. B: FO371/48081/46/R9228.
33. B: ibid.
34. B: ibid.
35. B: FO371/48082/46/R12746.
36. A: 84/7/801/21-645.
37. A: 84/7/OSS Reports and Messages/7-545.
38. A: 59/6865/875.00/7-645.
39. A: 165/ABC334.
40. B: FO371/48080/46/R5809.
41. B: ibid.
42. A: 84/7/801.
43. A: 59/6866/875.01/5-1945.
44. B: FO371/48081/46/R9228.
45. B: FO371/48104/3492/R13806.
46. A: 59/6865/875.00/5-2645.
47. A: 84/7/801/6-2045.
48. A: 84/7/801/7-145.
49. A: 84/7/801/21-645.
50. A: 84/7/801.
51. A: 84/7/801/875.00/6-2145.
52. B: FO371/48094/544/R13808.
53. B: ibid.
54. A: 59/6865/875.00/8-1545.
55. "Keesing's Contemporary Archives", Volume 5; p. 6991.
56. B: FO371/48084/46/R17157.
57. A: 84/7/Recognition II/10-145.
58. B: FO371/48084/46/R17157.
59. B: FO371/48081/46/R9541.
60. A: 84/7/Recognition II/10-1345.
61. A: 84/7/Recognition II/10-1445.
62. B: FO371/48084/46/R18675.
63. A: 84/7/Recognition II/11-245.
64. B: FO371/48084/46/R18699.
65. A: 59/3492/711.75/11-64.
66. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/11-845.
67. A: ibid.
68. A: 84/7/801/Recognition II/11-945.
69. A: ibid.
70. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/11-1145.
71. B: FO371/48100/1664/R20293.
72. B: FO371/48100/1664/R20394.
73. B: FO371/48086/46/R21172.
74. B: FO371/72107/1224/R14500.
75. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/11-145.
76. B: FO371/48085/46/R19737.
77. A: 59/6866/875.01/11-1745.
78. "History of the Party of Labour of Albania"; Tirana; 1982; p. 202.
79. A: 59/6865/875.00/12-1945.
80. A: 59/6865/875.00/12-1145.
81. B: FO371/48086/46/R21328.

82. B: FO371/48086/46/R20660.

1945-46 :

20

THE FROST

"It grew wondrous cold" - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Withdrawal of the British Military Mission

The British Military Mission spared no effort to make contact with such dissident elements as it could find. In June 1945 it reported meetings with two opposition organisations. The first - referred to as "Organisation A" - had as its liaison officer Anastas Papapostoli. Papapostoli, also known as "Larry Post", had been a student at Harry Fultz's American Technical School in Tirana before going to the United States and joining the OSS. The second - referred to as "Organisation B" - had among its leaders Muharrem Bajraktari, Fiqri Dine, Prenk Previsi and Mark Markagjoni (whose activitiers have already been referred to), together with Hysni Dema, who had been in charge of the German-controlled operations against the NLF in the South. (1)

In October 1945 the BMM reported the establishment of contact with a third opposition organisation, referred to as "Organisation C". (2)

A Foreign Office minute by Acting 1st Secretary William Hayter on June 28th, 1945 noted:

> "The Military Mission would like us to give the opposition groups the support they ask for", (3)

while a US State Department report of July 21st stated:

> "Brigadier Hodgson . . continues openly to encourage the 'reactionaries'", (4)

and the Final Report of the US Mission in Albania, dated August, declared:

> "The present regime . . has come to suspect that the British authorities, especially the British military authorities, are actively supporting the conservative group and desire to see the downfall of the present regime. In all due frankness, the actions of some British representatives give cause for suspicion. . . .
> The British representatives in Tirana . . have given systematic and certainly moral encouragement to the opposition". (5)

As the subversive activities of the British Military Mission became obvious to the Albanian authorities, it began to complain that restrictions were being placed on its activities. On February 11th, 1946 it was reporting to London:

> "The British Military Mission at first enjoyed some measure of liberty, which was soon, however, reduced to its present state". (6)

and ten days later was warning;

> "Relations with BMM may be said to have reached their lowest level. . . The probability exists that when the next TIRANA Opposition trials are held, Britain and the USA will be pilloried freely,

particularly since the efforts of the two parties involved ("Albanian Unity" and the "Christian Democrats" - Ed.) to interest His Majesty's Government and the American Government are well known. . . . It is additionally unfortunate that two Albanian UNRRA employees have been arrested, and an ex-OSS agent named Larry POST". (7)

On March 13th Caserta was reporting to the Foreign Office on the arrest of former opposition deputy Gjergj Kokoshi:

"Visit of Kokoshi to British Military Mission at the time of the elections to ask for their postponement may be used to try to prove connection with Military Mission. . . .

Office-in-charge of Mission (Major Maxwell Arnot, Acting Head of the Mission - Ed.) believes that British Military Mission officers will be personally implicated at the trial". (8)

Five days later, on March 18th, the Foreign Office was informed by Caserta:

"A rather alarmist telegram has arrived from Major Arnot in which he reports that the situation has continued to deteriorate. . . . He has urgently requested authority to send out of the country personnel of the Military Mission whom he considers redundant in the present circumstances. . . .

He himself considers that the safety of members of the Mission may be endangered if they remain". (9)

On March 22nd Mediterranean GHQ was informing the British War Office of the nervousness about its position expressed by the British Military Mission in Albania:

"We have none of the privileges, status or even bargaining power of a diplomatic body. We are simply soldiers in hostile country. Should crisis occur, Albanian government may well detain us here and thus prospect extremely grim". (10)

and was advising the War Office that it was

". . strongly of the opinion that the BMM should be withdrawn forthwith and request immediate concurrence". (11)

Hayter minuted on the 25th:

"Major Arnot has got into a slight panic. He thinks that his name may be brought into some political trials which are going on in Albania at present and that the Albanian Government might try to prevent him and his staff from leaving the country. The War Office have become infected by this panic. . . .

It is possible . . . that the persons involved in this trial may be able to say with truth that they have had some contact with the Mission". (12)

Next day the Foreign Office was informed by the US Embassy in London:

"The State Department have no objection to withdrawal of British Military Mission. . . .

fashion, without signs of panic or of guilty conscience". (13)

and on the day after that (the 27th) the Foreign Office informed the British Embassy in Paris:

"The Military Mission has been instructed to withdraw" (14)

and asked it to request the French government to look after the Mission's furniture. A Foreign Office brief for the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris (dated April 16th) noted that this had been done

" . . at the request of the War Office" (15)

Caserta informed the Foreign Office on April 2nd:

"Albanian Government have now given permission for all members of staff of Mission to leave Albania and for a ship to enter Durrës to fetch them". (16)

and a few days later:

"British Military Mission at Tirana was withdrawn without incident on April 6th". (17)

In June Dayrell Oakley-Hill, Head of the UNRRA Mission in Albania, told the Foreign Office:

"It is in my opinion regrettable that Great Britain was not early represented by a Diplomatic, instead of a Military Mission. A friendly approach in place of the antagonistic, even blustering, spirit which was in fact adopted . . would have preserved the good will towards Great Britain . . which has now suffered a great setback. This is not merely my personal view, but is supported by almost the whole of the UNRRA Mission". (18)

And in October Prime Minister Enver Hoxha, in a speech to the General Council of the Democratic Front (as the NLF was now renamed) denied reports circulating abroad that the Albanian Government had imposed restrictions on the legitimate movement of the British Military Mission, or had insisted on its withdrawal:

"Following the recognition of the Albanian government by the British government, the British Military Mission accredited to our General Staff ceased functioning and left the country, in accordance with the wishes of the Mediterranean High Command and the British government; it is quite untrue that it was we who insisted on its departure. . . .

The British Military Mission was not only allowed to travel freely about Albania 'on its business', as the members of the mission put it, but its members also went on picnics and hunting expeditions. No obstacles were ever put in its way, and they even went where they should not have gone, to places which had nothing to do with 'their business'". (19)

That the charges of subversive activity made against the British Military Mission were essentially true was admitted to the Foreign Office by the officers concerned. On June 30th, 1946 Maxwell Arnot informed the Foreign

Office:

> "The statements made in the Albanian trials are, in a sense, correct. That is, they undoubtedly represent the implications drawn from my remarks by the accused Albanians. . . .
>
> I expect there is much more to come out still about my contacts with other accused men - Kokoshi, Asllani, Shaban Ballo, Musina Kokolari (a woman), Larry Post and possibly even Professor Lozzi, amongst others. . . I was very glad to leave Albania". (20)

and on July 2nd Alan Palmer (writing from his family firm, the biscuit manufacturers Huntley and Palmer) admitted:

> "It is correct that Major Smith . . and I met the two accused Qenan Dibra and Abdulla Muça, and also Kristo Xhouga. . . .
>
> Contact with Organisation A was maintained only through Anastas Papapostoli (Larry Post). . . Similarly contact was maintained with Organisation B through their Liaison Officer". (21)

Roger Pinsent, now in charge of the Albanian desk at the Foreign Office, minuted on July 9th:

> "The BMM in Albania obviously had to maintain contact with opposition elements in Albania in order to gain information". (22)

and again on the 18th, referring to a numbered list of Albanians on trial in Albania:

> "No. 12 ('Larry Post') was the BMM's liaison with 'Organisation A'. Qenan Dibra is another accused . . who had contact with Col. Palmer of BMM, who also saw Abdulla Muça (No. 6) and Profi Çoka (No. 7).
>
> Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 12 and 17 all contacted Major Arnot at one time or another". (23)

Mr. Rapp is "Delayed"

On February 15th, 1946 the British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Halifax, informed the Foreign Office that the United States government intended to delay recognition of the People's Republic of Albania, which had been proclaimed on January 11th by the Constituent Assembly elected in December 1945. The communication passed on the hope of the US State Department that the British Foreign Office would therefore delay the departure for Albania of the British Minister Designate, Thomas Rapp:

> "State Department are now determined to go slow . . .
>
> State Department hope that in the circumstances you may decide to delay Mr. Rapp's departure" (24)

Three days later Alexander Kirk, the US political adviser to Allied Forces Headquarters at Caserta, was reporting to the State Department:

> "Rapp has received instructions from Foreign Office to delay departure from Italy". (25)

On the 21st Philip Broad, Kirk's British counterpart in Caserta, informed the Foreign Office:

"Albanian Government have agreed to accept members of Mr. Rapp's party with the exception of Major Smith (Major Victor Smith, who had served with the British Military Mission and had been implicated in the Albanian treason trials - Ed.)", (26)

on which Michael Williams, Acting 1st Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented:

"It (the refusal of a visa to Smith - Ed.) is a gross impertinence on the part of General Hoxha's Government. . . I submit that we should not send Mr. Rapp into Albania until the Albanian Government withdraw their veto on Major Smith and their expulsion order against the British War Graves party, and at the same time give us assurances that no obstacles will be placed in the way of the diplomatic mission's work". (27)

That this was a mere pretext to disguise London's subservience to Washington's wishes was made clear in the same minute:

"The United States Government felt obliged to send in a very strong protest. . . . Consequently, we thought it best to hold up Mr. Rapp's entry into the country pending discussion of the situation with the Americans". (28)

On March 13th, however, the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested the agreement of the British government to the appointment of Vasil Konomi as Minister in London. (29)

Following the line proposed in Williams's minute, on March 21st a British note to Albania declared:

"His Majesty's Government have been led to the conclusion that the Albanian Government are not, in fact, anxious for the resumption of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom. Pending receipt of satisfactory assurances in this matter, His Majesty's Government would not propose to instruct His Majesty's Minister-Designate to proceed to his post. The points on which His Majesty's Government particularly require assurances are that facilities shall be given to enable the work of concentrating and registering British war graves to be completed; that Major Smith will be permitted to enter Albania with Mr. Rapp; that Mr. Rapp, on proceeding to his post, will receive from the Albanian Government all normal facilities, privileges and immunities granted to diplomatic representatives in foreign countries". (30)

The Albanian government replied on March 28th stressing that it was indeed desirous of establishing diplomatic relations with Britain, guaranteeing to the British Minister

" . . all rights, facilities and immunities enjoyed by diplomatic representatives" (31)

but stating:

"The Albanian Government do not consider return of Major Smith desirable as his return to Albania would not consolidate friendly relations which unite our two countries so happily and which the

Albanian Government wish to develop further. . . .

If the remains of more British servicemen are notified to the Albanian authorities by His Majesty's Diplomatic Representative, they will undertake to provide the appropriate facilities and transportation". (32)

This reply was rejected by the British government as

" . . unsatisfactory", (33)

and Williams commented on April 2nd that this was not unpleasing to the British Foreign Office:

"The necessary corollary of a decision to postpone the resumption of diplomatic relations with Albania will be that we shall be able to continue to oppose Albania's application for membership of the United Nations Organisation. Our attitude will also please the Greeks". (34)

The British government responded on April 4th with a further note which declared:

"His Majesty's Government . . are regretfully confirmed in their conclusion that the Albanian Government are not at present anxious for the resumption of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government regret to have to inform the Albanian Government that they would not feel justified in instructing Mr. Rapp to proceed to his post, and that they will be unable at present to agree to accept an Albanian representative in London". (35)

On April 22nd., however, in a further note to London, the Albanian Government met the demands of the British government:

"The Albanian Government are greatly desirous of having diplomatic and close friendly relations with their Great Ally, Great Britain. . . .

In order to safeguard this friendship, . . a visa was not granted to Major Smith to enter Albania. . . Notwithstanding, the Albanian Government are ready to grant permission to Major Smith to come to Albania if the British Government are of the opinion that his presence here would not be in any manner a hindrance to the development of friendly relations between the two countries. . . .

If the British Government would consider it necessary that the officer in the question (of the war graves - Ed.) should return to Albania in order to continue his work for a time, the Albanian Government have no objection at all". (36)

It was, of course, obvious to the Albanian authorities that the British demands were a mere pretext for not establishing diplomatic relations as, Hoxha told the General Council of the Democratic Front in October of that year:

"As for the officer making inquiries about the graves, . . permission was again granted to this officer about six months ago, but he did not come to carry out his 'mission' nor does he intend to come. This reinforces our conviction that . . the issue was a pretext

for not sending the Minister". (37)

Its pretexts having been undermined, however, the British government made a gesture in a further note of May 11th:

> "His Majesty's Government find these assurances reassuring and are now prepared . . to proceed to resumption of diplomatic relations". (38)

and on May 15th the British Minister in Belgrade, George Clutton, was instructed by the Foreign Office to hand to his Albanian counterpart there a note stating that the Minister-Designate would be proceeding to his post immediately. (39)

Later the same day, however, further instructions were cabled to Belgrade:

> "You should not now deliver the note referred to . . and, if you have delivered it, you should withdraw it". (40)

To which Clutton replied:

> "I was able . . to withdraw the note at once - in fact, before the Albanian Minister had properly perused the contents". (41)

For on May 15th, 1946 a new pretext to "delay" the resumption of diplomatic relations with Albania had arisen!

The First Corfu Channel Incident

The Corfu Channel - more accurately, the North Corfu Channel - is a narrow strait lying between the coast of Albania and the Greek island of Corfu. It varies in width between 1 and 6 miles, so that at its narrower part it lies wholly in the territorial waters of Albania or Greece, with the boundary midway.

At about 8. 25 a.m. on May 15th, 1946 two British cruisers, the Orion and the Superb were proceeding southwards through this channel within Albanian territorial waters, when a shore battery on the Albanian coast opened fire. Neither ship was hit and there were no casualties.

Later in the day the British Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, sent a signal to the Admiralty in London saying:

> "Unless H. M. Government can extract immediate and full apology from Albanian Government and guarantee that the perpetrators of this outrage are properly punished by them, I intend to direct FO (Flag Officer - Ed.) 15th Cruiser Squadron, before he leaves Corfu on May 21st, to destroy these guns either by direct bombardment or by landing demolition parties.
>
> This seems such good opportunity to teach the Albanians a lesson and to demonstrate that the British flag cannot be insulted with impunity, that I strongly urge that above action be taken without attempting to extract an apology". (42)

to which the Admiralty replied a few hours later:

"Foreign Office are informing Albanian Government that they expect . . . apology. . . . Meanwhile you should not (repetition not) carry out bombardment or land armed demolition parties". (43)

The British note of protest concerning the incident, dated May 15th, demanded

" . . an immediate and public apology from the Albanian Government for the outrageous action of the Albanian shore batteries concerned, and an assurance that the persons responsible have been severely punished". (44)

The General Command of the Albanian Armed Forces issued on May 17th an instruction to all states:

"Foreign warships and merchant vessels have been entering Albanian territorial waters without notification to, or permission from, our authorities. Please inform your authorities that such vessels must not sail in Albanian territorial waters without prior notification to, and permission from, this Government". (45)

On the same day the Admiralty sent a further signal to the C-in-C, Mediterranea, concerning the incident:

"Pending result of diplomatic representations, no (repetition no) action is to be taken against the batteries concerned, and any possibility of a further incident is to be avoided". (44)

The Albanian note of reply, dated May 21st, described the incident as

" . . regrettable", (46)

It pointed out that over the previous year Greek ships had made a number of provocative incursions into Albanian territorial waters, and stated:

"On May 15th two unknown ships . . in Albanian territorial waters were observed near Saranda, moving in the direction of Vetura port. In conformity with general orders based on international law, the coastal commander, after having given a signal to the vessels to move further off shore, ordered several rounds to be fired in the direction of the ships, which thereupon hoisted their flags. It was then possible to recognise the ships as British warships. . . . Had it been possible to recognise the vessels and had they not been navigating in Albanian territorial waters, the commander would never have attacked the ships of Albania's ally, Great Britain". (47)

The note concluded:

"The Albanian Government . . hope that the present incident will not be considered an obstacle to exchange of diplomatic representatives and furtherance of friendship which exists between Great Britain and Albania". (48)

William Hayter, now Acting Counsellor at the Foreign Office, commented on this note in a minute of May 23rd:

"We might . . put out suggestions . . that this irresponsible and illegal action by the Albanians has some bearing on her claim for admission to UNO. . . We might also ridicule the Albanian claim to part of the Italian fleet on the grounds that a country of this kind cannot be trusted to hold modern weapons, and finally we might call attention to the bearing of this incident on the Greek claim to the territory on which the firing took place.

I am afraid that there seems to be some justification for the reference in the Albanian note to provocative acts by Greek vessels". (49)

On May 29th the British government despatched a second note to Albania, declaring that it considered the Albanian reply to be

" . . unsatisfactory to HMG.

Reply appears to be based on ignorance of the relevant provisions of international law. In the first place, there is the ordinary rule providing for the right of innocent passage through territorial waters. Secondly, there is the particular rule about straits, giving a right of passage both in peace and war for warships and merchant ships through straits forming part of highways of international traffic and connecting two parts of the open sea. It is immaterial that the straits consist of territorial waters or that passage through them involves passage through territorial channel. There is no doubt that the Corfu Channel falls within this definition". (50)

The note concluded by repeating the previous demands for an apology and for the punishment of the responsible officer, adding the demand

" . . for an assurance . . that there will be no further interference in the right of passage through the Corfu Channel. When satisfactory assurances on these points have been received, the question of the resumption of diplomatic relations can be reconsidered". (51)

The Albanian reply, dated June 19th, assured the British government that

" . . the Albanian government, basing itself on its rights and international law, has had and has no intention of interfering with navigation on open sea or in Straits of Corfu, provided shipping . . does not enter Albanian territorial waters without having fulfilled the necessary formalities and without the permission of the Albanian authorities and provided it does not show aggressive intent". (52)

The note concluded by expressing the

" . . hope that His Majesty's Government will reconsider the question and that the incident will not be an obstacle in the way either of strengthening friendly sentiments of the Albanian people towards the British people or of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries". (53)

On which Hayter commented:

"This reply . . is not satisfactory". (54)

Foreign Under-Secretary Hector McNeil told the House of Commons on July 1st:

> "Since . . November 1945, His Majesty's Government have been in discussion with the Albanian Government regarding the resumption of diplomatic relations. These discussions have been suspended pending a satisfactory settlement of the incident on 15th May, when Albanian shore batteries opened fire without warning on two of His Majesty's ships proceeding through the Corfu Channel". (55)

Meanwhile the Foreign Office's legal experts had been researching the provisions of the law of the sea involved in the incident - only to find that the case put forward in the British notes relating to it had no agreed basis in international law. Pinsent summed up their findings in a minute of July 3rd:

> "It appears from the attached papers that there is no generally recognised principle of international law allowing 'innocent passage' of warships through territorial waters. HMG have always maintained their view that this right does exist. . .
>
> The answer to the question whether the Albanians have the right to demand that shipping should fulfil the 'necessary formalities' and demand permission of the Albanian authorities before entering Albanian territorial waters . . seems to be that there is no definite ruling on this point". (56)

In these circumstances Hayter asked the Admiralty on July 5th whether it

> " . . could agree to any formalities being attached to the exercise of the right of innocent passage". (57)

To which question the Admiralty replied sternly on the 12th:

> "We think there are strong objections to this suggestion". (58)

Accordingly, the British government sent to Albania a third and final note on the incident on August 2nd, saying:

> "His Majesty's Government recognise no right on the part of the territorial power concerned to demand fulfilment of conditions before entry into such waters is permitted. . .
>
> Should Albanian coastal batteries in future open fire on any of His Majesty's vessels passing through the Corfu Channel, fire will be returned by His Majesty's ships". (59)

The Treaties Question

As has been said, on November 8th, 1945 the US State Department presented to Tirana a condition for the establishment of diplomatic relations additional to those presented by the British government:

> "The Government of the United States also desires that the Albanian authorities shall confirm that treaties and agreements which were in force between the United States and Albania on April 7, 1939, remain valid". (61)

Prime Minister Hoxha replied to this demand on November 14th:

> "To enable me to answer on behalf of my government, I should be grateful if you would send me as soon as possible copies of the instruments on the treaties which have been drawn up prior to April 7, 1939 between the Albanian government and the United States of America. I am asking this because most of the files of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been burned as a result of war or have been removed by the occupier". (62)

In a second letter the following day, Hoxha gave the requested assurances concerning the holding of free elections and concluded with a reference to the treaties question:

> "We hope that this will not delay the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries". (63)

The State Department replied that, in the circumstances outlined, it was willing to establish diplomatic relations

> " . . provided Albanian authorities will affirm established principle of international law respecting continuing validity of treaties entered into by former GOVTS and not legally terminated". (64)

Hoxha replied on November 23rd:

> "The Democratic Government of Albania is obliged at all times to act . . within the law which was enacted at the Congress of representatives of the people in Përmet on May 24, 1944, which states:
>
> 'All the agreements with foreign States are to be reviewed; political and economic agreements which were made by the government of Zog to the detriment of the Albanian people are to be annulled and new treaties drawn'.
>
> We hope that this matter will not cause delay in the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, the agreement to which will greatly hasten the re-examination of the treaties which may exist between our two States". (65)

To which the State Department replied:

> "Far from involving contractual obligations which are onerous in character or to disadvantage of Albanian people, the treaties and agreements in effect between US and Albania are consistent with and constitute a basis for Albania's assumption of responsible place within family of nations. . .
>
> US GOVT does not feel able to proceed with the establishment of diplomatic relations with existing Albanian authorities until it has received requested assurances regarding status of treaties and agreements". (66)

Joseph Jacobs, the Head of the United States Special Mission, which had arrived in Albania in May 1945, reported to Washington that he had handed this last note to Hoxha, who had

> " . . expressed keen disappointment that United States has made affirmation of former treaties condition precedent to recognition,

especially as British Government had not done so. . .

The regime could not agree to continued validity of specific treaties without careful study of such treaties. . .

I fear . . that insistence upon our position will delay our recognition for some time and lose for us considerable goodwill. . .

I suggest for consideration that we modify our position to extent of accepting the assurance with respect to treaties as set forth in Hoxha's note of November 23rd; that note indicates willingness, upon receipt of copies, to examine our treaties in the light of the Permet resolution after re-establishment of relations". (67)

The State Department brusquely rejected this recommendation on December 5th:

"Department is not disposed . . to modify further its request for assurances from Albanian authorities regarding continuing validity of treaties and agreements". (68)

Meanwhile, copies of seven of the US-Albanian treaties had been handed to Hoxha on November 30th; the rest followed on January 16th, 1946.

On February 27th, 1946 Jacobs reported that he had had a further meeting with Hoxha at which he (Jacobs) had stressed that

" . . most-favoured nation agreement and naturalisation treaty were more important to us than ever". (69)

The former agreement, of 1922, was later described by Hoxha as one by which the United States

" . . in practice was given the keys of Albania. This was one of the most disgraceful documents, one of the most dangerous to the independence of our country". (70)

Jacobs's report went on to express the view that, in view of the stand of the Albanian government on the treaty question

" . . Mission here should be withdrawn completely or I and part of staff recalled. . .

Am beginning to come round to view Albanian people may not be qualified for independence. . . It begins to look therefore that solution might be trusteeship under UNO". (71)

On August 13th, 1946 the Albanian government handed a further note to Jacobs, agreeing to accept the continuing validity of the multilateral treaties involving the USA and Albania, but stating that it desired "some corrections" in certain of the bilateral treaties:

"Always having in mind a desire to reinforce and strengthen relationships between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Albania, . . the People's Republic of Albania has taken under consideration and studied the treaties which existed between the United States of America and Albania before April 7, 1939. . .

Many of the treaties signed during the period before April 7, 1939 . . were signed by anti-popular governments created and brought into power through force backed by foreign bayonets and against the will of the Albanian people. Such treaties are directly or indirectly

detrimental to the interests and sovereignty of our country. The spirit and application of many of these treaties . . dealt with them as a colonial or semi-colonial people.

We cannot say that the treaties between the United States and Albania were created in the spirit mentioned above, but with respect to some of them . . some corrections are necessary. . .

The Government of the Republic of Albania . . accepts the validity of the treaties of an international character which existed between our two countries. . .

With respect to the other treaties of a bilateral character, . . the Albanian Government is ready to take them under consideration immediately with the American Minister who will come to Tirana. . . After the necessary corrections have been made by the two parties, these treaties will enter into force at once.

The Government of the People's Republic of Albania expresses once more its readiness to continue most friendly relations with the United States of America. . .

Hoping that diplomatic relations between our two countries may be re-established as soon as possible as a factor in reinforcing more than ever the friendship existing between the American and Albanian peoples, please accept my highest esteem". (72)

By September 20th, however, US Secretary of State James Byrnes was notifying the State Department that the government had decided that diplomatic relations would not be established with Albania even if the Albanian Government were to agree to the original American demands on the treaties:

"I wish that no steps be taken towards recognition of regime in Albania at this time regardless of what Albania may do to accept the validity of our treaties". (73)

The Withdrawal of the US Special Mission

The United States Special Mission which had arrived in Albania in May 1945 was slightly more discreet than the British Military Mission in its contacts with opposition elements - most open contacts with such elements being left to the OSS Mission. For example, in a report dated June 1945 Jacobs related:

"On June 5 first Albanian fairly well known to us claiming to represent opposition came to see me. . .

As story sounded so much like rumours which Brigadier Hodgson has been talking about, inquired if caller had seen Hodgson. He replied that he himself had not, but that he had seen two of Brigadier's aides and that Brigadier was aware of movement. I explained to caller purpose of my mission and said that, while I was interested in hearing views of opposition, question of recognising or refusing to recognise present regime was one thing and question of giving moral and material support to an opposition group was quite another which I was sure US Govt would not (repeat not) consider. I said that I would mention his call in my report to Dept but could give him no encouragement whatsoever", (74)

and the OSS reported in August 1945:

"In an attempt to organise the overthrow of the present government, the Catholic Church, together with a Tirana representative of Fiqri Dine and Muharrem Bajraktari, Albanian personalities in former regimes, is trying to approach both the Americans and the British with the intent of securing their aid in attempting to foster a so-called 'Anti-Bolshevist Group' that has been organised in the mountains.

Source, who said he was sent by the Catholic clergy, approached OSS on 25 August and tried to lay plans for clandestine meeting in the mountains with Dine and Bajraktari, leaders of the Anti-Communist Group". (75)

Indeed, following submission of its Final Report in August 1945, the principal function of the US Special Mission was the gathering of intelligence - as the British Embassy in Washington reported to the Foreign Office in April 1946:

"State Department intend to leave Jacobs and his staff in Albania for as long as possible as they consider he is performing a useful intelligence function there". (76)

The subversive activities of the US Mission did not, of course, go unnoticed by the Albanian authorities, and the Mission began to complain that restrictions were being imposed on its activities. By January 1946 Jacobs was complaining to Washington of the

" . . growing unfriendliness of regime here towards US". (77)

and was saying on February 4th:

"Our relations here continue to deteriorate". (78)

On the 15th the US Embassy in London informed the Foreign Office

" . . that United States Minister in Tirana has been instructed to deliver a strong protest against treatment of his Mission by the Albanian authorities, and that unless he secures satisfaction he may be withdrawn". (79)

On which Williams commented:

"The behaviour of the Americans seems to me in itself sufficient to account for the Albanians' obstructive attitude towards the American representatives in Albania". (80)

By July the State Department was noting:

"Jacobs's sources of information seem to be progressively drying up.

It seems to me that Jacobs's remaining in Albania is both futile and undignified, and I do not believe that the present small trickle of information which he is able to report to us justifies keeping him there". (81)

In October 1946, therefore, Jacobs was recalled as Head of Mission, and replaced by George Henderson, who reported to the State Department on the final meeting between Jacobs and Hoxha on October 3rd:

"Jacobs expressed thanks for courtesies and cooperation extended by Hoxha and Foreign Office during his stay in Albania, adding that although some difficulties had arisen between Mission and Albanian government, nearly all had been resolved (with exception of two, . . very minor from official international standpoint).

Hoxha thanked Jacobs for his kind words. . .

Albanian Government felt from beginning and continued to feel nothing but friendliness towards US, to which Albania was bound by numerous important ties. . . He would look into both (outstanding - Ed.) matters and see if they could be arranged shortly". (82).

Henderson reported to Washington on October 19th that Hoxha had said in a speech three days earlier that

" . . he did not understand what kind of work this Mission does here and implied that, since its report is done, it has no reason to remain". (83)

On November 2nd, therefore, the State Department informed Henderson:

"After careful consideration all aspects situation, Department has decided on immediate withdrawal US Mission from Albania". (84)

and instructed him to deliver a note the Albanian government saying:

"In the absence of a satisfactory response from the Albanian Government to the offer of recognition which was tendered by the United States Government in November 1945, the Mission has been unable to achieve the purposes for which it was originally sent to Albania.

In the circumstances . . my Government . . does not feel there is any further reason for the Mission to remain in Albania. The United States Mission is accordingly being withdrawn". (85)

This note was conveyed to Prime Minister Hoxha on November 5th, and the decision was publicly announced by the State Department in a press statement on November 8th.

The Albanian government's reply, dated two days later, declared:

"From our side the American mission was received with satisfaction and it received everything it required for the performance of its task. For the whole eighteen months your mission has freely travelled about the whole of Albania, our villages and towns, and has met with no obstacles in its activity - which was to bear a purely informative character connected with the recognition of our Government. . .

The condition proposed for the recognition of our Government was not merely a 'technical' question, as Mr. Jacobs wished to present it; on the contrary, facts testify that this is purely a question of principle.

Our Government has always endeavoured to find a solution to this question, which hindered the establishment of diplomatic relations between our peoples.

> The Albanian people continues to harbour deep sympathies for the friendly American people. It much regrets that various reasons are put forward for hindering the development of that friendship". (86)

The US Mission requested permission to send two American warships into Durrës harbour to evacuate its personnel. The Albanian government replied on November 9th, saying:

> "The Albanian Government does not permit the cruisers in question to come to the Port of Durrës, but with great pleasure agrees that a civilian ship . . come to Durrës. . .
>
> The Albanian Government is quite disposed to permit the arrival of one or two American planes at the Tirana airport to transfer the Mission's personnel if that appears necessary". (87)

Meanwhile, on November 8th, the trial had begun of several Albanians alleged to have carried on sabotage in connection with the draining of the Maliq marsh, and Harry Fultz, of the US Special Mission, was implicated in the evidence presented at the trial. On the following day, a note was handed to the Mission by the Albanian government

> " . . declaring Fultz undesirable and requesting his immediate departure". (88)

Henderson replied on the 14th:

> "Mr. Fultz's departure is the result of the prior decision of my Government to withdraw the entire American Mission from Albania. . .
>
> My Government feels it unnecessary to state that the fantastic charges in question have absolutely no basis in fact". (89)

Nevertheless, Henderson admitted to the State Department that Fultz had had four meetings with defendants in the Maliq case. (90)

In a speech to the People's Assembly in July, 1947 Prime Minister Hoxha declared:

> "The hostile stand of the British and American governments towards our country cannot be justified by purely technical considerations, or by unreasonable arguments such as the question of the treaties. . .
>
> Our government is in possession of astounding proofs and facts which indicate that the political and military missions of the British and US governments in Albania . . were an espionage agency of Anglo-American reaction, which worked out plans to overthrow our people's power, and planned sabotage actions and the most shameful crimes against the sovereignty of the peace-loving and heroic people of a small country". (91)

1. B: FO371/48082/46/R11474.
2. B: FO371/48085/46/R18874.
3. B: FO371/48082/46/R11474.
4. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/7-2145.
5. A: 59/6885/875.00/7-645.
6. B: FO371/59474/24/R3010.
7. B: FO371/58474/24/R3446.
8. B: FO371/58474/24/R3948.
9. B: FO371/59490/2338/R4252.
10. B: FO371/58474/24/R4940.
11. B: FO361/58491/2338/R4939.
12. B: FO371/58490/2338/R4601.
13. B: ibid.
14. B: FO371/58491/2338/R4763.
15. B: FO371/58492/2338/R6216.
16. B: FO371/58491/2338/R5175.
17. B: FO371/58491/2338/R5629.
18. B: FO371/58479/120/R8867.
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20. B: FO371/58509/9187/R10109.
21. B: ibid.
22. B: FO371/58509/9187/R10109.
23. B: FO371/58509/9187/R10502.
24. B: FO371/58474/24/R2516.
25. A: 59/6866/875.01/2-1846.
26. B: FO371/58490/2338/R2873.
27. B: FO371/58490/2338/R3521.
28. B: ibid.
29. B: FO371/58490/2338/R4034.
30. B: FO371/58490/2338/R4228.
31. B: FO371/58491/2338/R5032.
32. B: ibid.
33. B: ibid.
34. B: ibid.
35. B: ibid.
36. B: FO371/58492/2338/R6645.
37. E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 1; Tirana; 1974; p. 642.
38. B: FO371/58492/2338/R6979.
39. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7986.
40. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7388.
41. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7986.
42. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7418.
43. B: ibid.
44. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7693.
45. B: FO371/66889/1/R3836.
46. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7418.
47. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7693.
48. B: ibid.
49. B: ibid.
50. B: ibid.
51. B: ibid.
52. B: ibid.
53. B: FO371/58493/2338/R9367.
54. B: ibid.
55. B: ibid.
56. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series; Volume 424; col. 1764.

57. B: FO371/58493/2338/R9604.
58. B: FO371/58493/2338/R10459.
59. B: ibid.
60. B: FO371/58493/2338/R10863.
61. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/11-845.
62. A: 59/6866/875.01/11-1345.
63. A: 59/6866/875.01/11-2245.
64. A: 59/6866/875.01/11-1345.
65. A: 59/6866/875.01/11-2445.
66. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/11-2945.
67. A: 59/6866/875.01/12-145.
68. A: 84/7/Recognition II/875.01/12-1145.
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70. E. Hoxha: "The Anglo-American Threat to Albania"; Tirana; 1982; p. 13.
71. A: 711.75/2-2846.
72. A: 711.75/8-1846.
73. A: 740.00110/Council/9-2046.
74. A: 59/6865/875.00/6-845.
75. A: 84/7/OSS Reports and Messages/8-2545.
76. B: FO371/58491/2338/R5586.
77. A: 59/3492/711.75/1-2946.
78. A: 59/3492/711.75/2-446.
79. B: FO371/54890/2338/R2465.
80. B: FO371/54890/2338/R2701.
81. A: 84/7/740.00110/Council/7-2746.
82. A: 59/3492/711.75/10-646.
83. A: 59/3492/711.75/10-1946.
84. A: 59/3492/711.75/11-246.
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86. Ibid.; p. 871-2.
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88. A: 59/1236/124.75/11-1846.
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21

1946 - 1949 :

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

"A rape! A rape! . . .
Yes, you have ravished justice,
Forced her to do your pleasure" -
John Webster

The Second Corfu Channel Incident

As we have seen, following the first Corfu Channel Incident in May 1946, the British government insisted on its "right" to send its warships into Albanian territorial waters without acceptance of the requirements demanded by the Albanian government, that is, without notifying or asking permission from the Albanian authorities. Instead of seeking to resolve this dispute through diplomatic channels or through some international agency, the British government decided to try to impose its will upon Albania by means of "gunboat diplomacy".

On September 21st, 1946, therefore, the Admiralty sent a signal to the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Sir Algernon Willis:

> "Establishment of diplomatic relations with Albania is again under consideration by His Majesty's Government, who wish to know whether the Albanian Government have learned to behave themselves. Information is requested whether any ships under your command have passed through the North Corfu Strait since August and, if not, whether you intend them to do so shortly". (1)

To which Willis replied the following day:

> "They have not done so yet, but my intention is that Admiral Kinahan, flying his flag in HMS Mauritius, with HMS Leander in company and two destroyers, should do so when they depart from Corfu on the 22nd October". (2)

On the afternoon of October 22nd, therefore, four British warships were on their way northwards through the Corfu Channel, en route from the port of Corfu to Argostoli on the Greek island of Cephalonia (which lies 100 miles south of Corfu). The leading vessel was the cruiser Mauritius (flagship of the commanding officer of the detachment, Rear-Admiral Richard Kinahan), followed at a distance of a few hundred yards by the destroyer Saumarez; two miles behind the latter vessel was the cruiser Leander, followed at a distance of a few hundred yards by the destroyer Volage. The ships were sailing at a speed of 10 knots, with their crews at combat stations. The weather was clear; the depth of water about 30 fathoms.

In deliberate contravention of the Albanian government's requirements, the British warships were sailing through Albanian territorial waters without requesting the authorisation of the Albanian authorities or even notifying them - an action which, even forty years later, international lawyers were describing as an "unlikely" and "serious" step:

"It would obviously be a serious step for one state to send its warships, however peaceably, through the territorial seas of another state without seeking the authority of that state if that state demanded the right to allow only authorised warships through its territorial sea. . . It would be unlikely that the flag state would ignore a regulation made by the coastal state . . requiring conformity with some sort of authorisation or notification procedure". (3)

At 2.53 p.m. the Saumarez was severely damaged by an explosion, and the Volage went to her assistance and took her in tow. At 3.32 p.m. an Albanian launch came out of nearby Saranda harbour for the purpose (according to a statement by the Albanian government later) of seeing if assistance was required. At 4.16 p.m. the Volage was also damaged by an explosion.

With the Volage towing the more severely damaged Saumarez, the four warships returned to Corfu.

1 officer and 43 ratings were killed or missing as a result of the explosions, and 3 officers and 39 ratings injured. The Saumarez was a total loss and had to be written off; the Volage was found to be repairable.

There can be no doubt that the British naval operation of October 22nd, 1946, which involved adding a hundred unnecessary miles to the warships' route in spite of governmental calls for strict fuel economy at home, was intended as a show of force. Albanian witnesses testified later in the International Court that the advent of the four warships so close to the shore had aroused great concern among the population of Saranda, who feared that it heralded a repetition of the Italian invasion of 1939.

One of the witnesses at the proceedings, the French Rear-Admiral Raymond Moullec, was asked:

"Q: Have you seen passages through foreign territorial waters with men at combat stations in time of peace?
A: No, I have never seen it", (4)

and commented:

"There is a certain custom in force in all navies: one must not, in general, exceed the figure of three ships when one goes abroad. . .
It is well understood in all navies that innocent passage is really a non-threatening passage - I would say even more, a friendly passage". (5)

James Cable, in his study of "gunboat diplomacy" for the Institute of Strategic Studies, defines the term as

" . . the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage or to avert loss". (6)

and characterises the British naval operation of October 22nd, 1946 as a classic example of such "gunboat diplomacy", in which Britain was the "assailant" and Albania the "victim". (7)

The International Court confirmed this view in its Judgment:

> "Four warships . . passed one after another through this narrow channel, close to the Albanian coast, at a time of political tension in this region. The intention must have been not only to test Albania's attitude, but at the same time to demonstrate such force that she would abstain from firing again on passing ships". (8)

In fact, there is strong evidence to suggest that the British operation had also even more sinister aims - those of espionage. In his report on the operation Commander Reginald Paul, commander of the Volage stated:

> "The most was made of the opportunities to study Albanian defences at close range". (9)

Questioned in the International Court about this passage in his report Commander Paul explained:

> "A: I felt that I should be neglecting an elementary duty if I did not, while we were in this position, check and record the positions of any guns that could be seen. . . Having recorded them, I naturally put them in my report. . .
>
> Q: In paragraph 7 of your report, . . you state that, with reference to 'XCU', this includes such and such defences. What do you mean by the words 'with reference to XCU'?
>
> A: The term 'XCU', Mr. President, refers to a document which, as a serving officer, I have been instructed not to discuss". (10)

On December 14th, 1948 the International Court requested the Agent of the British government to make available to the Court the document referred to as 'XCU' (which was stated to stand for 'Exercise Corfu'). The request was refused. Counsel for the British government Sir Eric Beckett admitted, however:

> "It would be quite legitimate . . to infer that 'XCU' contains some reference to Albanian gun positions". (11)

But, commenting on the refusal of the British government to produce 'XCU' to the Court, a majority of the judges concluded:

> "It cannot be deduced therefrom that the vessels had received orders to reconnoitre Albanian coastal defences". (12)

Nevertheless, the fact that reconnaissance of Albanian coastal defences was admitted to have taken place during the British naval operation of October 22nd, 1946, presented a problem for Counsel for the British government, since, even those international lawyers who maintained that warships could legally pass unconditionally through the territorial waters of another state, held that this "right" existed only where the passaage was "innocent". Beckett was forced to admit:

> "I agree that a deliberate reconnaissance of coast defences is not one of the things which a ship exercising the right of innocent passage can lawfully do. That is an act prejudicial to the security of the coastal State". (13)

And, of course, if the British warships entering Albanian territorial waters on October 22nd, 1946 in defiance of the demands of the Albanian government for prior notification and authorisation, had not been exercising "innocent passage", then all international lawyers would have to agree that they had been violating Albanian sovereignty.

But in this case, involving a "Western" state and an "Eastern" state at the height of the "cold war", a majority of the judges were happy to stretch international law in favour of the British government, finding:

> "With regard to the observations of coastal defences made after the explosions, these were justified by the fact that two ships had just been blown up and that, in this critical situation, their commander might fear that they would be fired on from the coast, as on May 15th". (14)

The judges concerned apparently felt it prudent to ignore the evidence in the report of Rear-Admiral Kinahan himself that such reconnaissance was being carried on before the explosions:

> "At about 1452 my staff officer (operations) reported that he had seen a large mobile gun ashore, and while I was endeavouring to locate it . . I heard a large explosion. . . The time was recorded as 1453.5". (15)

A majority of the judges also upheld the British government's claim that the Corfu Channel was an international maritime highway, so that the Albanian government had no right to prohibit the "innocent passage" of foreign warships through its territorial waters within the Channel, and therefore no right to demand prior authorisation for their passage:

> "The Court has arrived at the conclusion that the North Corfu Channel should be considered as belonging to the class of international highways through which passage cannot be prohibited by a coastal State in time of peace. . .
>
> The Court is of opinion that Albania . . would not have been justified . . in prohibiting such passage or in subjecting it to the requirement of special authorisation". (16)

However, a majority of the judges endorsed the Albanian government's view that "exceptional circumstances" existed in the area concerned, and so endorsed the Albanian government's contention that it had the right to regulate the conditions of the passage of warships through its territorial waters even within the Corfu Channel:

> "The Court is of opinion that Albania, in view of these exceptional circumstances, would have been justified in issuing regulations in respect of the passage of warships through the Strait". (17)

But if this right to regulate the conditions of passage of warships embraced the right to require prior notification of their passage, then the British warships, which it was admitted had entered Albanian territorial waters in contravention of the demand of the Albanian government for such notification, had clearly violated Albanian sovereignty.

A majority of the judges thus felt it prudent to ignore in their judgment the important point as to whether the right of a state to regulate the passage

of foreign warships through its territorial waters embraced the right to demand prior notification of their passage - in order to find that they were

> " . . unable to accept the Albanian contention that the United Kingdom has violated Albanian sovereignty . . on October 22nd 1946". (18)

The Third Corfu Channel Incident

It was quickly ascertained that the damage to the British warships in the second Corfu Channel Incident had been caused by mines in the Channel.

On October 26th, 1946 a British note informed the Albanian government that

> " . . in view of the serious accidents which occurred recently to two of His Majesty's warships passing through the Corfu Channel, . . British minesweeping authorities will shortly sweep the Channel". (19)

The Albanian government replied on October 29th

> " . . protesting at length against the incursion into Albanian territorial waters on October 22nd and affirming that there is no objection to minesweeping provided there is no incursion into territorial waters". (20)

and on the same day complained to the United Nations that

> " . . at 1.04 p.m. October 22nd, 1946 four British warships, . . entered our territorial waters around Saranda, Kakoma and Bors without the authorisation of the Government of Albania". (21)

and requested UN

> " . . intervention in order to bring to a stop to such provocations". (22)

On the next day (November 1st) British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin on board the SS Aquitania, was informed by the Foreign Office that there was

> " . . doubt as to whether the right of innocent passage gives us also the right to carry out minesweeping operations within territorial waters without the assent of the territorial power. . .
> The matter was discussed in Cabinet this morning. . .
> The Minister of State (Hector McNeil- Ed.) took the line that the sweeping should not be carried out without the prior assent of the Albanian Government, since to do otherwise might put us into a difficult juridical position just at the time when the Albanians were appealing to the United Nations". (23)

To which Bevin cabled the reply:

> "I consider that we should proceed with operation" (24)

and repeated this view from New York on November 7th. (25)

On November 10th, therefore, a further British note to the Albanian government announced that minesweeping of the Channel, including Albanian territorial waters within the Channel, would take place on November 12th

> " . . in accordance with the unanimous decisions taken on the 1st November by the Central Mine Clearance Board". (26)

However, the minutes of the Central Mines Clearance Board show that the Board's final resolution on this question merely stated:

> "The Central Board considers that the North Corfu Channel should be reswept at a favourable opportunity", (27)

and that the British Chairman of the Board, Captain R. F. Nichols, had

> " . . agreed that the expression 'favourable opportunity' meant all conditions are generally acceptable, including no objection by Albania". (28)

The Foreign Office informed Bevin that this resolution was

> " . . addressed as an instruction to the Mediterranean Zone Board, who, however, seem to have committed themselves to obtaining concurrence (from the Albanian government - Ed.)". (39)

On November 11th the Albanian government sent a further note to Britain protesting

> " . . against unilateral decision of His Majesty's Government concerning the sweeping of the Straits of Corfu, i,e., for Albanian territorial waters within the Straits", (30)

and describing the proposed operation as

> " . . a deliberate violation of Albanian territory and sovereignty". (31)

And in an effort to settle amicably the dispute with the British government concerning navigation through the Corfu Channel, it proposed the setting up of a mixed commission

> " . . to decide what area of the sea should be considered to constitute the channel of navigation". (32)

Prime Minister Enver Hoxha sent a similarly worded telegram the same day to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Trygve Lie, protesting

> " . . energetically to the United Nations Organisation over this unilateral act". (33)

However, on November 12th and 13th some thirty warships of the British navy, supported by aircraft, carried out a minesweeping operation in the Corfu Channel, including Albanian territorial waters lying within the Channel, under the code name "Operation Retail". The French member of the Mediterranean Zone Mine Clearance Board, Commander Paul Mestre, participated in the operation as an "independent expert observer".

Prime Minister Enver Hoxha sent a second telegram to Trygve Lie on November 13th, complaining that

> " . . since the morning of 12 November, a large number of warships, flying the British flag, have been sailing all over the waters off the southern Albanian shore", (34)

protesting at

> " . . this brutal and unilateral act of the British government", (35)

and requesting the United Nations Organisation

> " . . to give orders for the immediate withdrawal of the British warships and minesweepers from our ports and territorial waters in the interest of the maintenance of peace". (36)

On November 14th the Central Mine Clearance Board adopted a resolution, intended for submission to the press, denying the British government's assertion that "Operation Retail" hsad been carried out under the auspices of the Board:

> "In connection with . . the sweeping in Albanian territorial waters of the North Corfu Channel by British minesweepers, the Central Board records that this sweeping was not carried out either under their direction or auspices". (37)

But at the next meeting of the Board, on the 19th, it was recorded that this resolution had <u>not</u> been sent to the press on the instructions of the British, French and United States governments. (38)

The International Court of Justice later found unanimously - the only unanimous finding in connection with the case - that the British government <u>had</u> violated Albanian sovereignty on November 12-13th, 1946:

> "The United Kingdom government . . recognises that the operation had not the consent of the international mine clearance organisation, that it could not be justified as the exercise of a right of innocent passage, and lastly that, in principle, international law does not allow a State to assemble a large number of warships in the territorial waters of another State and to carry out minesweeping in those waters. . .
>
> The Court must declare that the action of the British Navy constituted a violation of Albanian sovereignty". (39)

<u>Diplomatic Exchanges on the Second Corfu Channel Incident</u>

On November 16th the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean reported to the Admiralty that twenty-two large mines of German manufacture had been cut in "Operation Retail". Some of them had been examined in the water, before being blown up; two had taken to Malta for more detailed examnination:

> "The mines are of type GY. . . It is considered that the mines were laid within two months of sweeping". (40)

On which the Foreign Office commented to the British delegation to the Council of Foreign Ministers:

> "It would appear that we now have a clear case to proceed against Albania:
> 1) for deliberately attempting to block the right of innocent passage through a strait, the passage of which has the full sanction of international usage;
> 2) for the damage and casualties inflicted upon His Majesty's ships on 22nd October, 1946". (41)

A conference on November 21st between representatives of the Foreign Office and the Admiralty

> " . . agreed that we should recommend that, as a first step, we should send a note to the Albanian Government". (42)

and on December 2nd the Foreign Office informed the British delegation to the United Nations:

> "We agree that it is preferable that, in the event of an unsatisfactory reply from the Albanian Government, the matter should be brought in the first instance before the Security Council. . .
> Discussion in Security Council will secure maximum publicity, but is unlikely to lead to any positive result". (43)

On December 9th, therefore, a strongly worded British note was sent to the Albanian government. This presented the evidence for charging Albania with responsibility for the second Corfu Channel Incident of October 22nd:

> "In 1944 and 1945 the following areas of Albanian territorial waters were swept or searched by British minesweepers:
> Vlorë Bay - December 1944;
> Durrës Approaches - December 1944, March 1945;
> North Corfu Channel - October 1944. . .
> On 12th and 13th November, the sweeping operation was carried out. . . Expert examination . . has shown that the mines were of German manufacture, that they were free from marine growth and that they still had grease on their mooring cables. These facts leave no doubt whatever that the mines were laid only a very short time before the date on which His Majesty's ships Saumarez and Volage suffered damage and casualties. . . Fragments recovered from HMS Volage also confirm the origin of the mines which exploded on 22nd October and bear out the conclusions reached above.
> Ever since the attack on HMS Orion and Superb, the Albanian authorities have maintained a close watch on all ships making use of the North Corfu Channel. . . It is certain that no minefield could have been laid in the Channel within a few hundred yards of the Albanian batteries without the connivance or at least the knowledge of the Albanian authorities". (44)

The charge against the Albanian government was then detailed:

> "His Majesty's Government must accordingly conclude that the Albanian Government either laid the minefield in question or knew that it had been laid. The Albanian Government has thus committed a flagrant breach of international law. . . The Albanian Government

never made any public notification of this minefield. . . As a result two of His Majesty's ships have been seriously damaged and forty-four innocent lives have been lost". (45)

together with the British government's demands:

"His Majesty's Government demand that an apology be made to them in respect of the unprovoked attacks upon the Royal Navy which took place on 15th May and 22nd October, and that they receive assurance that there shall be no repetition of this unlawful action. They further demand that reparation be paid for the damage suffered by His Majesty's ships on 22nd October and that full compensation be paid to the relatives of the forty-four officers and seamen of the Royal Navy who lost their lives in consequence of action on the part of the Albanian Government", (46)

The note concluded with an ultimatum:

"If no satisfactory reply is received within fourteen days . ., His Majesty's Government will have no alternative but to bring the matter before the Security Council of the United Nations as a serious threat to, and a breach of, international peace and security". (47)

The Albanian government replied to the British note on December 21st. The reply began by expressing the government's "profound regret" that the incident of October 22nd had occurred:

"The Albanian Government expresses its profound regret for the accident which occurred to the two British destroyers on 22nd October 1946". (48)

It declared that

" . . it respects the principles of international law with regard to maritime navigation", (49)

and categorically denied that it had either laid the mines concerned or knew of their existence:

"It energetically rejects all the accusations . . making the Albanian Government responsible for this regrettable incident. The accusations made do not conform either with the peaceful aspirations and purposes so often expressed by the Albanian people or with the Albanian Government's policy in its relations with both Great Britain and with other peaceful peoples; similarly they do not conform with the actual facts and circumstances in which the incident of 22nd October took place. . .

The accusations according to which the Albanian Government itself had placed the mines or was aware that others had placed them or again knew of the presence of the mines in the Corfu Channel . . are completely without foundation and are profoundly wounding to the peaceful aspirations and policies of the Albanian people and the Albanian Government". (50)

The note went on to express the view that, if the incident was not the result of an accident, the "inhuman act" must have been engineered by elements who wished to disrupt British-Albanian relations:

"The Albanian Government is of the opinion that, if there was any evil intention, such an inhuman act could only come from those who wish to disturb the relations between these peoples and who do not wish to see good and amicable relations between Great Britain and Albania". (51)

It concluded by rejecting the British demands:

"The Albanian Government cannot therefore consider the demand for reparation and for compensation. . . The Albanian Government cannot either accept the demand for an apology". (52)

The Security Council Proceedings

The British government informed the Albanian government in a note dated January 10th, 1947:

"His Majesty's Government cannot accept the Albanian Government's reply as a satisfactory answer to their note of December 9th. His Majesty's Government observe that none of the demands summarised in paragraph 20 of their note . . have been met. In these circumstances, . . His Majesty's Government are taking steps to bring this matter before the Security Council of the United Nations". (53)

Sir Alexander Cadogan, Britain's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, had already been instructed the previous day to

" . . submit the case to the Secretary-General of UN as soon as you are satisfied that your United States colleague is in a position to support our case". (54)

On January 10th, therefore, Cadogan wrote to the Secretary-General of the United Nations requesting him

" . . to bring this dispute to the early attention of the Security Council under Article 35 of the Charter (i.e., as "likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security" - Ed.)". (55)

Eric Beckett, the chief legal adviser to the Foreign Office, was not, however, completely optimistic about the likely outcome of this step. He minuted on January 9th:

"I am not certain that we shall persuade the Security Council in fact to decide that Albania did know this (that the mines were laid - Ed.). The evidence, of course, is necessarily only circumstantial and there will be a reluctance to convict a state on purely circumstantial evidence", (56)

a view which was shared by Cadogan:

"Our case is in nature of things based largely on circumstantial evidence". (57)

The Security Council proceedings commenced on January 18th. The Soviet representative, Andrei Gromyko, opposed the inclusion of the item on the council's agenda on the grounds that

> " . . all possibilities of negotiations had not been exhausted and the incident did not constitute a threat to peace", (58)

but the council adopted - by 10 votes to 0, with 1 abstention (the Soviet Union) - a resolution to place the dispute on its agenda. The Albanian government was invited

> " . . to participate, without a vote, in the proceedings with regard to this dispute, on condition that Albania accepts, in the present case, all the obligations which a Member of the United Nations would have to assume in a similar case". (59)

Prime Minister Hoxha replied saying:

> "Albanian Government accepts the Security Council's decision. Its representative to the Security Council for that question will be Mr. Hysni Kapo (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had already arrived in New York - Ed.)". (60)

At all stages of the proceedings the Albanian representative emphatically denied that the Albanian authorities had either laid the mines or knew of their presence, telling the Security Council in February 1947:

> "The Government of the People's Republic of Albania . . had no reason for laying mines or allowing them to be laid. Moreover, if it were aware of the presence of a minefield. it had no reason for not giving warning of its existence. . .
>
> The Albanian Government did not lay the mines; it does not know who laid them". (61)

On February 27th, the council set up a Sub-Committee of three members - the representatives of Australia, Colombia and Poland - to examine and report on the British claim.

Meanwhile the British government was busy canvassing for support for its case. Roger Pinsent minuted on March 5th:

> "It seems doubtful . . whether we will be able to get more than a bare majority in the Security Council to decide in our favour on the question of fact. The US, Colombian, Australian, Brazilian and Chinese representatives should vote in our favour, but we need one more to get even a bare majority. In view of the uncertainty of the French and Syrian votes, the best vote to canvas would no doubt be the Belgian. . . We should approach Spaak (Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak - Ed.) through H. M. Ambassador in Brussels". (62)

The Foreign Office accordingly instructed the British Ambassador in Brussels, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, to press the Belgian government

> " . . to instruct M. van Langenhove (Belgian representative at the United Nations, Fernand van Langenhove - Ed.) to give us full support in the Security Council". (63)

To which Knatchbull-Hugessen replied a few days later:

> "Mr. Spaak informs me that instructions have been sent to Mr. van Langenhove". (64)

The Sub-Committee held 10 meetings and reported on 15th March. Its only conclusion was that

> " . . the explosions on 22 October 1946 caused loss of life and damage to ships of the British Royal Navy when sailing in the Corfu Channel", (65)

and it merely recommended

> " . . that the Security Council should, for the time being, concentrate its attention on the following two questions:
> 1) Did a minefield exist in the swept channel opposite Saranda Bay on 22 October, or did it not?
> 2) Was this minefield laid by Albania, or with the connivance of the Albanian Government, or was it not?" (66)

The principal point of the resolution moved by Cadogan was that the Security Council should find

> "1) . . that an unnotified minefield was laid in the Corfu Strait by the Albanian Government or with its connivance, resulting in serious injury to His Majesty's ships and loss of life and injury to their crews;
> 2) that the United Kingdom and Albanian Governments should settle the dispute on the basis of the Council's finding in paragraph (1) above". (67)

Neither the American or French members of the Security Council were, however, prepared to support the British resolution in this form. The US member, Herschel Johnson, said:

> "We find it difficult to reach the conclusion that the Council ought to find that Albania laid these mines", (68)

and the French representative, Alexandre Parodi, declared:

> "It is not proven that the minefield was laid by the Albanian Government, or with its assistance". (69)

Accordingly, on March 19th Cadogan informed the Foreign Office:

> "My United States colleague tells me he would vote for our Resolution if paragraph 1 were amended in such a way that, instead of declaring that the minefield was laid by the Albanian Government, it would declare that an unnotified minefield had been laid with the knowledge of the Albanian Government. . .
> I hope you may be able to authorise me to accept such an amendment. . .
> My United States colleague . . is going to work on our French colleague and thinks there may be a chance of securing the Syrian vote". (70)

The Foreign Office replied on the 24th:

"I agree to the terms of the Resolution as amended", (71)

adding:

"In the probable event of a Soviet veto, you should . . propose a new Resolution whereby the matter should be referred to the International Court for a decision". (72)

The amended resolution was put to the Security Council on March 25th. It stated:

"The Security Council . .
Considers that the laying of mines in peace-time without notification is unjustified and an offence against humanity;
Finds that an unnotified minefield was laid in the immediate vicinity of the Albanian coast, resulting in serious injury to two of His Majesty's ships with loss of life and injury to their crews; that this minefield could not have been laid without the knowledge of the Albanian authorities;
Recommends that the United Kingdom and Albanian Governments should settle the dispute on the basis of the Council's findings in (2) above". (73)

Seven members voted for the amended resolution - Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Colombia, France and the United States; two members voted against - Poland and the Soviet Union; one member abstained - Syria. The British representative did not participate in the vote. The resolution was therefore, declared to be rejected on the grounds that it had failed to obtain the affirmative vote of one of the five permanent members - the Soviet Union.

The abstention of the Syrian representative caused considerable annoyance at the British Foreign Office. Pinsent minuted:

"The Syrian representative abstained, declaring that he could not consider that the evidence was sufficient to convict Albania. . .
It is gratifying to see that . . the Syrian Government do not agree with the attitude of the Syrian representative at the Security Council". (74)

In the following month Minister of State Hector McNeil recorded:

"The Syrian Minister called this afternoon to make the apologies of his Government for the representative's vote on the Security Council on the subject of the Corfu dispute. He said that his Government had been surprised and distressed by the attitude of their representative - that he had acted against his instructions", (75)

and the British Minister in Damascus, Patrick Scrivener, informed the Foreign Office:

"Prime Minister (of Syria - Ed.) confirmed this morning that Syrian delegate had been instructed in future to support the British and American attitude". (76)

On April 9th, 1947, in accordance with his instructions from London, Cadogan moved a second resolution in the Security Council, declaring that it

> ". . Recommends that the United Kingdom and Albanian Governments should immediately refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice". (77)

The resolution was adopted by 8 votes - Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Syria and the United States - to 0. There were 2 abstentions (Poland and the Soviet Union), and the British representative again did not participate in the voting.

Preliminary Proceedings in the International Court

On May 13th, 1947 the British government filed an Application with the International Court of Justice at The Hague that the Court should hear and determine its claim against the People's Republic of Albania in connection with the second Corfu Incident.

This claim was:

> "1) that the Albanian Government either caused to be laid, or had knowledge of the laying of, mines in its territorial waters in the Strait of Corfu without notifying the existence of these mines as required by Articles 3 and 4 of Hague Convention No. VIII of 1907, by the general principles of internationmal law and by the ordinary dictates of humanity;
>
> 2) that two destroyers of the Royal Navy were damaged by the mines so laid, resulting in the loss of lives of forty-four personnel of the Royal Navy and serious injury to the destroyers;
>
> 3) that the loss and damage referred to in (2) was due to the failure of the Albanian Government to fulfil its international obligations and to act in accordance with the dictates of humanity;
>
> 4) . . that the Albanian Government . . is under an obligation to make reparation or pay compensation to the Government of the United Kingdom therefor, and
>
> 5) that the Court shall determine the reparation or compensation". (78)

On July 2nd, 1947 the Albanian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hysni Kapo, wrote to the Court expressing the view that the unilateral application to the International Court on the part of the British government was not in accordance with the April 9th resolution of the Security Council, so that - since the Court had no compulsory jurisdiction over Albania (which was not a party to its Statute) the Albanian government would be justified in refusing to appear before the Court:

> "The Government of the United Kingdom . . has not complied with the recommendation adopted by the Security Council on 9th April, 1947. . .
>
> The Albanian Government considers that . . the Government of the United Kingdom was not entitled to refer this dispute to the Court by unilateral application. . .
>
> The Albanian Government considers that . . the Government of the United Kingdom, before bringing the case before the International

> Court of Justice, should have reached an understanding with the Albanian Government regarding the conditions under which the two parties, proceeding in conformity with the Council's recommendation, should submit their dispute to the Court. . .
>
> In these circumstances, the Albanian Government would be within its rights in holding that the Government of the United Kingdom was not entitled to bring the case before the court by unilateral application without first concluding a special agreement with the Albanian Government". (79)

Nevertheless, the Albanian letter continued, despite this irregularity the Albanian government was anxious to establish to the world its innocence of the charges made against it and so was willing to appear before the Court:

> "The Albanian Government, for its part, fully accepts the recommendation of the Security Council.
>
> Profoundly convinced of the justice of its case, resolved to neglect no opportunity of giving evidence of its devotion to the principles of friendly collaboration between nations and of the pacific settlement of disputes, it is prepared, notwithstanding the irregularity in the action taken by the Government of the United Kingdom, to appear before the Court". (80)

Cadogan gave his interpretation of this letter in a telegram to the Foreign Office on August 2nd:

> "Point of letter of acceptance seems to be that Albania accepts jurisdiction not (repeat not) as a matter of right under Article 25 of the Charter, but voluntarily in order to display cooperation with Security Council. The view on which this rests, viz, that Security Council recommendations are not (repeat not) binding is . . shared by the Secretariat and . . by a number of delegations on the Council". (81)

On December 9th, 1947 the Agent for the Albanian government, Kahreman Ylli (Albanian Minister in Paris) submitted a formal Preliminary Objection to the admissibility of the British government's Application on the grounds put forward in Kapo's letter of July 2nd, maintaining that the Court had no competence to impose what was in effect

> " . . compulsory jurisdiction on the Albanian government in the present case". (82)

On February 26th, 1948 preliminary proceedings began in the International Court on the question of whether, in the circumstances, the Court was competent to determine the case. The Court delivered its judgment on this question on March 25th, finding by 15 votes to 1 (the dissenting judge being the ad hoc judge nominated by the Albanian government - Igor Daxner of Czechoslovakia) that it had such competence.

There was, however, a further legal obstacle to the hearing of the case. Article 35(2) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice laid down that the Court was open to states not party to the Statute (such as Albania) but, by a resolution of the Security Council of the United Nations of October 15th, 1946

> " . . such States must file with the Registrar of the Court a declaration by which they accept the Court's jurisdiction . . and undertake to comply in good faith with the decision or decisions of the Court". (83)

and the Albanian Government had not filed, and did not file, such an declaration. However, on July 31st the President of the Court issued an Order ruling that Kapo's letter of July 2nd

> " . . may be regarded as constituting the document mentioned in Article 36 of the Rules of Court". (84)

On the day that the Court's Judgment was delivered on the Albanian Government's Preliminary Objection - that is, on March 25th, 1948 - but before this Judgment had been delivered, a Special Agreement had been concluded between the Agents for the Albanian and British governments, Kahremann Ylli and Eric Beckett, by which they agreed on

> " . . submitting to the International Court of Justice for decision the following questions:
>
> 1) Is Albania responsible under international law for the explosions which occurred on the 22nd October 1946 in Albanian waters and for the damage and loss of human life which resulted from them, and is there any duty to pay compensation?
>
> 2) Has the United Kingdom under international law violated the sovereignty of the Albanian People's Republic by reason of the acts of the Royal Navy in Albanian waters on the 22nd October and on the 12th and 13th November 1946, and is there any duty to give satisfaction?". (85)

On March 26th, 1948, therefore, the Court issued an order declaring that the Special Agreement of the previous day

> " . . now forms the basis of further proceedings before the Court in this case". (86)

The British government confirmed that it accepted this in a statement issued on the same day:

> "The Government of the United Kingdom agree that the future procedure in the present case is now based upon the agreement signed between the Agents of the two Governments on 25th March 1948". (87)

The Special Agreement represented a compromise between the two governments: the Albanian government agreed to accept the Court's jurisdiction on the British claim that it was responsible for the explosions of October 22nd, 1946, and on the question of whether there was any duty to pay compensation; the British government agreed to accept the Court's jurisdiction on the Albanian claim that it had violated Albanian sovereignty on October 22nd and November 12-13th, 1946, and on the question of whether there was any duty to give satisfaction.

It has to be pointed out that in July 1947, many months before the Special Agreemnent was signed, Prime Minister Enver Hoxha had expressed the opinion to Stalin in Moscow that

" . . the International Court at The Hague . . is being manipulated by the Anglo-American imperialists". (88)

The question arises, therefore, why the Albanian government, however innocent, should have been prepared to accept the jurisdiction of a judicial body which it regarded as manipulated by Britain and the United States.

One important reason for the decision was that strong pressure was being exerted upon it by other states in connection with its application for membership of the United Nations. The report of the Membership Committee of the Security Council dated July 21st, 1947 makes it clear that these states were prepared to give Albania's application favourable consideration only if its government accepted the jurisdiction of the International Court in relation to the second Corfu Channel Incident:

"The representative of BRAZIL noted that the Albanian Government had not referred the question of the Corfu incidents to the International Court, pursuant to the Security Council decision. . . He considered that the Committee should formally inquire from the Albanian Government whether it intended to accept the Council's recommendation. Pending a reply, consideration of the application should be postponed. . .

The representative of COLOMBIA fully supported this proposal. . .

The representative of AUSTRALIA also noted that three months had passed without the Albanian Government complying with the Council's recommendation concerning the Corfu incidents. . . Before stating its opinion on the admission of Albania, his Government wished a satisfactory answer from the Albanian Government that it would comply with the resolution of the Council concerning the Corfu incidents. . .

The representative of the UNITED STATES . . supported the proposal that inquiry should be made whether the Albanian Government intended to comply with the Council's recommendation concerning the Corfu incidents. . .

The representative of FRANCE . . agreed that an inquiry should be made whether the Albanian Government intended to implement the Council's resolution concerning the Corfu incidents. . .

The representative of CHINA . . reserved his position.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM stated that his Government still had its doubts, expressed in 1946, regarding the ability and willingness of the Albanian Government to carry out its obligations under the Charter. He referred to the incidents in the Corfu Channel". (89)

The Hearing in the International Court

The hearing of the Corfu Channel Case commenced before the International Court of Justice on November 9th, 1948 before 15 regular judges and an ad hoc judge nominated by the Albanian government, namely:

Alejandro Alvarez (Chile);
José Azevedo (Brazil)
Abdel Badawi (Egypt);
Jules Basdevant (France)
Igor Daxner, succeeded later by Bohuslav Ecer (Czechoslovakia)(ad hoc)
Charles De Visscher (Belgium);
Isidro Fabela (Mexico);
José Guerrero (El Salvador)(President);
Green Hackworth (United States);
Hsu Mo (China);
Helge Klaestad (Norway);
Sergei Krylov (Soviet Union);
Sir Arnold McNair (Britain);
John Read (Canada);
Bohdan Winiarski (Poland); and
Milovan Zorichich (Yugoslavia).

Principal Counsel for the British government was initially the Attorney-General, Sir Hartley Shawcross, succeeded in November by the Solicitor-General, Sir Frank Soskice; Sir Eric Beckett (he had been knighted in 1948), Chief Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, assisted and acted as Agent for the British government. Counsel for the Albanian government were the French lawyers Pierre Cot (a former Air Minister) and Joe Nordmann, while Kahreman Ylli, Albanian Minister in Paris, acted as Agent for the Albanian government.

On December 17th, 1948, when pleadings had concluded, the Court appointed a Committee of Naval Experts, consisting of:

Commodore J. Bull (Royal Norwegian Navy);
Commodore S. A. Forshell (Royal Swedish Navy); and
Lieutenant-Commander S. J. W. Elfferich (Royal Netherlands Navy).

Its main task was to investigate

> ". . . the possibility of mooring those mines . . without the Albanian authorities being aware of it". (90)

This committee delivered its first report on January 8th, 1949.

On January 17th, 1949 the Court requested the Committee of Naval Experts to visit Sibenik in Yugoslavia and Saranda in Albania. Commodore Bull did not make this journey for health reasons. On its return, the committee delivered its second report on February 8th, 1949.

Although the Committee of Naval Experts was assumed to be "impartial", its view of the People's Republic of Albania was hardly that. Commander Edward Sworder, a British naval officer who accompanied the committee on its visit to Albania, reported to the Foreign Office:

"With the exception of the Bulgarian captain, every member of the Court Mission and every member of the crew of the KLM aircraft were glad to leave Albania. They felt they had been associating with something unclean and insane. As we crossed the Albanian coast, the Swedish member of the Mission, Commodore Forshell, turned to me and said: 'I have never been so glad to leave a country in my life. I think we have had a glimpse of hell!". (91)

Meanwhile, Beckett reported to London:

"After having heard the final speeches, we consider that, on the UK claim, the chances are just over 50% that the Court will decide in favour of the UK". (92)

On February 12th, 1949, in response to certain questions put to it, the Committee of Naval Experts delivered its third and final report.

The Court delivered its Judgment on April 9th, 1949.

It found, firstly, by a majority of 11 judges (drawn from Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Chile, China, El Salvador, France, Mexico, Norway and the United States) to 5 (drawn from Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Poland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia) that the People's Republic of Albania was

" . . responsible under international law for the explosions which occurred on 22nd October 1946, in Albanian waters, and for the damage and loss of human life that resulted therefrom" (93)

and that there was, in consequence, a duty on the Albanian government to pay compensation to the British governmment.

The evidence on which this finding was alleged to have been based will be reviewed later.

The Court decided, secondly, by a majority of 10 judges (drawn from Belgium, Britain, Canada, Chile, China, El Salvador, France, Mexico, Norway and the United States) to 6 (drawn from Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Poland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia) - despite the fact that this question did not appear in the Special Agreement of March 25th, 1948, which the Court itself had ruled to be "the basis of further proceedings" - that it had competence to assess the amount of compensation which the Albanian government should pay as a result of its first finding.

The Court found, thirdly, by a majority of 14 judges (drawn from Belgium, Britain, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Mexico, Norway, Poland, the United States and Yugoslavia) to 2 (drawn from Brazil and the Soviet Union) that Britain had not violated Albanian sovereignty on October 22nd, 1946 (the day of the second Corfu Channel Incident).

The Court found, fourthly, by unanimous vote, that Britain had violated Albanian sovereignty on November 12-13th, 1946 (the days of the third Corfu Channel Incident, the minesweeping operation known as "Operation Retail") and that this declaration constituted adequate satisfaction to Albania.

The Assessment of Compensation by the International Court

In the Judgment of the International Court of April 9th, 1949 a majority of the judges had decided that the court had competence to assess the amount of compensation which the Albanian government should pay to the British government as a result of its finding that Albania was "responsible" for the explosions of October 22nd, 1946.

On June 29th, 1949 Behar Shtylla, Albanian Minister in Paris, who had replaced Kahreman Ylli as Agent for the Albanian government, wrote to the Court objecting to the proceedings on this question on the ground that the Special Agreement of March 25th, 1948, which had laid down the precise questions over which the British and Albanian governments had given the court jurisdiction,

> " . . did not provide that the Court would have the right to fix the amount of the reparations". (94)

Rejecting the Albanian government's objection, the Court commenced on November 17th, 1949 to consider the amount of compensation that should be awarded by it in the Corfu Channel case. The hearing took place before thirteen regular judges, and the ad hoc judge originally nominated by the Albanian government, namely:

Alejandro Alvarez (Chile);
José Azevedo (Brazil);
Abdel Badawi (Egypt);
Charles De Visscher (Belgium);
Bohuslav Ecer (Czechoslovakia) (ad hoc);
José Guerrero (El Salvador) (President)
Green Hackworth (United States);
Hsu Mo (China);
Helge Klaestad (Norway);
Sergei Krylov (Soviet Union);
Sir Arnold McNair (Britain);
John Read (Canada);
Bohdan Winiarski (Poland);
Milovan Zorichich (Yugoslavia).

The Albanian government refused to be represented at the hearing.

On November 19th, 1949 the Court appointed a Committee of Experts to examine the British claim for damages and compensation. The Committee conmsisted of:

Rear-Admiral J. B. Berck (Royal Netherlands Navy); and
G. de Rooy (Director of Naval Construction,
Royal Netherlands Navy).

On December 15th the Court announced that, by a majority of 12 judges (drawn from Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Norway, Poland, the United States and Yugoslavia) to 2 (Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union), it had assessed the damages and compensation to be awarded to Britain against Albania at £843,947, made up as follows:

Compensation for killed and wounded officers and men:	£ 50,048
Cost of replacement of H.M.S. Saumarez:	£700.087
Cost of repairs to H.M.S. Volage:	£ 93,812

The Presiding Judge, José Guerrero of El Salvador, announced that the Judgment was final, without right of appeal.

Negotiations on Compensation

The Albanian government had agreed to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court on the questions of responsibility for the explosions of October 22nd, 1946 and of whether there was a duty to pay compensation. After the Court had delivered its Judgment on this question on April 9th, 1949, Shtylla approached the British government on August 9th, saying:

> "The Government of the People's Republic of Albania expresses its willingness to discuss directly the question of compensation with the Representative of the British Government and to reach a result satisfactory to both countries". (95)

To which Beckett replied on September 12th:

> "I have consulted the authorities here, whose view is that the procedure before the Court should not be interrupted and that the Court must be left to give its judgment on the amount of damages. . . My Government are, therefore, not prepared to enter into discussions with the representatives of the Albanian Government on this question at the present moment". (96)

A further approach was made by Shtylla on October 4th, 1949:

> "The Government of the People's Republic of Albania declares, as it has already done, that it is ready to negotiate directly with the Representatives of the British Government on the question of fixing the amount of the compensation". (97)

and again received a negative reply.

However, following the Court's award in December 1949 of £843,947 damages to Britain, at Easter 1950 negotiations on the paymnent of damages began in Paris between Beckett and Shtylla.

Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice, Legal Adviser to the British Foreign Office, told the International Court in May 1954 that the Albanian government had, in these negotiations, first offered to pay damages amounting to £20,000, and had later increased this to £40,000, a sum which Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ernest Davies described in the House of Commons in March 1951 as

> " . . derisory" (98)

Beckett had then proposed that the Albanian Government should assign to Britain the gold held by the Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold, already determined in part to belong to Albania,

> " . . in part satisfaction of the Corfu damages". (99)

According to Fitzmaurice, the Albanian government did not reply to this proposal.

On January 29th, 1951 Ernest Davies, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, told the House of Commons:

> "The discussions have led to no result and are now considered to have concluded. His Majesty's Government are, as a consequence, now considering what course of action is most likely to secure payment of damages by the Albanian Government. . .
>
> We are trying to find out ways in which we can enforce payment". (100)

Exploring such ways of enforcing payment of its "damages", the British Foreign Office had already been informed in November 1950 by the Custodian of Enemy Property:

> "There are some Albanian assets in this country, but they are mixed up with those of Italy. . .
>
> We can think of no other assets outside Albania that we could lay our hands on, and neither can the Treasury". (101)

In April 1951, David Johnson, a legal adviser at the Foreign Office, minuted:

> "I have come to the conclusion that, if all else fails, it would not be illegal for H.M.G. to seize Albanian ships on the high seas as a reprisal for Albania's failure to honour her judgment debt". (102)

Other Foreign Officials, however, were more doubtful that such an action by the British navy would be in accordance with international law. The Foreign Office's Senior Legal Adviser, Sir Eric Beckett, minuted:

> "This would be action of the very greatest gravity, and it is doubtful whether there has been a single case in the past where, in time of peace, the navy of any country has been used for the purpose of seizing a foreign ship on the high seas in order to obtain payment of a debt in the country to which the ship belongs. . . There is a lot of material which goes to show that it is not right to use armed force to take measures to recover payment of debts". (103)

In these circumstances the British government turned back to the Albanian gold lying in the Bank of England - a question which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Who laid the Mines?

The contention of the British government in the Corfu Channel case before the International Court of Justice that

> " . . some State laid these mines", (104)

was accepted by Counsel for the Albanian government, Pierre Cot:

> "We admit that the mines could have been laid only by a State", (105)

During the Court proceedings, five states - and only five - were suggested as the possible authors of the minelaying operation in the Corfu Channel. These were:

1) Nazi Germany;
2) Albania;
3) Britain;
4) Greece; and
5) Yugoslavia.

Who laid the Mines? Nazi Germany?

The first and most obvious assumption following the explosions in the Corfu Channel on October 22nd, 1946 was that the mines concerned had been laid during the Second World War.

The British government pointed out in its note to the Albanian government of December 9th, 1946:

> "During the war of 1939-45 some hundreds of thousands of mines were laid in the waters of the Mediterranean and North-West Europe. . .
>
> Only about 20,000 of the mines . . had been swept by the end of hostilities". (106)

Assuming that the explosions of October 22nd were caused by mines from the minefield swept on November 12-13th (the evidence for this will be reviewed in a later section), it was noted that all the mines inspected during the latter operation, including the two recovered and taken to Malta for more detailed examination, were of German manufacture.

However, the evidence presented to the Court established beyond reasonable doubt that the minefield swept on November 12-13th, 1946 had been laid recently, within the previous six months:

firstly, the charts of the German minefields acquired by the Allied Powers after Germany's surrender, which had been found to be accurate, showed no German minefield to have laid there;

secondly, the Corfu Channel had been swept by the British navy three times since German military activity in the area ceased - in October 1944 and in January and February 1945; no mines had been found in any of these sweeps which, according to evidence presented to the Court, were 100% efficient; and the ships had at all times on October 22nd, 1946 been well within the mile-wide swept channel (known as "Medri 18/32 and 18/34" in the charts issued by the International Routeing and Reporting Agency, set up in July 1945);

thirdly, British warships had passed through the channel on May 15th, 1946 without encountering any mines;

fourthly, the mines recovered on November 12-13th, 1946 were found to be free of marine growth, to be free of rust, to have their mooring cables still smeared with grease, to have their horns easily unscrewable, and to have been recently painted - in other words, to be in such a condition that they could have been in the water for no longer than six months.

As the Court noted in its Judgment, the fact that the minefield swept on November 12-13th, 1946 had been recently laid

" . . was disputed in the Albanian pleadings, but was no longer disputed during the hearing". (107)

In other words, all parties to the dispute accepted that the mines could not have been laid by Nazi Germany, whose military activity in the area had ceased prior to the autumn of 1944.

Who laid the Mines? Albania?

The principal of the alternative charges brought by the British government against that of Albania was that it had

" . . caused to be laid . . mines in its territorial waters in the Strait of Corfu without notifying the existence of these mines as required by Articles 3 and 4 of Hague Convention No. VIII of 1907, by the general principles of international law and by the ordinary dictates of humanity". (108)

While the International Court found in its Judgment that Hague Convention No. VIII was not relevant to the case, since it related only to time of war, it was agreed by both parties to the case that the laying of mines in territorial waters without public notification was a crime under international law. The Albanian government declared in its Counter-Memorial to the Court:

"The Albanian government . . agrees . . in holding minelaying in peacetime as an international offence. . .

The Albanian government agrees also in principle with the viewpoint put forward in the Memorial that this offence is particularly serious if it is committed on a customary highway of maritime trade". (109)

However, since the International Court of Justice was not an international criminal court, this crime against international law was

" . . treated like any other international tort". (110)

As Judge Bohuslav Ecer of Czechoslovakia expressed it:

"Both the Parties have stigmatised the incident of October 22nd, 1946 as a crime. However, the International Court is not a criminal court. . . The Special Agreement requires the Court to give judgment as to Albania's responsibility in international law, that is to say, without describing it either as a criminal or as a non-criminal (civil) responsibility". (111)

From the outset, as has been said, the Albanian government emphatically denied responsibility for this international crime. Hysni Kapo told the Security Council of the United Nations categorically on February 19th, 1947:

"The Albanian Government did not lay the mines". (112)

Counsel for the British government, Sir Frank Soskice, however, suggested a possible double motive for the action of which the Albanian government was accused:

" . . namely, as a protection against Greek incursions and to catch British warships when next they sailed through the Corfu Strait, as Albania knew, after the 2nd August, that they were going to do some time". (113)

But evidence was presented by an expert witness - Captain Branimir Ormanov, Chief of Staff of the Bulgarian Navy in the Black Sea - that the layout of the minefield was such as to render it unsuitable for the defence of Saranda, leaving the second motive as the only possible one.

The Albanian government, however, strongly denied that it had any such motive. Hysni Kapo told the Security Council on February 19th, 1947:

"The Government of the Albanian People's Republic has always endeavoured, and still endeavours, to maintain friendly relations with its war-time ally Great Britain, and had no reason for laying mines". (114)

Furthermore, as Counsel for the Albanian government Pierre Cot pointed out to the International Court:

"She (Albania - Ed.) had not in 1946 - everyone is in agreement on this - either minelayers or a stock of mines at its disposal". (115)

At the Security Council proceedings, British representative Sir Alexander Cadogan sought to persuade the Council that lack of minelaying vessels was no obstacle to minelaying:

"The laying of mines is the easiest operation in the world. Almost any small craft can be employed and the procedure is most simple: mines are simply tumbled over the edge and sink to the pre-arranged level". (116)

But other members of the Security Council were not convinced. The French member, Alexandre Parodi, declared:

"I cannot myself agree that responsibility can be laid at the door of the Albanian Government in this form. . .

First, before you can lay mines you must have some; secondly, you must have the necessary staff and equipment in order to lay them. I do not think it very likely that the Albanian Government has a direct responsibility in the incidents which took place". (117)

And the Acting United States representative Herschel Johnson said:

"We find it difficult to reach the conclusion that the Council ought to find that Albania laid these mines". (118)

And, as we have seen,

" . . in view of our reluctance to support a finding that Albania actually laid these mines", (119)

Johnson moved an amendment to the original British resolution before the Security Council, replacing the phrase "that an unnotified minefield was laid in the the Corfu Channel by the Albanian Government or with its connivance" by

the phrase "that this minefield could not have been laid without the knowledge of the Albanian authorities".

In its Judgment the International Court found:

> "Although the suggestion that the minefield was laid by Albania was repeated in the United Kingdom statement in Court on January 18th, 1949 and in the final submission read in Court on the same day, this suggestion was in fact hardly put forward at that time except pro memoria, and no evidence in support was furnished.
>
> In these circumstances, the Court need pay no further attention to this matter". (120)

In other words, the International Court found Albania "not guilty" of having laid mines in the Corfu Channel.

Who laid the Mines? A "Frame-up"?

Once Counsel for the Albanian government were convinced that the minefield swept on November 12-13th, 1946 had been recently laid, their line of approach was to denounce the minelaying operation as an attempted "frame-up" of Albania for political motives, carried out with the aim of disrupting relations between Britain and Albania.

This had indeed been suggested in the Albanian government's note of December 21st, 1946, which said:

> "The Albanian Government is of the opinion that, if there was any evil intention, such an inhuman act could only come from those who wish to disturb the relations between the peoples, and who do not wish to see good and amicable relations established between Great Britain and Albania". (121)

Indeed, the view that the minelaying operation had been carried out with the aim of concocting a false charge against the People's Republic of Albania was lent support by the evidence of a British witness before the International Court. Commander Quintin Whitford testified that he did not expect to find any mines during "Operation Retail" on November 12-13th, 1946, since the mines could have been fitted with a device which would have caused them to sink to the bottom of the channel after a pre-determined period:

> "In every nation . . large, modern sea mines can be fitted with a flooding device which is operated by some time-mechanism. The object of this device . . is simply to ensure that in certain operations mines which have been laid no longer remain dangerous after a set period. Such a device could very easily be used by anyone laying mines in the circumstances we are considering at the moment in order to destroy the traces of their work. My own personal view was that it was very unlikely we should find any mines at all. . .
>
> The German flooding device used in the GY mine consists of a clock-fitting which actuates . . a small explosive charge. . . When the small charge explodes, the mine will quickly sink to the bottom". (122)

The conclusion appears to be, therefore, that the authors of the minelaying operation wanted the minefield they had laid to be discovered.

Three states were suggested by Counsel for the Albanian government as the possible perpetrators of this attempted "frame-up": Britain herself, Greece and Yugoslavia.

Who laid the Mines? Britain?

During the International Court proceedings, Counsel for the Albanian government raised the possibility that the minefield swept on November 12-13th, 1946 might have been laid on the orders of the British government itself.

It was not suggested that this might have been done prior to October 22nd, 1946, when the two British warships struck mines in the channel. As Counsel for the British government Sir Frank Soskice expressed it somewhat sarcastically:

> "Even Albania has not suggested at any stage of the proceedings that our Government laid the minefield itself and then knowingly let a squadron of the Royal Navy sail unwittingly into it". (123)

The hypothesis put forward by Counsel for the Albanian government was that the British warships might, on October 22nd, have accidentally struck mines which had floated into the cleared channel from an old German minefield nearby, and that the British government had then ordered its navy to lay a field of German moored contact mines in the area in order to place the blame for the accidents - for political motives - upon the Albanian government.

This hypothesis depended upon a second hypothesis - that the mines which caused the explosions of October 22nd did not come from the minefield swept on November 12-13th.

Evidence was, however, presented against both these hypotheses:

firstly, that the possibility of two floating mines entering a swept channel at roughly the same spot was so unlikely as to be virtually impossible;

secondly, that the damage caused to the warships was not such as could have been caused by floating mines, but only by moored contact mines of the GY type swept on November 12-13th;

thirdly, that the fragments of the mine which had caused the explosion on HMS Volage were identical with mines of the type swept on November 12-13th; and

fourthly, that it would not have been feasible for Britain or any other state to have planned and executed the operation of laying the minefield in the three weeks between October 22nd and November 12th, and that the risks of exposure would have been unaccountably great.

As Counsel for the British government Sir Frank Soskice argued not unreasonably:

> "Whether the suggestion is that Great Britain planted these mines after October 22nd, or that Greece did so, in either case there are the greatest of improbabilities. The theory involves the following suppositions. It must be supposed, presumably, that the ships having been wrecked on 22nd October - an incident which could not

> have been foreseen as likely to happen by either country - the British or the Greek government, thereafter, in the space of time which elapsed between the 22nd October and the 13th November, conceived the idea, which they could only then have begun to harbour, of fabricating evidence against Albania. Whichever country it was must be supposed to have procured the mines, loaded them, transported them to the scene of operations, and carried out the minelaying. . . Supposing the United Kingdom were capable of using its navy for such a nefarious purpose, is the United Kingdom completely reckless as well as criminal? How risky it would have been and what appalling consequences would have ensued if it had been found out! Every person who participated in the operation would have known of it. Many would have been indignant at being invited to take part in such a colossal fraud and might have given it away. Whispers would have begun to circulate in the Press, and there was the gravest risk that at any moment the whole thing might have been disclosed". (124)

In its Judgment, the International Court concluded that there was no evidence to support the hypothesis that the minefield had been laid after October 22nd and that

> " . . the explosions were due to mines belonging to that minefield". (125)

Who laid the Mines Greece?

During the proceedings in the Corfu Channel case before the International Court of Justice, Counsel for the Albanian government also raised the possibility that the mines might have been laid by the Greek government, which, having territorial claims against Albania, could be regarded as having a motive in disrupting relations between Albania and Britain.

No evidence was, however, presented in support of this hypothesis, while evidence was presented against it:

firstly, that no German Y-type mines were left in Greece when the German forces withdrew from that country;

secondly, that Greece had in 1946 no vessels equipped for minelaying;

thirdly, that the Greek navy was, in any case, at this time under the command of the British Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, who possessed all relevant information as to the disposition and movement of Greek naval vessels.

The Court rejected the hypothesis that the minefield might have been laid by Greece, saying in its Judgment:

> "The Court need not dwell on the assertion of one of the Counsel for the Albanian Government that the minefield might have been laid by the Greek Government. It is enough to say that this was a mere conjecture which, as Counsel himself admitted, was based on no proof". (126)

Who laid the Mines? Yugoslavia?

Once the British government had tacitly dropped its charge that the minefield swept on November 12-13th, 1946 had been laid by the Albanian government, it transferred this charge to the Yugoslav government.

The evidence presented in support of this accusation was as follows:

firstly, that Yugoslavia, alone of all the states in the area, possessed stocks of German Y-type mines (German records acquired by the Allied Powers showed, for example, a stock of 171 such mines at Trieste on April 25th, 1945);

secondly, that Yugoslavia possessed ex-German powered barges, which had been observed carrying GY-type mines from one Yugoslav port to another, including Sibenik;

thirdly, that in October 1946 there had been a stock of such mines at Sibenik;

fourthly, that it was the custom of the Yugoslav navy to mark German mines with a swastika, in the same way as the mines swept on November 12-13th, 1946;

fifthly, that the Yugoslav navy possessed a number of vessels capable of laying mines efficiently;

sixthly, that an agreement had been signed only on September 10th, 1946 for the operation of a shipping service, employing a Yugoslav ship, between the ports of Yugoslavia and those of Albania as far south as Saranda; however, the voyages to Saranda had been halted after September 26th - the implication being drawn that the Yugoslav authorities were aware that a minefield had been, or was shortly to be, laid off this port;

seventhly, the evidence of a key witness, Karel Kovachich, formerly a lieutenant-commander in the Yugoslav navy who had defected to the "West" in July 1947;

This witness testified that in October 1946 he had been in charge of the Signals Workshop at the Yugoslav naval base of Sibenik. In the morning of either October 16th or 17th three ships of the Yugoslav minesweeping flotilla had arrived at Sibenik for radio repairs. Work had begun at 7 a.m. the next morning on two of these ships - the Mljet and Mejline, which were equipped for both the sweeping and laying of mines. Just before noon on that day he had received a telephone call from the Chief of Staff, Commander Viktor Kobol, instructing him to postpone the rest of the work on these two ships. They had left the workshops at St. Peter's Cove by 3 p.m. the same day.

Later in the day, at 4.15 p.m., he had observed the Mljet^ and Mejline moored at the quay at Panikovac Cove; they had been partly loaded with German Y-type mines, and loading was continuing; minelaying rails, which had not been in position at 9 a.m. that morning, had been fitted to the ships. At about 6.30 p.m. he had observed the ships again, now fully loaded with mines.

The two ships had sailed from Sibenik during the night, and had returned about four days after he had heard on the BBC the news of the second Corfu Channel Incident (that is, they had returned about October 26th). The minelaying rails were still in position on one ship, but both were empty of mines.

At a party that evening, an engineering officer on one of the ships, Sub-Lieutenant Drago Blazevich, had told him that the ships had gone to Kotor to

refuel, and had then sailed for "an important duty" which he had refused to specify. However, another officer, a friend of Blazevich, had later told him that Blazevich had revealed to him in confidence that, after leaving Kotor, the ships had laid mines in Albanian territorial waters at the spot where the explosions had occurred on October 22nd.

It was established that the speed of the Mljet and Mejline was 6 knots, so that the voyage between Sibenik and Saranda would have taken two and a half days each way.

eighthly, the evidence of Zivan Pavlov, a Yugoslav merchant seaman and former naval rating who had defected to the "West' in October 1948. Pavlov testified by affidavit that between October 23rd and 26th, 1946 he had observed a Yugoslav naval vessel of the M-class (the class to which the Mljet and Mejline belonged) sailing up the Gulf of Kotor in the direction of the fuelling points.

Counsel for the British government Sir Frank Soskice suggested as the motive for the alleged action of the Yugoslav government in laying the mines:

> "At that time Yugoslavia was very ill-disposed towards the United Kingdom". (127)

But there was, in fact, a much stronger motive for the Yugoslav government to have carried out the minelaying operation in Albanian territorial waters.

From 1944 to 1948 a pro-Yugoslav faction held leading positions in the Albanian Party and state. This faction - headed by Koçi Xoxe, Organisational Secretary of the Party and Minister of the Interior - supported within Albania the efforts of Yugoslavia to absorb Albania.

On July 9th, 1946 a Treaty of Cooperation and Mutual Aid was signed between the two states. This was followed by an economic convention, on the basis of which the two currencies were placed in parity, prices were unified and a customs union established. A commission was set up to "coordinate economic planning" between the two countries, and joint Yugoslav-Albanian companies were set up.

In the same period, requests were made by Belgrade for the stationing of Yugoslav troops on Albanian soil,

> " . . the concept of the unification of the Albanian Army with that of Yugoslavia was launched", (128)

and

> " . . the Yugoslav leadership . . submitted to the Central Committee of the CPA its plan for the 'union of Albania with Yugoslavia on a federative basis'". (129)

However, these Yugoslav plans to absorb Albania were being strongly resisted by a group within the leadership of the Albanian Party and state headed by Enver Hoxha, General Secretary of the Party and Prime Minister. In order to break down this resistance, efforts were being made by the Yugoslav leaders to intimidate the Albanian people into believing that a Yugoslav military and political presence was necessary to enable Albania to "defend its national independence" from the imminent danger of attack not only from Greece

but from one or other of the major "Western" powers, as Hoxha told a meeting of Party activists in Tirana in October 1948:

> "The Yugoslavs . . wanted to create in our country, and at the head of our Party, a phobia of imminent war. . . The Yugoslavs presented the matter as if we were about to be attacked by the Anglo-Americans and the Greek monarcho-fascists, and alleged that they had reliable information. . .
>
> The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Tito himself tried to maintain the war phobia in Albania". (130)

One of the witnesses at the International Court proceedings, the French rear-admiral Raymond Moullec, expressed the view that

> " . . the planners of this operation must have known that there were no observation posts either on Limion Hill and/or Denta Point", (131)

and this view was endorsed by Counsel for the Albanian government Pierre Cot:

> "The criminal authors of the secret minelaying evidently knew this (that there was no path or road to Denta Point - Ed.). They had all the means of keeping themselves informed on the topography of the region". (132)

In view of the fact that Koçi Xoxe (who was tried and convicted of treason as a Yugoslav agent in 1949) was at the time of the Corfu Channel Incidents Minister of the Interior in charge of security, such knowledge could well have been made available to the authors of the minelaying operation if these had been the Yugoslav authorities.

Although it was clear that the Yugoslav government had the motive, means and opportunity to have carried out the minelaying operation, the evidence that it had done so was circumstantial. The Court, therefore, concluded:

> "In the light of the information now available to the Court, the authors of the minelaying operation remain unknown". (133)

With the Complicity of Albania?

Although it did not appear as such in the Application filed by the British government in the Corfu Channel case, the second alternative charge made against Albania was that of "complicity' in laying the minefield.

Counsel for the British government Sir Frank Soskice based his case in this respect on the assumption that the mines had been laid by Yugoslavia, and on the fact that in 1946 Albania had had close relations with that state:

> "If Yugoslavia laid these mines, this could only have been at the request of, or with the knowledge and assent of, Albania. . .
>
> Owing to the close friendship and relationship between the two countries, it is inconceivable that Yugoslavia laid the mines without the knowledge of the Albanian Government". (134)

Counsel for the Albanian government Pierre Cot pointed out the possibility that the Yugoslav government might have laid the minefield for its own motives and without the agreement of the Albanian government:

> "It is possible - I do not say more - that the Yugoslavs had interests and preoccupations which were their own. And it is possible that they undertook certain operations without agreement with Albania", (135)

while his fellow Counsel Joe Nordmann went further and declared that if the Yugoslav government had indeed laid the minefield, this would have been

> " . . prejudicial to Albanian interests". (136)

This, he asserted, ruled out the possibility of the complicity of the Albanian authorities:

> "It is clear that, if the wish had been through this provocation to bring about the entry of troops into Albania, . . the Tirana Government would not have been informed because it would not have permitted or tolerated such a provocation. Still less would it have participated". (137)

But the Court had already found it unproven that the Yugoslav government had laid the minefield, and in its Judgment found it unproven that the Albanian government was guilty of complicity in this operation:

> "The United Kingdom Government endeavoured to prove collusion between Albania and Yugoslavia by certain presumptions of fact or circumstantial evidence, such as . . the bond of close political and military alliance between Albania and Yugoslavia. . .
>
> The Court considers that, even in so far as these facts are established, they lead to no firm conclusion. . . The origin of the mines laid in Albanian territorial waters remains a matter of conjecture. It is clear that the evidence of a treaty . . in no way leads to the conclusion that they participated in a criminal act". (138)

In other words, the International Court of Justice found Albania "not guilty" of complicity in the laying of mines in the Corfu Channel.

With the Knowledge of Albania?

The final alternative charge brought by the British government against that of Albania was that it "must have known" of the presence of the minefield, and so had been "guilty" of a breach of international law by failing to make public notification of its presence.

The responsibility under international law of the Albanian government in such circumstances was admitted by its Counsel Pierre Cot:

> "If Albania had been informed of the operation before the accidents of 22nd October, and in time to warn the British vessels and shipping generally of the existence of mines in the Straits of Corfu, then the responsibility of the Albanian State would be involved". (139)

Counsel for the British government Sir Frank Soskice admitted that the minefield could have laid by the Yugoslav government without the Albanian government being informed:

"Yugoslavia may, for her own purposes, have laid the mines and have never informed Albania at all. In this case Albania would plainly not be responsible in law for the consequence of Yugoslavia's breach of an international obligation committed in Albania's territorial waters, unless she independently became aware of the new minefield and kept silent", (140)

but pointed out that in this case

" . . Yugoslavia would be planting something dangerous on Albania's doorstep which would be likely to bring Albania into serious trouble with other Powers because, when a foreign ship blew up on the minefield, Albania would certainly be blamed for it". (141)

Such an act would, therefore, be

" . . one of the foulest treachery", (142)

which, Soskice maintained, could not be considered seriously in view of the

" . . close and friendly relations between the two countries at this time (1946 - Ed.). (143)

But, of course, if the Yugoslav government had carried out the minelaying operation with the deliberate aim of disrupting relations between Albania and Britain, for the purpose of exerting additional pressure upon the Albanian government to agree to the Yugoslav plans of disguised annexation - a theory already discussed - then it was essential that the operation should be executed without the knowledge of the Albanian leaders (except, of course, for those who were known to be so strongly pro-Yugoslav that they could be trusted to keep silent.

The British government's charge that the Albanian government "must have known" of the presence of the mines in the Corfu Channel was, therefore, based primarily on the view that

" . . it was impossible for mines to be laid on such a scale and so near the coast without being either observed or heard by the Albanian coastal authorities". (144)

This view, which was accepted by a majority of the judges of the International Court, was based on indirect or circumstantial evidence. As Il Yung Chung points out in his detailed study of the legal aspects of the Corfu Channel case:

"This is the first instance in which the International Court has expressly applied the method of indirect or circumstantial evidence". (145)

But the essential principle of jurisprudence in relation to circumstantial evidence is that those responsible for judging a case on its basis

" . . must decide, not whether these facts are consistent with the prisoner's guilt, but whether they are inconsistent with any other rational conclusion; for it is only on this last hypothesis that they can safely convict the accused. The circumstances must be

such as to produce moral certainty, to the exclusion of every reasonable doubt". (146)

Expert witnesses were agreed that the mines concerned could have been laid only by a surface vessel, and not by an aircraft or submarine.

But on the question of whether such an operation "must have been heard" by the Albanian coastal authorities, these expert witnesses pointed out that the distance over which it could have been heard from the shore depended on the intensity of surf noise, the wind direction, etc., on the particular day or night on which it had taken place; and no evidence was available to the Court on this latter point. The Committee of Naval Experts put the position bluntly:

"We are not in a position to give even an approximate date for the minelaying". (147)

But, declared the Committee, unless conditions were favourable,

" . . it would . . be impossible to hear the minelaying from any of the positions mentioned. We are not in the possession of sufficient information as to conditions when the mines were laid to give a more definite statement". (148)

Since it was not possible even to establish that the minelaying operation could have been heard from the shore, the charge that the Albanian authorities must have been aware of the operation had to rest on evidence that "it must have been observed" by the Albanian coastal authorities.

The Committee of Naval Experts summarised its findings on this point in a passage which it emphasised in its second report:

"The experts consider it to be indisputable that if a normal lookout was kept at Cape Qephali, Denta Point and Shën Gjergj Monastery, and if the lookouts were equipped with binoculars as has been stated, under normal weather conditions for this area the minelaying operation . . must have been noticed by these coastguards". (149)

In other words, according to the Committee of Naval Experts, it was "indisputable" that the minelaying operation must have been observed by Albanian coastguards if three conditions could be established:

1) if a normal lookout was kept at Cape Qephali, Denta Point and Shën Gjergj Monastery;
2) if these lookouts were equipped with binoculars; and
3) if weather conditions during the operation were normal for this area.

As the Committee of Naval Experts noted, Albanian witnesses agreed that observation posts for their coastguards were equipped with binoculars. They denied, however, that such observation posts were sited at Cape Qephali, Denta Point and Shën Gjergj Monastery, testifying that they were sited only at the first and third of these places, and not at Denta Point. This latter question will be discussed later.

But since the Committee of Naval Experts had admitted that it was "not in a position to give even an approximate date for the minelaying", it was clear that it was not in a position to assert that weather conditions during the

operation were "normal for this area", so that the third condition for the Committee's conclusion could not be established. Had, therefore, the International Court of Justice been concerned to apply the recognised principles of jurisprudence relating to circumstantial evidence cited above, it would have, on the basis of this point alone, found that it was not established that the Albanian coastal authorities must have observed the minelaying operation and so must have known of the presence of the minefield. But a majority of the Court's judges felt it prudent to ignore this point.

In its Final Report, the Committee of Naval Experts amplified and amended its earlier reports with regard to the possible ways in which the minelaying operation might have been carried out. It now agreed that there were eight possible ways in which this might have been done, namely:

1) with the minelaying vessels approaching from the North and leaving from the North;
2) with the minelaying vessels approaching from the North and leaving from the South;
3) with the minelaying vessels approaching from the South and leaving from the South; and
4) with the minelaying vessels approaching from the South and leaving from the North;

with, for each of these ways,

a) the mines being laid from North to South; and
b) the mines being laid from South to North.

No evidence was available to the Court as to which of these possible ways had in fact been adopted by the authors of the minelaying operation. In order to establish that the operation "must have been observed" by Albanian coastguards, it was, therefore, necessary to establish this for each and every one of these eight possible ways.

However, in its Final Report the Committee of Naval Experts concluded that for one of these ways - namely, if the minelaying vessel or vessels had approached from the South, laid the mines from North to South, and left from the South (3a above) - the minelaying must have been noticed only from Denta Point (if a coastguard observation post had been sited there):

> "Provided that a lookout was kept at Cape Qephali, Denta Point and Shën Gjergj Monastery, and under normal weather conditions for this area, and if the mines were laid from the North towards the South,
>
> 1) the operation might not be seen by the lookout post at the foot of Shën Gjergj Monastery;
> 2) the operation would not be seen from Cape Qephali;
> 3) the minelayers must have been noticed from Denta Point". (150)

During its inspection tour of the Saranda district of the Albanian coast, the Committee of Naval Experts visited Denta Point. It found no road or path leading to it, and gained access to it from the sea. It found there some old, abandoned trenches and machine-gun posts (which it was told had been built by Italian occupation forces), but no sign of any Albanian coastguard observation post. However, in one of the deserted trenches it found a copy of the Albanian newspaper Bashkimi (Union) dated September 11th, 1948.

On the basis of this "evidence", the Committee of Naval Experts concluded (and emphasised the conclusion in its report):

"The above facts point to the conclusion that guards or lookout posts were kept at Denta Point until September 11th, 1948". (151)

The Court, however, rejected this conclusion in its Judgment:

"The existence of a lookout post at Cape Denta . . has not been proved". (152)

But the Committee of Naval Experts had concluded that, if the minefield had been laid in the way indicated above, the operation "might not be seen" or "would not be seen" from the two coastal points where coastguard observation posts did exist - at Cape Qephali and Shën Gjergj Monastery.

Clearly, therefore, for a second reason, if the International Court had been concerned to apply the recognised principle of jurisprudence relating to circumstantial evidence cited above, it would have found that it was not established that the Albanian coastal authorities "must have observed" the minelaying operation and so "must have known" of the presence of the minefield.

But a majority of the judges of the International Court proceeded to misrepresent the findings of the Committee of Naval Experts.

While this had concluded in its Final Report that, if the mines had been laid in the way indicated above,

" . . the operation would not be seen from Cape Qephali", (153)

a majority of the judges proceeded to base their Judgment on an earlier report of the Committee of Naval Experts which had been amended in this respect in its Final Report, misrepresenting the findings of the Committee in their Judgment to read: "The minelayers would have been seen from Cape Qephali", saying:

"The Court, basing itself on the declarations of the Albanian Government that lookouts were stationed at Cape Qephali and Shën Gjergj Monastery, refers to the following conclusions in the Experts' Report: . . that in the case of minelaying from the North towards the South, the minelayers would have been seen from Cape Qephali". (154)

Thus, ignoring the fact that it had not been established that the minelaying operation had been carried out under normal weather conditions for this area, and misrepresenting the findings of the Committee of Naval Experts appointed by the Court, a majority of the judges found the Albanian government "guilty" of knowing that the minefield had been laid in its territorial waters in the Corfu Channel and (admittedly) failing to notify its presence:

"The Court draws the conclusion that the laying of the minefield which caused the explosions on October 22nd 1946 could not have been accomplished without the knowledge of the Albanian Government. . .

The obligations incumbent upon the Albanian authorities consisted in notifying, for the benefit of shipping in general, the existence of a minefield in Albanian territorial waters and in warning the approaching British warships of the imminent danger to which the minefield exposed them. . .

> In fact, Albania neither notified the existence of the minefield nor warned the British warships of the danger they were approaching. . .
>
> The Court therefore reaches the conclusion that Albania is responsible under international law for the explosions which occurred on October 22nd, 1946 in Albanian waters, and for the damage and loss of human life which resulted from them, and that there is a duty upon Albania to pay compensation to the United Kingdom". (155)

Judicial Prejudice

The verdict of a majority of the judges of the International Court of Justice in the Corfu Channel case in relation to Albania's "responsibility under international law" for the Corfu Channel Incident was a clear and blatant miscarriage of justice.

Such a miscarriage of justice - in which a defendant is convicted of a crime of which he is completely innocent - may be brought about in various ways: fabricated evidence may be presented to the court; or the court may be so prejudiced against the defendant that it finds the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence a pretext for his conviction. It is rarer for a court to find a defendant "guilty" on the basis of written evidence which the judges themselves misrepresent.

The fact that this misrepresentation of written evidence undoubtedly occurred in the Corfu Channel case indicates an unparalleled degree of prejudice on the part of a majority of the judges then sitting in the International Court.

In theory, the International Court of Justice is

> " . . composed of a body of independent judges, elected regardless of their nationality" (156)

by the Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations.

But the candidates for election as judges are nominated by

> " . . national groups", (157)

and

> " . . the national groups are themselves nominated by governments". (158)

In consequence,

> " . . the system of election ensures that the composition of the Court reflects voting strength and political alliances in the Security Council and the General Assembly. The permanent members of the Security Council always have judges on the Court". (159)

Each judge is drawn from a particular state, and is therefore liable to a greater or lesser extent to hold the prejudices current among ruling circles in his country at a particular time. And each government naturally tends to arrange for the nomination of candidates for judgeship from persons whom it regards as likely, where applicable, to further its interests.

The view that a majority of the judges of the International Court were influenced by political prejudice in relation to the states involved in the Corfu Channel case - one of which (Britain) was a member of the "Western" bloc of states, while the other (Albania) was then a member of the "Eastern" bloc of states - is supported by an analysis of the voting on the primary question of whether Albania was "responsible" under international law for the explosions of October 22nd, 1946. The eleven judges who voted for a "guilty" verdict were drawn exclusively from states associated with the "Western" bloc - namely, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Chile, (Kuomintang) China, El Salvador, France, Mexico, Norway and the United States.

In the proceedings in the Security Council on the same issue, the seven members voting for a "guilty" verdict were also drawn exclusively from states associated with the "Western" bloc - namely, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, (Kuomintang) China, Colombia, France and the United States.

In other words, the pattern of voting among the "independent" judges of the International Court differed little from that in the Security Council, the members of which are officially representatives of the states from which they are drawn.

The political prejudice present in the august precincts of the International Court of Justice is evidenced also in the fact that, while the British government charged Yugoslavia with the actual laying of the minefield concerned, it proceeded only against that state's alleged accessory, the People's Republic of Albania.

Counsel for the Albanian government Joe Nordmann drew the attention of the Court to this anomaly:

> "The British government is convinced that the mines were laid by the Yugoslav government. However, it does not proceed against this government. Why?" (160)

Soskice replied on behalf of the British government:

> "We could not institute or maintain proceedings against Yugoslavia for the very simple reason that Yugoslavia has not signed an Optional Clause" (161)

- the Optional Clause referred to being an agreement by which a state pledges itself to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court at the demand of any other state which has also signed it.

To this Nordmann replied:

> "But Albania has not accepted it either". (162)

One can hardly fail to draw the conclusion that the British government made no attempt to institute proceedings against Yugoslavia because that state had, by 1948-49, moved into close economic, political and military relations with the "Western" Powers.

1. CP5; p. 59.
2. Ibid.
3. D. W. Greig: "International Law"; London; 1976; p. 297.
4. CP4; p. 389.
5. CP4; p. 388, 389, 397.
6. J. Cable: "Gunboat Diplomacy"; London; 1981; p. 39.
7. Ibid.; p. 224.
8. CJ; p. 31.
9. CJ; p. 32.
10. CP4; p. 21, 27-8.
11. CP4; p. 564.
12. CJ; p. 32.
13. CP4; p. 565.
14. CJ; p. 32.
15. CP5; p. 53.
16. CJ; p. 29.
17. Ibid.
18. CJ; p. 29-30.
19. B: FO371/58493/2338/R15668.
20. B: FO371/58494/2338/R16025.
21. B: fO371/58494/2338/R15995.
22. Ibid.
23. B: FO371/58494/2338/R15992.
24. B: FO371/58494/2338/R16104.
25. B: FO371/58494/2338/R16211.
26. CP1; p. 75.
27. B: FO371/58494/2338/R16067.
28. CP1; p. 104.
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22

1945 - 1955 :

THE CAMPAIGN OF OSTRACISM

"Close the book, quench the candle, ring the bell" -
Formula of Excommunication, c 1200

The German Reparations Conference : A "Mistaken" Invitation

The Reparations Conference relating to Germany was held in Paris in November-December 1945. When the Head of the Yugoslav Delegation, Dr. Ales Bebler, proposed that Albania be invited to participate in the conference, the question was referred to the governments of the three inviting powers - Britain, France and the United States. The British Foreign Office replied on November 15th:

> "We have no objection to Albania being asked to send representatives to Paris". (1)

Similar responses were received from the French and US governments.

The Greek Embassy in London protested to the Foreign Office on November 19th, stating on behalf of the Greek government:

> "The proposal is entirely unacceptable to them, and . ., in the event of a representative of Albania being invited, it will not be possible for their own representative to continue at the conference". (2)

Six days later Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sir Orme Sargent characterised the decision to invite Albania as

> " . . regrettable", (3)

declaring:

> "I very much regret I was not consulted over this matter. I fail to see any reason why Albania should be classified with the countries entitled to reparations from Germany. . .
> A mistake has been made". (4)

On November 24th the Foreign Office notified the British delegation at the conference:

> "Please make it clear to your United States and French colleagues that we do not think Albania is entitled to any reparations". (5)

The Treasury advised the Foreign Office on November 27th:

> "The three Foreign Offices should tell the Greeks that the invitation to Albania is without prejudice to territorial arrangements to be concluded in due course. . . The French have agreed to hold up the invitation". (6)

The Greek delegation did not withdraw from the conference.

Eventually, although the French government failed to convey the official invitation, an Albanian delegation headed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hysni Kapo, arrived in Paris and was one of the signatories to the Final Act of the conference on December 21st, 1945. This provided that:

> "German Reparations . . shall be divided into the following categories:
>
> Category A, which shall include all forms of German reparations except those included in Category B;
>
> Category B, which shall include industrial and other capital equipment removed from Germany, and merchant ships and inland water transport. . .
>
> Each Signatory shall be entitled to the percentage share of the total value . . set out . . below:

	Category A	Category B
Albania:	0.05%	0.35%"

(7)

As Hoxha told the People's Assembly in March 1946, the conference

> " . . fixed a quota for our country which consisted of a number of factories. . . The Reparations Conference quite unjustly gave us a quota very small in comparison with the destruction Germany wrought in our country". (8)

Exclusion from the Italian Peace Conference

The Peace Conference with Germany's European allies - Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Italy and Romania - was held in Paris in July-October 1946.

On April 26th, 1946 the Albanian government made formal application to be invited to participate in the conference. Roger Pinsent, in charge of the Albanian desk at the British Foreign Office, minuted:

> "We do not particularly desire Albania's presence". (9)

The British delegation to the conference reported to the Foreign Office:

> "We shall take the line that she (Albania - Ed.) should not be admitted to the Conference, but she should be invited to state her views on such relevant questions as she may wish to raise". (10)

and that this view was shared by the French and United States delegations. (11)

Meanwhile the Albanian government applied on May 10th for the allocation to Albania of part of the Italian navy, namely

> " . . a reasonable portion, proportional to the needs of the maritime defence of the country". (12)

On which Hayter commented:

> "We feel that we should oppose the claim. . . The Albanians are not to be trusted with modern weapons". (13)

Prime Minister Hoxha addressed the conference on August 21st, saying:

> "Albania considers that the decision not to invite it as a participant in this Conference was unjust. . .
> Albania's fight earned it the right to participate in this Conference with the same title and same rights as those of the twenty-one victorious nations". (14)

He proposed an amendent to the draft treaty to the effect that

> " . . in the implementation of this treaty, Albania is considered as an Associated Power". (15)

On October 25th, 1946, after the conference had ended without finalising the Peace Treaty with Italy, the Albanian government sent a note to the Council of Foreign Ministers demanding that, since it was charged with this task, it should recognise

> " . . <u>the right of Albania to be considered as an Associated Power in the implementation of the Peace Treaty with Italy</u>". (16)

At the Council of Foreign Ministers held in New York in November-December 1946, the Peace Treaty with Italy was finalised in a form which agreed that Albania should be considered as an Associated Power for the implementation of the treaty.

The treaty was signed in Paris on February 10th, 1947. Article 27 pledged Italy to respect the independence of Albania, while Article 28 transferred the island of Sazan from Italy to Albania.

<u>Reparations from Italy</u>

Although refused permission to attend the Peace Conference with Italy, Albania put in a claim for reparations from Italy

> " . . in the amount of 3,544,000,000 gold francs or $1,161,000,000", (17)

On June 6th, 1946 the Head of the US Special Mission in Albania, Joseph Jacobs, expressed to the US Delegation at the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Paris the view that

> " . . Albania is entitled to little if any reparations from Italy". (18)

adding on August 16th:

> "Albania has profited by the Italian occupation to a greater extent than it has suffered from that occupation and war devastation, so that the problem (of reparations - Ed.) resolves itself". (19)

A US State Department Policy and Information Statement on Albania noted:

> "Albania's claim to a share in Italian reparations was . . opposed by the US and UK on the ground that Albanian losses were covered by Italian assets in Albania which the latter had already

obtained. In the final vote of the Commission on October 5, 1946, no provision was made for reparations". (20)

On October 25th, 1946 the Albanian government wrote to the Council of Foreign Ministers, which was charged with finalising the Peace Treaty with Italy, saying:

"The fact that Albania's right to reparations has been denied is profoundly unjust. . . In view of the indecisive outcome of the vote, the Council of Foreign Ministers is alone qualified to take a decision upon the matter". (21)

And the final peace treaty drawn up by the Council of Foreign Ministers, meeting in New York from November-December 1946 and signed in Paris in February 1947 recognised Albania's right to

" . . $5,000,000 as reparations from Italy". (22)

Obstruction of Reparations

After the expulsion of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia from the Communist Information Bureau in 1948, and Yugoslavia's movement into closer relations with the "Western" powers, the Yugoslav government began to prevent the passage of reparations to Albania through that country. The Albanian government complained in a note to Belgrade in November 1950:

"The Yugoslav government has for almost two years prevented Albania from receiving the reparations from Germany which came through Yugoslavia". (23)

The British and United States governments pursued the same policy.

In February 1949 Gordon Campbell, in charge of the Albanian Desk at the British Foreign Office minuted:

"It is . . greatly in our interest to interrupt any reparations going to Albania". (24)

Geoffrey Wallinger, now Head of the Southern Department at the Foreign Office, suggested that the extension of the visa granted to Bude Ifhan, who had arrived in Trieste to supervise the transit of these reparations through the Anglo-American occupied port on behalf of the Albanian government, should be refused, adding:

"In addition, there are a number of technical difficulties connected with transport and payments arrangements for it, which could be raised in order to prevent or interrupt Albanian traffic through the port". (25)

On March 5th Wallinger wrote to the British Embassy in Washington to say:

"We gather . . that the United States Government would be as ready as we are to put a spoke in the Albanian Government's wheel whenever they conveniently can. . . We assume that they would be ready to join us in placing obstacles, if possible, in the way of the transport of reparations from Germany to Albania. . . The Allied

Military Government might be given a directive to be as generally obstructive as they can towards Albanian interests". (26)

To which the Embassy replied on the 21st:

"The State Department . . agree with you on the desirability of being as obstructive as possible in the matter of reparations, but . . they are inclined to think it is better to prevent the Albanians from setting up shop at all in Trieste". (27)

adding on August 27th:

"The State Department . . considered therefore that we should . . expel Bude Ifhan from the United States/United Kingdom zone". (28)

The Foreign Office wrote to William Sullivan, British Political Adviser to the Allied Commander in Trieste, on September 14th, saying::

"We agree with the State Department to the extent that we think that the Allied authorities should impose any practical obstacles they can under existing rules and practices relating to the shipment of such supplies. . . Their existing powers ought to be enough to stop anything of any importance". (29)

A fortnight later, however, the office of the Allied commander in Trieste was informing the Foreign Office that the measures carried out to expel Ifhan from Trieste

" . . had as their sole result his transferring his activities . . to Venice", (30)

while the British Embassy informed Whitehall next month of the complaints of Trieste businessmen at the loss of business which had resulted from Ifhan's expulsion from the port:

"Business men concerned have been putting pressure on the Allied Military Government (in Trieste - Ed.) to restore what had turned out to be a valuable source of dollars". (31)

The Foreign Office, however, was more concerned that the Italian government should be pressed to expel Ifhan from Italy:

"It is now time to put Rome in the picture to ask them to see what they can do to harass Ifhan in Venice", (32)

and in May 1950 Trieste was able to inform the Foreign Office:

"Bude Ifhan . . has left Italy at the request of the Italian authorities, who consider his presence undesirable". (33)

Expulsion of the Albanian Military Mission

The Albanian Military Mission had arrived in Bari in 1944 as a result of the agreement signed there in July of that year.

In March 1946 Philip Broad, British Political Adviser to the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean, in Caserta informed the Foreign Office:

> "The Supreme Allied Commander is anxious to get rid of the Albanian Mission at Bari at the earliest opportunity". (34)

On which Michael Williams, Acting 1st Secretary at the British Foreign Office, commented:

> "It is to be hoped that the Military Mission in Albania will be withdrawn in the near future. This will give us an opportunity of expelling the Albanian Military Mission from Bari, where it has been causing us considerable incvonvenience over the last few months", (35)

Consequently, following the withdrawal of the British Military Mission from Albania on April 6th, Broad notified the Foreign Office four days later:

> "AFHQ (Allied Forces Headquarters - Ed.) are . . requesting Kadri Hoxha (Albanian Officer in Charge) to inform the Albanian General Staff that the Supreme Allied Commander wishes this mission to be withdrawn as soon as possible". (36)

On May 16th Broad reported to London that the Albanian Military Mission had left Bari. (37)

Exclusion from the Mediterranean Zone Mine Clearance Board

The International Mine Clearance Board was set up by the Allied Powers in 1945 to organise the sweeping of mines left over from the Second World War. The waters off Albania were placed under the supervision of a subsidiary board, the Mediterranean Zone Mine Clearance Board, composed of representatives of Britain, France, Greece, the Soviet Union, the United States and Yugoslavia, with headquarters in Malta. Albania was not invited to join this Board. As John Grant of the British Foreign Office expressed it later:

> "We . . did not . . oppose American objections to her admission". (38)

and as a representative of the Greek government stated in the spring of 1947:

> "Greece, as well as other countries, had opposed Albania's participation (in the Mediterranean Board - Ed.)" (39)

At the first meeting of this Board on November 5th, 1945 the sweeping of Albanian territorial waters was assigned to Greece to form part of Zone 18A.

On February 26th, 1946 the Albanian government applied for observer status on the Mediterranean Zone Board, and repeated its application on August 13th, 1947, saying on this occasion that it

> " . . possesses minesweepers at the present time and finds itself in a position to contribute by its own means to the clearance of mines in Albanian coastal waters". (40)

It therefore also applied for the exclusion of Albanian territorial waters from Zone 18A and their placing under Albanian responsibility.

Grant minuted on in September:

"The Albanians have repudiated the International Court's competence to assess the damages in the Corfu Channel case. I submit that this is sufficient political grounds for not welcoming Albania on to the Board, even as an observer. I understand that the Americans still object to her admission". (41)

The Foreign Office agreed, and notified the Admiralty on September 19th:

"We should still wish for the time being to oppose the admission of Albania as an observer". (42)

Obstruction of the Restitution of Looted Property

On March 11th, 1948 the Albanian government formally requested the Italian government for the restitution of looted property or its equivalent value, as provided for in the Italian Peace Treaty, which Albania had ratified on October 24th of the previous year. The request was rejected by the Italian government, and on May 3rd the Albanian government sent notes to London, Moscow and Washington asking the Allied governments to ensure that the terms of the treaty were honoured in this respect by the Italian government.

Sir Victor Mallet, the British Ambassador in Rome, clarified the position of the Italian government on May 22nd:

"Italian Government . . do not deny Albanian rights under Articles 74 and 75, etc. . . But they do not see why they should meet them so long as Albania (in their view) infringes the Treaty by holding up repatriations (of Italian citizens in Albania - Ed.) . .
Italian case seems weak juridically. . . I know of no article in the Treaty or any other agreement to which Albania is party which she is breaking by holding up repatriations". (43)

Nevertheless, Mallet's recommendation was

" . . that we should reject the Albanian protest". (44)

On which Foreign Office officials commented:

"The Albanian claim appears not only to be good in law but to be accepted by the Italians, and I think it would be difficult to make out that Albania is infringing the text of the Treaty", (45)

but

"There is no reason for HMG to put any sort of pressure on any power to honour its obligations to Albania". (46)

The special case of Albania's looted gold will be the subject of a later chapter.

Obstruction of Relief

On July 28th, 1945 an agreement was signed between the Albanian Red Cross and the American Red Cross for the transport and distribution of

> " . . supplies bought by the Albanian Relief Fund (in the United States - Ed.) for the Albanian people". (47)

Despite the privations suffered by the Albanian people as a result of the devastation caused to Albania's already extremely backward economy by the years of occupation and war, in the spring of 1946 the American Red Cross stopped the supplies on the advice of its representative in Albania, Ernest Pett. Qamil Cela, the President of the Albanian Red Cross, protested to Pett in a letter dated May 8th, 1946:

> "It is with regret that we learn that the supplies . . have been stopped and that this is due to the reports which you have sent from time to time to your headquarters in the United States pretending that the Albanian Red Cross does not live up to the agreemnent of July 28, 1945. . .
>
> You . . participated in two meetings held by the Central Distribution Committee, which planned the distribution process after having heard your views on this matter. . .
>
> Wherever you visited you yourself observed that the distribution centres were acting in full conformity with the distribution programme planned in the centre. For this work you have also expressed your congratulations to us. . .
>
> Every supply, according to its destination goes in favour of the needy population and war victims". (48)

That the motives for the cutting of of supplies were primarily political, was admitted by the Head of the US Mission, Joseph Jacobs:

> "It is high time for people of USA to cease giving and giving to this and similar countries where US representatives are not accorded treatment due them, where our way of life is criticised. . . I speak feelingly because I . . know what utter farce this regime has made of its vaunted democracy. We shall be more respected and get further when we stop bolstering its existence". (49)

Thus, in April 1946 Jacobs, expressed the view to the State Department:

> "There is no real destitution in Albania. It is true that Albanian peasants appear poverty-stricken, but they have always been in that condition". (50)

He added in June:

> "Cannot recommend too strongly that all possible steps be taken to prevent inauguration another campaign for funds for Albania". (51)

and in August:

> "Am opposed resumption of ARC (American Red Cross - Ed.) relief distribution in Albania. . .
>
> No, repeat no, need exists". (52)

Exclusion from the United Nations Organisation

As has been said, Albania was not invited to be represented at the San Francisco Conference of April-June 1945 which set up the United Nations Organisation.

On January 25th, 1946 the newly-constituted People's Republic of Albania formally applied for membership of UN.

The Greek Foreign Minister, Constantinos Rendis, sent a note to the UN Security Council on February 12th saying:

> "In view of the fact that . . Albania (i.e., the puppet government of Albania imposed during the Italian occupation - Ed.) joined the Axis Powers by sending fifteen battalions against Greece, . . consideration of this matter should be postponed until the next session of the Assembly in the hope that meanwhile normal relations will have been established between the two countries". (53)

On the following day, when the question of Albania's application was discussed at the Security Council, US Secretary of State Edward Stettinius declared:

> "I think that it would be highly desirable that this question be deferred until a later date," (54)

and British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin added:

> "If I were forced to vote tonight, I should have to vote against the proposal". (55)

Finally, a US motion

> " . . that consideration of it (the Albanian application - Ed.) be deferred", (56)

was ruled to be a procedural question and was carried by majority vote.

In July the Greek government submitted a memorandum to the Security Council on the question of the admission of Albania. This, in effect, demanded that Albania should be excluded from the UN unless and until it ceded Southern Albania ("Northern Epirus") to Greece: it accused Albania of

> " . . a ruthless policy of denationalisation of the Greek population of Northern Epirus", (57)

stated that Greece would continue to be in a state of war with Albania

> " . . as long as the questions arising out of the state of war with Albania have not been settled and, especially, the question of Northern Epirus which Greece considers as an integral part of her territory", (58)

and concluded:

"The foregoing facts clearly point out that the time has not come for Albania to enter the United Nations. She does not qualify as a peace-loving nation. . .

The Greek Government therefore formally oppose the membership of Albania in the United Nations as long as no settlement has been worked out and normal relations restored between the two countries". (59)

A second Greek memorandum, dated August 15th, reiterated

" . . the Greek Government's formal opposition to the admission of Albania to the United Nations as long as a settlement of the questions pending between her and Greece, and especially of the question of Northern Epirus, has not been reached". (60)

In the Committee on the Admission of New Members, which met in July and August, the British representative expressed

" . . doubts . . as to whether the latter (the Albanian government - Ed.) was peaceloving and able and willing to carry out the obligations of the Charter", (61)

referring to the Corfu Channel incident of May 1946.

The U. S. representative stated that the United States had "doubts" whether Albania qualified for membership of the UN because of her failure to confirm the validity of the pre-1939 US-Albanian treaties:

"We do not admit the right of any state to terminate or modify a treaty by unilateral action. . . .

We are concerned as to whether or not this disregard for the long-established principle of international law is of such a serious nature as to disqualify Albania from membership in the United Nations. . . At the moment we must reserve our position". (62)

On August 29th, 1946 the full Security Council voted on the admission of Albania. 5 delegations voted in favour (Brazil, France, Mexico, Poland and the Soviet Union), 3 against (Britain, Netherlands, USA) and 3 abstained (Australia, China and Egypt). Having failed to secure the requisite 7 votes, the motion was lost.

On November 19th the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending the Security Council to re-examine on their respective merits the applications of five states, including Albania, on which the Security Council had failed to make a recommendation.

When the question of Albania's admission came before the Security Council again on August 18th, 1947, Sir Alexander Cadogan (Britain) said:

"The majority of the Council found that the present Albanian Government must have been aware of the mining of the Corfu Channel. . . In the second place, a majority of the Commission of Investigation appointed by the Security Council found that Albania . . was guilty of stirring up strife in Greece. . . In these circumstances, my Government could not agree here and now to the admission of Albania to the United Nations". (63)

Herschel Johnson (USA) spoke in similar tones:

> "The United States delegation will have to oppose the application of Albania for membership of the United Nations for the reasons which were fully stated in the . . Committee on the Admission of New Members. . .
>
> There is one other reason: . . the careless disregard which the present Government of Albania has for the international obligations which bound Albania with other countries before the war". (64)

On this day 3 delegates voted in favour of the motion to admit Albania (Poland, Soviet Union, Syria), 4 against (Australia, Belgium, Britain, United States), and 4 abstained (Brazil, China, Colombia, France). The motion was lost.

Behind the pretexts presented in public lay the real motive for the opposition of the Western Powers to the admission of Albania, indicated by Patrick Dean, Assistant Legal Secretary to the British Foreign Office, in December 1947:

> "The total of states . . who have priority rights is 23. If Albania is added the number will be 24. Of these the Soviet will be able to control six votes for certain, and two probable, namely Czechoslovakia and Norway. The anti-Soviet vote will consist of fifteen certain and one probable, namely Brazil. The Soviet therefore could block any vote which required a two-thirds majority if only one of the anti-Soviet powers were to abstain". (65)

In April 1948 the Security Council once more discussed the admission of Albania, reporting to the General Assembly

> " . . that none of the representatives on the Security Council has changed his position". (66)

On September 15th, 1949 a further vote was taken in the Security Council on the admission of Albania. 2 delegations voted for her admission (Soviet Union, Ukraine), 1 against (Canada) and 8 abstained (Argentina, Britain, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Norway, USA). Having failed to obtain the requisite 7 votes, the motion for admission was lost.

By 1950, however, it was clear that the admission of most applicant states was deadlocked, since, in response to the blocking of the applications of certain pro-Eastern states by the pro-Western majority, the Soviet delegation to the Security Council was making use of the principle of unanimity (the right of one of the five permanent members to veto any action by the Council not of a merely procedural nature) to block the admission of certain pro-Western states.

On December 21st, 1952 the Assembly, inspired by the desire of the Western Powers to find a way to avoid the Security Council's "principle of unanimity" in the admission of the members, adopted a resolution to set up a Special Committee

> " . . to make a detailed study of the question of the admission of States to membership in the United Nations". (67)

The Special Committee reported in June 1953; its principal findings were summed up in a memorandum by Michael Williams:

> "In brief the Special Committee concluded that the veto in the Security Council was properly applicable to the question of new admissions and that it could not legally be disregarded by the General Assembly". (68)

However, as a Foreign Office Brief pointed out in June 1955, the Soviet government

> " . . repeatedly declared its willingness to see certain 'Western' candidates admitted, on condition that this was done under a package deal which simultaneously admitted several Soviet candidates". (69)

The continuation of the deadlock was assisted by the fact that formal deals on the admission of states had been ruled by the International Court of Justice in 1948 to be contrary to the United Nations Charter. As Foreign Service Officer William White pointed out in June 1955:

> "The ICJ's advisory opinion . . precludes our supporting a 'package deal'". (70)

However, Gerald Fitzmaurice, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, made it clear that this was not an obstacle in practice:

> "In practice . . a horse deal could be brought about, provided all the arrangements were made behind the scenes and nothing was said in public to indicate that one state's admission was dependent or consequent upon the admission of another state". (71)

Nevertheless, the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and the United States, meeting in San Francisco on June 20th, 1955, agreed:

> "There must be no 'packages' or bargains". (72)

In October 1953 the General Assembly had approved by 54 votes to 1, with 5 abstentions, a Peruvian motion to set up a "Committee of Good Offices", consisting of representatives of Egypt, Netherlands and Peru,

> " . . with the object of exploring the possibilities of reaching an understanding which would facilitate the admission of new members". (73)

On this project Christopher Cope, Foreign Service Officer at the British Foreign Office, minuted:

> "The Minister of State (Selwyn Lloyd - Ed.) has given them (the Peruvians - Ed.) some mild encouragement since . . their scheme seems harmless enough and might serve to postpone an embarrassing debate on this item". (74)

In 1954 the British government was still unprepared to agree to the admission of Albania. Robert Turton, Joint Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, informed the House in a written answer on the 25th:

"The Albanian Government have not yet paid the compensation which was awarded to Her Majesty's Government by the International Court. Her Majesty's Government will continue to refuse to support Albania's application for membership of the United Nations while the Albanian Government demonstrate their unwillingness to accept the obligations of the United Nations Charter". (75)

But, in fact, the British government's real objections to any 'package deeal" were that a blanket admission of the outstanding applicants would change the balance of voting power in the General Assembly to its disadvantage. A memorandum by Michael Williams in June 1953 had pointed out:

"We are on record as being generally in favour of universality of membership of the United Nations. In voicing such sentiments we are in agreement with a large majority of our fellow members of the United Nations. At the same time we have considerable private reservations. We have calculated that if all, or nearly all, of the 21 outstanding candidates for admission were to be admitted, our own position in regard to certain important votes, particularly on colonial matters, would be seriously weakened. A majority, perhaps a substantial majority, of potential new members would be likely to vote with the anti-colonial and under-developed States. . . Nevertheless we cannot openly oppose universality of membership. . .

In these circumstances it seems that we have little interest in trying to expedite a solution of the deadlock". (76)

This analysis was developed in May 1955 in a memorandum of Sir Pierson Dixon to Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan:

"If the sixteen fully sovereign states among the outstanding candidates were admitted, it would radically change the balance in the Assembly,

The composition of the Assembly . . would give the uncommitted states the power, which they do not now possess, to achieve a blocking minority on Western resolutions. . .

The anti-colonial vote would rise by 12. . . This would seriously endanger the precarious one-third minority which has been established. . .

The United Nations would be a much more difficult place for the United Kingdom Delegation after the admission of new members, and it is indeed likely that the vital votes of Her Majesty's Government would be adversely affected. . .

We must of course appear publicly to be working for universality. . . But, with this proviso, our policy should surely be to avoid doing anything to hasten the day when . . the deadlock on new admissions is broken". (77)

This view was endorsed in July in a Foreign Office Brief prepared by Foreign Service Officer Edward Warner for Four Power talks in Geneva:

"It is not in HMG's interests to press for the early admission of States if this is likely to lead to an increase of the anti-colonial vote in the United Nations". (78)

But by July 1955 Warner was warning the British delegation to the United Nations:

> "The French are wobbling on the question of a 'package', despite what was agreed between the thee Western Foreign Ministers at San Francisco". (79)

and by August the government of Canada was proposing to London a scheme based on

> " . . the US, UK and France attempting to reach a prior understanding with the Soviet Union on the admission of the 17 qualified applicants. This could be viewed not as a 'package deal', but as a . . gentlemen's agreement". (80)

But after the Canadian proposal had been discussed by the British Cabinet in September, the Foreign Office informed the British delegation to the United Nations:

> "For your own confidential information, the Cabinet had misgivings about taking the initiative in promoting the Canadian proposal, on account of the adverse effect on our voting position on colonial issues". (81)

Support for the British position came from the Greek government. Foreign Service Office Ronald Scrivener reported in November 1955 a call by John Cambiotis, 1st Secretary of the Greek Embassy in London, who

> " . . explained that his Government did not relish the prospect of Albanian and Bulgarian membership of the United Nations", (82)

and from the "Assembly of Captive European Nations" held in New York in October; this telegraphed to British Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan appealing

> " . . to Your Excellency against admission of Soviet-controlled puppet Governments of Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania to United Nations membership". (83)

However, the British position was made more difficult by pressure from branches of the United Nations Association and other bodies in favour of the principle of universality, (84) as well as from pro-Western countries denied UN membership as a result of the deadlock, and from Commonwealth countries such as Australia, India and New Zealand. (85,86)

And so, although on October 20th Foreign Secretary Macmillan was minuting in New York:

> "We must not (repeat not) take on our own shoulders the responsibility for having stopped the election. So we must act in this way: neither to instigate action, nor to stop it", (87)

on the same day

> " . . the Cabinet decided . . that we should support the Canadian proposal, with the modification that Spain . . should be added to the list". (88)

The British delegation was instructed in November that - if necessary to avoid blame for a breakdown of these moves falling upon London - it should

even vote for the admission of Albania:

> "I have had a word with the Prime Minister, who agrees that, in the light of your telegram and of dangers of our bearing major responsibility for breakdown, we should be ready to vote for Albania, much as we dislike it. Any such vote would have to be accompanied by a declaration . . explaining that our vote did not connote approval, but was cast purely in order to break deadlock". (89)

Accordingly, a Canadian resolution was moved on December 1st, 1955 in the following terms in the Ad Hoc Committee concerned with the question:

> "Having noted the general sentiment . . in favour of universalty in the membership of the United Nations;
> having received the preliminary report of the Committee of Good Offices;
> requests the Security Council to consider in the light of the general opinion in favour of the universality of the United Nations, the pending applications for membership of all those countries about which no problem of unification arises". (90)

Dixon then stated on behalf of the British government:

> "My Government are ready to acquiesce in the admission of all 18 outstanding applicants even if we have reservations about the qualifications of some of them", (91)

while the United States representative, Henry Cabot Lodge, had already stated in November that the US government was prepared to vote for the 13 pro-Western states and to abstain on (i.e., not to veto) the admission of Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. (92)

The ressolution was approved by the Ad Hoc Committee on December 8th by 52 votes to 2 (China, Cuba), with 5 abstentions (Belgium, France, Greece, Israel and the United States).

In the Security Council on December 13th, 1955, Dixon gave a pious explanatory position on the British government's vote on the admission of Albania:

> "Our particular reservations about Albania arise not from our doubts about its independence, but our doubts whether . . it should be regarded as peace-loving. I do not wish to go into the history of the shocking incident which took place in 1946. . . But I must point out that, despite the award of compensation by the International Court, the Albanian Government has so far consistently refused to make any amends for this outrage. . . Nevertheless, nine years have passed since then. The British people are by nature tolerant and forgiving and we are capable of restraining ourselves in the national interest. . . We shall, therefore, vote for Albania. In doing so we are making an act of faith in the future good conduct of the Albanian Government". (93)

The Security Council recommended on December 14th, the admission of the 16 agreed applicants, namely, Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Ceylon, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania and Spain. The vote on the admission of Albania was carried by 8 votes

to 0, with 3 abstentions (Belgium, China and the United States).

The General Assembly met the same evening and formally admitted the above states. The vote in favour of the admission of Albania was 48 to 3 (China, Cuba and Greece), with 5 abstentions (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, the Netherlands, the Philippines and the United States).

Exclusion from UNRRA

On March 22nd., 1946 the Committee on Procedure of the Council of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) rejected Albania's application to join the Council of the Agency by 23 votes (including those of the British and United States delegates) to 6, with 3 abstentions.

The official reason presented by the Foreign Office for the British vote in opposition to Albania's application was that she was not a member of the United Nations Organisation - as it informed Nicholas Lawford, of the British delegation to the United Nations:

> "The United Kingdom delegate at the Fourth Council Session of UNRRA at Atlantic City . . did speak against the admission of Albania to the UNRRA Council. This was . . in conformity with a previous resolution of the Council that only signatories of the United Nations Charter should be members of UNRRA". (94)

In fact, the motive for the rejection of Albania's application for membership of both organisations was political, as US Secretary of State James Byrnes admitted in a memorandum of May 1946:

> "Primary consideration which has determined attitude of United States Government towards Albania's application for UNRRA membership is failure of present Albanian administration to recognise continuing validity of treaties and agreements in force between United States and Albania as of April 7, 1939". (95)

1. B; FO371/45797/624/UE5607.
2. B: FO371/45797/624/UE5635.
3. B: ibid.
4. B: ibid.
5. B: FO371/45798/624/UE5778.
6. B: FO371/45800/624/UE6017.
7. B: FO371/45805/624/UE6548.
8. E, Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 1; Tirana; 1974; p. 524.
9. B: FO371/58505/7292/R11433.
10. B: FO371/58636/5851/R12076.
11. B: FO371/58636/8493/R9027.
12. B: FO371/58505/7292/R7659.
13. B: ibid.
14. E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 1; Tirana; 1974; p. 594.
15. Ibid.; p. 613.
16. B: FO371/58505/7292/R16793.
17. A: 284/711.75/1-2347.
18. A: 84/3/Tirana Mission 1945-46/6-646.
19. A; 84/4/Tirana Mission 1945-46/8-1646.

20. A: 284/711.75/1-2347.
21. B: FO371/58505/7292/R16793.
22, A: 284/711.75/1-2347.
23. B: FO371/87509/RA10392/18.
24. B: FO371/78234/1491/R2473.
25. B: ibid.
26. B: ibid.
27. B: FO371/78234/1491/R3447.
28. B: FO371/78234/1491/R8854.
29. B: ibid.
30. B: FO371/78234/1491/R9547.
31. B; FO371/78234/1491/R9591.
32. B: FO371/78234/1491/R9547.
33. B: FO371/87536/RA1691/5.
34. B: FO371/58490/2338/R3947.
35. B: FO371/58491/2338/R5016.
36. B: FO371/58491/2338/R5624.
37. B: FO371/58492/2338/R7391.
38. B; FO371/78233/1272/R8403.
39. B: FO371/66889/1/R3836.
40. B: FO371/78233/127/R8403.
41. B: ibid.
42. B: ibid.
43. B: FO371/72107/1224/R6309.
44. B: ibid.
45. B: ibid.
46. B: ibid.
47. A: 84/8/Tirana Mission 1945-46/5-846.
48. A: ibid.
49. A: 84/8/Tirana Mission 1945-46/8-3146.
50. A: 84/10/848 UNRRA/4-1846.
51. A: 84/8/814.2 Red Cross/6-346.
52. A: 84/8/Tirana Mission 1945-46/8-3146.
53. UN Security Council: Official Records: 1st Year, 2nd Series; Supplement No. 4; p. 19-20.
54. UN Security Council: Official Records: 1st Year, 1st Series; p. 263.
55. Ibid.; p. 265.
56. Ibid.; p. 270.
57. UN Security Council: Official Records: 1st Year, 2nd Serries; Supplement No. 4; p. 21.
58. Ibid.; p. 22.
59. Ibid.; p. 24.
60. Ibid.; p. 41.
61. Ibid.; p. 57.
62. Ibid.; p. 87.
63. UN Security Council: Official Records: 2nd Year; p. 2035-6.
64. Ibid.; p. 2036.
65. B: FO371/66896/698/R16986.
66. UN Security Council: Official Records: 3rd Year: No. 55; p. 3.
67. B: FO371/107026/UP124/3.
68. B: FO371/107028/UP124/47.
69. B: FO371/117470/UN22516/21.
70. B: FO371/117471/UN22516/22.
71. B: FO371/107026/UP124/12.
72. B: FO371/117471/UN22516/31.
73. UN General Assembly: Official Records: 8th Session: Annexes: Agenda Item No. 22; p.21.

74. B: FO371/107028/UP124/54.
75. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons", Fifth Series, Volume 531; Written Answers; col. 221.
76. B: FO371/107028/UP124/47.
77. B: FO371/117470/UN22516/5.
78. B: FO371/117471/UN22516/31.
79. B: FO371/117471/UN22516/33.
80. B: FO371/117472/UN22516/48.
81. B: FO371/117473/UN22516/73.
82. B: FO371/117477/UN22516/188.
83. B: FO371/117477/UN22516/196.
84. B: FO371/107026/UP124/1,4,7,9,10,11,13,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,24
85. B: FO371/117472/UN22516/44.
86. B: FO371/117475/UN22516/108.
87. B: FO371/117475/UN22516/131.
88. B: FO371/117475/UN22516/142.
89. B: FO371/117477/UN22516/199.
90. B: FO371/117476/UN22516/177.
91. B: FO371/117478/UN22516/232.
92. B: FO371/117475/UN22516/148.
93. B: FO371/117479/UN22516/269.
94. B: FO371/66885/1/R699.
95. A: 84/10/848 UNRRA/5-746.

23

1941 - 1951 :

SCAPEGOATS FOR CIVIL WAR IN GREECE

"The scapegoat has always had the mysterious power of unleashing man's ferocious pleasure in torturing, corrupting and befouling" - François Mauriac

The Background to the Greek Civil War

Following the German occupation of Greece in April 1941, there was formed in September, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), a National Liberation Front (EAM) aiming, like its Albanian counterpart, to unite all Greeks prepared to struggle actively against the occupation forces. This created in December 1941 a National People's Liberation Army (ELAS).

Right-wing forces then formed the National Republican Greek League (EDES), led nominally by General Nicholas Plastiras (then in France), but in practice by General Napoleon Zervas. Although EDES described itself as a "Nationalist organ of resistance", as in Albania with Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti, its political opposition to EAM and ELAS led to its increasing collaboration with the German forces against these organisations.

In May 1944 a conference was organised in Lebanon by the Prime Minister of the Greek government-in-exile, George Papandreou, attended by representatives of EAM, ELAS and KKE. Here an agreement was signed on May 20th by which these bodies agreed to place all their military forces under a "government of national unity", to be formed by the broadening of the existing government-in-exile. In September six nominees of the EAM entered the government-in-exile in relatively unimportant posts. Papandreou then placed the forces of ELAS and EDES, together with the government's own forces, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Ronald Scobie, commander of the force of 6,000 British troops which were to accompany the government back to Greece - an event which took place on October 18th, 1944.

Papandreou then demanded the disbanding of all military forces except those of the Greek government. ELAS at first refused this demand, and on December 5th British Prime Minister Winston Churchill authorised Scobie to use whatever force was necessasry to "restore order". Civil war began.

On January 3rd, 1945 Papandreou was replaced as Prime Minister by General Nicholas Plastiras who, as has been said, had been the nominal leader of the collaborationist EDES. This was followed on February 12th by a "peace conference" at Varkiza at which ELAS agreed to disband its forces in return for an amnesty. After further government changes, elections were held on March 31st, 1946 under such conditions of terror that they were boycotted by the left-wing parties. Constantin Tsaldaris became the new Prime Minister and, following a plebiscite on September 1st, King George II returned to Greece as Head of State.

Following these events, the remnants of ELAS formed themselves into the Greek Democratic Army, under the command of Markos Vafiades, and civil war broke out again.

The Communist Party of Albania was highly critical of both the political and military strategy adopted by the Communist Party of Greece, as Hoxha told Stalin in 1947:

> "In the countryside . . the extension of the Party was limited and its organisation weak and lax, with the organisations of the Party frequently confounded with those of EAM. There was opportunism both in the organisation and in the political line of the national liberation councils at the village level, there was duality of power and co-existence with the Zervas reactionary organisations, etc., in the liberated areas and elsewhere. We told the Greek comrades that their putting the command of the National Liberation Army under the orders of the Mediterranean Command, their talks and agreements of an opportunist and capitulationist character with Zervas and the reactionary Greek government-in-exile, the predominance of peasant elements and of the old career officers in the leadership of the Greek National Liberation Army, and so on, were grave errors which would lead the heroic struggle of the Greek people to defeat. The Varkiza agreement was the logical conclusion to all these wrong actions and views - it brought about the capitulation to British and local reaction. . .
>
> The leadership of the Greek Communist Party . . underrated the internal enemy and Anglo-American reaction. . . It had great hopes in 'legal' activity and parliamentarism. As a result the Party was disarmed before the enemy. . . The Greek people fought heroically against the Hitlerites to win their freedom, but victory slipped from their hands because of the mistakes of the leadership of the Greek Communist Party. . .
>
> The enemy was afraid of a partisan war, which would be extended from day to day. . . The enemy was spared this because of the wrong tactic of the Greek leadership, which thought and still thinks that it should always station its main forces facing the enemy in a frontal war and a passive defence. That was precisely what the enemy wanted - to nail down the main forces of the Greek Democratic Army in a few places and to smash and annnihilate them by means of its superiority in men and armaments". (1)

The validity of these criticisms may be judged from the fact that in October 1949, after several serious military setbacks, the Communist Party of Greece called a "temporary" end to hostilities.

The Persecution of the Çams

In order to lend support to their territorial claims for Southern Albania, Greek governments frequently alleged without foundation that the post-war regime in Albania "persecuted" the Greek-speaking minority there.

It is, therefore, of relevance to look at the treatment of the Çams, the Albanian-speaking minority which inhabited north-western Greece.

Colonel Montague Woodhouse, Head of the British Military Mission in Greece, reported in October 1945:

> "Zervas, encouraged by the Allied Mission under myself, chased them (the Çams - Ed.) out of their homes in 1944. . . They mostly took refuge in Albania. . . The eviction from Greece was bloodily carried out. . . Zervas's work was completed by an inexcusable

massacre of Çams in the Philiates area in March 1945. . .
The result has been . . removing an unwanted minority from Greek soil". (2)

This picture was confirmed by the Head of the British Military Mission in Albania in 1944-46, Brigadier Edward Hodgson. after a tour of southern Albania:

"By the end of Dec 1944 approximately 18,000 of the Albanian minority in Çamëria had fled over the border into Albania. . .
In March 45 a further number estimated at approximately 5,000 again fled into Albania from alleged persecution by the Greek National Army", (3)

and in June 1946 by Joseph Jacobs, Head of the US Mission in Albania in 1945-46:

"According to all the information I can gather on the subject, the Greek authorities in north-western Greece . . did in the autumn of 1944 and the early months of 1945 perpetrate an outrage in driving some twenty to twenty-five thousand Çams, inhabitants of the region of Çamëria in north-western Greece, from their homes which they had occupied for several centuries across the border into Albania, after having taken from them their land and property. The majority of the young men seem to have been killed, as the greater part of the refugees consisted of old men, women and children". (4)

The Greek Complaint against Albania

Despite their criticisms of the political and military strategy of the Communist Party of Greece, the Communist Party and Government of Albania gave full moral support to the Greek Democratic Army in its struggle. Militarily, however, the Albanian government maintained that a policy of non-intervention was required by international law. As Hoxha reported to the 1st Congress of the CPA in November 1948:

"We wholeheartedly love the fraternal Greek people, . . and our people are with them in their gigantic efforts. . .
The Albanian people have not supplied and will not supply the Greek Democratic Army with weapons, because they will never allow themselves to interfere in the internal affairs of Greece. . .
Our people have provided and will provide asylum to the Greek refugees, to innocent men, women and children who have come to us, pursued, maimed and terrorised by the monarcho-fascist beasts, solely because they are democrats and sons of democrats. The Constitution of our People's Republic and the just, democratic policy of our government provide for refuge for those persecuted for patriotic and democratic activity. But the Albanian government has always maintained a correct stand towards Greek militarymen, whether democrats or monarcho-fascists, who have crossed our borders. They have always been taken prisoner, disarmed and interned". (5)

After the Albanian government had complained to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on October 30th, 1946 of repeated Greek violations of the Albanian frontier and asked for UN intervention to put an end to further incidents, on December 3rd the Greek delegation to the United Nations sent a note to the Secretary-General charging Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia with

interference in the internal affairs of Greece and asking him to submit to the UN Security Council

> " . . a situation which is leading to friction between Greece and her neighbours, by reason of the fact that the latter are lending their support to the violent guerilla warfare now being waged in Northern Greece. . . This situation, if not promptly remedied, is, in the opinion of my Government, likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. . .
>
> The Greek Government desire to draw the attention of the Security Council to the urgent necessity for an investigation to be undertaken on the spot". (6)

On December 19th, 1946 the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution to establish

> " . . a Committee of Investigation to ascertain the facts relating to the alleged border violations". (7)

It was decided that this committee should be

> " . . composed of a representative of each of the nations of the Security Council", (8)

that is, of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, China, Colombia, France, Poland, the Soviet Union, Syria and the United States.

The Commission of Investigation, which began work on January 30th, 1947, proved to be sharply divided on its findings. Its majority report, issued on May 23rd - adopted by the 8 pro-Western members of the commission (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, (Kuomintang) China, Colombia, Syria and the USA) but opposed by Poland and the Soviet Union - alleged

> " . . that Yugoslavia, and to a lesser extent Albania and Bulgaria, had supported the guerilla warfare in Greece". (9)

It recommended that the Security Council should establish in Salonika (Greece) a

> " . . small commission or a single commissioner . . to report to the Security Council . . whenever they thought fit. . .
>
> That body should be established for a period of at least two years". (10)

On this latter recommendation, the British Foreign Office wrote to Sir Alexander Cadogan, Britain's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, to emphasise:

> "The most essential recommendation, on the acceptance of which all our efforts must be concentrated, is that a semi-permanent United Nations body should be established in Greece". (11)

The minority report of the Commission of Investigation, signed by the representatives of Poland and the Soviet Union, found the charges of interference in the internal affairs of Greece by her northern neighbours unproved. It stated:

"In many cases the Greek authorities selected their witnesses for the Commission from fascist and criminal elements. . .

A number of witnesses stated that threats, torture and blackmail were used in the prisons of Greece in order to obtain appropriate statements for the Security Council Commission. . .

To give shelter to political refugees and also to give them medical treatment was not contrary to the universally recognised standards of international law. . .

Greek democrats amd former participants in the resistance movement fled in thousands to Albania and other countries bordering on Greece from the terrorism carried out by right-wing bands, the police and gendarmerie, in order to save their lives. . .

The accusation that military training of Greek refugees was taking place in the territory of Albania could not be regarded as proved. . .

Likewise, the accusation that the Albanian authorities supplied the Greek guerillas with arms and food could not be considered as founded". (12)

The Security Council began discussion of the report of the Commission of Investigation in June, and the vote on a US resolution to endorse the recommendations of the majority report and establish a semi-permanent commission in Salonika was taken on July 29th. 9 delegations voted in favour of its acceptance (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, China, Colombia, France, Syria, USA), 2 against (Poland, Soviet Union). The resolution to endorse the report was thus lost on the Soviet veto.

A further resolution emanating from the USA came before the Security Council on August 10th, 1947: it declared that the Council

"Finds that Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have given assistance and support to the guerillas fighting against the Greek Government and have continued to do so; . .

Determines that such assistance and support . . constitute a threat to the peace; . .

Calls upon Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to cease and desist from rendering any further assistance or support in any form to the guerillas". (13)

The voting was the same as that for the resolution of July 29th, and the resolution was again lost on the Soviet veto.

In order to avoid the principle of the unanimity of the five permanent members of the Security Council, on September 15th, 1947 the United States moved a resolution to remove the dispute from the agenda of the Security Council. This received the same majority vote as that in connection with the report and, having been ruled to be a procedural question where the principle of unanimity was not applicable, was declared adopted.

On October 21st, 1947 a US resolution (entitled "Threats to the Political Independence and Integrity of Greece") to endorse the report of the Commission of Investigation and set up a United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB) with headquarters in Salonika was adopted in the General Assembly of the United Nations by 40 votes to 6 (Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Yugoslavia) with 11 abstentions. Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia declared that a resolution of this kind was constitutionally invalid, since under the United Nations Charter a

body of this kind could be set up only by the Security Council, and announced that they would not cooperate with it in any way. However, it was resolved that the Special Committee should consist of representatives of Australia, Brazil, Britain, China, France, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan and the USA, with seats left open for Poland and the Soviet Union.

The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans held its first meeting in Paris in November 1947, and established itself in Salonika in December. In May 1948 it moved to Geneva (Switzerland) to discuss and adopt its first annual report, which was signed on June 30th, 1948. Its principal conclusions were:

> "The Governments of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia . . have refused to cooperate with the Special Committee or even to recognise it as a duly constituted body of the United Nations. . .
>
> It appears to the Special Committee that the Greek guerillas have received aid and assistance from Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia; that they have been furnished with war material and other supplies from these countries; that they have been allowed to use the territories of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia for tactical operations; and that, after rest or medical treatment in the territories of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, their return to Greece has been facilitated. . . This assistance has been on such a scale that the Special Committee has concluded that it has been given with the knowledge of the Governments of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia". (14)

UNSCOB issued a Supplementary Report on September 10th, 1948, the main conclusion of which was:

> "The Greek guerillas have continued to receive aid and assistance on a large scale from Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia with the knowledge of the Governments of those countries". (15)

On September 15th, 1948 the French government presented a tripartite démarche in Tirana on behalf of the governments of Britain, France and the United States pointing out the conclusions of UNSCOB and declaring that

> " . . this behaviour is contrary to the obligations imposed on all states by international law". (16)

To which Albanian Deputy Prime Minister Hysni Kapo replied:

> "The Albanian Government's conduct in regard to the interning and disarming of Partisans crossing the Albanian-Greek border is entirely in conformity with the rules of international law; in addition, the Albanian Government categorically rejects as absolutely at variance with the facts the Greek statement that interned Partisans were armed in Albanian territory and returned to Greece. The action of the Albanian Government in giving protection and assistance to Greek women, children and old people also conforms exactly to international law". (17)

It was also in this month (September 1948) thast the Greek Ambassador in London, Leon Melas, informed the Foreign Office that

" . . his Government had hinted in a most urgent telegram to him that it might be well for a naval demonstration to be made off the coast of Albania . . to show that the three Powers meant what they said". (18)

while Greek Prime Minister Constantin Tsaldaris told Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin that

" . . he thought that the British and American Governments should give serious thought to the possibility of instituting some kind of control of the Albanian coast". (19)

On November 27th, 1948 a joint resolution emanating from the British, Chinese, French and United States delegations was voted upon in the General Assembly:

"The General Assembly . .
Considers that the continued aid given by Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to the Greek guerillas endangers peace in the Balkans, and is inconsistent with . . the Charter of the United Nations;
Calls upon Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to cease forthwith sending any assistance or support in any form to the guerillas fighting against the Greek Government; . .
Calls upon Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to cooperate with the Special Committee; . .
Recommends to all . . States that their Governments refrain from any action designed to assist directly or through any other Government any armed group fighting against the Greek Government;
Approves the report of the Special Committee, continues it in being". (20)

The resolution was adopted by 47 votes to 6, with no abstentions.

A further report from UNSCOB, dated August 2nd, 1949, alleged that

"Albania and Bulgaria have continued to give moral and material assistance to the Greek guerilla movement. Albania is the principal source of material assistance". (21)

On November 18th, 1949 the General Assembly adopted by 50 votes to 6, with 2 abstentions, another joint resolution emanating on this occasion from the Australian, British, Chinese and American delegations:

"The General Assembly . .
Considers that the active assistance given to the Greek guerillas by Albania in particular, by Bulgaria and by certain other States, including Romania, . . is contrary to the . . United Nations Charter and endangers peace in the Balkans. . .
Calls upon Albania, Bulgaria and the other States concerned to cease forthwith rendering any assistance or support to the guerillas fighting against Greece, including the use of their territories as a base for the preparation or launching of armed action;
Recommends to all . . States . . to refrain from the direct or indirect provision of arms or other materials of war to Albania and Bulgaria until the Special Committee or other competent United Nations organ has determined that the unlawful assistance of these States to the Greek guerillas has ceased. . .

Approves the reports of the Special Committee and continues it in being". (22)

A new report of UNSCOB, dated July 31st, 1950, declared:

"The organised guerilla movement within Greece now consists of the activities of scattered bands. Nevertheless, many thousands of Greek guerillas fled beyond the northern borders of Greece; the disarming and disposition of these guerillas have not been verified by any international agency". (23)

On December 1st a resolution approving the report of the Special Committee and continuing it in being, initiated jointly by Australia, Britain, France, Pakistan and the USA, was adopted in the General Assembly by 53 votes to 6, with no abstentions.

A further report from UNSCOB, dated August 15th, 1951, alleged:

"During the past twelve months, the guerillas have not ventured to undertake any specifically military operations against the Greek Army. . .

Various groups of Greek guerillas have been infiltrated across the Greek-Albanian and Greek-Bulgarian frontiers with the active assistance of the Albanian and Bulgarian authorities. . .

Albania and Bulgaria . . have failed to permit any international verification of their disarming and disposition, thereby continuing a situation which constitutes a potential threat to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece". (24)

The Special Committee recommended

" . . the provision of no arms and materials of war either directly or indirectly to Albania and Bulgaria until it has been determined that the unlawful assistance of these States to the Greek guerillas has ceased". (25)

A resolution emanating from Greece, approving the report of the Special Committee and dissolving it, was adopted in the General Assembly on December 7th, 1951 by 48 votes to 5, with 1 abstention.

* * * * * * * * * * *

The view of the Albanian government was that the whole UNSCOB affair had been designed to bring about an international campaign, partly to try to conceal the real basis of the civil war in Greece, partly to slander the People's Republic of Albania. As Hoxha said to the People's Assembly in July 1947:

"The British, the Americans, and those who usually cast their votes for them, are trying to shift the responsibility for the bloody civil war which is raging furiously in Greece on to the Albanian, Yugoslav and Bulgarian governments. But this argument can fool nobody. . . It was not the Albanian, Yugoslav or Bulgarian governments which stirred up or armed the heroic Greek people to rise with arms in hand to gain their freedom. . . They were prompted to take up arms by the misery of their homeland, the wretched conditions of their people, the ideal of freedom and democracy which is being

> trampled underfoot by the monarcho-fascists in Athens and their supporters; they were driven to fight by the great terror of the Greek fascists", (26)

and to the 1st Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania (as the Communist Party was now renamed) in November 1948:

> "The Americans and the British know very well that we have not interfered and will not interfere in the internal affairs of Greece. But they put out this slander with the express purpose of covering up and justifying their brutal interference, of oppressing the Greek people and giving military aid to the fascists of Athens". (27)

In fact, the political motives behind the UNSCOB campaign were admitted by Edward Peck of the British Foreign Office in a minute of April 1949 - political motives which cannot be separated from the plans to organise the overthrow of the Albanian government by invasion from outside:

> "It would be useful if UNSCOB could . . provide us with one more reason for treating Albania as . .'a pirate government' to be put out of business as soon as possible", (28)

and by the British delegation to UNSCOB to the Foreign Office in July 1949:

> "We feel that a stern condemnation of Albania will be the best policy. . . Such a condemnation may prepare the ground for any future action against Albania by USA and ourselves". (29)

The embargo on arms to Albania, recommended by a majority of the General Assembly on the basis of the UNSCOB reports, had as one of its aims the reduction of the defensive capacity of Albania in preparation for the Anglo-American organised invasion. As the British Embassy in Washington reported to London in November 1949:

> "In their instruction to Rome, the State Department stressed that their policy was not only to prevent any increase in Albanian war potential, but also generally to embarrass the Hoxha regime. . . They suggested that the United States Embassy should at once bring the General Assembly's resolution on Greece to the attention of the Italian government and should ask the latter to stop the trans-shipment across Italy of any arms or war material consigned to Albania". (30)

A similar instruction was sent to the US Legation in Vienna.

The British government in particular was also concerned to encourage the Greek army to make limited incursions into Albanian territory - military actions which would have the effect of weakening the capacity of the Albanian armed forces to deal with the major Anglo-American operation being prepared. For example, a British Foreign Office memorandum by Sir Anthony Rumbold, Head of the Southern Department, entitled "Greece and Albania" and dated July 30th, 1949, urged such an incursion:

> "The State Department . . are inclined to consider that there might be justification for limited action . . by the Greek army just inside Albanian territory. . .
>
> There is much to be said . . for hinting unofficially to the

Greek military authorities that a minor incursion of this nature would be winked at. . .

A major incursion into Albania and any attempt to occupy part of Northern Epirus would make our task at the Assembly much more difficult". (31)

On October 10th the Foreign Office went further in a communication to the British delegation to the United Nations citing the testimony of UNSCOB and saying that in the circumstances

" . . the Greeks would be justified under Article 51 . . in taking military measures of self-defence against Albania. . .

Sir Eric Beckett's opinion is that they could resort to 'the employment of all the force that (they) may be able and think proper to use, in such manner as they think fit'". (32)

The Greek government, however, preferred that the desired military operations against Albania should be undertaken by others. Prime Minister Constantin Tsaldaris told British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin in Strasbourg in August 1949 that

" . . he thought that the Assembly should charge certain members of the UN - he suggested the United States and Great Britain - with the responsibility of taking police action against Albania". (33)

And Rumbold expressed the official view of London, Washington and Athens bluntly in a minute of August 1949:

"Even if Albanian territory isn't violated, it deserves to be violated". (34)

1. E. Hoxha: "With Stalin"; Tirana; 1979; p. 111-12, 113, 114-15.
2. B: FO371/48094/544/R18138.
3. B: FO371/48094/544/R8564.
4. A: 84/3/Tirana Mission 1945-46/6-646.
5. E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 2; Tirana; 1975; p. 69, 70. 71.
6. UN Security Council: Official Records: 1st Year, 2nd Series; Supplement No. 10; p. 170.
7. UN Security Council: Official Records: 1st Year, 2nd Series; p. 701.
8. Ibid.
9. UN Security Council: Official Records: 2nd Year; Special Supplement No. 2; p. 106.
10. Ibid.; p. 154-55.
11. B: FO371/67079/320/R7244.
12. UN Security Council: Official Records; 2nd Year; Supplement No. 2; p. 115, 117, 120, 121, 122.
13. UN Security Council: Official Records; 2nd Year; p. 2098.
14. UN Security Council: Official Records; 3rd Year; Supplement No. 8; p. 27, 28.
15. UN Security Council: Official Records; 3rd Year; Supplement No. 8a; p. 9.
16. R. Dennett & R. K. Turner (Eds.): "Documents on American Foreign Relations", Volume 10; Princeton; 1950; p. 637.
17. Ibid.
18. B: FO371/72245/31/R10589.
19. B: FO371/72246/31/R11266.

20. UN General Assembly: Official Records; 3rd Session: Plenary Meetings; Annexes; p. 393-4.
21. UN General Assembly: Official Records; 4th Session; Supplement No. 8; p. 8.
22. UN General Assembly: Official Records; 4th Session: Annexes: Resolutions: p. 9.
23. UN General Assembly: Official Records; 5th Session; Supplement No. 11; p. 26.
24. UN General Assembly: Official Records; 6th Session; Supplement No. 11; p. 11, 29.
25. Ibid.; p. 31.
26. E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 1; Tirana; 1974; p. 690.
27. E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 2; Tirana; 1975; p. 70.
28. B: FO371/78433/1024/R3973.
29. B: FO371/78434/1024/R5960.
30. B: FO371/78234/1491/R1137.
31. B: FO371/78444/10390/R7696.
32. B: FO371/78446/10390/R9216.
33. B: FO371/78383/10125/R7866.
34. B: FO371/78444/10390/R7679.

24

1946 - 1955 :

THE FAILURE OF A TERRITORIAL CLAIM

"Seem only to regard your friends,
but use them for your private ends" -
John Gay

The Greek Claim to Southern Albania

A memorandum of the (British) Foreign Office Research Department on the Greek-Albanian frontier, dated March 11th, 1946, pointed out:

> "Since 1913 the Greek Government has consistently claimed the two important districts of Gjirokastra and Korça, and the intervening districts of Përmet, Leskovik, Kolonja. . .
> Since 1940 the Greek Government has asked formally for Sazan and indicated its desire for Vlora. . . Greek patriotic societies go much further and claim a frontier running north of the River Shkumbin and Elbasan to Lake Ohrid". (1)

As the Peace Conferences that followed the Second World War approached, a propaganda campaign developed in support of these claims, with messages to the Allied leaders from such bodies as the Greek community in Egypt; from the Pan-Epirotic Federation of America; from Panteleimon, Orthodox Bishop of Gjirokastra; from the Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church; from the Chamber of Commerce in Salonika; from the Grand Committee of Unredeemed Hellenes of Northern Hellas; from the Communist Party of Greece; etc. (2) A counter-campaign opposing these claims was organised by, for example, the Albanian community in the United States. (3)

In a note dated May 12th, 1946 the Greek government warned both London and Washington:

> "No Greek government could remain in power if the Greek people . . were not to be given satisfaction in these national aspirations of theirs. Nor could any Greek government be in a position to sign any peace treaties which would not give satisfaction to Greece on these . . points. The situation that would arise in such an event would afford an unexpected encouragement to the subversive elements in the country and would have the gravest consequences". (4)

In August 1946 the Greek delegation to the Paris Peace Conference formally applied for Greece's territorial claims against Albania to be placed on the agenda of the conference. The conference voted on August 30th by 12 votes to 7, with 2 abstentions to accept the item on the agenda. (5)

The Albanian government formally protested to the Peace Conference against this decision on September 2nd.

Those in official British and American circles who supported the Greek territorial claims against Albania did so not on ethnic grounds nor on the grounds that a frontier drawn in accordance with these claims would strengthen Greece's strategic defence capacity, but on the grounds that right-wing forces in Greece, on which the retention of Greece as an ally of the Western Powers depended, would be greatly weakened unless these claims were satisfied.

In April 1946, for example, Captain William McNeill, US Assistant Military Attaché in Athens, told the State Department:

> "Despite the fact that claims such as these seem sure to hurt rather than help Greece's security; despite the disregard of international realities which is implicit in making them; and despite the dubiety of many of the arguments brought forward, many and perhaps most Greeks firmly and enthusiastically believe that their sacrifices in the war should and shall be rewarded by substantial territorial acquisitions at the expense of . . neighbouring countries. This belief has been fostered by Rightist newspapers and fanned by Nationalist parties. . .
>
> If the British and American Governments do not lend warm and efficaceous support to Greek territorial claims . ., many and perhaps most Greeks will feel that they have been betrayed by their Western Allies. Furthermore, this sentiment will be current among the very groups in the population on which England, and indirectly the United States, depend for the maintenance of a friendly government in Greece". (6)

The US Chargé d'Affaires in Athens, Karl Rankin, strongly backed this view:

> "There appears to be a very real danger of underestimating political consequences of a negative attitude towards this not unreasonable Greek claim. . . Should . . a negative verdict be returned on that occasion (at the Peace Conference - Ed.) or the question shelved on grounds of expediency, one consequence would certainly be a very profound revulsion of feeling in Greece against the Western Powers. . .
>
> There is also the very real question whether Albania can exist as a truly sovereign state in view of its small size, lack of resources and general backwardness. Certainly there would seem to be very strong arguments in favour of leaving no minorities at the mercy of a primitive majority in a country such as Albania. . .
>
> There is no prospect of this little country's being able to stand on its own feet". (7)

Similarly, British Deputy Under Secretary of State (Political) Sir Oliver Harvey minuted in July 1946:

> "Albania is now so much a Yugoslav or Soviet stooge that it is doubtful if the case for leaving the existing Albanian frontiers as they are is any longer very strong. It would be very satisfactory, from our point of view, therefore, if the frontiers could be pushed north of the Corfu passage". (8)

and in November 1946 the British Ambassador in Athens, Sir Clifford Norton, told the Foreign Office:

> "I would say, without hesitation, that rejection in the near future of the Greek claims for frontier rectification . . would bring about the fall of the Tsaldaris Government". (9)

These general views were supported by the United States Senate which, on July 29th, 1946, unanimously adopted a resolution introduced by Senator Claude Pepper:

" . . that Northern Epirus (including Korça) . . should be awarded by the peace conference to Greece". (10)

However, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson instructed that Prime Minister Hoxha be informed:

"It is prerogative of US Senate to express its views on any matter it so desires.

However, action taken by Senate in such an instance is not to be construed as indicating attitude of Executive Branch of US Government". (11)

And, in fact, both the British Foreign Office and the American State Department took the view that the Greek territorial claims should not be supported. The British Foreign Office Research Department memorandum on the Greek-Albanian frontier dated March 11th, 1946 (already mentioned) declared:

"When Greece invokes the wishes of the inhabitants, she is on ground which seems to have got steadily weaker while she has been baulked of her object. . .

While there is little strength in Greek economic arguments, there is serious reason to consider Northern Epirus economically indispensable to Albania. . .

Sazan should go with Vlora. . .

As no rectification of her land frontier would satisfy Greece without destroying Albania, it is best to leave the border as it is". (12)

And a further report from the same body dated January 1952 noted:

"In the past HMG approved Greek claims to Northern Epirus. Since the Second World War their attitude has been one of great reserve. The claims are held to be weak on ethnological, economic and strategic grounds and everything has been done to discourage Greece from raising them". (13)

A similar report, entitled "The Greek Claim to Northern Epirus", prepared by Harry Howard of the Division of International Organisational Affairs of the US State Department, recommended that

" , , the United States should not commit itself at this time to any specific position as to the questions of issue in the Greek territorial claims to Northern Epirus". (14)

The opposition in British and American ruling circles to the Greek territorial claims was based on the view that any attempt to satisfy them would tend to unite Albanians of all political views around the new regime in Albania. As the Head of the US Mission in Tirana, Joseph Jacobs, reported to the US delegation to the Council of Foreign Ministers on April 23rd, 1946::

"There is nothing that makes Albanians of all political and racial complexions to see red more quickly than proposal to give southern Albania to Greece", (15)

Until the Greek territorial claims had been formally presented, the strategy of the British government was to seek to dissuade the Greek government from putting them forward - as the Foreign Office confirmed to the British Embassy in Washington:

> "Our attitude to Greek territorial claims . . against Albania . . in the past has been that they are difficult to justify. . . We have therefore discouraged the Greek Government from putting these claims forward. . .
>
> We see no need to change our view on the value of the Greek claims, but the tactics we have hitherto pursued have become out of date since the claims have now been put forward". (16)

The new strategy, therefore, was to arrange for the Greek territorial claims to be dismissed, but with the "blame" for their dismissal placed on the Soviet Union, as the above communication went on to say:

> "We think it would be a mistake for His Majesty's Government to take the initiative in opposing the Greek claims, particularly since they are supported by every party in Greece. . . But whatever the merits or demerits of the claims, it is fairly obvious that the Greeks will not achieve them. . . It seems desirable that the Russians and not we should be blamed for Greek failure to obtain their desiderata". (17)

William Hayter, Acting 1st Secretary at the British Foreign Office, minuted in July:

> "The matter could be raised in the Council of Foreign Ministers. . . This would perhaps be the best course to pursue. . . We should at least be able to tell the Greeks that we had raised the matter and that failure to make any progress was due to Russian intransigence". (18)

and a Foreign Office Brief for the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference reaffirmed in August:

> "The most we can reasonably aim at is to ensure that the responsibility for opposing these claims falls on the Russians rather than ourselves. . . It seems probable that the US delegation will also be anxious to pass on to other shoulders the responsibility for turning down these Greek claims". (19)

Accordingly, the British Foreign Office informed the British delegation to the Conference on July 29th:

> "Our view is that the Albanian problem could not be discussed at the Peace Conference". (20)

although, according to the Yugoslav delegation to the conference, the Greek delegation attempted to solicit Yugoslav support for their claims by offering to partition Albania between them:

> "In the course of a conversation with two members of the Yugoslav delegation . ., the Greek Minister, wishing to obtain the assent of our delegation to Greek claims in Southern Albania ('Northern Epirus'), declared that the Greek government would not be opposed to

Yugoslavia taking possession of the territory in Northern Albania which she might wish to annex". (21)

According to an article by MP Richard Crossman in the Sunday Pictorial of April 3rd, 1949, plans for precisely this partition were still being considered in Washington three years later:

"Plans are being discussed in Washington for permitting the Greeks to occupy the southern portion of the country (Albania - Ed.), while the Yugoslavs enter it from the north". (22)

In June of the same year the former French Minister in Tirana, Guy Menant, told officials of the US State Department that

" . . he thought that a great many of the people would welcome a division of Albania between Greece and Yugoslavia, since they realised the country could not stand on its own feet". (23)

In July 1953, the communique issued after the first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia after the signing in February of the Treaty of Friendship and Collaboration between these three states, stated:

"The three Ministers . . particularly agreed that the independence of Albania constitutes an important element of peace and stability in the Balkans". (24)

Anthony Lambert, Chargé d'Affaires at the British Embassy in Athens noted:

"This formula avoided mention of the integrity of Albania. This, of course, was due to Greek insistence on their claim to Northern Epirus, which colours all their thinking on Albania". (25)

But when, in August 1954, the treaty between the three states was followed by the signing of the military alliance known as the Balkan Pact, a British Foreign Office Brief for Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden revealed that a secret clause of the Pact provided that:

"Greece and Yugoslavia have agreed . . that in the event of war they should undertake a joint occupation of Albania". (26)

* * * * * * * * * * *

Returning to the time of the Peace Conference in 1946, the British delegation eventually reported to Whitehall:

"His (US Secretary of State James Byrnes's - Ed.) legal advisers . . had persuaded him that . . the question (of the Greek-Albanian frontier - Ed.) . . was not a fit subject for discussion by the Conference". (27)

On September 3rd, 1946 British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin reported to the Foreign Office of a meeting he had that day with US Secretary of State James Byrnes:

"I . . informed him that a hint had been given to the Greeks that the United States and ourselves hoped that a way would be found which would enable them to drop this question at this conference. Mr. Byrnes agreed, and he was hopeful that that would be done". (28)

The Greek government, therefore, obediently withdrew its territorial claims from the Peace Conference on September 26th, and on October 15th formally submitted them to the Council of Foreign Ministers, meeting in New York, along with two memoranda in support of the claims.

The Acting Head of the Greek delegation to the Peace Conference, Philip Dragoumis, had, however, already told Byrnes on October 1st that the Greek government wished the matter simply to lie on the table:

"Greece realised . . that Mr. Molotov would certainly never acquiesce to any solution of the problem which would be satisfactory to Greece. On the other hand, Greece did not want any decision taken by the Council which would reject any future consideration of the question. He was, therefore, asking the Secretary . . merely to leave the matter on the Council of Foreign Ministers' agenda and neither raise it in the future nor agree to its definite exclusion. The Secretary stated that . . he would comply with the Greeks' request". (29)

In the same month, however, the British and American delegations had managed to persuade the Peace Conference to reject (by 13 votes to 7, with 1 abstention) a Yugoslav motion adopted by the Italian Commission adding a clause to the Italian Peace Treaty recognising the "territorial integrity" of Albania.

Encouraged by this apparently ambiguous attitude of the British and United States governments, for many years the Greek government continued to hope for eventual support from these states for their territorial claims. The British Ambassador in Athens, Sir Clifford Norton, reported to London in September 1947 a conversation with Prime Minister Constantin Tsaldaris, who had

" . . said, speaking off the record, that during his stay in the USA he is prepared to find out if the United States would not make some declaration to the Greek Government holding out a hope that the last word had not been said about Greek claims for rectification of their frontiers. . . M. Tsaldaris said that he was not referring to some minor alteration which would cover the Corfu Channel, but he was thinking of Vlora, which it was essential . . to keep in safe hands". (30)

In November 1949, however, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin told Tsaldaris

" . . that in his opinion Greece would never be secure from Soviet intervention until she made up her mind to renounce her claim to Northern Epirus. He went on to impress on M. Tsaldaris that he could give no assurance whatsoever of support by HMG for a Greek claim to the territory and believed that the Americans were in agreement". (31)

In December 1952, the Greek Prime Minister, Field-Marshal Alexander Papagos, told the Chamber of Deputies in Athens:

> "Specifically with regard to Albania, the Greek Government desires to emphasise that they repudiate the use of force and rely solely on lawful international means for the settlement of the Northern Epirus issue", (32)

and by July 1953 John Galsworthy, 1st. Secretary at the British Embassy in Athens, was informing the Foreign Office:

> "They (the Greek government - Ed.) fully realise that their claim to Northern Epirus will never be met. . . No Greek Government could ever formally and openly renounce the national claim to Northern Epirus. . . What the Greeks would like is that the new regime which may eventually take over in Tirana should issue a reassuring statement about its intentions towards the Northern Epirotes. . . They hope that we will bear this in mind in the dealings which they are convinced we have with the Albanian exiles from whom a new Government may eventually be formed". (33)

In December 1955 Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis was still declaring:

> "The Government abides firmly by the national line laid down on our imprescriptible rights". (34)

1. B: FO371/58500/4015/R4015.
2. B: FO371/58478/120/R1614, R1928, R2015, R4696.
   FO371/58480/120/R15288.
   FO371/58886/6032/R8045.
   FO371/58887/6032/R8295.
   FO371/58888/6032/R11944, R11982, R14485.
3. B: FO371/58478/120/R4696.
4. B: FO371/58886/6032/R7725.
5. B: FO371/58480/120/R15978.
6. A: 84/5/710/868.014/4-1846.
7. A: ibid.
8. B: FO371/58888/6032/R12891.
9. B: FO371/58890/6032/R16770.
10. B: FO371/58887/6032/R11349.
11. B: ibid.
12. B: FO371/58500/4015/R4015.
13. B: FO371/107289/WA1022/3.
14. A: 84/6/868.00/5-2746.
15. A: 84/3/740.0019/Council/4-2346.
16. B: FO371/58886/6032/R6032.
17. B: ibid.
18. B: FO371/58479/120/R11258.
19. B: FO371/57313/2558/U6821.
20. B: FO371/58479/120/R11275.
21. B: FO371/58479/120/R12138.
22. "Sunday Pictorial", April 3rd, 1949; p. 6.
23. A: 84/5/875.00/6-2849.
24. "Keesing's Contemporary Archives", Volume 9; p. 13,224.
25. B: FO371/112656/WA1021/1.

26. B: FO371/107843/WY1076/34
27. B: FO371/58480/120/R13060.
28. B: FO371/58891/6032/R18184.
29. A: CFL Files/10-146.
30. B: FO371/67008/4/R13236.
31. B: FO371/107289/WA1022/3.
32. B: FO371/107289/WA1022/14.
33. B: FO371/107289/WA1022/17.
34. B: FO371/117603/RA10319/8.

1943-1955 :

25

THE ALBANIAN GOLD

"Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? . .
Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,
wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant" -
William Shakespeare

The History of the Gold

As has been said, the Zog regime sought support and assistance abroad, and in consequence Albania became a virtual protectorate of fascist Italy, and was opened to Italian capital.

As a first step in this latter process, on March 15th, 1925 the Albanian government signed a Banking Convention, to operate for fifty years, with a group of Italian financiers. By this, the latter were permitted to set up a bank in Albania with the exclusive right to issue banknotes. Laws giving effect to the formation of this bank, the National Bank of Albania with head office in Rome, were promulgated by Presidential decree on July 12th, 1925.

By an Italian decree of August 28th, 1935, shares in the National Bank of Albania owned by Italian companies or individuals were compulsorily purchased by the fascist state. As a result, by 1943 the Italian state owned 88.5% of the shares of the bank, a Yugoslav bank owned 10.0% and Albanian nationals the remaining 1.5%.

During the occupation of Albania by Nazi Germany, on the morning of September 16th, 1943, German SS patrols seized by force 2,338.7565 kilograms of monetary gold, the property of the National Bank of Albania, from the Mint and the Bank of Italy in Rome. A receipt was given, and the gold was taken to Germany and lodged in the Reichsbank in Berlin. Here it was discovered and taken possession of by the Western Allied Powers after the surrender of Germany in May 1945.

On January 13th, 1945 the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee of Albania (acting as a Provisional Government) abrogated the Banking Convention of 1925 and nationalised without compensation the assets of the National Bank of Albania. By another law adopted the same day, the Albanian State Bank was established, and the assets of the NBA transferred to it.

On January 14th, 1946 representatives of eighteen states (including Albania, Britain, France and the United States) signed the Final Act of the Inter-Allied Conference on Reparations. Part III of this Act provided that monetary gold found in Germany by the Allied forces should be pooled for distribution as restitution among the states participating in the pool, in proportion to their losses of such gold through looting by, or its "wrongful removal" to, Germany. Italy agreed retroactively to Part III of the Act by a Protocol signed on December 16th, 1947 with the governments of Britain, France and the United States.

Meanwhile, on September 27th, 1946 the governments of Britain, France and the United States had set up the Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold, composed of representatives of the three states, with headquarters in Brussels. The three governments delegated to this Commission their

responsibilities under Part III of the Act, and on March 13th, 1947 the Commission invited states to submit claims to it.

On May 21st, 1947 Italy laid claim to the gold on the grounds,
firstly, that on the day when the gold had been looted, the Italian state had owned 88.5% of the shares of the National Bank of Albania;
secondly, that the nationalisation without compensation of the National Bank of Albania by the Albanian Provisional Government in 1945 had been

" . . under international law an illegal act", (1)

so that

" . . no extra-territorial effect should be given to the Albanian government's confiscation, and the gold should be delivered to Italy". (2)

On September 15th, 1947 the government of the People's Republic of Albania submitted to the Tripartite Commission a claim to the gold taken from Rome in 1943, on the grounds that this was the property of the National Bank of Albania, the assets of which had been legally transferred to the Albanian State Bank by the legislation of January 13th, 1945.

On February 16th and June 30th, 1948 the Tripartite Commission made preliminary allotments of 1,121.4517 kilograms of gold (48% of the total quantity involved) to Albania, and the Albanian government notified the Commission of the place to which it wanted this gold to be returned.

Italy protested against the award of the gold to Albania in letters to the governments of Britain, France and the United States dated December 11th, 1948. These letters were conveyed to the Commission, which replied to the Italian government on May 20th, 1949 that it saw no reason to change its allotments to Albania of the previous year. A further letter of protest was presented to the Commission by the Italian government on June 22nd, 1949.

The Scheme to Embezzle the Gold

None of the gold was, in fact, delivered to the People's Republic of Albania. As has been said, on April 9th, 1949 the International Court of Justice, through a gross miscarriage of justice, found Albania "responsible" for the Corfu Channel Incident and as a result, liable to pay compensation to the British government. The British government, with the connivance of the governments of France and the United States, then embarked on a scheme to acquire the looted Albanian gold in "partial satisfaction" of the unpaid "compensation".

By 1952 the value of the looted Albanian gold was estimated by the British government at

" . . £939,909" (3)

and the British Chairman of the Tripartite Commission, Sir Ronald Wingate, informed the Foreign Office that

" . . present calculations show that claimant countries will receive a share of the gold pool amounting to between 60% and 65% of their validated claims" (4)

On July 11th, 1949 the Tripartite Commission notified the Albanian government that it had decided to make

" . . a more profound examination" (5)

of the question of the ownership of the gold. The Albanian government protested against the failure to transmit the gold to it in notes to the Commission dated July 26th, October 21st and December 1st, 1949.

On November 15th, 1950 British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin

" . . sanctioned a course of action designed to secure for His Majesty's Government the gold held by the Reparations Gold Commission and claimed by both Albania and Italy, in partial satisfaction of our claim for damages in the Corfu Channel case". (6)

Two days later, on November 17th, the Commission decided to

" . . annul its former decisions (the allotments to Albania - Ed.) , and refer them to the three governments which formed it", (7)

that is, to the governments of Britain, France and the United States.

The Albanian government protested against this decision in further notes to the Commission dated February 26th, May 3rd and July 21st, 1951.

The Washington Agreement

The original British plan was outlined in a Foreign Office brief of March 1951 to the British delegation at British-French-American discussions on the gold held in Washington:

"Our representatives at the talks should attempt to secure French and American agreement to

a) the submission of the Italian and Albanian claims upon the Reparations Gold Pool to . . an independent arbitrator . . ;

b) in the event of the Gold being awarded to Albania, the immediate submission (with French and American support) of our claim arising from the Corfu Channel incident to the Security Council . . , together with the proposal that we seize the Gold as partial satisfaction of our claim". (8)

This plan involved, of course, ignoring the fact that such a resolution would almost certainly be invalidated by the veto of the Soviet Union. Foreign Service Office Robert Brash made this clear in a brief for a Parliamentary debate entitled "The Corfu Channel Case":

"The Soviet would veto any decision; but, provided we get a majority vote including France and the United States, the Treasury and Bank of England would be prepared to take steps . . to seize the gold". (9)

Another brief by Brash, dated January 1951, recognised by implication the dubious legality of the plan:

"This course of action is complicated and must be delicately handled. The gold has not been mentioned in the House of Commons before, and it is important that it should not be now". (10)

Asked in the House of Commons in March 1951 about progress in obtaining compensation from Albania in connection with the Corfu Channel Incident, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ernest Davies replied darkly:

"We are exploring certain possibilities, but some of these it would not be in our interests to disclose". (11)

and Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison was equally vague in a similar Parliamentary reply the following month:

"I do not want to be too specific on this matter at this moment, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that we are doing all we can about it". (12)

The French and United States delegations at the Washington talks were sympathetic to the British plan. As Sir Eric Beckett, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, reported from Washington on March 20th, 1951:

"Neither France nor the United States wanted any of this gold to go to Albania in any circumstances". (13)

However, in the course of the Washington discussions, the original British plan had to be modified. Nicolas Cheetham, Head of the Southern Department at the Foreign Office, reported on April 16th:

"Neither the United States nor France was willing to support the United Kingdom's claim to the gold before the Security Council in view of the fact that Italy would claim it too". (14)

On April 26th, 1951 the governments of Britain, France and the United States signed the Washington Agreement in which they announced that they had decided to request the President of the International Court of Justice to appoint an arbitrator to advise them

" . . on the question whether Albania, or Italy, or neither, has established a claim to the aforesaid amount of gold", (15)

and agreed to accept his advice.

The Albanian government strongly protested against the Washington Agreement in a letter to the International Court on July 4th, 1951:

"The request to nominate an arbiter is illegal and arbitrary.
The Government of the People's Republic of Albania . . does not recognise in any way the authority of an arbiter in the event of him being nominated by you, , ,
The Government of the People's Republic of Albania considers the agreement of 25 April 1951 . . to be a brutal violation of the Paris Agreement". (16)

However, in response to a request from the US government on behalf of the three Powers, dated April 30th, 1951, the President of the International Court appointed on July 23rd, 1951 Professor Georges Sauser-Hall (Switzerland) as

arbitrator.

The Arbitral Opinion

Professor Sauser-Hall delivered his Arbitral Opinion on February 20th, 1953.

He pointed out that the verb "to belong to" and its French equivalent, used in Part III of the Final Act, had two meanings: firstly, "to be owned by", and secondly, "to pertain to". It was the latter meaning which must have been intended by the drafters of the Act, since in the majority of countries monetary gold was owned, not by the state, but by private banks; consequently, the first meaning of the verb "to belong to" would have prevented the restitution of monetary gold to the majority of states. The Act was not concerned with the protection of private investments, but with the restitution of monetary gold to the states to which it "belonged", in the second meaning of the term:

> "The Act of Paris . . has organised a procedure for the restitution of monetary gold in favour of States and not of private persons, physical or juridical, and any disposition of it does not concern the protection of investments operated by a group of financiers". (17)

Thus, the Italian government's claim that the gold concerned was

> " . . gold originating from Italian investments" (18)

was

> " . . outside the framework of the mandate conferred by the Act of Paris on the three signatory Governments to the Washington Agreement, and does not enter, in consequence, into the competence which it attributes to the undersigned arbiter". (19)

The gold concerned was

> " . . gold over which neither the Italian State, nor its central bank of emission, ever had proprietory rights, and which has never figured in the accounts of any Italian public or private bank, but in those of the National Bank of Albania, which was constituted by application of Albanian law". (20)

Most important, the gold concerned, in relation to September 1943 when it was wrongfully removed to Germany,

> " . . constituted on this date the metallic cover of the Albanian currency". (21)

As a result, the gold formed part of

> " . . the <u>national patrimony</u>" (22)

of the Albanian state, and

> " . . it was in consequence Albanian monetary gold". (23)

The arbiter concluded, therefore:

"It is established that 2,338.7565 kilograms of monetary gold, which were looted by the Germans from Rome, belonged to Albania within the meaning of Part III of the Paris Act of January 14th, 1946". (24)

The British Foreign Office found the Arbitral Opinion very satisfactory, writing to the British Ambassador in Berne. Sir Patrick Scrivener:

"We wish to send a letter of thanks to Professor Sauser-Hall.

. .

The wording has been chosen advisedly, since we have to be careful not to give voice to any expression of gratitude for a result satisfactory to ourselves". (25)

The Washington Statement

At the same time as the British, French and United States governments adopted the Washington Agreement, they signed a separate declaration (referred to in this connection as "the Washington Statement"). This declared:

"The three governments have agreed that, if the opinion of the arbitrator is that Albania has established a claim under Part III of the Paris Act to 2,338.7565 kilograms of monetary gold looted by Germany, they will deliver the gold to the United Kingdom in partial satisfaction of the judgment in the Corfu Channel case, unless within 90 days from the date of the communication of the arbitrator's opinion to Italy and Albania, either:

a) Albania makes an application to the International Court of Justice for the determination of the question . .; or

b) Italy makes an application to the International Court of Justice for the determination of the question". (26)

The obvious intention of the "Washington Statement" was to present Albania with an insoluble dilemma. If she did not make an application to the International Court, then (unless Italy made an application) her gold would, under the terms of the Statement, be handed over to Britain. But if, in order to block this transfer, she did make such an application, then she was required under the Statutes of the Court to agree to accept its jurisdiction. As Gerald Fitzmaurice, Second Legal Adviser at the British Foreign Office, wrote to Attorney-General Sir Hartley Shawcross in March 1951:

"The Albanians . . would find the sympathy of the Court strongly with His Majesty's Government". (27)

Having experienced the "justice" meted out by the Court in the Corfu Channel case, the Albanian government rejected the second alternative. As the Court's Judgment later recorded:

"Albania, which has not accepted the jurisdiction of the Court, refrained from making an application to it". (28)

On May 19th, 1953, however (within the 90-day period laid down in the "Washington Statement"), the Italian government lodged an Application with the International Court.

This claimed the Albanian gold on the grounds that Albania's nationalisation in January 1945 of the National Bank of Albania without compensation had been

" . . an illegal act", (29)

which

" . . entitles Italy to damages", (30)

as a result of

" . . loss of profits covering the unexpired period of 30 years of the concession, which was to end in 1975". (31)

The Italian government claimed that Italy's claim to Albania's gold should have priority over that of Britain on the grounds that Italy's "damage" at the hands of Albania had occurred earlier (in January 1945) than Britain's "damage" at the hands of Albania (the second Corfu Channel Incident of October 1946).

On October 30th, 1953, however, the Italian government sent a note to the International Court entitled "Preliminary Question". This requested the Court, before hearing the case itself, to adjudicate on the question of whether it had competence to determine the case, and implied that it had not.

The International Court Proceedings

The preliminary hearing of "the gold case" before the International Court of Justice took place from May 10th to 14th, 1954, before 13 regular judges and 1 ad hoc judge nominated by Italy, namely:

Enrique Armand-Ugon (Uruguay);
Abdel Badawi (Egypt);
Jules Basdevant (France);
Levi Carneiro (Brazil);
José Guerrero (El Salvador)(Presiding Judge);
Green Hackworth (United States);
Hsu Mo (China);
Helge Klaestad (Norway);
Feodor Kojevnikov (Soviet Union);
Sir Arnold McNair (Britain);
Gaetano Morelli (Italy)(ad hoc);
John Read (Canada);
Bohdan Winiarski (Poland); and
Milovan Zorichich (Yugoslavia).

Presenting the Italian government's case on the preliminary question of competence, its Agent - Casto Caruso, Italian Ambassador to the Netherlands - contended that the Court had no jurisdiction in the case for the following reasons:

1) that the Court could not determine the validity of the Italian government's claim without first determining the validity of the Albanian law of January 1945 nationalising the National Bank of Albania;

2) that this latter question affected the interests of Albania;

3) that the Statutes of the Court barred it from adjudicating on a matter which affected the interests of a state without the consent of that state; and
4) that the People's Republic of Albania had not consented to the jurisdiction of the Court in this matter.

The Court delivered its Judgment on June 15th, 1954.

On the first Submission of the Italian Application, relating to the question of competence, it found, unanimously,

> " . . that the jurisdiction conferred upon it by the common agreement of France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Italy does not, in the absence of the consent of Albania, authorise it to adjudicate upon the first Submission". (32)

On the Submission relating to priority of claim, the Court found by 13 votes to 1 (the dissenting judge being Levi Carneiro of Brazil)

> " . . that it cannot adjudicate upon the second Submission". (33)

The comment of the editorial in "The American Journal of International Law" that "the gold case" constituted an abuse of trusteeship on the part of the Western Powers in relation to the Albanian gold looted by the Nazis can hardly be regarded as an overstatement:

> "In a very real sense Britain, France and the United States were international fiduciaries of the looted monetary gold. It is somewhat disturbing to find these fiduciaries disposed in the twilight of their trust to enforce their own non-trustee claims against the trust assets. . .
>
> Certainly any likelihood in Paris in 1946 of any such self-help principle would have prevented agreement on Part III of the Paris Agreement on Reparation. . .
>
> The episode, on the whole, does not appear to be a happy one. . .
>
> The entirely distinct British claim against Albania should have been rigorously isolated from the restitution operation". (34)

The British Attempt to Seize the Bulk of the Gold

Following the presentation on October 30th, 1953 of the Italian government's note to the International Court entitled "Preliminary Question", the British Foreign Office argued to the Court and to its partners in the Gold Pool that this "objection" to the Court's jurisdiction invalidated the Italian Application to the Court, so that the Washington Agreement scheme ought now to be put into effect and the disputed gold handed to Britain. The Court rejected this argument, stating in its Judgment:

> "The Application . . had not been withdrawn. . . The Application . . could not have become invalid by reason of the presentation of the objection to the jurisdiction. . .
>
> That Application still subsisted". (35)

Despite the Court's Judgment on this issue, the Foreign Office sent a note to the US State Department in July saying:

"Her Majesty's Government trust that the United States Government will agree that the original intention to transfer the gold to the United Kingdom . . should now be carried out". (36)

The United States government replied on July 30th, 1954:

"It appears to the Government of the United States that, before the three Governments should take action to dispose of the gold as was contemplated in the Washington Statement . ., our Governments should offer to Italy the opportunity to have the legal questions set forth in the Washington Statement put before an ad hoc tribunal, with terms of reference which would specifically enable it to go into the merits of the claims, . . inviting Albania to come in, but going ahead even if Albania did not do so. .

Should this proposal commend itself to the British Government, it is suggested that our two Governments approach the French Government to secure its agreement before transmitting it to the Italian Government". (37).

The "Tirana Gold"

In addition to the 2,338.7565 kilograms of Albanian monetary gold looted by the Germans from Rome and the subject of the International Court proceedings, a further 116.1180 kilograms of Albanian monetary gold looted by the Germans from Tirana was eventually located in the gold pool.

Gerald Simpson, Foreign Service Officer at the British Foreign Office, minuted in October 1954:

"There is no question of a dispute as to its nominal ownership; this has been established as Albanian". (38)

Frustrated by its partners from laying hands on the bulk of the Albanian gold, the British government attempted to persuade the French and American governments to transfer to Britain the undisputed "Tirana Gold". The Foreign Office notified the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Roger Makins, on June 29th, 1954:

"Her Majesty's Government assume that the United States Government will agree that in no circumstances should this amount of 116.1180 kilograms actually be transferred to the Albanian Government. . . Her Majesty's Goverment trust that the United States Government will . . agree to the transfer of this gold to them in part satisfaction of their claim in respect of the Corfu damages. . .

I am addressing a similar despatch to Her Majesty's Minister at Paris". (39)

This request was rejected. The United Kingdom Treasury and Supply Delegation in Washington informed the Foreign Office in December 1954:

"The US . . cannot agree that our claim for the Tirana gold should be settled in advance of a settlement of the dispute about the bulk of the Albanian gold". (40)

And Ralph Selby, of the Legal Department at the Foreign Office, minuted in the same month:

"We have asked the Americans and French to allocate the Tirana gold to us and they have declined to do so". (41)

The Abortive Negotiations with Italy

The Italian note entitled "Preliminary Question" came as a surprise to the British government. As Fitzmaurice informed Attorney-General Sir Lionel Heald in November 1953:

> "We have had a surprise packet in the shape of an application from the Italian Government addressed to the Court in which they in effect object to the admissibility of their own original application. . . This, I am sure you will agree, creates a highly paradoxical situation". (42)

adding:

> "The probability is that the Italians entertain at least a good deal of doubt whether they will succeed on the merits before the Court and are therefore working to achieve a possibility of stalemate". (43)

In fact, on May 12th, 1954, during the Preliminary Hearing of "the gold case" in the International Court but before Judgment had been given, Livio Theodoli, Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in London, visited the Foreign Office and

> " . . expressed the readiness of the Italian Government to reach an immediate settlement with HMG before the Court delivered judgment". (44)

A memorandum from the Embassy two days later proposed that the Albanian gold be divided equally between Italy and Britain:

> "In view . . of the necessity of avoiding a drawing-out of the litigation, which would have harmful repercussions . . on Italo-British relations as a whole, the Italian Government proposes a half-way meeting of the two claims with the division in equal parts of the gold under dispute". (45)

Foreign Service Officer John May commented on this proposal:

> "The Note . . suggests that the Italian Government would withdraw their Application to the International Court if some compromise solution were possible", (46)

while Fitzmaurice (now Sir Gerald) wrote that the Italian proposal for an out-of-court settlement

> " . . confirms our guess that the rather extraordinary Italian move challenging the jurisdiction of the Court, although they themselves had invoked it, is inspired by a desire to lock the whole thing with a view to getting us to agree to a compromise". (47)

Pressure on the Foreign Office to agree to a division of the Albanian gold with Italy came from the British Ambasssador in Rome, Sir Ashley Clarke, who wrote on June 23rd, 1954:

"There is . . considerable political advantage to be gained from a compromise. I share the view of the Italian Embassy in London that this is an excellent opportunity of making a friendly gesture at relatively little cost to ourselves", (48)

and from the United States government, as Fitzmaurice minuted on July 9th:

"The US Government have now suggested to us unofficially . . that we should agree to share the gold with Italy. The reason given is that, in the American opinion, this would help the Trieste negotiations". (49)

The Trieste negotiations of 1954 followed the association of Yugoslavia with the Western Powers, which began in 1948. In these circumstances, the Western Powers agreed to tear up the agreement of March 1948 (by which Italian sovereignty had been accepted over the whole Free Territory of Trieste). This led eventually to the signing, on October 5th, 1954, of a Memorandum of Understanding between Britain, Italy, the United States and Yugoslavia which accepted Italian sovereignty only over a reduced "Zone A" and granted Yugoslav sovereignty over an increased "Zone B'.

Frustrated by its partners from laying hands on any of the Albanian gold, the British government now turned its attention to attempting to negotiate a deal with Italy. Fitzmaurice considered the legal aspects of such a possible compromise:

"If any transfer was to be made to Italy, it could only be in the following way. The entire Gold would have to be transferred in the first place to the United Kingdom as being the only country which had a judicially established claim against Albania. There would, however, be an understanding that the United Kingdom would thereupon, on an ex gratia basis, transfer a certain proportion of this Gold to the Italians. It would not, of course, be easy to defend this action vis-à-vis public opinion here. . .

It would in no case be possible to proclaim publicly that we were transferring some gold to Italy as an inducement to that country to agree to the Trieste settlement. Nevertheless, that might be part of the object". (50)

Despite these "difficulties", the Foreign Office was prepared to

" . . agree, if necessary. that HMG will make an ex gratia payment of £100,000 to the Italian Government in the event of the successful seizure of the gold by HMG, (51)

as the price for Italy's withdrawal of her application to the International Court. It was, however, unwilling to meet the price demanded by the Italian government, which amounted to 50% of the gold: Livio Theodoli, Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in London, demanded from the Foreign Office:

" . . a settlement with us on a 50:50 basis". (52)

On this demand, British Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Anthony Nutting informed the Treasury categorically:

"We cannot go fifty-fifty with the Italians". (53)

In an effort to break the deadlock, the British government therefore decided to accept the Italian demand for a fifty-fifty division on condition that, as its partners were proposing, the Italian claim was established before some quasi-legal tribunal. Hilary Young, Head of the Southern Department at the Foreign Office minuted in January 1955:

> "The Americans have now shown that they will not agree to our getting all the gold until the Italian Government has been offered the chance of going to arbitration. (The French Government has not yet stated its decision, but is virtally certain to concur in the American view)". (54)

and proposed:

> "We would agree with the Italians to forego our claim to half the gold on the following conditions:
> a) that they would raise no objection to the immediate transfer of half the gold to ourselves;
> b) that their claim to half of the gold must be established before an independent judge or tribunal where we would not oppose them;
> c) that in the event of Italy's failure so to establish their claim, it would be open to us to consider it our own". (55)

This plan was approved by the Foreign Secretary and the Treasury, and put to the Italian government. In making it, the British government was satisfied that the Italian claim to the gold - on the grounds that the Albanian nationalisation of the National Bank of Albania had been illegal - could not be substantiated. Francis Vallat, Deputy Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, noted in January 1955 that the Italian Peace Treaty

> " . . put the stamp of legality on the Albanian law of 1945. .
> .
> The general conclusion is that Italy would not be able to base a claim on the Peace Treaty, but on the contrary that the Italian claim would probably be defeated by it". (56)

Legal Adviser Fitzmaurice concurred:

> "The Peace Treaty . . almost certainly would be held to rule out the Italian claim". (57)

In these circumstances, the Italian government rejected the British proposal, and in an Aide Mémoire dated March 25th, 1955 suggested that the "arbitration" should be subject to prior agreement between the British and Italian governments:

> "This arbitrator could be requested to give a decision . . along the lines which both Governments have in principle agreed upon". (58)

The Foreign Office professed itself shocked at this suggestion. Gerald Simpson noted on March 28th:

> "Her Majesty's Governmmenbt would be unlikely to agree to a suggestion that we should attempt to influence the tribunal, before it heard the evidence, on the decision it should reach". (59)

Furthermore, it interpreted the Italian Aide Mémoire as basing itself, not on a claim against Albania, but on the argument that the gold had always been Italian, thus setting aside, in practice, the Sauser-Hall arbitral decision - to the effect that the gold was Albanian. Fitzmaurice minuted on March 29th, 1955:

> "The Italian memorandum is evidently based on the notion of reverting to the idea of the gold as having the status of Italian gold, thereby ignoring the finding of Professor Sauser-Hall to the effect that, for the purposes of Part III of the Paris Reparation Agreement, it had the status of Albanian gold", (60)

and the Foreign Office informed the British Embassy in Rome:

> "The Italian Government appeared to ignore the Sauser-Hall Judgment, a proposal which Her Majesty's Government could not countenance. It was probable that the American and French Governments would also decline to contemplate shelving this Judgment". (61)

In an Aide Mémoire to the United States government in September 1955, the British government pointed out that to agree to the setting aside of the Sauser-Hall arbitral decision would cut the ground from under the British government's claim to the gold, which rested on its being Albanian gold:

> "Her Majesty's Governmment cannot accept any such clause which has the effect both of running counter to the Sauser-Hall award . . and of invalidating Her Majesty's Government's own claim to the gold". (62)

In July/August 1955 the Italian government despatched banker Ugo Sola to London to try to reach a settlement with the British government. Francis Vallat, Deputy Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, minuted on July 20th:

> "Far from strengthening the Italian case, Ambassador Sola has merely shown how weak it is. He was both unable and unwilling to show on what basis Italy could establish any valid claim against Albania that would justify the Tripartite Commission in delivering part of the gold to Italy". (63)

Hilary Young, Head of the Southern Department at the British Foreign Office, mninuted on August 9th:

> "At the end of the final meeting (with Sola - Ed.) it was clear that the views of the British and Italian Governments were still wide apart", (64)

and on August 22nd, 1955 the Foreign Office was informing the British Embassy in Rome that it insisted that any compromiser must be based on the British proposals:

> "The Italian Government must decide whether or not they are prepared to accept an arrangement along the general lines which Her Majesty's Government have proposed. . . If, however, they feel unable to do so, it will be necessary for Her Majesty's Government to report to their colleagues in the Tripartite Commission that, to their regret, they have failed to reach agreement with the Italian Government". (65)

And at the end of the year, on December 19th, the Foreign Office was informing the Rome Embassy:

"The French and the Americans do not propose to intervene with Italians in favour of the settlement we have proposed". (66)

1. GP; p. 13.
2. GP; p. 11.
3. B: FO371/101590/WA1271/4.
4. B: FO371/107299/WA1271/14.
5. GP; p. 53.
6. B: FO371/95034/RA1271/39.
7. GP; p. 54.
8. B: FO371/95033/RA1271/17.
9. B: FO371/95032/RA1271/13.
10. B: FO371/95032/RA1271/8.
11. "Parliamentary Debates: Official Report: House of Commons"; Fifth Series; Volume 484; col. 2511-12.
12. Ibid.; Volume 486; col. 181.
13. B: FO371/95034/RA1271/28.
14. B: FO371/95034/RA1271/39.
15. GP; p. 9.
16. B: FO371/95035/RA1271/54.
17. GP; p. 69.
18. GP; p. 70.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. GP; p. 75.
22. GP; p. 70.
23. GP; p. 75.
24. GP; p. 76.
25. B: FO371/107298/WA1271/8.
26. GP; p. 11.
27. B: FO371/95033/RA1271/26.
28. GJ; p. 26.
29. GP; p. 13.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. GJ; p. 34.
33. Ibid.
34. C. T. Oliver: Editorial: "The Monetary Gold Decision in Perspective", in: "American Journal of International Law"; Volume 49, No. 2; April 1955; p. 220, 221.
35. B: FO371/112671/WA1271/48.
36. B: FO371/112671/WA1271/59.
37. B: FO371/112672/WA1271/65.
38. B: FO371/112672/WA1271/67.
39. B: FO371/112671/WA1271/52.
40. B: FO371/112671/WA1271/78.
41. Ibid.
42. B: FO371/107301/WA1271/46.
43. Ibid.
44. B: FO371/112669/WA1271/30.
45. B: FO371/112669/WA1271/31.
46. B: FO371/107301/WA1271/32.
47. B: FO371/112688/WA1271/9.

48. B: FO371/112671/WA1271/53.
49. B: ibid.
50. B: ibid.
51. B: FO371/95033/RA1271/17.
52. B: FO371/117610/RA1271/6
53 B: FO371/112672/WA1271/62.
54. B: FO371/117610/RA1271/3.
55. B: FO371/117610/RA1271/4.
56. B: FO371/117610/RA1271/1.
57. B: ibid.
58. B: FO371/117610/RA1271/19.
59. B: ibid.
60. B: ibid.
61. B: ibid.
62. B: FO371/117611/RA1271/40.
63. B: FO371/117611/RA1271/33.
64. B: FO371/117611/RA1271/36.
65. B: FO371/117611/RA1271/38.
66. B: FO371/117611/RA1271/48.

26

1944-1955 :

INVASION

"An invasion of armies can be resisted,
but not an idea whose time has come" -
Victor Hugo

The Plan

In 1948 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was expelled from the Communist Information Bureau, and Yugoslavia began to move into ever closer relations with the Western Powers.

Stimulated by this development, the Western Powers turned increased attention to seeking to bring about political changes in the other People's Democracies of Eastern Europe which would yield a similar result. In the language of London and Washington this programme was described as one of "liberating the satellite states from Soviet imperialism".

In 1948, therefore, the British government set up the "Russia Committee" to plan the strategy of this programme. Composed of representatives of the Foreign Office, the armed forces Ministries and the intelligence services, it was presided over by Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Gladwyn Jebb, who told Conservative Peer Nicholas Bethell that the committee had

> " . . a considerable influence on our policy . . during a rather critical period". (1)

The "Cold War Sub-Committee" of the Russia Committee declared that its aim was that of

> " . . promoting civil discontent, internal confusion and possible strife in the satellite countries", (2)

with the object of

> " , , loosening the Soviet hold on the orbit countries and ultimately enabling them to regain their independence". (3)

In November 1948, after coopting a representative of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Russia Committee decided that prime attention in this strategy should be concentrated on Albania. At the meeting of the committee on November 25th,

> "Sir IVONE KIRKPATRICK (Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs - Ed.) said that . . it would be best to start any kind of offensive operations in . . ALBANIA. Would it not be possible to start a civil war behind the Iron Curtain . .?" (4)

On December 16th, 1948 the Russia Committee agreed

> " . . that there could be no question of taking action without coordination with the US government, . . but that action must be taken without the knowledge of the Brussels Powers (Belgium, France,

Luxembourg and the Netherlands - signatories with Britain of the Brussels Treaty, a military alliance signed in March 1948 - Ed.)". (5)

On February 15th, 1949 Frank Roberts, Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, told the Russia Committee that Bevin

" . . would . . prefer to concentrate in the first place on three primary objectives:
a) to take even more energetic steps to save Greece . .;
b) to give discreet encouragement to Tito and so to maintain the Yugoslav-Soviet clash;
c) to detach Albania from the Orbit". (6)

Next month Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs William Hayter flew to Washington as leader of a delegation which included Jebb and Lord Jellicoe (2nd Secretary at the British Embassy in Washington, specialising in Balkan Affairs). The delegation had a three-day meeting with their American opposite numbers - led by Robert Joyce, of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, and Frank Wisner, Chief of the Office for Policy Coordination. Following this, Joyce reported on a meeting of the Policy Planning Staff on April 1st:

"There was considerable discussion with regard to the ALBANIAN situation and it was generally agreed that something very definitely might be accomplished now in the way of . . assisting in the setting up of a new regime which would be anti-Communist and therefore pro-western". (7)

On September 12th, 1949 the US State Department issued a brief for the talks with Bevin himself that were to take place later in the month. This recommended:

"That the US act in coordination with the UK and France in the Albanian situation as it develops; . .
that the US do what it can . . to weaken the position of the present Soviet-dominated regime in Albania". (8)

On September 14th Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, supported by a team which included Jebb, Sir Roger Makins (now Deputy Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) and Sir Oliver Franks (British Ambassador in Washington) met US Secretary of State Dean Acheson and a team of leading officials of the State Department:

"With reference to Albania, Bevin said the British had followed a policy of unrelenting hostility to the Hoxha Government. . . Bevin asked whether we would basically agree that we try to bring down the Hoxha Government when the occasion arises. I said yes. . . He asked what government would replace Hoxha if he is thrown out? Are there any kings around that could be put in? . . Bevin . . said he thought a person we could handle was needed". (9)

A State Department policy paper dated September 21st. concretised the agreed Anglo-American aims:

"SHORT RANGE US OBJECTIVES IN ALBANIA:
The weakening and eventual elimination of the Soviet-dominated

Hoxha regime". (10)

This document was handed on October 18th to a delegation from the British Embassy in Washington, consisting of Sir Frederick Hoyar Millar (Minister) and Lord Jellicoe (2nd Secretary):

> "Hoyar Miller said that offhand he thought British views were completely in accord with ours". (11)

On December 28th, 1949 the State Department's September policy paper was amended at the suggestion of the office of the Secretary of Defence to clarify the question of the type of regime which it was desired to see established in Albania:

> "The basic long-range objective is establishment of an Albania which . . should not have a regime hostile to the US or participate in a bloc of states pursuing aims hostile to the US. . .
> Admittedly, no Albanian regime, because of the inherent weakness of the country, can be free of foreign influence or independent of foreign support. . . It is in our interest, however, that foreign influence in the country . . should not be unfriendly to the US. We would expect that such developments . . would orient Albania toward the West". (12)

It was taken for granted that the planned regime would be a dictatorship. The brief prepared by the State Department in September 1949 for the Bevin talks in Washington admitted frankly:

> "It could not be expected that Albania could be governed democratically". (13)

There were three primary reasons for the selection of Albania as the primary target for the Anglo-American plans:

firstly, because Albania was regarded as holding a strategic position. In the words of the US State Department:

> "The significance of the country (Albania - Ed.) derives from its strategic situation and from its part in the complex of Balkan and Adriatic relations. . . The United States has a strategic interest in Albania", (14)

> "This (Albania's - Ed.) position is important because of its strategic location at the entrance to the Adriatic", (15)

and of the CIA:

> "Albania . . has assumed unusual importance because of its strategic location". (16)

secondly, because Albania was regarded as being particularly weak by reason of her geographical isolation from her allies of that time following the movement of Yugoslavia into increasingly closer relations with the Western Powers. As Julian Amery wrote in "Time and Tide" in January 1949:

> "The position of the Albanian State is particularly precarious. Albania . . is separated from the rest of the Cominform bloc by

deviationist Yugoslavia". (17)

In the words of the US State Department:

> "Albania is cut off physically from the rest of the Soviet bloc and would be hard to hold militarily"; (18)

and of the CIA:

> "The present isolation and weakness of the pro-Soviet Albanian regime are important factors contributing to its basic instability. . .
>
> The Yugoslav break with the Soviet Union has served to isolate the pro-Soviet Albanian regime from its Cominform support and surround it with unfriendly neighbours desirous of its overthrow". (19)

thirdly, because Albania was regarded as being particularly weak by reason of reports that a large proportion of the population were hostile to the regime. These reports came from the British Foreign Office:

> "There is a great deal of latent hostility to Hoxha in the country. The people as a whole dislike his policy"; (20)
>
> "The situation in Albania apparently continues to deteriorate"; (21)

from the US National Security Council:

> "Hostility to the regime is reported to be widespread, extending even into the ranks of the army and into elements of the security and police forces. . .
>
> There is probably more passive and active opposition to the Communist regime in Albania than in most of the other European satellites"; (22)

from the CIA:

> "The vast majority, perhaps as much as 90%, of the Albanian people have consistently opposed the Communist group"; (23)

from the French: Guy Menant, former French Minister in Tirana, told State Department officials in June 1949 that

> " . . the Albanian people were very friendly disposed toward the West and toward the US in particular. . .
>
> The internal situation (in Albania - Ed.) was now diastrous. . . The regime had never been genuinely popular and now the opposition to it included almost everyone not immediately involved in the regime. . .
>
> He said that most of the people . . were invariably opposed to the government"; (24)

and from the Yugoslavs:

"On two recent occasions important officials of the Yugoslav MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Ed.) have remarked to Western journalists that they did not think that Enver Hoxhga's regime would last very much longer. 'Borba' has been reiterating the theme". (25)

Cannon Fodder

The plan elaborated by the British and American governments relied on the recruiting, organisation, training and arming of anti-communist Albanian exiles - "refugees" in Anglo-American official parlance - for the forcible overthrow of the regime in Albania. The US State Department's policy paper of September 21st, 1949 expressed it tactfully:

"The US believes that these refugees should play an important role in determining the future of Albania", (26)

while a later National Security Council paper was franker:

"Among the means at hand to assist in the attainment of United States objectives are defectors and refugees from the satellites. . . The defection of key personnel and potential recruits for a Volunteer Freedom Corps offers considerable benefits and should continue to be encouraged. . . Defectors, exiled leaders and other refugees can contribute to United States objectives by virtue of: a) their knowledge of conditions, trends and personalities in their homelands; b) such symbolic value as they may have to the peoples of their homelands; and c) their military potential. . . When they operate . . with American funds, the United States should seek by appropriate means to have them abide by its general overall guidance". (27)

The Protection of the War Criminals

Naturally, many of the exiles most "suitable" for the Anglo-American plan were war criminals who had collaborated with the occupying powers of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

In October 1943 the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC) had been established in London - without the participation of the Soviet Union - and in August 1944 Lieutenant-Colonel Bedri Spahiu, leader of the Albanian delegation then in Bari, issued a list of Albanians now in Italy who were charged with having committed war crimes in Albania and requested their extradition to Albania for trial. James Wardrop of the British Foreign Office commented cynically on this request:

"Albania is not represented on the Commission, which is not likely, therefore, to concern itself with atrocities committed against Albanians". (28)

A joint meeting of the British Foreign Office and the Special Operations Executive Committee in January 1945 decided that Abaz Kupi, one of the most prominent names on the Albanian list of war criminals, should be transferred from Italy to Egypt (29) and in March it was decided that his passage, and that of his sons, should be paid for by the British taxpayer. (30) Kupi arrived in Cairo in April 1945.

On February 2nd, 1945, Tajar Zavalani visited the Foreign Office and

" . . expressed concern over the possible fate of Midhat Frasheri (uncle of his wife Selma - Ed.) and the other Albanians (most of them members of Balli Kombëtar) who recently fled to Italy. . . I said that, speaking personally, I thought it was unlikely that we should hand over these people to NLF". (31)

Ivor Pink, 2nd Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented more decisively the following day:

"There can be no question of our handing them over to the NLF", (32)

but noting:

"Hoxha will assume that we are keeping them there (in Italy - Ed.) in order to use them to stage a coup against him when it suits us". (33)

On February 23rd, 1945 the Albanian Central Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes and Criminals requested UNWCC to order the extradition to Albania for trial of named Germans, Italians and Albanians - the latter charged with treason. The request was repeated, again without result, on June 22nd.

Meanwhile, on May 24th, 1945 Joseph Jacobs, Head of the US Special Mission in Albania, had a meeting with Prime Minister Enver Hoxha at which the latter raised the question of the war criminals:

"The General knows of the group of 120 Albanian political refugees (whom he calls war criminals) now in a camp at Santa Maria di Lucca, south of Brindisi, a port in Italy nearest the Albanian mainland. He fears that the British may have planned it thus so that some of this group could escape and return to Albania to stir up organised resistance". (34)

On June 1st Hoxha repeated his request for the extradition of the war criminals concerned in notes to US President Harry Truman and to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Sir Alexader Cadogan informed Mary Herbert on June 27th that

" . . we had refused the Albanian request". (35)

The Peace Treaty with Italy was signed on February 10th, 1947. Clause 45 of the treaty stated:

"Italy shall take all necessary steps to ensure the apprehension and surrender for trial of . . nationals of any Allied or Associated Power accused of having violated their national law by treason or collaboration with the enemy during the war", (36)

with the People's Republic of Albania, recognised as an Assocated Power.

Despite the terms of the Peace Treaty, Sir Noel Charles, the British Ambassador in Rome, informed the Foreign Office:

"Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs assures me that Italian Government will not hand over to Albanian Government political refugees in this country". (37)

On June 19th, 1947 the Albanian government again requested the British and American governments to apprehend and extradite 170 Albanians accused of collaboration. Christopher Warner, British Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, minuted:

"I do not think that we should consent to give any consideration whatever to this demand". (38)

The US State Department commented on the Albanian request in an Aide Mémoire to London on August 11th, 1947:

"Although in general agreement with the views of the British government on this subject, the Department . . is inclined not to reply to similar Albanian representations". (39)

The British government, however, did reply on October 4th:

"His Majesty's Government recognise no obligation to surrender to the Albanian Government any Albanian national accused of collaboration. . .

His Majesty's Government must point out that Albania has never in fact enjoyed Allied status, and can therefore claim no rights as an Allied country". (40)

On October 29th, 1947 Albania requested the UN War Crimes Commission to arrange for the surrender to it for trial of 63 Germans, 105 Italians and 170 Albanians - the latter charged with treason. As the official history of UNWCC relates:

"The Commission declared that, not only was Albania not a member of the United Nations, but that the request was misconceived as the Commission had no competence to order the surrender of . . quislings and traitors. The matter was raised again on 25th February 1948, when the Albanian Government requested that its charges against the Germans and Italians named in the list should be investigated by the Commission. . . It was decided, by a majority, to reject the Albanian request". (41)

UNWCC was dissolved on March 31st, 1948.

Various pretexts were put forward by the British and US governments for thair protection of the Albanians accused of treason:

firstly, that Albania was not a member of the United Nations (having been excluded from it, as we have seen, on the initiative of the British and US governments), and was therefore excluded from the internationally agreed provisions concerning the apprehension and extradition of war criminals;

secondly, that they had not recognised the new regime in Albania.

The British Embassy in Washington informed the Foreign Office in August 1945:

"In United States Government's view, a decision regarding the handing over of such persons cannot be taken until the question of recognition of his (Hoxha's) administration has been settled". (42)

thirdly, that the Albanian war criminals were "political refugees" from the new regime in Albania.

Privately, however, officials of both governments admitted that some at least of the named Albanians had been collaborators and traitors. For example, when in August 1945 Mary Herbert appealed to Sir Alexander Cadogan for the release from internment in Italy of Midhat Frashëri, whom she described as

" . . one of the very few really disinterested patriots", (43)

John Addis, 2nd Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented:

"Frashëri . . is undoubtedly implicated in the charge of collaborationism". (44)

Nevertheless, on September 6th the Foreign Office gave instructions for Frashëri to be released from internment. (45)

The Final Report of the US Special Mission, dated August 1945, noted that

" . . the British authorities, when they could easily control the situation, have permitted members of the Albanian opposition, including some real war criminals, to move about freely in Italy and some even to proceed to Egypt", (46)

and the British Foreign Office admitted to the British Embassy in Washington:

"Some at least of the men on Hoxha's list did collaborate with the enemy . . and their surrender for trial in Albania as traitors would therefore be justified". (47)

The Exile Organisation in Italy

Already by April 1946 the British Foreign Office was officially informed, concerning Albanian exiles in Italy:

" . . that no Albanians are now held in internment camps", (48)

and according to a Memorandum prepared in December 1948 by the United States Embassy in Rome:

"There are between 1,000 and 1,300 Albanian nationals . . now in Italy. . . Of these approximately 578 are living in IRO (International Refugee Organisation - Ed.) camps. . .
In addition there are about 60 in Italian Government camps. . . An IRO source estimates that about 400 others are living in Italy by their own wits and means". (49)

The politically active of these exiles were organised in four principal organisations:

firstly, "Balli Kombëtar" (The National Front), the remnants of the collaborationist organisation of that name. Its Chairman, Midhat Frashëri, had left Italy for Greece and Istanbul in 1947, and its leader was the Secretary-General Vasil Andoni. According to the Rome Memorandum mentioned above:

> "The Group's magazine 'Flamuri' (The Flag - Ed.) has not appeared since 1947. . .
> According to an IRO source, there are about 120 Balli adherents in the camps". (50)

secondly, "Legaliteti" (Legality), the remnants of the monarchist collaborationist organisation of that name, headed by Ferid Dervishi and Selim Damani. According to the Memorandum,

> "Monarchists are the least active, although not the least numerous of the Albanian exiles in Italy. According to an IRO source, there are about 120 of this group in the IRO camps. . .
> The Monarchists publish no newspaper in Italy". (51)

thirdly, "Bloku Kombëtar Independent" (the Independent National Bloc) founded in 1946. According to the Memorandum, this organisation

> " . . finds its adherents principally among . . those who 'collaborated' with the Fascist Italian administration in Albania. . .
> The Bloc has published, at irregular intervals, a newspaper called "L'Albanie Libre" (Free Albania). . . Owing to the resources of its leaders, the Bloc is the best financed of any of the groups in Italy. . .
> The officers of the Bloc in Italy are its President, Ismail Vërlaci, son of the late Premier Shefqet Vërlaci, and its Secretary-General Ali Vrioni. . .
> According to an IRO source, the Bloc has some 50 to 70 followers in IRO camps. . .
> The National Bloc apparently inclines toward sympathy for the Monarchy". (52)

An American intelligence report of Novemnber 1949 gives a similar, though blunter, picture. It was founded, says this report, by

> " . . a group of Albanian exiles, mostly former members of the Albanian Fascist Party and belonging to the old 'noble' feudal, large landowning families . . for the purpose of working for the liberation of Albania from the Communist yoke and, incidentally, for re-establishing their old prestige and power in the country". (53)

fourthly, "Lidhja Kombëtare e Bujqve dhe e Katundarëve" (The National League of Peasants and Villagers) formed in the summer of 1948, founded and led by Seit Kryeziu.

The American intelligence report of November 1949 commented:

> "The party is considered a hoax and a camouflage, as its founders and its few followers have no connection with the Albanian peasantry". (54)

According to the Rome Memorandum:

> "A ranking official of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs . . expressed what amounts to a personal predilection for the National Bloc - a sentiment quite understandable in view of the nature and background of this group and its leaders. . .
>
> At the 'high working level' of the Italian Government, there is sympathy for and at least unofficial support of the National Bloc; for example, Italian naval intelligence is said to use some of the Bloc's members for its projects, and it is an observable phenomenon that leaders and followers of the Bloc fare best in dealings with officials of the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs". (55)

On the other hand, Balli Kombëtar had the backing of the United States, and Legaliteti that of Britain. As Tirana Radio expressed it succinctly at this time:

> "The Ballists worked for the Americans, Legaliteti for the British, and the Independent Bloc for the Italians". (56)

"The National Committee for a Free Albania"

Whatever their particular orientation, all the exile organisations recognised that any hopes they might have of dominating Albania could only be fulfilled with the aid of the Western Powers.

The Rome Memorandum of December 1948 expressed the view

> " . . that unity of the exiles which might be effective in terms of political and/or military operations designed to bring about the overthrow of Hoxha will not be achieved . . until the Western Powers, notably the United States, give their blessing and at least moral support". (57)

In June 1949 Harold Perkins (of the British Secret Intelligence Service), Julian Amery, Neil McLean, Alan Hare and Auberon Herbert (son of Aubrey) - together with two US intelligence officers, Robert Low and Harold Minor - flew to Italy to try and secure agreement between the rival groups of Albanian exiles there on the formation of a "national committee". Agreement was reached on July 7th: Midhat Frashëri of Balli Kombëtar would be Chairman of the committee, with Zog's secretary, Gaqi Gogo, as its Secretary. Others who agreed to serve on the committee were:

from Balli Kombëtar: Vasil Andoni, Abaz Ermenje and Zef Pali;

from Legaliteti: Abaz Kupi and Nuçi Kota (son of Zog's last Prime Minister, Koço Kota); and

from Lidhja Kombëtare e Buqve dhe e Katundarëve: Seit Kryeziu.

Zog had left Britain in February 1946 and settled in Egypt as the guest of King Farouk, whose government maintained diplomatic relations with him. Immediately after the above agreement had been concluded, therefore, Perkins, McLean, Hare and Low flew to Alexandria to try to persuade Zog to give his blessing to the projected committee. Amery informed the ex-king:

> "The United States and Britain were not establishing a government, only a representative committee, and they were not asking him to give up his royal prerogatives. On the other hand, the time was not yet ripe for the restoration of the Albanian monarchy. The wave

of democratic feeling sweeping the world must be taken into account, and it would not be possible for Zog to resume the throne before the operation. After the operation had succeeded, of course, it would be a different matter. There could be a national referendum and he could become king again on the basis of the people's will. This was the scheme, said Amery, that Albania's American and British sponsors were ready to back. And it was in Zog's interest to cooperate". (58)

Zog informed his visitors that

" . . he would not support the committee publicly, . . but he would not oppose it either, and he would allow his nominees to take part". (59)

On August 6th Sir William Strang, British Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, informed the Rome Embassy of the imminent formation of the committee, saying:

"The formation of this Committee has our benevolent approval". (60)

On August 26th, 1949 Frashëri, Kota, Kryeziu, Kupi and Pali gave a press conference in Paris at which they formally announced the formation of the National Committee for a Free Albania (NCFA). Its aim, it was said, was

" . . to offer a rallying point for the Albanian people, believing that the liberation of Albania from Communist rule is the country's prime need". (61)

Next day the British Embassy in Athens reported to London a statement by Greek Prime Minister Alexander Diomedes:

"We greet with sympathy the liberation movement of a people with whom we have old ties". (62)

The British Foreign Office reported on September 7th to the British Embassy in Athens that Muharrem Bajraktari, Gjon Markagjoni, Mustafa Kruja (a puppet Prime Minister under the Italian occupation) and Ihsan Toptani had joined the NCFA. (63)

It added:

"We are not playing up the formation of the Committee in our publicity, as we do not want to lend any substance to the belief . . that the Western Powers are behind it". (64)

George Perkins, US Assistant Secretary of State, was franker:

"We have proceeded with the formation of an Albanian National Committee". (65)

Following the official formation of the NCFA, Frashëri, Kota, Kryeziu and Pali flew to London, where Peter Kemp introduced them to prominent publicists and Frashëri was given facilities to broadcast on the BBC's Albanian-language programme.

On September 11th, 1949 Frashëri, Kota and Kupi flew to America, where

they were received on the 19th by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Llewellyn Thompson. It was agreed that the headquarters of the NCFA should be in New York. They were also received by the Committee for Free Europe (CFE), founded in June 1949 with Joseph Grew as Chairman and Allen Dulles and Dwight Eisenhower among its members. Conservative peer Nicholas Bethell notes:

> "Its clearly published aim was to collect émigrés from all eastern Europe into a political body and together cause the destruction of the Soviet orbit". (66)

Kupi, Kryeziu and Pali flew back to Rome, while Frashëri and Kota stayed on at the Lexington Hotel in New York to establish the committee's office. On October 3rd, 1949 Frashëri died at the hotel, an inquest finding that he died of natural causes. He was succeeded as Chairman both of Balli Kombëtar and of the NCFA by Hasan Dosti, who had been Minister of Justice during the Italian occupation of Albania. The committee began to publish its official organ, "Shqipëria" (Albania), in New York.

In December 1951 a message was sent to to the NCFA on behalf of British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, saying that

> " . . he has followed with interest the efforts of the National Committee for a Free Albania to keep alive the spirit of freedom". (67)

In January 1952 a conference was held in London of a body called the "Central and Eastern European Commission" of the European Movement. Julian Amery, Auberon Herbert and Neil McLean were among the British delegates, and there were about 140 delegates emanating from the countries of central and eastern Europe. Ihsan Toptani and Tajar Zavalani were the Albanian delegates. In his speech Zavalani said:

> "Our fellow-countrymen . . will not despair of the future when they know that their friends and supporters in Western Europe declare most emphatically that the present division of Europe cannot be everlasting. . .
>
> Let us look forward to the day when our nations, liberated from Communist tyranny, will join hands with the free nations of Western Europe, with Great Britain and the Commonwealth, and . . with the United States of America". (68)

Following the signature of the Treaty of Friendship between Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia in March 1953 (a treaty which foreshadowed the Balkan Pact treaty of military alliance between these countries the following August), the NCFA sent a telegram to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill which

> " . . hailed the signature of the Greco-Turko-Yugoslav pact". (69)

"The National Democratic Committee for a Free Albania"

In August 1950 a split occurred in Balli Kombëtar - one group, headed by Ali Këlcyra, accusing the other of being "crypto-Communist". In July 1953 the first group merged with Bloku Kombëtar Independent to form the "Unione Democratica Albanese" (Albanian Democratic Union), led by Ali Këlcyra, Ismail Vërlaci and Nduc Markagjoni.

In late 1953, on the initiative of the United States government, the NCDA was "reorganised" to admit the Albanian Democratic Union. In a letter to the US Embassy in Rome in February 1954, Abaz Kupi and Seit Kryeziu complained that this reorganisation had been carried out

> " . . arbitrarily by your representatives", (70)

that the committee had been compelled to adopt a

> " . . constitution and new by-laws formulated by your representatives", (71)

and that the reorganised committee was

> " . . denied essential autonomy . . in a most flagrant manner". (72)

In February 1954 the rump of Balli Kombëtar, led by Vasil Andoni, Abaz Ermenje and Zef Pali, held a congress in Naples at which it decided to withdraw from the NCFA, and to expel its Chairman, Hasan Dosti, who insisted on remaining in the reorganised NCFA, from the organisation.

Peers Carter, Foreign Service Officer at the British Foreign Office, minuted in September 1954:

> "The NCFA was reorganised in the summer of 1953; we had nothing to do with this idea. . . Certain ex-Quislings became members of the Executive Committee". (73)

John Watson, Information Liaison Officer at the British Embassy in Washington, informed the Foreign Office in November:

> "The American attitude . . means that they do not look with particular disfavour on groups which may have associated themselves with the other side in the different context of the last war, and are concerned rather to preserve an impartial balance of encouragement to all groups opposed to Communism. . . I think that the State Department would not agree that the presence in the National Committee for a Free Albania of a number of people with records of association with the Axis means that it should not receive the same support as other groups of Albanian émigrés". (74)

In August 1954, on the initiative of the Andoni wing of Balli Kombëtar, a "National Democratic Committee for a Free Albania" (NDCFA) was set up, with Abaz Ermenje as Chairman and headquarters in Paris.

The Exile Organisation in Yugoslavia

According to the National Committee for a Free Albania, there were, apart from the 500,000 Yugoslav-Albanians in Kosova, Montenegro and Macedonia,

> " . . between 5,000 and 8,000" (75)

Albanian exiles in Yugoslava.

On September 13th, 1948 British Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Sir Orme Sargent replied to an inquiry from Julian Amery about what steps were being taken to secure the release of Gani Kryeziu from imprisonment in Yugoslavia:

> "We have made periodic approaches to the Yugoslav Government since that date (1945 - Ed.), the last one being in December of last year". (76)

and in October the British Embassy in Belgrade informed the Foreign Office:

> "We think it possible that the Yugoslavs may consider it worth while keeping Kryeziu alive and in reasonable health as a potential threat against the Albanians". (77)

On August 29th, 1949 the "New York Times" was reporting the setting up of a "Free Albania Committee" in Prizren, Yugoslavia, under Gani Kryeziu and Cen Elezi, (78) and a British Foreign Office minute in October noted that Bajram Bajraktari, brother of Muharrem Bajraktari, was working with Gani Kryeziu. (79)

Foreign Service Officer Robert Brash minuted in August 1950:

> "The Yugoslavs have been active and, so far as we know, their machine has been built up around Gani Kryeziu". (80)

Belgrade Radio reported in May 1951 the inaugural meeting of the "League of Albanian Political Refugees" at Prizren, attended by 300 delegates. The main speech was given by a representative of the Yugoslav authorities, Dushan Mugosha, and a proclamation issued by the Committee of the League

> " . . called upon all honest Albanian citizens to join them in the struggle against the Government led by Enver Hoxha", (81)

while the British Embassy in Rome reported in July an interview by MP Francis Noel-Baker with the Chairman of the newly-formed League:

> "Q: What is the object of your Committee?
> A: We are planning the liberation of Albania from the Soviet yoke.
> Q: Are you receiving any assistance?
> A: Yes, of course, the Yugoslav Government are giving us every help". (82)

Seeking to bring about unity with the (Yugoslav) League of Albanian Political Refugees, NCFA Chairman, Hasan Dosti, lobbied the US State Department

" . . concerning the possibility of utilising the Yugoslav-sponsored Prizren Committee and the Albanian minority element in Yugoslavia to bring about the overthrow of the Hoxha regime", (83)

expressing the view

" . . that the liberation of Albania could be accomplished at this time only with Yugoslav assistance and that the Yugoslavs could be utilised effectively. . . Mr. Dosti did not feel that complete reliance could be placed in any Yugoslav promises not forcefully to establish a Titoist Government in Albania, but he did feel that this is not a major consideration, that if such a government were established it would at least remove Albania from the Soviet orbit". (84)

This view was not, however, shared by official circles in Washington and London.

In May 1951, the US Embassy in Athens told Washington:

"US officials here . . are extremely concerned about Albanian refugee meeting. . . Yugoslavs are supporting, perhaps arming, Albanian refugees and Albanian-Yugoslavs estimated at 2-8 thousand. These officials fear . . Yugoslavs might be planning widespread infiltration Albania. . . Such Yugoslav infiltration could effect open revolution or dominate a genuine revolution should such occur. Thus Yugoslavia would become sole architect post-'liberation' political reconstruction Albania". (85)

This concern was shared by the British Foreign Office. Already in November 1949 Sir Anthony Rumbold, Head of the Southern Department at the Foreign Office, had informed Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar, Minister in Washington:

"I would certainly deprecate any suggestion that Albanians in Yugoslavia might be encouraged to cooperate with our Free Albania Committee". (86)

In July 1951, therefore, the United States government presented an Aide Mémoire to Yugoslavia stating that it would

" . . look with . . concern on efforts by any interested nation to take unilateral action vis-à-vis Albania". (87)

and in September 1951 a spokesman of the National Committee for a Free Albania stated:

"The Union (the League of Albanian Political Refugees in Yugoslavia - Ed.) either did not want to collaborate with the National Committee or was unable to do so". (88)

In May-June 1952 the 2nd annual conference of the League of Albanian Political Refugees was held in Prizren, the main address being given by a representative of the Yugoslav government, Dushan Mugosha. Its third annual conference followed at Prizren in May 1953, when Apostol Tanafi was elected Chairman. At its fourth annual conference in October 1954, Hajrulla Ismi was elected Chairman; Dushan Mugosha remained the representative of the Yugoslav government on the League's Committee.

The Yugoslav government did, in fact, send a number of armed bands into Albanian territory. As Foreign Service Officer Robert Brash minuted in August 1950:

> "It (the Yugoslav committee - (Ed.) has certainly sent several bands into Albanian territory in the last six months (some of them were caught". (89)

Preparations - 1

The official British and American records are almost entirely silent on the preparations for the invasion of Albania organised by the British and American governments, as well as on the operation itself. In September 1982, Louis Dube, an officer of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, declared under oath:

> "Plaintiff's FOIA (Freedom of Information Act - Ed.) request which seeks information on alleged attempts to conduct covert Agency intelligence operations in Albania between 1945 and 1953 can neither be confirmed nor denied, as an affirmative or negative answer to plaintiff's FOIA request could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to the national security". (90)

However, a number of those who took part at various levels have told their story in some detail to the Conservative peer Nicholas Bethell.

Preparations for the operation by the British and American intelligence services began some time before official high-level approval to it had been given in the autumn of 1949.

In October 1948 Pat Whinney, British Secret Intelligence Service station chief in Athens, approached two British ex-naval officers, Sam Barclay and John Leatham, who were building in Piraeus (the port of Athens) a 45-ton schooner, the "Stormie Seas", but were encountering financial difficulties. Whinney

> " . . explained to them that his superiors in SIS would very easily find a use for two good men and a good boat. He offered to help them out of their financial problem by taking over the cost of building the 'Stormie Seas' and he agreed to instal the very powerful engine". (91)

The offer was accepted; the partly finished schooner was launched on December 15th, and in February left Piraeus for Malta under sail. After reaching Malta, Barclay and Leatham flew to London, where they were briefed by the head of SIS, Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Perkins. Work on the boat, and engine trials, were completed by September 1949.

Meanwhile, in March 1949, Neil McLean and Julian Amery had a series of meetings with Foreign Office and SIS officials, in which - because of their war-time experiences in Albania - they were invited to become special advisers on the projected operation. As Amery told Bethell:

> "The secret services asked me to set up the organisation for an Albanian counter-revcolution, and I was glad to do it". (92)

In the United States the Office for Policy Coordination (OPC) had been

set up in June 1948 - financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, but responsible to the National Security Council and the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department - for the purpose of carrying out subversive operations in countries regarded as unfriendly to the United States. An NSC directive laid down that its activities should be

> " . . so planned and conducted that any US government responsibility for them is not evident . . and that if uncovered the US government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them". (93)

In March 1949 the OPC set up a "Special Policy Committee" to direct the American side of the operation, and appointed the American intelligence agent James McCargar as "commander". The committee also included Robert Joyce, of the US State Department, and Lord Jellicoe, 2nd Secretary at the British Embasssy in Washington responsible for Balkan affairs. In October British intelligence agent Harold ("Kim") Philby - given the cover of 1st Secretary at the Embassy - became a member of the Special Policy Committee as British liaison officer to the OPC and joint "commander" of the operation with McCargar.

Director of the OPC Frank Wisner visited London in April and, over lunch with McLean on the 14th, agreed that the 19th century Fort Bin Jema, in an isolated spot on the south-west corner of the island of Malta, should serve as the training ground for the Albanian recruits and that an intelligence listening post should be established on the Greek island of Corfu, at the Villa Bimbelli overlooking the Corfu Channel, commanded by Alan Hare.

In May 1949 another Albanian veteran, Lieutenant-Colonel David Smiley, was interviewed by Perkins in Germany, where he was serving with the Royal Horse Guards, and, as he told Bethell, asked to

> " . . set up a training school in Malta and arrange for the infiltration of Albanian agents. I admit, I rather jumped at it". (94)

In June Smiley flew to Malta, where he was given the cover of Deputy Chief of Staff of the Malta garrison. He was joined the following month by his wife Moy, who functioned as the unit's cipher expert. Other members of the unit at Fort Bin Jema were Robert Zaehner, a linguist , and a number of instructors drawn from the British armed forces.

Meanwhile, in May, Amery and McLean flew to Greece and approached, through an intermediary, the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek army, Field-Marshal Alexander Papagos, and, directly, the Secretary-General of the Greek Foreign Office, Panayotis Pipinelis. They agreed to covert Greek participation in the operation.

Later in the month, McLean flew to Rome with Perkins, and on May 20th began discussions with the leaders of Albanian émigré organisations;

> "Their first requirement, Perkins explained, was thirty young men suitable for training in Malta". (95)

and these were selected from camps in southern Italy; they were then

> " . . put into British battledress with Pioneer Corps flashes on the shoulders". (96)

Smiley himself describes the basis of the operation as follows in his book "Albanian Assignment":

> "It was hoped that they (the recruited Albanians - Ed.) would make their way inland to contact their friends and relatives who, together with those already fighting, would form the nucleus of active opposition to the Communists". (97)

Transported to Malta, the recruits were given military training by Smiley's team:

> "The course consisted of weapon training with pistols and sub-machine guns, wireless and PT. The wireless sets were . . a type of collapsible bicycle without wheels . ., one man pedalling away busily while they were sending out signals". (98)

By mid-summer 1949, Smiley recounts,

> " . . the Albanians were well enough trained and the weather right for operations to start. They had been formed into small groups . ., depending on their politics, relations, tribes and the areas from which they came. Each group, of four to six men, had a wireless set". (99)

According to Bethell,

> " . . they had Albanian money too, but their main currency was the gold sovereign. Each man had a 'reserve' of fifty coins". (100)

The Operation - 1

The first group of nine recruits left Malta on September 28th

> " . . in a motor fishing vessel (MFV) manned by men of the Royal Navy. In the Adriatic they were switched to a Greek caique (the 'Stormie Seas' - Ed.) manned by two British officers, (Barclay and Leatham - Ed.) who put them ashore at night". (101)

This first group was landed on the Karaburun Peninsula during the night of October 3rd/4th, 1949.

The second group of eleven recruits was landed on October 10th on a sandy beach north of Vlora.

Bethell sums up the results of these first two landings as

> " . . unsuccessful. Four of the twenty men put ashore were lost and the others had failed to inspire any genesis of an anti-government movement. Several Albanian civilians had also been arrested". (102)

Rumour, however, presented an even less favourable account. Cyrus Sulzberger wrote in the "New York Times" on March 27th, 1950:

"Last November two teams of Albanian émigrés were landed on the Albanian coast. Their assignment was to take radio equipment into the hinterland and to establish communications between the anti-Hoxha resistance movement and the émigré committees.

These agents were all rounded up immediately by the police". (103)

In April 1950 Smiley left Malta, and in the following month his place was taken by Anthony Northrop, another SOE veteran who had operated in Albania during the war. Preparations were begun to send a third group into Albania, this time overland from Greece. Dayrell Oakley Hill was again recruited into government service and sent to Athens to organise it. In September the trained recruits were driven to the Albanian border by car. Bethell reports:

"Towards the end of 1950 the survivors trickled back to Malta and, partly as a result of what they told their friends, morale at the fort declined alarmingly. . .

An aura of doom began to surround the fort". (104)

Meanwhile, in May 1950, Barclay and Leatham had returned to England to attend an SIS training school near Gosport, in Hampshire. The new plan was to "destabilise" the People's Republic of Albania by showering it with leaflets from balloons.

"Leatham's and Barclay's first reaction when confronted with this plan, worked out by SIS scientists in every theoretical detail, was to burst into laughter, but Perkins assured them that it was a serious part of the West's anti-communist propaganda drive". (105)

In February 1952 Northrop returned to England and began training groups of four to five Albanian émigrés near Chagford, on the Devon moors, but found that most of them were medically unfit. It was at this point that the British decided to end their part in the joint operation, and Fort Bin Jema was dismantled.

Northrop later expressed to Bethell the view that only the assassination of Albanian leaders could have been effective:

"If some of the leaders could have been eliminated, even in a suicide mission, it would have been worth while. . . If Enver Hoxha or one of the men around him could have been disposed of publicly, . . it would have had a great effect". (106)

but this was rejected by Perkins on the grounds that

" . . such an attack would be too 'noisy'. It was beyond the level of involvement authorised by Bevin's order." (107)

It was therefore agreed that

" . . the operation would . . continue on the understanding that the American side, represented by the Office for Policy Coordination, would take the lead". (108)

Preparations - 2

In August 1949 the US Office for Policy Coordination sent Michael Burke, an OSS veteran who had served in occupied Europe during the war, to Rome as its operational officer. His task was to work with the officers in Italy of the National Committee for a Free Albania to select suitable Albanian exiles for the American side of the operation, and to supervise their military training. The plan was basically that of the British operation, although on a much larger scale, except that the recruits would be trained in West Germany and dropped into Albania from the air.

When the leaders of the NCFA in Italy had selected the first 250 recruits from Albanian exiles in Italy, these were formed into a "Labour Battalion" known as "Company 4000". This was placed under an Albanian-American commanding officer (Capain Thomas Mangelli), but with Albanian junior officers (Major Çaush Ali Basho of Balli Kombetar and Captain Xhemal Laci of Legaliteti) and NCOs.

James McCargar left the OPC in April 1950 and his place as American joint "commander" of the Albanian operation was taken by another intelligence officer, Gratian Yatsevich.

In June 1950 the first forty-nine of the recruits reached Germany and, after receiving their Labour Battalion uniforms - blue with red shoulder flashes and a red scarf bearing the black two-headed Albanian eagle - began their military training at various camps. Their basic training consisted of

> " . . a programme of drill, physical training, first aid, use of arms and military law". (109)

Meanwhile, Perkins of the British SIS, assisted by Roman Rudkowski, a colonel in the Polish RAF, had selected six Polish émigré pilots:

> "They were to live in Athens and from time to time fly unmarked aircraft over Albanian territory, dropping men and materials". (110)

After a refresher course at the US Air Force base at Wiesbaden, the pilots arrived in August 1950 in Athens, where they lived for two years in a CIA "safe house".

In October the first sixteen of the Albanian exiles were sent for a month's special training in guerilla warfare near Heidelberg, receiving

> " . . lessons in map-reading, use of compass, enciphering and deciphering of telegrams, unarmed combat, use of the grenade and the knife". (111)

The Operation - 2

After being taken to Athens by air, on November 19th, 1950 nine of the first batch of sixteen were dropped by parachute into northern Albania - one group near Bulqiza, the other near Zarrisht. Some were killed, some captured; a few escaped into Yugoslavia.

In the spring of 1951 Burke was replaced by Joseph Leib, a former US Army major.

The second drop took place on July 23rd, 1951, when twelve men were dropped in three groups of four near Gjirokastra, Kavaja and Shkodra. It was, in Bethell's words

" . . a total disaster", (112)

all the parachutists being either killed or captured.

Zog visited the United States in the summer of 1951, and was received on August 8th by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State James Bornbright. He also met Yatsevich, who persuaded him to allow three men of his Royal Guard to take part in the operation in return for a large estate on Long Island, including a sixty room mansion, which

" . . the CIA paid for", (113)

and left America in October.

It was in this month (October 1951) that the trial began in Tirana of 14 captured agents from the various landings already carried out. As Bethell admits:

> "The information that emerges from the 1951 Tirana trial was . . essentially accurate. . . The dates, names and other details appearing in the transcript . . do not generally conflict with the facts provided by Albanian and American participants thirty-three years after the trial:. (114)

The trial proceedings were broadcast by Radio Tirana:

> "The result was a sudden and very serious decline in morale among the trainees". (115)

Despite this setback, on October 15th, 1951 five more men were dropped into Albania near Dibra. Two were killed, the other three - after

> " . . four days in Albania, . . spent entirely on the run evading communist patrols", (116)

managed to escape into Yugoslavia.

During the winter of 1951-52, Yatsevich visited Zog in Egypt and, in discussions with the commander of the Royal Guard, Colonel Hysen Selmani, it was decided that Zenel Shehu, Halil Branica and Haxhi Gjyle should be selected for the operation.

"The King gave each of them a bag of gold". (117)

After training near Athens, they joined two other Albanian exiles and crossed into Albania on foot from Greece on April 27th, 1952.

For the next few months it appeared that this operation was going successfully:

"Throughout the 1952 summer OPC representatives in Greece were pleased to find themselves at last in regular contact with agents in the field. . .

Quantities of equipment were . . dropped at Prenci's (Tahir Prenci was the unit's radio operator - Ed.) request: gold sovereigns, machine-guns, ammunition, radios, binoculars, woollen underwear, hats, trousers, and a can of beige paint. American intelligence was greatly encouraged. It indicated that opposition bases were being established and equipped in an orderly fashion". (118)

Over the next few months, the radio messages became

" . . more and more triumphant. . . Their network of bases was expanding. There was now a nucleus of army and police officers ready to move against the communist regime. The parachuted equipment had been distributed and would soon be put to use". (119)

In May 1953 another group of three Albanians was dropped in the Mat area.

However, in April 1954 another trial began in Tirana. This

" . . revealed a catastrophe far beyond American intelligence's worst nightmares. It transpired that Shehu had been captured almost as soon as he arrived in the Mat area two years earlier. His radio operator Tahir Prenci had disappeared. . . For eighteen months Sigurimi (the Albanian Security Service - Ed.) . . had concocted and transmitted the radio messages on which American decisions were based. . .

Sigurimi had done their work well. By interrogating their American-trained prisoners, . . they had discovered all the essential facts not only about the . . operation, but also about the five years of intrigue that formed the background. Several prominent Americans and all the main Albanian exile leaders were mentioned during the proceedigs. The trial's legal form was grotesque, but its basic facts are confirmed by Albanian survivors and they are in the author's view accurate". (120)

This brought the American side of the operation to an end. In June 1954 the training camps were closed down and "Company 4000" was disbanded. Its survivors were resettled - in Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canade, France and West Germany.

The "Sunday Times" of October 15th, 1967 summed up the whole operation:

"It was a disaster. . .

The reception was brisk and bloody. Within a month 150 or so guerillas - about half the total force - were either killed or captured, along with a number of Albanians at home who had been unwise enough to welcome the warriors.

The 150 survivors struggled into Greece - to the embarrassment of the Greek Government. The SIS in London had hastily to bully the bewildered Foreign Office into allowing 150 mysterious Albanians into Britain (where a weird 'welcome back' party was thrown for them at the Caxton Hall in London)". (121)

In 1963 Philby, the British joint "commander" of the Albanian invasion, defected to the Soviet Union and was exposed as a Soviet agent. The failure of the operation is sometimes attributed to this fact. However, even Bethell accepts that Philby was not the only factor responsible for the fiasco:

> "To what extent, then, was Philby responsible for the failure? Clearly he was not the operation's only flaw. He did not, for example, cause the debacle of the Shehu . . mission. . . This episode took place long after his recall to London in June 1951". (122)

In fact, the financing of the American side of the operation was quite open. In October 1951 US President Harry Truman signed the Mutual Security Act of that year providing for special appropriations of $100 million for the financing of

> " . . any selected persons who are residing in or escapees from . . Albania . . either to form such persons into elements of the military forces supporting the North Atlantic Treaty organisation or for other purposes". (123)

For their part, the Albanian authorities attribute little importance to the Philby factor. Enver Hoxha writes in "The Anglo-American Threat to Albania":

> "Deceiving themselves that Albania at that time was the weakest link of the countries of people's democracy, the British and American imperialists tried to undermine our people's state power. They had not reckoned on its strength, which was based on the people, on the cleverness, determination, vigilance and swiftness in action of our organs of security and people's defence. . .
>
> We forced the captured agents to make radio contact with their espionage centres in Italy and elsewhere, hence to play our game, totally deceiving these centres, which showed themselves to be completely incompetent and short-sighted. Things went so far that they dropped us whatever we dictated to their agents who had fallen into the trap. . .
>
> Our famous radio game, the wisdom, justice and revolutionary vigilance of the Albanian people brought about the ignominious failure of the plans of the foreign enemy, and not the merits of a certain Kim Philby, as some have claimed". (124)

Bethell admits frankly that the invasion of Albania organised by the British and American intelligence services in 1949-54 was a flagrant breach of international law:

> "The United States and Britain . . were at peace with . . Albania, . . and the armed attack thet they had sponsored was a clear violation of international law. . .
>
> American and British intelligence men who took part in the conspiracy . . accept that they committed a violation of international law. However, they say, Hoxha had no right to claim the protection of any such law". (125)

The Role of Zog

Despite Julian Amery's reassuring words to the ex-king in 1949, official circles in Britain and America had little belief that Zog would ever regain the Albanian throne. British Foreign Service Officer Gordon Campbell minuted in July 1948:

> "It is hardly likely that King Zog will ever return to the throne of Albania". (126)

Nevertheless both the US State Department and the British Foreign Office were anxious to continue to keep Zog as a possible useful tool for the future.

Following the overthrow of the Zog's patron King Farouk in 1952, in August 1953 the new Egyptian government

> " . . decided to withdraw its recognition of the Royal Albanian Legation in Cairo". (127)

Next month Egyptian police raided Zog's villa, and Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi informed the US Embassy in Cairo that

> " . . a number of illegal items were found". (128)

It was alleged that the ex-king had been taking advantage of his diplomatic status to engage in gold smuggling. The British Embassy in Cairo informed the Foreign Office:

> "We are inclined to believe that this accusation may not be without some foundation in fact". (129)

On October 3rd, however, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles cabled the US Embassy in Cairo:

> "Informally approach appropriate Egyptian officials along following lines:
>
> King Zog's request for admission US, where he has property, has been granted and he is planning leave Egypt on or about 18 October. . .
>
> It has been learned from Zog, and confirmed by press reports, that certain actions have recently been taken against him by Egyptian authorities. Without in any way judging merits of case, US Government feels Zog represents real asset in struggle against Communism and hopes Egyptian Government, acting in the general interest, will be able permit Zog leave Egypt with such property as remains to him and without exposing him to further actions which will tend diminish his prestige as a top Albanian leader and important figure in anti-Communist struggle". (130)

Zog stayed on his estate on Long Island only briefly, however; by 1955 he had settled in France with his family and "court".

The Hope of a Military Coup

With the failure of the invasion by Albanian anti-Communist exiles organised in 1949-54 by the Anglo-American intelligence services, the hopes of Britain and the United States for the replacement of the existing regime in Albania by

one favourable to the Western Powers, rested, over the next years, on the hope of a coup within Albania.

As far back as 1944-45, British and American intelligence reports were presenting Mehmet Shehu - who, after being Minister of the Interior in charge of security, was Prime Minister of Albania from 1954 to his death in 1981 - as the "dissident" most likely to be able to lead such a coup. For example,

in November 1944:

> "There has been speculation as to a possible defection within the NLF Movement. . . Pro-British feeling is apparent in some of the more important leaders. . . There are clearly some who . . are fundamentally against the present Party policy, but unable to express their views openly. . .
>
> It is however important to consider the potential opposition within the movement and its possible leaders. These are: . .
>
> Mehmet Shehu . . is a personally ambitious and vain man. . . He is undoubtedly the most respected and important military figure within the movement. . . He is a Communist but his personal ambition exceeds his loyalty to the Party. . .
>
> Every effort should be made to prevent the elimination of these pro-British elements already known to us and endeavour to build these up unobtrusively"; (131)

in December 1944:

> "Mehmet SHEHU . . is most likely to try to satisfy his own personal ambitions by attacking the NLF Government. . . The only man in ALBANIA who might be able to divert the allegiance of the army from the Government to himself is Mehmet SHEHU. . .
>
> This opportunist group . . consists of men who from love of power and personal ambition might use the various discontented elements of the right-wing and the more non-political portions of the army to overthrow the government from the right. . . That this type of combination of elements hostile to the rulers of the NLF has the best chance of overthrowing them is undoubted.
>
> Any successful revolution in . . Albania must be supported from the outside by some great power"; (132)

and in February 1945:

> "The obvious leader for such a coup would be Mehmet Shehu. . .
>
> He must remain a potential danger to NLF in view of his following in the army". (133)

Subsequent documents in 1951 to 1955 speak frankly of the existence of a "power struggle" between the leadership, headed by Enver Hoxha, of the Party of Labour of Albania and a faction headed by Shehu.

In August 1951 the British Embassy in Paris cited the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs as saying:

> "Of the two factions which appeared to exist within the Albanian Communist Party, that headed by Enver Hoxha seemed to be losing ground to that headed by Mehmet Shehu, the Minister of the Interior"; (134)

and in the following month the British Embassy in Belgrade similarly quoted the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> "A major feature in Albanian politics today is the struggle between Shehu and Enver Hoxha". (135)

The February 1952 issue of "Albanian News Bulletin", published by the National Committee for a Free Albania, declared:

> "The rift between Premier Hoxha and his Minister of Interior, Mehmet Shehu, . . has grown wider in recent months". (136)

The British Embassy in Belgrade quoted in August 1952 the official Yugoslav newspaper "Politika" as expressing the view

> " . . that the clash between Hoxha and Shehu is likely to be forced into the open soon and that the latter will probably succeed . . in eliminating his rival"; (137)

while later in the month, according to the BBC Monitoring Service, Rome Radio was speaking of the

> " . . well-known enmity between Enver Hoxha and M. Shehu, Vice-Premier and Minister of the Interior". (138)

A British Foreign Office brief prepared for the visit of Foreign Minister Anthony Eden to Yugoslavia in September 1952 stated

> "Our interest in the Albanian internal situation centres round the degree of popular discontent with the regime and the struggle for power between the two leading Communists, Hoxha the Prime Minister, and Shehu the Minister of the Interior", (139)

while Tito told Eden:

> " . . that . . Prime Minister Hoxha's position seemed to be weakening, and it might well be that he would be overthrown by his rival Shehu". (140)

In August 1953 Livio Theodoli, Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in London, told the Foreign Office in a memorandum, following Shehu's removal as Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party and Hoxha's election as 1st Secretary:

> "Hoxha's . . rival, Mehmet Shehu, though remaining the Regime's second-in-command, has lost his direct grip on the party". (141)

In July 1954 Ivor Vincent, Foreign Service Officer at the British Foreign Office, minuted:

> "Gen. Shehu . . is reputedly pro-Yugoslav", (142)

and in the following year Archibald Ross, Chargé d'Affaires at the British Embassy in Rome was speaking to the Foreign Office of

" . . the Albanian Prime Minister, Shehu, whom the Italians believed to be a true Albanian patriot and at daggers drawn with Hoxha, whom they regarded as a stooge of Moscow". (143)

However, no military coup took place. Shehu's suicide was announced in December 1981, and Enver Hoxha told an election meeting in November 1982:

"Against this unity of the Party and people, Mehmet Shehu, . . one of the most dangerous traitors and enemies of socialist Albania, broke his head. He had been criticised many times by the Party for his grave mistakes, but had managed to camouflage himself. The documents that have been discovered and incontestable evidence prove that since before the War he had been working for the American secret service. . . When he was in the 1st Brigade he was recruited by the Yugoslav secret service (OZNA, today the UDB). . . Acting on the orders of foreign espionage centres, especially the CIA and the UDB, he and the group of plotters linked with him, who are now in the hands of the authorities for full investigation, worked to destroy the Party and the people's state power and to put Albania under foreign rule". (144)

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1956 - 1985 :

EPILOGUE

The Travels of "King" Leka

Zog died in Paris on April 16th, 1961 and a few days later his son Leka, who had returned to Britain to attend and graduate from the Sandhurst Military Academy, proclaimed himself, at a ceremony in the Hotel Bristol, Paris, "King of the Albanians" in succession to his father.

In July 1972 Leka called a press conference in Madrid

> " . . to announce that a three-day meeting of exiled party delegates had determined to form a united front to combat the Communist regime in their homeland. . .
> Xhefer Deva . . was elected chairman of the united front". (1)

By 1975 this had become

> " . . the Military Council for the Liberation of Ethnic Albania (Ethnic Albania includes parts of Yugoslavia and Greece inhabited by Albanians)", (2)

Leka, its President, claimed:

> "We started our first military operation in 1975 with 3 çetas that went into Albania", (3)

and that he had organised

> " . . certain actions which were basically terrorist", (4)

for example,

> " . . an M72 rocket was fired at the Albanian Embassy in Paris". (5)

Leka married in Madrid in October 1975 English-educated Susan Cullen-Ward, daughter of a wealthy Australian sheep-farmer.

On March 31st, 1977 Leka was arrested in Thailand

> " . . in connection with the seizure of a huge arms cache in Bangkok"; (6)

he was released five days later

> " . . following acceptance by the Thai Government of his claim to diplomatic immunity". (7)

Two years later, in February 1979, Leka

> " . . arrived in Rhodesia after being expelled from Spain following the discovery by police of an arsenal of arms . . hidden in the basement of his palatial home . . on the outskirts of Madrid. . .
> Leka had represented European groups selling arms to Rhodesia

and that was why he had been allowed to enter the country. . .
He is staying with Mr. Pieter Van Der Byl, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The two men are close friends". (8).

Then, as the negotiations for the transformation of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe proceeded, Leka flew to the more congenial atmosphere of South Africa, where he now lives on a farm near Randberg.

On September 28th, 1982 the Albanian Telegraph Agency announced that

" . . a gang of criminal émigrés . . led by the bandit Xhevdet Mustafa" (9)

had made an armed landing on the Albanian coast but had been

" . . totally liquidated". (10)

On the following day, Leka, in Paris on a visit,

" . . claimed responsibility for the attempted invasion of the country", (11)

saying

" . . that the band's leader had been acting under his orders for several years at the head of a 'national liberation army' aimed at overthrowing the Tirana regime". (12)

Next day, however, he

" . . denied reports that he was responsible for . ." (13)

the attempted invasion, saying:

"This was not one of ours. It was the first to be undertaken without my orders". (14)

The Abandonment of a Territorial Claim

On May 6th, 1971 the Greek government established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of Albania. First Secretary of the CC of the PLA Enver Hoxha commented:

"Thus an absurd situation comes to an end. Now the situation will be normalised". (15)

Greece was one of the signatories to the Final Act of the "European Security Conference" on August 1st, 1975; a clause of this read:

"The participating countries regard as inviolable . . the frontiers of all states in Europe". (16)

And on February 21st, 1984 Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou interpreted this to mean that

" . . Greece had no territorial claims against Albania". (17)

Following a visit to Albania in December 1984, (the first by a Greek Minister since World War II), Greek Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs Karolos Papoulias said:

> "The Greek language continues to be cultivated in Albania with satisfactory results", (18)

and also commented on a report of "Amnesty International" published that month which had criticised "civil liberties", especially those of the Greek minority, in Albania, suggesting

> " . . that Amnesty International had to rely on the accounts of refugees, which were not always accurate". (19)

The border crossing between Greece and Albania at Kakavia, which had been closed since 1940, was reopened for official traffic in June 1984 and for ordinary traffic in January 1985.

The Albanian Gold and Diplomatic Relations with Britain

More than forty years after the Albanian gold was looted by the Nazis, it still lies - at the time of writing - in the vaults of the Bank of England. This gold consists of the 2,338.7565 kilograms of monetary gold taken from Rome (the portion which was the subject of "the gold case" in the International Court of Justice in 1954) together with 116.1180 kilograms of monetary gold taken from Tirana - a total of 2,454.8745 kilograms with a current value of some £44 million. The proposal that the British and Italian governments should reach a "compromise" over the gold, and the attempts of the British government to obtain French and American agreement for its seizure of the gold, came to nothing.

Similarly, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania (as Albania became in 1976) remains the only country in Europe with which Britain has no diplomatic relations.

For many years the British government maintained, as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs David Ormsby-Gore told the House of Commons in November 1958, that it was refusing to restore diplomatic relations with Albania

> " . . because Albania has not yet paid any compensation as was requested of them by the International Court (in connection with the Corfu Channel Incident - Ed.)" (20)

By the 1960s, however, the Soviet Union had - in the official Albanian view - ceased to be a socialist country and had essentially degenerated into a capitalist state. In 1961 the Soviet Union cancelled all economic aid to, and broke off diplomatic relations with, Albania, which ceased to participate in COMECON and in 1968 formally withdrew from the Warsaw Pact. In 1978 China too terminated economic aid to Albania.

With Albania now a completely non-aligned state, in February 1980 the British government modified its position on the question of diplomatic relations. Charles Gray, 2nd Secretary at the Eastern European and Soviet Department of the Foreign Office, wrote:

> "We entirely share your view of the desirability of re-establishing relations with Albania. . .

> The question has recently been reviewed again at a high level and Ministers have authorised a further attempt to reach a settlement". (21)

Richard Luce, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, gave further details a few days later:

> "A new initiative has recently been authorised. . . One of our aims in this is to dissociate the question of a resumption of relations from the financial problems". (22)

On February 25th, 1981 Peter Blaker, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, told the House of Commons:

> "Last year we formally proposed to the Albanian Government that diplomatic relations should be restored without waiting for a resolution of the financial problems which had previously stood in the way. Regrettably, the Albanian Government have not agreed, but the offer remains open and we remain ready for talks without preconditions". (23)

From the Albanian point of view, the obstacle to the resumption of diplomatic relations with Britain is the failure to restore the looted gold to Albania - a failure which the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs attributes primarily to the British government.

First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania Enver Hoxha reported to the 7th Congress of the Party in November 1976:

> "Britain must return the gold it plundered from the Albanian people. . . We will never renounce this right", (24)

and amplified this position to the 8th Congress in November 1981:

> "Can there by any talk of diplomatic relations between the People's Socialist Republic of Albania and Britain? The British Government must immediately return the gold to Albania together with the interest accrued from the arbitrary exploitation of it". (25)

In Britain in 1957 the Albanian Society was revived as a broad vehicle for the dissemination of factual information about Albania and for the fostering of friendship and understanding between the Albanian and British peoples, and in 1980 the Society initiated the Founding Conference of the Campaign for Diplomatic Relations with Albania (CDRA), supported by several Members of Parliament. The Founding Resolution of the conference declared that the CDRA

> " . . recognises the desirability of normal diplomatic relations between Britain and the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. . . Such relations would open up the path to further trade and cultural links and social exchanges between the two countries. . .
>
> The CDRA upholds that the British government should take steps that the Albanian gold now in the vaults of the Bank of England be returned to Albania". (26)

Officials of the Albanian Ministry of Internal Affairs have made it clear to representatives of the Albanian Society in discussions on this question

that it is not primarily the value of the looted gold that concerns the Albanian government. They see the return of the gold rather as a symbolic gesture that the policy of unrelenting hostility towards Albania pursued by successive British governments over many decades has been at least modified.

The British government argues that the question of the Albanian gold is not one which it can resolve unilaterally. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote to MP Ron Brown on July 1st, 1985:

> "We should like to settle once and for all the long-standing and anomalous situation which exists between this country and Albania. In 1980 we offered to establish diplomatic relations without preconditions, leaving the outstanding issues to be settled separately. The Albanian Government rejected this offer.
>
> The gold to which the Albanian Government has laid claim is in the custody of the Tripartite Gold Commission. . . There are a number of outstanding claims against Albania of which our claim . . is only one. The gold can only be released with the unanimous consent of all three TGC governments; it is therefore not a matter in which we can act unilaterally.
>
> You may have read recent press reports about confidential contacts between Britain and Albania. . I can assure you that our objective is to reach a just and mutually acceptable solution to a problem which, as you rightly observe, has proved an obstacle to the establishment of a normal relationship between this country and Albania". (27)

The United States government has argued similarly. A State Department circular to US Embassies in Western Europe in March 1981:

> "The question of the delivery to Albania of gold in the custody of the Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold is a matter to be decided by that Commission. . . We would not wish to comment on the US position within the Commission". (28)

The "outstanding claims" referred to include not only those of Italy and Britain already discussed, but also one from the United States - despite a statement by the US government to the International Court in 1954 which declared:

> "The Government of the United States has no claims with respect to any of the gold involved in the present proceedings". (29)

In April 1981, however, Blaker told the House of Commons:

> "Financial problems (related to the Albanian gold - Ed.) include British and American claims against Albania". (30)

Richard Johnson, Director for Bulgarian, Romanian, Yugoslav and Albanian Affairs at the US State Department told Piero Ferraboschi, Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in Washington, in March 1972 that there were outstanding

> ". . US claims against Albania for war damage (estimated at roughly $2 million) and for nationalisation of US concerns (estimated at about $10 million)". (31)

Attempts by the authors under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain in

Washington details of these United States claims against Albania have been rejected on grounds of "national security". But Enver Hoxha in an interview given in December 1984 to Professor Paul Milliez, President of the Association of French-Albanian Friendship, confirmed the existence of the US claims for nationalisation of US property, although giving a significantly lower figure than that given by Johnson in 1972:

> "The Americans . . have demanded that we remit to them the wealth of Albanian residents who live in the United States which, according to them, has a value of around $1,900,000. But we have notified them: give us proofs, supported by documents, on your American wealth nationalised by us so that this problem, may be considered concretely". (32)

According to Hoxha in the interview of December 1984, however, the French government is now urging the return of the Albanian gold:

> "We thank France for the assistance which she is giving us on this question (of the gold - Ed.). (33)

Nevertheless, by February 1986 it was being reported in the British press that the secret negotiations had broken down:

> "The secret talks in Paris between Britain and Albania, which began last March, have ended in failure. . .
> Albanian officials in Paris refused to budge on their long-standing demand that the gold - now worth £50m at current prices - should be returned before they would discuss other issues". (34)

The Pre-war Treaties and Relations with the United States

We have seen that the proclaimed obstacle on the US side to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Albania had been the refusal of the Albanian government to accept unconditionally the pre-war treaties between the two states, but that this was a mere pretext for underlying political motives.

Following the breach of relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Albania in 1961 and the withdrawal of Albania from the Warsaw Pact in 1968, as in the case of Britain with the Corfu compensation, this question eventually ceased to be put forward as an obstacle on the American side to the restoration of diplomatic relations.

In July 1971, a US State Department circular to US Missions abroad declared the American government's

> " . . readiness to establish channels of communication looking towards normalisation of relations with Albania. This has been our basic policy for some time". (35)

In February 1972 Richard Johnson, Director for Bulgarian, Romanian, Yugoslav and Albanian Affairs at the US State Department, told Igor Filin, 3rd Secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Washington:

> "We would like to have diplomatic relations with Albania, but still had no reason to believe the Albanian Government might be interested". (36)

And in March 1972 Johnson told Piero Ferraboschi, Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in Washington:

> "The United States Government would welcome the normalisation of relations with Albania. . .
> The obligations contained in pre-war US-Albanian bilateral agreements . . would appear no longer to possess substantial intrinsic importance". (37)

And on April 4th, 1973 US Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush, in the course of a speech at the Naval Academy at Annapolis, stated that

> " . . if Albania wished to resume relations, it would find the US Government prepared to respond". (38)

But an External Research Study for the State Department by Stephen Peters dated December 1973 and entitled "Albania: US Position on Recognition of the Tirana Government", noted that Rush's feeler

> " . . has elicited no response from the Tirana Government". (39)

The position of the Albanian government, however, has been for many years that it is unwilling on principle to establish diplomatic relations with either the United States of America or the Soviet Union. Hoxha reported to the 8th Congress of the Party in November 1981:

> "With the United States of America and the Soviet Union, which are the most ferocious enemies of the freedom and independence of the peoples and of peace and security in the world, our country does not maintain and will not maintain any relations", (40)

and reiterated this position in an election speech of November 1982:

> "We have said and continue to say that we will have no rapprochement or relations with either American imperialism or Soviet social-imperialism, which to us and all the peoples are the greatest enemies". (41)

The two major Albanian-American organisations - Free Albania and Vatra - still function. Free Albania has a larger membership - about 1,500 against about 820 - and a more open attitude to the PSR of Albania than Vatra, which is extremely hostile to the regime. In addition, there are in cities such as New York, Chicago and Detroit, small organisations of Kosovars which are for the most part sympathetic to the PSRA.

Outside the Albanian-American community, Ruth and Jack Shulman in New York have for nearly thirty years been active in the distribution of Albanian literature throughout the United States and have produced for some sixteen years the publication "Albania Report".

The first significant organisation concerned with developing friendship with the PSR of Albania was founded in 1977 as the Committee to Form a US-Albania Friendship Association (CFUSAFA), later renamed the US-Albania Friendship Association (USAFA), with headquarters in Chicago and chapters in California. For a number of years this body organised meetings, film shows and exhibitions, but in 1981 a split took place within it - the basic issue being that some members wished it to be associated with a political party, while the

majority felt that it should be a broad organisation not affiliated to any party. As a result of this split, two new organisations came into being: the Albania Friendship Society of Southern California (formed in 1981) and the Chicago Area Friends of Albania (formed in 1982). The USAFA, on the other hand, declined and is now no longer active. In 1983 the Albania Information Project (AIP) was founded in New Orleans.

In the spring of 1984 representatives of all the existing organisations met in New York and agreed to collaborate in their work, including the production of a joint pamphlet entitled "New Albania" to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Liberation of Albania. It is hoped that this collaboration may eventually lead to the formation of a national organisation for friendship with Albania.

The Charges of Internal Aggression

During the 1970s a number of prominent Albanian political figures were charged with plotting to overturn the socialist regime as agents of foreign states, including Britain and the United States. In 1973 Fadil Paçrami and Todi Lubonja, members of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, were accused of fostering bourgeois trends in culture; in 1974 Beqir Balluku, Minister of Defence, was accused of plotting a military coup; and in 1975 Koço Theodhosi, Minister of Industry and Mines, Abdyl Këllezi, Chairman of the Planning Commission, and Kiço Ngjela, Minister of Trade, were accused of economic sabotage.

Following the death of Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu in December 1981, Hoxha accused him of having been the secret coordinator of all the above plots as an agent of foreign states, particularly Britain and the United States:

> "Mehmet Shehu was an agent recruited by the Americans from the time he attended Fultz's school in Tirana. . . He was recruited as an agent of the British Intelligence Service also". (42)

and stated that, having been ordered to assassinate Hoxha,

> " . . Mehmet Shehu could see no alternative but the shameful course of suicide". (43)

Meanwhile the People's Republic of Albania had in 1976 become the People's Socialist Republic of Albania.

Enver Hoxha died on April 11th, 1985 and was succeeded as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania by Ramiz Alia, who had replaced Haxhi Lleshi as President of Albania in November 1982.

CONCLUSION

In his book "The Anglo-American Threat to Albania" Enver Hoxha sums up the tangled web of British and American relations with Albania in the following terms:

> "All this interference and pressure, the unscrupulous provocations like that in the Corfu Channel, the use of the veto against the rights of our Republic in the international arena, the holding of the gold, and many other hostile acts, are the continuation of the savage struggle which the American, British and other imperialists

and world reaction have never ceased for one day or even one minute against our country". (44)

It is clear from even those official documents in London and Washington which are open to inspection that Hoxha's statement is in no way an exaggeration.

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