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1983



BULETINI KATHOLIK SHQIPTAR

Albania is nestled on the eastern shores of the Adriatic and Ionian seas between Yugoslavia and Greece. Her size is about 11,100 square miles. The climate and land are like that of central California. The estimated number of Albanians is nearly six million, but only half live within the physical boundaries. They call themselves *Shqiptare*, "sons of the eagle," and their land *Shqipëri*, "eagle's country." In terms of religious distribution Albania is 68% Muslim, 19% Albanian Orthodox and 13% Roman Catholic. However the present government strictly prohibits its citizens from exercising their religion in public or private.

BIBLIOTEKA PUBLIKE
"MARIN BARLETI"
SHKODER (2016)

ALBANIAN CATHOLIC BULLETIN

Volume IV

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We trust that you will like the new layout of our Bulletin. The typesetting was done by Mollerus Business Services of San Francisco. We are greatly indebted to Sharon and Michael for their Christian attitude in assisting us.

Among the news and information items about Albania, Albanians, and human rights issues in general that appear in these pages, this edition emphasizes two main concerns: lack of religious (and other) freedom in Albania, and the tragic plight of Albanians in Yugoslavia. As always we would like to have your comments. We invite you, as well, to voice your own personal concern on these issues in writing to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the Yugoslav Government in Belgrade, and the Albanian Government in Tirana, protesting the grave violation of human rights towards Albanian citizens.

For those of you who are not acquainted with our Front Cover, the combination of the red cross with the black eagle symbolizes the crucifixion in the past and particularly today, of the Albanian nation irrespective of our religious affiliation. The inscribed words, "PER FE, ATDHE, PERPARIM" (For Faith, Fatherland, Progress), had been for centuries, the motto of Albanian Catholics. As our forefathers were inspired to resist particular evils of the time, so do we feel today propelled to follow their ideals.

The most critical national issue for Albanians today is Kosova. For this reason we are devoting much of this issue (as we have done in the past) to this national and indeed international concern. For those who are not familiar with the geographical location of Kosova, our back cover carries a map of ethnic Albania prepared by the organization, Union of Kosovars, Chicago, Illinois. We have added 1 9 8 1 in red to symbolize visually the fateful event in the struggle of Albanians in Yugoslavia for their God-given rights.

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News articles and photos of general interest, 100-1200 words in length, on religious, cultural, historical and political topics about Albania and its people, may be submitted for consideration. No payments are made for published material. Please enclose a self-addressed envelope for return.

Letters and inquiries should be directed to:
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IN MEMORIAM

Terrence Cardinal Cooke
(1921-1983)

Members of our Center grieve over the passing of Cardinal Terrence J. Cooke, who died on Thursday, October 6, 1983. With Christian resignation and stoicism, he endured terminal leukemia. The Cardinal's last days were spent in prayer and work at his official residence.

Born in New York in 1921, Cooke pursued his secondary education in the Bronx. In 1940 he entered St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. Cardinal Spellman ordained him to the priesthood December 1, 1945. Father Cooke studied at the University of Chicago and Catholic University of America, where he received a Master's degree in social work. For several years he served as an instructor at the Fordham University School of Social Sciences.

In 1957 Father Cooke was appointed personal secretary to Cardinal Spellman and eight years later he was consecrated an auxiliary bishop. In 1968 he succeeded his mentor Francis Cardinal Spellman as the seventh archbishop of New York. A year later Pope Paul VI elevated him to the cardinalate at the age of 48, thus making him the youngest cardinal in the world.

Cardinal Cooke served the Church and the Faithful well. He became a leader in the Church's moral and legislative efforts against abortion.

Although immersed in many responsibilities and projects, the Cardinal found time to address



the needs of minorities and new immigrants, among whom were Albanian Catholics. With fatherly love and care he encouraged and helped them to organize and build their own parish and church.

In 1975, the Cardinal visited the Albanian Catholic Community in Bronx, N.Y. and celebrated an open door Mass at the construction site for their new church building. On January 14, 1979, Cardinal Cooke returned to the same spot and dedicated the new church, named Our Lady of Good Counsel, patroness of Albania. In

his dedication sermon he said: "...It is a great joy for me to return and be with you on this Sunday and I recall too well the musical Mass that we had out in the parking lot some years ago.

"As that time Msgr. Orosi told me about the dream that you all had, and I began to dream with you, but I wasn't quite sure whether the dream would become a reality. But now, I see that the dream has come true and I wish to congratulate each and every one of you and all the others who were part of this effort to build this beautiful church."

Cardinal Cooke was also a loving father to Albanians of Muslim and Orthodox faith. At the 1969 celebration of the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, VATRA, honoring the fifth centenary of the death of Skanderberg (Albania's national hero), Cardinal Cooke presided at an ecumenical prayer service in St. Patrick's Cathedral—first of this kind ever held there. On this occasion he extended an invitation to Albanians to come always and worship in St. Patrick's.

Cardinal Cooke encouraged and supported the work of our Center for the persecuted Church and believers in Albania. We will miss his fatherly concern and shepherding. Albanian people have lost in him a good and sincere friend. He will remain always in our thoughts and prayers.

DR. PIERIN SHKRELI
(1919-1983)

We sadly learned of the untimely death of another friend and supporter, Dr. Pierin Shkreli, in Cleveland, Ohio. As Mr. Pistulli, Dr. Shkreli never returned to his dear homeland after graduating from Law School in Rome. He immigrated to the United States, settling in Cleveland, where he excelled in his field. Dr. Shkreli was admired and loved by many, especially Albanians and Croatians. Dr. Shkreli will be sorely missed, especially in Cleveland where he resided for many years. We extend our condolences to his wife Milka, his family and friends in Albania and abroad.

LODO PISTULLI
(1910-1983)

The recent death of Lodo Pistulli, our friend and supporter has saddened the Albanian community in Milan, Italy and elsewhere. A descen-

dant of a prominent Shkodra family, Mr. Pistulli studied at Jesuit schools in that city, pursuing his professional studies in Italy where he remained for the rest of his life.

Mr. Pistulli carved his name in Milan's business circles as a dependable and trustworthy figure. Respected for his generosity and hospitality, especially to his Albanian countrymen, he leaves a large void in the hearts of his family, friends and all who met and came to love him. We were privileged to have met and known him. Our condolences and prayers go to his family in Milan and Albania.

Symposia

Continued from page 96.

been forgotten, that their brothers in Christ support them from afar. They will know that the insidious pamphlets and political commissars read to them containing articles designed by American religious leaders do not represent the opinion of American believers—but the point of

view of a small group, because they probably also "know not what they do."

I want to ask you to remember my brothers, my fellow prisoners in your prayers, especially the Protestant pastor, Humberto Noble Alexander. They suffer because of their ideas and beliefs, and the only way to help them is to announce to the world that they exist and are being humiliated, punished and tortured. To remain silent will never bring them out of prison. Let us campaign to make the public aware and to apply public pressure can set them free. My own case demonstrates as much.

To finish, I'd like to read from another, much more successful, writer than I, one who also knew of persecutions, St. Matthew:

"Blessed are you when man shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice; and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

demonstrators. And they stood courageously by them in their hour of need.

Albanian religious communities showed the same courage, and the same concern and loyalty to the Albanian nation not long ago, in response to the October, 1981 resolution of the Bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church, who claimed to defend the religious rights of "four hundred thousand Orthodox Greeks" in southern Albania. All four of the Albanian denominations in America, issued prompt and powerful statements rejecting the Bishops' resolution as a chauvinistic provocation towards Albania.

These are two fine examples that show the patriotic posture of Albanian religious communities in our day. Kosova has need today of the same spirit and will on the part of all Albanians. Unity of mind, unity of feeling, unity of action by Albanians everywhere on this national issue will go a long way to help the Kosovars in these difficult times and hasten the day of their liberation.

Indeed, the demands of the Kosovars are so manifestly just and solid that numerous non-Albanians the world over are giving them support. In our own country, two prominent supporters are Senators Charles Percy of Illinois and Jesse Helms of North Carolina. They feel that to help the Albanians of Yugoslavia is to help the cause of justice and democracy in the world.

Can Albanians, who are tied to the Kosovars by blood and language and history and culture, do less for them than these friends of Kosova are doing? The time has come for all Albanians to unite their efforts in support of Kosova, just as they did in those other times of trial for the Albanian nation in 1878, 1912, and 1920.

THE HORNED HELMET

FROM THE EDITOR

We were happily surprised and gratified by the outpouring of felicitations and expressions of solidarity we received on the occasion of the Center's 10th Anniversary. The letters of support and commendation in the press enabled us to overlook a few anonymous chiding letters to "stick strictly to religious persecution in Albania" and not to "get involved in anti-Yugoslav politization." In spite of such ill-caused criticism, we want to take this opportunity to declare publicly that we are bound in name and blood to the Albanian people presently living under Yugoslav jurisdiction and wholeheartedly stand by them in their just cause for freedom and human dignity. In this policy, we have the full support of our co-workers here in America and abroad.

Notwithstanding our accomplishments we feel obliged to appeal to our friends and readers once again for financial help. The cost of production and distribution of the *Bulletin*, especially overseas mailing, has reached such proportions that we foresee an eventual end by next year unless substantial support is secured. We look forward to some assistance from religious institutions in America and abroad, as well as many individuals who share our concern for the present plight of the Albanian people. Meanwhile, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to all individuals and organizations who helped us to pay our indebtedness for the 1982 issue. Among them, we are most grateful to Cardinal Joseph Höfner and the German Bishops' Conference, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, Cardinal Terrence Cooke, Archbishop Philip Hannan, the organization "Church in the World", Jesus Community at the University of Santa Clara, the Dudley Perkins Foundation, Santa Repishiti, Zef Shllaku, Ismail Dema, Don Banas and John Neiman.

May your loving care for the persecuted Albanian brothers and sisters continue to keep their faith alive.

Very grateful for the book and recent *Bulletin*. Faculty and students will greatly benefit in their research about contemporary Albania and its people. With our best wishes for you and your country.

The Librarian
Sophia University
Tokyo, Japan

Your *Bulletin* presents information which is not commonly and readily available to the average American. The American in general, and Catholics in particular, should be informed and sensitive to conditions in Albania by the truth in the *Bulletin*.

Charles E. Maria
San Diego, California

I visited Albania recently and I want to assure you and your readers that religion is still and well alive there. On Easter Sunday we observed many women who had new scarves on their heads while men and children dressed festively. In Durrës we saw an old woman and man with a wreath of roses and beads in their hands in the front of a little chapel which was closed and covered with high grass.

Friedrich T. Kühl
Dusseldörf, West Germany

The *Albanian Catholic Bulletin* (and especially your book) have been very helpful to our staff of *Tosei News*, Japan's Bishop's Conference bi-monthly publication. We will continue to publish material on religious persecution in Albania (and other countries) as our policy is to speak the truth in the name of Jesus Christ. May God bless your work for the Church and Albania.

Andrew S. Matsumura
Catholic Bishop's Conference
of Japan, Tokyo

Our family will remember in our prayers the persecuted believers in Albania and your efforts on their behalf.

Richard A. Watson, M.D.
San Francisco, California

Albanian Catholic Bulletin is a most worthwhile publication. Through it, we come to know that there are many who cherish religious freedom and human dignity and have a real burden for our Albanian brothers and sisters.

Rev. Hans Kristian Neerskov
Bagvaerd, Denmark

The 1982 *Bulletin* was a treasure. I read it from front to back and found it most inspiring. May the Albanian martyrs watch over your work.

Sister St. Thomas
Norwalk, Connecticut

I am an Arberesh (Italo-Albanian) through my mother, but I know only a few words in Arberesh. Because of the Eastern (Arberesh) Rite Liturgy some American friends consider me as Greek. Many of us from the first and second Arberesh generation in America would appreciate it if someone learned in this matter will explain to us and our friends, in detail, what is the origin of the Arberesh people in America and Italy. Are they of "purest" Albanian origin, who were forced to leave Albania in the XVth century after the Turks overran Albania? I know your Bulletin has written often about us, but a lengthy presentation of the Arberesh would be not only much desired but helpful to all.

Salvatore Russo
Austin, Texas

The Albanian people have suffered enormously, particularly the believers. The world should know more about this. Your Bulletin is a great source of information about the plight of Albanians, especially those persecuted for their faith.

Christopher Cvic
London, England

Many thanks for the Bulletin which is packed with so many news and informations items about Albania and its people. May God reward your efforts on behalf of the Albanians.

Lino Camilleri
Bugibba, Malta

Thank you very much for the Bulletin and other information material. You and your staff have to be commended for the efforts to inform the public opinion on the tragedy of the Albanian nation. Following your suggestion in the Bulletin, I have sent a letter to the *International Herald Tribune* (Paris) asking the editor to bring the dreadful religious persecution in Albania to the attention of his readers. I pray to the Almighty to help all those who struggle against religious oppression.

Jacqueline Zogu
Chantilly, France

I read your Bulletin and congratulate you for the interesting contents. The protest of Albanian religious communities in USA against Greek claims was particularly interesting to me. Belgrade favors very openly Greek claims against Albania, and it likes the actions of the Greek Church. In Greece only the extreme Right is engaged, so we have a nice coalition between "Titoists" and extreme Greek rightists.

Hans Peter Rullman
Hamburg, West Germany

I would like to thank you for all information you have sent me. Although I have never been there, I love Albania, and thanks to your material I feel I know the place as much as my own country. There is an Albanian prayer group meeting at my flat regularly.

We often misuse our freedom to worship the Lord. I know that in England I can pray when I want to, I can read the Bible when and where I want to. In fact I often take it to work and read it during my dinner hour. In Albania it is very different. So I earnestly pray every day that very soon Albanians will experience the same religious freedom we have.

Fiona Randall
Bristol, England

By reading your book *The Fulfilled Promise* and the Albanian Catholic Bulletin we feel as witnesses to the crucifixion of the Church and believers in your country. God bless your efforts to inform the world of this tragedy.

Olivo and Ida Milanese
Santa Monica, California

Your book and recent publications of the *Albanian Catholic Bulletin* are a terrible document of our time, of the courage and faith of Albanian believers and of their infamous persecutors.

Willy Fautre
Braine-Le-Comte, Belgium

Pressure May End Life Of *Drita*

According to reports reaching our Center, *Drita* (The Light), the only Albanian Catholic newspaper in Yugoslavia, is being pressured to shut down after twelve years of publication. During these years *Drita* has reported continually on the religious and cultural patrimony of the Albanian people, and on the situation of Catholics in particular.

Publication of *Drita* has had to decrease in frequency since the massive student demonstra-

tions in Prishtina in 1981. Despite indications to the contrary, we would like to believe that the difficulties in printing *Drita* are of a technical nature and not politically motivated.

While the Yugoslav government and its atheistic propaganda continued its pressure against all religious activities in the country, Albanian Catholics appear to be experiencing the brunt of this campaign.

Besa-Fede A Beacon Of Albanian Culture

The Arberesh and Albanian communities of Rome have been meeting regularly at the cultural Center *Besa-Fede*, located at Via dei Greci 46 in Rome. Founded several years ago, the Center is headed by Monsignor Eleuterio Fortino, the well known Arberesh prelate and activist.

Besa-Fede fills a great need for the two communities and affords an opportunity for many Albanian, Arberesh and foreign scholars to discuss current events of Albanian life. The Center also regularly issues a newsletter informing its readers of current religious and cultural matters in Albania and among Albanian communities outside the country. With its manifold activities, this Center has become one of the beacons of Albanian cultural traditions.

Among various meetings recently held at the *Besa-Fede* Center, the internationally renowned Albanian writer Nermin Vlora Falaschi presented a talk entitled "Albanian Humanists: Their Contribution to the Renaissance and to the Poetry of Today." Falaschi spoke at length about the many Albanian humanists who made a notable impact on European culture.

We congratulate and salute our Arberesh brothers for their continued love and dedication to Albania, their country of origin.

A CORRECTION

In the past issue a few errors appeared and we apologize to our readers for them.

On Page 36, first paragraph, line 5, (#4, 1981) should read (#4, 1980).

On Page 39 of the same article, line 3, first paragraph, "the wife of Lenin", should read "the friend of Lenin".

On Page 89, the reprinting of the article on *Albanian Folk Dance* by Jan Price was done without his permission. We could not find his whereabouts at the time of publication and assumed that by giving him proper credit we fulfilled the obligation. However, Mr. Price wrote to us, requesting an apology and statement that he is in no way whatsoever associated with our organization. We hereby apologize to him, assuring him of our good intentions and that he is in no way associated with us.

On Page 99, fourth line, "in 1502", should read "in 1462".

John Paul II's Historic Visit To Sicily

From November 20 to 21, 1982, the Holy Father paid a pastoral visit to Sicily. The Pope's encounter with the Byzantine Italo-Albanian (Arberesh) Eparchy was the highlight of his historical visit to that island of great religious and cultural traditions.

The meeting took place at the church of Martorana, co-cathedral in Palermo for the faithful Arberesh of Eparchy in the Piana degli Albanesi.

At the main square, Pope John Paul II was greeted by the new Arberesh bishop of this Eparchy, Iračli (Ercoli) Lupinacci, and the Archimandrite of the Monastery Grottaferrata (near Rome) Father Paolo Giannini. He was also warmly greeted by the Arberesh priests, deacons, sisters and many others. After an exchange of greetings, the group proceeded to the church of Martorana where the Holy Father prayed silently while the well known Arberesh choir of San Demetrio sang "Ton Despotin" the Byzantine hymn of inauguration. The co-cathedral of Martorana was filled to capacity for the impressive event and thousands more were in Bellini square in front of the church.

During the Holy Father's solemn entrance, thousands of the faithful applauded loudly, shouting in Arberesh and Italian "Roft Papa", "Viva il Papa" (Long live the Pope).

The church of Martorana has hosted in the past many ecumenical gatherings, such as those in which high dignitaries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, of the Church of Greece and of the Church of Crete, worshipped inside of its beautiful walls. But, the Holy Father's visit and the prayer ceremony which followed were the culmination of a formal recognition of the ecumenical spirit and ties that the Eparchy of Piana degli Albanesi has witnessed for decades with Orthodox Churches.

After the welcoming address by Iračli Lupinacci, the bishop of Piana degli Albanesi, Pope John Paul II delivered the following message to the Italo-Albanian Community:

LEVDUAR QOFTE JESU KRISHTI!

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

1. With brotherly affection I address my greeting to Mons. Ercoli Lupinacci, pastor of this Albanese Church of the Byzantine rite in Sicily; to Mons. Giovanni Stamatì Bishop of Lungro; to Father Paolo Giannini, Archimandrite of Grottaferrata. And I heartily greet all of

Qoftë Levduar Jesu Krishti!

you here present, Italo-Albanese brothers and sisters of the Greek rite.

I am very happy to meet you in this co-cathedral church of the Eparchy of Piana of the Albanese on the day when the Church of the Latin rite celebrates the feast of Christ the King, *Pantocrator*, fully aware of your ancient history, which is woven of fidelity to Christ and to the Chair of Peter, and of the ecumenical role that Providence and circumstances, even geographical ones, have called you to fulfil between West and East, in the perspective of the re-establishment of full communion between the Churches.

2. You have been here for more than five centuries. The Roman Pontiffs called your leader Giorgio Kastrioti "Christ's athlete", and rightly so, and they called the Albanian people "bulwark of Christians". The See of Peter the Apostle has always looked upon the land of your ancestors and upon all of you with very special affection. In 1968 my venerated predecessor Paul VI, with the letter *Quinto Revolutio Saeculo*, recalled the noble achievements of your fathers. Exiles, they brought here as a sacred heritage the traditions of their homeland, the Catholic faith professed according to the venerated Byzantine-Constantinopolitan rite, the faithful and constant attachment to the Chair of Peter. A deposit that for them constituted the reason for the forced "exodus" and, for the future, a reason for security.

With their glance turned toward the See of Peter, the vertex of converging unity, on this soil of generous welcome, your ancestors found hospitality among their brethren of the Latin rite and consistently shared the joys and pains, the hopes of daily labour.

The squad of refugees who, sustained by their profound evangelical faith, in a hundred and thirty-four years ago arrived here in Sicily, found not only a stable support for the future of



their families, as a nucleus of the far-off homeland, but also the larger island of *Mare Nostrum* which, because of its natural position, is a centre of communication between West and East, a providential bridge between the banks of different peoples.

3. Dear brothers and sisters, the years 1448, which can be considered the birthday of the Albanese Church of the Byzantine rite in Sicily, which today has its eparchial see in Piana, must be considered also a reference point for the role that Divine Providence has willed to give in the framework of ecumenism.

The Second Vatican Council not only declares that it surrounds with merited esteem and rightful praise the ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage of the Oriental Churches, but also unhesitatingly looks upon it as the heritage of Christ's universal Church" (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, n. 5).

So then, Divine Providence, whose wisdom directs everything for the good of mankind, has made your situation fruitful in promises: your rite, the Albanian language that you still speak and cultivate along with your centuries-old customs, constitute an oasis of genuine Eastern life and spirituality, transplanted into the heart of the West. One can therefore say that you have been invested with a special ecumenical mission.

On the occasion of the fifth centenary of the death of your leader, Giorgio Skanderbeg, my predecessor Paul VI, welcoming you at the tomb of the head of the apostles, greeted you with the hope of being "the path of alliance and collaboration".

The Church expects from you and the Albanese communities, likewise venerated and well-served as the Eparchy of Lungro and the Eparchial Monastery of Grottaferrata, that collaboration for dialogue that may serve to keep lit

Continued on page 6.

Continued from page 5.

and revive the flame of the hoped-for unity between the sister Churches of the East and the West.

Your commitment must be characterized by being the element of ever greater understanding and peace, the reason for the continuity and unity of the whole pilgrim Church. If you are faithful to the authenticity of your oriental spirituality, the yearning for full unity can hasten the time of its achievement according to the prayer of Christ: *Pro eis rogo ut unum sint* ("I pray that they may be one") (cf. Jn 17:20 f.).

From this blessed island, as from the bow of a ship heading into port, I, as the Successor of Peter, the brother of Andrew, who, first among the Apostles to receive the mission of ensuring the "harmony" of the holy Churches of God in fidelity to the divine mandate, welcoming your yearnings along with those of the whole Christian world, address a brotherly greeting of peace and charity to the sister Churches that are in Constantinople and in Greece. They have always seen in this community of yours, in its ritual expressions of faith, an authentic guarantee of

the Gospel.

This must be for everyone a reason for security on a beneficial path toward fullness of unity.

This we ardently hope, in conformity with the demanding call of the Gospel, in expectation of being able to intone the canticle of praise: "Alleluia! The Lord our God, the Almighty, has taken possession of his kingdom. This is the wedding day of the Lamb; his bride has prepared herself for the wedding" (Apoc 19:6-7).

5. Dear brothers and sisters, Christ the Lord, because he has passed from this world to the Father (Jn 13:1), has been your "exodus". He is our "exodus", our "Pasch", "the Way, the Truth, the Life" (Jn 14:6). He is therefore also the "fulfilment". In Christ everything is fulfilled, because he has carried out the perfect exodus for Christians who are "unleavened". And everything must continue to be fulfilled, day by day, in an uninterrupted welcoming of the Spirit, who must transform us into the unity of the Lord's Pasch for all the Churches.

The *Theotokos*, the ever Virgin Mary, the *Odighitria*, whom you call the "Leader", as the

Stella Matutina (Morning Star), first guided your steps in your homeland, and then pointed out to you a new road.

May her motherly intercession, together with that of the Holy Apostles Peter and Andrew, make the sister Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, attain perfect unity, in joy; with a heart full of evangelical hope, let us listen to the words of St. John Chrysostom: "Our hope is the Church, our salvation is the Church, our refuge is the Church" (*Hom. de capto Eutropeo*, 6), and with the same holy doctor, let us repeat: "May the name of the Lord be blessed, now and forever" (from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom): "Emri i t'yne Zotit qofte i bekuar. Amin, Amin."

We Italo-Albanians (*Arberesh*) and Albanians everywhere irrespective of religious beliefs are most grateful to Our Holy Father for such encouraging words of praise for our forefathers and their descendants. Pope John Paul's continued concern for the Albanian people instill in us courage to remain faithful to our national, religious and cultural legacy.



Arberesh Bishops celebrating Mass at St. Peters during the celebration of the Fifth Centenary of the death of G.K. Skanderbeg, Albania's national hero.

He Serves The Cause Of Religious Freedom In Albania



From his native Austria Otto Knösel-Prem for a number of years devoted much time and effort to promote religious freedom for Albania. A truly sincere friend of the Albanian people, Otto has spent time before and during the war traveling across Albania on foot and on horseback and has made many friends among people of all walks of life. Without any doubt, he is one of many foreign friends who today are working to help Albanian people to preserve their faith in God.

Otto has assembled a small exposition of memorabilia acquired during his travels in Albania which he presents to the public at Salzburg, where he is a distinguished businessman. Many objects at the exposition are religious books, articles, photos and rosaries from Albania.

Besides his interest in Albania Otto Knösel is also a benefactor of people in need in Africa and Asia. He has been received in a special audience by the Holy Father.

The Austrian local and national press often features Otto Knösel-Prem and his manifold religious, social and cultural activities. We salute Otto and are grateful for his love and dedication throughout the years to our people.



Fiftieth Anniversary Of Legion Of Mary In San Francisco

1983, declared a special Holy Year by Pope John Paul II to honor the 1950th year since our Redemption by Jesus Christ, also marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment in San Francisco of the Legion of Mary. Since our Center has been located in the San Francisco Bay Area for the past 11 years, we should take notice of the accomplishments of this great Marian organization which strives to bring the message of the gospel to every person and to every sphere of modern life.

Some of the works which the Legion in San Francisco undertakes are: door-to-door visitation of homes, teaching of Catholic doctrine to children and to adult converts, the seeking out of non-practicing Catholics, and the visitation of the sick and elderly. The Legion in San Francisco is only a small part of this organization originally founded in Dublin, Ireland, in 1921 by the late Frank Duff. The Legion today has grown to over 1,000,000 active members in almost every diocese throughout the world. Over 3,000 of its members gave their lives for the faith in China during the early 1950's. The Legion of Mary has been particularly successful in the

Philippines, Africa, and most recently Korea, where the Legion has played a major role in the truly miraculous number of conversions to the Catholic faith (over 100,000 conversions in 1982 alone).

The 50th anniversary of the Legion of Mary in San Francisco gives us an opportunity to consider the situation in Albania where any Marian devotion or expression, public or private, is brutally suppressed. Prior to the abolition of religious organizations in Albania there existed Marian Associations, of both men and women which carried out work not only in the religious field, but also in the cultural, social, and educational fields. Many Albanians participated in large pilgrimages, sponsored by them, to the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Counsel, also called Our Lady of Shkodra, the national patron of Albania. On the eve of the Communist takeover, Archbishop Prezbisi of Durres led the Albanian Bishops and the faithful in a pledge of fidelity to Christ and to the Pope. At the same time he consecrated Albania in the direction of the Madonna.

This gave the Albanian Catholics great courage and enabled them to remain in their faith and their devotion in spite of the barbarous attacks made on the youth of the Marian Associations. On April 25, 1946 a huge barefoot pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Shkodra was organized by the Marian Associations. Over 2,000 people participated in the devoted march to the sanctuary. The police unsuccessfully tried to disperse the pilgrims, and the march remained a living commitment of the Albanian people to their Madonna and the Catholic Church. The Communists could not tolerate such open expression of faith in God and closed the Sanctuary, designating it as a restaurant and dance hall before finally destroying it in 1967.

As we congratulate our brothers and sisters in the Legion of Mary in San Francisco, and assure them of our prayers, we also raise a prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel, the Madonna of Shkodra, that once again the faithful in Albania may publicly raise their voices in song to her, in open expression of their love and devotion to Mary and her Son.

BIBLIOTEKA PUBLIKE
"MARIN BARLETI"
SHKODER (2018)

Albanian Bishops Received By John Paul II

Among the bishops from Yugoslavia who paid their 'ad limina' visit to Rome this year were two Albanians, Archbishop Pjeter Perkolli, who heads the ancient bishopric of Tivar (Bar, Montenegro), and Bishop Nike Prela of Prizren (Kosova).

Archbishop Perkolli was received by the Holy Father on March 14, 1983. He presented to the Pope the needs and achievements which the Archdiocese has encountered and made in the pastoral care of his people. John Paul listened attentively and encouraged the Archbishop in his apostolate among Albanian and other faithful.

Bishop Prela of Prizren was received on March 17, 1983 by the Holy Father, along with Ioakim Herbut, Bishop of Skopje (Macedonia), where a considerable number of Albanian Catholics reside. Since 1970, these two prelates have administered jointly the dioceses of Skopje and Prizren. The Pope rejoiced, especially when he was apprised of the increased number of vocations among Albanian Catholics. He was also pleased to hear of intensive pastoral activity and expressed appreciation for the fidelity that Albanian Catholics have nurtured for centuries towards the Holy See.

On this occasion, Bishop Prela presented to



Pope John Paul II a list of 140 Albanian nuns who continually pray for the intentions of the Holy Father and for religious freedom in Albania. The Pope was deeply touched by this filial devotion and told Bishops Prela and Herbut that he, "too, prays everyday for Albania."

After the audience with the Holy Father, Archbishop Perkolli and Bishops Prela and Herbut were also received by the Most Reverend Achille Silvestrini, Secretary for Church Af-

fairs. The Archdiocese of Tivar (Bar) and the dioceses of Skopje and Prizren, are, as many realize, under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. A few years ago the Prefect of this Congregation, Agnello Cardinal Rossi, paid a pastoral visit to these dioceses. However, the bishops of the above-mentioned dioceses partake regularly in the pastoral work and meetings of the Bishop's Conference of Yugoslavia.

Albanian Activist Duro Cini Honored By Canadian Leaders

In Toronto, on September 28, 1982, at a special dinner, Albanian activist Duro Cini was honored by Canadian civic leaders and Albanian religious and political representatives in exile, for his dedicated work on behalf of the Albanian people.

Mr. Duro Cini, from the day he came to Canada, for years has labored tirelessly to inform the Canadian people about the tragic plight of Albanians under Communist and Yugoslav yoke. Mr. Cini with his broad activity and political and cultural involvement to spread the truth about Albanians, has made many friends in all walks of life. Proof of this was shown in the dinner celebration attended by a great number of

distinguished members of the Canadian Parliament, the Press, business and religious communities.

The remarks of the Honorable Yure Shymko, member of the Ontario Legislature, about Duro Cini serve as a fitting tribute to Mr. Cini who honors its origin:

"I have grown to love the people of Albania because, as the previous speaker had indicated in his introduction, I was fortunate and privileged to meet more than ten years ago in Canada a very special human being, a great man and a proud Albanian named Duro Cini. He is a man whose greatness is measured, not by titles, nor

material wealth, but only by his love, his dedication and his sacrifices for his beloved native land and people.

He is an Albanian patriot who has dedicated his entire life to such a missionary cause of liberty and justice for his suffering Albanian nation, being always and everywhere every available means and opportunity at his disposal.

"He has earned the respect of politicians at every level of government in Canada. I would like at this moment to express my personal gratitude to him and give credit to Mr. Duro Cini for the inspiration I have received in my love for Albania."

Italian News Reports Top Albanian Leaders Executed

According to news reports of October 31 on Italian radio, Albania has executed nine top leaders who fell into disgrace after the "suicide" (murder) of former Premier Mehmet Shehu in December of 1981. The news was leaked through diplomatic sources and confirmed by several refugees who recently reached Greece and Italy, fleeing in horror from Albania. The executions took place on September 18th of this year.

The refugees' reports indicate that the executed leaders were tortured by their comrades to make them confess that they had been working to overthrow the Hoxha regime. Hoxha himself, during the past year, publicly accused the dis-

graced leaders of being in the service of the United States, the Soviet Union, and particularly Yugoslavia.

The executed are: Kadri Hazbiu, former Defense Secretary; Fejor Shehu, former Interior Secretary and Head of Security Police; Nete Nasse, former Secretary of Foreign Affairs; Fiqre Shehu, all-powerful wife of the former Premier Mehmet Shehu and Director of the Albanian Institute on Marxism-Leninism; Rapo Dervishi, former Secretary of Public Works; Viktor Nushi, former Secretary of Commerce; General Vasil Plaku, former Chief of Staff of the Albanian Army; Hamdi Ramadani, former Executive Secretary of the District of Durrës; and the former Executive Secretary of the District of Vlora (name unknown).

For nearly forty years, Hoxha has excelled in keeping secret any internal turmoil or purges. However, he has not been able to cover up this recent bloody purge of Albania's top leaders.

These recent executions, in combination with Hoxha's deteriorating health, make it apparent that some changes will occur soon. We only hope that the new developments will be to the benefit of the Albanian people.

Ex-Yugoslav Police Chief Dies

Alexander Ranković, the most feared and hated Communist Yugoslav leader, died recently in Yugoslavia. For over two decades he wielded absolute power as chief of the dreaded Yugoslav State Security Police (UDB-a). The brutal force and terror that Ranković instituted made him the chief butcher of tens of thousands of innocent non-communist and non-Serbian people. His vicious, bloodthirsty methods were often shocking even to Tito and his close advisors.

The news of Ranković's death would not merit mentioning if it were not for his many crimes. He was the mastermind of Yugoslav genocide against Albanian and Croatian people. As Christians, we do not pass judgement on Ranković, but the fact remains that his cruel deeds stain the history of the 20th century. Albanians in particular will remember with fear and trembling his inhumane and despicable crimes against them.



1983 Declared A Holy Year

This past March 25, on the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord, Pope John Paul II officiated in a ceremony not very often witnessed. He opened the great passageway in St. Peter's Basilica, the *Holy Door*. The door gives pilgrims a special entrance to this most sacred place, and it is opened only during the Holy Year.

1983-1984 is a special Holy Year of Jubilee, the 1,950th anniversary of the year of the Redemption — when Christ died on the cross for all mankind. The Holy Year is customarily marked by special prayer and pilgrimages.

Jesus' death on the cross was a fact which the apostles found difficult to understand. It is also difficult for modern-day people to appreciate what happened on that first Good Friday. The events of that day fit no pattern, offer no reasonable explanation, and make no sense, unless seen in the loving act of God-made-man.

St. Paul writes in his first epistle to the Corinthians: "For us, we proclaim Christ on the cross, a message that is offensive to the Jews and foolish to the Gentiles; but for those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, this message is Christ, who is the power of God and the Wisdom of God."

It is only fitting that during this Holy Year we reflect upon the significance of the Redemption which Christ won for us on the Cross.

1983 ANNUS SANCTUS REDEMPTIONIS

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"MARIN BARLETI"
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John Paul II Asks Faithful To Pray For Religious Freedom In Albania

As his Mission Intention for the entire month of November, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II has appointed the theme, "Religious Freedom in Albania". The Holy Father has asked that prayers be raised to God by the millions of believers throughout the world so that the suffering of the faithful in Albania may have an end and that the Church may be born again. He also wants to draw the attention of Catholics to the needs of their brethren who have for four decades experienced many hardships and known the blood of martyrdom as the price for refusing to deny their faith in God. The importance that the Holy Father attaches to this "Apostolate of Prayer" is certainly a further sign of his great concern regarding the plight of the Albanian people. In response to his requests our Center will sponsor a special prayer service in

November for the intention of religious freedom in Albania.

Responding to the Holy Father's request of prayers for Albania, the monthly leaflet of the Apostleship of Prayer for November '83 reminds the faithful of the plight of Albanian believers. Thousands of copies of the leaflet are distributed to many parishes around the country. Below is the text of the November leaflet on Albania.

Religious Freedom in Albania

Martyrdom is a great test; in a way it is the final and complete test. . . . I cannot but turn my eyes across the sea to the not distant heroic Church in Albania, upset by harsh and prolonged persecution but enriched with the testimony of its martyrs: bishops, priests, men and women

religious and simple faithful.

The attempt is very often made to describe martyrs as "guilty of political crimes". Christ, too, was condemned to death apparently for this reason. . . . Let us not forget, therefore, the martyrs of our times. Let us not behave as if they did not exist. . . . Let us implore the power of the Holy Spirit for the persecuted who still have to pit themselves against this test.

— John Paul II

Address in Otranto, Italy (October 5, 1980)
Albanian Catholics have faced continuous persecution since 1944. At least 137 priests and religious have died for their faith.

Scripture passages for reflection:

Matt. 5:10-12; Lk. 12:4-12; 21:12-19.

Communion of saints:

For this intention we can ask the intercession of two Albanian saints: the scripture scholar Saint Jerome and Saint Nicetas, who wrote the *Te Deum*.

Lech Walesa Receives Nobel Peace Prize

On Wednesday, October 5, the Nobel Commission in Oslo awarded to Lech Walesa, Polish Solidarity leader, the Nobel Peace Prize for 1983. The most prestigious international award for peace went to the forty year old electrician from Gdansk for his leadership of the only independent union in the Communist bloc.

Established in 1980, after a long and determined struggle by the Polish workers and farmers, Solidarity was outlawed October 8 of last year. Its leaders, many members and sympathizers were imprisoned, among them, Walesa.

The Nobel Commission said the award went to Walesa because he had fought peacefully for the "unconquered longing" of all people for freedom and peace.

"I am very happy. The whole working people in the world are honored," Walesa declared upon receiving the news of the award.

The reaction of the Polish government at this happy event was negative. Polish officials called the prize "an instrument in the anti-Polish and anti-socialist game."

The Soviet government paper *Izvestia* described Lech Walesa in an editorial as a "low-grade hustler."

Our Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. The Albanian government controlled news media never made mention of this high honor awarded to the Albanian nun.



John Paul II Invited To Soviet Union

On April 22, 1983, Pope John Paul II received four Lithuanian bishops who were in Rome for the canonical visit "ad limina". It was the first time in a period of 45 years that Lithuanian bishops were able to travel to Rome and visit with the Pope. In ordinary circumstances, as is known, bishops around the world make their "ad limina" journey to Rome each five years to visit St. Peter's and St. Paul's graves and to also meet with the Pope.

Lithuania, a Baltic country, predominately Catholic, has been forcefully incorporated into the Soviet Union since WWII.

In His address to the Lithuanian bishops, the Holy Father expressed solidarity with the Lithuanian Church. He particularly praised the vitality and spiritual strength of the Church and the Lithuanian believers in spite of many difficulties and hardships they are subject to. Pope John Paul II stressed the need for religious freedom and emphasized the obligation of civil authorities to respect the basic rights of their citizens.

During the meeting, the Lithuanian Bishops formally invited the Holy Father to visit Lithuania next year when they will solemnly celebrate the 500th anniversary to the death of St. Kasimirus (Casmir).



During the Holy Father's visit to Spain, a private audience was granted to the former Albanian Queen Geraldine. The meeting took place on November 2, 1982 during which a cordial exchange of views was centered around Albania, Poland and Hungary. The main topic of discussion was religious freedom in Albania. The Holy Father expressed his deep love and compassion to his suffering flock and all believers in Albania.

Albanian Artist Succeeds In Daring Escape From Albania

Only a few months after completing a ten years prison term, Qamil Haidini, an Albanian writer and poet, escaped from Albania to Greece in early spring of 1983. Despite the threat of almost certain death if he failed in his escape attempt, Haidini's determination and thirst for freedom drew him to achieve his goal.

At a press conference held in Athens on April 23, with Greek and foreign journalists in attendance, the Albanian writer described Hoxha's communist system as being "most brutal." Haidini particularly stressed the terrible and unbearable situation of the imprisoned and deported people in the prisons and concentration camps throughout his native land. He described in detail the tragic fate and harsh conditions under which the political and religious prisoners are kept. Such prisoners are kept in camps euphemistically called by the Albanian government, "re-education camps."

Haidini emphasized that the present regime stands not because the people support it but only because of the brutal force and repression inflicted by the Albanian Party of Labor against the people of Albania. He stated, however, that the power of the great tyrant, Enver Hoxha, is failing day by day. As a proof of this Haidini referred to Hoxha's paranoid behavior during the past two years.

Throughout his ten years of imprisonment Haidini suffered greatly. His daily food ration amounted to 600 grams of bread along with some thin soup. When put out on forced labor, he spent most of his time handcuffed in a dark, narrow cell, with his feet bound.

It is reported that Haidini's poetry reflects his criticism of Hoxha's regime. We hope to soon be able to present to our readers some excerpts of Haidini's poetry work.

lav federation. Given the geographical position of the areas where Albanians live in Yugoslavia, it is feared that the Kosova problem could very well develop into a complex and highly undesirable situation of European proportions.

The new volume will be published under the auspices of the Center for Eastern European Studies, University of Colorado, and distributed through Columbia University Press of New York.

"Studies On Kosova" To Be Published Soon

A collection of essays on the various aspects of the Kosova problem will be published by the end of this year. This was announced by the editors, Professor Arshi Pipa, of the University of Minnesota and Dr. Sami Repishti, of Adelphi University. The volume contains the studies of twenty American and European scholars. Most of these papers were read in a summarized form at the International Conference on Kosova, held on November 6, 1982 at the Auditorium of the Graduate Center of the New York City University. Several contributions are invited articles.

It is hoped that the new volume, the first of this kind on Kosova, will shed light on the past and present of the Albanian population presently living in Yugoslavia, as well as open new perspectives to badly needed approaches to the problem of Kosova in the future. It is also the editors' hope that this scholarly approach will encourage a meaningful dialogue between the Yugoslav ruling class and the ruled masses of Albanians living in Yugoslavia, thus avoiding future bloody confrontations as the Spring 1981 riots which shook the foundations of the Yug-

Albanians Demonstrate For Their Rights In Geneva

On December 10, 1982, a demonstration was held at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva (see picture). The occasion was the International Day of Human Rights. Delegations from many European countries were present. Among them were some 2,000 Albanian nationals from Yugoslavia, who are guestworkers in several western European countries. The Albanians were there to protest Yugoslavia's oppressive measures towards the two million Albanians under Yugoslav jurisdiction.

Representatives of the Albanian delegation



met with M. Jacob Moller, assistant director of the U.N. Office of Human Rights in Geneva, and presented him with a document which summarized the violations of human rights in Kosova. In the document they called for the

freeing of all Albanian political prisoners in Yugoslavia, of which there are over 14,000.

The Albanian demonstrators were dressed in national costumes but wore masks for fear of being photographed by Yugoslav secret police.

Yugoslav Government — Stop Persecuting Innocent Albanians

Since 1945, when the Soviet Armies invaded Eastern Europe, the Yugoslav communist brigades of Marshal Tito have forcefully annexed half of Albania's territories — better known as KOSOVA.

Since 1945, the Yugoslav authorities have pursued a policy of oppression, persecution, discrimination and neglect against Albanians in Yugoslavia.

Since 1945, more than 60,000 Albanians have been killed and summarily executed by the communist government of Yugoslavia.

Since 1945, more than two million Albanians living in Yugoslavia are fighting against all odds, and against the immoral silence of the world towards the Albanians killed and persecuted in communist Yugoslavia.

Today, we are here to remember them and appeal to all men and women of good will for help, by joining us in denouncing the Yugoslav government crimes against the innocent Albanians.

Please, speak out, call or write to your neighbor, to your friends, to your representative and request to stop the persecution of innocent Albanians in Yugoslavia.

New York City
July 10, 1983

THE ALBANIAN KOSOVAR YOUTH
IN THE FREE WORLD
439 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036

Albania Heads List Of Countries Violating Human Rights

Religious rights are being violated in 25 countries. According to an article appearing in the *Oakland Tribune*, Saturday April 16, 1983, Albania heads the list of the 13 "worst cases" — nations where "citizens are severely curtailed in their capacities to be faithful to their religion." The writer, George V. Cornell of Associated Press, reports that suppression of religion in some countries has intensified. Among them, in addition to Albania, are North Korea, Iran, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan.

Celebration To Be Held For Fortieth Anniversary Of The Persecution

On November 7, an ecumenical meeting took place at our Center to pray for religious freedom in Albania. This was in response to the Holy Father's request to pray for persecuted believers in Albania during the month of November. The gathering afforded us the opportunity to discuss our future activities. This included planning for our 1985 Peace Mass celebration to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the persecution of the Catholic Church in Albania.

The meeting concluded with an evening Mass offered for the Holy Father's intention for religious freedom in Albania. Celebrant was Father James Torrens, S.J., our long time supporter. The Mass was attended also by students, some of whom heard for the first time about religious oppression. They were saddened to learn of atrocities perpetrated against the clergy and believers in Albania.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE PLIGHT OF BELIEVERS IN ALBANIA

For the past decade, the plight of Albanian believers persevering in their just cause for religious freedom has been slowly gaining public attention and support. In many prayer groups around the world, particularly in Europe, concerned people, not only pray for their brothers and sisters in Albania, but by becoming more aware about their plight, are asking their respective religious and civic leaders to speak and act on behalf of persecuted Albanians. After the appeals for religious freedom in Albania issued by Boston's Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, and the late Orthodox Bishop (of the Albanian Archdiocese) Mark Lipa, and after repeated pleas of our Holy Father, other leaders and institutions began to raise their voices. We single out two recent strong pronouncements against the violation of religious rights in Albania. The first is from the Danish European Mission. After months of tireless work gathering evidence, the Mission presented a Paper to the Danish Foreign Ministry, on June 17, 1982, requesting intervention at the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Eight months later, the Foreign Ministry of Denmark officially appealed to the U.N. Human Rights Commission during its 39th meeting on March 11, 1983, and urged respect of the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief. As far as we know, this is the first time in the history of the U.N. that Albania's government has been singled out for violations of its citizens' rights.

Enver Hoxha, mastermind of religious persecution in Albania, has often in his speeches praised Denmark as a sincere friend. Thus, the Danish government, by this noble act, has publicly shown its high regard for the safeguard of human rights everywhere, even in Albania. Albanians at home and in exile, highly welcome and are thankful for this bold step. We are grateful to the Danish European Mission, and to Mission Possible U.S.A. May other Christian and Humanitarian organizations follow in the steps of these two in promoting religious freedom of the Albanian believers. Below, is an excerpt of the Danish Government's motion:

UN-mission

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

119.B.11

March 11, 1983

No. 129

The 39. meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Statement by the Delegation of Denmark on March 7, 1983 on agenda item 25. Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.

(An excerpt)

Mr. Chairman,

It took this Commission 20 years to draft and finally adopt the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.

The Declaration brings together and enlarges upon the principles of religious freedom recognized by United Nations Human Rights instruments. It asserts the individual, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to manifest religion or belief without coercion. It deals with the elimination of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and protects the rights of parents and children with regard to religion, family life and education. It also contains important provisions regarding the practice of religion or belief including the right to worship and assembly, freedom to publish and to teach religion or belief and to train and elect leaders.

Mr. Chairman,

What has been the impact of the adoption of the declaration on the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief?

If one looks at the number of conflicts around the World that involve religion and at the extent of religious persecution of individuals and groups taking place in many countries under different pretexts and in more or less sophisticated disguises we are afraid that the conclusion will be that the impact of the adoption of the Declaration, if there is any at all, is hardly to be perceived.

The principles of religious freedom is expressed in the constitution of almost every sovereign state. There are, however, examples of constitutions which not only lack provisions safeguarding the principle of religious practice. Pursuant to art. 55 of the Albanian constitution formation of organization of religious character is thus prohibited.

Mr. Chairman,

It is necessary that further steps are taken to encourage understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to religion or belief and a seminar to that effect to be held within the framework of the Advisory Services Programme can only be recommended.

Measures for giving effect to the declaration are also a necessity. We are not at this stage able to judge what measures will be the most effective for that purpose. We therefore hope that the report of the Secretary General to be presented to this Commission at its fortieth session in accordance with the resolution contained in document E/CN.4/1983/L.68 will contain suggestions to be taken to complement the declaration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The second pronouncement came in the form of a "Resolution on Denial of Religious Liberty in Albania". This resolution was adopted by the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, U.S.A. at their spring meeting held in San Francisco on May 12, 1983. Our Center's representative, Dr. Palok Plaku, attended the afternoon session during which religious persecution in Albania was discussed and at which the resolution was unanimously adopted. Since the resolution was introduced by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, we were somewhat hesitant to attend, and skeptical about the true motives behind it, being aware of the past record of blatant chauvinism displayed by the Orthodox Bishops of Greece. As is known, in their 1981 resolution calling for restoration of religious liberty in Albania, the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece grossly erred about the number of the Greek national minority in Albania. They claimed 400,000 Albanian Orthodox faithful to be Greeks. In fact the true number of the Greek minority in Albania, according to all encyclopedias and statistical sources, from the London Conference of 1913 up to present is only 35,000 to 40,000. By this misleading statement the Greek Hierarchy has tried in fact to resurrect an outmoded Greek chauvinism by referring to Orthodox Albanians as Greek Orthodox. This lack of recognition for Albania's national identity and homogenous culture has provoked the deep indignation of Albanian peoples of all faiths. Also, it has given to Enver Hoxha a powerful argument to justify his brutal drive against religion. It is sad, indeed, that a church body with a long religious tradition would involve itself in political deviousness to serve the cause of extreme Greek chauvinism from which even the Greek government had disassociated itself.

We were happily surprised, however, that neither during the discussions, nor in the Resolution itself, was there any mention whatsoever about Greek minority. The representative of the Orthodox Archdiocese, in a very eloquent and convincing manner, spoke about the plight of all Albanian believers, stressing explicitly "Christians and Muslims." It can only be hoped that the Greek Orthodox Hierarchy in Athens will learn to act with similar wisdom.

Albanians are thankful to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. for this encouraging statement. Below is the text of the entire resolution:

RESOLUTION ON DENIAL OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN ALBANIA

Adopted by the Governing Board
May 12, 1983

The oppression of people for their beliefs anywhere is a threat to the human race everywhere. Officially and in practice the government of Albania has attempted to exterminate religious practice and institutions for the past three decades. It proclaims itself "the first atheist country in the world" and its 1976 Constitution (Article 37) says: "The State does not recognize any religion at all and supports and develops atheistic propaganda in order to implant in mankind the scientific-materialist worldview." Reliable reports indicate that ruthless repression of all religious practice in Albania continues to this day.

We believe it is important to call the continuing religious repression and persecution in Albania to the attention of the world community of nations and to raise our voice on behalf of the voiceless in Albania who are prevented from the exercise of any religious freedom.

International and ecumenical organizations have repeatedly stressed the importance of religious freedom.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."
- The Helsinki Final Act affirms "The participating states will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief . . ."
- The World Council of Churches, in its 1948 Amsterdam Assembly, stated: "Every person has the right to express his religious beliefs in worship, teaching and practice . . ."
- The 1982 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief strongly reaffirms the freedom of religion.

Therefore, the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. resolves:

1. We call upon the leaders of the People's Republic of Albania to recognize the right of its people to religious belief and practice. We respect Albania's national independence, development and unity, and see the respect for religious freedom, as urged by the United Nations, as a potential major contribution to the development and welfare of Albania's peoples. We especially urge a prompt end to the imprisonment and harassment of persons due to their religious beliefs. We request to enter into dialogue regarding the present religious situation in Albania.
2. We call upon the leaders of world nations, and most especially the United Nations and United States government leaders to urge the government of the People's Republic of Albania to guarantee its citizens the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms widely recognized by the human community, including the free exercise of religion.
3. We urge member denominations of the NCCCUSA to remember in prayer the Christians and Muslims and all other citizens of Albania espousing a religious belief who are suffering for their religious convictions, and to pray for a return of religious freedom in Albania. We urge also a greater awareness of the Albanian people's long and heroic struggle for survival and human dignity, of the Albanian's religious traditions and the current denial of religious liberty. In addition, we would uphold Albanian-Americans, many of whose family members and friends are victims of current repressive policies in Albania.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE RESOLUTION ON THE DENIAL OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN ALBANIA

The modern history of the growing repression in Albania began with the arrival at political power of Enver Hoxha and the establishment of a Communist government, in November, 1944, when persecution of religious communities began. Hoxha still leads the Albanian government today. According to pre-World War II figures about 70% of the population was Muslim, 20% Orthodox and 10% Roman Catholic.

Formally, the Constitution of 1946 did provide guarantees for the exercise of religion. Article 15 stated: "All citizens are equal, no matter to which nationality, race or religion they belong." Article 18 states: "All citizens are guaranteed freedom of opinion and belief. The Church is separated from the State. All religious communities are free in matters concerned with their faith as well as in its practice and outward expression." Despite these provisions, however, in practice there was a growing restriction of religious communities. A general Decree "On Religious Communities" dated January 26, 1949 included this provision: "The activity of religious associations and organizations must take place on a national basis, in that it should serve the interests of the people and the State, and their officials must be loyal to the people and the State."

Various restrictions on religious practice developed, culminating in 1967 when on November 13, 1967 all Decrees on Religion were abolished. The Albanian press proclaimed Albania as the "first atheist country" in the world. The Albania 1976 Constitution stated in Article 37:

The State does not recognize any religion at all and supports and develops atheistic propaganda in order to implant in mankind the scientific-materialistic worldview.

Article 55 reads:

The formation of any organization of a fascist, anti-democratic, religious or anti-socialist nature is forbidden. Fascist, religious, warmongerish, anti-socialist activity and propaganda are forbidden, as is the incitement to hatred between peoples and races.

Religious practice in Albania has been virtually eliminated, often by violent means. Foreign priests have been expelled from the country. Priests have been executed or sentenced to long prison terms. The Jesuit Order was banned. In February 1974 a priest was executed for baptizing the child of a woman fellow-prisoner in a labor camp. The repression has been systematic, directed at all the religious groups.

Reports on current conditions in Albania are sparse, but everything indicates conditions are not improving at all. More detailed historical information and analysis is available in various books and articles such as the following:

The Fulfilled Promise, a documentary account of religious persecution in Albania, by Gjon Sinitia, H & F Printing, Santa Clara, CA 1976.

Albanian Catholic Bulletin, 1980, 1981, 1982, P.O. Box 1217, Santa Clara, CA 95053.

"Albania—Towards an Atheist Society" by Peter Prifti, in *Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe*, edited by Bohdan R. Bociurkiew and John W. Strong, University of Toronto Press, pp. 380-404.

"Church and State in Albania" by Stephen R. Bowers, in *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 6, No. 3, 1978, pp. 147-152.

"Albania: The World's First Atheist State" by Janice A. Brown, in *The Christian Century*, March 18, 1981, pp. 303-307.

"Religious Persecution in Albania," by Bernard Tönnies, in *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 10, No. 3, 1982.

Albania is a member state in the United Nations. It did not sign the Helsinki Final Act.

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR MARTYRDOM

There are many Albanian believers, bishops, priests, religious men and women who have died for their faith and merit the holy name of martyr. Their number may never be known but to God. However, about some of these saintly people much has been written by witnesses to their suffering and sacrifices.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the heroic deaths of Bishops FRAN GJINI and GJERGJ VOLAJ, Msgr. NIKOLL DEDA, Fathers ANTON MUZAJ, NIKOLL LASKA, ALEXANDER SIRDANI, NIKOLL MALAJ, PASHKO BARDHI, CYPRIAN NIKA, NIKOLL SHELQETI, PJETER CUNI.

We remember them with great sorrow and pride and, as they did at the end of their Calvary, we too pray for forgiveness of those who made them suffer and die.

“Mother, Do Not Weep For What You See Now. Weep For What Is To Come.” A Testimony Of Bishop George Volaj of Sappa — His Sufferings And Death” by Anton Gaspri



The appointment of Rev. George Volaj as the Bishop of Sappa in northern Albania on June 26, 1940, was not a great surprise for the Albanian Catholics. The Holy See certainly could not have chosen a better clergyman and one more beloved by his flock than George Volaj.

Bishop Volaj was born on September 21, 1904, in the peaceful and beautiful Albanian fisherman's village of Shiroka near Shkodra. From his childhood he listened to the voice of God, and in 1916 he entered the Albanian Pontifical Seminary in Shkodra where his vocation for the priesthood matured. In the seminary he studied philosophy and other humanities, and in October of 1926 he enrolled at the well-known School of Theology in Padua, Italy. Four years later, on June 28, 1930, he was ordained by His Excellency, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Shkodra, Luzer Mjeda.

Rev. Volaj, from the first days of his seminary life, distinguished himself as a diligent, able, and humble young man. For several years, he was a prefect in the Pontifical Seminary of Shkodra, and in Padua's School of Theology he soon became very respected by his superiors and his classmates. Although he was a foreigner, the superiors of the School of Theology appointed him as Prefect of the Minor Seminary in Thiene, Italy.

Cardinal Dulla Costa (at that time Bishop of Padua) and Archbishop Della Pietra (then apostolic delegate in Albania) both praised Rev. Volaj's exemplary conduct.

Prior to his appointment as a bishop, Volaj engaged in apostolic activities for four years in the parish of Jushi and six years in the vast mountainous parish of Shkrelli. The faithful of these two parishes, as much as they rejoiced in Volaj's appointment, also felt the loss of their beloved pastor.

Bishop Volaj, only thirty-six years old at the time of his appointment, was the youngest bishop in the world. Less than eight years later, at the age of forty-three, he became the youngest bishop to be executed.

When the Communist forces took over Albania in November 1944, Bishop Volaj and some of the priests of his diocese were maltreated and slandered by the security forces of the new government. As a well-known preacher and orator, Bishop Volaj was considered by the new regime to be a great danger to their new order. Actually, in his pastoral letters and sermons, Bishop Volaj never attacked or criticized any specific persons or governments, but he did speak out against the lack of freedom to exercise fundamental human rights. In a dignified

manner, he defended the teaching of the Christian faith and the right of the Albanian people to live free.

Unable to answer his charges, incompetent to challenge him in a democratic fashion, and incapable of tolerating his courage and openness, the new government tried to silence Volaj by prohibiting him from participating in all religious activities and keeping him temporarily under house arrest. But these measures failed to put an end to Bishop Volaj's apostolic work. One of his last public appearances was on April 25, 1946, at the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Shkodra where he concelebrated the Mass with two other bishops and gave a sermon before two thousand pilgrims.

Bishop Volaj on this occasion called for an apology to Christianity, the Albanian Catholics, and Albania in general. In his sermon he denounced the new regime's slanders against the Albanian Catholic Church and its clergy. He asked that the new government stop its campaign of intimidation and its terrorizing and killing of innocent victims. In his skillfully delivered sermon, Bishop Volaj vowed that he and the Catholics of Albania would stand firmly devoted to the Madonna of Shkodra and to Christian teaching, no matter what they would encounter. He invited all those present to be messengers in their towns and villages of this commitment of the Albanian people to their Madonna and to the Catholic Church.

Bishop Volaj was arrested in January, 1948, only a month after the arrest of Bishop Franco Gjini, the Substitute Delegate of the Vatican in Albania. After a horrible period of torture and humiliation lasting nearly a month, Bishop Volaj was shot without a trial on the morning of February 3, 1948.

The day before his death his mother was allowed to see him, although neither was aware of the impending execution. As any mother would, she wept to see the terrible spectacle of her tortured son. Bishop Volaj's heart was touched by her tears, but with dignity he said, "Mother, do not weep for what you see now. If you want to weep, weep for what is to come."

At the time of his execution, Bishop Volaj was only forty-three years old. His last words spoken to his executioners were not of hatred or vengeance but of forgiveness and love. He is honored by the Albanian Catholics as a spiritual leader and martyr. In his words and deeds until his death, he showed not only the Christians but also the Moslem people of Albania the way of honor and courage.

"Bishop Frano Gjini — Dignified Defender Of His Flock" by Jeh Vala



The death in 1917 of the Abbot of Mirdita (a completely Catholic region in Northern Albania) was a loss which was greatly felt. Abbot Prenk Doçi was an undisputed messenger of the cultural and religious renewal and a liberator of Albania from the yoke of Turkish rule. He was the head of the Literary Society Bashkimi (The Union) of Shkoda and above all, the spiritual leader of Catholics in Albania. His death left vacant the seat of the Abbey Nullius of St. Alexander of Oroschi in Mirdita until 1921. That vacancy was deeply felt by staunch Catholic mountain dwellers. Deprived of such a spiritual leader, (the traditional political leader Prenk Bibë Doda was killed in 1919), the Mirdita region witnessed a leaderless period of injustice, deprivation and starvation. This culminated in 1921 in warfare which brought additional misery to the region.

Bishop Frano Gjini came to fill this vacancy at a time when it was thought that no one would dare go there. Even Jesuit missionaries rarely appeared in this region. But he did dare to go — and what a welcome he received!

On an overcast October afternoon in 1929, a joyful noise resounded from the bells of the tallest church steeple in Albania, from the discharging of all types of private guns, from the barking of sheep dogs and house dogs, and from the juniper and pine branches on the mountain passes and on the bare slopes and hilltops. These they burned so that the flames might go high in the sky and be seen by far-away villagers. This continued late into the night. Such was the sincere outburst of joy among these poor, humble, illiterate, yet proud people on the happy occasion of the arrival of the new Abbot.

The next day, as the people gathered for the Abbot's first Sunday Mass, it is said that his hands were continually moistened with tears from those who were reverently kissing his ring. He was urging the people to restrain themselves and to realize that he was just a servant of Christ and of the poor; but joy and tradition prevailed over his pleas and tears. Because of this modesty, some people were hastily saying that he was not as strong as they would have liked the Abbot to be.

The tall, straight, dignified man with a reddish, serious, almost stern looking face and with a trembling musical voice, graciously knelt before the crucifix. He then faced the hungry, staring crowd of the faithful with sparkling eyes radiating love and hope for all. As he preached during the holy Mass about the suffering of Jesus Christ to save poor people like

those present, it seemed that everyone began to realize that Gjini had so many good qualities of which they were not previously aware.

There was no doubt that Bishop Gjini influenced the mountain dwellers in many ways. He was instrumental in curbing some of their rough traditions. He soothed their distressed hearts and helped them to face the realities of their hard life. He counselled them to work hard and to better themselves through education.

Unfortunately, the people were poor and remained so until the advent of Communism, which promised them a heaven on earth.

When the Communists took over Albania in 1944-45, the region of Mirdita clashed in bitter bloodshed with their forces. The Seat of the Apostolic Delegate in Albania was vacant at that time because Bishop Leone De Nigris was ousted in 1945 by the new communist government. Gjini was called upon by the Catholic Bishops of Albania to take the place of Bishop De Nigris. The Vatican officially confirmed Gjini's appointment as a Substitute Delegate.

When he left Mirdita in 1945 for his new position in Shkodra, there was again the discharging of guns and again tears, but there was no joy and only desperate hopes.

The region of Mirdita, from the beginning, took arms against the communist forces and caused them heavy losses. Such resistance was a great blow to communist morale and worked against their propaganda. As Abbot of this resisting region, and furthermore as the Substitute Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Gjini was considered an instigator of the turmoil.

He was summoned by Enver Hoxha, the boss of the Communist Party in Tirana, and asked to use the influence of his office and personality to sway the Catholic clergy and people of the northern regions of Albania over to the communist side, cutting off their ties with the Vatican. Bishop Gjini rejected the accusations against himself and refused to betray his clerical brothers and the Catholic Church. After this confrontation, an eagerness to stand firm in defense of the ideals of Catholicism grew in Bishop Gjini. The best path he could choose was to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, which he did with serenity and eloquence. Gjini knew that he was sacrificing himself not for the sake of being remembered as a martyr of faith, as much as to keep alive that faith in the hearts and minds of his people.

The time of his martyrdom came very soon. The new regime arrested Gjini immediately after his letter denouncing the government's slanderous campaign and persecution of the Catholic Church was made public. Police persecutors tied up his head and mouth with electrical cords, tormented him with electrical shocks, lacerated and salted his body, and drove splinters of wood under his finger and toe nails. Finally, an execution squadron ended the Bishop's life in a muddy ditch in the vineyard plantation of Bardhaj (near Shkodra). He was executed along with 18 other clergy and laymen on the morning of March 8, 1948.

Perhaps the only witness of their execution was Bishop Gjini's sister, Tina Gjini. She secretly followed the footsteps of her brother's Calvary. Noticed and recognized by the squad, Tina was captured and dragged back to Shkodra and thrown into the same prison cell her brother had occupied. Since then her fate remains unknown.

The sacrifice of Bishop Gjini inspired the mountain dwellers of the Mirdita region to purify themselves by giving up their somewhat paganistic customs in favor of a stronger Christian faith. While such people were being killed and religious institutions were being destroyed by the Communists, the ideals which these people and institutions represented were being kept alive in the hearts of the Albanian Catholics.

"...The Suffering, My Son, Makes The Victory More Noble" — Remembering Father Cyprian Nika, O.F.M." by Ilir Ball



Father Cyprian Nika, O.F.M.

The provincial of the Albanian Franciscans in Shkodra, Father Cyprian Nika, was arrested in October 1946 on the absurd accusation of hiding arms in the convent. This event was planned by the Albanian Security in Shkodra and was publicized as a comedy through the news media by the Albanian Communists and filmed by the Yugoslavs in 1947. This comedy became a great tragedy, costing the lives of many Franciscan priests. Father Nika was executed in March 1948. It happened that for a long period of time I shared the prison cell with him. I well remember those days.

In the half-darkness of the tiny cell assigned to us, my companion, the silent friar, is kneeling with his hands crossed over his breast and his head bowed, his eyes half-closed and his lips barely moving (in prayer). This is our temporary lodging, because we are awaiting the end — the same end as our companions around us. I was watching in Father Nika's face that unlimited magnitude that humility gives only to devout people, that quietness that wells up only from the soul of an unpretentious man, that grace that floods only from those whose ideas are selfless, and the energy which springs from a deep sense of mission. I observe the friar who for many days has eased my suffering with the breath of hope and is filling me with the spirit of resistance. There are moments when Father is entirely alone, because what he is experiencing are exactly those moments of devotion when soul and consciousness surrender without condition at the altar of the creator, with the statement of meekness and the intensity of the prayer for forgiveness: "My Father, help me to be worthy of your grace and love."

Such moments of prayer are interrupted by the many daily concerns of prison life. Around us the soldiers of the atheistic phalanx growl obscenities at us, bind our hands, harass us, and torture us day and night.

Many times I saw the soldiers take Father for interrogation, but I will always remember this one time which left a great weight on my heart.

The soldier opened our cell with noisy clattering and rudely shouted to the priest to get up. Father Nika, being in prayerful ecstasy, was oblivious to the soldier and did not hear or see him. Then a kick of the soldier's boot, along with a shouted curse and the hysterical laughter of the two other soldiers waiting at the door, abruptly brought the priest out of his reverie. The friar stood up with dignity and composure and smiled at me. Then very slowly, still looking at me, he left for a new Golgotha.

I think I passed several hours alone filled with loneliness and apprehension. I lost track of time. But then I heard the noise of the soldier's footsteps. It seemed that they were bringing him back. The floors of

the prison were filled with the echoes of the soldier's cruel joking and mirthless laughter, their cursing, and their beating of the prisoners. One of the soldiers hurled the friar, a corpse almost and without consciousness, against me and the cell wall.

After ministering to him and wiping his wounds with water, which alone was at my disposal for his care, and not knowing just what to do for him, I saw the friar barely open his eyes. I felt great joy at this sign of life, and I asked him promptly, "How do you feel, Father?" He answered in a low and weak voice, "I'm fine. I am just fine. I gave them an example." I said, "Father Cyprian, they tortured you so much and you were unconscious so long! Would you like some more water?" Father Cyprian answered, "Yes, my son." After he drank, smiling serenely, Father explained, "The security officers told me that they wanted to discuss academically the existence of God. These were four high officials. I never felt more happy than on this occasion! 'Cyprian,' I said to myself, 'here is an opportunity to gain the love and mercy of the Almighty.' I showed it to them." His face, black and blue from the beatings, beamed radiantly as he continued.

I explained some of the arguments of St. Thomas Aquinas. I told them that in this world there are too many men who do only evil things, even though they have untroubled lives. On the other hand, there are many who never stop working for the good of humanity, even though they have great suffering and lead sorrowful lives. In this world where harmony is the fundamental law, wouldn't it be wrong for the Creator not to correct this state of things? As a thinking human being, I believe [in a time ...] [something] to follow after this short earthly life where the good and evil will find reward and punishment — some condition. Something, I think, which crosses the boundary of our human nature, something superhuman, something supernatural where evil and injustice have no place. But I couldn't finish my words because the officials lost patience and started to torture me. "Let thy will be done," I prayed. I felt composed and ready. None of the interrogators could find a way to answer my questions, except with sticks and boots. I can remember that during this session one of them said, "My God is also Father Hoim (the Boss of the Albanian Communists). I also remember that I smiled, though not purposely, but they took my smile as ridicule of their leader. I do not remember anything else.

I said to him, "Father Cyprian, this attitude is costing you too much. You know that they are purposely questioning you as a cruel joke — they do not care about the existence of God. I think that whenever it is possible to avoid such evil, it is right to do so."

"My son," he said to me, "In a sense that is true, but I also have a mission in this milieu more than other people. I have to light the candle whenever and wherever it is blown out. Certainly it is not easy to suffer, but" — then looking me straight in the eyes with his smiling face where only goodness remained — "but suffering, my son, makes the victory more noble."

A few months later on March 4, 1948, this devoted son of St. Francis of Assisi joined the long line of Albanian martyrs.



Monsignor Nicholas Deda

The fifty-six year old Mons. Nicholas Deda, the exceptionally robust pastor of the village of Hajmeli, in the diocese of Sapazadrina in northern Albania, was arrested at the end of 1946 and locked up in the basement of the State Security Building in Shkodra. There he was beaten with wooden sticks until bloody and tortured with electrical shocks on all sensitive parts of his body.

A priest friend, who was arrested at the same time (and later released), recounts how during the interminable interrogation at the tribunal he saw a skeletal figure able to stand only with the support of ropes hanging from the ceiling. He recognized his friend only when he heard a weak voice exclaiming: "Memento mei, Nicolaus Deda fuisse." (Translation: "Remember me, I was Nicholas Deda.")

A friend of mine, who was for two years imprisoned in different sections of the State Security Building in Shkodra spoke of Mons. Deda in the following manner: "I lived for several weeks in the same prison cells with Monsignor Deda. The whole body of the mon-

signor was a cankerous wound and he could barely raise himself on his own two feet. The cell itself was so narrow and confining that you couldn't move without rubbing against someone else. The air was stifling, as must be expected in such a room wherein human beings are locked together with no sanitary facilities. There was such filth, but I never heard a lament. During the whole time I had the fortune of being imprisoned with him, I never heard Monsignor Deda speak any words that were not encouraging or that did not accept the suffering for the love of God and the welfare of Albania." At midnight on March 8, 1948, already near his last agony, Monsignor Deda was executed along with Bishop Fran M. Gjini and seventeen clergymen and laymen.



Father Anton Muzaj

In 1946 Father Anton Muzaj returned to Albania after a five year absence during which he completed his studies at the Gregorian University in Rome. He was appointed Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Shkodra, succeeding Father Thomas Laca who had been condemned to 101 years of imprisonment. Prior to Father Laca's arrest, his superior, Archbishop Gasper Thaci, who had been under house arrest since 1945, died very mysteriously. Father Muzaj arrived

find the archdiocese in a state of turmoil. Since he had come from Rome, Father was considered by the new communist officials to be a Vatican spy. When attempts to elicit information or support from Father Muzaj failed, the Albanian Security began a campaign of harassment ending with Father's arrest in 1948.

For several months Father Muzaj was kept in the prison cells of the Sigurimi, a building noted for the various horrible tortures which were inflicted on its captive occupants.

While suffering from the cold and malnutrition, the already frail priest contracted a severe case of tuberculosis and died shortly afterwards. He was only twenty-six old when he resigned his will to Divine Providence.



Rev. Peter Cuni (Chuni)

Pjeter Cuni, ordained a priest in March 1940, by Cardinal Fumasoni Biondi in Rome, returned to Albania in August of the same year. In the beginning he was assistant pastor in Rec-Lohe, a large parish north of Shkodra. He worked with great zeal and self-sacrifice in years that were most difficult for the Albanian clergy.

Arrested at the end of 1948, Rev. Cuni died in prison at Shkodra after fifteen days of uninterrupted interrogations accompanied by painful beatings and electrical shocks. His body was left in a garbage dump.



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THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AGAINST RELIGION IN THE SIXTIES

After the abolition of religious communities in 1967, and particularly since the new constitution of Albania was promulgated at the end of 1976, the Albanian leaders and their news media have constantly returned to the same theme: religion in Albania has been eradicated. The steps used to pursue this goal have been presented by them in such a way as to make it appear to the world that the destruction of religion has been carried out willingly and spontaneously by the youth and the people themselves.

Contrary to official Albanian press reports, there are people among the clergy and ordinary people who resist, some actively and others passively, the anti-religious laws and practices. Just in the past decade two Catholic priests and a Bishop have been executed for conducting secret religious services, while many believers and other clergy have been sent to prisons and labor camps for disobeying the laws prohibiting religion. Passive resistance, such as the marking of the cross on one's body, the hiding of icons, rosaries and prayer books, and visiting the sites of destroyed churches and mosques, has been reported by the government's news media.

One of the latest attempts by the Albanian government propaganda machine is outlined in the article: "Revolutionary Movement Against Religion in the Sixties" by Dilaver Sadikaj, which appeared in the University of Tirane quarterly journal *Studime Historike* (Historical Studies), No. 4, 1981. The article presents a synopsis and is a statement that attempts to justify the various phases in the struggle against religion which were developed and carried out by the Albanian Party of Labor under the leadership and direct guidance of Enver Hoxha.

Ironically, the entire article particularly the author's summary, with many contradictions and gross falsifications, clearly attests to the presence of religious faith in Albania today. Belief in God cannot be done away with, despite the hate-filled actions of an all-powerful state; the merciless murder of Bishops and priests, the countless jailing of innocent believers, the closing of churches and mosques, and the promulgation of laws against God. Belief comes as a natural part of man's outlook on life. History shows that attempts have been made to destroy man's belief in God, using various means and tactics. All have failed. But, nowhere have the efforts to destroy religious belief been as great as in Albania. We firmly believe that the present storm against God and His people will eventually subside.

We are printing in our Bulletin a translation of the original article as it appeared in Albanian. We trust that the readers will be able to judge for themselves the truth of the religious situation in Albania today.

As a convenience to our readers, below is a list of abbreviations with a glossary of terms and names used in the article from the *Historical Studies*.

ABBREVIATIONS

- APL — Albanian Party of Labor
- SPRA — Socialist People's Republic of Albania
- CSA — Central State Archives
- CC — Central Committee
- APGC-CC — Archives of the Presidency of the General Council of the Democratic Front of Albania
- AMIA — Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- APL-CC — Albanian Party of Labor Central Committee

GLOSSARY

- pashkët (pasch-KT) — Easter
- bajram (bi-RAHM) — Moslem Holiday
- hoxha (ho-JA) — Moslem clergyman
- ramazan (rah-mah-ZAHN) — Moslem Holiday
- teqe (tay-KEH) — Bektashi (Moslem) community and house of worship

The struggle against religion, and against religious preconceptions and backward customs that are directly or indirectly related to religion, has always been viewed by APL (Albanian Party of Labor) as an essential condition for the social liberation of workers, the development and strengthening of the socialist economy and culture, the revolutionary and ideological molding of the working masses, and the building of the socialist society in general. On the other hand, the struggle for the abolition of economic and social oppression and exploitation has been viewed by the Party as the foremost condition for the liberation of the workers from the spiritual slavery of religion.¹

In the struggle against religion and backward customs, the Party has used correct methods and procedures in accordance with changing historical conditions, the situation of religious beliefs existing in the country at a given time, the stages of the revolution and the level of socialist consciousness among the workers. The decisions and measures taken by APL and the government of SPRA (Socialist People's Republic of Albania) in connection with religion and backward customs, have always expressed the needs of the majority of the people, as well as the interests of the people and of socialism.

Immediately after the Liberation of the country, reactionary clerics and other class enemies made use of "the word of god" in an attempt to obstruct the construction of socialism in the country. But their efforts proved abortive. They found no support among the masses. The people followed the path shown by the Party. Following the proclamation of the country as a People's Republic, religion was separated from the state and the educational system by a provision in the Constitution, and was declared to be a private matter of the individual.

The proclamation of the freedom of conscience was another proof of the democratic character of our people's government, which operated on the basis of its own laws, and had no need of any religion.

A series of other measures were taken as well, such as the prohibition of political organizations based on religion. The greater portion of the land and other wealth belonging to religious institutions was expropriated by law. Training for the priesthood was no longer possible. Nevertheless, the Party and the government did not prohibit religious beliefs, the existence of religious communities, or the practice of religious rites.² The Party could not afford to offend the sentiments of a mass of workers, especially in the countryside, who had close ties with the Party and the government, but who continued to adhere to one religion or another, even though they did not manifest any excessive fanaticism. The uprooting of the religious world view would come as a result of the ideological persuasion of the masses. At the same time, in order to liberate the masses from religious beliefs and backward customs, the Party carried out a broad scientific atheist propaganda campaign by means of lectures and discussions, the press and the radio, readings, cinematic films, and especially through the educational system by the diffusion of culture, education and scientific knowledge. Naturally, the triumph of socialist relations and the development of the productive forces made their own contribution to the struggle against the religious world view.

The above-mentioned achievements in the struggle against the religious world view and the religious system in general, brought about a whole chain of quantitative changes, and made possible a transition to qualitative changes and a genuine leap forward. Apart from the objective and subjective conditions now in effect, the transition to this new phase in the struggle against religion was favored by certain factors peculiar to our country.

First, our people have not been closely tied to religion. In general, they have not been as pious as other peoples. Our people have not made of religion a world-encompassing theory and philosophy. In preaching the faith, the clergy, with the exception of catholic clerics, in general aimed at the preservation of religious discipline by means of an archaic liturgy and prayer by rote, without understanding their content or giving them a philosophical interpretation. Religion as an organized system never achieved full expression in our country.

Second, the reactionary leaders of the clergy have always been on the side of occupiers and enemies of the people, and always fought against all the liberation movements of our people. As a result, our people have viewed religion and the clergy as enemies of freedom and of their rights. Such circumstances could not but facilitate the final victory over religion.

After analyzing the notable results up to this point, the Party and the Central Committee declared war on a broad front against religion. The Party waited until the right moment before taking this step, and apart from other conditions, took into account also the spiritual state of the masses. And in fact, as a result of the work done by the Party, the working masses of the country, and in particular the younger generation, were convinced of the futility of religion. This was clear not only from the abandonment of many religious institutions and practices by many of the believers, but also from the concrete actions taken against religion by the youth and the masses in general.

At the end of 1965 and during 1966 quite a number of youth organization undertook a series of drives against religious hearths — churches, mosques, *teqes* (Bektashi-Moslem communes), religious land holdings, etc. On May 14, 1966, the youth organization shut down the mosque in the village of Xibrakë in the locality of Belshi (Elbasan). A day later, the youth organization shut down the mosque in the village of Myndaq in the locality of Cërrik. On July 10, the youth of the village of Theth in the Dukagjin zone had organized a social evening in the former village school, which had been converted into a cultural house. At its meeting on July 5, 1966, the residents of the Kongresi i Përmetit (Congress of Përmet) presiding in the city of Shkodër, resolved to shut down the mosque and to use the mosque grounds as a sports field for children.³ On August 17, certain cooperativists of Shënkoll (St. Nicholas) advised the priest in the parish office of Breg Maftë in the district of Lezhë that the people did not want any communion rite, and that word should be sent to the Bishop not to come to perform the customary ceremonies. During 1966 the youth also shut down places of worship in many other districts in the country.

The closing down of religious institution was one of the clearest proofs of the raising of the atheistic consciousness of the masses and of their readiness to engage in a frontal struggle against religion. On October 16, 1966, the General Council of the Bektashi Community issued a special decree closing down a number of *teqes* in the districts of Kolonjë, Elbasan, Berat, and Gjirokastër because of lack of attendance on the part of the faithful.⁴

On the other hand, the organs of local government, in an action expressing the will and wishes of the workers, made a series of proposals to high government agencies to take a series of steps in the area of legislation pertaining to religious institutions and organizations. All of these proposals were justified by the new conditions that had been created, and by achievements in the economic and ideological fields, and in the rise of the cultural level of the masses.

The Executive Committee of the People's Council in the district of Shkodër, in an action expressing the demands of the people of this district, alerted the Council of Ministers to the need to make a series of changes in the statute of the catholic church of Albania. More concretely, the committee proposed the deletion of items "ç" (ch) and "E" in article 8 of the statute, which provided for the training of clerics in seminaries and special schools, owing to the fact that by now all children and youth attended public schools, and there were no students available to attend religious schools. At the same time, the committee proposed the deletion from the statute of provisions regarding the publication of religious magazines and other materials.⁵

This same committee made a series of proposals to enable the District Executive Committee of the People's Council to restrict the rights of the church,

The proposals called for a series of changes in articles 10, 11 and 16 of the Statute of the catholic church, with a view to obliging the churches thereafter to obtain the approval also of the people's councils in the villages, localities or districts in matters involving important decisions by the churches, the appointment of new priests, and the like.¹⁰ At the same time, it was proposed that religious institutions obtain the approval of, and be subject to inspection by the executive committees of the people's councils with regard to a series of important matters relating to their activities.

And finally, in view of the great changes that had taken place by this time in our country in the field of consciousness, as well as in other areas, it was proposed to the Council of Ministers that certain changes be made in Law No. 743, "On Religious Communities,"¹¹ dated February 16, 1949, which was approved by the People's Assembly in law number 773, dated January 16, 1950, the reason being that the decrees cited above contained articles that had become obsolete and therefore needed to be changed.

Likewise, during the first half of the sixties, a series of limited measures were taken which restricted religion, such as the reduction of personnel at the headquarters of religious communities, as well as in district offices under their jurisdiction. The Medrese (Moslem theological seminary) had been shut down, and religious books had been taken out of circulation. At the same time, the budget of religious communities was reduced. The budget of the moslem community alone was reduced from 12 million old leks ("lek" is the monetary unit in Albania) to 2,800,000 leks.¹²

All of these many-sided successes that were attained prior to the decade of the sixties, as well as the drives against religion by the youth, created a new spiritual situation among the masses that paved the way to a new and higher phase of struggle against religion, namely a frontal struggle of unprecedented dimensions. By now, such a qualitatively novel struggle was not only possible but essential. It was a component of the struggle for the intensification of the ideological and cultural revolution in our country, whose fundamental aim, as comrade Enver Hoxha stressed from the tribunal of the Fifth Congress of APL, was "the inculcation and total triumph of the proletarian socialist ideology in the consciousness of all the working people, and the uprooting of bourgeois ideology; as well as the education and the all-round molding, in a communist and revolutionary manner, of the new man, who is the decisive factor in the solution of the great and complex problems of socialist construction, and in the defense of the fatherland."¹³

The Fifth Congress of APL characterized the struggle against religious ideology, preconceptions, superstitions and backward customs as an important aspect of the class struggle. The construction of socialism and its complete triumph could not be guaranteed as long as there were people who adhered to an idealistic religious world view, and to backward customs. Such people hampered progress with their activities. In view of these objective and subjective conditions and their urgency, the Party called for an intensive class struggle between two world views, involving not only us and our enemies, but also the people, the object being to uproot the religious world view, which was an important element of the reactionary ideology, and at the same time to educate the masses with the Marxist-Leninist world view.

This movement was born and developed from below, and encompassed a broad front, including cities and villages, and all segments of the population. The movement was accompanied by direct frontal blows. The Party directed with care this movement from below. Of great help in this connection were the materials of the Fifth Party Congress, and the teachings of comrade Enver in the letter of February 27, 1967, entitled "On the Struggle Against Religion, and Religious Preconceptions and Customs,"¹⁴ which was addressed to district party committees. Those important documents carried guidelines for waging as just and error-free and successful a struggle against religion, religious preconceptions and backward customs as was possible.

The movement against religion was a revolutionary movement of great substance that unfolded in several important directions. It was directed against the hearths and material base of religion. Its object was the liquidation of the official function of the professional clergy, and the neutralization of the non-professional clergy. Another objective of the movement against religion in those years was the emphatic struggle against religious dogmas, rites and practices — inasmuch as they comprised the main target of the anti-religious struggle — and their replacement by our socialist norms, customs and festivals.

The revolutionary movement that erupted during this period was at first directed against the hearths and the material base of religion. At first, some of the main churches and mosques were shut down, and afterward the masses of the population went further, in order to shut them all down. In this ideological drive, too, the youth revealed itself as a great revolutionary force. The fact that the youth became the vanguard in this struggle is understandable. The young generation in general, and the school youth in particular, were less infected by the religious consciousness, owing to the new conditions in which they were born and grew up. The knowledge they had gained in school, and the constant educational work carried out by the Party by every manner and means, had armed the youth with the new Marxist-Leninist world view, and had made them front-line warriors in the struggle against the religious ideology. To these should be added also the qualities that are characteristic of young people: the spirit of initiative, energy and revolutionary courage.

Immediately after the Fifth Party Congress, a series of initiatives and drives were set in motion by the youth against the material base of religion. To be sure, limited local drives had taken place before this time, as we mentioned previously. Now, however, drives by the youth were better organized, had clearer objectives, and attracted all segments of workers on a national scale. We are now dealing with a broad revolutionary movement against religion.

The first spark, set off right after the proceedings of the Fifth Party Congress, was ignited by the youth of the village of Shënkoll (St. Nicholas) in the Lezhë district (now known as the Ylli i Kuq (The Red Star) village), who took the initiative to shut down the village church. Following a meeting called by them, the youth issued an appeal to all inhabitants of the Shënkoll-Rrillë zone to support their initiative. On December 4, 1966, at 10 o'clock in the morning, the (democratic) front of the village held a meeting.¹⁵ All of the participants who spoke at the meeting denounced the falsity and the deceptive character of holy places, such as churches, as well as the clergy. The meeting took a number of important decisions: the conversion of the church into a house of culture, the banishment of the priest from the village forever, etc. The meeting also appointed a group of representatives to follow up on, and carry out these decisions.¹⁶ This was an important victory of the workers of this zone in the struggle against religion. Later, this initiative was emulated by other youth and front organizations, and spread throughout the district.

In the context of the revolutionary movement against religion, the initiative of the "Mam Frashëri" school in the city of Durrës holds a special place. The reason is that this initiative was the best organized and so substantial that it had consequences and repercussions throughout the country. Its object was the struggle against the material base of the religious ideology. Because of the results it obtained, this initiative takes its place as one of the most distinguished events in the history of our educational system, relative to the struggle against alien ideologies. It gained great authority in the eyes of the masses both within and without the district. During this time, many letters expressing solidarity and greetings came from the four corners of the country.

Seeing the positive results of the movement, the district party at once set out to share the experience that had been gained. Accordingly, seminars were held with secretaries of youth organizations in the schools, in work centers, in villages, with the councils of the front in the precincts, and with presidents of trade unions. All of this added to the net results. The youth thus became the Party's agitators in intensifying the movement against religion.

The initiative had repercussions also outside the district of Durrës, becoming thus a powerful revolutionary movement in the whole country. In the wake of the drives by the youth of this school, youth in all the other districts began a wide-ranging campaign of criticism and self-criticism, under the slogan, "Let us set our own house in order, and help others at the same time."¹² By means of wall posters (literally "lightning sheets") distributed in classes, schools, work sections and enterprises, pious students were criticized. Everywhere battle encampments were set up against religion. The same type of operation took place in precincts and villages. The youth was in the forefront of the struggle against activities of religious institutions. Indeed, they acted courageously even when there was some hesitation or fear of churches or mosques.

These initiatives, which originated from below, were given powerful support from above, including Party committees and organizations at the base level, as well as the organizations of the masses. Party committees frequently sent youth from work centers and from schools to the villages and precincts. The work was coordinated in such a manner that youth from the plains who worked in cooperatives in the highlands carried out broad propaganda work in favor of scientific atheism in general, as well as helped the youth of the villages in those zones in the struggle against religious hearths.¹³

The struggle for the liquidation of the hearths and the material base of religion was accompanied by an extensive clarification and educational campaign. In the course of drives undertaken by the youth and the working masses to annihilate holy places, there were also instances of hasty and reckless work, when administrative (i.e., punitive) rather than persuasive measures were taken.

In spite of good intentions, there were instances when the people were not consulted or informed sufficiently; instead, their religious institutions were taken over at once, as happened in Delbnisht in the Krujë district, Bulçesht in the district of Tiranë, Fiqiq in the Saraandë district, Labinot in the district of Elbasan, and in the takeover of some churches in the district of Shkodër, etc.¹⁴

Of capital importance for the proper and correct conduct of the struggle against religion in this phase were the guidelines given by comrade Enver Hoxha in the letter of February 27, 1967 entitled, "On the Struggle Against Religion, and Religious Preconceptions and Customs," which he sent to the district Party committees in the name of the CC (Central Committee) of APL.

Seeing that the struggle against religion had entered quite an intensive phase, and intent on carrying out this struggle successfully, the CC of APL provided a series of guidelines in this letter. The guidelines noted that it was necessary to accompany the drives and initiatives of the youth and the masses against religion with an informative and persuasive campaign. The letter also instructed Party committees as to where to concentrate their efforts, and in what manner they were to implement their work in scientific atheism. Of special importance were the guidelines concerning the content of the struggle against religion in this phase. "We must direct our struggle against religion," the CC of APL pointed out, "as much against religious dogmas and the idealistic and mystical viewpoints of religious philosophy, as against religious practices that have penetrated even the daily routine of believers, and indeed even that of non-believers, who sometimes implement them unwittingly, carelessly, often from force of habit."¹⁵

At the same time, the CC of APL advised the district Party committees that, in carrying out their work of leadership, they should take into account the concrete historical factors relative to religion in our country, and the degree of its diffusion among the people, according to different denominations.

In the entire effort to inform and persuade, they were to make clear to the people the hostile and reactionary attitude of the clergy throughout the history of our people, and its ties to the enemies of the nation and the working class. Finally, the CC pointed out the need to prepare seriously for this life-and-death struggle between the Marxist-Leninist world view and the idealistic world view of religion. In this connection, the CC advised that "The struggle against religion is quite complicated: therefore, he who is not well armed for this struggle may not achieve the desired results. But the means and the arena of battle are favorable to us, and promise success in this struggle."¹⁶

Enlightened by the teachings of this letter, the district Party committees and the base organizations of the Party did a better job in directing the movement against religion, that had erupted from below.

In general, the closing of churches and mosques and other hearths of religion did not meet with resistance on the part of the mass of believers. This was due to the results achieved by the Party up to that time in carrying out atheistic work, plus the work done to prevent the training of clerics and the circulation of religious books. Hand in hand with the closing of houses of worship, there emerged a series of other drives that had broad repercussions. Among these were drives for the abolition of the entire material base of religion, including crosses, icons, books, etc., in the "holy" places, in other milieu, and in residential buildings. The young men and women of the middle school for general education in the city of Lushë began a drive to collect all religious articles that were located in the homes of the villagers. The villagers, of their own will handed over to the youth hundreds of thousands of icons, crosses of all sizes, and a variety of religious books, magazines and brochures. These drives by the youth found support among other masses of workers. The inhabitants of the village of Ungrej, resolved at a consultative meeting that hand in hand with the closing of the village church, they would remove all crosses found in cemeteries and so-called holy places, and collect all other religious objects.¹⁷

Initiatives such as these by the youth and the masses sprang up everywhere. The villagers of the "Border Guard" agricultural cooperative in the village of Peshkëpi, district of Gjirokastrë, had supported the initiative of the pioneers of the village for the abolition of icons and crosses.¹⁸ The letter that the organization of the front in the village of Sofradikë, Gjirokastrë, sent to comrade Enver, informed him, among other things, that they had resolved to remove from their homes all icons and crosses and everything else connected with religion (front 9 in the revolution).¹⁹

As a result of these initiatives, within the short span of a few months, the first blow was dealt to the hearths of the religious ideology. With the exception of a few churches or mosques of architectural or historical value, all churches, mosques, *teqes*, mausoleums, religious holdings, etc., were shut down throughout the country. The total number came to 2035, of which 740 were mosques, 608 orthodox churches and monasteries, 157 catholic churches, and 530 *teqes*, mausoleums, sepulchers, etc.²⁰

The closing of these religious institutions by the people was effected in a proper way. According to the official record dated February 25, 1967, it is clear that the documents for the takeover of the Franciscan church of Shënanton, bl. Anthon, are in order. Present during the takeover were an official of the church, a delegate of the people's council in the precinct, and a delegate of the Front of the precinct or the bloc.²¹ An official record was made of the takeover of an establishment, following the taking of inventory. With the exception of edifices that had value as cultural monuments, all houses of worship were in general converted into social and cultural centers or into warehouses.

The closing down of houses of worship gave rise to some problems. Although used for economic and cultural purposes, nearly all of them preserved

their former appearance. Apart from other things, this situation reminded believers of the church or the mosque, causing them to continue to regard them as holy places. Such a sight could not but have a negative psychological influence on the younger generation. Mindful of the negative influence that the outside appearance of religious edifices might have on viewers, instructions were issued to undertake a series of corrective measures. Those religious edifices that interfered with the city or village layout and zoning regulations were to be destroyed and in their place new buildings were to be erected. Likewise religious edifices that were old or threatened to collapse and had no architectural value, were destroyed. As for those edifices that were used for different needs, such as cinemas, houses and hearths of culture, gymnasia, etc., slight renovation work was done on them to change their external appearance. In this connection, proposals were made by base organizations that "The Ministry of Education and Culture (Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Monuments) review the criteria which let stand a great number of churches and mosques that had no historical value."²²

The wealth of religious institutions was expropriated along with the edifices. By decree of the Presidium of the People's Assembly, No. 4236, dated April 11, 1967, all fixed assets of religious communities were turned over to the executive committees of the people's councils in the districts concerned, or surrendered to agricultural cooperatives without any compensation.²³ The treasures and running accounts of all religious institutions, which at the end of March, 1967 came to 1,929,307 new leks, were turned over to the district executive committees to be used for social and cultural purposes, or for the needs of agricultural cooperatives.²⁴ The latter came into possession also of a great number of livestock, vineyards, olive orchards, gardens, etc., that were formerly the property of religious institutions. From eight monasteries alone there were expropriated 500 heads of large and small livestock, and from the residence of the spiritual leader of the bektashi community 34,000 square meters of land. All of these became the property of the "Gjergj Dimitrov" Agricultural Enterprise.

Other fixed and movable assets that became the property of the state were residential units and their accessories, mills, tens of stores along with their warehouses, the interior furnishings of monasteries, etc. At the same time, the state was now freed from subsidizing annually the salaries and pensions of a substantial number of clergy.²⁵

The liquidation of the material base of religion, which took place in record time, thanks to the initiatives of the youth and the working masses, could not be considered as the end of the road in the general struggle against religion. Nonetheless, the annihilation of the hearths of religion not only put an end to those centers of corruption and obscurantism, but in general was greatly influential in uprooting the religious ideology, which had held dominion for centuries. Such activities enabled the people to perceive the hollowness of legends that told of the occurrence of "miracles" in holy places, such as "punishment by death" and "freezing on the spot" of people who tried to violate these holy places that were guarded by the lord. The masses, including quite a few believers at this time, were convinced by the testimony of their eyes that tales about "holy places" were without basis, and this served to educate them.

When the youth and educators set out to shut down the mosque in the village of Leshnjë in the district of Kolonjë, there were a few elders who looked out their windows toward the mosque, and waited for something to happen from moment to moment. But when no act of "revenge of the Lord" against the fighters for the new (i.e., the modern) took place, the positive effect of this incident on believers was obvious. After the churches and mosques were closed, and the people learned from documents and religious objects about the falsity of these holy places and the corrupt life of the clergy, there were many instances when one heard people utter the most insulting words against religion, priests and mullahs.

The noteworthy achievements with regard to the liquidation of the material base at this stage, comprised an important victory in the struggle against religion. But this did not mean that the job was finished in this particular area. Vestiges of the material base could still be found in different zones of the country, especially in the countryside, where they were shielded by ex-clerics and other believing individuals. This was true particularly in those zones where religion had struck especially deep roots, and where the educational work had been especially weak. Furthermore, hand in hand with the preservation of the material base of religion, efforts were made by ex-clerics and fanatic believers to produce anew such articles. Meanwhile, one could not ignore the fact that the existence of places bearing religious names comprised a kind of frozen material base for religion.

Alongside the struggle against houses of worship and the material base, the movement was directed as well against religious dogmas, rites and practices which were the focus of the struggle against religion. This struggle was the sharpest, the broadest and the most intensive of all, and extended even to the family. It affected and shook up directly religious rites and the world view they project, as well as holidays and customs that had become a part of the daily life of individuals. This struggle testified to the fact that by now all objective and subjective conditions had matured, and made possible the severings of all those strands that kept the masses tied to the old world and prevented them from going forward.

In the course of this struggle, it was kept in mind that religion in our country had not been able to attain a refined philosophical form, owing to the absence of a developed and cultivated clerical foundation. In these circumstances, the CC of APL in its letter, "On the Struggle Against Religion and Religious Preconceptions and Customs," sent to district Party committees, advised that the struggle "against customs, traditions, way of life, and interpretations of phenomena must be waged with tenacity."²⁶ Such action was necessary because it was precisely in this area that the clergy had been able for centuries on end to inject the poison of religion, and to mingle it with the joys, sorrows, and daily activities in people's lives. In order therefore to wage a more effective struggle in this area, it was essential to study and analyze properly the content of religious customs and ceremonies. Such a course of action would make possible a more informed and systematic struggle against religion from every aspect — ideological, political and organizational.

With the movement in its ascendancy, the party committees shared the experience gained in the struggle against religious beliefs and backward customs, by taking a series of important ideological, political and organizational steps, aimed at arousing the workers in every zone, village, work center, and precinct, including even the family. This broadened the social base of the movement, since, apart from the youth, the movement was attracting increasingly the older people as well. The broad discussion of these problems, in different conventions and meetings of the people, the pledges taken and the efforts made to put them into practice, constituted a great revolutionary education for the masses.

After exposing the rites, the futility of religious services and holidays, the activities of clerics, and pointing out the great harm done to the economy by religion, the struggle moved on to the unmasking of religion as a world view, an alien ideology, as a weapon in the hands of the overthrown classes for the moral, spiritual and material oppression of the masses.

In support of the initiative taken by the youth of the "Naim Frashëri" school in the city of Durrës, the young men and women of the "Halim Xhelo"

middle school in Vlorë, made use of critical wall posters at various meetings to declare war on all religious dogmas and rites.²⁷ The initiatives followed one another. For 20 days in succession, all 188 senior students of the "Shehnaze Juka" school in Shkodër, along with the faculty of the school, went to the highland villages in their district to help out in the struggle against religious ideology and backward customs in general.²⁸

The movement became more and more organized with the passage of time. The base organizations of the Party in the villages made use also of *aktives* (elite teams) in the mainly young people and educators. Serving as a nucleus in the struggle against religion these *aktives* performed quite efficient work. Participants in *aktives* at first concerned themselves with the study of the character of religious rites in their zone or village, and the influence of these rites and the clergy in general. Such a job was quite helpful in devising proper procedures for persuasive work with the people.

Later on, broader methods of work and struggle were used, as the organizations of the masses were brought into action. They were transformed into tribunals for the unmasking of religious institutions and demagoguery. The people now had risen to their feet, and in addition to backward customs and alien vestiges, they denounced also the ideology of religion. The people pledged to the Party that they would, as always, struggle to put into practice the important decisions of the Fifth Party Congress. A frequent exchange of letters that amounted to genuine dialogue between the party and the people, took place at this time. The working masses held meetings that reached important decisions to liquidate forever backward customs and religious rites. In the letter they sent comrade Enver Hoxha, the 75 elders of the district of Kukës promised to the Party leader that, "hand in hand with the help we shall give to strengthen agricultural cooperatives, we shall not spare ourselves to help out, both with words and deeds, in all other matters and duties taught us by the Party. We shall struggle stubbornly against religious and backward customs, . . ." Comrade Enver Hoxha, in his letter of reply, expressed his approval of their important decisions, and emphasized the democratic and revolutionary character of those decisions. "Such a correct understanding of these problems of great importance to the future of all our people," he emphasized, "and your manly decision will have great repercussions among the people."²⁹

Immediately after this exchange of letters, the enlarged council of the Democratic Front of the district of Kukës held a meeting.³⁰ The council appraised the reply that comrade Enver addressed to the elders of Kukës as a great program of action for of the organization of the Democratic Front and for all workers. Inspired by this important material, the enlarged council of the Democratic Front of the district set forth a number of tasks aimed at strengthening political work with the masses. At the same time, the council took the capital decision to make the issue of backwards customs and religion a problem for all the people in the district and, under the leadership of the Party, to burn once and for all these vestiges of religious and alien ideology in general.³⁰

Conventions and meetings, at which the people tried before the court of reason religious dogmas and rites and backward customs, succeeded one another. After analyzing the initiative of the youth of the "Naim Frashëri" school, the workers of the marine construction unit in Durrës, pledged conscientiously in their letter to comrade Enver to carry this initiative through to the end.³¹

An important role in this sharp struggle against the old was played by the masses of women.

The struggle for the emancipation of women, and for their liberation from the slavery of religion, are closely linked. They influence and compliment each other. And indeed, the successes achieved for the full emancipation of women in general could not be divorced from the successes that were being achieved in those years by our people and women themselves, in the struggle to subdue religion. Broad masses of women, educated in the spirit of atheism, were by now prepared to undertake courageous action against religion.

In the struggle against the church, the clergy and the religious ideology in general, they envisioned their own liberation. That is why, like the rest of the people, they joined courageously the struggle against religion. Indeed, we can say without hesitation that the movement against religion during this period assumed a massive popular character precisely because of the activation of the great masses of the women of Albania. But the role of women in this matter should not be judged primarily in terms of their participation, but rather by the contribution they made. By taking an active part in the struggle against religion, the church and religious preconceptions, women helped to intensify the movement, because religion had depended on them to lengthen its days.

Thus, whereas with the victory of the National Liberation Struggle, women gained freedom and equal rights with men, and with the successes in the construction of socialism they won effective equality with men, now they went vigorously on the offensive to vanquish the heavy spiritual yoke of religion.

In the revolutionary drive against religion that had erupted in our country, women of different ages and professions organized forums to denounce the evils that religion in general and the catholic clergy in particular had visited upon women and girls. By taking part in the revolutionary movement against religion, women, like all working people, took a decisive qualitative step in respect of their consciousness. In fact, they rose through action to the level of atheism.

If we examine the content of the decision taken at conventions and meetings of the people, we find that it is quite rich. The people condemned religious feasts and holidays like *bajram*, *ramazan* (Moslem holy days), *pashkët* (Christmas and Easter), etc., and religious rites and ceremonies at births, christenings of children, or funerals.³²

At many meetings, hand in hand with the denial of the old (i.e., the obsolete), it was resolved to replace religious holidays and ceremonies with our popular and national festivals. We find this in item number six of the resolution of the villagers in the United cooperative Gëkan-Peshiran in the district of Elbasan; in item number two of the resolution of the meeting of the elders in the village of Peshon-Fier; in item number two of the resolution adopted by the collective of the handicrafts cooperative in the city of Peshkopi, etc.

Important resolutions such as these, in which the people condemned religion, were generally adopted throughout the country, in every village, precinct and work center. This shows that by now the revolutionary movement against religion, begun by the youth as a movement against the hearths of religion and the material base of religion, had been transformed into a movement of unprecedented dimensions that encompassed every corner of the country, and all ages and segments of the population.

The struggle against religious dogmas, rites, and beliefs was carried out in conformity with the line of the masses. It was the people themselves who rose up and condemned the religious ideology. This job was done gradually and with great tact, through discourse and reasoned polemics. Persuasion, the elevation and activation of public opinion — these were the decisive factors that assured success in the struggle. Nevertheless, there were instances when mistakes were made in the conduct of this struggle, owing to the use of improper methods and means. In Kashnjet in the district of Lezhë, a number of villagers who were not totally clear about the character of religious beliefs, celebrated the feast of the "saint," even though at the general meeting of

the Democratic Front organization, they had pledged not to celebrate it any longer. At the meeting of the front, called expressly to deal with this incident, it was decided to expel them from the organization, and as a consequence their membership card was revoked. The Party organization, too, went along with this decision, calling it "a just solution which would serve as an example to others."⁴¹ This was a mistaken and harmful act. Had such a course of action been pursued, quite serious problems would have resulted.

In moments like those, the guidelines of the Party CC were of special importance for the correct and faultless prosecution of this struggle that was taking place chiefly within the ranks of the people. Among other things, the Central Committee advised: "In spite of our propaganda against religion, religious rites, dogmas, institutions and the professional clergy, we must constantly keep in mind not to engage in open warfare with believers, because there are bound to be honorable people who are linked with the Party, and are ardent patriots, but who nevertheless will preserve their religious beliefs in their consciousness for many years, perhaps even unto death."⁴² In addition to the above recommendation, the Central Committee pointed out the effective road to follow in this matter. "With such people," the committee advised, "we must do persuasive work on a continuous basis and with great patience, taking care that it does not become offensive to anyone. With these people the party should behave, shall we say, like a good physician who makes every effort to heal the patient and restore him to the joys of life."⁴³ And further on: "We shall meet with futile religious beliefs not only among the clerics, who are professionals and who propagate such beliefs and keep them alive, and stoop to trickery and base deceptions, but also among the people. Therefore, even as we carry on propaganda against religion without slowing down for a single moment, we must be mindful at all times that we are dealing with people. Rash actions must be avoided, and every action must be preceded by careful preparation of the political terrain."⁴⁴

Along with the condemnation of religious dogmas, rites and ceremonies at their meetings and conventions, the people rejected the representatives of religion themselves — a variety of reactionary clerics. During this time, quite a few political and social activities by the clergy, some of which were known, while others were not, were exposed and destroyed. The dissolution of the councils of churches and mosques, which in general were dens of debased persons, put an end to those hostile religious nests. In the same way, an end was put to a number of other organized activities of religious institutions, such as choirs in catholic and orthodox churches, and a variety of services in the *teges* and other "holy" places.⁴⁵

The activity of the reactionary clergy was revealed to the people also by means of many church documents that threw light on the exploitative, deceptive, immoral, anti-patriotic and criminal actions of clerics. A considerable quantity of propaganda materials, plus hostile religious and political literature was found during the takeover of churches, especially catholic churches. In the church of Dardhë, district of Pukë, a journal was found which documented the bequest of the church in 1939, with the authorization of the bishop of Shkodër, and the reading of a letter from the pope blessing the armies of Victor Emmanuel. The priest of Kaçinari had in his possession a photograph of King Zog and a journal containing political material, while in the mosque of Plan i Bardhë, district of Mat, a Turkish flag was found in the place where the *hoxha* (a Moslem clergyman) said his prayers.⁴⁶

The exposure of these documents and facts before the people, testifying to the profoundly reactionary role played by the clergy in our country, intensified the indignation of the masses and strengthened their conviction regarding the futility of religion. In the letter they sent to comrade Enver Hoxha, the members of the organization of the front of the locality of Roshnik, the district of Berat, notified him, among other things, that they had rejected the clergy: "They have deceived us, these roguish *hoxhas*, and now that we understand even better the harm they have done us, we want the *hoxha* to get out of town right now."⁴⁷ A similar decision unmasking the *hoxha* and his hypocrisy was taken by the members of the united cooperative "29 Nëntori" in the same district. Acts such as these denouncing the clergy can be found in many decisions taken by the people.

Apart from concrete drives, conventions and meetings organized in order to reject the religious ideology, an effective tool for fighting that ideology was the propaganda work with the masses. In this connection, use was made of a variety of methods of struggle, ranging from open discussions in small collectives to organized propaganda by the press, the media, and popular culture. This was a process in which communists and agitators, as well as activists in the organizations of the masses, engaged in a series of discourses to demonstrate the harm caused by religion, as well as its futility. Furthermore, a series of scientific lectures were given on such topics as: "On the Reactionary Character of Religion During the Occupation and After Liberation," "The Struggle Against Backward Customs and Religious Preconceptions as an Aspect of the Class Struggle," etc.,⁴⁸ which played an important role in the atheistic education of the masses. Parallel with these discussions and lectures, scientific atheist booths were set up in the schools, houses of culture and production centers.

It was not long before this great work that was carried out in every direction and by every means, produced the first results in the struggle against the religious ideology. Very soon religious holidays and ceremonies were restrained. Statistical data show that a holiday such as little *hajram*, was observed on a smaller scale in March of 1967 than in any previous year. In general, there were no absentees from work or at school on that day as used to happen in previous years.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, this did not at all mean that the deep-rooted vestiges of the ideology of religion had been liquidated in a matter of months. This was a frontal and intensive struggle which would continue further, despite the speedy and considerable results attained already.

Another positive result of the revolutionary movement against religion was the liquidation of the official function of the professional clergy, and the neutralization of non-professional clerics, a process that resulted in a sharp class struggle. In 1968, there were active in the districts a great number of *hoxhas*, priests, dervishes, monastery clerics, etc. Moreover, a portion of the churches and the mosques had their own advisers, numbering in all several thousand people.

The attitude of clerics differed in respect of this great movement of the masses against religion. A sizeable portion of the clergy, who, as before so also on this occasion, showed its close ties to the people and the government, supported the initiative and demands of the masses. Another portion was not convinced that the closing of religious institutions by the people was just and necessary, but nonetheless reconciled itself to what had taken place or remained silent.

In this connection, quite a few positive initiatives were taken by clerics who were in solidarity with the struggle of the popular masses against religion. The initiators of this positive movement were the clerics of the bektashi community in Fushë-Krujë, who immediately after comrade Enver Hoxha's February 6 speech, "The Revolutionization of the Party and the Government," resolved to convert their religious center — namely the *teqe* — into an educational and cultural center, and at the same time turn over all its fixed and movable assets to the united agricultural cooperative, "Partizant," of Fushë-Krujë. Simultaneously, all the members of that clerical body voluntarily took off their priestly vestments, and became members of this agricultural

cooperative.⁴²

In support of the initiative taken by the clergy of the bektashi commune in Fushë-Krujë, the leadership of the bektashi clergy as well as the leadership of the moslem clergy issued a circular letter calling on all clerics of these denominations in the country, namely, all the *hoxhas* and dervishes, to follow the example noted above, and take off their white or green turbans, and at the same time surrender their *teqe*s and mosques. According to the circular letter, if through the initiative of the clerics themselves, or as a result of the demands of the masses a *teqe* was shut down, then its clergy was automatically dismissed, and cut off all administrative relations with their denomination. The clerics would then be given a sum of money to meet their needs temporarily, until their employment situation stabilized.

Aged clerics who were unable to work were advised to go to rest homes for the aged, while others became members voluntarily of agricultural cooperatives.⁴³ These decisions were taken by the religious communities without any inducement or pressure, or even so much as a suggestion on the part of the state. They were taken entirely on their own initiative.

Of course, in moments like these, there were people who did not approve of the actions of these clerics. Under these circumstances, the Party advised that one should not remain indifferent to those positive initiatives of the clergy, but rather that their worthy aims should be supported, because the majority of the people, above all young men and women, would approve them.⁴⁴

There were quite a few such initiatives, regardless of the degree of substance in them. In September 1967, representatives of the religious denominations, inspired by the revolutionary momentum to overthrow vestiges of the past, that had encompassed the working masses in every corner of the country, proposed to the Council of Ministers a number of measures to scale down their staffs and budgets.⁴⁵ Two months later, in November, representatives of the religious faiths — moslems, orthodox and bektashi — undertook an initiative of deep significance. They affirmed that their continuation as religious representatives was futile, and at the same time an obstacle to the radical elimination of religious beliefs. Their continued existence did not contribute to the abolition of the religious ideology, but rather provided an outlet for believers to keep their hopes alive about going back to that ideology. They took the capital step of proposing to the Council of Ministers the elimination of those representatives.⁴⁶

Swept up in the drive of the masses that originated from below, there were many clerics at the conventions of the people who, after seriously consulting their conscience condemned openly their past deeds of deception, and pledged to renounce their parasitic life. In the course of these revolutionary events, the former head of the *teqe* of Gjerbërsi, in the district of Fier, declared before the people at the meeting of the organization of the front, called by the "Partizani" agricultural cooperative, "I resign as a cleric," and "... I call upon all other clerics to renounce religion. Let us not deceive the people, let us put an end to parasitism."⁴⁷

There were many cases where different clerics declared their solidarity with the movement of the popular masses against religion. The commitments they made, and the unmasking before the people of their own activity, and of the futility of religion, were of great benefit to the overall struggle against religion. This contributed to the elimination of doubts, fear and illusions that were connected with the idea of the existence of the lord among believers.

Parallel with the positive stand of the majority of the clergy, there was a portion which resisted in every way the movement of the masses, and maintained a reactionary attitude toward it. In many cases these clerics, in collaboration with other enemy elements within the country, tried in every way to do harm. Such clerics sought to take advantage of the weaknesses of the political and ideological work of certain organizations of the Party and the masses, and attempted to incite the believers against this revolutionary movement. Resorting to hostile slogans and a string of reactionary deeds, they aimed through this hostile activity at impairing nearly all the spheres of our politics and ideology. In collaborating with the clergy, remnants of kulaks in many instances did not carry out the resolutions of the conventions of the people concerning the struggle against religion and backward customs. In open opposition, they tried to influence other believers as well. There were debased elements that came out openly in defense of religious preconceptions and backward customs, and against the new socialist customs that were being consolidated day by day. They became supporters and guardians of the material base of religion, which they propagated wherever they could. Furthermore, this category of people attempted to incite different elements into action against the Party and the government. Working in unison, they formed the basis of the active domestic ideological pressure against the new, and in favor of the preservation and propagation of everything old and reactionary.

In response to the initiatives of the youth and of other organizations of the masses which demanded the closure of churches and mosques, the clergy at first reacted by presenting petitions to the government or to the Presidium of the People's Assembly which distorted the truth, and attributed to local government the actions of the youth, or the will expressed by the people, to liquidate the churches and mosques. It was in this distorted fashion that the priest of the church of Shënanton (St. Anthony), Laç presented the issue to the high organs of the state. Indeed, he even sent to the division of complaints a citizen to ask, allegedly in the name of 10,000 persons, that his church be left alone.⁴⁸

The most widespread method of struggle that hostile elements, working hand in hand with the reactionary clergy, used against the Party and the government, was the mouthing of different slogans, such as: "When you are at the end of your tether, you rush headlong toward the gate of the church and the mosque, so what these people are doing shows plainly that they have come to the end of the road;" or "There must be something wrong with this government to go to the length of abolishing religion;" or "This is only the beginning, the end will be the abolition of the family." The ex-dervishes in Tropojë made propaganda with the religious slogan, "Let us turn Albania into a religious estate."

They tried to link the activity against religion with the collectivization of agriculture, and the reduction of the size of personal plots of land, as well as with other measures of the Party, all with the intention of obstructing them. "The communists," they said, "are destroying the churches and mosques, they took our land away, and they took away our faith." Or, "They have their hands full, these communists, now they rid away with the *teqe*s and garden plots." They tried also to create the impression that our government practices discrimination with regard to religion, districts, etc. The fact that in Pogradec and Fier the churches were taken over before the mosques, and the fact that certain religious institutions were preserved as monuments, was interpreted as support for a particular denomination, and bitter war against another denomination.⁴⁹

Enemy elements tried to cause harm especially by exploiting natural phenomena and misfortunes, such as earthquakes, heavy rainfalls accompanied by floods, etc. In the districts of Sarandë and Gjirokastrë, there appeared slogans like, "For as the churches have been shut down and the priests have been dismissed, there will be more misfortunes, the whole world will come to an end."

Besides using slogans, hostile elements and the reactionary clergy exerted direct pressure on the people. Just before the takeover of the church in Vokopollë of Berat, an anonymous wall poster appeared with the inscription, "The shutting down of the church in Vokopollë has upset young and old in the village. He who tears down this poster will be held accountable." In Jorgucat of Gjirokastrë, a letter was attached at night to the door of the house

owned by the secretary of the base organization, cursing and threatening him for closing the church. In Shënavlash of Durrës, certain elements of ill political repute threw stones at the young men and women of the "Naim Frashëri school who had gone to close down the church."¹

Since the takeover of the houses of worship did not take place all at once, but was preceded by gradual persuasive work among the people in every village and district, certain clerics were able to conceal a variety of documents or to destroy them. In general, they destroyed church ledgers and journals, and dispersed a portion of the religious literature among certain fanatic believers.

Another testimony of the hostile activity of the clergy was the effort to preserve or revive religious preconceptions. Clerical elements, debased elements of ill political repute, who formed the social foundation of religion, attempted to win the support of various segments of people, propagate religious dogmas, and on occasion even perform religious ceremonies.²

Another method of resistance and hostile activity on the part of clerics was the attempt to accommodate themselves to the existing situation, so as to preserve the substance of the old by using new methods and ways. Quite a few clerics tried to teach believers certain religious services which they could perform at home by themselves, and suggested to them that they teach those same services to their children. Certain clerics became instructors on the preparation of holy water for believers. These activities were accompanied by teachings such as, "To believe, it is not essential to go to church or to the mosque, since they are mere gathering places. A person can worship in his own house, as well, provided that he has religion in his heart."³ One observed also attempts by the clergy and various believers to put an equation sign between the norms of our communist morality and the preachings of religion. "Religion," they said, "teaches not to steal or lie, help one another, obey the government," etc. The preservation of religious beliefs was likewise the object of such teachings as: "We do not harm the Party if we observe the holidays of *hajram* and *ramazan*. We will observe both the national and the religious festivals." Or: "He who is for religion is also for the country." Such teachings even reached the point where one heard cries from believers to march with "the Party to the right and religion to the left."⁴

Faced with this allround activity, the organizations of the Party reacted energetically, as did also, under their guidance, the organizations of the masses, and conjointly they unmasked such activity and, when called for, appropriate action was taken against particular elements by the proper authorities. At such times, the Party advised the organizations of the Party and the masses to strengthen their revolutionary vigilance toward enemy activities, and to do frequent political and ideological work in order to enlighten the popular masses. On the other hand, attention was called to the need to work with care, so as not to confuse the reactionary role of religion with the majority of the clerics, who were linked to the Party and the government, but rather to differentiate among them according to the different stands taken by individual clerics.⁵

The organizations of the Party and the masses made extensive use of the multitude of facts regarding the hostile activity of religion, and of the propaganda material that came into their possession in order to unmask the reactionary role of religion in the political arena — an action that produced good results. The organizations of the Front had unmasked a number of clerics at their meetings. The organization of the Front of the city of Shkodër had unmasked the activity of the *haxha* of Gumenicë, who used to go to the homes of villagers with wicked political intent, and agitated among them against the government. The members of the Front organization in the precinct, "Three Heroes," criticized and unmasked the hostile activity of the ex-cleric of this precinct who, being unable to operate in his own precinct, continued his activity by meeting with villagers in precincts on the periphery of the city. Likewise, other clerics who performed religious rites in their homes were unmasked without mercy.⁶

In addition to the types of activity mentioned above, the most reactionary portion of the clergy, which had formerly engaged in hostile activity against the country and the people, in collaboration with degenerated elements and kulaks, managed to carry out organized hostile activities. A number of hostile groups, inspired and headed by the reactionary clergy, were uncovered and punished by organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat and by the people.

In 1967 there came to light the hostile activity of the priest, Shtjefën Jak Kurti, who was a cleric in the village of Gurrëz in the district of Krujë. Being imbued with deep hostility against the government, he found in the revolutionary measures taken against religion an excuse to put all of his skills in the service of his counter-revolutionary designs.⁷ In his hostile activity there were mixed up a number of people, some of them with a record of hostile opposition, former convicts or debased elements, as well as believers, parasites, and idlers who had gradually degenerated into enemies of the government. The reactionary influence of the religious ideology hastened the process of their degeneration.

After he became familiar with, and convinced of the hostile predisposition of these elements, Shtjefën Kurti began to have discussions of a hostile character with them. Gradually he became the instigator, inspirer and in general the spiritual leader of these elements, manipulating them politically and ideologically in order to make them fully aware of the hostile path they had taken.

Their hostile activity manifested itself chiefly in two directions: First, in the economic field, by encouraging and organizing massive thievery and sabotage in order to damage the economic foundation of the government. They engaged in acts of thievery mainly in the cultural cooperative of "Fushë-Miloti," with a view to lessening the revenues of this cooperative and thereby causing discontent among the villagers.

Second, they engaged in agitation and propaganda against the government. In meetings and so-called dinners that Shtjefën Kurti arranged with his hostile group, he expressed with passionate hatred his counter-revolutionary ideas, telling the people that "the overthrow of the regime is near, it's only a matter of time."⁸ At the same time, he and his group agitated and endeavored to convince the people that the social order in Albania was going to change through the intervention of revisionist and imperialist forces, and that the so-called "Prague Spring" would free our country as well.⁹ In the meantime, he sought to create discontent among the people in connection with the measures taken by the Party at this time for reducing the size of personal land plots and heads of livestock. He spewed venom against the cooperativist system in general, listened to news broadcasts from foreign radio stations and commented on them, approved of anti-communist books and distributed them, etc.

The people uncovered the hostile activity of this group. In order to try this hostile group, an open hearing was held in the village of Gurrëz, at which the popular masses themselves and the investigating agencies brought to light the hostile activity of the group. The organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat handed down to the leader of the group, Shtjefën Kurti, and his collaborators the punishment they deserved.

Likewise in 1967, State Security forces placed under arrest the hostile group headed by the priest Zef Bëri, on charges of spying for the Italian secret service, as well as for agitating and carrying on propaganda against the regime.¹⁰

The materials produced during the investigation and court proceedings, confirmed that these enemies of the people had carried out their traitorous activity at different times and in different places, and that each one of them had individual connection with different agents of foreign intelligence services. Later on they coordinated their activities, and formed a group of agents and spies in the service of Italian intelligence. They used churches and church-related grounds as sites for collecting information destined for foreign agencies. Under the mask of performing religious services, they

maintained connections with representatives of certain diplomatic missions in our country, and through them or through tourists and other persons, transmitted to the Vatican and to foreign agencies political, economic, and military data.⁶¹

At every stage in our social development, and whenever there emerged among us revolutionary initiatives, the group of Zef Bici did not hesitate to take the offensive in order to obstruct them, using for this purpose every means he deemed appropriate for the realization of his counter-revolutionary aims. During 1966-1967, when the historic decisions of the Fifth Congress of APL and comrade Enver's programmatic speech of February 6, 1967, "The Further Revolutionization of the Party and the Government," gave rise to a series of deeply ideological revolutionary initiatives, one of which was the revolutionary movement against religion, these traitors, being servants of the Vatican, did not hesitate to intensify their counter-revolutionary activity, and agitated and engaged in propaganda work in opposition to those initiatives, realizing that those initiatives signalled their end as clerics, and the uprooting once and for all of the religious ideology.⁶² These people attempted by means of lies and fabrications to obstruct the implementation of these initiatives, and in their discussions described them as unjust, and alleged that they were going to make the people discontented.

In their agitation and counter-revolutionary propaganda, the defendants went even further, and attempted to enlist the aid of the Vatican to intervene with catholic states that had diplomatic relations with our country, as well as with some other countries, in order to blackmail and frighten our government to pressure the working masses to renounce their struggle against religion. Following their trial, Zef Bici and his collaborators were punished by the organs of justice for their hostile activity.⁶³

During the unfoldment of resistance by the clergy and the class enemy in general, other hostile groups were discovered and punished by the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or by the people themselves. The open trials that were held during this period, threw light on the hostile activity of the clergy, and objectively played a great role in the struggle against religion, because they convinced the masses once again concerning the aims and wicked deeds of the reactionary clergy vis-a-vis the country and the government.

This hostile activity was accompanied by pressure and encouragement on the part of foreign enemies, who went as far as to interfere in our internal affairs. One aspect of the struggle waged by the imperialist and revisionist enemies, was the endeavor to keep alive and cultivate by every method and means the religious world view. International reaction has always viewed religion as a powerful ally in its counter-revolutionary activity against the freedom and independence of peoples, and for the stifling of revolutions. Many were the snares and methods of propaganda and diversionary activity employed by the external enemy to preserve and disseminate the religious ideology. Radio and television broadcasts of imperialist and revisionist states vented the poison of the opium of religion for hours on end. By air, sea and riverways they infiltrated propaganda materials: books, bibles, religious programs and calendars. They used the postal service to send (religious) postcards, crosses and packages with icons.⁶⁴ Tourists and other visitors from abroad tried in different ways to make propaganda in favor of religious rites, backward customs, their way of life, etc.

The pledges taken in a revolutionary and patriotic spirit by the youth and all workers in all parts of the country to struggle against the religious ideology, and liquidate the material base of religion, were undoubtedly a powerful blow to religion. But these achievements did not mean that the job was now finished, that religion was defeated and there was nothing more to be done. The triumph of the scientific atheist world view in its struggle against religion and its dogmas, ceremonies and customs, which the ruling classes, invaders and the reactionary clergy had cultivated for centuries, is a continuous and lengthy process. It cannot be accomplished with a single act, namely, the abolition of religious institutions and the dismissal of the clergy. It could not by any means be expected that, following such pledges and actions, the people would all become thoroughgoing atheists, and that the religious world view would disappear automatically. Once the problem was understood in this fashion, it became necessary to press on with the struggle, and to reject any concepts that bred complacency, and any tendencies to regard the struggle against religion as finished.

After the initial actions against the material base of religion, one notices such inhibiting concepts as, "... We have done our part, we closed down the churches, and dismissed the priests and the *hoxhas*, and that's all there is to it."⁶⁵ Just as harmful was the concept that religion would disappear in time, that time itself would take care of it. Or, "We're in good shape; for the present, there are no religious manifestations; and if they should show up again, we'll start discussions and lectures once again, just as we did in the beginning."⁶⁶

Had these and similar concepts been permitted to exist, rather than opposed, the propaganda for scientific atheism would have been threatened with decline. And there would have been the further danger of working by fits and starts, which would have meant opening the doors to spontaneous activity, and changing the revolutionary movement of the masses into something as ephemeral as a bonfire. In the case, religion and its preconceptions and vestiges not only would not have disappeared, they might even have been strengthened. This by virtue of the fact that the old ideology in general, and the religious world view in particular, cannot disappear all at once, as they have deep roots and offer resistance for a long time.

Such resistance became manifest in a number of phenomena immediately following the great battle against religion. In spite of the successes achieved against religion, it was evident that religious vestiges, especially those connected with the practical side of life, continued to persist and to spread here and there, often assuming new forms. Among these vestiges were salutations, greetings, condolences, oaths and threats that were linked with the name of the creator of the world — the lord, as well as fantastic and idealistic expressions. Often the elders would propagate oral literature among the children, such as fables, tales, exclamations, proverbs, etc., that had a religious and reactionary content. Efforts were made to pass on to the younger generations religious practices in connection with births, funerals, grave markers, sicknesses that befell people or animals or crops, natural phenomena, christenings, observances of one's name-day, etc. There were attempts to get children to learn religious dogmas by heart.

Often these old practices were slipped in surreptitiously via the new, and efforts were made to adapt them to new situations. A frequent occurrence of this sort was the observance of a saint's day under the pretext of celebrating one's birthday.

One form of passive resistance was the preservation of certain religious edifices that had no historical value or any practical use whatsoever. At times they were used for christenings or for other activities of a religious nature. In a considerable number of villages, or even in a city here and there, there were abundant indications that certain people continued to adhere to religious beliefs, customs and rites. During the week of lent in 1967, the consumption of milk fell noticeably in the cities of Fier, Durrës, Lushnjë, and Tiranë. In quite a number of villages in the districts of Berat, Pogradec, and Peshkopi, the

shops sold more sugar during the holiday season of *hajram* than on other days. During these days there were also many absentees from work.⁷²

The preservation of the material base of religion or respect for holy places were likewise types of resistance that attracted one's attention. After the removal of the guard from the church of Shënantonj (St. Anthony) in Laç, "visitors" appeared who stayed there overnight, and sick children were sent there to be cured. Also, money was found at a designated spot in the courtyard of this church. Similarly, money was found in certain *teges* in the district of Skrapar.⁷³ In the zone of Vërzhëzhë, the sepulcher of a Moslem holy man had been destroyed for a long time; but in spite of that, 40 kg. of tallow candles were found there. Candles and money were found in other holy places as well, after they were shut down.

There were frequent tendencies to preserve or create secretly the material base of religion. In the zones of Laç, Milot and Bicaj signs and different hand-made articles were found, with figures in the form of a cross. There was confirmation that certain families kept icons or crosses.⁷⁴ There was danger also in the attempts made by certain ex-clerics or fanatic believers to convince public opinion that one can worship the lord despite the closure of churches and mosques. According to them, one could do this wherever there were "holy" places, by praying with one's whole heart, or by lightly touching the ground of the church, mosque, or *tege*.⁷⁵

All of these manifestations and phenomena testified to the fact that the old has deep roots and makes desperate efforts to resist by making use of different methods, paths and means. A backward social consciousness, the force of custom, the low educational and cultural level of certain segments of the population, the allround pressure exerted by the fierce imperialist and revisionist encirclement and domestic enemies, are some of the factors that help to preserve, spur, nourish and reactivate the struggle against religious ideology. This was a terrain that had to be well trodden and cleansed continuously and in a systematic manner. The struggle against the religious ideology is long and ceaseless. If one does not struggle against it, it can revive in different ways.

In a correct assessment of this problem, the Party advised at that time to keep up the struggle against religion, and that the epicenter of the struggle against religious beliefs and practices now was to be the family, yet without neglecting to engage, whenever necessary, in discussions and political struggle by different methods and means. The forces that were to carry out this struggle were the communists, the working youth, and school students. And in order to wage this struggle as well as possible, the Party pointed to the need for good ideological preparation of these forces.⁷⁶

Above all, the Party called for the intensification of drives already begun, and for the masses to undertake new drives, and accompany them with frequent educational work in the political and ideological realms. These drives were to be directed against religious feasts, the observance of holy days as noted in religious calendars, the celebration of name-days, etc.; religious rites that were customary in every province, village and precinct, such as the keeping of lent, the feast of *ramazan*, the taking of communion, and christenings; and religious preconceptions, such as expectations of good things and miracles from the lord, belief in fate, fortune telling, the practice of magic, etc.

A big job still remained to be done in liquidating and annihilating completely the material base of religion, including icons, books, etc., for in spite of the results achieved in this area, the job had not been carried out within the family. The icons had by this time been taken off the walls, but a good many of them were concealed in closets and in other parts of the home. The further intensification of this struggle necessitated that the organizations of the masses resume time and again discussions with the masses regarding the fulfillment of pledges taken by them at different meetings and convocations. In this matter, the Party cautioned that care must be taken not to give the impression at meetings of checking up on, or calling people to account, but rather to educate the masses and induce them to educate themselves, by engaging in open discussions, propaganda work and taking new pledges.⁷⁷

With respect to the initial results obtained in the struggle against religion, a big role was played by the propaganda media, the national as well as the local press, the radio, cultural institutions, etc., which supported the propaganda and nourished well the movement of the masses. Now, the situation called for the total mobilization of all the propaganda media, and an improvement of their work, so as to carry the struggle through to the end. The improvement of propaganda consisted above all in explaining theoretically and with empirical data the roots of religion and the class core of the religious ideology, as well as its anti-science and anti-popular role. It was the duty of our propaganda to explain, in short, that our communist morality had nothing in common with the morality of religion.⁷⁸

In dealing with the struggle against religion, the national and local press now began to assign special importance to publicizing the positive experience gained in the struggle, supporting the new initiatives of the masses, and promoting the use of new socialist norms and customs.

One specific result of the propaganda work for scientific atheism, was an increase in the volume of published anti-religious literature, including an expansion of anti-religious themes. There was also an increase in the publication of science and art books containing anti-religious themes. Regarding this field of propaganda, the Party advised that care be taken to treat these problems from an Albanian perspective.⁷⁹ A special role in the field of propaganda, during this phase of the movement, was played by Radio Tiranë, which improved noticeably the ideological, political, and scientific atheist content of broadcasts that related to the cultural life.

Our educational system likewise had a big responsibility in doing propaganda and scientific atheist work. It extended its work in order to instill the materialist world view among members of the new generation. In this connection, the educational system had made contributions in the past. Nevertheless, it was clear that, as soon as school was over, there was backsliding among pupils and students in this area of their education. For this reason, along with measures taken for the further revolutionization of our educational system, on the basis of the ideas of the 8th Plenum of the PL-CC, the Ministry of Education and Culture had the duty to study these problems closely, and to issue appropriate guidelines.⁸⁰ The "New Albania" Film Studio, too, had to face up to the task of devoting more attention to problems that had to do with the struggle against backward customs and religious customs.

The general task of propaganda during this phase was to make itself massive, in terms of means to be employed and the number of people who were going to be involved. To achieve this goal, cultural and educational institutions, youth organizations, hearths of culture and professional vaudeville teams in the districts and at the national level, had to see to it that they incorporated the struggle against backward customs and religious beliefs in their artistic programs and activities. The important thing was to do the job in conformity with existing conditions in different districts, zones or villages. District libraries, houses and hearths of culture were given the task of compiling specific reading lists, and recommending scientific atheist books, writings and publications. Likewise, they were instructed to prepare special exhibitions, along with relevant explanations, on the struggle against backward customs and religious beliefs, for tours to different zones and districts.

The main condition for carrying this movement through to the end was for the Party to do a better job in directing the movement. Party organizations and committees had to understand in earnest that this movement was going to be a lengthy struggle, and an integral part of the effort to intensify further the ideological and cultural revolution. Toward that end, the Party made it a duty for communists to be at the forefront of this struggle, and to be the first ones

to face up to religious beliefs and customs in their own families, and thus set an example to others, because here and there passive resistance and attitudes in the struggle against religion showed up in the ranks of the communists, as well. Either in a secret manner, or under the pretext that "you can't cross the elders," it happened that even in families of certain communists religious rites and customs continued to be respected.

It was necessary, first of all, to educate the communists in order to divest them of every religious preconception and belief, and mold them so as to overcome any wavering or submission for the sake of "custom" and "family tradition". This was to be done by means of principled and group criticism within the base organizations of the Party. The Party advised that any wavering with respect to religious beliefs was to be considered by base organizations of the Party as a manifestation of opportunism toward reactionary ideology, and as such could not be reconciled with the revolutionary figure of the communist.⁷³

It was the duty of base organizations, organs of leadership and Party apparatus in the districts to take these problems always into account, and to follow them closely. This called for studies and for deciding what steps to take next. The broad activation of the intelligentsia, and the setting up of commissions or groups to study particular problems or to prepare lectures, discussions, publications, propaganda materials and other methods of work that had been tried out in certain districts — all of this experience had to be distilled and made available to other districts.⁷⁴

Special attention was given at this time to the struggle to replace religious holidays and ceremonies with new socialist festivals and customs. This was essential, because you cannot abolish customs and traditions that relate to the spiritual life of an individual, unless you replace them with new, progressive customs and traditions. In this respect, the old had by this time been rejected, and now it was necessary to assert and affirm the new, since there can be no vacuum in the spiritual life of individuals. Either that which is positive or that which is negative will make a place in their lives, and which of the two it will be depends on the work done in the ideological, political and scientific arenas. The vacancy that was created had to be filled as soon as possible with new festivals and customs, otherwise there was danger of a return to the old. Life itself, practice and experience were the very factors that would affirm and promote the new and enrich the fund of new socialist festivals, which would thus take their place in the spiritual and social life (of the people).

Having rejected all religious feasts, the job of organizing national, local and family festivals became more pressing. A carefully planned work was needed in order for the new phenomena to make rapid progress. For this purpose, Party organizations and organizations of the masses made plans for all the activities that were to take place before and on the day of a festival. The idea was to create a lively atmosphere and induce the people to get ready to spend the festival by taking part in a great many political and cultural activities, and sharing joys and pleasures together, both on a collective and family level.⁷⁵

As a result of the work that was done, the number of festivals and customs grew rapidly and spread among the masses. Almost for the first time, there now began the festival of events of a local character, such as the day of the founding of the Party or youth organization, anniversaries of the inaugural of factories and enterprises, the opening of schools, the setting up of agricultural cooperatives, etc. New also were family festivals such as going to school for the first time, becoming a member of the Party, etc. They took their place side by side with celebrations of birthdays, engagements and weddings within the family.

The question of how to handle the funeral ceremony called forth concentrated effort — this by virtue of the fact that death, being a sad event in the life of man, had always been exploited by the clerics as the most appropriate occasion for imbuing people with the enslaving ideas of religion, strengthening religious sentiment through fear, and disseminating reactionary ideas about the existence of the heavenly world. To that end, churches and mosques, adapting themselves to the climate of the times, invented and practiced a plethora of religious ceremonies and services, and these took root in the consciousness of people who had not been sufficiently inculcated with the materialist world view. In order to eliminate these religious customs and practices, efforts were made to renounce, on the one hand, the philosophical, ideological and mystical content of funerals, and on the other hand to introduce ceremonies and services that showed respect for the memory of the deceased, and solicitous regard for the afflicted family and relatives. It did not take long for the elements of the new to come into play in this regard. People very soon stopped spending large sums of money for funerals. In place of the clergy, there began the practice of having an elderly person or a representative of an organization of the masses speak at the burial ceremony.

In order to develop further the struggle against the religious ideology and backward practices in general, and clear the way for the new, a series of organizational measures were taken, and relevant work was done by the Party and its levers — the organizations of the masses. Of special importance for assessing the situation and determining the course of action to be taken in the future, was the discussion and study of this problem during 1969, in accordance with the recommendation of comrade Enver Hoxha to the secretariat of the CC of APL on January 31, 1969.⁷⁶ Warning that it was possible for the old to return, and that a lengthy struggle was needed to prevent its return, comrade Enver Hoxha called for the continuation of the political and ideological education of the masses, and at the same time realized that "... the district Party committees, after determining when to act, should make a sound critical analysis to find out how they have operated with regard to these problems, how the problems stood at the moment, and how we should organize the work hereafter ...".⁷⁸ Comrade Enver also pointed out the path and method of work that was to be followed, in order to best reach this goal.

From March to August 1969, the organizations of the masses in all the districts made a vigorous analysis of the work done up to that time, in the course of which backward customs and religious beliefs were subjected once again to a broad-ranging popular discussion, the results of the struggle were assessed, and a check was made to determine the fulfillment of pledges taken previously. From the very start of their work, the organizations of the front and the other organizations of the masses, seeing popular discussions as a new avenue that would help the process of overthrowing the old, devoted special attention to this great political and ideological drive. Toward that end, the leaderships of the front drafted programs regarding the aims of popular discussions, the main problems to concentrate on, and the organizational measures to take to achieve the objectives of the program.

The popular discussions led to the conclusion that the elimination of backward customs and religious beliefs, and the affirmation of the new socialist concepts would be speeded up only by extending the struggle to the bosom of the family, and by enlisting the support of both the public and the family in this struggle.

Special attention was paid to the old people. By this time, they had come to support the movement against religion, and had become a good source of support to the youth in this struggle. The holding of special conferences and meetings, consulting with the elderly and getting them to make resolutions, and the educational work done with them, were some of the methods used, and which would be used again in the future, depending on the problems to be dealt with. This was understandable, considering that they, more than anybody else, were fanatics and believers, slaves of backward customs. Accordingly, the radical struggle that was waged against religion in this area called for more treachery in their ranks (than among other people). That is

why, acting under the direction of the base organizations of the Party, the organizations of the masses, and especially that of the front, had to view the special work being done with this segment of the population as an important drive that needed to be handled with great care.

It was important also to wage this struggle differently in various regions of the country, taking into account the characteristics peculiar to them, since there was variation in the degree of religious beliefs (in any given area). A number of denominations had been active in any given district, but there were differences among them, since one religion had been more active in one place than in another.

These distinctions with regard to the diffusion of religion called for discriminating work on the part of our propaganda work for scientific atheism.¹¹

The Party noted that in order to wage this struggle successfully in the future, it was necessary to implement rigorously the line of the masses, for on it depended also the outcome of the drive and the pledges taken by the people. The chief question now was to intensify the educational and persuasive work of the Party, in order to continue with success the struggle against religious beliefs.¹²

Summing up the results of the frontal struggle that was waged against religion, it is clear that one of the characteristics of this period — namely, the late sixties — is that the overwhelming majority of the population was no longer under the influence of religion. Most of the people had renounced in earnest religious rites and ceremonies, and did not observe them any longer. From now on, expressions of the religious ideology were but vestiges or blemishes that manifested themselves chiefly within the family and among particular groups and individuals, who were still under the influence of the main dogmas of religion, and who in various ways practiced religious customs, mores, ceremonies and rites. The reason these vestiges persisted in limited social circles and milieus was that, while in the society as a whole there had been carried out a wide range of activities of a political, ideological, and scientific atheist character, such activities had not been carried out within the family to the extent that they should have been.

These vestiges are preserved and show up in particular instances, such as occasions of joy and sorrow, at birth, engagements and weddings, funerals, times of misfortune, etc. They find expression in the life-style, behavior, relations between people, in the attitude toward natural and social phenomena.

The revolutionary movement against religion that took place in those years, had certain definite features: *First*, the struggle was fought in the context of the intensification of the ideological revolution. This was a profound class struggle between two world views, two ideologies, the object being to uproot the religious world view, which is one of the powerful pillars of the reactionary ideology. The eruption and intensification of the movement against religion and backward customs was a concrete expression of the sharpening of the class struggle against this ideology, a movement that served also as a genuine school for the education of the working masses with new socialist concepts and customs. It was likewise a vivid expression of the militant unity with the Party that has been characteristic of our people at every phase of our socialist revolution. Domestic and foreign enemies tried in every way, both openly and secretly, to block this struggle. With the backing of external reaction, they resorted to incitement, propaganda and constant pressure, hoping all the while that this was but a temporary situation. The steadfastness of the popular masses, their conviction that this struggle was necessary and just, and the revelations about the reactionary and harmful activity of the clergy made possible the unmasking of the religion and the victory over it.

Second, the movement was sharp and spread widely in cities and villages, and involved all segments of the population and all ages. It stood out, in this regard, for its massive scope. The broad working masses rose up as never before in the struggle against religion, by dealing direct blows not only against religion as a reactionary world view, but also against the foundations that served to maintain and nourish it. In reference to the participants in this massive movement, the youth proved to be the most vital and dynamic force, not only in terms of the initiative that it showed, but because of its steadfast prosecution of the struggle.

Third, the struggle against the religious ideology was part and parcel of the entire struggle against alien ideology, and against all backward customs to which religion had given its support for centuries. That is why in all the drives that were undertaken in this struggle that had as its aim the renunciation of the old and the triumph of the new, the struggle against the religious ideology was not divorced even for a moment from the struggle against backward customs. The blows against the religious world view and the material base of religion were interwoven with the struggle against backward customs that were linked with the status of the Albanian women in society and in the family. They were interwoven with the struggle of the socialist ideology in general.

Fourth, in the course of this revolutionary movement, the renunciation of the old was a dialectical renunciation, in the sense that it was accompanied by the assertion and affirmation in social life of the new socialist norms and customs. In this confrontation it was the new that won out, being that the future belongs to it. Naturally, the new did not become dominant from the start. In some respects, it showed itself to be weak, and often it coexisted with the old, or else operated as a camouflage for the old. But in any event, it pressed forward every day, gaining strength, consolidating itself, and becoming dominant.

Finally, the entire effort and struggle against the religious ideology, was led by the Party, as has been the case also with every other constructive effort. In dealing with any problem, it was always the committees and base organizations of the Party that oriented, organized and led the masses. The heavy blows that were dealt to religion and backward customs, under the leadership of the Party, and within a short period of time, make up a heroic page in the history of our people. The great revolutionary step that was taken in our country in this field is without precedent in the history of socialist countries.

As a result of the revolutionary drives in the sixties, and of the unrelenting work of the Party, religion in our country has been dealt a heavy blow politically and ideologically; but even so, it continues to offer resistance in the ideological arena. Complete victory in this area is more difficult than in other areas, because this is a question of the destruction of the roots of an ideology that has existed and operated for centuries or so. The present phase calls for the intensification of the struggle in the ideological terrain, by making use of scientific explanation in order to abolish the dogmas and spiritual ties that cause certain people to remain religious believers even now. Religious vestiges have not been eliminated totally, nor forever. Those that have remained are not inconsiderable in number, and more importantly the danger they pose must not be underestimated. They are a powerful regressive force, pose a real threat to socialist society, and operate with varying intensity and in different ways among particular segments of the population, and in particular zones and circumstances. Being vestiges of the past in the consciousness of the people and in their world view, they are not easily eradicated, nor quickly, for as soon as some of them weaken or disappear, others revive in different form and gather momentum, in case they are not fought against.

- ¹*History of APL*, Tiranë, 1968, p. 489.
- ²*Ibid.*, p. 491.
- ³*Central State Archives of S.P.R.A.* (Socialist People's Republic of Albania) (Hereafter to be cited as CSA), Fund of the Council of Ministers, 1966, file no. 470, leaf 2.
- ⁴*Ibid.*, leaf 6.
- ⁵*Ibid.*, August, 1966, file no. 499, leaf 3.
- ⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁸*Ibid.*, December, 1966, file no. 467, leaf 19.
- ⁹E. Hoxha, *Report to the Fifth Congress of APL*, Tiranë, 1966, p. 131.
- ¹⁰*Archives of the Executive Committee of the village of Lezhë*, 1966, file no. 261.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*
- ¹²CSA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1967, file no. 20, p. 34.
- ¹³*Ibid.*, leaf no. 23.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, leaf no. 37.
- ¹⁵*APL, Main Documents*, Vol. V, Tiranë, 1974, p. 240.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 244.
- ¹⁷Materials located in the museum of history in the city of Lezhë, file A-1-20.
- ¹⁸*Bashkimi* (Unity) newspaper, June 20, 1967.
- ¹⁹*Ibid.*, June 24, 1967.
- ²⁰SCA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1967, file no. 20, leaf 36.
- ²¹SCA, Fund of the Franciscan church, 1967, file 1342.
- ²²SCA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, file no. 20, leaf 24, July 1967.
- ²³*Ibid.*
- ²⁴*Ibid.*
- ²⁵*Ibid.*
- ²⁶*APL, Main Documents*, Vol. V, Tiranë, 1974, p. 243.
- ²⁷*Let Albania Remain Forever an Indomitable Fortress of Socialism and Communism*, Tiranë, 1967, p. 73.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 170.
- ²⁹Archives of the Presidency of the General Council of the Democratic Front of Albania, 1967, file no. 41 (hereafter cited as APGC or DFA).
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 170.
- ³¹*Zëri i Popullit* (The Voice of the People), Feb. 16, 1967.
- ³²At their meeting in March, 1967, the elders of Shtoji i Ri, Shkodër, resolved, among other things to: "Cease to observe any religious holidays. Cease to circumcize children. Cease to serve memorial dinners for the dead. Cease to commemorate the dead on religious holidays." (*Bashkimi* newspaper, March 28, 1967).
- ³³*Rruga e Partisë* (Road of the Party), no. 9, 1969, p. 63.
- ³⁴Letter of CC of APL to district Party committees, "On the Struggle Against Religion and Religious Preconceptions and Customs," *APL, Main Documents*, Vol. V, Tiranë, 1974, p. 244.
- ³⁵*Ibid.*
- ³⁶*Ibid.*
- ³⁷SCA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, July 11, 1967, file no. 20, leaf 28.
- ³⁸*Ibid.*
- ³⁹*Bashkimi* newspaper, March 19, 1967.
- ⁴⁰APGC of DFA, 1967, file 411.
- ⁴¹SCA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1967, file no. 20, leaf 29.
- ⁴²SCA, Fund of the Council of Ministers, February 1967, file no. 12, leaf 2.
- ⁴³*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴Letter of CC of APL to the district Party Committees, "On the Struggle Against Religion and Religious Preconceptions and Customs," *APL, Main Documents*, Vol. V, Tiranë, 1977, p. 245.
- ⁴⁵SCA, Fund of the Council of Ministers, September 1967, file 612, leaf no. 3.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷SCA, Fund of the Council of Ministers, file 20, leaf no. 6.
- ⁴⁸SCA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, July 11, 1967, file no. 20, leaf 26.
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*
- ⁵²APGC of DFA, "District Reports on the Struggle Against Backward Customs and Religion," September 1969.
- ⁵³SCA, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, July 1967, file no. 20, leaf 3.
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 27.
- ⁵⁶APGC of DFA, October 1969, File, "District Reports on the Struggle Against Backward Customs and Religious Beliefs".

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⁵⁷*Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* (hereafter cited as *AMIA*), file no. 23, 36-A leaf 1.

⁵⁸*AMIA*, file 23 36, leaf 2.

⁵⁹*Ibid.* leaf 4.

⁶⁰*AMIA*, 1967, file no. 2291 A of the court (trial) in Shkodër, against the group headed by Zef Bici, leaf no. 2/1.

⁶¹*Ibid.* leaf 132.

⁶²*Ibid.* p. 117.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*APGC of DFA*, October 1969, file "District Reports on the Struggle Against Backward Customs and Religious Beliefs."

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶*SCA*, Fund of the Ministry of Education, 1969, file no. 47, leaf 1.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸*APGC of DFA*, 1969, file, "Reports on the Struggle Against Backward Customs and Religious Beliefs," leaf 26.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹Letter of CC of APL to the Ministry of Education and district Party Committees, *SCA*, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1969, file no. 47, leaf 2.

⁷²*SCA*, Fund of the Ministry of Education, file 20, leaf 43.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.* leaf no. 1.

⁷⁶*SCA*, Fund of the Ministry of Education, file no. 20, p. 42.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

⁷⁸*Ibid.* leaf 11.

⁷⁹E. Hoxha, *Reports and Speeches 1969-70*, Tiranë, 1970, p. 33.

⁸⁰*Ibid.* p. 34.

⁸¹*SCA*, Fund of the Ministry of Education and Culture, file no. 20, leaf 38.

⁸²*Ibid.*



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STALINIST LEGACY OF ENVER HOXHA



During his lifetime as dictator of the Soviet Union, the speeches and writings of Joseph Stalin were printed in hundreds of volumes and used as texts and guides to strengthen the reign of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and to promote the communist cause around the world. In 1953, Nikita Khrushchev denounced the recently deceased Stalin, who was his onetime closest associate, as the cruelest despot that the world has seen. Since then, Stalin's name has almost disappeared. The 30th anniversary of his death was commemorated rather as a reminder to the world of the evils and sufferings his rule brought to millions of innocent people.

Albania alone celebrated the anniversary of Stalin's death and Enver Hoxha (the "little Stalin of Albania") even published a book entitled *With Stalin*, which describes in detail the five encounters they had. As a blind adorer of Stalin, Hoxha has recently released a collection of 35 volumes, appearing periodically, about world communism and

its leaders. The authorship of these volumes is attributed to Hoxha although when one considers his heavy work load of daily duties of state, it is highly improbable that these vast works could have been written by him in such a short time. It is said that the books were produced from detailed notes which Hoxha gathered through the years. By carefully perusing them, we see Hoxha as a rude, long-winded Stalinist, spinning off endless tautologies, justifying the unprecedented brutality against his own people, indeed, even his own comrades. Between lengthy ideological diatribes and political passages, the persevering reader can find many interesting portraits which bring to light the personalities of Hoxha and other communist leaders. However, experts in communist affairs will easily discover the Albanian leader's poorly contrived lies. They will also see his desire to give "true" accounts about events and personalities as his intent to present himself as the only true Marxist-Leninist in the whole world!

It appears that Hoxha's "revealing" and "outstanding" volumes (as they are called by Albanian propaganda), have been published with the author's intent to leave a "Stalinist" legacy to his successors. The "Little Stalin of Albania" is now 75 years old and in frail health. His political power is not as firm as it was before his right-hand man for 30 years, Premier Mehmet Shehu, "committed suicide." With Hoxha's death imminent, a political, economical and cultural evolution will undoubtedly occur in Albania. Did that not happen after the passing of Stalin, Mao, Tito and others?

Among Hoxha's colorful collection, his book *With Stalin* is for us revealing indeed when he describes how he briefed Stalin about the role Albania took in the struggle against religion and "reactionary clergy." This briefing took place during Hoxha's third meeting with Joseph Stalin, November 1949. We present part of that conversation here, as it lays bare Hoxha's attitude towards religion in general and Roman Catholicism in particular. Any comment on our part about these two men, who all their lives "tirelessly" fought against religion and the Vatican, will be superfluous.

During this meeting, Comrade Stalin talked, as always, quietly and calmly, asked questions and listened very attentively, expressed his opinion, gave us advice, but always in a thoroughly comradely spirit.

"There are not cut-and-dried prescriptions about how you should behave on this or that occasion, about how this or that problem should be solved," he would repeat frequently, according to the various questions I raised.

During the talk with Stalin I pointed out to him the stand of the clergy, especially the catholic clergy in Albania, our position in relation to it, and asked how he judged our stand.

"The Vatican is a centre of reaction," Comrade Stalin told me among other things, "it is a tool in the service of capital and world reaction, which supports this international organization of subversion and espionage. It is a fact that many catholic priests and missionaries of the Vatican are old-hands at espionage on a world scale. Imperialism has tried and is still trying to realize its aims by means of them." Then he told me of what had happened once in Yalta with Roosevelt, the representative of the American catholic church and others.

During the talk with Roosevelt, Churchill and others on problems of the anti-Hitlerite war, they had said: "We must no longer fight the Pope in Rome. What have you against him that you attack him?!"

"I have nothing against him," Stalin had replied."

Then, let us make the Pope our ally," they had said, "let us admit him to the coalition of the great allies."

"All right," Stalin had said, "but the anti-fascist alliance is an alliance to wipe out fascism and Nazism. As you know, gentlemen, this war is waged with soldiers, artillery, machine-guns, tanks, aircraft. If the Pope or you can tell us what armies, artillery, machine-guns, tanks and other weapons of war he possesses, let him become our ally. We don't need an ally for talk and incense."

After that, they had made no further mention of the question of the Pope, and the Vatican.

"Were there catholic priests in Albania who betrayed the people?" Comrade Stalin asked me then.

"Yes," I told him. "Indeed the heads of the catholic church made common cause with the nazi-fascist foreign invaders right from the start, placed themselves completely in their service, and did everything within their power to disrupt our National Liberation War and perpetuate the foreign domination."

"What did you do with them?"

"After the victory," I told him, "we arrested them and put them on trial and they received the punishment they deserved."

"You have done well," he said.

"But were there others who maintained a good stand?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, "especially clergymen of the Orthodox and Moslem religions."

"What have you done with them?" he asked me.

"We have kept them close to us. In its First Resolution our Party called on all the masses, including the clergymen, to unite for the sake of the great national cause, in the great war for freedom and independence. Many of them joined us, threw themselves into the war and made a valuable contribution to the liberation of the Homeland. After Liberation they embraced the policy of our Party and continued the work for the reconstruction of the country. We have always valued and honoured such clergymen, and some of them have now been elected deputies to the People's Assembly, or promoted to senior ranks in the army. In another case, a former clergyman linked himself so closely with the National Liberation Movement and the Party that in the course of the war he saw the futility of the religious dogma, abandoned his religion, embraced the communist ideology and thanks to his struggle, work and conviction we have admitted him to the ranks of the Party."

"Very good," Stalin said to me. "What more could I add? If you are clear about the fact that religion is opium for the people and that the Vatican is a centre of obscurantism, espionage and subversion against the cause of the peoples, then you know that you should act precisely as you have done."

"You should never put the struggle against the clergy, who carry out espionage and disruptive activities, on the religious plane," Stalin said, "but always on the political plane. The clergy must obey the laws of the state, because these laws express the will of the working class and the working people. You must make the people quite clear about these laws and the hostility of the reactionary clergymen so that even that part of the population which believes in religion will clearly see that, under the guise of religion, the clergymen carry out activities hostile to the Homeland and the people themselves. Hence the people, convinced through facts and arguments, together with the Government, should struggle against the hostile clergy. You should struggle against the hostile clergy. You should isolate and condemn only those clergymen who do not obey the Government and commit grave crimes against the state. But, I insist, the people must be convinced about the crimes of these clergymen, and should also be convinced about the futility of the religious ideology and the evils that result from it."

I remember that at the end of this unforgettable meeting Comrade Stalin gave us a piece of general advice: strengthen the internal situation well; strengthen the political work with the masses.



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...HE WANTED TO PRAY AND BELIEVE...

An Episode In The Atheistic Campaign Of The Albanian Red Guards

By Angel Loti

The young boy, Gjergj, had grown up in a beautiful mountain area near the region of Mirdita. However, he never took special notice of the natural beauty which surrounded him as he was growing up. Then, one day, Gjergj was taken from his mountain home and brought to Lezha by the Red Guards to become a "volunteer" in the army. The first fourteen years of his life had been filled with the traditional religious education of the mountains. But as a member of the Red Guards, he began to be instructed in the doctrine of the Communist regime. Gjergj seemed both to understand and accept his new education.

Leaving the city of Lezha for his first action with the Red Guards, Gjergj noticed, as he never had before, the great beauty of his natural surroundings. The leader of the squad, Guran Ferri, gave a brief explanation of their mission: "You all know very well the meaning of today's action, which the Party and the People have entrusted to you, and you must prove your loyalty." The leader looked over the men in his squad, and his eyes stopped on Gjergj: "And you, Gjergj, as the youngest and newest member of our group, have this opportunity to demonstrate your allegiance."

As they marched, the young men became very thirsty under the burning August sun. Their mouths were parched and they suffered from the long march in the heat. Then the men asked their leader, "Where will we stop to refresh ourselves with some water?" Guran Ferri encouraged his men. Pointing to the top of the nearby mountain on which stood the church they were sent to destroy, he said, "Have patience. When we arrive, you will taste the best fresh spring water that you have ever drunk."

The guards followed orders and kept marching. When they finally came over the crest of the mountain near the church and reached the place where the fresh spring was supposed to be, they stopped in amazement and looked angrily at their leader, for no water was evident. Guran Ferri was himself taken aback and exclaimed with surprise, "Where could that spring be?" No one said anything.

Guran Ferri, now angry as well as thirsty, marched decisively towards the church. A dignified old man stood petrified in the doorway. The military man perceived the fright of the old man and said to him, "Good day, old man." The old man answered, "Welcome."

"Are you afraid of us?" asked the leader.

"Why should I fear you. The church is for the people."

"Are you the church bell ringer? Do you know how to shout messages across the mountains?"

"I can shout and speak, but I am no longer able to ring the bells."

"Oh, you aren't? Then you know how to lie, old man. I heard the bells ringing just a few moments ago."

"By the sun which is burning for all the earth, I do not lie, for that is not God's command; but if you heard the bells ringing then they must indeed have been ringing, because that is what the Creator of the Heavens desired."

"Since you speak in this manner, you must also be a pastor."

"On my honor, we do not have a pastor."

"Did the pastor flee to the mountains with the other criminals?"

"No, sir, they threw him in prison long ago."

"So you must be performing the services?"

"I do what I can," he answered simply.

"And who gave you permission?" Ferri asked. "Don't you know that the church is outlawed?"

"I have permission from Heaven. The people come to the church and I cannot refuse them. Our ancestors let us this heritage..."

"Who are your forefathers?"

"The old man wanted to answer but swallowed his words. A few moments later he mustered the courage to explain. "The prince is our forefather."

"Prince? Who was this prince? Who are you talking about, old man?"

"Prince George, sir," said the old man in a low voice. "He is our ancestor from whom, according to legend, this church took its name. He died as a saint." The old man turned to the Red Guards, who were listening intently, and very innocently asked "Is any one of you named George?"

The Guards answered, patting young Gjergj on the back, "Yes, we have a boy from the mountains with that name."

The old man said, "Be blessed, young man."

Guran Ferri interrupted sharply because he was displeased with the old man's answer. "Stop this devil's trickery. You had better tell us where the spring is so that we can refresh ourselves."

"People of God, there is no longer a spring here."

"What happened to it? Where is it?" the man shouted.

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The old man explained, "The workers of the State Cooperative piped the water down to the villages at the foot of the mountain. Look what remains where the beautiful spring water used to flow."

The leader of the Red Guards looked all around, he saw the church building, the dry haystacks behind it, and dry brambles that had grown up to ten feet on either side of the church. He looked behind him and saw caked mud full of dead frogs and humming with insects.

While Guran Ferri's eyes were fixed on the mud, the old man said, "Only this mud remains of what used to be a spring where the prince and his white horse refreshed themselves."

The leader of the Red Guards interrupted angrily, "Don't bother me any more with that prince story. Are you trying to save the church? Listen to what I tell you. We have the order from our superiors to burn this church. As you must know, we will destroy all the churches in Albania."

The old man was terrified by that news, and fell on his knees pleading with the leader not to execute this horrible crime.

"It will be better for you, old man, if you help us bring these dried grasses into the church."

The old man mustered all his strength and tried to bar the door with his body.

Guran Ferri easily grabbed him and kicked him outside. The other guards opened wide the church doors and began to carry in the dry hay and grass. One of the young guards began to strike a match, but Guran Ferri stopped him, saying "Leave that to young Gjergj. He can prove his manhood with this task."

Gjergj took the matches and stared at the golden grasses. He hesitated unconsciously for a moment, then in a flash lit the flame. From that meager beginning, the whole church was soon ablaze. Young Gjergj ran through the flames and smoke and disappeared inside the church. A comrade who saw him yelled, "Hey what are you doing? Come back! You'll get burned!" But Gjergj did not answer.

The old man rushed inside and tried to beat out the flames. Guran Ferri and his companions quickly ran out of the burning church. When they were outside, one of the guards realized that the old man was still inside.

Guran Ferri announced, "We did not order the old man to be burned. It was his decision to go in."

Not only was the church building ablaze, but all the haystacks behind it were burning and the brambles on either side of the church had also caught fire. While their eyes were fascinated by the flames their ears were surprised by the sound of the church bells ringing.

"Who could be ringing the bells?" said one of the Red Guards. "The old man is certainly too weak?"

"It might be young Gjergj. It certainly cannot be the wind!" said another. A third said, "As you can see, the flames have not yet reached the bell tower. But soon the bell ringer will be ashes."

The first guard said, "It is too bad this will happen to one so young." To which another declared, "He must have found what he was looking for."

Suddenly some of the guards noticed that the flame was spreading from the brambles to the grass surrounding the dry mud in front of the church.

"Hey men, we are trapped," shouted Guran Ferri. "If we hurry, we can escape the flames by passing over the dry mud. We must hurry!"

All of them rushed to get away, but were sucked footfirst into the muddy earth. Guran Ferri shouted to his men: "Throw away your weapons and try to swim out of this filthy swampland."

Arms and feet flailed, but they gained only inches against their adversary.

The whole area was brightly lit by the fire and the bells could be heard, sometimes brightly ringing and sometimes muffled.

"Oh God, what has happened to us?" cried out one of the guards. "Is that the church bell ringing or are my ears shouting?"

The church bells kept ringing while the men were sinking up to their necks.

"Give me your hand, I'm drowning," screamed one of them. But as soon as a comrade reached out, both were swallowed by the mud.

One of the young men lamented, "What crime have we committed to deserve such a fate?"

The flames were crackling and the bells were still ringing, rung either by the wind or by young Gjergj who was transformed into a vigilant angel.

With the fire raging around him, so that even the sun was overshadowed, the leader of the Red Guards Squad looked around him to see all of his men perishing. Swamp mud covered his face which for the first time held a truly human expression. He alone was left to look upon his dead companions, and on that August day, a marvelous transformation brought tears to his face. Guran Ferri for the first time in his life wanted to pray and believe that in this universe God does exist.



POPE AND VATICAN — TARGETS

Two events, the visit of Pope John Paul II to Central America and the Proclamation of the Holy Year, attracted quickly the attention of the Albanian official press, which immediately set its gear in hysterical motion to downgrade and downplay such historical events.

We are printing a translation of two recent articles appearing in Zeri i Popullit (Voice of the People) March 22 and May 10, 1983. Voice of the People is the official daily organ of the Albanian Party of Labor (Communist). Our readers may be offended by the content and style. However, we believe that by bringing them to public attention they can see just how far the Albanian officials can go in their blind anti-Catholic and anti-Vatican paranoia.

Why Did Pope Wojtyla Proclaim The "Holy Year" Ahead of Time?

When the prelates of the Vatican preach the dogma of the faith, they aim at two things: to deceive the faithful and to empty their pockets. This is how they have behaved for centuries, and this is how they behave today as well. But at certain times, such as now, Pope the robber prevails over Pope the preacher. And in such a role, the Pope reveals his most "interesting" and "extraordinary" aptitudes, by practicing robbery behind religious rites.

Why did Karol Wojtyla proclaim the "Holy Year" ahead of time, and called it Special? The lie: so that humanity may return to the "way of the Lord". The truth: so that the rites to commemorate the date of the death of the biblical Christ may increase the earnings of the treasury of the "Holy See". Here is what the Italian magazine *Panorama* says in one of its recent issues: "There is a close connection between the Special Jubilee and the need not only to cover the annual deficit of the Holy See, but also to close the gap in the finances of the Vatican created by the failure of the Ambrosian bank." Further on the same magazine writes: "This day gave birth to a series of initiatives designed to have an economic impact not only on the Vatican, but on all Catholic countries in the world." And what were these initiatives?

They began with ceremonies greeting the "Holy Year" and bringing down "the Wall containing the Holy Gate". Like all walls this one too is ordinary, built with bricks. But since everything during this special jubilee is considered "holy," the bricks of this wall also cannot be thought of as anything but "holy." And as such they cannot simply be thrown away, but are instead sold piecemeal to the faithful! And in order that as many as possible may benefit from them, the robber Pope ordered that the bricks be made available in smaller dimensions. Also, in order to avoid complications, the bricks were curmarked beforehand for the persons who were to receive them. "This questionable tradition," write the newspaper *Corriere Della Sera*, "naturally brings something, for as the 'collector' picks up the bricks, he makes an offering."

Here is another initiative that has a bearing on earnings in the Holy Year: The Pope will open wide the portals of the Vatican until the end of this year for all those who want to see "the home of the lord on earth". But, naturally, not without profits. Thus, to see the most valuable art collections of the Vatican, the price of admission is 2,000 liras. A stroll in the Papal gardens costs 1,500 liras.

Another innovation, whose author again is the robber Pope, is the following: The faithful who seek forgiveness of "sins" need not go all the way to Rome to pray "the lord". They can perform this rite "just as well and with the same spiritual results" in their own diocese. But why all this thoughtful regard for the faithful? Because, since they will save travel expenses to Rome, the offering to the local church will of course be greater. Furthermore, this "modernization of the rite" will fill the pockets of a countless number of priests in the provinces. The robber looks out also for the band.

Such are the ways by which the Pope fattens himself. The religious rites and dogmas are the most appropriate means for robbing the faithful. This deceptive spectacle with a heavenly halo reveals plainly the primary goal of the "Holy Year" — to gain wealth in the name of religion, and religious rites and dogmas. This year is called Special because the enterprise for enriching the treasury of the "Holy See" is also special. And the Pope who directs this huge financial operation is the "inspirer" and the "extraordinary thinker" of this year.

But this is only one aspect of what goes on behind the scenes in the Vatican. Only a limited part of such goings-on is published in the press. The activities of what is called the "multinational of sacred souls" is carried out on a much bigger scale, and is concerned not only with spiritual plunder, but with outright material plunder that is practiced everywhere and which stops at nothing.

What Does The Pope Believe in?

A few days ago, a semi-anonymous letter written by a Polish priest, arrived at the address of the Pope in the Vatican. The letter bore the name of Rev. Henrik, nothing else. The secret police of the Vatican, in collaboration with Interpol, set out on the trail of the letter writer who dared to cast doubt on the dignity of the holy father. Let us leave the police to their job, and let us see what the anonymous priest writes to pope Wojtyla.

"Our holy father (are you really that?)

I am a simple priest. Like all other servants of the Lord, I too have followed your activities with great interest. Fortunately, you turned out to be a bright man, and with a passion for travel, to boot. There is not a patch of ground on the globe you haven't set foot on or kissed. But to tell the truth, it's your recent trip to Central America that I've followed with most attention. The reason is that I made a bet with a tailor friend of mine. He said that You would not get back alive from this pastoral tour, while I, as a man of god, said the opposite. Naturally I won the bet.

But I lost my faith. . . .

While you went from Costa Rica to Panama, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, my friend and I debated here in Poland.

'In the last two years, twelve priests have been slain in Panama. The thirteenth will be the pope.'

'You forget that the pope is the vicar of god on earth. He cannot be killed because the omnipotent watches over him.'

'The lord wasn't able to protect him inside the Vatican. If medicine and science hadn't done the utmost, the pope would have slipped into oblivion when the first assassination attempt was made on him.'

'From that day on, I doubt that the pope believes in god.'

'And what do you think he believes in?'

'The police, money, the devil. . . . It's for money he took the trip to America.'

'He traveled to America for the sake of peace. War is boiling there. Didn't you hear the declaration he made as soon as he arrived in San José?'

'Children of the same god, let us put aside hatred among men. Let us rather practice justice. Let us secure peace for all.'

'Why should he go all the way to Panama just for that?'

'Because he had been invited by the archbishop of Managua, Obando (Bravo).'

'Add also the president of Salvador, Magaña, that of Guatemala, Efraim Rios Mont, as well as the other generals who maintain rule thanks to the gun and the bible. . . .'

Our dialogue continued for days on end. I was frozen with fear that something might happen to you. I couldn't find comfort even in your declarations about "putting aside hatreds" and about "love and harmony among men". I lost all hope when I heard about the provocation in Nicaragua, and also the harsh protests against you by the unbelievers in Guatemala.

True enough, you got back safely in the Vatican, and now you are getting ready to come here to us. I won the bet, but that devil of a tailor had poked around and unearthed many secrets about your last trip. He had precise information about the greatest number of policemen who accompanied you to assure your safety, and about your special vestments, about the armored cars and many, many other secrets. All of which made me wonder what does your holiness believe in: god, the police, money, or the devil?

With wavering faith,
Rev. Henrik'



Interior of the Jesuit Church in Shkodra. It is now a warehouse.

NEW BOOK ON ATHEISM REVIEWED

Albanian leaders claim that they have succeeded in eradicating religion from the public and private life in Albania. But they must surely recognize, as they themselves admit often in their speeches and continually in the daily press, that "deep-rooted religious feelings cannot be eliminated by closing churches and mosques." *Hulusi Hako*, a propaganda writer against religion for many years and a protégé of Enver Hoxha, is the author of a book entitled *Scientific Atheism* recently released in Tirana.

The book deals with the problem of religion in general and in particular Albania, from the point of view of Hoxha and his followers. *Hulusi Hako* tries to justify, with his last work, the regime's harsh measures against any vestige of religious belief. His book was reviewed in Tirana's daily *Zëri i Popullit* (*Voice of the People*) on July 20, 1983. Below is the translation of that review.

The book, *Scientific Atheism*, by *Hulusi Hako*, doctor of philosophical sciences, is a recent publication of the Department of Political and Judicial Sciences at the University of Tirane. Although it is intended as a school text, this book is very timely and suitable for the widest mass audience. The readers will find in it a profound critique of religious dogmas and clericalism, based on scientific, theoretical, historical and empirical arguments. They will gain a clear understanding of the substance and social role of religion as the "opium of the people" (K. Marx), and as the "benzene of evil fires" (E. Hoxha, pronounced HO-dja). They will also learn about the path taken by the Party and our people in affirming scientific atheism.

The value of this publication lies in its scientific veracity, and its discussion of the transforming power of the Marxist-Leninist line of our Party and the teachings of comrade Enver Hoxha, which have been embodied in our revolutionary practice, and which have guided us securely along new and untrodden roads and passes. The book *Scientific Atheism* shows through rational argument the contribution of the Party of Labor of Albania and of comrade Enver Hoxha to the defense and development of Marxist-Leninist theory regarding this acute problem, as well as its creative application in accordance with conditions in our country and contemporary world development. In studying the problem of religion and expounding scientific atheism, the author has successfully taken into account our fund of experience and the intensification of the critique of anti-Albanian bourgeois and revisionist viewpoints.

The book is a powerful and well-founded indictment of the religious dogmas of idealism — the most serious, most cynical and most inhuman underhanded deception known to history. World reaction has felt keenly the overthrow of religion in Albania. That is why it churns up a campaign of lies against Marxism-Leninism and socialism, saying they are fighting religion and denying to the people the freedom to believe, etc. *Scientific Atheism* shows us that the struggle against the opium of religion began centuries ago, and that the spirit and force of this struggle has been growing with the development of the class struggle and revolutionary practice, the broadening and mastery of materialist knowledge, and the growth of the capacity of human reason to acquire knowledge and to debate. This struggle has accompanied the entire process of world civilization and culture. It found unprecedented expression also during our National Renaissance in the great idea that "The religion of Albanians is Albanianism".

The merit and strength of a true socialist society lies in the fact that it makes the most cherished dreams, aspirations and ideals of humanity a reality. It does not quit the struggle against religion in the middle of the road. Nor does it reconcile itself with the religious opportunism of the modern revisionists who, in this book, are subjected to a reasoned critique and exposure, starting with specific examples of Khrushchevian deceptions, such as "Communist Christianity" and "Islamic Socialism," and all the way to "the religious language of Titoism," whose aim is to disorient the Kosovars who are struggling for their just rights.

The book *Scientific Atheism* helps us to arm ourselves with the only correct, active and militant world outlook against old conservative remnants—the debris of centuries—which at present are fomented by the ideological, liberal, modernist aggression of the imperialists and revisionists. The materialist philosophy, as well as scientific atheism which derives from it and is organically linked with it, owe their origin to the working-class perspective, and preserve thus the rigor and objectivity of science. They rest on a broad and solid scientific foundation, and they equip us with a stable outlook and system of convictions. They have nothing in common with that which is reactionary and hinders progress. "The Marxist-Leninist doctrine," comrade Enver Hoxha has said, "is the synthesis of everything rational and progressive that has struggled in all epochs and by every means against superstition, magic, mysticism, ignorance, and the moral and material oppression of peoples. This doctrine has now become the torch that illuminates the path of peoples towards socialism and communism."

The scientific atheist world outlook affirms the socialist order, which looks upon the working man as its most valuable capital and its greatest force, ruler over nature and master of his destiny. In addition, the reader of this book learns that the theoretical activity and revolutionary practice of the Party of Labor of Albania, and the ideas and teachings of comrade Enver Hoxha concerning the problems of scientific atheism, are a valuable contribution to the treasury of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of socialist construction.

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DREAM TRAPS AND OTHER TRICKS IN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

One of the pragmatic principles of the communist system of education is to use any means in order to get as much information as possible from every person — starting from pupils at tender ages to the fragile old people who are barely able to act or talk.

In a series of short articles and comments, we have brought to our readers examples of the indoctrination of Albanian youth whereby pupils are instructed to gather information about their parents, relatives and their peers. All of this information then is registered and used by the communist party as evidence against the accused when they may at any time willingly or unwillingly traverse the prescribed lines of communist conduct.

One of the tactics which we are treating here involves asking children to relate the dreams of their beloved ones as well as their own. Based on Sigmund Freud's principle that "An uninterpreted dream is like an unread book," the communists take it on themselves to become 'the interpreters', i.e., psycho-analysts, sorcerers, fortunetellers, etc. From the meaning and notion "dream" as strictly explained by Freud, the communists accept for their purposes only the following as a basic scientific fact — that 'dreams reflect the wishes, desires and aspirations of people'. They disregard the notion that dreams may be nothing more than a reflection of daily perturbations, disorders and turmoils of life.

The dream information device was used in the beginning of the communist seizure of power by bribing the children of freedom fighters with various promises until the danger the freedom fighters posed was over. However, due to convulsive oppression which brought about radical changes and new laws, the tension never ceased. By the middle sixties, a new wave of religious persecution, in tune with Mao Tse Tung's "Cultural Revolution" caused the tension to grow even higher. This culminated in the outlawing of religion in Albania. Incidentally, the Albanian dictator, Enver Hoxha, already denied Mao Tse Tung, whom he followed literally, but still accepts his "Cultural Revolution" and his own application of it. (See "The Revolutionary Movement Against Religion" in this issue, pp. 20-34). During all these upheavals and others that followed the dream device was used extensively.

Presented here are some examples given by refugees arriving in New York this summer of this tactical practice, in the form of questions asked of children during their daily courses in different subjects:

Zoology hour (after the physical description of animals): At what do the dogs bark? Do they bark during the night or during the day? Who goes out at night to find out as to why dogs are barking so hard? Do people come in your house to eat and sleep after dogs bark? Do you know them? Do you feel sorry for them because they have to do their business at night? Do you have any of your relatives in mountains (outlaws)? Do you miss them? Do you dream about them when they don't come to see you for a long time? What did you dream about them? Do your dogs bark at them? Why don't they bark at them? . . . , and so on.

Because dogs barked at the security police who were continuously pursuing nationalists during the first decade (1944-54), it became imperative to get rid of most of the poor dogs who dealt equally with all strangers. Allegedly, this decision was made on the ground that "a dog's food ratio was as much as a person's ratio." These decisions were strictly reinforced by 1946 when agrarian reforms were applied to small landowners, and even more strictly when farmers were forced to join the cooperative state controlled system by the beginning of the sixties. Some of the dogs that were left to communist or pro-communist farmers were then used as cooperative flock dogs.

Mathematical hours: How many animals and fowl do you have in your house? How many did you have last year or one year before the last? Do you now have more or less than you had before? When your parents voluntarily joined the cooperative, did you miss some of your animals? Do you dream about them? How many of you dream about them?

These questions were given as "quizzes." Their answers, after discussions and mathematical corrections, had to be verified by asking parents and relatives. In the coming sessions other quizzes on the same subject would take place. If contradictory results were proven, then those results were not discussed, but were used as evidence against the pupil's parents or relatives who might have slaughtered animals for their consumption. It should be noted that nobody could slaughter registered animals or fowl without explicit permission from the authorities.

Home economics and handicraft hours: How many pounds of cereals, wool, cotton, etc. does your family get from the field, sheep, etc.? How many eggs do you get per day from your fowl? How much do you think is set aside for the needs of the family and how much is given to the fatherland?

Of course these questions would be made after discussions of a particular plant, and then connected with the math hours. When the results would show differences, the case would be investigated seriously so that the investigators would have reasons to press their victims harder. The same procedure could be used for fruits, vegetables, etc., but always blended into learning processes in order to cover the clear intent of their pressure.

Civic hours: About 90% of the questions have the following correct answer: Yes, the party, Comrade Enver Hoxha or Uncle Enver, the state, the democratic front, etc. This is because the learners are led by questions to give desired answers, for example, "Is it true that the party supplies teachers to teach you? Who organizes cooperatives? Where do your parents get the food for you and for themselves? Who has been ordered to set up cooperatives?"

who has brought electricity in every city and village, the clergy or the party? Where do we get our clothes from? Who has been directed to build roads, big buildings, factories, channels, hydroelectrical plants, etc.? Who teaches everybody how to work? Isn't it because of this that the party is called "Workers' Party"? Aren't your parents happy about the evening conferences? If not, why? (These conferences consist of readings from party daily papers and books highlighting and justifying its own orders, the never-ending monthly, yearly and five-year plans, people's loyalty, achievements and sacrifices.) Do your parents and clergy approve of your participation in voluntary work around here and outside of our village, region, or city? (This type of question was touchy particularly when girls were involved equally with boys in 'voluntary' work during summer vacations. These lasted up to three months, consisting of 6-8 hours per day of physical work and the rest of the day set aside for propaganda and recreational activities. Most of the people objected to this new practice either on the grounds of religion, on the part of Muslims or on the ground of tradition in general). What do your parents tell you when you describe the way you spent the summer in the 'voluntary' youth working brigades? Did they dream about you when you were away enjoying the summer? How many of you would volunteer next year to spend the summer together? Would you like to become a squad (company, brigade) commander next year? How many medallions and insignias did you earn and what for? Why don't you tell us about your dreams for the next summer? and so on.

Tough measures to impose radical changes took place. Among them were the requisition of animals, crops, savings, the taking over of private houses for governmental buildings, the executing of patriots (including some of those who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1912), of well known scholars, of traditional leaders and simple clergymen; the giving of formerly owned land to landless farmers followed by the joining of all private lands into state cooperatives, the closing of all private and religious schools, etc. All of these acts were prepared and accompanied by a fierce propaganda campaign. This included mobilizing the youth in squares and leading them to shout "Death to the accused" while a judge enumerated his charges in the presence of the accused and of the forcibly gathered town or city people. Everybody was instigated to repeat many times that slogan. Consequently the "people's wish" was accepted and carried out.

The tensions were so high that most of the population lived in permanent shock. Hungry and angry, they lived in fear of persecution, thinking that the next to disappear would be themselves alone or with part of the family, or with the whole family. By trying to keep or protect any private property or any of one's rights, a person ended up only stirring trouble for oneself. The people, in general, were completely disillusioned. They would experience frequent deliriums, traumas, spells of weakness, sudden collapses, heart attacks, and go through day and night with dreams and nightmares, wishing themselves not to have owned anything, not to be there. They became completely powerless to express their own thoughts and desires. The only consolation for them was to seek the help of God in the hidden silence of the night or through the hard and long day of never-ending work, although the communists claimed that they had killed even Him.

These were ripe occasions for the party to instruct teachers at party meetings not to lose any chance to ask their pupils and students about their dreams and about dreams of their parents and relatives. The whole younger generation was encouraged and praised to relate those dreams as a natural phenomenon of human nature and of glorious outcome of the socialistic-communistic system. Always the dream device was used more often on children whose parents were considered opponents of the government and party. If and when parents or relatives living in the same house would scream during the night because of daily exhaustion or horrible dreams, their offspring were as ready as a set tape recorder to record and report the dream to the class and their teacher. Hunger, threats by wild animals and monstrous reptiles, the appearance of the dead, or refugees or of outlaw relatives, dreams about people being trapped in mines or woods or displaced from one region to another, or channels, separate or mass executions, etc. were the most frequent themes that were reported. It was related, for example that a father was invited for lunch by a party member at his home on the occasion of "Liberation Day, November 29." When he arrived there he was asked why he had come. The party member denied he had invited him. The dream was reported by one of his children, but it was interpreted as a 'fake dream'. Later the 'fake dreamer' was invited for two months of 'voluntary work'. Upon his return, his boy, who had been praised for relating a good dream, asked his father: "Daddy, did you dream anything when you were at voluntary work during these two months?" After a moment of hesitation, his father, realizing what was going on answered: "No, dear son, I have stopped dreaming since I went there on voluntary work."

Another case: By the middle sixties, cooperative kitchens were established in the Macukoll village, northern Albania. In one of the first days of that event, a woman took her coupon to get her family portion from the kitchen. In a moment of distraction she spilled her part of the liquidy food. Upset by what happened, she shouted, "To hell with this type of poison!" That swearing was discussed at length in the cooperative meeting that same evening, and she was warned and reprimanded. This immediate action made her more upset. During that night she screamed waking up her children and her husband. Unaware of what might happen, she told her family what she had gone through that evening. This matter was reported in the school by one of her children. Without losing time, the party interpreted her behavior as if she was resisting and fighting against cooperativisation. The decision was made to displace the whole family in another region where cooperativisation was already in full swing.

These are two examples of lenient punishments for the acts of simple people which one may interpret as "tongue slips" or as natural under the circumstances. The communists, however, interpreted them ad literam as "Freudian slips," i.e., as "proof of circumstantial reaction." Furthermore, if one was talking or standing firm about his/her rights of thought including religion, then that individual would have received up to six years or more of prison with hard labor.

It is because of these permanent pressures that people live in Albania with constant fear, shock and anger. They feed themselves not with love and admiration for the glorious party, as the communists so ironically acclaim, but with a despondent sense of revenge, unsure as to what might happen to them the next day. Unable to even tell their dreams to their offsprings, they wonder how their own children were somehow stolen from their midst and had become eyewitnesses for their prosecution by party prosecutors. It is no wonder then that Enver Hoxha found it delightful to abolish the Ministry of Justice, thus becoming himself the "Judge of judges," of Marxism-Leninism and of all other governmental systems.

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PASSIVE REACTION TO ATHEISM MAY BRING PEOPLE TO RELIGION

The environment in which we live affects us in many ways, changing our habits, mores, thoughts, ideals, beliefs, the way we dress, the language we speak, etc. . . . However, when a group of people stick too forcibly to a set of rules and try by any means to impose these rules on everybody, then some of those subjected begin to suspect the group and voice their opinions openly. They show by their behavior or actions that they do not like that type of pressure put upon them. One may rightly think that from here stems the embryonic idea of democracy as opposed to a dictatorship.

As an example, the intolerance of the group, caste, or government may be expressed through a calculated process, such as mass persuasion propaganda, which injects slander and threatens them by mistreatment, blackmail, and finally, physical force. One of the ways to counteract these pressures is a passive silent reaction, which in many cases makes up the "silent majority."

This last spring, we received a letter from a former Albanian teacher now living in Austria. In the letter, he briefly discusses his own experiences of atheism by reacting through silence. We found his notes interesting and appropriate for our Bulletin, mainly because the hope they promote is so much needed by our suppressed Albanian people. At the same time, his episode of escape from prison and his survival, connected with a wondering invocation of God in a moment of extreme danger, gives us some food for thought.

He writes that his early childhood as a Catholic consisted of repeating his parents' prayers with his brothers and sisters without understanding them, but eventually memorizing at least fractions of them. At the elementary school in his region, he had catechism only one hour per week for four years which included the recitation of litanies in Latin. When he was sent to a state teachers college, religion was not taught at all, since it was considered a private matter, and left to private religious schools. He asserts that the government policy of separation of Church and state under King Zog I was in complete conformity with the ideals of the Albanian national awakening, formulated by Vaso Pasha: (1) from Shkodra in the statement "The religion of Albanians is Albanianism." This idea, writes our veteran educator, is intentionally interpreted by the present government of Enver Hoxha and some other intellectuals to mean that Vaso Pasha or "Pashko" (2) proposed that Albanians were nonreligious people. This interpretation completely forgets or willingly disregards the fact that Vaso "Pashko" was really implying that to be an Albanian meant to put aside personal religious adherence be it Muslim, Orthodox, or Catholic. During this time period a Muslim was considered a Turk, an Orthodox a Greek or a Slav, and a Catholic an Italian or Latin. With these Middle Age notions, he writes, one couldn't build national concepts. More than religion, it was the language, the inherited culture and the land the people inhabited that made up the concept of a nation and of nationalism.

By asserting that the religion of Albanians is Albanianism, Vaso Pasha did not by any standards mean that the Albanian people shouldn't be religious in order to be Albanian. On the contrary, he was warning them against Turkish, Greek, Slavic and Italian propaganda on religious grounds. Actually there were only a limited number of individuals in the country educated in Albanian that could write the language, because Albanian schools and books in the vernacular were prohibited by law. The majority of the people were illiterate anyway. Most of the nationalist activity was developed outside of the occupied country. In Italy it was mainly carried out by Arberesh (Albanians living in Italy since the time of Scanderbeg). Similar activity was taking place in Istanbul, Rumania, Greece, Bulgaria and at about the turn of the 20th century in the U.S.A. As we have stated in previous issues of our Bulletin, a good number of these patriotic activists were religious. For example, the second president of the League of Prizren, who also became the president of the provisional revolutionary government of the same League, was Rev. Omer Prizreni. So were many Muslim and Catholic clergy, participating in the Congress of Monastir which adopted the Latin alphabet for the Albanian language. Among them was famed Franciscan Father, Gjergj Fishta, who was elected President of the Commission of that body. Also among the cosigners of the Albanian Declaration of Independence on 28 November 1912 were Rev. Bab Dud Karbunara, Msgr. Nikoll Kacori, and others.

In his letter, our new friend continues with the example of Naim Frashëri, one of the two national poets of Albania who is so venerated in present Albanian literature. Frashëri, himself of a Bektashi Muslim sect, wrote a poem in his *Lulet e Verës* (*The Flowers of Spring*) dedicated to Jesus Christ (*Krishti*). The first stanza is presented below in Albanian and English:

Krisht, djalitë, njeriu i Perëndisë!
Fytyra yje mua më tregon,
Ah, të këqijat e njerezisë
Që ka punuar dhe po punon!
Se kjo fytyrë është pasqyrë.
Që na rrëfen e s'na gënjen.

Christ, Son of God!
Your face shows me,
Alas, the injustices of the world (humanity)
Which it has done and is doing
Because this image is a mirror
That confesses and doesn't lie

The booklet of poems *Lulet e Verës* was used as a literary text in Albanian schools until the communists took power. After that all of Frashëri's religious poems and references to God were either eliminated or distorted.

This censorship has prompted Mahmoud Tsungu of New York to prepare a new edition of his brother Ali Tsungu's English translation of Frashëri's masterpiece *Flocks and Farming* under the title *Frashëri's Song of Albania* (1981). The new edition includes the poet's religious thought which Albanian censorship prevented Ali Tsungu from including. Commenting on the cover flap of the new English edition, Mahmoud Tsungu points out that the poet Frashëri is not alien to the dogma that God created man according to His image when he writes:

(1) Vaso Pasha was a self educated Albanian Catholic intellectual employed under the Turkish administration. He succeeded in getting the title of "Pasha" because of his moderate, enlightened Renaissance ideas expressed in his French, Italian, Turkish and Albanian publications, as well as in his administrative directions under the Turkish empire.

(2) "Pashko-Pashkë," which in Albanian means a man born on Easter Sunday, was Vaso Pasha's Turkish title, or surname, as for example George Kastrioti "Skanderbeg."

In your midst you'll find Him hidden,
in your features, in your shape.
(p. 22, lines 19-20 of his version.)

We wonder whom the author would have condemned for omitting his belief, which permeates most of his works.

With this somewhat discursive explanation, the retired educator continues to describe his own experiences. "When winter came, students had to warm themselves around four stoves in a long cold concrete dormitory, which during the Turkish rule served as a horse stable for the Turkish cavalry. The students had to take turns chopping and bringing wood in to feed the fire. While warming themselves, some students would start telling dirty jokes allegedly heard or extemporaneously invented, mainly directed at the clergy. On weekends, when these jokes would reach an unbearable point of immorality, I would go and chop wood, bring it in and then go to bed and read something as it was too cold to use the study hall. Noticing my behavior, the classmates would purposefully tell such nonsense stories whenever I came to warm up by the stove knowing I would leave, thus depriving me from enjoying the fire." This, he writes, added to their enjoyment as he was not able to reasonably discuss, persuade or fight with them.

By giving up in this manner, he became a constrained and alienated youngster, almost like a misanthrope. However, it helped him in another way, by motivating him to study harder and longer than his peers, resulting in good grades and an uninterrupted state scholarship for all eight college years.

Two months before he finished his college studies, Fascist Italy attacked Albania (April 7, 1939). He, like most of his classmates, volunteered to go to the front lines. But they were utterly disappointed as they were not allowed to have more than 39 bullets each for their guns. They were also disappointed in the government which fled the country, and in the armed forces which lasted not even three days. Transportation to the front lines, or any kind of food distribution or leadership was not provided. In spite of these odds, the volunteers moved on foot towards the front lines of Durres. During the sunset of the second day, near Kavaja city, they were greeted by leaflets dropped by Italian planes urging their surrender. To that action they responded by firing against the planes and using their bullets to the very last one. By that time, many volunteers and military people were already quitting the front since the casualties grew heavier and heavier. They were furnished with absolutely nothing. Consequently they decided to return to college before the Italians could catch them. With this action of solidarity for the sake of their own and their country's freedom, all of the unpleasantness, disparagements and rivalries at the boarding school were forgotten.

During the war, our friend encountered many other difficulties, which if printed could be a good and interesting description of the situation in that part of the Balkans. In 1945 while teaching at a teacher's training school in Kosova, he was arrested with the whole Albanian faculty allegedly for not conforming with the communist ideology. He was accused of spreading hatred among the people, and supporting anti-communist forces which were waging a desperate uncoordinated war, hoping that the western world would come to their help. Explaining the arrest of these Albanian educators, their prison tortures, and their sentences from 7 to 15 years each of imprisonment with forced labor, he winds up with this conclusion: "Actually we suffered all these hardships because the Yugoslav communists thought that we were plotting against them." Comparing the double and triple death sentences of many others as well as life and other long term sentences, he writes, "Our light sentences looked as if they were just a warning punishment to us, particularly to the suffering and hungry people outside."

The small two story prison in the city of Peja (Kosova) was packed with 151 people, one of whom was a Montenegrin sent there for killing 6 Albanians in cold blood. Another was a Serbian, for slaughtering two cows of his cooperative and consuming their meat with his family. Each of them was sentenced to a one year prison term, and both had appealed for release. All the other 149 people were Albanians, six of them dragging their shackles and handcuffs awaiting their imminent execution. More than half of them were already sentenced and waiting to be transferred to large prisons in Serbia.

As the feelings of rage, revenge and hatred towards the Albanians peaked, the prisoners decided to break out in en masse before the executions and transfers. This occurred on August 11, 1946. Forty-eight prisoners were killed during the attempted escape. At the moment of the break, they suffered only one casualty while they were disarming the guards whom, incidentally, they decided to leave completely unharmed. However, there was apparently a gross misunderstanding about the paths to be followed, and the points of assembly. This was combined with the lack of support from freedom fighters who had suffered many casualties, including that of their leader, in clashes with the communist forces just days earlier.

As he says, "Because of a slight wound in my leg, my blood traces made me vulnerable. Dragging myself uphill among the bushes, I lost my companions during the machine gun barrages. At a certain point, I found myself in the middle of a bare platform area. The firing was so powerful that I didn't have either energy or will to continue, particularly as the bright sun and the sweat prevented me from seeing uphill. I nearly decided to stop and be shot; but, at the moment I stopped, the gunfire also stopped, and I heard the warning to surrender. As this warning was clearly understood, I said to myself, 'Perhaps God doesn't want me to be killed. . . .' and with a spontaneous zigzag dash, I reached the bushes followed by a more powerful barrage of machinegun fire, which miraculously didn't get me. I gained enough strength to leave my pursuers behind and hid behind a rock covered with a bush about five feet from the pathway, along which a militia, soldiers, and communist youth passed group after group pursuing me and others.

"Behind the oval shaped rock of about two feet by four feet, I dug a kind of foxhole, in which I hid by covering myself with dirt and dry leaves. I rested there from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. until I heard the order for the search parties to withdraw back to their assigned centers in the city to await further instructions. I didn't move from the hole until I heard no more steps. Only then did I head towards the high border mountains between Yugoslavia and Albania, which seemingly ironic to me are called 'Cursed Mountains' ('Malet e Nemuna' in Albanian and 'Maledija' in Serbian).

"After ten days of wandering through these mountains in order to avoid an encounter with my pursuers, I was caught while trying to get in contact with a relative of mine. By that time, the order 'to shoot on sight' had already been rescinded. However, I suffered the consequences of being carried through the city where I had been teaching by a cart drawn by bulls and surrounded by ten machineguns aimed at my head as a sign of Yugoslav communist victory. By midnight of that day, I was taken back to prison. There I was greeted with hard blows to my head and face, and assigned to clean the sewers under the supervision of two machinegun militia men. I was given, by the guards, the honorable title of 'Professor Shit,' which I bore for the rest of my five years."

What makes our new friend, the former teacher now living in Austria, and his wonder is that at the moment of his sure death, his thought of God resulted in the regaining of strength to run and escape. According to him, he invoked God in that same moment when the shooting stopped, just when he would as well have pleaded with his pursuers to spare his life. On the contrary, he did the opposite and he was saved.

He asks us, "Why don't we think about this experience?" Then he sums up his religious perception by stating that "... Perhaps I believe in God more than I think I believe and formally practiced; I am sure the silent Albanians under dictatorship in both Albania and Yugoslavia have similar and natural convictions, because our Son of God, Jesus Christ, has been and is on the side of all oppressed people."

ANNUAL REPORT 1982 — ALBANIA

Amnesty International

Albania, although a member of the United Nations, has not signed or ratified the international human rights covenants. Its laws explicitly limit the exercise of certain human rights in the name of defending the socialist state and the Albanian Workers' Party from "socially dangerous acts", in particular "manifestations of bureaucracy and liberalism". For instance Article 55 of the criminal code deals with "anti-state propaganda and agitation". Its broad formulation makes it possible to penalize the non-violent expression of dissent or religious belief, with 10 years' deprivation of liberty (not less than 10 years or death in particularly serious cases or in time of war). Similarly Article 53, which deals with "sabotage", allows for excessively wide application. It refers to: "An action or absence of action intended to undermine state activity or that of the Workers' Party of Albania, the socialist economy, the organization and direction of the state and society and also carries a penalty of not less than 10 years' deprivation of liberty."

An article about "sabotage" in the official legal journal *Drejtësia Popullore* (Popular Justice) No. 1 of January/March 1981 revealed that people from all the main areas of public life had been prosecuted for this offence in recent years. "Thus all the hostile groups which were uncovered, especially during the recent years in the military, in the field of state administration and economic management, in the fields of arts and culture and so forth, tried to realize their hostile objective entirely through sabotage in the various sphere of our political, ideological, military, economic and administrative life."

Very few Albanian citizens were officially allowed to travel abroad. People who attempted to leave the country without official authorization were liable under Article 127 of the criminal code to a sentence of up to five years' deprivation of liberty for "illegal passage across the borders of state". Under Article 47 they could be sentenced to 10 to 25 years' imprisonment or death for "flight from the state and refusal to return to the fatherland on the part of a person sent on service or allowed temporarily to leave the state". Amnesty International was informed of a number of people sentenced during the 1960's and 1970's to up to 25 years' imprisonment under these articles or similar provisions in the former (1958) criminal code.

Since 1967, when Albania was officially proclaimed an atheist state, all places of worship have been closed and religious leaders of the Muslim, Orthodox and Roman Catholic faiths have been prohibited from carrying out religious duties. Those who did were reportedly severely penalized by the authorities. It was alleged by emigre religious sources that over 20 Roman Catholic priests and members of religious orders were serving prison sentences in 1981. At least two — Bishops Fishta and Coka — were reported to have died in detention in the late 1970's (see *Amnesty International Report 1981*). Amnesty International learned of the arrest of Father Ndoc Luli in mid-1980 for having baptized the children of a relative. Their mother was apparently sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. Father Luli was reported to have been tried and sentenced *in camera*; Amnesty International did not however learn details of his sentence.

In past years Amnesty International received reports of serious deficiencies in criminal procedure both during pre-trial detention and trial. It was alleged that psychological and sometimes physical pressure was used during investigation to obtain statements from the accused and witnesses. Some defendants were held in solitary confinement without access to family or lawyer for up to six months during pre-trial investigation. Where defendants were permitted defence counsel, these appeared to have been state-appointed and to have provided only nominal services. Some defendants did not see their defence counsel before the trial itself, which was frequently held behind closed doors.

Amnesty International could not, on the basis of the information available, estimate the number of political prisoners in Albania. However, reports indicated that in the late 1970's up to 2,000 political prisoners were held in the prison camps of Ballsh and Spaci alone. Many of them were reported to have been convicted for expressing dissatisfaction with economic or political conditions in Albania, or for attempting to leave the country without authorization.

Conditions at Spaci camp, with an estimated prison population of over 500 political prisoners, were described as particularly harsh. According to reports, prisoners mined copper in eight-hour shifts, six days a week, with little protective clothing. Production targets were described as excessive and prisoners who failed to meet these targets faced extra work hours or solitary confinement. Ballsh camp reportedly held some 1,000 political prisoners, and there were also camps at Ballsh for ordinary criminal prisoners and for foreigners. Conditions, although apparently less harsh than at Spaci, were also reported to be very poor. According to these reports, prisoners slept in unheated barracks, on straw mattresses or wooden platforms. At both camps food was deficient in quality and quantity. It had to be supplemented with parcels from prisoners' families and with food produced on farms attached to prison camp sites bought from the prisoners' wages. Medical care, provided by staff mainly recruited from among the prisoners, was inadequate. Prisoners punished by solitary confinement were kept in unheated, concrete cells approximately two metres by one metre, with either bed or no mattress. It was also reported that guards punished prisoners by stripping them to the waist and beating them with rubber hoses filled with sand or gravel.

Political prisoners were also held in other prisons, such as Burreli, and employed in labour camps in many parts of the country to construct factories and housing, and work on marsh-drainage and mining. Other political or religious dissenters were administratively interned or banished. Under Decree No. 5912 of 1979 people may be administratively interned or banished, without trial (in contravention of Article 56 of the constitution), for unspecified periods. This measure may also be used against (members of the family of fugitives living inside or outside the state) — that is, as a reprisal against people who have not themselves necessarily violated Albanian law.

On 28 March 1981 the National Assembly passed a law which laid down the procedure for granting pardons to convicted prisoners. Amnesty International learned of one political prisoner, a foreign national, who was granted a pardon and released during 1981.

The criminal code lists 34 crimes, 23 of which are political and military crimes, punishable by a discretionary death sentence.

WHO IS ENVER HOXHA AFRAID OF?

Since assuming power, the Albanian communist leader Enver Hoxha, has fought continually, not only against his Yugoslav, Russian and Chinese patrons, but also against his own people. He has been inordinately suspicious, particularly of those who embody the values of a free Albanian nation. Consistent with this policy, Hoxha has banned by decree all literary works of many poets and writers, who were instrumental in the development of Albanian language and culture, as a direct threat to his militant Stalinist thought. The list is long and increases constantly according to Hoxha's paranoid moods.

Among these 55 silenced authors, there are bishops, priests and religious. These enlightened personalities have been consigned by Hoxha to the "garbage bin of history" (according to his own statement). However, this attempt to downgrade and destroy the tremendous contribution that these illustrious people have made to the Albanian culture will not succeed. The new generation of Albanians at home and abroad are daily becoming more aware of this propaganda and are beginning to discover and appreciate the "forbidden" literary treasures.

Below is the list of the banned Albanian authors, which was compiled from the Albanian press.

Rev. ALEKSANDER SIRDANI
ANTON LOGORECI
ARSHI PIPA
Fr. BENEDIKT DEMA, O.F.M.
ENGJELL RADOJA
ET'HEM HAXHIADEMI
FRANO ALKAJ
Fr. GJERGJ FISHTA, O.F.M.
ILO MITKE QAFEZEZI
KOLEC PRENDUSHI
KOLE THACI
KOSTE A. CEKREZI
KRISTO FLOQI
Rev. LAZER SHANTOJA
LEF NOSI
LUMO SKENDO (MIT'AT FRASHERI)
Fr. MARIN SIRDANI, O.F.M.
MARTIN CAMAJ
MEHDI FRASHERI
MUSTAFA KRUJA-MERLIKA (SHPEND BARDHI)
NDOC VASIJA
Rev. NIKOLL GAZULLI
Abbot PRENG DOCI
STAVRO SKENDI
VANGJEL KOCA
Archbishop VINCENC PRENDUSHI
ZEF SCHIRO, Jr.
ZOI XOXA

Fr. ANTON HARAPI, O.F.M.
Fr. ANTON ZANONI, S.J.
Fr. BERNARDIN PALAJ, O.F.M.
BRANKO MERXHANI
ERNEST KOLIQI
FAIK KONICA
Fr. FULVIO CORDIGNANO, S.J.
GJERGJ PEKMEZI
Fr. JUSTIN RROTA
KARL GURAKUQI
KONSTANTIN KOTE
KRIST MALOKI
LAME KODRA (SEJFULLAH MALESHOVA)
Fr. LUIGJ MARLEKAJ
LUIGJ THACI
LLESH BITROJ
Fr. MARK HARAPI, S.J.
MATI LOGORECI
MUZINE KOKOLARI
NAMIK RESULI
Rev. NDRE ZADEJA
Fr. PASHKO BARDHI, O.F.M.
SIMON SHUTERIQI
TAJAR ZAVALANI
VASIL ALARUPI (BENDO SHAPERDANI)
ZEF M. HARAPI
Fr. ZEF VALENTINI, S.J.



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ALBANIANS WHO HONOR THEIR ORIGINS

Professor Martin Camaj

In the past we have written briefly about Professor Martin Camaj, Albanian scholar, educator, poet and writer, who is currently serving on the faculty of the University of Munich, Germany.

Camaj's literary roots began forming in his youth in Shkodra, Albania. Escaping from Albania in 1948, Martin pursued his academic education at the University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia, during which time he wrote extensively on Albanian language and culture. Before leaving Yugoslavia in 1955, he published a two volume work of collected poems which were extremely well received.

Camaj served for a short period as Instructor at the State University in Rome while engaging in scientific research on the oldest texts of written Albanian. At the same time he became Editor of the renowned literary journal Le Pleiade (Shejzat), which was owned and directed by Professor Ernest Koliqi, a distinguished Albanian poet, writer and educator in exile from his native land. Camaj's literary talents are reflected in the pages of this highly cultured journal, and also in his own literary and linguistic works which have made him one of the most prominent Albanian scholars and writers of the post World War II generation.

Unfortunately, Camaj's works are prohibited in his native land, along with the works of fifty-five other distinguished Albanian writers. We have chosen to print one of Martin Camaj's many poems, "The Skull" because it reflects the anxiety of the present world, at the mercy of massive preparations for war and divided by war propaganda. The poem was written shortly after World War II while the suffering caused by the war was still fresh in the young poet's mind. "The Skull" appears below in an English version by our friend and supporter, Rev. James Torrens, S.J., a poet and educator himself.

THE SKULL

Walking in a desolate place I see a skull on the ground.
Young teeth have fallen from the bare jaws,
which smilingly stay open as if to say:
"Don't be afraid, this happened long ago!"

In the hollow eyes one detects
A youth never to return.

On the wide forehead a kernel-sized hole glares,
And the nose bone is cracked.
It seems to be saying to me: "Didn't he hit me straight?
No sound came out of my mouth!"

In the hollow eyes one detects
The sky darkened by clouds.

"I am happy that they didn't bury me:
With no dirt in my mouth, I listen to the wind and speak.
I see the light and the stones where I fell with my fellows.
The travellers can see and tell about us at home!"

And the hollow eyes intently
Regard the nearby pile of bones.

"I am afraid of just one thing! I wonder if this time
The flash of new weapons would burn our skulls?"
Horried, I hurry from there, but at my look back
The skulls seem still beseeching:

"Have mercy on us, traveller!
Toss a little earth over us!"



RRASHTA

N' nji vend të tretum shof mbi tok' nji rrashtë.
Dhambë e rij kan' ra prej noflash t' zblueme,
Që hapun rrjën në ('qeshun si me dashë
Të thojshtin: „mos u trand, është gjë e shkume!“
Nga zgavrra e synit vren
Rinin, që kurr nuk kthen.

N' ballin e gian' sa 'i kokërr drithi 'i birë
E ka dhe kocin e hundës të camë.
M' duket se m' thotë: „Aspo! Ma shaj mërë.
Prej goje s' emë nuk ka dal' m' gënjë!“
Nga zgavrra vren n' pres
Nji qiell prej rëvënxë.

„E lumtum jam po shi s' më kam' nën tokë:
Emat ndigjo! Në gojë n' gë s' kam dhë,
Dritën e shi gurt, ku mëc me shokë:
T' na vrenë udhtar' t' dëshajn n' shp' për në!“
Nga zgavrra me legsi
Kurr koka nuk për be
„Nji gjë ka shp' frige! A thue s' dyti flaka
E armë e re, lash na vë mbi rreshma?“
Mnerue ndej ika, por tuc u sjell' përmbropa
M' ngja se zbutun m' u luntën kto eshtina:
Udhëtar' m' shir për në.
M' kry na qit pak dhë,

SOME REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY ALBANIA

*Dr. Rexhep Krasniqi, President
Free Albania Committee*

Editor's note: We are pleased to bring to our readers the following essay on contemporary Albania written by Dr. Rexhep Krasniqi. We are sure you will find it interesting and valuable, since he is an authority on Albanian affairs. Born in Kosova, Krasniqi studied in Albania and Austria before serving his country as Secretary of Education. For the past twenty-five years he has been president of the Free Albania Committee located in New York. In this position, Dr. Krasniqi has travelled widely and has met many distinguished personalities in politics.)

Under Communist Rule

The invasion of Albania in April, 1939, by Fascist Italy, in spite of a brief and memorable resistance of the people abandoned by the West, actually paved the way for the Albanian communist Party, and its so-called National Liberation Movement to take over the country. In this land where communism was virtually non-existent, Yugoslav communist agents, having strong moral-material support from the Western Allies, founded the Party, and in fact organized and directed the partisan war against the fascist-nazi occupation. At the same time, they were able to out-manuever the badly-split and disorganized genuine nationalist guerilla resistance groups. Thus, Albania was the first Balkan country "liberated" at the end of 1944, without direct foreign military intervention. Ever since suppression of freedoms and human rights have been the rule, including the destruction of all forms of religious life.

Due to a number of incidents that have occurred during the past four decades, there has been considerable attention paid to this small country. However, because of the very nature of the communist system, it has been extremely difficult for the media, or even the diplomats, to find out and clarify these events. This is particularly true in Stalinist Albania with its strictly enforced secrecy, its tight information policy and its concealed maneuvers. Examples of this arose there in 1948, when Tirana broke with Titoist Yugoslavia, then the 1960's on the occasion of the dramatic split with Moscow, again in 1978, when Tirana broke its Alliance with Peking, and finally, in the wake of a series of recent events culminating in December, 1981 with the "suicide" of Premier Mehmet Shehu, the second most powerful leader of the entire communist era in Albania. These developments triggered various speculations and rumors in the world press and the diplomatic circles. There was, however, not much agreement on what caused these events or how they actually developed. Most of the observers agreed, though, that what happened in Albania on these occasions were in themselves meaningful and deserve attention.

Under Powerful Foreign Influence

After the "liberation" Albania continued to remain totally under the tutelage of Titoist Yugoslavia. In 1948 came the Tirana-Belgrade split precipitated by Belgrade's systematic plans to incorporate Albania into the Yugoslav Federal State. At this point, Tirana's communist leaders, Enver Hoxha, the Party Secretary, and Mehmet Shehu, the Premier, were saved from being ousted due to the Stalin-Tito conflict. With Moscow's backing Hoxha-Shehu were able to crush all opposition within the Party, and thus establish their own strong and undisputed control of the Party and the State.

In 1960, the Kremlin leadership under Khrushchev became disenchanted with Hoxha-Shehu, but was unable to remove them. One of the reasons for this was that the Albanian chiefs found a new and mighty protector, Mao's China. Thus Khrushchev made the unprecedented and drastic move of severing all Party and diplomatic relations with rebellious Tirana. It was generally thought that this action was performed to preserve the Kremlin's supremacy within the communist camp, or as Hoxha put it, to "compel all to submit to Soviet policy." Having in mind primarily Communist China, Khrushchev applied this harsh formula first against Albania, the weakest of Moscow's dominated countries in Europe. Peking's firm support of Tirana considerably weakened the Kremlin's condemnation, and at the same time contributed to bringing into the open the conflict between Moscow and Peking, the great schism in the communist world.

The post-Khrushchev Soviet leadership tried time and again to make conciliatory moves towards Albania. Tirana was invited to participate at the meetings of Comecon, the East European economic association, and in the Warsaw Pact, of which Albania was still formally a member. Tirana promptly rejected the invitation and asked the members of the Pact, among others, for condemnation and correction of the "fatal errors made under premier Khrushchev against Albania." ("Zeri i Popullit", the Party organ, Feb. 3rd, 1963.)

One of the major consequences of the Soviet-Albanian break was the formation of the Sino-Albanian alliance which helped Tirana overcome the economic-trade difficulties caused by their break with Moscow. In return, Albania not only served as Red China's "beachhead" in Europe, but also rendered valuable service as Peking's chief spokesman in the United Nations until Communist China became a regular member state of that world body. When the present leadership of Peking began changing Mao's rigid rule, particularly its rapid movement with the hated "new revisionist" Yugoslavia, and the United States, Tirana distanced itself from Peking without breaking all ties (1978).

Albania's Total Isolation Under Hoxha's Dictatorship

The end of 1981 saw the sudden "suicide" or murder of Mehmet Shehu. This was the culminating point of a series of drastic purges carried out in Tirana since 1966 in Maoist-style under the significant slogan of "Revolutionizing the Revolution." The most prominent among those purged were Party writers, high ranking Party, Government and Army leaders, such as Fadil Pacrami, Editor-in-Chief of the Party daily *Zeri i Popullit*, General Beqir Balluku, longstanding First Vice-Premier and Minister of Defense, General Petrit Dume, Chief of Staff of the Army, Abdyl Kellezi, Politburo member and former Rector of the Tirana State University, Kico Theodosi, Politburo member and Minister of Industry and Mines, Kico Ngjela, Minister of Trade, Thoma Deliana, Minister of Education and Culture, Pirro Dodbibaj, Minister of Agriculture. After Shehu's death, his entire family, his wife Fiqrete (herself a prominent Party member), her sons, relatives and friends in the Party, Government and Army quietly disappeared from public life and are still unaccounted for. The same fate seems to have met Haxhi Lleshi, longstanding nominal head of the State, Kadri Hasbiu, former Minister of Internal Affairs, including the Security Agency, Nesti Nasse, Foreign Minister, and others.

In the meantime, Hoxha in a speech in November, 1982, formally accused Shehu and his faction of "deviation", hostile activities and conspiracy with the Western Powers, Soviet Russia, Yugoslavia and so on, against the people and the State. Shehu's "suicide" as well as an abortive seaborne "invasion" on the Albanian seacoast, seems to have been used to divert the attention from internal troubles and direct them towards the "sinister" aims of Belgrade against Albania.

These supposed hostile intentions have been vividly described in a book published by Hoxha in 1982 under the title *The Titoists* in Albanian, English and French. Based on "facts" and the analization of "true" happenings, Hoxha exposes a series of plots of the "modern revisionist Titoists" against the Albanian (communist) Party of Labor aimed to eliminate its leadership (meaning himself) by using such "traitors" as Koci Xoxe, Liri Gega, and most recently Mehmet Shehu. He further elaborates at length on the hostile policy of the Titoist and the chauvinistic Greatserbians towards the Albanian population in Yugoslavia in the past and present, which is similar to that of the pre-war Serbian regime. In spite of seemingly serious deterioration of relations between the two neighboring countries, they continue to cooperate in the economic trade sectors, in fact Yugoslavia is the main trading partner of Albania.

It is therefore difficult to assess the course of Tirana-Belgrade relations. To a degree they are likely to be determined by Belgrade's moderating policy towards the ethnic Albanians and eventually the common threat posed by Moscow's intentions in that area.

Thus, in spite of Hoxha's advanced age of mid-seventy and the constant rumors of his failing health, he appears to have recovered some strength as of late, and has consolidated his position as Albania's omnipotent leader. One of the most important elements he is using to secure the backing of the people is his continued vigorous campaign against Belgrade's brutal treatment of nearly 2 million Albanian nationals in Yugoslavia, demanding for them the creation of a Republic status and full equality like other major ethnic groups.

Nevertheless, Hoxha's era is coming slowly to an end, and there might already be some moves among the younger leaders for succession. Hoxha seems to have trusted Ramiz Alia, his longstanding disciple on Marxist-Leninist ideology, as his successor. However, neither he or any other obscure younger pretendent seems to have the ability and the esteem of the people to play a major role in the post-Hoxha era. Outside influence could become a more deciding factor on this matter.

New Interest On Albania — The Soviet Union-Communist China-The West

Thus, Albania is presently in the kind of situation that could invite the Soviet Union to become more involved there and try once more to bring her back into the Soviet bloc. That is what has really been happening. The new Kremlin leadership under Yuri Andropov addressed warm greetings to the Tirana regime on November 29, 1982, the 38th Anniversary of Albania's liberation from fascist-nazi occupation, and extended an invitation to repair the ties that were broken in 1961. This offer, as expected, was flatly turned down. Although it appears that there cannot be much chance of Albania joining the Soviet bloc during Hoxha's stay at the top, there are still speculations of some sort of Moscow influence in Tirana.

This Soviet step towards Albania, brought Communist China to the fore at once. In spite of Soviet moves towards reconciliation, China does not want Moscow to extend its influence in any part of the world including the Balkan peninsula. At the beginning of this year the communist Chinese sent a delegation to Tirana to discuss resumption of economic-trade relations. The Chinese aid is badly needed for the civilian and military sectors, and could help Albania to complete some of the 23 industrial projects which were unfinished when Peking abandoned Albania. Among these are the large hydroelectric works of Fierza and Kumani in the Drin Valley in the northeast, and the large steel mill in Elbasan and the oil refineries in the southwest of the country. The probability that Peking might regain some sort of influence in Tirana is not to be disregarded.

Under present circumstances and taking into consideration the fate of Czechoslovakia in 1968, as well as the present situation in Poland, there is no chance for Albania to open herself up more to the West. The Hoxha regime for its own security within the entire communist orbit is compelled to continue to propagate its traditional policy of being an uncompromising foe of "American imperialism" and of NATO. In the last years Hoxha has been very active in rewriting the Albanian historic events during and after World War II. At the end of 1982, he has edited a special volume in Albanian, English and French, entitled: *The Anglo-American Threat to Albania*, which in reality contains little truth and many distorted facts. In all his enormous voluminous works of over 40 books, Hoxha uses his considerable writing skill of distorting historic facts and forwarding plain lies, in order to portray himself as the sole and authentic architect of "modern socialist Albania", and moreover, as the most prominent Marxist-Leninist living ideologue in the world.

In the past, according to a *N.Y. Times* article of December 26, 1982, there had been discussion among Washington, London and Paris, in earlier decades about the possibility of negotiating with the Tirana regime. This idea appears to have acquired more urgency after Moscow's recent wooing of Tirana. The three Western Allies seem to have come to the conclusion to try once more to deal with Tirana by offering to return some \$36 million in gold originally belonging to pre-war Albania, which was acquired by Britain via Italy and Germany at the end of the war. It is assumed that this deal might settle an agreement with communist Albania (*N.Y. Times*). Washington has openly tried in 1973 and again in 1980 to come to terms with Hoxha's regime without any positive results. New Western overtures to Tirana do not appear to promise more success.

How the above-mentioned developments will affect Stalinist Albania's position within the communist world and towards the West, is anybody's guess. However, they do seem to justify the sudden interest in that tiny country of both sides of the Iron Curtain.

IN STALIN'S REFUGE

By Sandro Ottolenghi

Editors note: The following article on a recent trip to Albania by an Italian journalist is reprinted in full from the June 6, 1983 issue of the magazine Panorama, published in Milan.

On the clearest summer night the shining lights of another planet can be seen from Bari, from Otranto, across the sea. A total of 2.5 million persons live there—men, women, children. They distrust strangers. They consider them corrupt and dangerous. They feel as though they are in a fortress under siege and they are all trained for defense. A monarch governs there who has been in power for almost half a century. He is their father-master whom they listen to and venerate. And they feel fear.

The planet, called Shqipëri — land of the eagle — by its inhabitants, is Albania. Its sovereign is Enver Hoxha, the only Stalin disciple still heading a government. He is the liberator, founder and guide of the only existing dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the only place in the world where the tablets of the law are of the purest and most authoritarian Marxism-Leninism.

It is the most inaccessible and mysterious European country, truly another planet 60 kilometers by sea from Italy, sunk in the Balkans between Greece and Yugoslavia. It is not easy to get into Albania, and its inhabitants cannot leave. Merely thinking about leaving the country is high treason punishable by years in jail. Albania admits no foreign newspapers or books or travelers who are not accompanied by trusted guards. Newspapermen, poets, writers, all uncontrollable witnesses, are not admitted. Profession of any religion is not permitted except for that of the worker's party. There is no culture except that which comes from above; there is no property that does not belong to the state. The only cars belong to officials; the only history studied is that of Albania freed from Nazi-fascism; no philosophy is studied except out of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and obviously Hoxha. Even foreign languages are studied in the ponderous, translated Hoxha texts (almost three a year are published, the latest being "The Tito Supporters," and "Eurocommunism and Anticommunism," together totalling 1,000 pages). The state does not permit jeans, rock music, beer, moustaches, long hair — and only married women may use lipstick.

Albania in 1983 is a complex and fascinating puzzle, a disquieting political and ideological laboratory within Europe, a strategic objective desired by the great powers. Nevertheless, it often seems different from the scenario described in documents or in biased interpretations. But it must also be said that it is "extremely difficult" as a western diplomat in Tirana said, "to go behind the scenes — more difficult than in any other country in the world." And an observer who has been in Albania for a long time says that "the reports sent by 20 foreign ambassadors accredited here do not go beyond what can be seen by walking through the streets. At most there can be speculation of the post-Hoxha period, on the return of the Russians or Chinese, on the advance of the Americans. But without really knowing anything. Months or years may pass before it is known that a minister was fired from his job or that Hoxha received a stranger." The most sensational case is that of ex-prime minister Mehmet Shehu, whose suicide was reported by the party newspaper *Zeri i Popullit* on 18 December 1981. Only at the beginning of this year, with the release of Hoxha's new book, was it learned the Shehu was exposed as a spy and conspirator of the "Yugoslav-Soviet-British-American clique."

Hoxha said, "We could live without bread, but we will never live without our principles." Ramiz Alia, the Albanian coslov, ideologist and regime brain, said, "We are the most democratic nation on earth." Together they are creating a new model of life which they believe will make Albania "the world's lighthouse."

The party is behind everything. The party, which means Hoxha, shares power with no one, and officially no one has any wish to question decisions. At the parliamentary elections in 1981, of 1.6 million voters there was only one "no." In elections last 24 March to people's councils, the people's courts, and local administrators, 99.9 percent voted yes, and the no votes numbered 175. Hoxha said, "People's party unity is as strong as our steel. Our adversaries will break their heads against this unity. We must protect this unity as our most precious possession. Fortified by this unity we will break through the ring that surrounds us."

The threat that is supposed to come from abroad, the threat against the integrity of the "land of the eagle" is the fixed point of propaganda. Every street, every building, every store, every office has — alongside Hoxha's picture — banners and posters in which people are urged to be vigilant, to mobilize, to report every suspicion. "Every citizen is a soldier, every soldier a citizen" is one of the preferred slogans, but the soldiers seen in the streets do not have the martial, severe look of troops of the eastern nations; and their uniform, which closely resembles those of the Chinese military, would not pass inspection by the least disciplined corporal from Bucharest or Sofia.

Tens of thousands of minifortifications are the most constant and apparent sign of the Albanian landscape. They are scattered through the farmland; the hills and mountains are full of them. They will serve to "stop the invader" in a hand to hand defense which seems to be that decided upon by the Tirana

strategists. Another consideration is that the Albanian army is not among the best armed and equipped. In general they have old tanks bought from the Chinese or on the black market. It is said that some French Mirage fighter planes and U.S. missiles arrived recently. The fortifications in the northern area have their weapons turned toward Yugoslavia; along the coastal strip they are defending against an improbable Italian attack; guerrilla fighters in the south could oppose an invasion from Greece. In September last year Hoxha reported an abortive landing attempt by counterrevolutionaries, supplied by imperialism, to overturn the Tirana regime. Nothing more was ever heard of this, but in December the most important "purge" in the history of Albania sent 10 key ministers, in accordance with standing procedure, to work in camps or factories.

According to a U.S. State Department report in 1980, Albania is the European nation with the highest citizen-secret police ratio. The "Sigurimi" (counter-espionage) agents are reported to be everywhere. But in Tirana, Shkodra, Valona or in other cities and villages, the presence of the police, at least uniformed police, is not as apparent as in Moscow or in Budapest. The organization of society and the mode of living actually prevent any type of dissent. The generations born after 1938 are practically cut off from the rest of the world, they are without information, they look at the rest of the earth, as someone has said, with a telescope with red-colored lenses. From nursery school, children grow up impregnated with the official ideology, nursed with slogans, and protected by their shelters. From elementary school they learn to live according to styles that would be easy to relate to the "books and the rifle" of other completely different historical and political situations.

But that is not all. Albania today gives the precise impression that, despite a very low standard of living, despite restrictions and privations, despite isolation, Hoxha and his theories have created a homogeneous society closed within itself and with a deep-rooted collective conscience. On one hand, the elderly recall what this world looked like at the end of the war — always a place of transit and of booty — and they see what progress has been made. On the other hand, the youth evidently feel that ideology is sufficient to compensate for shortcomings in other areas. A western diplomat added, "It is a tale that could lead very far, but it seems evident that most Albanians are satisfied with what they have and they seem not to be aware of what is around them. In fact, they are all really equal."

The Albanian bureaucracy does not enjoy the privileges of the Moscow or Belgrade bureaucracies. Even if it is said that Hoxha and his powerful wife Nexhmije, head of the party's ideological school, like French cuisine and champagne (both have a Parisian upbringing, and got their degrees in France), the secretary of the party lives in Tirana like the others of the "nomenklatura" in a modest quarter of small villas isolated from the military and near the university. His "dacha," on the Durazzo beach, is still that built on orders from Galeazzo Ciano. A secondary school teacher from Fieri says, "We have had the Ottoman beys, the Zogu kings, the Italian fascists, and surely things were worse then than they are today." The 2,000 automobiles in Albania all belong to the bureaucracy and all have grey curtains on the windows. But this is not a difference that the Albanians notice because no one can ever own an automobile. And one would be useless since it is difficult if not impossible to go from one place to another considering that everyone works 6 days a week for 10 hours a day, considering that vacations are planned from above and last just 2 weeks. An "Enver Hoxha" brand heavy-duty bicycle (the same brand as tractors, shirts, steel cable) is enough for daily transportation. As in Mao's China, everyone owns a bicycle.

In one of its editorials, *Zeri i Popullit* said: "any kind of dissenter in our country was sent into exile because we don't want to follow the degenerate road of capitalism." Alia decreed that "The artist, of any kind, must be a militant revolutionary. Art and entertainment must be weapons of socialist change."

Albania even sent God into exile. This officially happened in 1967 when Albania was proclaimed "The world's only atheist country." Thus churches and mosques disappeared (60 percent of the population was Muslim) and the few still standing have been transformed into "places more useful to society": movies, arenas, party or police offices. Considering the Vatican "a spy and lackey of capitalism" and John Paul II "a fireman serving imperialism," the regime sent 217 priests and mullahs to jail or labor camps and it inflicts heavy sentences on anyone who secretly practices religion or observes religious holidays (the children are interrogated at school regarding this). To have a Bible in the house means 5 years in jail and the same punishment is prescribed for listening to Vatican Radio in Albania. At Shkodra, which was the principal Catholic center of the country, there is "a museum of atheism" whose exhibits show every kind of nefarious act of religious belief and in which the Trinity is described thus: The father is imperialism, the son is revisionism, and the pope is the Holy Spirit.

Among the many decisions made by Hoxha in the four decades of his reign, the most obvious remains that of economic dependency. The party head said, "We don't want gifts from anyone that would make us slaves and we do not want to belong either to industrial society or to socialist realism of a Soviet type, or to a consumer society or to the postindustrial society, or third world development." With these principles, followed very rigorously, the Albanian economy which was at a zero point after the war, developed surprisingly. A specialized agriculture was created which, with Chinese patience and often rudimentary tools (wooden plows are still seen) produced vegetable gardens even on the shoulders of the roads. A strong push was given to industries that produced essential goods.

Albanian collectivism is absolute and, while other socialist nations tend somehow toward private ownership in some areas of their economy, here the regime pushes for new transfers from cooperatives to state enterprises. The rigidly-observed planned economy bore fruit. In 1982, according to official estimates, productivity increased by 15 percent with increases of 40 percent for some agricultural products (two-thirds of Albanians live in agricultural areas). Gains also were made in industry, which although backward or even primitive in some cases, can still supply 98 percent of the nation's needs. The remaining 2 percent (advanced technology, chemical products, vehicles or spare parts) are imported on the basis of "total compensation." Albania does not give up hard currency but offers goods: some weeks ago an industrialist from northern Italy who had closed the sale of a supply of truck batteries, was offered in exchange thousands of briar root pipes, bottles of raki (eau de vie, the national liquor), in addition to minerals. Albania is the world's third most important producer of chrome; Tirana's prime trade partner is Yugoslavia (130 million dollars in 1982 despite the litigation" started over the Kosovo affair), Czechoslovakia is second, Italy is third with 50 million dollars and is enjoying a growth trend.

Hoxha repeats obsessively, "Our country has not experienced the ills of other societies. Here there is no crisis, no inflation, no unemployment, we do not have energy problems and we depend on no one. Much less on banks or international organizations which have been transformed into collaborators of international neocolonialism for the purpose of dominating and exploiting new or poorer nations." And the leader proclaims that the 1981 to 1985 5-year plan, the first made by Albania alone after the rupture with China, will demonstrate that Albania is capable of "moving forward" as Alia said, "without having to thank anyone."

However, many doubt that Hoxha can succeed in these plans. The regime provides subsistence for everyone, has brought the country out of a semifeudal situation, has provided what, compared with the past, only the Albanians call well-being. A per capita income on the level of the third world countries, lower than that of the entire east. A skilled worker earns the equivalent of \$21 per week, a factory manager \$36 per week. This is not

much despite the subsidies and the absence of taxes.

Western observers in Tirana say, "After all, Hoxha is not immortal and, as happened in the case of Tito, his charisma as father of the country is unlikely to survive him." Hoxha means national unity even in following his plans. His successor (Alia seems, right now, to be the designated dauphin, but no one can say how strong his position is) must face up to the domestic situation (there are those abroad who fight against what is described as the "Hoxha dictatorship") as well as foreign pressures.

The strategic position of the "land of the eagle" is among the most important in Europe. Its problems create an attractive market for the West as well as the East. Hoxha broke with the Soviets in 1960 and with the Chinese in 1980, demonstrating that for ideological reasons Albania was ready to endure harsh sacrifices. Some weeks ago Hoxha indignantly rejected offers of a rapprochement by Yuri Andropov; was scornful about the visit of Hu Yaobang, Chinese CP leader to Yugoslavia; continued to insult the western world as well as the eastern world with its "Soviet social-fascism," and "Chinese neocapitalism" not to speak of U.S. imperialism.

"Is this a splendid isolation or only the most drastic means of remaining in power and avoiding civil war?" a French analyst asks. He is one of the few who knows Albania from close up. "And what means does Hoxha use, in addition to isolation, to remain in the saddle?" Amnesty International confesses it has little information from Tirana. In a report just published in England, Amnesty says it knows of at least two concentration camps for political prisoners at Ballsh and Spaci, with 2,000 prisoners. A recent amnesty may have decreased this number. The report lists a series of serious crimes punished by internment in those camps: from socially-damaging acts to propaganda and agitation against the state, sabotaging the economy, the state, the army, the culture and illegal border crossing. In 1979 a decree was issued which provided administrative internment, that is loss of work. But those who do not work wind up in jail. And Albanian poet Kiamil Haidini, who recently escaped to Greece, has said that opposition is growing and widespread even though it has no possibility of expressing itself.

Hoxha said, "In the Elbasan steel mills we produce not only steel, but the power of our cohesion." There are those who begin to feel that like Hoxha and the Elbasan mills (the latter a gift from Mao Zedong), even the slogans begin to grow old on the planet of the eagles.



Bell tower of the Cathedral of Shkodra. The Cathedral built in 1858 was the largest church building in Albania. The bell tower was demolished in the fall of 1967, following the violent attack against religion. It is now a sports arena.

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THE ALBANIAN KOSOVAR YOUTH IN THE FREE WORLD

MEMORANDUM

His Excellency
Javier Perez de Cuellar
Secretary General
United Nations Organization
Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Excellency:

On the occasion of the opening of the 37th Plenary Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, the *Albanian Kosovar Youth in the Free World*, an organization voicing the concerns of the young exiled generation of the more than two million Albanians presently living in the SFR of Yugoslavia — known as *Kosovars* — presents its respects to the Secretary General and authorizes its executive secretary to take this opportunity to bring the following to the attention of his Excellency.

The Yugoslav army and tanks that rolled over the territory of the Socialist Autonomous Province (SAP) of Kosova to crush the peaceful Albanian student demonstrations in March and April, 1981 are still there to stay indefinitely. The "temporary" state of emergency declared thirty months ago has become a permanent feature of the daily lives for the Albanians presently living in Yugoslavia. Special secret police forces that were used to kill and arrest several thousand peaceful demonstrators are now the masters of the Province, transforming that unhappy land into a large Gulag of pervasive fear and ubiquitous terror. Repressive policies and illegal operations are widespread and the torturing of political suspects is following a pattern previously set by the infamous pre-1966 Rankovic regime.

Once the state of emergency was declared in the Spring of 1981 the Yugoslav Government invested itself with unlimited powers, sharing them only with the security police forces, who, on their part, have interpreted the investiture as a license to operate brutally and with impunity. This unusual interpretation has permitted the Yugoslav secret police to kill and bury or cremate dead bodies without procedures or postmortem. Thirty months after the killing of hundreds of demonstrators, the Yugoslav Government has not found yet enough courage to give the names of the innocent victims or allow them a decent burial by families and friends. In Yugoslavia one kills first and explains later. And, as if the killing were not enough, their cover-up, an indifference to human tragedy, looks even worse in the eyes of the civilized world. The Yugoslav authorities are now a government of arrogance, with no sense of fairness or any feeling of guilt. For Albanians in Yugoslavia it is a frightening situation indeed!

This atmosphere of fear and terror is also expressed in the extensive political trials and heavy jail sentences exacted against Albanians today. Official statements indicate that from March 11, 1981 to September 1, 1982, no less than 527 Albanians have been sentenced to up to fifteen years imprisonment. (Belgrade, October 20, 1982, TANJUG). Since August 16, 1983 at least one hundred and thirty more Albanians were sentenced again, up to fifteen years imprisonment (See Addendum One). These figures do not include prison sentences passed by the Magistrates' courts ranging from thirty to sixty days, which are an almost daily event in the SAP of Kosova. Since March, 1981, not one single Albanian has been pardoned.

The Yugoslav Government is now learning the bitter lessons that safety cannot be obtained by arms alone. As the restlessness among the victims continues unabated, the Yugoslav perversion of truth remains their only defense mechanism. The pathological fear has generated an excessively suspicious atmosphere leading to confusion, and tragic blunders. The present president of the SR of Serbia, General Nikola Djindjic, admitted that "... Serbian nationalists were eager to see more disturbances (in Kosova), so that new opportunities for military intervention against them (Albanians) may arise." (Speech at Lazarevac, 19 March 1983). This ominous statement reflected the judgment of Hiaz Corteshi, the representative of the SAP of Kosova at the December 1981 meeting of the CC of the YCL for Serbia, who said: "It looks as though some people have in fact been hoping that something serious like the 1981 uprising would take place (in SAP of Kosova) soon or later so that they (the Serbs) could demand drastic changes (of Kosova's autonomy status)." (S. Stankovic, RFE Research, Munich, W. Germany, 26 January 1982).

The political confusion is responsible for the deplorable economic situation in Yugoslavia, especially in the regions inhabited predominately by Albanians. This was due primarily to the intentional decrease of investments in Kosova; the witness:

The Chamber of Republics and Provinces of the Parliament of the SFR of Yugoslavia analyzed the data on the present economic problems of the SAP of Kosova. . . . The situation there is critical and quite complex. The investment cycle of the last four-year plan (1976-1980) for the economic development has not been completed yet. . . . Spasoje Medenica, a member of the Federal Government, declared also that in spite of all measures taken to promote a faster development of the Province (of Kosova) the economic difficulties are being manifested in their sharpest form (Belgrade, April 9, 1983, TANJUG).

Regarding the fulfillment of the obligations agreed upon by the members of the Federation to assist the SAP of Kosova (and so loudly publicized by the Yugoslav Government) the following table was given as an illustration:

TABLE 1.
(in 000 dinars)

Region	Obligations	Obligations honored	Percentage honored
1. SR of Slovenia	2,576,618	612,907	23.80
2. SR of Croatia	4,266,048	776,482	18.20
3. SR of Macedonia	841,924	0.00	0.00
4. SR of Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,051,125	151,916	7.40
5. SR of Montenegro	324,846	0.00	0.00
6. SR of Serbia	4,103,870	212,290	5.20
7. SAP of Vojvodina	1,640,653	681,111	41.50
8. SAP of Kosova	336,902	0.00	0.00
Total	16,141,990	2,434,708	15.10

(Source: RILINDJA 12 March 1983, p. 7)

The immediate result of the deep recession that followed is the present crippling unemployment. Again, in the Federative Chamber of the Yugoslav Parliament, the following was stated:

The situation of unemployment in Kosova is deteriorating rapidly. According to (the delegate) Surja Pupovci, the data given by the BVI of Labor indicates that there are now 86,000 unemployed registered in the SAP of Kosova. About 60,000 families live in Kosova, with an average of 7 members, twice as much as the national average do not have an employed person in their households. More than 40,000 families in Kosova among the unemployed have neither shelter nor land. And asked: *Can you now understand the critical social problems Kosova is facing, today?* (RILINDJA 7 August 1983, p. 6) (Emphasis added). It is estimated that in some cases there are as many as 200 candidates for one single opening.

The political confusion is also responsible for the systematic persecution of the new and young Albanian intellectual class and the neglect of education for Albanians. Contrary to the spirit and the letter of all international covenants on human rights ratified by the Government of the SFR of Yugoslavia, the persecution of those who do make use of the right of free speech and free expression is done with impunity; to witness: "some people who did not join us openly in our confrontation (with the enemy) and who willingly have abstained will never be forgiven for the sin they have committed." (Azem Vllasi, of the Communist League for Kosova, RILINDJA, 9 May 1982, p. 4). Another expression more worthy of a dogmatic dictatorship is hard to find, indeed!

This abominable attitude generated a massive purge of Albanian intellectuals which took place at the University of Kosova, Prishtine, and the High Institutes of Learning of that Province. Our limited list is indicative of the breadth and the intensity of these purges (Addendum Two). School registration will be curtailed as the result of the economic depression. In kindergarten 14,000 children will attend instead of 22,000. In the secondary cycle, 93,000 pupils will register instead of 130,500. At the University level, 35,683 students will be admitted instead of the 58,000 previously planned (See: RILINDJA, 8 July 1983, p. 8). With 37,500 high school pupils left out of school, and 12,313 university students rejected and joining the enormous army of the unemployed what can the Yugoslav Government expect but more demonstrations, more confrontations, and more bloodshed! Is this an invitation to disaster?

Outside the SAP of Kosova, namely in the SR of Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia proper, "... the heavy blow has been felt and continues to be felt by Albanians, where the constant pressure exercised against them by the respective local unitarist-great state nationalists has blocked their development and national affirmation." (Professor H. Hoxha, RILINDJA, 10 July 1983, p. 7). Public calls are made to underrate the history, the culture, and the language of the Albanians, to desecrate their flag and to discredit their national heroes and leaders. Clearly, the Yugoslav Government has chosen to make the new and young Albanian intellectual class the sacrificial lamb of its determination to stamp out freedom of thought and expression in the SFR of Yugoslavia.

Excellency:

In our 1982 Memorandum addressed to you we wrote that Albanians in Yugoslavia are now the most striking example of colonialism still left in Europe. We reiterate that belief. They are seen by the South Slav rulers as politically unreliable and nationally undesirable in a country that never learned to live together with them. More than two million Albanians living in Yugoslavia are still being killed, tortured and imprisoned at the whims of a political party ruling absolute over them. They are our parents, our brothers and sisters. *We never for them.*

Faced with such a critical situation, we plead with the Secretary General:

1. To use the great influence of his office with the Government of the SFR of Yugoslavia in order to bring the repeal of the state of emergency presently practiced upon the Albanian population living in that country.

2. To encourage the Government of the SFR of Yugoslavia to conduct a full and honest review of past events and take the necessary steps to protect the national and human rights of the Albanians by ending secret killings, arrests, indiscriminate detentions, indiscriminate torture, political persecution and the economic, educational, and social neglect of the Albanian population in Yugoslavia, as well.

3. To study the possibility of immediately setting up an *ad hoc* investigative group in cooperation with the Government of the SFR of Yugoslavia with the purpose of

- a) assisting the Government of the SFR of Yugoslavia in its review of past events in the regions inhabited by Albanians in that country; and,
- b) reporting, with recommendations thereon, on the measures to be taken in order to stop the present persecutions and prevent their recurrence in the future.

We believe that the civilized world has the right to know the truth about the situation of more than two million Albanians presently living in Yugoslavia. We also believe that the United Nations Organization can help bring the truth into the open.

The content of this *Memorandum* is not confidential. Copies of it will be made available to all Permanent Representatives of the Member-States to the United Nations Organization for their information, and possible assistance on this matter of urgency.

New York City, N.Y.

September 20, 1983 A.D.

Respectfully submitted:

Maliq ARIFAJ

Executive Secretary

MEMORANDUM — ADDENDUM ONE

Partial list of trials, and the number of Albanians sentenced to jail by the Yugoslav Government for "hostile propaganda" and "hostile activities" from August 16, 1983.

Date	District Court of	Number of persons sentenced	Terms exacted
1982			
1. August 16	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	3½ years
2. September 2	Kerchova, Macedonia	7	1½ years each
3. September 14	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	5½ years
4. October 7	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	1½ years
5. October 7	Titograd, Montenegro	3	1 year each
6. November 7	Skoplje, Macedonia	6	7 to 14 years
7. December 7	Vranje, Serbia	1	2½ years
8. December 9	Manastir, Macedonia	2	7 and 13 years
9. December 20	Prishtine, SAP of Kosova	1	1½ years
1983			
10. January 6	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	3½ years
11. January 12	Skoplje, Macedonia	5	10 to 15 years
12. January 20	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	8 years
13. February 7	Vranje, Serbia	2	2 years each
14. February 15	Prishtine, SAP of Kosova	23	1 to 14 years
15. February 15	Vranje, Serbia	2	2 years each
16. February 17	Prishtine, SAP of Kosova	5 (2 minors)	6 (2) years
17. March 2	Peje, SAP of Kosova	10	1 to 5 years
18. March 2	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	6 years
19. March 30	Prizren, SAP of Kosova	2	4 years 9 months
20. March 31	Skoplje, Macedonia	2	6 and 8 years
21. March 31	Skoplje, Macedonia	2	NA
22. April 16	Skoplje, Macedonia	2	6 and 10 years
23. April 12	Skoplje, Macedonia	7	NA
24. April 20	Peje, SAP of Kosova	4	1 to 6 years
25. May 11	Mitrovica, SAP of Kosova	7	2½ to 5½ years
26. May 19	Mitrovica, SAP of Kosova	1	7 years
27. May 27	Mitrovica, SAP of Kosova	4	4 to 6 years
28. June 3	Kamenice, SAP of Kosova	2	2 years
29. June 4	Skoplje, Macedonia	1	1 year
30. June 10	Skoplje, Macedonia	3	1 to 5 years

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31. June 16	Prizren, SAP of Kosova	2	2 and 3½ years
32. June 20	Peje, SAP of Kosova	4 (1 minor)	2½ (1) years
33. June 21	Vranje, Serbia	4	2 to 6 years
34. June 16	Peje, SAP of Kosova	13	2 to 12 years

Total number of trials publicized: 34 — Number of Albanians sentenced: 132

Note: This list does not include those persons sentenced by magistrates' courts from 30 to 60 days imprisonment.

MEMORANDUM — ADDENDUM TWO

Partial list of the persecuted Albanian faculty at the University of Kosova, Pristine. They are either jailed or dismissed, expelled and publicly reprimanded by the Yugoslav Communist League and Government, as a direct result of the Spring 1981 Albanian student demonstrations in the SAP of Kosova.

Sentenced from 2 to 11 years imprisonment

1. Halil Alidemaj	Lecturer, Dept. of Philosophy
2. Ukshin Hoti	Lecturer, Dept. of Philosophy
3. Hilmi Ratkoceri	Lecturer, Dept. of Philosophy
4. Muhamet Ternava	Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
5. Muharrem Fetiu	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
6. Nozir Halili	Professor Albanian Lit, Philosophy
7. Shemsi Recica	Professor of Marxist Philosophy
8. Ruzhdi Sefa	Lecturer, Dept. of Technology

With this group were sentenced also:

9. Ekrem Kryeziu	Radio-TV Director and filmmaker
10. Ali Kryeziu	Legal Advisor, UNO, Yugoslav delegation

Dismissed, expelled, publicly reprimanded (likely to be arrested)

11. Seit Lipa	Professor, Secretary, Institute for the History of Kosova
12. Jusuf Bajraktari	Research Associate
13. Fehmi Rexhepi	Research Associate
14. Muhamet Shatri	Research Associate
15. Demush Shala	Professor (for a 1973 collection of folklore songs)
16. Hajdar Rečaj	Assistant Professor (for a favorable review of the above collection)
17. Ymer Jaka	Professor, former Secretary for Education
18. Nexhmi Rexhepi	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
19. Ali Aliu	Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
20. Agim Vinca	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
21. Murat Blaku	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
22. Ali Hadri	Professor, former Director of Institute of History
23. Fehmi Agani	Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
24. Rexhep Qosja	Professor, Director Institute of Albanology
25. Rexhep Ismaili	Professor, Dept. of Philosophy
26. Jusuf Rexhepi, MD	Professor, School of Medicine
27. Shaban Geci, MD	Professor, School of Medicine
28. Sadete Mekuli, MD	Professor, School of Medicine
29. Riza Binishi	Professor, School of Medicine
30. Fadil Batallli	Professor, former Dept. Chairman, School of Medicine
31. Hamdi Gashi	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Agriculture
32. Ahmet Gashi	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Agriculture
33. Hamdi Sulejmani	Professor, former Chairman, Dept. of Technology
34. Rashit Alidemaj	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
35. Muje Rugova	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences

36. Nexhat Daci	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
37. Mustafe Bacaj	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
38. Eshref Ademaj	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
39. Hifzi Islami	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
40. Mark Krasniqi	Professor, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
41. Idriz Berana	Research Associate, Dept. of Math and Natural Sciences
42. Pajazit Nushi	Professor, former Vice-Chairman of the Provincial Executive Committee
43. Nimetulla Hafizi	Professor, Chairman, Dept. of Oriental Studies
44. Remzi Ballata	Secretary, Academy of Arts
45. Sefedin Sulejmani, MD	Dept. of Physical Education
46. Ibrahim Sylaj, MD	Dept. of Physical Education

From the Department of Education in Prishtine

47. Muharrem Dika	Adviser, General Educational Affairs
48. Kajtas Rrecaj	Adviser, Research and Development
49. Riza Brada	Adviser, Teacher Training
50. Zahir Istefi	Adviser, Financing
51. Rashit Godonca	Adviser, Geographical Studies
52. Muharrem Sadria	Adviser, Adult Education
53. Rexhep Berisha	Adviser, Technical Education
54. Ferid Hisari	Adviser, Physical Education
55. Fetah Nasufi	Adviser, Elementary Education
56. Fehmi Xherbeli	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Agriculture
57. Xhevat Elezi	Lecturer, Dept. of Agriculture

(Note: The list does not include the persecuted Albanian intellectuals not associated with the University of Kosova, Prishtine, nor the several hundreds of elementary and secondary high school teachers.)

THE ALBANIAN KOSOVAR YOUTH IN THE FREE WORLD

(RINIA SHQIPTARE KOSOVARE NË BOTËN E LIRË)

439 West 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036

Editor's Note

At the June 2nd National Republican Heritage Groups' Annual Convention, the Albanian-American Republican Clubs passed a resolution asking "the government of the United States to change its policies of indifference towards Albania and to take a positive and constructive attitude towards Albanians in Yugoslavia."

During the deliberations at the Convention, Albanian delegates stressed the new developments which are taking place in the Balkans, especially after the massive Albanian riots of 1981 which have attracted the Soviet Union's attention.

A CHILLING DOCUMENT OF TORTURE OF ALBANIANS IN YUGOSLAV PRISONS

The following is a translation of a document in Albanian that first appeared in Zeri i Kosovës (The Voice of Kosovë), an Albanian language magazine, published in Biel-Bienne, Switzerland, issue of March, 1983, pp. 3-4. The document was made available to the magazine by a Croatian friend. The document is in the form of a petition by 17 Albanian political prisoners, addressed to the Judicial Secretariat of the Croatian Republic in Zagreb. The Albanians were arrested in the aftermath of demonstrations in the province of Kosovë, Yugoslavia, in the Spring of 1981. The document is hereby presented in its entirety. — Translator's Note

To the Judicial Secretariat of the Croatian Republic in Zagreb.

Since you did not reply to our previous petition, signed by 17 of us Albanian political prisoners, we are obliged to write you again, in order to bring to your attention (if you do not already know?) the unheard of barbarisms to which we have been subjected and continue to be subjected everyday.

During our transfer from Kosovë to the prison of Gospić [in Croatia], a special reception awaited us, as befitting Albanian political prisoners, which cannot be called other than savage and inhuman, worthy of comparison with the terrors of the Nazi camps at Dachau and Mathausen.

We will not tell here of our trial in Kosovë, why and how we were sentenced, since history will speak of that (and not that alone), but will instead tell of what happened to us from the time we fell into the hands of the special police force [in Kosovë], and the prison guards in Croatia.

After the special police force took custody of us at the Prishtine county jail, the first thing they did was to force us to take off all our clothes, not in order to check for weapons and other illegal possessions, but — as they themselves said — in order to humiliate us. Then, kicking us and hitting us with the butt of their automatic rifles, they loaded us into a special van of metallic compartments, two men to a compartment. We were bound with chains used for animals, and so tightly that our hands began to swell. Then, the doors to the van were closed air tight. We spent several hours at the point of departure, but minutes after the doors closed, we were laboring for breath, since no air whatsoever could get into the van. And there were 43 of us in the van! We were exhausted from lack of oxygen, and fearing we would all suffocate, we used what little strength remained in us to hurl ourselves against the metal doors of the compartments, even though we knew well what awaited us from the police for protesting like that. But the police paid no attention. Only when more than half of us passed out did they open the doors. Then they withdrew and stood several meters away, unable to stand the stench of the steaming, sweat-drenched bodies. We were pale like corpses. The van had a ventilator, but they did not turn it on in order to make us suffer as much as possible.

During the 17-hour-long trip, they gave us no food to eat, except for a glass of water when we reached Zagreb. In Belgrade, where the guards were changed, they let us go to the rest room, two by two. On the way there, they beat us with a whip, kicked us and hit us on the spine with the butts of their automatics. The commanding officer there told us tersely that from then on a new procedure would be in effect. He warned us that lack of discipline on our part would be met by firearms. But we fail to see how there could be a threat to order from people like us, who were totally exhausted, with our hands tied behind our backs with heavy chains, and locked up as we were in a van with air tight metal compartments. The officer even took all our matches from us, and we never saw them again.

We arrived at the Gospić prison on November 15, 1981. The officer who accompanied us professed to be "satisfied" with us, since, as he put it, he was convinced that four or five of us would not make it alive to the prison.

If only they had allowed us to rest for at least half an hour. We were so thoroughly worn out that for a little rest, we would have forgiven all the torments we had suffered. But no. Our suffering had no end. Without any pause at all, they led us to the fourth floor of the prison, where a special squad of prison guards was waiting for us. After stripping us naked, they began immediately to beat us up, each one competing with the others to see who could punish us the most! Our naked bodies were covered all over with blood stains. They opened Nexhmî Bani's mouth and shoved a whip down his throat. He nearly choked to death. For more than two weeks he was unable to eat. They knocked Abdyl Zyber down on the floor, and a guard thrust his boot in his mouth and screamed, "Lick it!" Halit Osman was beaten so badly with a club that he suffered permanent deformation of the nose and other parts of the body. They tore off nearly all of Shaban Dragusha's moustache. Avdi Liman was hit hard on the chest as he lay on the floor, causing him a heart ailment. Naim Bujup bears to this day the scars of the wounds he sustained from being beaten with a club.

The most bestial of all the guards who were involved in this brutal act was one, one by the name of Gëra, who hit us in our genital organs, our noses and our mouths. But the other guards were not far behind. They began to torture him, and as they struck him [Bujup] they screamed, "Never again will you have Albanian children!"

When the entire corridor was red with our blood, they put us into cells, three to a cell. But nobody dared to sit down, as they gave us strict orders to stand at attention. Two hours later, they tied up our hands and sent us, two by two, to a doctor for a medical check-up. On the way there, they kicked us

and offended us with insults against our mother and against everything Albanian. Nor did the beating cease when we returned from the "check-up". On every floor of the prison, there were seven or eight guards who kept hitting us without let-up as we passed in front of them.

Then they ordered us back into the cells, which now were silent as the grave. Although we were drained of all strength, we were nevertheless forced to remain standing. Even the crippled Sadik Sadiku, who had lost a leg, was subjected to this torture. With rare sadism, the guards would strike him on his one remaining leg and threaten him saying, "We will break this leg, too, and then you can walk on your hands!" From the beatings, many of us have been disabled for life. Adem Sahihaj (a former Prishtine Television reporter) is suffering badly from injuries of the spine. Fatmir Jus (I had the fingers of his hand crushed when they trampled on his hand as he lay unconscious on the floor. Nor are Hamdi Hajdin, Riza Demaj, Abdullah Rama, Xhemil Fic) and other faring any better. Zyfl Rackoren sustained serious injuries in the genital organs (while being told over and over that he will never again have Albanian offspring).

On the eighth day, the prison warden himself came over to see us. But instead of ordering a halt to the tortures, he said to his underling, "Carry on the same way!" Unable to stand it any longer, on December 12, 1981, inmates of cell number 82, Hamdi Latif and Hilmi Muzaqi, complained to the prison warden and told him (though he knew it already) that they were being tortured daily for no reason at all. "We shall cut you head off, all of you," answered the warden, and ordered Steva to continue as before. Steva, a guard from the prison of Lepoglave (we heard that he had been brought to Gaspic, along with the infamous prison guards in Croatia, in order to torture us), lived up to his reputation for ruthlessness. That very day, assisted by all the guards in his shift, he beat up the two inmates who had complained to the warden so viciously that they passed out. And he did so with the sole aim of terrifying us, so that none of us should dare to complain ever again.

Besides the daily beatings, we had to stand every day between four and five hours in succession in one spot, without moving at all, as the guards would watch us through a hole in the door. If anyone could not sleep at night on account of wounds received during the day, they would drag him out of the cell and beat him some more, using as an excuse the very fact of his being awake. His cellmate suffered the same fate because he slept without budging.

On December 17, 1981, after cleaning the rest room, Riza Demaj (a former state-wide ski champion) was told to go to his cell. On the pretext that he had opened the door of the cell himself, prison guards Shubek and Silavek (from the Lepoglave prison) beat him up so badly that for a long time he lay in the corridor as if he were dead. In short, torture in this hellish hole has become routine. Prison regulations are a mockery in such a place. For example, they beat up Avdi Latif merely because his only nephew was an inmate at the prison of Stara Gradishke.

Undoubtedly, the most chilling instance of cruelty we witnessed took place on April 26, 1982, when they brought to the Gaspic prison 26 more Albanian political prisoners. After beating them on the way to Belgrade and Zagreb, in the Gaspic prison they were treated even more brutally than us. And the guards' excuse for this was simply that they were Albanian political prisoners. They were brought to Gaspic to suffer there because, like us, they had taken part in the demonstrations of the Spring of 1981. They became targets of exceptionally sadistic violence by a certain Vinko, a guard from the prison of Lepoglave. As he beat them up, he forced them to say "Republic" (the reference is to the demand of the demonstrators that the largely Albanian-populated province of Kosovë be made a Republic), and to sing and march as in a parade down the prison corridor. At one point, he asked one of the inmates where he was from.

"From Dragash," he replied.

"And where is Dragash located?" demanded the guard.

"In the Province of Kosovë," answered the prisoner.

For this the prisoner of Dragash was clubbed repeatedly, because Vinko could not tolerate the mention of Kosovë. On May 3, 1982, this same guard came in drunk, and together with Nikolla, a guard at the Gaspic prison, they beat Shani Berisha, Rame Demajn, and Enver Hoti until they lost consciousness. Two other guards from the prison of Lepoglave, Stevo Sheti and Ilija, also stood out for their cruelty.

This kind of spiteful conduct on the part of the prison guards at Gaspic was common. Torture was in fact an inseparable part of our lives. It is important to stress here that prior to our transfer to the prison of Lepoglave, the entire corridor of the Gaspic prison was stained with our blood. There were big blood stains also inside our cells. One of the worst forms of torture was that in which a guard poured water over the concrete floor of the corridor, and we were forced to push our mattresses over it, with our bodies so positioned that the blood rushed into our heads. So exhausting was this operation that we would faint, or else we would be so drained of strength that we could not make it back to our cells. As a result, Halit Osman to this day suffers from fainting spells, as well as habitual cramping of the legs. Others, too, suffer in similar ways. Such was the "pastime" that the guards Stevo and Nikolla (from the Stara Gradishke prisons), and two others from the ill-famed Goli Otok prison, whose names escape us, chose to do to themselves with.

Nor was this enough to satisfy them. After wearing ourselves out at the "chore" of the mattresses, we were forced to stand at attention. This was one of the most vexing forms of punishment in that torture house. Sometimes they would keep us standing at attention until midnight. Even at meal time, and when we were in the rest room. And when the church bells rang, the guards Dushan and Boris from Goli Otok, or other guards, would order us to stand at attention.

"Commit suicide. Why don't you commit suicide?" they told us. "If you don't kill yourselves, we will shoot you and say that you tried to escape."

In the Gaspic prison, they gave us no matches. They would give us a light for our cigarettes only when I pleaded the guards; sometimes once a day, on other days none. We were allowed walking exercises outside only twice a week, for five minutes each time. During our walks the guards did their best to strike us with their whips and their fists. We had to enter and exit our cells quickly, and with our hands tied behind our backs. It often happened that we fell and for the crime of falling we paid a terrible price.

It was the same when we shaved. At first we were shaved by certain inmates who, acting on orders from the guards, cut and bled us profusely. Later they let us shave ourselves, but that did not make matters easier for us. A single razor was used by 40 prisoners, and we had only two minutes each to shave. All 49 of us had to make do with only three razor blades, while a guards stood around watching the seconds tick away the allotted time of two minutes! Nor was bathing any better. We took communal showers, and the guards would first turn on the water to the cold temperature (even during the Winter), followed by boiling hot water, and so it went from one extreme to the other.

Because of the great distances, our families visited us only rarely. In the beginning, the guards did not permit us to meet them. But even when they permitted visits, no more than five minutes were allowed for them. And so, every visit to our beloved ones turned into a torment for them, since, apart from other things, the prison guards did not let us speak in Albanian to them. Imagine! We could not speak in our native tongue to our aged mothers who

know only Albanian! That is why our family visitors, who spent large sums of money on journeys totaling thousands of kilometers, returned home thoroughly dispirited. We did not dare tell even those nearest to us about our tragic condition. We later learned that the prison warden informed them that, apart from other luxuries, we had color television in our cells. The warden could tell such a cynical lie because he ruled the prison with arbitrary authority, and because his underling, Shtef, carried out faithfully all of his orders.

As if all the torments they inflicted on us were not enough, the vicious guards plundered us repeatedly. They grabbed the food our families brought us. They coveted especially our money, which they pocketed saying, "You don't need this here." To illustrate our point, the day after our arrival at the Gaspic prison, Adem Saliq was missing 2,400 dinars, Hamdi Hajdin 1,950 dinars, Remzi Fazli 1,000 dinars, etc. This robbery inflamed us all the more when we considered that our parents had to deny themselves food on the table in order to send us a little cash money. In this matter as well, the leading offender was Steva, together with Iliza from the Stara Gradishke prison, although the other guards were not far behind.

We have much more to tell about our horrifying experiences in the Gaspic prison, and not only there, but we believe that what we have already touched upon is sufficient to give you a clear idea about how the penal laws are executed [in Yugoslavia], particularly as they are applied to Albanian political prisoners.

As you are well aware, physical punishment as well as all forms of physical and mental torture, all violations of human dignity, and all injustices or insults to prisoners are forbidden by our laws and by international conventions. The nightmare we are experiencing shows that our ordeal is not accidental, seeing that you did not deign to reply to our first petition. We must conclude therefore that the treatment to which we are subjected is not merely the work of prison wardens, but the consequence of decisions made by officials in high places of government.

We are convinced that the day will come when our people and history will call to account the perpetrators of these crimes against us.

(Signed) 17 Albanian Political Prisoners
The Prison of Lepoglave
[Croatia, Yugoslavia]

More On Kosova

Kosova province in Yugoslavia has been under martial law since March 1981. The tanks and troops sent in by the Belgrade government to check peaceful demonstrations by Muslim Albanians have remained as an occupation army.

The occupation is, however, proving costly to the financially strapped Yugoslav economy and Belgrade would like to resolve the problem of Kosova. The political and economic conditions which sparked the initial protests have changed little however. The gap between Kosova's Muslim Albanian population and the government in Belgrade remains as wide as ever.

Control of Kosova's province remains in the hands of Serbs and the government in Belgrade. The Albanians want to build a mosque in Prishtina, the capital of Kosova, with their own resources. Permission is denied by the authorities.

Albanians continue to be tried for "unfriendly acts" and are often sentenced to 15-year terms in one of Yugoslavia's notorious political prisons. There are now more than 1,100 of these Albanian political prisoners, including many women.

The media and the intellectuals routinely and openly disparage Islam and the Albanians. Albanians are denied the opportunity to reply. The damage done may take generations to repair, and there are no signs that the process has begun. A compromise still seems far off. Belgrade fears any such move will weaken its control over the province. The Serbian colony minority in Kosova also is apprehensive that it will lose its own privileged position and they have encouraged Belgrade to take a hard line.

Only an end of the military occupation, amnesty for Albanian political prisoners, and granting of greater political, economic and religious freedom are likely to bring peace to the troubled province. Albanians believe that the whole umma be concerned with the Kosova problem.

Like Algeria in the 1950's or Palestine today, it is more than a local issue. Muslim countries can play a positive role by mediating a peaceful solution between the Albanians of Kosova and the Belgrade government. This is the most realistic way to break the deadlock.

Yugoslavia relies on the Muslim world for oil, construction contracts, loans and export markets. It has good relations with many Muslim countries. Belgrade might welcome an offer from these countries to help solve a dilemma which it has not been able to resolve on its own for two years now.

From: *Arabia: The Islamic World Review* (21 May 1983)

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KOSOVË HELD IN NEW YORK

By An Observer

Report and Summary

According to the 1981 Yugoslav national census, there are 1,732,000 Albanian nationals in Yugoslavia. But according to Albanian exiles or emigrants from Kosovë, the Albanian population is far greater, roughly one million more than the official figure. By far, the greatest number of Albanians in Yugoslavia (1,227,000 according to the census) reside in the so-called autonomous province of Kosovë, a region adjacent to Albania, but incorporated into the Republic of Serbia since the end of World War II.

The lot of Kosovars (the name used by Albanians to refer to all the Albanians in Yugoslavia) has been a difficult one; indeed, the most difficult of any of the numerous peoples that make up the multi-national state of Yugoslavia. The accumulated tensions and frustrations of many decades erupted into massive demonstrations in the Spring of 1981 in the major towns of Kosovë. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people, including students and intellectuals, professionals, youths, farmers and factory workers, women and children, joined the demonstrations. The demonstrators voiced a variety of demands to redress economic, social, national, cultural, linguistic, and political grievances. The major demand, however, was that Kosovë be made a republic: in other words, that its political status be upgraded from that of an "autonomous province to that of a Republic of Kosovë."

The demonstrations started peacefully, but turned into a bloody confrontation when the Yugoslav authorities used police and military force to disperse the demonstrators. The action taken by Belgrade provoked cries of indignation by Albanians everywhere: in Albania, Western Europe, Turkey, Australia, and in the Western Hemisphere. In the United States, Albanians and sympathizers held demonstrations in Washington, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and other towns to denounce Yugoslavia's massacre of Albanian nationals and the subsequent arrest, imprisonment and persecution of thousands of demonstrators and alleged supporters.

The Kosovë crisis caused much concern among Albanian-Americans. Accordingly, a group of scholars took the initiative to organize a conference to discuss the problem of Kosovë as thoroughly and as objectively as possible. The riots were clear evidence of a serious problem in Yugoslavia that could have important consequences for the entire Balkan area, and even beyond. That in itself was an important reason for holding the conference. Another concern of the organizers was the portrayal of events in Kosovë by the Western media. Much had been written in European and some American newspapers and magazines about Kosovë, but unfortunately many of the reports suffered from inaccuracy, superficiality, or sensationalism. A conference on Kosovë, it was hoped, would help to correct media misconceptions, distortions and errors regarding events in the province. The organizers expected moreover that the conference would benefit the population of Kosovë, enhance Albanian and Yugoslav cultures, and contribute to mutual understanding and peace in the Balkans.

Organization of Conference

The chief organizers of the conference were Prof. Arshi Pipa, member of the department of French and Italian at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; and Prof. Sami Repishti of Adelphi University, New York. Prof. Pipa is widely recognized in the Albanian community as a poet and as the distinguished author of *Trilogia Albanica*, which appeared in 1978. Dr. Repishti has for many years been the leading activist on Kosovë among Albanian intellectuals in the United States. The full committee for the conference included: Jani Dilo, Fejzi Domini, Gjean Gjoleka, Agim Karagjozi, Arshi Pipa, Peter R. Prifti, Sami Repishti, and Zef Shllaku. Stephanie Kosmo was the conference secretary.

The organizing committee planned a most varied program for the conference, intended to cover all of the major aspects of Kosovë, past and present: history, folklore, economy, politics, society, education, language, and culture. The roster of scholars invited to participate in the conference included both Albanians and non-Albanians, from within the United States as well as from abroad. Hence the title, "International conference on Kosovë". The countries represented were: U.S., England, France, West Germany, and Australia.

The conference was sponsored by: The Office of International Programs, University of Minnesota; Albanien-Institut, University of Munich; Istituto di Lingua e Letteratura Albanese, University of Palermo; Department of French and Italian, University of Minnesota; The Society for Albanian Studies in the United States; The VATRA Federation; and The Albanian Center in New York.

Funds to meet conference expenses came entirely from members of the Albanian community in America.

After months of preparation and hard work by committee members and others, the conference convened in New York City on Saturday, November 6, 1982. The site of the conference was the Auditorium of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, 33 West 42nd St.,

New York City. There was an exhibit also in the auditorium of books and other literature on Albania and Albanians.

The conference, subtitled, "The Question of Kosovë: Historical Considerations and Prospects for the Future", was divided into a morning and afternoon session. A total of twenty scholars, ten from the United States and ten from overseas, prepared papers for the convocation. Several of the scholars from abroad, however, were unable to attend in person, in which case abstracts of their papers were read at the conference by Ms. Kosmo, the conference secretary.

The conference was opened by Dr. Repishit with a few brief remarks, welcoming the audience and explaining the purpose and objectives of the conference.

The morning session dealt with "historical perspectives and cultural aspects" regarding Kosovë, and was moderated by Prof. Albert B. Lord of Harvard University, who has been in the forefront of American scholars involved with the Albanian community, most notably during the centennial of the late Bishop Noli in May of 1982.

Prof. Safete Juka of Lafayette College was the first speaker at the conference. The title of her paper was, "The Albanians in Yugoslavia in the Light of Historical Documents: from Illyrian Times to the Present". She made the claim, as implied by the title of her paper, that there has been an Albanian presence in Kosovë from ancient times to the present. Her study also affirmed that the Kosovars historically "have been treated with unbelievable harshness" by the Serbs. The time has come, she suggested, to build a new relationship between the Serbs and the Kosovars based on justice and equality.

The second speaker was Prof. Alain Ducellier of the University of Toulouse-Le-Mirail, France. Prof. Ducellier has won world renown as a scholar of the history of Medieval Balkans. He spoke on the "Genesis and Setback of the Albanian State in the 14th and 15th Centuries". Like Juka, he also argued for the continuity of Albanians in Kosovë through the centuries. To quote Prof. Ducellier: "Based especially on archeological evidence, it cannot be doubted nowadays that an Illyrian-Albanian presence can be detected from Ancient times to the Middle Ages in what are now the Yugoslavian territories of Kosovë and Macedonia. . . . He stated also that the Medieval Albanian state failed not because Albanians lacked a sense of their national identity — a thesis long propagated by Albania's neighbors — but because Albania "was nothing but a part of economic structures whose command was always in non-Albanian hands."

Ducellier was followed to the podium by Prof. Gerhard Grimm of the University of Munich, who spoke on "The Development of Ethnographic Maps: Kosovë from 1878 to 1913". Prof. Grimm discussed the authorship of such maps, the degree of their accuracy, the criteria used by the cartographers and the technical means at their disposal for map-making, the connection between the publication of the maps and political events in the Balkans and Europe at the time, and the extent to which the maps were used by European governments as a basis for delineating frontiers in the Balkans — decisions which affected Kosovë's future. He claimed that the making of such maps was not always dictated by disinterested scholarly concerns, but by intentions to manipulate them for political reasons.

Morning Session Continues

In the absence of Prof. Peter Bartl of the University of Munich, Prof. Grimm read an abstract of his paper entitled, "Kosovë in the Light of Pastoral Reports". The paper dealt with reports of Catholic Missions in Kosovë from 1610 until 1853. According to Bartl, these reports provide data on the number of Catholics and Moslems in the region, confirm their Albanian origin, tell of the process of Islamization of the population in Kosovë and the appearance of Crypto-Christians, and of the movements of the population in the area. They are indispensable historical sources for the study of internal developments in Kosovë at the time, as seen not through the eyes of Turkish officials, but from the standpoint of "the little people" living in difficult circumstances.

Prof. Nicholas Pano of Western Illinois University, and President of the Society for Albanian Studies, spoke next on the topic, "The Kosovë Question in Albanian Politics and Diplomacy: 1912-1939". Prof. Pano considered the origin of the Kosovë question, and dwelt at some length on the formation of the "Kosovar Committee" and its efforts to win back Albanian territories lost to Serbia and Montenegro. In pursuit of that goal, the committee established relations with the COMINTERN, believing that the Moscow-based organization might be helpful to the Albanian cause. Prof. Pano also noted that King Zog's policy on Kosovë was in some instances detrimental to the Kosovars and the goal of an ethnic Albanian state.

The question of "The System of Education in Kosovë" was explored by Jens Reuter of the Südost-Institut in Munich, and author of *Die Albanen in Jugoslawien* (1982). Reuter said that Kosovë made progress in the development of education and culture since 1966. Following the 1981 demonstrations, however, the Yugoslav authorities viewed the University of Pristina as "a hotbed of Albanian nationalism" and began a purge of Albanian intellectuals and students on charges of nationalism. The purge, he said, "does not seem to be the appropriate measure to win the young Kosovars to Yugoslav ideals". The fact is, Reuter maintained, that Kosovar youth by and large feel and think Albanian, and their support of the demonstrations was a reflection of that truth.

There followed the reading of an abstract of a study of Prof. Martin Camaj, the well-known Albanian scholar and author of the University of Munich. Camaj's topic was "The Typology of Kosovë's Dialects". He defended the thesis that the current dialect of Kosovë developed independently of the other Gheg dialects, such as those of Dibra and Dukagjin, and at an earlier time as well. Moreover, Albanian folklore in Kosovë "reflects events from the region's history," thus suggesting that it is native to the region, rather than a graft or importation from outside.

Albanian oral epic folklore was discussed by Prof. Albert Lord and by Prof. Arshi Pipa. Both of them discussed the subject in relation to the Serbo-Croatian folklore of the same genre. More specifically, Prof. Lord spoke on "Albanian and Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs," beginning with the pre-Turkish period and showing their development during the era of Turkish occupation. Using concrete songs as examples, he urged that there is an affinity between the two folklores.

In his paper, "Albanian Singers of Tales in Serbo-Croatian: the Frontier Epic Cycle," Prof. Pipa maintained that the cycle "is a bilingual cycle of a special kind of epic songs shared by both South-Slavs and North-Albanians." He emphasized the significance of the Parry-Lord collection at Harvard's Widener Library for the study of the epic folklore of this particular region. The materials in the collection reveal, he said, that the cycle under consideration has three components: Catholic North-Albanian songs sung in Albanian, Moslem Kosovan songs sung in Albanian, and Moslem Bosnian-Albanian songs sung in Serbo-Croatian. Pipa argued also that epic songs having a legendary character are older than the Bosnian songs. A good

example is the "Gjergj Elez Alija" rhapsody which is "one hundred percent Albanian".

Thus ended the morning session of the conference.

Afternoon Session Begins

The afternoon session was devoted to discussions of "the economic and political situation" in Kosovë, and was moderated by Pipa. It began with the reading by Stephanie Kosmo of an abstract of the paper prepared by Prof. Adi Schnytzer of Griffith University in Australia, entitled "The Economic Situation in Albania and Kosovë: Notes on a Comparison". Schnytzer claimed that while available data is of some use in understanding the development of the economy in Kosovë and Albania, it is not possible to make an accurate comparison of the two economies. The primary reason for this is that Albania is a sovereign state and is thus able to determine its own economic goals, while Kosovë is not. Kosovë's economic activity is conditioned by the economic plan drafted in Belgrade for the whole community. The evidence nevertheless seems to show that the economies of Albania and Kosovë have developed at roughly the same pace in recent years.

The conference continued with a paper by Peter Prifti, of the University of California at San Diego, on "Kosovë's Economy: Problems and Prospects". Prifti argued that although Kosovë is rich in mineral and natural resources, it is in deep trouble economically. The gap in development between it and the rest of Yugoslavia has been widening steadily. He placed the responsibility for this condition mainly on the Federal Government of Yugoslavia which, according to the evidence, discriminated against Kosovars and neglected the development of the province. He said that the Republic of Serbia also share responsibility, since it has not been able to bring Kosovë out of its backward condition, despite the control it has had over the province since the end of World War II. He concluded by saying that "unless there is a basic change in the direction, management or operation" of Kosovë's economy, the prospects for its recovery and growth appear dim.

Prof. Paul Shoup of the University of Virginia spoke next. A leading authority on the nationality question in Yugoslavia, Prof. Shoup examined "The political System of Kosovë". He said that Kosovë has made political gains since the war, and that the granting of republican status to it would be largely a symbolic gesture, but "the symbolic effect of elevation to republican status would be immense". He said further that Belgrade missed an opportunity to make Kosovë a republic back in 1946, and again following the riots of 1968. Had that step been taken either in 1946 or 1968, the turmoil of 1981 might have been avoided.

Approximately the same topic was discussed by Prof. Sami Repishti. Speaking on "Constitutional Developments in the SFR of Yugoslavia and the Status of Kosovë," Repishti discussed briefly the formal aspects of Kosovë's political and judicial structure. His comments threw light on the political evolution of the region as shaped by the constitutions of 1946, 1969, and 1974.

The session continued with the reading of another abstract by Ms. Kosmo, this one of a paper by Anton Logoreci, well-known Albanian journalist and author, and a long-time resident of London. In his study, "A Clash Between Two Nationalisms," Logoreci surveyed the history of the problems and conflicts between Albanians and Serbians in relation to Kosovë, as they developed from 1913 to 1982.

Roughly the same question engaged the attention of Blez Biberaj, Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University in New York. Taking as his topic "The Management of Ethnic Conflicts in Yugoslavia," Mr. Biberaj explored the roots of the present crisis in Kosovë, and Yugoslavia's attempts to deal with the situation. "At the center of the conflict," he said, "stands the struggle between the Serbs — who want to preserve their dominant position and keep Kosovë within Serbia's jurisdiction — and the Albanians who are dissatisfied with the status quo and are challenging what they perceive as unjust political arrangements." He called Belgrade's policies unrealistic, claiming that military repression, Trials and purges have only worsened the ethnic confrontation. The alternative, he said, is to initiate a dialogue between Belgrade authorities and the Kosovars.

Afternoon Session Continues

Prof. Robert Sharlet of Union College, Schenectady, NY, continued the discourse on the ethnic question in Kosovë, under the topic, "Ethnic Dissent in Yugoslavia". He said "The Kosovë crisis is the most recent and possibly the most serious manifestation of ethnic dissent in Yugoslavia in the postwar period." He asserted that "the ethnic question and the economic dilemmas together are pushing Yugoslavia towards a general crisis of the system in the post-Tito era".

There followed the reading of an abstract of a paper by Francis Dessart, of the Institut des Hautes Etudes Economiques at Louvain, Brussels. Dessart, it will be recalled, is the author of a study of Albanian ethnic groups in the world. Dealing with the subject, "The Question of Kosovë in the Political Context of Europe's Future," Dessart held that the problem of Kosovë goes beyond the borders of Albania or Yugoslavia, since its outcome will hold a key to similar situations in Europe. Arguing for the merits of regionalism, Dessart maintained that the Kosovars as a regional group have a right to self-determination. He concluded by calling for "international solidarity in behalf of Albanian communities wherever oppressed".

The political aspect of Kosovë was addressed once again, this time by Prof. Patrick F. R. Artisien of the University of Bradford in England, who took as his topic, "Kosovë and the Future of Yugoslav-Albanian Relations: A Balkan Perspective". Artisien made the point that while recent events in Kosovë aggravated the ideological warfare between Albanian and Yugoslavia, the two countries have maintained — for reasons of national self-interest — NORMAL STATE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS. Furthermore, they have common strategic interests, as long as they perceive a threat to their security from the Soviet Union. This realization seems to have had a moderating influence on their reactions to the flare-up in Kosovë.

Prof. Branka Magas, also of the University of Bradford, spoke on "The Yugoslav Perception of the Situation in Kosovë". She said that Yugoslavia believes it has followed a rational and equitable policy in its attempt to solve the nationality problem. The Albanians, she said, are seen as equals and as beneficiaries of all the rights enjoyed by other ethnic groups.

The last speaker at the conference was Mihajlo Mihajlov, the notorious Yugoslav dissident, now teaching at the University of Virginia. His topic was, "Kosovë and the Future of Yugoslavia in the Case of Democratization". Prof. Mihajlov views the solution to the Kosovë question in terms of the struggle between "democratization and dictatorship". He claimed that if democratization takes place in Yugoslavia, then Kosovë will want to remain in the federation. However, should Albania become a democracy, while Yugoslavia continued as a dictatorial state, then nothing can keep Kosovë from joining

Albania. And if both Yugoslavia and Albania become democracies, then Kosovë will no longer be a problem, since the matter will be resolved in accordance with democratic processes.

There follows a stimulating question-and-answer period, but unfortunately it was all too brief, owing to lack of time. Prof. Pipa then summed up the proceedings of the day-long conference with a few concluding remarks. He said that the Albanians have survived because, having met and overcome numerous challenges in the course of their long history, survival has by now become almost a profession with them. He said that the Conference on Kosovë "was inspired by a firm belief that efforts must be made by all people concerned, in Yugoslavia as well as elsewhere, to avoid another outburst of violence" such as the one that occurred in Kosovë in the Spring of 1981. He concluded with an appeal to reason as the only way for people of goodwill "to dispel the baneful myths" that cloud the minds of men. Only such an attitude can lead to a just and lasting solution to the problem of Kosovë.

Thus ended the International Conference on Kosovë. As far as this writer knows, this was the first conference of its kind ever held in the United States, and perhaps in the world. The organizers of the conference, particularly its two coordinators, Arshi Pipa and Sami Repishti, are to be heartily commended.

More About Albanians In Yugoslavia

Yugoslav authorities are engaged in serious talks with representatives of at least four Arab countries — Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Algeria — aiming at finding job markets for more than 150,000 unemployed Albanians of Yugoslavia, it was made public, on December 25, 1982, by the Yugoslav semi-official newspaper *Rilindja* (Pristinë, Kosova). There are more than two million Albanians presently living in Yugoslavia, as the largest national minority of that country. Albanians live in the three federal republics of Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. The largest concentration, more than 1,300,000 Albanians, live in the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosova alone.

Within the context of a deteriorating economy in Yugoslavia, the poverty and the unemployment that we witness today in Kosova has dangerously crippled the lives of the population living in the Albanian-inhabited regions of Yugoslavia. This is one of the reasons for the Spring 1981 riots, which were cruelly crushed by the Yugoslav army and special police forces, leaving hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Albanians dead, and many more thousands wounded. More than two thousand Albanians have been arrested, tortured and sentenced up to 15 years imprisonment by government admission.

The Yugoslav attempt to find a job market in Arab lands for the unemployed Albanians presently living in Yugoslavia is simply another form of political, economic and social discrimination used by the Communist authorities of Yugoslavia. Its main goal is "the silent expulsion" of this "undesirable" and "restless" national minority. The Yugoslav economic policies have always aimed at bringing Albanians to the point of desperation, and consequently, at forcing them to emigrate out of Yugoslavia, the latest shameful "Albanian problem" in that oppressive country.

We believe that the problem of crippling unemployment among the Albanians in Yugoslavia should be approached humanely, i.e., by opening new working centers in the cities, towns, and villages where the population lives, and not by "forced employment" abroad.

With that belief in mind, we strongly protest these inhuman policies, and we appeal for the understanding and the support of all men and women of good will.



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KOSOVA ISSUE PRESENTED IN U.S. SENATE

Early in June of this year, the Honorable Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina gave a speech on the floor of the U. S. Senate, which was subsequently printed in the Congressional Record (June 7, 1983, pp. S7815-S7830), under the title, "The Balkans Today: Yugoslavia and the Prospects for Freeing the Albanian Nation". The Record includes the remarks of Sen. Helms himself, plus five articles on Yugoslavia, Kosova, and Albania that have appeared recently in the magazine *Problems of Communism*, and the newspapers *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*.

The Senator discussed the Balkans in the broad context of the East-West conflict, with the emphasis on Soviet aims in the region. He began his address by saying that he was "deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the Balkan region and particularly the threat that the Soviet Union poses in the area. It is unfortunate, but true," he said, "that the Balkan region for decades has been misunderstood and too little attention has been placed on the consequences arising from potential instability there."

Referring to Yugoslavia, he noted that it is an "artificial state" in which "the rule of Serbia" has been challenged many times, including attempts by force. The fact, he said, that "the Serbs controlled the majority of the Yugoslav economy and the way they disposed of the funds was resented by the Croats, the Albanians, the Macedonians, the Montenegrins, the Slovenes, and other minority groups."

Revival of Nationalism in Yugoslavia

The Senator said that in recent times, Yugoslavia has come under attack by a revival of nationalist feeling. He pointed out that "Early in the 1970's Croatian nationalism became a significant threat to the Yugoslav Federation and it has remained so ever since. Armed clashes were reported in the early 1970's and sabotage continues today." He said that "In spite of Yugoslav attempts to contain and crush Croatian nationalism, other national groups within the Yugoslav Federation, such as the Kosovo region, which is ethnically Albanian, and Macedonia, have also started demanding their national rights."

In an interesting remark about Macedonia, the Senator said: "A number of reports have pointed out that Bulgaria has recently stated that one-third of Macedonia belongs to Albania and the other two-thirds to Bulgaria." He said that in Macedonia, "the situation is becoming almost as bad as in Kosova, with both Albanian and Bulgarian inhabitants taking part in armed clashes, riots, and countless incidents of sabotage". Incidents and clashes have been reported in the last few months also in Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia, and Vojvodina, he added.

These nationalist movements, Sen. Helms said, are explosive enough in themselves. But they become much more destabilizing to the Balkans when they come under the influence, wittingly or unwittingly, of the Soviet Union, which seeks to use them in order to acquire land bases in the region and warm-water ports on the Mediterranean.

Turning his attention to Kosova and the Spring 1981 riots, the Senator said that "armed clashes became very severe in the Drenica and Fier areas". He rejected official Yugoslav figures on the number of casualties resulting from the rioting, and said that the "actual figure was 1,600 killed, while the number of those imprisoned was "about 5,000". Continuing, he said, "As of July 30, 1982, the Albanians lost over 11,800 people, countless numbers have been wounded and crippled, and between 20,000 and 30,000 are in detention." The Yugoslav Army, he said, "has moved a total of 40,000 troops, including 200 armored vehicles, some helicopter gunships and some ground-attack fighters into the area to try and contain the insurrection within the borders of Kosova".

Echoing the Resolution of the Kosovars in January, 1944, Sen. Helms said that Kosova should be "reintegrated with the parent country Albania." He justified his statement by saying that "The present situation is unjust, because it denies the right of national self-determination to the Kosovars."

Comments On Albania

The Senator commented also on conditions in Albania, including the question of religion in the country and the death of Premier Mehmet Shehu. He said that since 1967, Albania "by decree became the only atheist country in the world where freedom of religion has been absolutely proscribed to the point where several religious personalities have been executed and all houses of worship closed". With regard to the controversial death of Shehu, Sen. Helms, like many other people, does not believe that Shehu took his own life, but rather that he was killed.

He speculated on what might happen in Albania, following the departure of "ailing dictator, Enver Hoxha". He claims that there are pro-Soviet elements in the country, and noted the "conciliatory moves" toward Albania made by the Soviets, both in a covert and overt manner. "The most overt move was made by Andropov himself," on the occasion of Albania's National Day in November of 1982, he said.

Two of the articles recommended by Sen. Helms are particularly interesting as source material on Kosova. Both are serious studies, and both appeared in *Problems of Communism*. One of them, "Yugoslavia's National Question" is by Viktor Meier, the well known expert on Yugoslavia, who writes regularly on developments in Kosova in the German press. The other article entitled "Crises in Kosova," explores many facets of life in Kosova, and is authored by Mark Baskin. (The articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* on Albania, and are impressionistic in style and negative in substance).

Both Meier and Baskin are in agreement with Sen. Helms that the recent upheavals in the province of Kosova are proof that the old problem of nationalism and ethnicity continues to be a major issue in the multi-national state of Yugoslavia. "Communists in Yugoslavia," says Meier, "have been claiming in their propaganda for years, even decades, that they have solved the nationality problem thanks largely to socialism and socialist self-management. Yet, today they are confronted by national problems that are hardly less serious than those of the inter-war Yugoslav state." In fact, since the death of Tito, the trend toward nationalism has grown in the country, as the republics and various ethnic groups have sought to reassert themselves. This assertiveness has been strongest among the Kosovars, and shows the limitations of Belgrade's policy which aims to integrate the different groups in the country."

Meier notes that the very name "Yugoslavia" signifies the land of the Southern Slavs. But the Albanians are not Slavs. "According to modern scholarship, they are the descendents of the ancient Illyrians. This hypothesis is accepted today by all Albanian scholars and by a large number of non-Albanian Balkan specialists."

The last census in Yugoslavia (1981) showed that the Albanians make up about 78 percent of the population of Kosova, as against 13 percent Serbs and 2 percent Montenegrans. Socially however, they have traditionally been looked down upon. Baskin writes that the average Yugoslav sees Albanians as lazy, stupid, cruel and barbaric. The low social status of the Albanians, he says, "might" be exceeded only by the Gypsies. Meier notes that the Serbian press these days is crowded with expressions of low esteem for Albanians. Even their Illyrian ancestry is being denied, because it is seen as a political problem for the country, namely a force that feeds the nationalist feelings of the Kosovars.

Background of Kosova Problem

Both Meier and Baskin devote much space to the background of Kosova, in an effort to place the problem in a historical context, and thus illuminate the current situation. Meier points out that the Serb-dominated prewar Yugoslavia "viewed the annexation of Kosova after the first Balkan War as a return of places sacred to the Serbian national past." Acting on this premise, they attempted to "push back the Albanians through colonization" of the region with Serbs. It was for this reason that most Kosovars "welcomed the breakup of Yugoslavia by fascist Italy" in 1941, and the union of Kosova to Albania proper.

In 1944, when Tito's Communist Partisans moved to reincorporate Kosova into Yugoslavia, despite pledges that the Kosovars would be allowed to determine their own future, the Albanians took up arms in self-defense. According to Baskin, "as many as 30,000 Albanians in Urosevac, Gnjilane, and Trepca staged an uprising" against Tito's Partisans. Overcome by superior strength, they were afterward subjected, says to Meier, to "a brutal police regime," symbolized above all by Aleksander Rankovich, second in command after Tito.

A new phase, called by Baskin the "Albanianization" of Kosova, began only after the fall of Rankovich in 1966 and the second uprising of the Kosovars in 1968. During this phase, which continued through the 1970's, the Kosovars' participation and influence in the administration of the province increased, enrollment in the University of Prishtine grew rapidly, reaching the figure of 35,000 students and beyond, and cultural relations between Kosova and Albania developed as never before.

The third uprising occurred in the Spring of 1981. Baskin notes that Albanians in Prishtine came out with slogans such as "Kosova Republike," "We Are Albanians, Not Yugoslavs," and "We Are the Children of Scanderbeg". He says that besides the upheavals in Prishtine, "clashes between demonstrators and police" occurred in the municipalities of Vuchiterna, Mitrovice, Glogove, Gjakove, Prizren, Podujeve, and Gjilan in Kosova; as well as Tetove, Gostivar, Diber, Kerehove, Struge, Ohri, Kumanove, and Shkup in the republic of Macedonia. Baskin observes that in terms of its intensity and duration, the 1981 uprising "surpassed all such disruptions in postwar Yugoslavia".

Despite drastic measures by Belgrade authorities to "settle accounts with Albanian nationalists," the situation in Kosova has not been normalized. The so-called "differentiation" campaign — a euphemism for "purges" — mounted against Albanian nationalists has not stamped out dissidence in the region. Baskin reports that two interesting forms of Albanian dissidence have appeared recently. He says that some Albanian-owned firms in Kosova and Macedonia now "conduct business solely in the Albanian language," and Albanians in Prishtine "are refusing to pay taxes."

There is neither political nor economic stability in Kosova. According to Baskin, statistics show that the downward trend in the economy of Kosova "accelerated in 1982". Total industrial production fell by 3.3 percent, losses grew to 10 billion dinars, and the number of unemployed rose by 12.5 percent, from 72,000 to 82,000. Considering that Yugoslavia's own economy is in disarray, an improvement in Kosova's economy in the foreseeable future is not to be expected.

Prospects for Resolving Kosova Issue

What then are the prospects for a resolution of the Kosova Issue? The central fact to take into account, according to Meier, is that the Kosovars "feel themselves to be Albanians," and this very feeling tends to make them indifferent to Yugoslavia. In this connection, Baskin reminds that the Belgrade authorities doubt the loyalty of the Kosovars, and are haunted by "the specter of Kosova's possible secession from the federation," if the province is made a Republic. Baskin's reading of developments in Kosova is very pessimistic, as regard the future of the Yugoslav Federation. "One might see the Kosova events," he says, "as signifying the disintegration of the federation into a collection of fiefdoms."

Viktor Meier, on the other hand, is less pessimistic. He believes that a political solution to the Kosova question is still possible. He is critical of Belgrade's policy of force now in effect in the province. He notes that because of the "specter of separatism, there is reluctance to give Kosova republic status. Yet, postponement of a political solution," he warns, "might necessitate greater concessions in the future," on the part of the Yugoslav state.

At any rate, all this material and more on Kosova, is now a part of the Congressional Record of the United States of America. This in itself is a victory for the Kosovars, especially in view of the fact that the Serbs have done their utmost to make Kosova "an issue" in the eyes of the world in general, and the eyes of American officials in particular. Viewed from this angle, the speech of the Honorable Senator Jesse Helms in the U.S. Senate on the Balkans and his open support for the Kosovars, is a step in the right direction, which we trust will be followed by other American public officials. Such expressions of support for the Albanians of Yugoslavia at this critical time would not only serve the cause of justice, but reaffirm America's traditional role of friendship with the Albanians, a tradition best exemplified by the great idealist and humanitarian, President Woodrow Wilson.

KOSOVA EVENTS IN THE WORLD PRESS AND ACADEMIC FORUMS

By Peter R. Prifti

Developments in Kosova, Yugoslavia, since the violent demonstrations that occurred there in the Spring of 1981, have been widely reported in the world press, particularly in Western Europe. The coverage in the press and on the radio extends from the Scandinavian countries to Saudi Arabia, and from Turkey to the Western Hemisphere and beyond to New Zealand. The interest shown by the outside world in Kosova, as reflected by the media, is a clear indication of the magnitude of those developments, as well as of their importance in the eyes of foreign observers.

The average American, however, is not aware of this fact, in large part because coverage of events in Kosova has been limited in our country, by comparison with most Western European countries. This article is intended to fill the void, and eliminate as far as possible that information gap. For the most part we shall let the media agents speak for themselves, rather than paraphrase or comment on their reports.

The Kosova question has been prominent especially in the West German and Austrian newspapers, magazines and radio. In Germany numerous articles have appeared in such newspapers as *Die Welt*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, and *Nuremberger Nachrichten*. The internationally known magazine, *Der Spiegel*, also has written on Kosova. There have been commentaries on the radio as well. Here is what the West Berlin Radio said on Kosova on April 2, 1981:

"These demonstrations and clashes have their own social causes. They were initiated by students at the University of Prishtina on account of unsatisfactory food and living conditions. [Yugoslav authorities] see these actions as manifestations of Albanian chauvinism, but it should be kept in mind that they occur because of the unpleasant social conditions in this autonomous province. . . . These turbulences are also the result of problems that exist among the different people in this province that is inhabited mostly by Albanians, who nevertheless do not enjoy the same rights and treatment accorded to others. The central administration does not approve of these actions, and therefore it intervenes. The Albanians of Kosova want to develop like all the other nationalities in this province."

Reporting on the martial law imposed by Belgrade in Kosova following the demonstrations on April 1 and 2, 1981, the influential West German daily, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, wrote on April 21: ". . . the state of emergency, the ban on meetings and on travel outside the province are still in force. The region continues to be out-of-bounds to foreigners. An atmosphere of tension persists in the streets. Eye witnesses report that Albanians are incensed over the brutal actions of the police."

Austrian publications writing on Kosova include *Die Presse*, *Tagblatt für Österreich*, *Neue Zeit*, and *Kurier*. Contesting the Yugoslav story that 9 people died during the Spring riots, the April 17, 1981 issue of the *Kurier* said: "Eye witnesses from Kosova reject the reports given out by Belgrade, and say that nearly a thousand died." The paper went on to say that the estimate of casualties given by witnesses was "probably reasonable."

On April 25, 1981, the widely-read Swiss paper, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, noted that "Dissent among Albanians in Kosova is to be found not only among militant groups calling for an Albanian Republic in Kosova, but also among the 300,000 who inhabit Macedonia, and 50,000 others who live in Montenegro."

Italian, French, and British Reaction

Kosova has been much in the news in Italy, France, and Great Britain. Leading publications in all three countries have kept their readers informed about events in Kosova. Among Italian newspapers featuring news on Kosova are *Corriere Della Sera*, *Repubblica*, *L'Unità*, and *Il Manifesto*. One of the most informative and dramatic accounts of the Spring 1981 events in Kosova was published in the Italian magazine, *Espresso*, by an Italian student at the University of Prishtina. Following are excerpts from his account of the demonstrations in Prishtina:

"On the night of March 11, students at the University of Prishtina decided to organize a demonstration based chiefly on three demands: the right to study, the issue of textbooks, and living conditions.

"At noon on March 12 . . . the students poured into the street shouting, 'bread, bread!' The police, ignoring the pleas of certain professors to remain calm, attacked the demonstrators with tear gas bombs. The students reacted by throwing stones at them. The demonstration broke up, but left the young people angry and startled.

"On March 26 several thousand students began a march, carrying with them a huge Albanian flag — which is the same as the flag of Kosova — and shouting, 'Free our comrades in prison,' and 'Long live the Republic of Kosova.' A group of people joined the demonstrators, and together they formed a column, and headed for the center of the city. Suddenly, police contingents dispatched from Belgrade by plane appeared, and began to attack the throng. . . . By evening of March 26, several hundred people lay wounded, hundreds more were arrested. The inhabitants of Prishtina were filled with hatred for the police.

"On April 1, two hundred construction workers of the 'Dardania' enterprise at the outskirts of Prishtina organized a solidarity march to ask for the

release of arrested students. . . . Along the way to the city, ordinary people, passersby and others joined the workers. . . . Seeing that the police had not intervened, women with children and even unescorted children who happened to be in the streets joined the marchers.

"By now the throng of demonstrators reached 15,000. Suddenly the police attacked again with tear gas bombs, wounding many. Nevertheless, the demonstrators remained cool . . . and continued to march in the street until they took complete possession of it. The number of demonstrators had now grown to between 30,000 and 40,000. Presently they turned the demonstration into a sort of revolutionary festival. The higher schools interrupted their afternoon classes, and students descended on the city carrying their professors on their shoulders. In the evening women came with bread and fruit for the hungry demonstrators. At 6:15 the police resumed their attack, leaving many wounded on the ground. The demonstrators dispersed as twilight fell. . . .

"But in the morning of April 2, the streets were filled once again with groups waving Albanian flags. The whole city [of Prishtina] was in the streets. No one went to work. At 11:00 tanks appeared, and four military aircraft flew low over the streets and rooftops to create panic. The demonstrators became indignant. At noon, using bottles filled with benzine, they burned two of the tanks. The police responded with bullets. Eight of the demonstrators, including two children, fell dead on the asphalted street.

"More tanks and armored cars were brought in from Macedonia . . . but the demonstration would not break up. The participants kept re-grouping after each assault. Trucks filled with bread rolled in from a bakery near the city to feed the demonstrators who had now turned warriors. Women used strips of fabric and lemons to protect themselves from the tear gas.



Yugoslav Army tanks still patrol the streets of Prishtina.

"The throng accepted the challenge [of the police and the army] to make this a test of strength. . . . The blood flowed freely in the streets."

An Italian student added that the "revolt" had spread not only to the main cities of Kosova, but even to remote villages in the province.

The French public has read about Kosova in the world-famous *Le Monde*, in *Le Journal*, *Le Quotidienne de Paris*, *Figaro* — said to be the largest daily in Paris — and the magazine *L'Express*. On June 30, 1981, *Figaro* wrote:

"Although Kosova is rich in lignite, nickel, and chrome, the Albanian population occupies the lowest bracket of the national income in the country. That income is ten times smaller than that of Slovenia, five times smaller than that of Croatia, and three and a half times smaller than that of Serbia. . . . There are 70,000 unemployed, and this is the reason why . . . 40,000 Albanians earn their livelihood in the West."

Among the English publications that have written on Kosova are the renowned *Times* and *Guardian*, and the *Economist* magazine. Writing in the *Economist* on May 7, 1981, correspondent Chris Switch said:

"I think that the greatest dissatisfaction [among the Kosovars] is nationalistic in nature. The Albanians of Yugoslavia, who live mainly within the Republic of Serbia, now want a republic of their own, which would have the same status as the other republics in Yugoslavia. There are many more Albanians than Montenegrans, and yet the Montenegrans have their own republic, while the Albanians of Kosova do not."

Coverage in Scandinavia, Greece, Turkey

News on Kosova has been carried by the press in Spain, Portugal, and Ireland. The coverage has been greater in Scandinavia, above all in Sweden, where Kosova has had exposure in *Sundsvallstidning*, *Aftenbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, and in the German *Tempus*. An article in the Danish paper, *Socialistik Dagblad*, dated April 29, 1981, said among other things:

"It is known that in this zone [Kosova] there live 1.5 million Albanians with a strong national identity, and their own tongue and venerable culture. They make up over 80 percent of the population of the province. Large groups of Albanians (numbering half a million) reside in Macedonia and Montenegro. . . .

"Albanians fought bravely together with the Yugoslav people for the liberation of Yugoslavia. . . . Kosova was not proclaimed a republic, as happened with the other regions, but a so-called 'autonomous province under Serbian rule'. And the Albanian nationality group was divided among three republics. A fierce campaign was carried out at the end of the fifties to displace the Albanians *en masse* through arrests, imprisonment, and oppression. Discrimination against Albanians continued, depriving them of their political and democratic rights."

Shortly after the demonstrations, Yugoslavia began a campaign of accusations against Albania, blaming Tirana for the unrest, and charging Albanian authorities with interference in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia. But the foreign press generally turned a deaf ear to the Yugoslav charges. The reaction of the Swedish paper *Svenska Dagbladet* is typical. On May 22, 1981, the paper wrote: ". . . official Yugoslav organs are trying, as much as possible, to place the blame for what is happening in Kosova on Albania. But their argument is not convincing."

There was the same reaction on the part of the Greek media to an attempt by Yugoslavia early in June of 1981 to impute to Albania aggressive designs on the territorial integrity of both Yugoslavia and Greece. As evidence for the plot, Yugoslavia pointed to a map of Albania, allegedly prepared and distributed by Tirana, which incorporated large chunks of Yugoslavia and Greece into Albania. Commenting on this incident, the Greek paper *To Vima* wrote on June 21, 1981 as follows:

"The aim of the Yugoslav agency in this action was not only to strengthen the Yugoslav position on Kosova, but to openly influence Greek opinion and

try to win the cooperation of the Greek media so as to echo the Yugoslav viewpoint. True, the function of official channels of information is to defend and disseminate the policies of the country where they operate, but in a manner which will not lead to error."

The Turkish media have been among the strongest defenders of the rights of the Kosovars, and probably the most eager champions of their demands. An example is the article by Prof. Ahmet Esmer in the Turkish newspaper *Baresh*, dated June 6, 1981.

"The question may rightly be asked: What do the Albanians of Kosova want? They want Kosova to be declared a republic within the framework of the Yugoslav Federation. . . . But the Serbs have never shown any sympathy for Albanians. Indeed, they have made plans for the displacement of Albanians. According to a report we have at hand . . . the Serbs aimed to uproot 200,000 Albanians and send them to Turkey. But it is known that the Albanians are the oldest people in the Balkans and in Europe. They are in their own native land."

In fact, Yugoslavia sent hundreds of thousands of Kosovars to Turkey both before and after World War II.

Articles sympathetic to the Albanians in Kosova have been published by the press in the so-called Third World, including our neighbor to the south, Mexico. On May 21, 1981, the Mexican paper *Uno Mas Uno* wrote:

"The protests in Prishtina are undoubtedly expressions of dissatisfaction with the position of the central government of Yugoslavia on the national aspirations of the Albanian population. . . . But neither a policy of oppression, nor draconian actions . . . are the most appropriate ways for solving problems of national minorities."

View of Kosova in U.S. Press

Reportage on Kosova in America has been limited, but much of what has been printed has been favorable to the Kosovars. Moreover, the reportage has appeared in some of the country's most prominent journals, including the *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. On April 20, 1981, the *Herald Tribune* commented on the social status of the Kosovars saying, "Kosova is populated mostly by people of Albanian origin who are on the bottom rung of the social ladder in the country".

The same point was made earlier in an article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, dated April 8, 1981. "Kosova . . . has experienced a visible decline in living standards. Many Albanian Kosovar youth do not feel themselves to be masters in their own home. Although traditionally they have maintained their national pride, Kosovar Albanians still suffer from an inferiority complex. The Serbs and other large elements in the country often look down on them."

Commenting on the question of a republic of Kosova, the *New York Times* wrote on April 27, 1981: "The federated state of Yugoslavia presently has six republics. What difference would it make if it had another republic? Why should Kosova not be a republic, when 85 percent of its inhabitants, numbering one and a half million, are Albanian ethnics?"

The same basic argument has been echoed time and time again in the world press in reports and commentaries on Kosova.

In a lengthy article on Kosova on June 18, 1981, the *Boston Globe* wrote:

"Albanians have always been second class citizens in the country of the South Slavs, called Yugoslavia. They are the poorest of the poor. . . . If they leave Kosova in search of work [elsewhere in Yugoslavia], they end up as porters, dishwashers, shoeshiners. . . ."

"For twenty years in succession, the Minister of the Interior, Aleksandar Rankovich, a Serb and second in rank after Tito, used his secret police to suppress the Albanians. For example, in the years 1955-56, a great drive was launched under the pretext of collecting arms from the villagers, during which many Albanians were slain. . . . Kosova is the little Third World of Yugoslavia: poor, proud, insulted and insufferable."

The world press kept up its reportage on developments in Kosova also in 1982 and 1983. But attention now shifted increasingly to the arrests, trials and imprisonment of Kosovars by the Yugoslav authorities, in the wake of the 1981 disturbances. On July 27, 1982, Eric Bourne wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor*:

" . . . Yugoslav authorities are shaking their political fist at this region in the south. More than sixty Albanians have been jailed this month, with sentences ranging as much as 15 years, because they were allegedly behind secret groups that called for an independent republic of Kosova within Yugoslavia. About 700 persons have been sentenced in more than 55 trials, while many more have lost their jobs. One thousand others have been expelled from the local branch of the Yugoslav Communist Party because they supported the slogan for a 'Republic of Kosova'."

"Belgrade's opposition to granting republican status to Kosova does not seem to be in accord with Tito's old slogan on fraternity and equality. The question arises: How long can his heirs reject such a solution. . . .?"

Pursuing the same theme, the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* wrote on July 30, 1982 that among the Albanians sentenced in Kosova,

" . . . 278 are university students and students in the middle schools, and 64 are professors and teachers. Among intellectuals who were given sentences, two hold doctoral degrees in science, seven are lecturers, ten jurists. But there are also workers and peasants. In the meantime, slogans scribbled on walls of buildings [calling for a Republic of Kosova, etc.] are on the increase. Official sources confirm that since the beginning of the demonstrations, some 7,000 slogans have appeared in public places."

The Canadian press also has taken note of events in Kosova. There have been articles in the *People's Canada Daily News*, and in the *Ontario Sun*, whose editor-in-chief, Peter Worthington, observed that Kosova represented "the most recent of mini-holocausts to plague the world".

On April 27, 1983, a Saudi Arabian paper, *Arab News*, carried an article describing the situation of jailed Kosovars. It said that prison conditions were lamentable. "The prisoners are obliged to do hard labor which impairs their health. Dr. Adem Demtja, a writer, has lost his eyesight because of his ordeal in prison. There are more political prisoners in Kosova than in South Africa," the article said.

A Chilling Document of Torture

Reports of mistreatment, persecution and torture of Albanians in Yugoslavia, some of them by Yugoslav dissidents, have appeared in the press from time to time. But few of them can compare, for vivid detail and emotional impact, with a document made public only recently that tells of the fate of imprisoned Kosovars in Yugoslavia. The document was published in the periodical *The Voice of Kosova*, in its March 1983 issue. The periodical is printed in Biel, Switzerland. The document is in the form of a petition, signed by 17 Albanians imprisoned for political reasons, and addressed to the

Secretariat of Justice in Zagreb, Republic of Croatia. The petition was sent from their place of detention in Lepoglava, Croatia. Following are excerpts from their petition, covering events from November 1981 to May 1982.

"Unusual cruelties are being perpetrated day after day against us, in the prison of Lepoglava. During our transfer from Kosova to the prison of Gospić [Croatia], a special reception awaited us which cannot be called other than savage and inhuman, worthy of comparison with the terrors of the Nazi camps of Dachau and Mathausen.

"In the district jail of Prishtina, the police forced us to undress completely. . . not to check for arms or other hidden objects, but, in their own words, to humiliate us. Then, kicking us and hitting us with the butts of their automatic guns, they loaded us into a van with metallic cubicles, two men in each cubicle. Our hands were tied with chains used for beasts of burden, and so tightly that our hands began to swell. The doors of the van closed hermetically, and in a matter of minutes we were breathing hard for lack of air, since the cubicles were air tight, and there were 43 of us in the van. . . . We feared we would burst from lack of oxygen, and in desperation hurled ourselves against the metal doors of the cubicles. But the police paid no attention. Only when half of us passed out did they open the door. Then they withdrew and stood several meters away, unable to withstand the stench of our bodies which were drenched in sweat and steaming from the heat. We were pale like corpses. The van had a ventilator, but they did not turn it on in order to make us suffer as much as possible.

During the 17-hour-long ride, they gave us no food to eat, except a glass of water when we reached Zagreb. In Belgrade, they let us go to the rest room, two by two, and on the way beat us with a whip, kicked us and hit us on the back with the butt of their automatics. . . .

"We reached the Gospić prison in a state of total exhaustion. . . . But our suffering did not end. After taking our clothes and leaving us naked, they began immediately to beat us up, with the prison guards competing with one another to see who could punish us the most! Our naked bodies were covered all over with blood stams. They opened Nexhmî Balaj's mouth and shoved a whip down his throat. He nearly choked to death. For more than two weeks he was unable to eat. They knocked Abdyl Zymbëri down on the floor, and a guard thrust his boot in his mouth and yelled "Lick it!" Halit Osman was beaten so badly with a club that he suffered permanent deformations of the nose and of the body. They tore off nearly all of Shaban Dragusha's moustache. Avdi Liman was hit hard on the chest, causing him a heart condition. Naim Bujupi bears to this day the scars of the wounds he sustained from being beaten with a club.

"The most brutal of all the guards was someone by the name of Gjura, who hit us in our genital organs. . . . Other guards followed suit, and when striking Naim [Bujupi] they would scream, 'Never again will you have Albanian children!'

"When the hallway was red with blood, they put us into cells, three to a cell. But nobody dared to sit down, for they gave us strict orders to stand at attention. We stood for two hours. . . . Even the crippled Sadik Sadiku, who had lost one leg, was subjected to this torture. With rare sadism, the guards would strike his one remaining leg and threaten him, saying, 'We will break this leg, too, and then you can walk on your hands'.

"Apart from the daily beatings, we had to remain standing from four to five hours straight, without making a move. . . . In short, torture in this hellish hole has become routine. Torture was an inseparable part of our lives.

We have much more to tell about our horrifying experience in the Gospić prison, and not only there . . . but we think that we have already said enough to give you an idea about how the law is applied in the [Yugoslav] penal system, especially when it comes to Albanian political prisoners."

The petition concludes with the cry, " . . . we hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable before the judgment of history!"

The Historical Argument on Kosova

Since the events of Spring 1981, the Yugoslav press has generally argued that the disturbances were due not to social and economic and political conditions, but to the machinations of Albanian nationalists and irredentists, plus the instigations of the albanian government, and the plots and underground activities of reactionary and fascist Albanian groups in exile, as, for example, the *Bullî Kombëtar* (National Front). The Yugoslav media have also revived the old thesis that Albanians settled in Kosova only in the last three centuries, after driving out most of the Serb settlers in the region. In recent years, however, more and more views have appeared in the world press which contest this thesis.

The Turkish paper *Cumhuriyet* wrote on May 22, 1983:

"It is proper to ask: Who indeed are the nationalists and irredentists [in Kosova], the Albanians who with justice demand a republican status for Kosova, or the Serbs who have occupied the lands of the autochthonous Albanians? . . . To point an accusing finger at patriotism and nationalism of the Kosovars, as the Serbs are doing, is none other than blackmail."

A more dispassionate and detailed argument, in opposition to the Yugoslav thesis, was published by the French paper *Le Monde*, on June 2, 1982. Its author was Professor Alain Ducellier, of the University of Toulouse in France. Ducellier said, among other things:

"He who has no ulterior motives can verify easily that the Albanians of Kosova are anything but an immigrant population. With rare exceptions, all at present agree that at least since the second millennium B.C., contemporary Albania and Kosova have been part of a large Illyrian community, the cultural unity of which has been brought to light by archeology. Archeology has also shown that the Illyrians are indisputably the ancestors of the Albanians.

"It is not without interest to note that the Slavs . . . are among the later occupiers [of Kosova]. Studies on toponymy (names of persons found in archival texts, particularly the documents of the Republic of Ragusa [now Dubrovnik]), and documents of the most distinguished Serbian tsars that make mention of "Albanian villages" in Kosova, and finally the surveys made by the Turks immediately after occupation [of the Kosova region], all testify clearly that the population of Kosova in the 14th and 15th centuries, was already predominantly Albanian and Christian. Furthermore, contemporaries such as Western publicists of the Crusades, as well as Byzantine chroniclers agree unanimously on the identity of the population of Kosova and its differentiation from the Slavs."

Ducellier defended this position also in the paper he delivered at the International Conference on Kosova in New York on November 6, 1982. But for the most elaborate presentation of his thesis on the unity and compactness of the Albanian nation, including the Kosovars, the reader is referred to his voluminous and well researched work *La Façade maritime de l'Albanie au moyen âge* (The Maritime Façade of Albania in the Middle Ages), published in Salonika in 1981.

Academic Conferences on Kosova

Kosova has become a topical issue not only for the media, but for the scholarly world as well. This is indicated by the interest shown in the region by scholars and academic institutions and publications. The preoccupation of scholars with Kosova has grown considerably since the 1981 riots and their aftermath.

The violent reaction of the Yugoslav authorities to the demands of the demonstrators indicated that they had no intentions of satisfying those demands, and resolving the issue amicably and peacefully. Motivated by a desire to explore and understand the root causes of the Kosova problem, and with the knowledge and insights thus gained contribute perhaps to the solution of the problem, several academic discussions on Kosova were organized in the recent past in Europe and America.

A seminar, "The Albanians of Kosova," better known as the London Seminar on Kosova, took place on May 19, 1982 at Russell Square 21, London. The seminar was sponsored by London University's School of Slavonic and East European Studies. It began with a round table discussion by Arshi Pipa of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Patrick F.R. Artisien of the University of Bradford in England, Branka Magas, also of Bradford University, and George Schöpflin of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Prof. Pipa opened the discussion with a review of the situation in Kosova since the Spring disturbances in 1981. He said that the continuation of the state of emergency in the province, and the heavy jail terms handed out to the Kosovars, were actions that only "add fuel to Albanian discontent and resentment". He likened Kosova to a land "under military occupation," and warned that the situation was fraught with danger. He said that Serbian tutelage left Albanians in a state of political inferiority and an economic condition characterized by higher unemployment and lower standards of living than other regions in Yugoslavia. "The Albanians," he said, "are the proletarians of socialist Yugoslavia."

Pipa affirmed that the situation could be corrected only by granting Kosova the status of a Republic. "Once the Kosovars feel that they are their own masters, they should be able to improve their economy," he claimed. Dependency on aid by the Federal Government of Yugoslavia would then gradually disappear, thus relieving the Federation of a heavy burden. Furthermore, the Kosovars would develop their own Albanian culture without having to rely for assistance on Albania. The double dependency, economic and cultural, will come to an end and the situation will be normalized to the profit of both Yugoslavia and Albania.

Pipa also maintained that Yugoslavia's fears that Kosova would secede from the federation if given republican status were groundless, all the more so since Albanian leaders have shown no inclination to incorporate Kosova, knowing that it would not be in their interest to do so.

Patrick Artisien commented on the economy of Kosova and on the demographic developments in the province and beyond. He said that the last official census (1981) showed that the Albanian population in Yugoslavia had reached 1,732,000, and was now almost as numerous as the population of the Slovenians (1,754,000), the third largest group in the country, after the Serbs and the Croats. Dr. Artisien observed that, considering their high birth rate, the Albanians will soon be the third largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia. Under these circumstances, he went on, to deny the Kosovars republican status can only invite further trouble.

Branka Magas noted that constitutionally Kosova has advanced steadily since 1946, being upgraded from a "region" to an "autonomous province". However, unlike the six republics, it lacks the fundamental right of secession, even though the 1944 Resolution of the National Liberation Committee for Kosova and Metohia acknowledged "the Albanians' right of self-determination, including secession". She remarked that after the war the Yugoslav Communist Party ignored the resolution. In so doing, it created an anomaly, since the population of Kosova is larger than that of Montenegro and Macedonia, both of which were granted republican status at the end of the war.

Dr. Schöpflin spoke with approval of Yugoslavia's policy on national minorities, and added that he had the impression that a feeling of "go it alone" was emerging in Serbia, a feeling that Serbia would be better off without the two provinces of Kosova and Vojvodina.

There followed a period of discussions. Questions were asked and comments made by Dr. Muriel Heppell, co-author of *Yugoslavia* (1961), Quintin Hoare, co-editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Professor Michael Kaser of Oxford University, Melanie Anderson of Amnesty International, and Dr. L. J. D. Collins and Richard Clogg, both of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at London University.

Panel on Kosova at Chicago Conference

From May 7 to 9, 1982, a conference was held in Chicago by the Midwest Association of Societies for Slavic Studies. The conference included a panel on Albanian ethnics in Yugoslavia. It was the first time, to the knowledge of this reporter, that an entire panel, devoted to Kosova, was featured at an academic gathering in America. The fact that it happened is proof of the interest Kosova has aroused in the halls of Academia in America, just as it has aroused the interest of the world press and — we may be sure, behind the curtains — that of statesmen and governmental experts on Balkan affairs, as well.

The panel on Kosova included Professor Nicholas Pano of Western Illinois University, Branko Bogumovich of the Yugoslav news agency, TANJUG, in New York, and Howard Tyner, reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and close observer of developments in Eastern Europe.

The panel was opened by Prof. Pano with a concise presentation of the Kosova question in its historical context, beginning with the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the Albanian League of Prizren. He noted that as a result of decisions by the Great Powers of Europe, the Kosovars were left out of the boundaries of the Albanian nation and incorporated in what is now the federated state of Yugoslavia. (Other Albanians, the Thams, he added, were separated from the body of the Albanian nation and turned over to Greece.)

Pano remarked that subsequently the Kosovars were subjected to a policy of denationalization and forced assimilation into the Yugoslav society. The Kosovars' rights as a national minority were ignored, in violation of the Treaty on Minorities. Their language was not recognized, and their economic needs were neglected. Instead, the Yugoslav government sought to colonize Kosova with Serbs, Montenegrans and Bosnians, and on the other hand put into operation a policy of mass expulsions of Albanians to Turkey. These policies, Pano observed, created friction and deep-rooted animosities between Albanians and Serbs.

Following the Second World War, Prof. Pano continued, the Kosovars gained some of the rights that had long been denied them, and with the normalization of relations between Yugoslavia and Albania in 1971 there was a further easing of tensions in Kosova. But the freedoms granted the

Kosovars did not go far enough. As a result, their frustrations grew and erupted into violence.

Bogunovich of TANJUG not surprisingly had words of praise for Yugoslavia's policy on Kosova, and spoke of the "fair treatment of Albanians in that country". He granted that the Kosovars do not have the right to secede, but noted that they hold many prestigious positions in government, including a seat in the collective presidency of Yugoslavia, in the person of Fadil Hoxha. He argued that secession "would destroy the integrity of the Yugoslav state," and for that reason there was no alternative to the course Yugoslavia is presently pursuing in respect to Kosova.

Continuing his analysis, Bogunovich blamed the intellectuals in Kosova for the recent riots there, as well as the Tirana government which, he charged, supported clandestine groups in the province. He had criticism also for officials in Kosova and Belgrade for their "lack of vigilance". Toward the end of his discourse, the TANJUG representative expressed the hope that reforms and a new sensitivity would bring about a lowering of tensions in the area.

The third speaker, Howard Tyner of the *Chicago Tribune*, was not impressed by the argument presented by Bogunovich, and went on to paint a bleak scenario of the reality in Kosova. He said that the violent outbreaks of the Spring of 1981 had engulfed all the major cities of the province, and involved not just the intellectuals but "a large portion of the population". The resulting casualties and the subsequent purges of Albanian cadres, especially educators and intellectuals in the higher institutions of learning, have given Yugoslavia "a very bad image overseas". It has damaged, he said, the concept abroad of Yugoslavia as a land of harmonious ethnic groups.

Tyner said that the core of the problem in Kosova is the lack of sensitivity on the part of Yugoslavia's leaders to the national feelings of the Albanians. Unless they become aware of this truth, and shape their economic and social programs for Kosova in accordance with it, they are likely to face new demonstrations and disturbances in the future. It is time they realized, Tyner remarked, that "the present status [of Kosova] is not acceptable to the Albanian minority".

In later comments at the panel, Prof. Pano warned that unless there is movement toward a solution of the Kosova problem, Yugoslavia could be exposed to "tremendous internal strains" that would weaken the country, and affect its standing in the international community in an adverse way.

A third and much larger convocation on Kosova was held in November of 1982, in New York, under the aegis of the City University of New York (CUNY). But since that conference is discussed elsewhere in the current issue of the Bulletin, we shall not report on it here.

Notes from the Journal of a Traveler to Kosova

In 1982 and again in the Spring of this year, a Western observer traveled extensively in Kosova and talked with many people. This observer, who has a keen eye for detail and a passion for accuracy and fairness, came back with some noteworthy findings and impressions, all recorded in a journal.

On the first trip, the observer, according to the journal, was struck by the poverty of many Kosovars. They have nothing, the journal said, not even a tiny piece of barren land, and the aid they receive from the government is very little. The journal notes that hatred is not seen as a vice in Kosova or Yugoslavia, when it is directed against Albanians. The blood feud tradition is still alive in the province, though popular sentiment against it is on the rise.



Visitors are halted for identification by the Military.

The Western observer came away with the impression that Yugoslavia is imbued with colonialist attitudes towards the Albanians. For example, Albanians are expected to feel grateful for government aid which other ethnic groups in the country accept as a right to which they are entitled, instead of as a favor.

The journal notes that despite discrimination and the hardships they are undergoing, the Kosovars' national feelings remain strong. As an illustration, it tells of a young Albanian woman engaged to be married. She showed the observer the trousseau she had prepared. And at the bottom of the hope chest, she had tucked away an Albanian flag. Just as Albanian women took care to preserve the Flag of Scanderbeg through centuries of domination by the Turks, until Albania regained its freedom and independence.

On the subject of politics, the journal records that a climate of fear pervades Kosova, that the best educated Albanians are in prison — in the opinion of people in one village, and that the number of killed during the Spring 1981 confrontations is thought to be closer to 2,000 than to 1,000, though no one knows for certain. Albania is off limits to Albanian ethnics in Yugoslavia. An Albanian woman in Montenegro living close to the Albanian border complained that authorities refuse to allow her to visit her relatives who live within walking distance across the border. The observer found evidence of suppression of Albanian culture. The journal notes, for example, that no books by Naim Frashëri, Albanian poet of the national Awakening, could be found in bookstores.

On the second trip, the observer found a lessening of the political tensions in the region, but the situation in general was not a happy one. The journal recalls that this time some Albanian literature, such as Illyrian studies and books by Ismail Kadare and De Rada, was available for purchase.

The economic situation is critical, marked by shortage of consumer goods and widespread unemployment. According to the journal, some Serbs fear to travel to Kosova, while others are leaving that region. The observer asked a number of Serbs what the reason was for their departure, and they answered that there was no work for them in Kosova, though some said it was because they feared Albanians. The journal points out, however, that probably many more Albanians than Serbs are leaving the region, owing to lack of jobs.

Peter R. Prifti

ALBANIANS IN KOSOVA ARE WAITING: YUGOSLAVIA MISSES ITS CHANCE

By Viktor Meier

Editor's Note: German journalist, Viktor Meier has been writing extensively for the past few years on the problem of Kosovo and its international dimensions that the issue brings forth.

Below, we reprint Viktor's most recent article which appeared in Frankfurter Allgemeine Daily on June 20, 1983.

Pristina, June — In one of the villages near Podujevo, one of the centers of the Kosovo revolt in spring 1981, we unexpectedly run into a general police control point. Every vehicle is searched with electronic instruments like those used in airports. Even the luggage is being checked. Apparently the police officers are looking for weapons and explosives. They are also interested in the printed matter and the books that we are carrying. It seems that the "normality" of which we had officially been assured prior to our visit does not apply to Kosovo. Not long ago all telephone and telex connections within and to the region were interrupted for several days due to an act of sabotage in the main telephone and telegraph office of Pristina, and across the street from the new Grand Hotel an explosion took place. Albanian schoolboys who are on recess are watching the police control with amusement and they do not hide their satisfaction when the police cannot find anything. Finally the teachers send them away. Apparently they want to prevent incidents. Within a few years, when these young Albanians will be a little older, they will dominate because of their sheer number. Everywhere one goes in Kosovo, one runs into large droves of children. Urosevac (Ferizaj), another center of disturbances and a regional school center, has 10,000 high school and college students among its population of 40,000.

To be sure, compared with last year, the interest in demonstrations among the politically oriented population seems to have subsided. Now young people are painting slogans on streets and houses only occasionally. When they get caught, they land in prison for three or more months. On the other hand, their determination has become more pronounced to demonstrate political strength to achieve equality for the Albanian population in Yugoslavia, which is approaching the 2 million mark. It means the establishment of a separate republic. "They should leave us alone" is what we hear. There is no evidence of irredentism. We are told that the Albanian authorities sent back a large number of the 50 to 100 young people who fled to the land of Enver Hoxha following the disturbances and also later particularly those who came from well-to-do houses, for instance, sons of farmers who own 10 hectares of land and a tractor. It shows that the regime in Tirana is afraid of the Kosovars, and fears that they might contribute to the ideological softening of Enver Hoxha's government. This attitude would not be very useful as a basis for an irredentist policy. It is true that the comments coming from Tirana about Yugoslavia are not very friendly. Nevertheless, if the regime were actually practicing irredentism, it would have to alter its attitude. Things could change if a more pragmatic government were to follow Enver Hoxha's regime in Tirana and if the emphasis were on more openness and on national unity instead of class struggle. At the present time we do not hear anything positive about Enver Hoxha from the Albanians in Kosovo, whether they are young or old. It seems that today's Kosovo Albanians are more single-minded and more unified than they were a year ago and that they are only concerned with regulations concerning their position within Yugoslavia.

Belgrade Obstinately Clinging to Unreal Positions

Does this constellation not present a great opportunity for Yugoslavia? One gets the impression that it is thrown away. Yugoslavia's official policy is obstinately clinging to totally unreal positions when it comes to two crucial questions. First of all, it is holding on to the legend of Tirana's irredentism. In light of this attitude, all expressions of Albanian nationalism seem to be inspired from the outside and as such they are considered treasonous. At any rate, the regime is again using more frequently the words "enemy" and "foreign centers," which allegedly are aiming at "destabilizing" Yugoslavia. Second, Belgrade is just as determined when it says that there must not be a "Kosovo republic" and even less a republic of the Albanians living in Yugoslavia. An Albanian national and government politician told us in Skopje that the question of the republic is not important at all and, besides, the Albanians did not want it either. Apparently he thinks a priori that all foreign journalists are dumb. According to him, what is important is the "practical participation by Albanians in the establishment of socialism."

In Slovenia it is considered quite an accomplishment that this very socialism made it possible for all Slovenes to live in a state community for the first time in history, but apparently different standards apply to the Albanians. The categorical rejection of the idea of a separate republic is very peculiar, because even those Albanians who occupy the most prominent positions in Kosovo advocated a Kosovo republic in past years when addressing small and large groups, and until the disturbances occurred in 1981 the region enjoyed the same rights as a Yugoslav regional republic. It referred to itself as a

"constitutive factor" and most of the time it dealt directly with the federal authorities and not through the republic of Serbia. Now it seems that the authorities of the region have been curtailed. Especially the Serbs who live in Kosovo prefer to go directly to the presidium of the republic of Serbia. They like, above all, to deal with Gen Ljubicic, who issues guidelines as if the regional organs did not exist at all.

Although on the outside everything seems quiet at the moment, Albanian nationalists feel that things are developing in their favor. They have time, they can wait. One of their most important objectives is the creation of an "ethnically pure," in other words, pure Albanian Kosovo, and the reality of this ambition is getting closer every day. According to POLITICA, the number of Serbs and Montenegrins who leave Kosovo is estimated at 400 per month, and their share of the total population is now probably no more than 15 percent. To be sure, we are told officially in Pristina that the migration is primarily motivated by economic reasons and less by political concerns, but political groups in Serbia seem to be of a different opinion. It appears that a Serb can only live securely and more or less comfortably if he lives in a larger Serbian community, in other words, in one of the cities or a fairly compact Serbian village. But even there are problems: the planned construction of a slaughterhouse in a Serbian village which belongs to the community of Gnjilane has lately attracted much attention and become a big political issue.

Even the economic development is playing more and more into the hands of Albanian nationalists. Economic conditions in Kosovo are in poor shape and because of the increasing pressure from the population it is not expected that the situation will improve soon. To be sure, the young, neatly dressed graduates who are celebrating their graduation in Pristina's Grand Hotel are proof of the emancipatory progress of the Albanian society, but the sad thing about it is that for a large number of these young people the graduation celebration does not signify the entry into the job market but into unemployment. Officially the number of registered unemployed persons in Kosovo stands at 70,000. Between 30 and 40 percent of them have no other source of income except their ability to work. The number of the hidden unemployed should be much higher. They simply disappear in extended families. The Albanians are more and more inclined to blame the poor shape of the economy on the Yugoslav regime and those politicians who are at the disposal of this regime. A clever whispering campaign is spreading the word that everything would be better if the Albanians were left to govern themselves. As a matter of fact, even a foreign observer can see without difficulty that there have been many instances of neglect and many mistakes. There is still no orderly plan for buying agricultural products, and even in Macedonia private initiative has a freer hand than it does in Kosovo. Today there are houses in Kosovo that do not even have any bread left.

The Belgrade regime is relying more and more exclusively on Albanian politicians. In the eyes of the population they wear the stigma of national disloyalty; consequently, they do not have much authority. Apparently some of them hope that the current policy will prepare them for a national Yugoslav career. Frequently they are noted for their radical behavior. On the day we spoke with Azem Vlasi, the current secretary of the city of Pristina, he had four members of the Historical Institute of the university expelled from the party. Measures like that create hatred. The Albanians live in clans, and every sentence affects a large group of people. We are told that almost all of the federal militia units were withdrawn and replaced by specially trained local units. But the uniformed Albanian policemen seem to be very much concerned about a good relationship with the population. If the situation should again come to a head, nobody will know in advance on what side they will be.

"Open Letter To The Congress Of The United States" By A Concerned Albanian-American Citizen

Honorable Senators and Representatives:

I address you as an American Citizen, and as a member of an ethnic group in our country — the Albanians of America.

Next year, 1984, will mark unofficially the 100th Anniversary of the Albanian ethnic group in America. In the course of one hundred years, tens of thousands of Albanians have settled throughout the vast and fertile land of America. Several generations of them have lived in peace in this country, earned their living in honest labor, raised their children to be decent citizens and, when necessary, fought for this country to preserve the liberty and freedoms that they and all other Americans enjoy.

At the same time, being proud of their national origin, they have preserved as much as possible their Albanian cultural heritage. They speak their own language, honor their national figures, publish books and newspapers in Albanian, assemble freely and discuss openly whatever is of interest to them as a distinct ethnic group. These are great democratic rights which they acknowledge and value, and for which they often praise this country, America, in turn, encourages them to preserve and enhance their Albanian heritage. It views that heritage not as a threat to the unity and integrity of this country, but as a contribution to American society. It sees it as a source of enrichment and strength to the American way of life.

How I wish I could say the same for the more than two million Albanian ethnics in Yugoslavia. The Albanians are the fourth largest group in that country, after the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes.

The sad truth, however, is that they are not recognized as an equal ethnic group, despite official Yugoslav propaganda. They do not have equal political rights with other ethnic groups, nor equal economic opportunities, nor equal social status.

Rather than encouraged to preserve their Albanian nationality, they are persecuted for it. Rather than allowed to use freely their Albanian language and cultivate their literature, they are arrested and jailed for it. Rather than respected for their ancient history and cultural heritage, they are scorned and abused for it.

Merely for demonstrating peacefully for their rights in the Spring of 1981, many of them (some sources say hundreds, or thousands) were massacred in the streets. Thousands have been illegally arrested. Hundreds are rotting in prison. Many are being tortured.

As an American citizen of Albanian origin, I appeal to you to use your influence to bring a halt to Yugoslavia's savage persecution of Albanian ethnics — the Kosovars. I appeal to you to raise your voice in behalf of their just demands.

It is to the credit of the United States Congress that some of you have already addressed this urgent issue. You have spoken bravely and eloquently in support of the Kosovars. I mention here: Senators Charles Percy and Jesse Helms, and Congressmen Mark Biaggi and William Broomfield.

I join Albanian ethnics in America in expressing warm thanks to you for your stance. We commend you for your humanity, and for upholding international principles of justice.

May your laudable initiative inspire similar action by all of your colleagues in the great halls of the Congress of the United States of America. When the voice of the American Congress rings loud and clear in defense of the Kosovars, the chances are Belgrade will listen.

Perhaps then the Albanians of Yugoslavia will begin to enjoy the same rights that Albanians in America have enjoyed for the past 100 years.

ALBANIAN-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS AND THE QUESTION OF KOSOVË

By Elez Biberaj

Mr. Elez Biberaj is a native Albanian who has written lately on the subject of Albania and the Kosova problem as well as Albanian-Yugoslav relations for such prestigious publications as London's Conflict Studies, East European Quarterly. He is associated with the United States Information Agency as a Writer/Editor. Mr. Biberaj has graciously granted us permission to publish this article, which first appeared in the East European Quarterly (January 1983). The views expressed in the article are solely his, and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Information Agency nor those of the U.S. Government.

The Balkan Peninsula is of a paramount political, strategic and military importance to the two major power blocs, and instability in that region has often had serious consequences for peace and stability in other parts of Europe. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania (PSRA) and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) occupy strategic positions in the vulnerable Balkans. During the 1970s, the development of good relations between these two former Soviet satellites, constituted an important factor in the preservation of stability in that part of Europe. However, the Spring 1981 revolt by ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia caused a serious deterioration in Tirane-Belgrade relations and, once again, brought to the fore a long-standing dispute between the two countries, i.e., the status of the large Albanian minority in the Yugoslav federation.

The aim of this article is to analyze the development of recent Albanian-Yugoslav relations. The focus will be on the multifaceted relations between the PSRA and the SFRY as they developed during the 1970s and on how these relations were affected by domestic and international developments. This article also analyzes the 1981 and subsequent events in the Albanian-inhabited province of Kosovë and their effects on Tirane-Belgrade relations.

I. The Background

Albanian-Yugoslav relations in the past have been characterized by periods of uneasiness and outright hostility, caused by long-standing territorial problems, nationalism, and different political, economic and ideological outlooks of the ruling elites in Tirane and Belgrade. For most of its modern history, Albania has had to face the threat of domination, perpetual insults and attempts at dismemberment by its neighbors — Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy. In 1912, Serbia and Montenegro annexed more than forty percent of the Albanian nation and more than half of Albanian-inhabited territories, including the province of Kosovë. Greece annexed Albania's southern region of Çameria, and Italy, during the interwar period, dominated Albania. Thus, the Albanians came to perceive their neighbors, especially Yugoslavia as principal enemies, representing a constant threat to their country's independence, territorial integrity and national aspirations.

The Yugoslav communists played an important role in the formation of the Albanian Communist Party (ACP)¹ — now the Albanian Party of Labor (APL) — and subsequently dominated it. Following the communist victory in World War II, Belgrade's influence in Albania became paramount. As a consequence of this factor, between 1945-48 Tirane was deprived of any significant initiative in its foreign and domestic policies. By 1948, plans were well underway for Albania's total absorption into the Yugoslav federation.²

Following the Soviet-Yugoslav break, the PSRA and the SFRY became adversaries and embarked on entirely different paths. Albania pursued a rigidly Stalinist internal policy, while Yugoslavia followed what Tirane considered a "revisionist" course, pursuing a domestic policy of "self-management" and a foreign policy of "non-alignment." The two countries adopted opposing views on the most important issues affecting the international communist system, and engaged in violent polemics. Khrushchev's reconciliation with Tito and the subsequent improvement in Soviet-Yugoslav relations, caused a deterioration in Soviet-Albanian ties and was a major contributing factor in Tirane's subsequent break with Moscow and alliance with Beijing.

The Albanian-Yugoslav relationship was also hindered by the personal animosities the governing elites developed about their respective roles in the international communist system. For Enver Hoxha, the Yugoslav leadership represented a serious threat to his regime and to his own tenure in office. This perception was fashioned by Hoxha's experience with the Yugoslavs during the war period. From the very beginning of their encounters with Albanian communists in the early 1940s, the Yugoslavs seem to have distrusted Hoxha, primarily because of his intellectual and bourgeois background, and attempted to replace him with Koci Xoxe, who was more amenable to their wishes. After 1948, the Yugoslavs incited Hoxha's opponents, and in 1951 formed an organization composed of Albanian emigres in Yugoslavia, with the publicly stated aim of overthrowing his regime.³

Relations between the PSRA and the SFRY, especially prior to 1966, were also complicated by the harsh persecution of the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia. In order better to appreciate the role of this factor in Tirane-Belgrade relations, it is necessary to briefly review the position of Albanians in socialist Yugoslavia.

At its Fourth Congress in Dresden in 1928 and its Zagreb Conference in 1936, the Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) endorsed the return of Kosovë to Albania.⁴ Following the fall of Yugoslavia in 1941, Kosovë was reunited with Albania. However, during the war, the Yugoslav communists reversed their stand on this issue. A national liberation movement was organized in Kosovë, which maintained direct links with the Central Committee (CC) of the

YCP. The Albanians were promised equal rights and status with other ethnic groups of Yugoslavia. The right of ethnic Albanians to self-determination, including secession, was reflected in Tito's statements as well as in many party documents.⁸

In their encounters with the ACP, the Yugoslav communists downplayed the issue of Kosovë's union with Albania, maintaining it was a "naïve" and "not a pressing" issue and that it could never become a problem in relations between "socialist" Yugoslavia and "socialist" Albania.⁹ The ACP maintained that at the end of the war, the Kosovars would have the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination and decide whether they wished to unite with Albania.¹⁰ But even during the war, Albanian and Yugoslav communists disagreed over the Kosovë issue. Under strong pressure from Yugoslav communists, the ACP was forced to denounce the 1943 Muka Agreement with the nationalist party *Ball'i Kombëtar*, which provided that the fate of Kosovë be decided by a plebiscite.¹¹

The Albanians in Yugoslavia overwhelmingly supported the idea of union with Albania. This view was also shared by Kosovar communists. A resolution passed by the first conference of the Provincial People's Council of Kosovë, in January 1944, noted that:

Kosovë and the Dukagjin Plateau is a region that is predominantly inhabited by Albanians, who as always, today too, desire to unite with Albania. Therefore, we consider it our duty to show the correct road which the Albanian people must take in order to realize their aspirations. The only way for the union of Albanians of Kosovë and the Dukagjin Plateau with Albania is through a joint struggle with the other peoples of Yugoslavia, against the occupier and its servants, because that is the only way to regain freedom, when all the peoples, including the Albanians, will have the opportunity to decide their fate, through the right of self-determination up to secession.¹²

The Yugoslav communists, who faced pragmatics of holding power after defeating the Serb-dominated Chetnics and who were eager not to further alienate the Serbs, opposed such a stand on the Kosovë issue. They feared that allowing Kosovë to reunite with Albania would be a blow to Serbian nationalism and would result in the loss of the support of the largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia. In a letter of March 28, 1944 the YCP rejected the resolution of the Kosovar communists.¹³ Because of their subordinate position in relation to the YCP, the ACP and Kosovar communists were not in a position to challenge the Yugoslav decision on this vital issue for the Albanian nation.

Immediately following the war, Belgrade faced serious problems in Kosovë. The Albanians did not willingly accept their reincorporation into Yugoslavia and were the only national minority group that put up an armed resistance against the Yugoslav communist regime.¹⁴ The Yugoslav Army employed such extreme measures of terror to put down the uprising, that at the First Congress of the Serbian CP, in May 1945, its behavior was harshly criticized by top Yugoslav leaders, including Tito, Djilas and Ranković.¹⁵

In 1945, the Albanians were denied the right to self-determination and were not accorded, as promised during the war, equal status with the other ethnic groups of Yugoslavia. Their legitimate national aspirations were sacrificed in order to satisfy the nationalistic ambitions of the Serbs, Montenegrins, and Macedonians. Ethnic Albanians were considered by the central authorities as politically unreliable and in order to downplay the forces of Albanian nationalism, the territories inhabited by them were divided into three different administrative units. Kosovë (Kosovë-Metohija), where the majority of Albanians in Yugoslavia live, was proclaimed an autonomous region and reincorporated into the Republic of Serbia. Other Albanian-inhabited territories were incorporated into the Republics of Montenegro and Macedonia. The option of returning Kosovë to Albania was vehemently opposed by the Serbs, who preferred to solve the problem through a "union" between Albania and Yugoslavia.¹⁶ Enver Hoxha has claimed that during a meeting with Tito, in July 1946, they discussed the question of Kosovë's union with Albania. According to Hoxha's account:

Tito asked me what I thought about Kosovë. "Kosovë and the other regions of Yugoslavia with an Albanian population," I replied, "are Albanian territory which the great powers unjustly tore away from Albania; they belong to Albania and should be returned to Albania. Now that we are two socialist countries the conditions exist for this problem to be solved correctly." Tito said to me: "I agree, this is what we desire, but for the moment we are unable to do anything because the Serbs do not understand such a thing." "If they don't understand it today," I said, "they will have to understand it tomorrow."¹⁷

During the 1950s and the 1960s, Kosovë was characterized by structural inequalities between ethnic Albanians, who made up the majority of Kosovë's population, and Serbs. Although, compared with their position in interwar Yugoslavia, when they were not even recognized as a separate ethnic group, in the post-1945 era, the Albanians did experience a considerable improvement in their status, economic lot and educational opportunities. Nevertheless, they remained in a subordinate position. Members of the dominant Serb group held political power and played a dominant role in Kosovë affairs. They occupied leading positions and employed political means at their disposal, especially the Secret Police — UDB — to preserve their dominant position. The Albanians were systematically deprived of their human and natural rights, subjected to political and economic harassment, forced to emigrate in large numbers to other countries, subjected to state-sanctioned terror, long imprisonment and in some instances physical elimination.¹⁸ As at least one observer has pointed out, Kosovë, before 1966, served as "... a colonial dependency ruled, neglected, and exploited by Serbian and local Serbs."¹⁹

Tiranë waged a fierce media campaign against what it considered as Belgrade's policy of "barbaric crimes, assassinations, violations, and fascist torture" of ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia, and excluded the possibility of normalization of relations as long as this state of affairs continued. In September 1958, an article in *Zëri i Popullit* alleged that only during the period 1945-48, some 36,000 Albanians had been murdered by Yugoslav authorities.²⁰ Following the 1966 purge of Alexander Ranković, Yugoslavia's Vice President and head of the powerful Secret Police, Belgrade authorities publicly admitted the harsh persecution of ethnic Albanians. And a prominent Kosovar scholar has described the persecution of Albanians in the cultural field:

... insistence on a cultural past for the Albanian nationality was considered a national deviation by chauvinistic forces. Historic tradition was a kind of a taboo. The mention of an Albanian literary tradition, even folklore, aroused political indignation. To insist on the unity and continuity of an Albanian national culture was an unpardonable crime.²¹

The factors discussed above contributed to a freeze in Albanian-Yugoslav relations during the 1950s and the 1960s, and contacts between the two countries remained at a minimum. In contrast, the 1970s were to witness the development of a new era between the two neighboring countries, characterized by an unprecedented cooperation, especially in the economic and cultural fields.

II. The 1971 Rapprochement

On February 6, 1971, it was announced that Albania and Yugoslavia had decided to elevate their diplomatic missions to the status of embassies, thus marking a new stage in their relations. The Tiranë-Belgrade rapprochement was precipitated by two main factors: the commonly perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union, following the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the improvement in the status of the Albanian ethnic minority in the SFRY.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia made the Hoxha regime realize that exclusive reliance for protection on distant and militarily weak China was an insufficient guarantee of Albania's security. As a result, the PSRA was forced to make a close reassessment of its foreign policy, and to seek an accommodation with its neighbors. In September 1968 Albania formally withdrew from the Warsaw Pact. Subsequently, Tiranë curtailed its propaganda attacks against Belgrade and offered to assist Yugoslavia in case of aggression from the Soviet Union.¹⁸ Albania's new policy toward Yugoslavia was also encouraged by the Chinese. During the visit of Albania's Defense Minister, Beqir Balluku, to Beijing in September-October 1968, Premier Zhou Enlai urged Tiranë to enter into a military alliance with Belgrade.²⁰

The second factor that precipitated the Tiranë-Belgrade rapprochement was the favorable political change in Yugoslavia following the fall of Ranković, and the subsequent improvement of the lot of the Albanian minority in that country. The Serbs began to see their power slipping, as the Albanians gained a greater say in Kosovë's day-to-day affairs. During public debates concerning changes in the constitution of the SFRY in 1967 and 1968, the Albanians of Kosovë demanded that their grievances be redressed and pressed for full recognition of their national rights and for greater autonomy. There were repeated calls for the creation of a separate republic, encompassing all Albanians in Yugoslavia.

Tiranë viewed Kosovars' demands for greater autonomy with a great deal of sympathy. An editorial in *Zëri i Popullit* on November 24, 1968, declared that improvement of Albanian-Yugoslav relations would depend on Belgrade recognizing the full national rights of Albanians in the SFRY.

In November-December 1968, demonstrations broke out in Kosovë and in Albanian-inhabited parts of Macedonia. Demonstrators demanded the creation of a Kosovë Republic, the establishment of an Albanian university, the improvement of the political and economic position of Albanians in the SFRY, etc. Faced with a serious challenge, the Yugoslav authorities moved on two fronts. They used force to quell the demonstrations, and dealt harshly with their organizers. At the same time, Belgrade met some of the demands of ethnic Albanians. The name of the province was changed from Kosovë-Metohija to the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovë, and "a constitutional law" for the province was promulgated. Kosovë was given its own Supreme Court, its own national emblems and the Albanians were allowed to display their national flag. However, the demand for the creation of an Albanian Republic was rejected. Apparently, President Tito contemplated making Kosovë the seventh republic of Yugoslavia, but was forced to abandon the idea because of strong Serbian opposition.²¹

During the 1968 crisis, the Tiranë regime showed unusual moderation. This policy was dictated by the perception that the security of the PSRA and the SFRY was interdependent and that destabilization of Yugoslavia might give Moscow great opportunities to intervene in that sensitive area. Albania welcomed the post-1968 gains achieved by the Kosovars and expressed the desire to help them in their cultural development. It was disappointed, however, over the lack of progress in the improvement of the status of Albanians in Macedonia. Although some concessions were made to the Albanians following the 1968 disturbances, they continued to be an oppressed minority within Macedonia. A June 1969 editorial in *Zëri i Popullit* accused the Macedonia authorities of following a "chauvinist policy towards the Albanians," of "inhumane treatment," and "denial of the most elementary rights and the continuous effort for denationalization."²²

During a visit to the northern city of Bajram Curri, in May 1970, Hoxha reiterated PSRA's desire to develop good relations with Yugoslavia, despite the deep political and ideological differences between the two countries. He expressed satisfaction that the Kosovars were making steady gains in the political, economic and cultural fields. The PSRA, he said, was ready to develop special cultural relations with Kosovë, and Albanian educational institutions were ready to cooperate with Kosovë University. Hoxha insisted that Albania had the right to be concerned that the Albanians in Yugoslavia were not discriminated against. He reaffirmed Tiranë's pledge to support Belgrade in case of aggression by Moscow.²³ Hoxha's statements drew favorable responses from Belgrade.

During the latter part of the 1960s, economic relations between Tiranë and Belgrade experienced a gradual but steady expansion. The volume of Albanian-Yugoslav trade grew from about \$3 million in 1966 to \$4.8 million in 1967, and to \$8.3 million in 1970.²⁴ This was followed by an expansion of cultural relations between Tiranë and Prishtinë.

III. Relations During the 1970's

In the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, it seemed as if Albania and Yugoslavia were putting aside their differences and that cooperation in the economic field would be extended to the political sector as well. Tiranë's alignment with Belgrade following the enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine gave rise to speculation that, as the Chinese had apparently suggested, Albania and Yugoslavia might enter into a military alliance. However, this was not to be the case. At the Sixth Party Congress, in November 1971, Hoxha laid aside all speculation about Tiranë entering into an alliance with Belgrade. He indicated that there were great political and ideological differences between the two states, but added that "mutual criticisms and polemics" should not hinder cooperation in non-political fields. Ideological attacks on Yugoslavia, which had been virtually suspended, were revived with Hoxha's sharp criticism of the SFRY's "self-management system" and other aspects of Yugoslav domestic and foreign policy.²⁵

Despite the resumption of Albanian polemics, Tiranë-Belgrade relations continued to improve gradually. But in a policy toward Yugoslavia, Albania had to reconcile two conflicting objectives. On the one hand, the PSRA came to appreciate the fact that the two states were independent, in opposing the presence of the Great Powers in the Balkans. In addition, Albania recognized the advantage of expanding economic cooperation with the SFRY, which is, after all, its natural trading partner. Albanian-Yugoslav trade continued to grow, and the agreement signed for the period 1971-75 envisioned that the value of trade between the two countries during those five years would amount to \$110 million. In 1974, the total volume of Albanian-Yugoslav trade amounted to \$37.5 million, double the volume of trade in 1973. During 1975, however, trade decreased, probably reflecting changes in the top echelons of the Albanian economic establishment. The plan had provided for transactions worth \$5.6 million, but trade during that year amounted to only \$37 million.²⁶

Tiranë's security and economic considerations, however, had to be reconciled with domestic concerns of Hoxha's regime. The Albanian and Yugoslav

models of socialism differ substantially, representing two extremes in the building of socialism. Belgrade's relatively liberal domestic policy and its market-type economic management system were anathemas to Hoxha's regime, which feared that Albanian society might be influenced by Yugoslav "revisionism," and that this in turn would lead to the weakening of the role of the APL. The series of purges in Albania during 1973-75, which engulfed the top echelons of the cultural, military and economic sectors, and resulted in the demise of many prominent officials, had immediate repercussions for Tirane-Belgrade relations. The abrupt end of what might be characterized as a "mild liberalization" phase in the early 1970s, led to a drastic increase in Albanian propaganda attacks against Yugoslavia. It appears that Hoxha was concerned that Yugoslavia's model of socialism had appealed to some circles in Albania. The purged officials, Abdyl Kellezi, the former Deputy Prime Minister, Koço Therdhosi, the former Minister of Industry and Mining, and Kiço Ngjela, the former Minister of Trade, were accused of seeking "to introduce revisionist forms and methods of self-administration" in the Albanian economic planning system.¹⁸

The relationship between Tirane and Belgrade was also influenced by their relations with Beijing. Albania was not very enthusiastic concerning the emerging Sino-Yugoslav rapprochement in 1970, and continued to show uneasiness over the steady improvement in Belgrade-Beijing relations. As relations between Yugoslavia and China became increasingly cordial, there was a corresponding deterioration in Albanian-Chinese relations.¹⁹

At the Seventh Party Congress, in November 1976, Hoxha reiterated Albania's declaration of support for Yugoslavia in case of an outside aggression. At the same time, he criticized Yugoslavia for admitting to its ports Soviet warships, characterizing this as detrimental to the development of good relations between Tirane and Belgrade. He also bitterly condemned Yugoslavia's model of socialism and pledged that the APL "will fight to expose the deceptive nature of the Yugoslav variety of revisionism and the danger it presents."²⁰ Albanian ideological polemics against Yugoslavia increased markedly during the last phase of the Albanian-Chinese alliance, as Yugoslav and Chinese leaders exchanged visits, and continued for a while following the Tirane-Beijing break. In 1978, Hoxha published his book *Yugoslav Self-administration: A Capitalist Theory and Practice*, in which he made a wholesale attack on Kardelj's theories. However, in conjunction with its ideological rhetoric, the PSRA followed a pragmatic policy of stealthily expanding its economic relations with the SFRY.

Belgrade made great efforts to court Albania's friendship. This policy was guided by several factors. The Albanian and Yugoslav economies were complementary, and Belgrade was interested in importing raw materials and electricity from the PSRA. But more importantly, the Yugoslavs had political and strategic interests in developments in the PSRA. A weak and unstable Albania has always presented a threat to Belgrade by providing opportunities to Yugoslavia's potential adversaries. Although the Yugoslavs made no secret of their contempt for Albania's "Stalinist" regime, they welcomed Hoxha's apparently irreconcilable break with Moscow, his strong opposition to both military blocs and his pursuit of an independent foreign policy. The two countries shared many of the same concerns and pursued policies that in many respects were parallel. Amid growing signs of the disintegration of the Tirane-Beijing alliance and the resulting power vacuum, Belgrade became increasingly concerned about Albania's foreign policy orientation in the post-Hoxha era and the possibility of a realignment, including a rapprochement with Moscow.

In an effort to influence developments in Albania, Belgrade assigned an important role to Kosovë, characterizing it as an "irreplaceable bridge" for cooperation between the SFRY and the PSRA. Following the establishment of Kosovë University and the conclusion of the first protocol with Tirane University, in 1970, cooperation between Prishtinë and Tirane was characterized by a rapid expansion. This cooperation, however, was restricted mainly to the cultural field. In the mid-1970s, for example, Kosovë's share in Yugoslavia's trade with Albania represented less than 2 percent.²¹ The two universities signed annual agreements on cooperation, which provided for the exchange of lecturers, textbooks, publications, exhibitions and sports teams as well as sponsoring joint projects in the fields of archaeology, ethnography, and linguistics. Kosovë University, which lacked adequate educational materials in Albanian as well as cadres, greatly benefited from its cooperation with Tirane. Between 1970 and 1981, as Table I indicates, 224 lecturers from Tirane were sent to Kosovë.

Tirane University also cooperated and signed protocols with universities in Montenegro and Macedonia. In December 1979, Kosovë's provincial Secretary for Education, Science and Culture, Ymer Jaka, visited Albania. In October 1980, Albania's Minister of Education and Culture, Tefta Cami, visited Kosovë. Cami highly assessed the cultural cooperation between Tirane and Prishtinë, expressed pleasure at the achievements attained by the Kosovars and indicated that cooperation between Albania and Kosovë would be expanded.²²

Yugoslav officials resented the renewal of Albanian polemics, but showed remarkable restraint in responding. With the resurgence of nationalism and growing unrest among the Albanian minority, Belgrade hoped to develop an interdependent relationship with Tirane and thus discourage Albania from taking advantage of Yugoslavia's vulnerability in Kosovë. During a visit to Prishtinë, in April 1975, Tito noted the importance of Yugoslavia and Albania for stability in the Balkans, adding that if they indulge in mutual disagreements, other nations would try to interfere.²³ Belgrade emphasized areas of agreement with Tirane and maintained that Yugoslavia was open to a dialogue with Albania. In October 1979, Tito declared that Yugoslavia would not respond to Albanian polemics but would continue to develop cooperation where possible and mutually beneficial.²⁴

By tolerating Albania's media attacks and refraining from responding, Yugoslavia hoped to appease Albania on the question of Kosovë and be in a better position to influence developments in that country after Hoxha's departure from the political scene. Obviously, as far as the Kosovë issue was concerned, such a policy paid off. Throughout the 1970s, the Yugoslav media reported many arrests and imprisonments of Albanians charged with nationalist and irredentist acts. In September 1974, the authorities allegedly uncovered a pro-communism plot, and later in the year student demonstrations broke out in Prishtinë.²⁵ In 1976 a group of 19 Albanians, including the writer Adem Demaci, were given long prison sentences ranging from 4 to 15 years for allegedly having formed a "Movement for the National Liberation of Kosovë,"²⁶ an advocacy union of Yugoslavia's Albanian-inhabited areas with the PSRA.²⁷

Albania adopted a moderate attitude toward Belgrade's treatment of the Albanian minority, subordinating its ethnic ties with Kosovë to its overall political, security and economic interests. It did not comment on the imprisonment of many Kosovars and, in line with the policy of not aggravating its relations with Belgrade, maintained virtual silence shortly before and after Tito's death when Yugoslav authorities launched a major crackdown on Albanian nationalists. However, in reply to an article on Kosovë published in Belgrade's magazine *Novosti*, the Albanian magazine *Ylli*, in May 1979, sharply condemned the economic backwardness of Kosovë and other Albanian-inhabited regions, claiming that this was "the consequence of the discriminatory and colonizing policy pursued towards the Albanian population."²⁸

In April 1979 Albania and Yugoslavia signed an agreement on a railroad linkage between Shkoder and Titograd. As Table II indicates, trade between the two countries continued to increase, especially following Tirane's break with Beijing. In 1980 total trade between Albania and Yugoslavia amounted

Table I
Tiranë Lecturers Dispatched to Kosovë
(1970-1981)

School Year	Number of Lecturers
1970-71	23
1971-72	27
1972-73	28
1973-74	32
1974-75	30
1975-76 *	--
1976-77	18
1977-78	23
1978-79	16
1979-80	11
1980-81	16
Total	224

* No agreement was signed for 1975-76.

Source: *Rilindja*, July 24, 1981, p. 5.

to \$28 million, in 1979 it increased to \$60 million, and in 1980 to \$115 million. In October 1979, Yugoslavia's Minister of Foreign Trade, Metod Rotar, visited Albania. A few months later his Albanian counterpart, Nedin Hoxha, visited Belgrade and concluded a long-term trade agreement. Trade between the two countries during the period 1981-85 is expected to reach \$720 million. Yugoslavia thus became Albania's major trading partner.

Prior to the outbreak of disturbances in Kosovë in Spring 1981, Albanian attacks against Yugoslavia had virtually been halted and relations between the two sides had reached the highest point since 1948. Immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and as Tito lay seriously ill, the PSRA again publicly offered to assist the SFRY in case of foreign aggression. An editorial in the party newspaper declared that despite "irreconcilable ideological differences" between Tiranë and Belgrade,

... everybody must be convinced that if the question will arise for the defence of the freedom and independence from the imperialist aggressors of whatever kind they might be, the Albanians and Yugoslavs will again fight together against their common enemies, just as they have fought in the past.¹⁷

IV. Kosovë: A Bridge or a Bone of Contention?

Kosovë has traditionally constituted a thorn in Tiranë-Belgrade relations. However, in contrast with the 1950s and the 1960s when the two sides waged an ideological war of words over Kosovë, in the 1970s Prishtinë played a constructive role in the development of cordial relations between the PSRA and the SFRY. Tiranë showed unusual moderation towards developments in Kosovë and seems to have refrained from inciting ethnic Albanians against Yugoslav authorities. A long-time observer of Albanian affairs characterized Tiranë's stand as "a model behavior during various critical moments in Yugoslavia's recent past."¹⁸ But with the Spring 1981 and subsequent events, the issue of Kosovë again became a bone of contention between the two sides.

Kosovë is an emotionally charged subject, reflecting a long history of enmity between Serbs and Albanians measureable in centuries rather than decades. It has a special historical meaning for both ethnic groups. In medieval times, Kosovë was part of the Serbian state and it was at the Plain of Kosovë that the Serbs lost a decisive battle to the Turks, in 1389. The Serbian myth of Kosovë has survived to this day and the Serbian view of that region's history has long prevailed.

The Albanians consider Kosovë as the cradle of their nationalism. The Albanian national movement of the late 19th and 20th centuries was centered in that region. It was in Prizren, in 1878, that the Albanian League was formed, which waged a two-fronted struggle for the protection of the territorial integrity of Albanian-inhabited areas from foreign encroachments and for autonomy from Turkey. The major struggle that led to the proclamation of Albania's independence in 1912, was waged in Kosovë and some of Albania's most prominent national figures, such as Isa Boletini, Hasan Prishtina and Bajram Curri, were Kosovars.

According to the April 1981 census, there were 1,730,000 Albanians in the SFRY, of whom 1,227,424 lived in Kosovë, 337,000 in Macedonia, 72,432 in Serbia proper and 37,735 in Montenegro. They have a high birth rate and outnumber the Montenegrins (577,298), the Macedonians (1,340,000) and soon might outnumber the Slovenes (1,750,000) and even the Muslims (2,000,000). All these ethnic groups have their own republics, while Kosovë remains under Serbia's tutelage and the Albanians divided among different countries. The Albanians in the SFRY represent more than half of the Albanian nation and proportionately constitute the largest irredenta in the world.

Albanians remain Yugoslavia's poorest, most oppressed and underprivileged ethnic group. The province of Kosovë is the least developed region in the

Table II
Albanian-Yugoslav Trade 1972-82
(in \$ mil.)

1972	11.9
1973	17.4
1974	37.5
1975	36.7
1976	20.4
1977	30.4
1978	28.0
1979	60.0
1980	115.0
1981	134.0
1982 *	130.0

* Planned

Sources: Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, *Trade of European Non-NATO Countries and Japan with Communist Countries 1972-1975 and 1975-1978* (Washington, D.C., 1976, 1979); *Tanjug Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian*, 1838 GMT, July 10, 1980; *Business Eastern Europe*, Vol. 9, No. 11, March 14, 1980, p. 85; *Rilindja*, February 22, 1981, p. 8, and *Tanjug in English*, 1320 GMT, March 30, 1982.

country, is plagued by unsurmountable social and political problems and its economy is in an appalling state. Yugoslavia's economic crisis has further complicated Kosovë's problems and inequality between the Albanians and other ethnic groups has reached serious proportions. The per capita annual income is below one third of the average of the country. In 1979, while per capita annual income in Yugoslavia as a whole amounted to \$2,635 and in Slovenia to \$5,315, in Kosovë it amounted to \$795. In 1980 a worker in Kosovë earned \$180 monthly as compared to \$235 for an average worker in the country and \$280 for a worker in Slovenia. In 1978, the social product of Kosovë amounted to 30 percent of the average of Yugoslavia.³⁹ According to official statistics, in June 1981, there were 72,000 unemployed people in Kosovë.⁴⁰ But a Belgrade publication conceded that there might be as many as 200,000 unemployed in the province.⁴¹ The national structure of people employed in the social sector is unfavorable for the Albanians. While the Serbs and the Montenegrins in 1981 represented about 15 percent of Kosovë's total population and the Albanians 77.5 percent, of the total number of people employed 29.8 percent were Serbs and Montenegrins and 64.9 percent Albanians.⁴²

The primary reasons for the province's chronic economic problems are past backwardness, neglect and misrule by the central authorities and inadequate investments. Economic decisions were based on Yugoslavia's economic efficiency and prior to the 1970s, investments in Kosovë were minimal and concentrated primarily in the extractive industries. Manufacturing and processing industries were concentrated in the northern republics, while Kosovë, which is relatively rich in mineral resources, was used as a material base for Yugoslavia's economy. Kosovë has over 20 percent of Yugoslavia's coal deposits, over 60 percent of lead and zinc reserves, over 20 million tons of ferronickel ore, 10.5 billion tons of lignite deposits, representing about one third of the economy's total energy potential, etc.⁴³ Even during the 1970s, when the federal government poured into Kosovë large sums of aid,⁴⁴ investments continued to be concentrated in the extractive industries. This investment policy, as the prominent Kosovar scholar Dr. Hivzi Islami has pointed out, was motivated by the needs of Yugoslavia's overall industrial development and not those of Kosovë.⁴⁵ The primary beneficiaries of these investments have not been the Kosovars but rather the country's richer republics, which has prompted Kosovars to complain of exploitation. In an article published in April 1982, an Albanian journalist complained that while Kosovë was interested in the construction of industrial projects where it could process its raw materials and thus create greater employment opportunities, other republics and Vojvodina province were interested primarily in obtaining raw materials and energy resources from that region.⁴⁶

Ethnic Albanians in the SFRY represent a self-conscious ethnic group, highly frustrated and dissatisfied with the existing system, which it perceives as being structured to its detriment. The Albanians are faced with built-in inequalities; limited access to power, career opportunities, social and political mobility as well as ethnic discrimination. In recent years, Kosovë has been characterized by an increasing ethnic politicization. Although Kosovë has experienced great economic and social transformations, Albanians continue to perceive themselves as the subordinates in Yugoslavia. They no longer see the question as what "great" progress they have made in comparison with the past, but rather the reference point has become the achievement of full equality. They reject the well-worn socio-political arrangements in favor of new ones, which would ensure their more equitable treatment.

The movement for the creation of a republic, which long antedates the Spring 1981 revolt, is rooted in the belief that Kosovë's socio-economic problems are the result of being kept in perpetual bondage to Serbia and economic exploitation, and that Kosovë can realize its potential only by becoming a republic and having decision-making autonomy. It enjoys widespread support among all strata of the Albanian minority and is motivated by a mix of Albanian patriotism, resentment of continued Serbian rule and ambitions to maximize Kosovë's autonomy within the existing system. The movement for a republic is led by a young, middle class, educated élite, born and raised in socialist Yugoslavia. This growing élite and its followers present a serious challenge to the Belgrade-sponsored Kosovë leaders, who are widely perceived as corrupt "traitors" and not interested in advancing the national interests of the Albanians.

In Spring 1981, the worst demonstrations in Yugoslavia's post-1945 history broke out in Kosovë.⁴⁷ The disturbances began on March 11, when students clashed with police at the student center of Kosovë University and were reportedly sparked by complaints over poor living conditions. At a

meeting of the provincial party and governmental leadership, a rift apparently emerged concerning the assessment of the character of the demonstrations. Mahmut Bakalli, the party chief, and other leading functionaries stressed the social character of the demonstrations, arguing that the main cause was students' dissatisfaction. A faction led by Ali Shokria and Azem Vllasi insisted that the demonstrations were allegedly "counterrevolutionary" and called for energetic measures. Bakalli prevailed, however, and at a meeting of the Presidency of the Serbian party's Central Committee, in March 25, again maintained that disturbances were caused by economic difficulties.³⁹

On March 25, Albanian students demonstrated in Prizren. The next day, large scale demonstrations broke out in Prishtinë, where some ten thousand students, striking workers and citizens took to the streets demanding the creation of a Kosovë republic.⁴⁰ On March 31, students and construction workers demonstrated in Obiliq.⁴¹

On April 1, large scale demonstrations broke out in Prishtinë and in Podujevë, where students were joined by workers. Just in Prishtinë several hundred people were reportedly injured.⁴² The next day there were violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces in Prishtinë and Podujevë. Demonstrations spread to other Kosovë towns such as Glogovc, Vuçitern, Vitina and Lipjan. There were attempts to organize demonstrations also in Pejë, Gjakovë and Gjiilan. On April 3, demonstrations occurred in Vuçitern, Mitrovicë, and Ferizaj.⁴³ Demonstrating students were joined by workers, ordinary citizens and even farmers. They demanded the improvement of Kosovë's economic conditions, freedom of the press, equal rights with other ethnic groups, release of political prisoners and that Kosovë be granted republican status. There were also demands for Kosovë's union with Albania.

Before the outbreak of demonstrations on March 25 and 26, Belgrade proposed that security forces from outside the province be brought in to restore order. The provincial leadership rejected the proposal. But when the demonstrations reached large dimensions and amid fears that provincial security forces might not be able to restore order, Belgrade overruled Prishtinë. A state of emergency was proclaimed, public gatherings were banned, a curfew was imposed, tanks and troops were deployed to put down the revolt, and Kosovë University was closed down. The authorities disclosed that nine people had died and some 257 injured. Western sources, however, reported a substantially larger number of those killed and injured.⁴⁴

The authorities immediately initiated a renewed policy of harsh repression and persecution of Albanians. A Belgrade-sponsored media campaign was launched against the Albanians, which was reflected in public attacks against their history, culture and heritage. A free rein was given to Serbian, Macedonian and Montenegrin nationalism, which prompted a Western journalist to note that

... never since the end of the war have such generalizing hostile notes been sounded officially in socialist Yugoslavia against an individual national entity or nationality of the country.⁴⁵

Officials initiated a widespread purge, which resulted in the replacement of the entire provincial leadership as well as of many cadres at all levels of Kosovë society. Thousands of people were arrested and over one thousand sentenced in summary proceedings. More than 400 Albanians were sentenced to from one to fifteen years of imprisonment. Very little information has come out concerning the trial of Albanian nationalists. No correspondents, foreign or domestic, were allowed to attend trial proceedings, and all information was relayed through the official news agency *Tanjug*.

Table III
National Structure of Kosovë's Population
(in thousands)

	1948		1953		1961		1971		1981	
	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%
Albanians	498	68.4	524	64.3	646	67.1	916	73.6	1,227	77.5
Serbs	172	23.6	197	24.3	227	23.6	228	18.3	209	13.2
Montenegrins	28	3.9	31	3.8	37	3.8	33	2.5	27	1.7
Moslems	—	—	—	—	8	0.8	26	2.0	59	3.7
Turks	—	—	35	4.3	26	2.7	12	1.0	12	0.8
Others	29	4.1	26	3.3	19	2.0	31	2.6	50	3.1
Total	727	100.0	813	100.0	963	100.0	1,244	100.0	1,584	100.0

Sources: Asllan Fazlija, *Autonomia e Kosovës e Metohisë në Jugosllavinë Socialiste* (Prishtinë: Rilindja, 1966), p. 55; *NIN* (Belgrade), May 10, 1981, p. 71.

The case involving writer Sabit Rustemi and the chief editor of the literary journal *Fjala*, Shëbedin Heliu, caused great indignation and made a mockery of Yugoslavia's justice system. On April 1, 1981, *Fjala* published Rustemi's short story entitled "Under the Guiltless Mask," which deals with the Albanian resistance against foreign invaders during the war. The journal was banned because Rustemi's story allegedly provided "a series of details which could represent an allusion to the current events in Kosovë." The legal department of *Fjala*'s publisher lodged an appeal, claiming that the short story, which had previously been published in a collection of literary works and been submitted for publication in *Fjala* in the beginning of 1981, mentioned neither the place nor the year of the events, and had no connection with the March-April disturbances. Kosovë's Supreme Court turned down the appeal, claiming that Rustemi's story "presented or conveyed untruthful and alarming reports, jeopardizing or liable to jeopardize public order or

alarm the public.⁵⁷ On August 28, 1981, the district court in Prishtinë sentenced Rustemi to four years of imprisonment and Haliti to three years, for permitting the publication of Rustemi's short story.⁵⁸ A Yugoslav writer, Milorad Vucelic, condemned the trial of Rustemi and Haliti, noting that it remained a secret how the short story written before the outbreak of demonstrations in the Spring of 1981 could refer precisely to those events.⁵⁹

The Albanian revolt occurred at a time of confusion in Yugoslavia, due to the diffusion of political power and a weakened national leadership after Tito's death. The central authorities, under pressure from the Serbs, overreacted by employing brutal force to stabilize the situation in Kosovë. The possibility of a political solution was not even considered.

Military repression touched raw nerves of anti-Serbianism among the Albanians and inflamed them to a greater degree than at any time since 1945. Despite the stationing in Kosovë of large numbers of security forces and reportedly one third of Yugoslavia's Army, disturbances continued. Between April 3 and May 26, 1981, demonstrations broke out in Istok, Kaçanik, Suva Reka, and three times in Prishtinë, and attempts were made to organize demonstrations in six other Kosovë towns.⁶⁰ The situation was also aggravated in the Albanian-inhabited areas of Serbia proper, Macedonia and Montenegro. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1981, there were reports of widespread subversive activity, passive resistance, writing of slogans and circulation of leaflets, and acts of sabotage. During January-February 1982, several demonstrations were reported. The situation was also complicated by the steady deterioration of Kosovë's economy. There were reports of serious shortages of food products and consumer goods. During a visit to Prishtinë, in March 1982, President Sergei Kraigher was surprised to learn that investments in Kosovë had drastically declined following the 1981 events and that developed republics had reduced original plans for joint investments and were insisting on a credit relationship, in order to avoid risks. Subsequently it was revealed that in 1981, compared to the previous year, investments in Kosovë had declined by 40 percent in real terms.⁶¹

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the 1981 events, authorities took extreme measures to prevent demonstrations. Security forces and the army were put on alert and a Yugoslav journalist described Prishtinë as "a captured city."⁶² But despite these precautionary measures, on March 11, Albanians demonstrated in Prishtinë, Vuçitern, Suva Reka and Podujevë. On March 31, security forces clashed with demonstrators in Prishtinë. On April 1, police discovered and dismantled explosive devices placed at the communal assembly building in Ferizaj, where three days later militia forces dispersed several hundred Albanian demonstrators.⁶³ In May 1982, Yugoslavia's Minister of Internal Affairs, Franjo Herlević, described the political situation in Kosovë as "still complicated." He claimed that the authorities had discovered 55 illegal groups, with a membership of over 700 people. These groups allegedly belonged to three organizations: the National Liberation Movement of Kosovë, the Marxist-Leninist Group of Kosovë and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Albanians in Yugoslavia. Herlević accused Tiranë of supporting all three organizations, although he provided no substantial evidence to support his allegations.⁶⁴ On July 10, 18 members of the "Marxist-Leninist Group of Kosovë" were sentenced to prison terms ranging from four to fifteen years. Among them there were school and university teachers, students, journalists, several workers and a police officer. They were accused of having inspired and organized the 1981 demonstrations.⁶⁵

The 12th Congress of the Yugoslav League of Communists, which was held in late June 1982, failed to reverse the adverse and dangerous trends in Yugoslavia's handling of the Albanian problem. Again, Belgrade proved unwilling to accommodate Albanian demands for a republic, because of Serbia's resistance. The extent of the movement for a republic was underestimated, its propagators ridiculed and Tiranë was blamed for allegedly having incited the Albanians to revolt. This kind of assessment by Belgrade and the failure to take Albanian demands seriously exhibits both flawed judgment and naivete. Clearly repressive measures have failed so far to stifle the Kosovar impulse for a republic, nor have they helped the grave economic situation. It appears that restoration of stability in Kosovë is highly difficult without a Yugoslav response to Albanian aspirations for equality with other ethnic groups. In the face of these facts, realism would suggest that Belgrade give up its futile search for scapegoats and reconsider adopting the best approach possible at this late hour — making structural adjustments and granting the Albanians their own republic. Failure to meet this moderate demand could have serious repercussions for Yugoslavia's stability. There are already signs of the emergence of radical movements and sporadic incidents of ethnic violence between Albanians and Serbs. With no acceptable solution in sight, the Albanians are likely to push for the maximum demand, i.e., secession from Yugoslavia and union with their mother country Albania.

The Yugoslavs handled the 1981 events in Kosovë with little or no consideration of the effects on relations with Albania, which apparently was expected to suffer in silence the injuries caused to its ethnic ties with Kosovë. Tiranë was painfully caught between its desire to maintain good relations with Belgrade and its sympathy and allegiance to ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia. It appears that Tiranë was not well informed about the high degree of discontent among the Kosovars and was as surprised as Belgrade by the scope of the disturbances. In the beginning of the crisis, Tiranë maintained complete silence, but eventually — probably after an internal debate — came down on the Kosovars' side.

First reports on Kosovë events were published in the PSRA on April 3, 1981. The official news agency, ATA, quoted *Pravda* as reporting the March 11 and 26 demonstrations, without any comments of its own.⁶⁶ Then on April 7, after the disturbances were extensively reported in the foreign press, ATA reported more extensively on the events and, for the first time, reported the developments of April 1 and 2.⁶⁷ On April 8, *Zeiti Popullit* published an editorial denouncing the brutal repression of the demonstrations, maintaining that at the root of disturbances lie the backwardness of the province, the poverty and misery of its people, their lack of democratic freedoms and political rights, and the denial to the Albanians of their right to their own republic. The editorial endorsed demands for a Kosovë republic and concluded with a conciliatory note by once again stressing Albania's desire to maintain good relations with Yugoslavia and reiterated Tiranë's offer of support in case of foreign aggression.

The editorial brought angry reaction from Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that on April 6, a senior Yugoslav official had denied Tiranë's involvement in Kosovë,⁶⁸ on May 14 Belgrade lodged an official protest accusing Albania of "the most crude interference in the internal affairs of the SFRY."⁶⁹ The Yugoslav media launched a massive campaign against Albania, accusing Hoxha's regime of having made territorial claims against the SFRY and having "embarked on a dangerous game which provides others, the blocs and the blackest international reaction, with an opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of both Yugoslavia and Albania."⁷⁰

Tiranë responded by declaring that it had made no territorial claims against Yugoslavia and denied any involvement in Kosovë events.⁷¹ During the Summer of 1981, polemics between Tiranë and Belgrade intensified, with serious incriminations from both sides. In a series of articles Tiranë accused Belgrade of following a policy of "savage national oppression" against the Albanians and called for the creation of a Kosovë republic.⁷² Belgrade responded by cutting all cultural and educational contacts between Prishtinë and Tiranë. The Yugoslavs initiated a campaign to discredit Kosovars demanding a republic, by questioning their allegiance to the SFRY and maintaining that their eventual aim was union with the PSRA. Lazar Kolisevski, a member of the SFRY Presidency, expressed surprise that for a considerable number of Kosovars Albania had become an example and an ideal. He

described the PSRA as

... the well-known bastion of ultra-Stalinist dogmatism and despotism, a country which is cruel to its own citizens, a country whose whole economic and social development lags considerably behind the development of Kosovë.⁷¹

In July 1981, the official news agency *Tanjug* published a book portraying Albania in the most negative terms.⁷² And a Yugoslav scholar, noting Kosovars' sympathy for the PSRA, raised the following question:

How is it possible that people from a more advanced and humane community (i.e., Yugoslavia) would idealize a community (i.e., Albania) in which there is none of that, in which they could not find a place and which they could not tolerate?⁷³

Albanian-Yugoslav relations reached a low point following APL's Eighth Congress, in November 1981. Hoxha called on Yugoslavia to meet Kosovars' demands for a republic. He declared that Albania had no territorial claims against Yugoslavia and was interested in developing good relations with Belgrade, but that this would depend on Yugoslavia's treatment of ethnic Albanians.⁷⁴ The Yugoslavs responded by lodging a protest, accusing Albania of interfering in SFRY's internal affairs and questioning its territorial integrity. Belgrade warned Tiranë that its stand on the Kosovë issue threatened the results achieved in Albanian-Yugoslav relations since 1971, adding that this could have grave consequences for broader stability in the Balkan region, and [could] open the gates to foreign interests and interference in that region.⁷⁵

Yugoslavia's media campaign against Hoxha's regime was further intensified following Tiranë's announcement, on December 18, 1981, that Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu, Hoxha's closest collaborator for close to three decades and heir apparent, had committed suicide "at a moment of nervous distress." Tiranë published only a terse obituary of Shehu, and there was no state funeral or national mourning. The Yugoslav press speculated that a policy rift had developed between Shehu and Hoxha, and that the former was forced to commit suicide or was killed.⁷⁶

Despite a serious deterioration in relations, Albania and Yugoslavia continued bilateral contacts and cooperation in such fields as trade, the development of water resources, railway, air traffic, etc. Mutual trade during 1981 amounted to a record \$134 million. According to the protocol signed in December 1981, trade between the two countries during 1982 is expected to reach \$130 million. In April 1982, Albania and Yugoslavia signed an agreement on the construction of a Shkodër-Titograd rail link. Despite the drastic change in their rhetoric, both countries repeatedly emphasized their interest in developing good-neighborly relations, and during the first half of 1982, Albanian-Yugoslav polemics had notably subsided. Notwithstanding allegations of Albania's interference in SFRY's internal affairs and charges of introducing cold war tendencies in the Balkans, the 12th Congress of the YLC underlined Yugoslavia's interest in cooperating with the PSRA in "all fields where this is possible and of interest to both sides."⁷⁷ A prominent Yugoslav official, Nijaz Dizdarević, emphasized that

... Yugoslavia has an interest in cooperation with [Albania] in all spheres of mutual interest. We have an interest in Albania remaining outside the blocs and we shall do nothing which would push Albania into an alignment. However, we expect from Albania respect for the generally accepted norms of conduct, which means noninterference and respect for territorial integrity.⁷⁸

And Hoxha's regime has let it be known that the substance of its policy toward Belgrade remains essentially unchanged and that it does not favor Yugoslav destabilization.

Albanian-Yugoslav relations since 1945 have fluctuated from periods of intense cooperation to periods of outright hostility. In the 1970s, the relationship between the PSRA and the SFRY underwent tremendous changes and, in comparison with the previous decades, immense progress was achieved. The two states followed parallel foreign policies, refused association with military blocs, and showed determination in opposing great power involvement in that part of Europe. Perceptions of a common enemy, i.e., the Soviet Union, made Albania and Yugoslavia recognize their interdependence. Kosovë played a significant role in the development of good relations between Tiranë and Belgrade, and it seemed that their relationship was based on sound foundations. But disturbances in Kosovë and the subsequent war of words, reminiscent of the late 1940s and the 1950s, proved erosive to relations between Albania and Yugoslavia and made it apparent that the two states still have a long way to go in order to build a lasting friendship.

It is difficult to make definite judgments about the possible course of future Tiranë-Belgrade relations. To a great extent, their relations are likely to be determined by Belgrade's policy towards ethnic Albanians and the unraveling of the ethnic conflict in Kosovë, and Tiranë's foreign policy posture in the post-Hoxha era. Yugoslavia's influence in Kosovë has already eroded to a point of high vulnerability and the PSRA, if it chose to, could effectively play on ethnic Albanians' nationalist feelings and thus hinder Yugoslav attempts to stabilize the situation. This, however, would not be a cost-free proposition because of Belgrade's ability to respond, especially in the field of economic cooperation.

On the other hand, developments in Kosovë could very likely unravel independently of Tiranë's wishes. Albania is not in a position, as is assumed by some Western observers, to exercise much power to control events in Kosovë or to display impressive influence in restraining the Kosovars. The initiative clearly rests with the unsatisfied ethnic Albanians.

Belgrade's failure to grant Kosovë republican status and the continuation of a freeze in Prishtinë-Tiranë relations, imposed after the 1981 events, could not only inhibit a further expansion of Albanian-Yugoslav cooperation and further alienate ethnic Albanians, but could also cause Albania's realignment. On the other hand, accommodation of ethnic Albanians' demands for full equality with the other ethnic groups would obviously have positive effects on future Tiranë-Belgrade relations and would deny the Soviet Union a long sought opportunity to intervene in an area it has traditionally considered as its sphere of influence.

¹Vladimir Dedijer, *Marrëdhënjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare 1939-1948* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1949), pp. 10-18; Ali Hadri, "The Formation of the Communist Party of Albania," *Prilozh za Istoriju Socijalizma* (Beograd), No. 3, 1966, pp. 215-58; and Stavro Skendi, "Albania within the Slav Orbit: Advent to Power of the Communist Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (June 1948), p. 260.

²For an Albanian view of Tirane-Belgrade relations during 1945-48, see: *History of the Party of Labor of Albania* (Tirane: "Naim Frashëri," 1971); and *Dokumente Kryesore të Partisë së Punës së Shqipërisë*, Vol. 1 (Tiranë, 1960). For a Yugoslav interpretation, see: Dedijer *Marrëdhënjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare*; Marko Perović, *Ekonomski Odnosi Jugoslavije i Albanije 1947-1948* (Beograd, 1951); and *Bela Knjiga O Neprijateljskoj Politici Vlade Narodne Republike Albanije Prema Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* (Beograd, 1961).

³Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 137.

⁴Paul Lendvai, *Eagles in Cobwebs: Nationalism and Communism in the Balkans* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 225; and Vuk Vunaver, "The Albanian Question in the Press of the YCP 1919-1939," *Gjurmime Albanologjike: Seria e Shkencave Historike* (Prishtinë), I, 1971, pp. 81-83.

⁵Dr. Hajredin Hoxha, "The Process of Self-Determination of the Albanian Nationality During the Revolution and the Building of Socialism," *Kosova* (Prishtinë), Vol. 2, 1973, pp. 68-80.

⁶Dedijer, *Marrëdhënjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare*, pp. 133-34.

⁷Enver Hoxha, *Vepra*, Vol. 1 (Tiranë: "Naim Frashëri," 1968), pp. 357-58.

⁸Nicholas C. Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 52. Also see *Dokumente Kryesore të PPSH*, vol. I, pp. 153-54; and Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, *Revolucija Kopa Teca*, Vol. 1 (Beograd: Komunist, 1971), pp. 366-67.

⁹*E Vërteta Mbi Gjendjen e Shqiptarëve në Jugosllavi* (Tiranë, 1960), p. 45. Also see: Stanoje Aksić, *Polozaj Autonomnih Pokrajina U Ustavnom Sistemu SFR Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Naučna Knjiga, 1967), p. 56; and Aslan Fazlija, *Autonomija e Kosovës e Metohisë në Jugosllavinë Socialiste* (Prishtinë: Rilindja, 1966), p. 39. Among those who signed the resolution were Fadil Hoxha, member of the SFRY Presidency and Xhavid Nimani, the former President of the Presidency of Kosovë.

¹⁰Fazlija, *Autonomija e Kosovës*, p. 46.

¹¹Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*, pp. 104-05.

¹²Institut za Istoriju Radnickog Pokreta Srbije, *Osnivacki Kongres KP Srbije* (8-12 Maj 1945) (Beograd, 1972), pp. 38-39, 72-79, 82-83, 157-58, and 213 for comments by Milovan Djilas, Alexander Ranković and Tito. See also Enver Hoxha, *The Krushchevites* (Tiranë, "8 Nëntori," 1980), p. 146; and *Zëri i Popullit*, March 24, 1957, September 9, 1958, and October 24, 1958.

¹³Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962), p. 144.

¹⁴Enver Hoxha, *With Stalin* (Tiranë: "8 Nëntori," 1979), p. 140. On May 17, 1981, an editorial in *Zëri i Popullit* quoted Tito as having said to Hoxha, in 1946, that "Kosovë and the other regions inhabited by Albanians belong to Albania and that we shall return them to you, but not now because the great-Serb reaction would not actually accept such a thing."

¹⁵Ramadan Marmullaku, *Albania and the Albanians* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975), pp. 148-49.

¹⁶Dennison I. Rusinow, "The Other Albania: Kosovo 1979," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, No. 5, 1980, p. 13.

¹⁷*Zëri i Popullit*, September 9, 1958.

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BIBLIOTEKA PUBLIKE
"MARIN BARLETI"
SHKODER (2018)

AN ALBANIAN PRAYER

Lutja E. Ashikut

Perëndi e jon' e Plotfuqishme,

Ki mëshirë për ne fëmijët e Tu të mekët dhe nëmna forcën të largojmë
ligësinë nga truri, zëmra e shpirti!

Bëna të drejtë o Zot dhe çlirona nga të këqijat që na sjellin rrotull!

Bëj që sjelljet t'ona të jenë plot mirënjohje e dashuri!

Pa ty o Zot as rrohet as vihet kërkund; ecë pranë nesh, të lutemi, dhe
drejtona ndaj të mirës!

Me Ty përpara e në zemer o Zot, bëj, që të marshojmë!

Mer, si të dashurit t'ënë, si ata që s'na i duan të mirën, nën kujdesin t'ënd
o Perëndi!

largoji nga ligështija dhe përmbusha gjithë dëshirat e zemrës!

Udhëhiqna ndaj të mirës o Zot, gjithë ç jemi të Krishterë e Myslimanë
dhe mos lejo të bëhemi as vegla e të ligut, as vegl' e armiqve
mizorë të fisit të Arbërit!

Perëndija e jonë e Begatëshme, frymëzona, ne fëmijët e Tu brënda e
jashtë Atoheut, dhe mësona të rrojmë me kurajo, në PAQE, me
dinjitet, në harmoni, me urrejësi e plot zemërmadhëri!

Amin o Zot!

Tomor Zavalani

Prayer

Dear God,

Have mercy for us, your helpless offspring, and give us the strength to
reject "badness" from our minds, from our hearts and from
our souls!

Make us just, O Lord, and deliver us from all the evil thoughts that take
hold of us!

Help us to be compassionate and practice loyalty and charity!

Without you, O Lord, one can't live and one can go nowhere; walk beside
us, please, and direct us toward "goodness"!

With a clear conscience in our hearts, make us march in a humble way!

Take our loved ones, as well as those that wish us harm, under your
protection!

Keep them away from blunder, bless them with your love and fulfill all
their wishes!

Guide us towards PEACE, dear God, all of us Jews, Moslems, Christ-
ians, Buddhists, and Atheists alike and do not allow that we
become the tools of evil, turn into enemies, and destroy one
another!

Benevolent Lord, protect us your beloved children and teach us to live
with courage, in love, with dignity and wisdom!

Tomor Zavalani



BIBLIOTEKA PUBLIKE
"MARIN BARLETI"
SHKODER (2018)

MOTHER TERESA: “MY ALBANIAN PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS IN MY HEART. . .”

Many people have written to our Center asking why Mother Teresa has never raised her voice in defense of Albanian believers. In their letters they have stated that the Pope has vigorously defended human rights in his homeland, Poland, and the authors of these letters feel that Mother Teresa should do likewise on behalf of

the suffering Albanian people.

It is true that Mother Teresa has not as a rule spoken openly against religious oppression in Albania. However, she has always been an unofficial ambassador of our people when meeting with countless world religious and civil leaders.

Mother Teresa is a great humanitarian and

spiritual leader. We are aware that any engagement by her on behalf of our cause (i.e., religious freedom in Albania) could be interpreted by some as a political gesture and, as such, incompatible with her primary mission. Nonetheless, she has never failed to identify herself with the Albanian nation. In her many public appearances she stresses this identity by saying, "My Albanian people." In fact, it was at one of the most important occasions of her life that Mother Teresa spoke out very boldly of her love for her native land and its people. During the press conference following her reception of the Noble Peace Prize in December 1979, she was questioned by a reporter on the very subject of religious persecution in Albania. Mother Teresa's reply was published in our first volume of 1980. For the benefit of those who have not had a chance to read it, we reprint her statement: "I don't know what to say about I don't know what is happening there. I can say only one thing. My Albanian people are always in my heart. I pray very much to our Lord that His peace may come to our hearts, in our families and in all the world. I pray for Albania, that the Lord may help its leaders to see clearly because if they want to live in peace, they should love one another. . . I think that the Albanian church is experiencing the Good Friday, but our faith teaches us that on Good Friday, Christ's life doesn't end, but continues on the Cross and ends with the Resurrection. Our Albanian people should keep in mind this truth. This is the secret of Christian assurance. Christ gave his life so that He may become our life. Present in each person, in each family, through their prayers. . . He certainly will not forget us. He is love and He wants nothing more than for people to love each other."



A PLEASANT ENCOUNTER WITH MOTHER TERESA

On May 30, 1983, our friend and associate, Dr. Petro Vuçani, along with two other Albanian friends, (Dr. Albert Akshija and Engjull Gjinori) had the rare privilege to attend a vow profession ceremony in Rome of the Missionary Sisters, Mother Teresa's order. One of these professed was an Albanian novice from Kosovë. To date there are five professed sisters of Albanian origin in Mother Teresa's order, all of them tracing their roots to Kosovë.

The Albanians greeted Mother Teresa from afar with a traditional Albanian Catholic greeting: "Kjoftë levdue Jezu Krishti!" (Praised be Jesus Christ!).

Startled, she turned her head quickly and responded: "Përgjithmonë e jetës" (Now and throughout eternity).

She then asked: "Kush foli shqyp?" (Who spoke Albanian here?)

Mother Teresa then noticed Dr. Akshija, who is attached to the Italian Broadcasting Company and whom she had previously met on several occasions. She warmly greeted him and his companions: "Sa po gezohem! Pse nuk vini, mbas ceremonisë, me më vizitue e kështu edhe bisedojmë?" (How happy I am. Why don't you come after the ceremony to visit me, then we could talk longer.)

The ceremony had hardly ended when understandably Dr. Vuçani and his companions made their way through the crowd to the house where Mother Teresa was greeting the people.

As soon as she entered the room where the three Albanians were awaiting her, she spoke to them with a glowing warmth.

"Fatkeqsisht, takohem rrallë me shqiptarë, por sa herë që i takoj, për mua është një gëzim i papërshkrueshëm. Ju siguroj ju, e krejt bashkëdhetarët kudo që gjinden, se çdo ditë e kujtoj Atë dheun tonë të dashur, në lutjet e mia. Lutem për mbarë njerzën, por jam e gjakut arbëror e i Lumi Zot më kupton e më falë për këtë. . .

mëkat!" (Unfortunately, I don't have an opportunity to meet often with Albanians. However, whenever a chance comes it is always a very great joy to meet and speak with them. I want to assure you and all Albanians wherever they may be that I remember every day in my prayers our dear fatherland Albania. I pray for all humanity, but being I'm an Albanian the good Lord will forgive me for being more devout for my people.)

The Albanians asked Mother Teresa to lead them in a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Gennazzano, near Rome.

"Tek Zoja e Shkodrës. Kështu e njoh unë. Duhet t'isha e lumtur, por nuk mundem me u sigurue e me u caktue një ditë." (To the Madonna of Shkodra. This is how I know this Sanctuary. I would be most happy to lead you there, but I cannot assure you or to set a date.)

Considering many other people wanting to meet and talk to her, the meeting with Mother Teresa lasted longer than it should have. She asked that all Albanians pray for her, her Order and most of all "për fukarat e mij" (for my poor ones), and she assured Dr. Vuçani and his friends of her continued prayers for the Albanian people.



LIFE OF MOTHER TERESA PORTRAYED ON FILM

On April 2, 1983, Italian television presented to millions of viewers for the first time, "La Voce" (The Call), a feature length film on the life of Mother Teresa.

Although the Albanian people and political conditions of that time are not presented authentically, nevertheless the film "La Voce" is a powerful and touching story about the call of Mother Teresa to religious life and to the service of the poor.

Many films about Mother Teresa have been shown in the United States. But none have touched extensively upon her early life. A film such as "La Voce" would certainly enhance the understanding of the American people towards this great living saint.

The contemporary French writer, Dominique Lapierre, will write, produce and direct a motion picture about the life of Mother Teresa. According to the French news agency "Agence France-Presse", Lapierre has signed a contract with Mother Teresa after several meetings at a convent in Calcutta with her. It seems likely that during those meetings, Lapierre acquired numerous details on Mother Teresa's life.

Dominique Lapierre coauthored with Larry Collins, the best-selling book *Freedom at Midnight*, which deals with the independence of India.

Di Madre Teresa di Calcutta si conosce soprattutto la sua vita di suora, votata al servizio dell'umanità sofferente. Ma la sua infanzia qual è stata? Come sono maturati i motivi di una scelta i cui frutti hanno commosso tutto il mondo? Il film racconta di un'adolescenza difficile, trascorsa nelle remote campagne tra Jugoslavia e Albania, sconvolta da una spaventosa malattia e da un'irresistibile vocazione.

FILM PER LA TV

1
20,30

A lato, Lilliana Turi; sotto, Margaret Mazzantini con Bekim Fehmiu, 47 anni; più a sinistra, Rossano Brazzi, 68, con Lilliana Turi.

LA VOCE







La suora Premio Nobel

«Una piccola fragile donna di ferro», così è stata definita madre Teresa di Calcutta, al secolo Agnese Bajashiu. Nata il 2 febbraio 1910 in Jugoslavia, ed entrata a 18 anni in un monastero irlandese, si trasferì giovanissima a Calcutta dove insegnò all'Istituto Superiore di St. Mary. Presto curò la scia la cattedra per curare i lebbrosi, assistere i poveri, consolare gli ammalati spendendo la propria vita tra gli «intoccabili». Presentata da «Time» come «donna dell'anno» nel 1979, ha ricevuto nel 1979 il Nobel per la Pace.



BIBLIOTEKA PUBLIKE
"MARIN BARLETI"
SHKODER (2018)

ALBANIANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD CELEBRATE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE

November 28, 1912, marks the day of a memorable and fateful event for all the sons and daughters of Albania. This date has been celebrated with great joy and national awareness both in Albania and the many countries throughout the world where Albanians live.

Last year's celebration of this anniversary was even more enthusiastically commemorated as it was the 70th year since Albania regained her independence of almost five centuries of Turkish domination.

Although last year's celebration in San Francisco drew a smaller number of participants, nevertheless, the presentation of the main speaker (Prof. Peter R. Prifti, University of California, San Diego) captured the audience with his vivid documentation of Kosovo's aftermath of the 1981 demonstrations.

In New York, the Free Albania Committee, the Albanian Political Parties in exile and the Albanian American Community of New York jointly celebrated this important anniversary. The celebration was held at the Colonnades Room of the Hotel Taft in the presence of more than 400 guests. Besides Albanian and American participants in the meeting were many friends of Albania from the captive European nations.

Among the many speeches and greetings delivered at the celebration, the Message of the Assembly of Captive European Nations read by its president, Stefan Karbonski, was warmly applauded. Here are some excerpts of this Message:

"The memory of the day of November 28, 1912, when your country was restored to a new life free from Ottoman rule, is being marred this year not only by the suffering of your people under the Communist regime of Tirana, but also by the tragic events in Kosovo where the Albanian population is a victim of persecution by the Communist regime of Yugoslavia.

The political and cultural persecution of the two million Albanians in Yugoslavia is a cynical violation of the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement of which Yugoslavia is one of the signatories and even was the host of its members at

the Belgrade Conference."

On the day of the solemn commemoration of the Albanian National Day, the Assembly of Captive European Nations joins the Albanian friends in their demands for self-determination and fundamental human rights for the Albanians in Kosovo.

May we also be allowed to mention on this occasion that the Polish Solidarity Union, which as you may know is waging a fight for freedom of Poland, in a resolution passed at its national convention in Gdansk mentioned Albania as one of the friendly nations whose quest for freedom the Poles would like to support."

In New Jersey, the distinguished activist of the Arberesh in the United States, Dr. John Cardino, spoke boldly about his ancestors' national, religious and cultural heritage, which is being preserved for the past five centuries. He urged the Albanian (post WW II) immigrants, to cherish and preserve their own ancestral customs and traditions. Below we print an excerpt of Dr. Cardino's talk:

Vellezër e Motra (Brothers and Sisters)

Today, on the 70th anniversary of Albania's freedom, our thoughts are carried across the ocean to family and friends and blood brothers who cannot celebrate this day in freedom, but who suffer persecution in Albania and Kosovo under oppressors who fear to recognize their human rights. Those of you here who had to leave the land of your birth enjoy the freedom of the U.S.A., and you bring to mind our ancestors who also had to flee the land of their birth 500 years ago. When they left their beloved home land, their thoughts and prayers for Albania and their families left behind never ceased, nor did their descendants ever forget their heritage. To the present, in Italy, after church on certain days the Arberesh face not north toward Rome, but eastward toward the Balkan peninsula, singing a very touching song about the land of their forefathers. The words are hundred of years old, yet they are as meaningful today as they were at the time of Skanderbeg. The words are as meaningful to you as they were to our ancestors.

They call on the Virgin of Shkodra, the Mother of Christ, to protect Albania and their families. And, they tell of the determination of the people never to forget their heritage. The translation is from Gjon Sinishta's book, *The Fulfilled Promise*. Listen as I read the words.

Motherland, place of beauty,
I have left, never again to see you.
Over there I have left my father
Over there I have left my mother
Over there I have left my brother
Motherland, place of beauty,
I have left, not to see you again.
Protector of Albania
Virgin so pure,
Great Mother of God,
Counsel us well.
You protected our forefathers,
Told them clearly to beware
Not to yield their precious faith
Arbereshes, take care.
And for us poor souls take care.
For us stray chicks without a nest
Take care for others, too
Whom the enemy has caught
Motherland, place of beauty,
I have left, never again to see you.
Over there I have left my father
Over there I have left my mother
Over there I have left my brother
Motherland, place of beauty,
I have left, not to see you again.
Protector of Albania
Virgin so pure,
Great Mother of God,
Counsel us well.
Protect us with the faith they gave us,
Those heroes of Albania,
And the flag they left us
Shall be guarded by our children
We will pray to the Almighty
With the language that He gave us
The same way as Kastrioti
And the ancestors from whom we came.

Falemnderit

UKRANIAN SPEAKS OUT FOR ALBANIAN SOLIDARITY

The Albanian Catholic Bulletin doesn't comment on or write about meetings or Congresses of the Albanian democratic parties in exile. They have their own papers. However when a distinguished friend of the Albanian people speaks at such a gathering, and his remarks are of enormous importance for our struggle, we gladly make the exception.

The Honorable Yuri Shymko, member of the Ontario, Canada, Legislative Assembly, is without doubt one of those outstanding friends of our people. During the Third Congress of the Albanian League of Prizren, held in New York last November 21 - 1982, the Honorable Shymko delivered an address focusing on the Albanian people, its tumultuous past and present. Below are excerpts from this address. We want to assure the Honorable Yuri Shymko that we share the same sentiments for his suffering Ukrainian people and we pray to the Almighty for their deliverance.

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am here today, neither Albanian by origin, nor American by citizenship. I am a Ukrainian Canadian equally proud of my heritage and my citizenship as you are of yours.

But tonight I speak to you as a brother. I am bound with you in heart, mind and spirit by the common destinies and goals of our respective subjugated peoples whose ancestral heritage we share equally with our responsibilities to assist them in their just struggles. For if we remain silent we can not expect anyone else in the free world to speak on their behalf.

Soon after his election, His Holiness Pope John Paul II delivered a message to his native Polish people. This is what he said: "Our love for our native land unites us. It must unite all of us whatever our differences. It is a right of the human heart. It is the measure of human dignity, a measure that has undergone many different tests in the course of our difficult history."

He continued on to say that "In this most difficult period, as we reach the end of the second millennium of human history, through our faith in God, we must have more faith in ourselves, in the strength and the power of truth. We must have more faith in the power of our ideals of justice, equality and liberty based on that truth." He concluded his message with the following appeal and challenge to his native people: "I want you to fight and oppose everything that violates human dignity, and desecrates the traditions of a healthy society; everything that threatens its existence and the common good; everything that diminishes a society's or a nation's contribution to our common human treasury."¹

The words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and of men like him merit our great attention. This is why the enemies of freedom try to silence them by threats, blackmails and even assassinations. His message was addressed not only to those who share the Catholic faith, but to all men of good will: to those who are concerned about our survival as human beings, not of our survival as mere machines, robots, cogs in totalitarian wheels.

You are one of the most ancient peoples in Europe with over two millennia of history and you have survived despite countless regimes of occupation, domination and oppression. I want to remind you, the young people especially, that you are bound by spiritual, historical, cultural, traditional and linguistic ties to your Albanian brothers and sisters in Europe who have vowed on the graves of the victims of tyranny, on the corpses of Albanian martyrs and heroes, the pledge, "We will not perish nor will we fail you."

Your history is one of glory — as you read about the great Skanderbeg. But it is also a history of tragedy, a history of sufferings, oppression, conquests by division and partition. And whenever you protested to the entire world, crying for help, for understanding, for assistance, for justice, for freedom for your people — your protests were either ignored or smothered in the blood of your nation. Yes, you have indeed paid a bitter price through forced absorption or often times, through forced escape to all the corners of the world so that today there are more Albanians outside your homeland than in Albania itself.

Your men have been thrown alive into burning incinerators, nailed to walls, your women have been beaten and raped in public. As we try to imagine these atrocities perpetrated after the holocausts of the Second World War, supposedly at a time of peace, by regimes that are respected today by the international community — we must ask ourselves, "Can our conscience allow us to be silent?" Well, our answer is categorical "NO". We will never be silent.

My ancestral Ukrainian nation shares with your people a similar fate, along with countless other peoples in Eastern and Central Europe. Ukrainians in the USSR make up 17% of the population, yet they comprise 65% of the political prisoners. But the case of Albanians is even more tragic. Today Albanians represent 80% of all political prisoners in Yugoslavia, when their population is only 8%. Let us mention these statistics to the diplomats who attend the review conference on the Helsinki Accords which made a total mockery of human rights by the mere fact that it was held in a place like Belgrade.

Yes there are even those representatives of free states who are willing to sacrifice human rights for the sake of signing the final agreement in Madrid. Tell them that without securing human rights and national liberties, there will never be a guarantee of security and peace in Europe or in the world. The only security that will be guaranteed will be the security of totalitarian oppression, the peace of our modern versions of Auschwitz and Dachau — the peace and security found in silent prison cells, asylums, and concentration camps.

A free and united Albania, I believe, will play a major role in the defense of our Western heritage. This is not a dream. Not only is it possible, it is inevitable. Just as you had defended Western civilization from the Ottoman Turks, that historical cycle may be repeated again this century. What we do not want to see this time, however, is a repeat of that unfortunate tragedy when five centuries ago, the pope of Rome appealed to all the rulers of Christendom to assist the Albanians under Skanderbeg. That assistance never came.

Unfortunately the West wishes to maintain the delicate balance of power at all costs, primarily for economic reasons. This necessitates preserving a status quo in Europe; peace, order and tranquility within the Soviet Russian Empire, its satellites and the Communist dictatorships in the Balkans. How naive. You know, we often caress the dagger of our own destruction. May God help us. Save us from our own ignorance and foolishness, for this, more than anything else, will lead us to destruction. May God almighty help the politicians of the free world to open their eyes and avoid the path of their own destruction. Ismail Kemal, the liberator of Albania begged the European powers for assistance in 1912. It never came. After the war in 1918, Kemal pleaded again at a London conference of the victorious Western powers. There he was simply told, "You are being sacrificed in the general interest of Europe and for the safety of Europe." Almost the same words were conveyed to my ancestral people — the Ukrainian nation whose independent government valiantly fought against the Russian Bolshevik regime to be told at the Versailles Peace Conference that their freedom was secondary to the general interest of Europe.

Yes, Albania, like the Ukraine, like the present captive nations were indeed sacrificed. Well, since 1918, it is ironic how history moves, how the circle turns because as history shows it today — it was really the safety of Europe and the general interest of Europe that have been sacrificed through the enslavement of the freedom-loving Albanians, Ukrainians, and countless other nations from the Baltic to the Balkans into Serbian or Russian dominated Communist regimes.

This winter will mark fifty years since six million of my people, the Ukrainian people, six million men, women and children were wiped out in one year for the industrialization of the USSR as well as to break the very backbone of their national resistance. Six million wiped out from the face of the earth by a state created artificial famine in a land that is the bread basket of Europe. Four million of these victims were children under the age of 14.

My dear Albanian brothers and sisters, whether we consider ourselves Americans or Canadians or political exiles of our respective national homelands, we bear a moral obligation to act as free spokesman of our silenced peoples. You are the messengers of truth, the heroes who must break the wall of silence that holds your imprisoned Albanian nation. No one else will do it for you.

You have survived and you live on every continent of the globe and there is no power on earth that will ever extinguish your ancient Illyrian race from our human family. And so, as I listened to your songs, and as I watched your beautiful young people sing and I listen to the beautiful Albanian language, I appeal to you to cherish and treasure your heritage in this land of the free. Cherish the heritage of your history, the heroic heritage of Skanderbeg. But above all else, cherish your language. Love it. Sing it. Let Albanian be the first words that your baby speaks. Develop it. Cultivate it in the hearts, the minds and the souls of your children — children who are dispersed today throughout the diaspora of the world.

Do not forget that it is your language which became the rallying and unifying force of your nation, that has united Albanians whatever their religion, wherever they may have settled, be they Albanians in Albania, or the Kossovars in Yugoslavia, the Arberesh in Calabria, the Arvanitis in Greece, or the Arnaut in Turkey — you are one.

United you have survived. You have survived the empires of Rome, the empires of Byzantium, the empires of the Ottoman Turks, and you will survive the brutal oppression of the present communist regimes.

There are many things one person can do for those who rights of worship are denied by force and legislation. Below we list some of them.

1. Become informed yourself.
2. Share with others your knowledge.
3. Pray every day, alone or in a group, for the religious freedom in Albania.
4. Write letters to editors of newspapers and periodicals.
5. Call in on radio talk shows.
6. Urge church and political leaders to take action on behalf of the oppressed Albanians.
7. Form a group to pray and to work together to help spread knowledge of the religious persecution now occurring in Albania.
8. Write courteous letters to Albanian leaders (Enver Hoxha, General Secretary of the PSRA, Tirana, Albania; and Adil Çarçani, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the PSRA, Tirana, Albania), protesting the antireligious laws of the Albanian government.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GREEK MINORITY IN ALBANIA

In the past two years the extremely chauvinistic Greek Propaganda has increased its shouting about the Greek minority in Albania. Unfortunately, it seems that the "Green Light" for this blatancy was given by the claims in the Bishop's of Greece Resolution of 1981, which proclaimed "400,000" Albanian Orthodox faithful to be Greek nationals. Our Center has written to newspapers against this gross distortion. Also, other non-Albanian people, scholars and experts on the issue have raised their voices denouncing the ridiculous claims of the Greek chauvinists. One such voice is Mr. Leonard Fox, an American linguist and expert in various fields of Eastern European nationalities. He wrote to London's Sunday Times. We hereby print our Center's letter to the San Francisco Chronicle and the letter to the Sunday Times by Mr. Fox. We encourage our friends and readers to do the same whenever they read similar distortions and false presentations about Albania and its people.

May 27, 1983

Editor

San Francisco Chronicle

Dear Editor:

In the past you have printed several reports about Albania. Most of them were fairly informative for the public in general, however, your latest report, printed on Wednesday, May 25th in the Briefing Section (page C-5) under the title: "Fugitives' Tale of Life in Albania" contains demographic and political distortions that need to be corrected.

A — "The 350,000 strong Greek minority . . ." is simply untrue. If your special reporter, Lee Stokes, had consulted any encyclopedia, he would have avoided this grave mistake about the number of the actual Greek minority in Albania which is 35,000 and not 350,000. The U.S. Government Area book on Albania puts the number of the Greek minority at 40,000.

B — Various international human rights organizations estimate that the number of all prisoners in Albania is about 10,000. The figure of 25,000 ethnic Greeks in prison and 80,000 in work camps or "exiled from their villages" is a mere hallucination.

We are confident that you will print our letter in the interest of correct information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Palok Plaku, Executive Secretary

Albanian Catholic Info. Center

P.O. Box 1217

Santa Clara, CA 95053

August 21, 1983

The Editor

The Sunday Times

Sir:

Regarding the article on "the Gulags of Albania" in your August 14th issue, there is at least one gross error which requires correction. The figure you quote of 400,000 ethnic Greeks in Albania is sheer fantasy on the part of certain interested circles in the Greek government who have pressed unfounded claims to territory in Southern Albania (termed by the Greeks "Northern Epirus") inhabited almost exclusively by ethnic Albanians. According to the Albanian census of 1961, there were 40,000 ethnic Greeks in the country. The number 400,000, which in other news and feature stories sometimes appears as 300,000, actually refers to the Orthodox population of Albania, the vast majority of whom — before the official adoption of religion in Albania — were adherents of the autocephalic Albanian Orthodox Church, officially established in 1922 and recognized by the Greek Church in 1937. In Albania, as in most countries (such as Armenia, for example) where there existed an Orthodox minority without an autocephaly, the Orthodox were called "Greeks". This term, however, had nothing to do with ethnic or linguistic affiliation. In the United States, representatives of the Albanian Orthodox Church have protested on more than one occasion against the falsification by the Greek government of "Greek" associations of the 300,000-400,000 figure. Albania, although divided linguistically and, to some extent culturally, into two major groups, Gegs in the North and Tosks in the South, is a remarkably homogeneous country where minorities were never much in evidence. Again, in the 1961 census noted that 95% of the population were ethnic Albanians; a number such as 400,000 would mean that ethnic Greeks comprise 25% of the population, which is a sheer absurdity. By extension, the figure of 25,000 ethnic Greeks in prisons or labor camps is equally absurd. It would be interesting to know the source of such statistics, since it is highly unlikely that the Albanian government publishes population figures of this type or that they would be available to individuals fleeing across the Greek border. The "Greek official records" mentioned in your article are, to the least, questionable. Even in the Soviet Union, where there exists a highly organized network of dissident activists and organizations, it has never been possible to obtain a breakdown by ethnic group of political prisoners. In a country like Albania, where no such organized dissident activity is evident, the likelihood of obtaining reliable information is practically non-existent.

Yours sincerely,

Leonard Fox

ALEXANDER MOISSI: GREAT ALBANIAN ACTOR OF WORLD THEATRE

In our first issue of 1980, we presented to our readers the great Albanian actor, Alexander Moissi, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth. This anniversary was celebrated in Albania, Kosova and parts of the world in which Albanians live. We were pleased to read that Moissi and his outstanding work was recognized by many other international dramatic institutions.

However, we were unhappy to read (and hear) that Moissi's origin was attributed to Austrian-Italian parentage. The same misunderstanding of nationality has happened on other occasions with Mother Teresa and Patriarch Athenagoras, when their nationality was credited to Yugoslav and Greek respectively. Our Center has often written to correct this misidentification of Albanians. The recent error in nationality about Moissi was made public by Maximilian Schell during his musical series on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

We are grateful to Professor Peter R. Prifti, who alerted us about this mistake and sent us a copy of the letter he wrote to Mr. Schell informing him of the matter. We reprint this letter so others will be enlightened about Moissi's real nationality.

21 August 1983

Maximilian Schell
Bernstein/Beethoven Series
% Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)
609 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Schell:

I take the pleasure in congratulating you for your introduction to the performance of Beethoven's "The Creatures of Prometheus," by the Vienna Philharmonic orchestra, under the direction of Leonard Bernstein. I have just watched a repeat showing of this program on the local PBS-TV station (which included, of course, Beethoven's Symphony No. Eight). The disk in German of Alexander Moissi's recitation of a passage from "Prometheus" was splendid. And so was your rendition of it in English.

Permit me, however, to point out an error in your fine introduction. You said that the great actor was of Austrian-Italian origin or nationality. It will no doubt come as a surprise to you to be told that there is documentary evidence that he was of Albanian origin.

True, he was born outside of Albania — in Trieste, to be exact — at a time (in 1880) when Albania was still under the occupation of the Turks. But both of his parents were Albanian. Indeed, Moissi himself is quoted as saying, "... my father was pure Albanian and my mother is an Arberesh Albanian," that is to say, an Albanian ethnic in Italy.

According to my documents, which include biographic data, photographs, certificates, correspondence, etc., his father came from Kavaja, a town in central Albania, later migrated to Trieste, and there met and married Amelia de Rada. His mother's surname, is in fact identical with the name of the most famous Albanian-Italian poet, Jeronim de Rada.

Little wonder, then, that Albanians throughout the world speak of Alexander Moissi, their compatriot, with great pride, and that he is commemorated in Albania in books, works of sculpture, houses where he lived for a time as a child, and the "Aleksander Moisi" Dramatic Institute of Tirane, capital of Albania.

Should you so desire, I would gladly arrange to provide you with materials testifying to Moissi's Albanian origin.

Sincerely yours,
Peter R. Prifti

TWO SYMPOSIA ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM HELD Armando Valladares Receives Religious Freedom Award

Albania's Antireligious Laws Denounced

Two symposia were recently held on Religious Freedom, one in Europe and another in the United States.

The European symposium was organized by the Austrian Television Network under the theme "Religious Freedom and Human Rights after the Helsinki Conference." It was held in Vienna on May 18 and 19 of this year.

Participants from Western and Eastern European countries emphasized, during the deliberations, that provisions of the Helsinki Agreements regarding religious freedom are often, if not continually, violated. They stressed the fact that discrimination and harassment on account of religious adherence of people not only violates the Helsinki Agreements, but creates the cause for instability in Eastern Europe.

The main speaker at the European symposium was Cardinal Franz König, Archbishop of Vienna. His address was attentively heard and well received.

Former Chancellor of Austria Bruno Krajski spoke at the closing session of the symposium. In his presentation Krajski underlined the great role that religion has always played in preserving human rights everywhere.

Although Albania is not a signatory of the Helsinki Agreements, antireligious laws and practices in this country were singled out during the symposium, and declared a grave and unique violation of basic human rights.

The other symposium was held in Washington, D.C., July 10 and 11 of this year. It was attended by 180 religious and political leaders. The theme of this symposium was "Religious Freedom, East and West: Human Rights Issues for the Eighties."

This gathering was sponsored by the Institute on Religion and Democracy and The National Association of Evangelicals. Papers were presented by such eminent scholars as Prof. Bohdan Bociurkiw of Carleton University in Canada, who spoke on religious persecution in Soviet-dominated countries; Miguel Bolanos Hunter, a former Sandinista intelligence officer, and Father J. Bryan Hehir of the U.S. Catholic Conference. United States Ambassador to the U.N., Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Jane Ellis, a Soviet

researcher at Keston College in England, and Armando Valladares, a Cuban Christian poet, also spoke at this international conference.

Just as it had been at the Vienna symposium, Albania was singled out and criticized at this meeting for its fierce religious intolerance.

The highlight of this international gathering was a presentation of the Religious Freedom Award to the former Cuban prisoner Armando Valladares. Below is his acceptance speech, reprinted with the permission of the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

I was unjustly imprisoned when I was 23 years old, accused of crimes that I never committed. At that time my religious convictions were genuine, but probably superficial. My religious beliefs had been learned at home and at school, in the way a child learns good manners or the alphabet. Nevertheless, that minimal religious conviction singled me out as an enemy of the Cuban communist revolution, and somehow helped convince my judges and accusers that I was a potentially dangerous adversary.

However, as soon as I was in prison, I began to feel a substantial change in my religious beliefs. In the first place, I embraced God, perhaps for fear of losing my life, since I was in danger of being executed.

Today, 22 years after those nights of horror and fear, that way of approaching Christ seems to me human but incomplete. Later I had another Christian experience: Grieved with pain, I saw many young people — most of them farmers and students — die shouting "Long live Christ the King." I realized then that Christ could be of help. Not merely by saving my life, but also giving my life and my death, if that was the case, an ethical sense that would dignify them.

I believe that it was at that particular moment, and not before, when Christianity, besides being a religious faith, became a way of life, that my own circumstances resulted in resistance: resisting torture, resisting confinement, resisting hunger, and even resisting the constant temptation to join the political rehabilitation and indoctrination programs that would end my predicament.

But resistance as a Christian could not become a blind form of temerity, or of personal courage, but a thoughtful and calm stance in defense of my democratic beliefs, a firm commitment to maintaining my dignity and self-respect. Even when I was in the bottom of a cell, naked and being turned into human refuse.

To be Christian under those circumstances meant that I could not hate my tormentors. It meant I had to keep believing that suffering was meaningful. Because if man gives up his moral and religious values, or if he allows himself to be carried by a desire for hate or revenge, his existence loses all meaning.

I should add that this experience has not been mine only. I saw dozens of Christians suffering and dying, committed like myself to maintaining their dignity and their richness of spirit beyond misery and pain.

Today I remember with emotion Gerardo Gonzalez, a Protestant preacher, who knew by heart whole biblical passages and who would copy them by hand to share with his brothers in belief. I cannot forget this man all of us called "Brother in Faith." He interposed himself before a burst of machine-gun fire to save other prisoners who were beaten in what is known as the massacre of Boniato prison. Gerardo repeated, before dying, the words said by Christ on the Cross: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." All of us, when the blood had dried, struggled with our consciences to attain something so difficult yet so beautiful: the ability to forgive our enemies.

For God, there are no impossibilities. Nor are there impossibilities for those who love to seek God. The more ferocious the hate of my jailers, the more my heart would fill with love and a faith that gave me strength to support everything, not with a conformist or masochistic attitude, rather, with a joy, internal peace and freedom. For Christ has worked with me in my cell...

It is for this reason, dear friends, that I said that the distinction you give me will be very important for all Cuban prisoners. When it is known in Castro's political prisons, and it will be known, they will all be filled with joy. They will

Continued on page 103

A VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS "Men Have Forgotten God"



Wide World Photos

The dynamic and prophetic voice of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian author, tends to make many in the modern world uncomfortable. His analysis of Communism and of the inept response by the West to Communist expansionism is totally out of step with the dominant thinking in both the East and the West. When Solzhenitsyn chooses to speak in public, such as his Harvard Commencement Speech in 1978, his theme remains the same: the necessity of a spiritual renewal, "A return to God", throughout the world so that Communism and all evils may be overcome. This blunt message often meets a stony silence among those in the West who consider religion unimportant, and communism not all that bad. In Communist countries, if atheism has a devil, Solzhenitsyn will suffice. He is the "anti-Lenin".

It is tragic that Solzhenitsyn should be so ignored in the West and so despised in the East. His voice, an authentic cry of the suffering Russian people, speaks with tremendous clarity and authority about the enduring values of civilization. Solzhenitsyn underscores the truth in the well-known lament "the Church in Eastern Europe is not silent, the Church in the West is deaf." By refusing to respond to our neighbors in need we are becoming deaf to truth itself.

Fortunately, some in the West are willing to listen and to provide him with a forum from which to speak. In May of this year Solzhenitsyn received the Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion. The award cites him

"as a pioneer in the renaissance of religion in atheist nations" and "a living symbol of the continuing vitality of the Orthodox tradition of spirituality." After accepting his award, Solzhenitsyn delivered an address in London's Guildhall entitled "Men Have Forgotten God." The address centers on his conviction that "the principal trait of the twentieth century" is the denial of God's existence. With precise wording and intense purpose he states "the failings of human consciousness, deprived of its divine dimension, have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century." He then proceeds to enumerate some of these crimes which have particular importance to those for whom he speaks: the hundreds of millions under Communism. He emphasizes his belief that World War I stands as the keystone "to which much of our present predicament can be traced." The nuclear umbrella, which the West developed after World War II as a protection against Communism, resulted according to Solzhenitsyn from the West's yielding to "a satanic temptation." Like a long suppressed voice of conscience, he reminds the West of its guilt for having "accepted calmly, after World War I, the protracted agony of Russia as she was being torn apart by a band of cannibals, and to accept, after World War II, the similar dismemberment of Eastern Europe." Scornfully, yet sadly, he exposes the "pathetic" response to Communism our age has chosen: "anesthesia." To Solzhenitsyn such a response is a mere "anesthetic" designed to dull our senses to what is really happening—the conquest of the world by militant atheism.

Yet Solzhenitsyn, like any good doctor, after having diagnosed the illness, next introduces the remedy for the world—"a return to God." Drawing upon his knowledge of Russian history he paints a picture of the days when the social ideal in Russia was a "pious way of life" and not "fame or riches or material success." He points to a time when "faith was the shaping and unifying force of the nation." He describes the breakdown of this society in the eighteenth century "when Russia felt the first whiff of secularism" and "opened the way to Marxism." Having set the historical stage, Solzhenitsyn squarely faces the true enemy of the Russian nation, and in fact of all civilization—militant atheism. This atheism has been organized, militarized and propagated by Communism, not as something "incidental or marginal to Communist policy", but as the "central pivot" which Communism makes use of "to achieve its diabolic ends."

Describing life in Russia since 1917, he recalls with awe the martyrs in the Orthodox clergy, ten thousand strong, "who went unswervingly to their death for the faith." After having destroyed the clergy, the Communists next turned to the family. "Religious parents were wrenched from their children and thrown in prison, while the children were turned from the faith by threats and lies." Solzhenitsyn recounts with horror the fifteen million peasants who died as a result of the "pointless destruction of Russia's rural economy in the 1930's". Without mentioning his own prison experience he directs our attention to the Gulag Archipelago, "where men were encouraged to survive at the cost of the lives of others." Despite the 66 years of such suffering at the hands of militant atheism, Solzhenitsyn states, "there remain many millions of believers", precisely because "as is always the case in times of suffering, the awareness of God in my country has attained great acuteness and depth." He vigorously underscores his belief that Communism will never destroy Christianity.

Nevertheless Solzhenitsyn sees that religion is undergoing a period of gradual erosion in the West, "a drying up of religious consciousness". This state of affairs represents "a threat to faith that is perhaps even more dangerous than any attempt to assault religion violently from without." This loss of spiritual strength has left the West unable to withstand the threats of Communism and in fact, causes the West to make "daily concessions to an integral evil". He makes the serious charge that "atheist teachers in the West are bringing up a younger generation in a spirit of hate for their own society." Such a statement falls on deaf ears in the U.S. Supreme Court, which according to Solzhenitsyn's analysis is guilty of promoting atheism. In a concise and perceptive summary of the public perception of capitalism compared to the reality of Communism, Solzhenitsyn states the following, "It has been forgotten that the defects of capitalism represent the basic flaws of human nature" and "that under communism the very same flaws become completely unbridled in any person with the least amount of authority."

Solzhenitsyn particularly notices the hatred for life in the art of the West, "where the artist, instead of attempting to make known the divine plan, tries to put himself in the place of God". He asks that a "common front against atheism" be organized by religious believers throughout the world. He openly criticizes the World Council of Churches for seeming "to care more for the success of revolutionary movements in the third world, while remaining blind and deaf to the persecution of religion where this is carried through most consistently — in the USSR."

It is significant that Solzhenitsyn at no point encourages or even mentions military defense against the Communists by the West, preferring to concentrate on a spiritual defense, and leave the military question to be settled by others. It is clear from Solzhenitsyn's logic that he believes that if the West returns to God, it will find the appropriate means to protect its own territory and to help those under Communist oppression.

Solzhenitsyn ends his address with a warning and a challenge to us all, but which seems particularly aimed at those in Western society, who are sympathetic and even supportive toward Communism.

"All attempts to find a way out of the plight of today's world are fruitless without a repentant return of our consciousness to the Creator of all. We must first recognize the horror perpetrated not by some outside force, not by class or national enemies, but within each of us individually and within every society."

THE FULFILLED PROMISE



**A Documentary Account
of Religious Persecution in Albania**

Copies of *The Fulfilled Promise* — a documentary account of religious persecution in Albania (new printing with additional photographs), are still available from our Center. A donation to defray printing and mailing costs is requested. (\$10 in the USA and Canada, \$15 in all other countries).

Please send requests along with donations payable to:

Albanian Catholic Information Center
Post Office Box 1217
Santa Cruz, CA 95061 USA

**BIBLIOTEKA PUBLIKE
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ARMANDO VALLADARES' ORDEAL

The Cuban poet and former political prisoner Armando Valladares was released in the fall of last year from Cuba after spending 22 years in prison. The 45 year-old poet flew to Paris after a long diplomatic campaign by the French President François Mitterrand and years of ceaseless petitioning by Armando's wife and human rights organizations throughout the world.

Valladares' poems were first smuggled out of Cuba and published by his wife in 1970. The two volumes are entitled, *From My Wheelchair* (based on a hunger strike that paralyzed his legs until last year) and *The Heart With Which I Live*. Both books were very well received by the public and were translated into many languages.

Armando Valladares is now living in France from where he speaks and works throughout Europe on the issue of human rights. He's especially campaigning for the release of his fellow Cuban prisoners. His new book, *22 Years of Horror*, will soon appear.

We are pleased to introduce Armando Valladares' poetry in Albanian with one poem from his volume, *From My Wheelchair* translated by a friend and supporter.



"Man is the most marvelous creature in nature. Torture him, destroy him, exterminate him for his ideas must be, more than a violation of human rights, a crime against all humanity." — Armando Valladares, *The Heart With Which I Live*

Vuajtjet e një poeti

Në Tetorin e kaluar poeti kuban Armando Valladares u lirua nga burgu, ku Fidel Castro e kishte dënuar dhe mbajtur për 22 vjet me radhë. Ai ishte 22 vjet kur e futën në burg; doli prej andej në moshë 44 vjeçare!

E kishin burgosur dhe dënuar me 30 vjet burg. Por me ndërhyrjen e presidentit të Francës, Mitterrand, Armando Valladares u lirua pas 22 vjet më parë si ta mbushte krejt dënimin që kishte marrë.

Ai ishte dënuar me 30 vjet burg pse kishte kritikuar regjimin e Fidel Castros.

Gjatë burgimit ai shkroi disa poezi, të cilat i mbledhi në një libër me titullin "*Desde mi silla de ruedas*" ("Silla de ruedas" është karriga me rrota që përdorin ata që paralizohen nga kembët dhe nuk mund t'ecin si njerëzit normalë. Poeti Valladares ishte mbajtur nga jeta e burgut, dhe s'mund të ecte dot).

Libri "*Desde mi silla de ruedas*" doli jashtë Kubës dhe u botua në Evropë, në Amerikë dhe gjërat bërtitën një sulm të madh dhe e bëri të njohur emrin e autorit.

Këtu më poshtë po botojmë përkthimin në gjuhën shqipe të një tregimi në varietet, mbi një autor që kishte mbledhur në burgun Boniato, atje ku ishte mbajtur edhe Armando Valladares, i cili, kur doli nga burgu tha se "Diktatura në e keqe që ka njohur njerëzima është diktatura komuniste, apo diktatura e proletariatit, sikurse e quajne disa".

Tregimi i një masakre:

Burgu Boniato

Nga Armando Valladares

Është Shtator dhe së shpejti ata do të mbledhin
Kongresin e Parë të Partisë komuniste
dhe prej andej një Koshitutë do të dalë
plot "respekt" për jetën njerëzore.
Psikologët e Drejtorisë
së Studimeve penale do të vijnë
shoqëruar nga doktorët rusë, për hetimet
e tyre ndryshëse.

Ata duan të mësojnë
në ç'kohë e ndiejmë vehten në murë
apo në keq;
duan të dijnë në se mëndja na shkon
tek familjet tona,
se çfarë ëndërrojmë
dhe në se ende na ka mbetur mëndje në kokë!

Loredani dhëmbët i janë kalbur
si çdokuj tjetër,
skuqur i është mish'i dhëmbëve,
gjak i rrjedh
nga plagët që i përvëlojnë gojën —
tortura brënda torturës!
Një dhëmb,
një guaskë e zbratur pothuaj,
po ia nxirr mëndt e kokës
nga dhembja e madhe,
nga era e keqe.
Të kota janë lutjet e tija
për shërbim mjekësor;
tashti aspirinin s'mund ta shohish me sy
sikurse as edhe dritën e diellit:
që të dyja t'i ndalon bajoneta.
Loredani u çmënd:
me një lugë dhe një gozhdë të ndryshkur
dhëmbin e prishur vetë ai e shkoll
Koha kalon e rëndë.
të burgosurit thërresin për mjekime.

Jehona ndigjohet
e britmave nga qelët e largta
dhe mbush korridorin e gjatë e të errët.
Dita zbardhoi në Shtator
me një qiell të kaltërt
por aspak tërheqës.
Loredani lëngon keq,
Përplasen grushtet dhe lugët godisin
mbi dyert e heshtjes.
Komunistët arrijnë si një stuhi.
Më parë masakruan të burgosurit
e Qelisë Bloku "D",
që ishin në shesh e krejt pa
mbrojtje,
krahorrët me plumba ia u mbushën

mbasandaj tri bomba-dorë lëshuan.
Prej andej u drejtuan në korridorin
e gjatë e të errët
me dyer metalike.
Jashtë i axuan të burgosurit,
një nga një,
mbrapa i shtynë dhe i shqelmuar,
me bishtin e pushkëve qëlluan
si kafshë i rrahën.
Gjaku muret ngjyrosi
kur kokën ia u dërmuan.
Dhe ushtarët përtri u kthyen mbrapa,
pushkët e tyre ngritën,
me gjakftohtësi qëlluan,
vdekja gjëmoi
në korridorin e errët
në korridorin e kuq.

Gerardi ishte një i burgosur politik
kuban,
një predikues i Ungjillit dhe Shpresës,
Gjithmonë kishte ai në duart e tija
një copë qiell
dhe një treze dielli,
në syt e tija.
Ne e quanim "Vëllaj Besim".
Gerardi zgjati duart drejt qiellit të
padukëshëm,
"Fali, o Zot, se s'dinë ç'bëjnë" — tha,
kur Komisarë ia zbrazi automatikun
sovietik
mbi trupin tretur nga uria.

Mungonin tre muaj që të mbledh
Kongresi i parë
i Komunistëve kubanë.
Oh se ç' nuk bënë ata
Torturuan, sakatuan dhe shpërmuan:
kjo i ngjau varrim Perezit.
Të gjymtuar, flakën
nga korrigjet lëvizëse
i çmarrën prej këmbeshi,
koka e tyre e përgjakura
shkallëve duke përplasur.
Kjo i ngjau larva delorës dhe
Pasardhës.
Çdo gjë e kryen me përsosmëri,
me përsosmëri u vranë të vdekurit,
të plagosurit me përsosmëri u
plagosën,
me përsosmëri u thyen krrerët,
siç nat po ashtu
brujet dhe gjymtyrët.

BOOK REVIEWS

Jet Era Glyphs, by Tomor S. Zavalani in collaboration with Mary K. Piser, Sherman Oaks, California, 1983.

For many Europeans it is only natural to speak several languages. In many countries of the world, English is learned by all college and even many high school students, even though it is not their native tongue, in order to enable them to communicate more easily in the modern world. The Catholic Church has continued to use the Latin language for centuries as a means of communicating among widely diverse peoples and cultures. Esperanto is a modern attempt to develop a universal language. It is only right that a universal *written sign language* be developed to complement these attempts at improving oral communication. Tomor S. Zavalani has developed such a written system which he calls "Jet Era Glyphs". (glyph: a picture or carving representing an idea). Zavalani, in collaboration with Mary K. Piser, has recently published an explanation and study guide entitled, *Jet Era Glyphs: A Utilization Graphic Sign System*. He is a native of Albania and is fluent in six languages. While working on a travel guide to Sicily over twenty years ago, he found the need to improve upon the existing international symbols for food, transportation and lodging in use in such places as airports. This set him to work on a graphic sign system, a tremendous undertaking which has culminated in the publishing of this important work.

Other graphic systems exist, yet according to Zavalani they have failed "because in order to fully master those systems one must have the patience of the ancient Egyptian scribe as well as the endurance of the Chinese scholar". Attempting to keep the Jet Era Glyph system simple Zavalani chose not to refer to the existing systems, in order to be as original and efficient as possible. It is evident that simplicity has been achieved as it is possible to learn the entire system in about thirty hours of home study, after which time one will have the ability to communicate in Jet Era Glyphs using a wide vocabulary. Most of the symbols, or glyphs, are simple pictures representing nouns. There are only three basic rules to be followed, which focus on the formation of verbs and nouns of location. Sentences are created by combining the glyphs representing nouns with glyphs representing action, location and conjugation. English sentence structure is used, a problem which the book admits must be overcome in the future. Zavalani is confident that a natural grammatical structure will be developed by institutions conducting research in this area.

The inventor has also designed the system with the handicapped in mind, for both children and adults who need an alternative means of communication. The system has been tested and used at the Northridge, California Hospital. According to Pamela W. Schiffmacher, Director of Communication Disorders for the hospital, and her co-worker, Gail Pickering, Speech Pathologist, "We have found Mr. Zavalani's, *Jet Era Glyphs*, most effective for the communicatively disabled population. The concrete and simple symbols make communication possible for those people with communication impairments due to strokes, head injuries, cerebral palsy, etc." The specialists go on to say that "the logic of the symbols in Zavalani's book make it easy for family and friends to learn quickly."

Mr. Zavalani's work is highly praised by experts on sign language from the United States and Europe. Educators have introduced this system into the classroom for teaching non-English speaking students. Reviews of this remarkable book have appeared in the *Information Design Journal* published in England and also in the *Los Angeles Daily News*. Both Zavalani and Piser are to be commended for bringing this valuable work to fruition, for *Jet Era Glyphs* will certainly prove to be a great help to many people. In its own way, through its simplicity and inspired imagination, *Jet Era Glyphs* has already made a unique and positive contribution in the quest for world peace and unity.

Jet Era Glyphs is available by writing to the author at: 15233 Ventura Blvd. P-8, Sherman Oaks, California 91403.

Below is an example of Jet Era Glyphs.



God blessed and gave you a soul, a mind and a heart. Live, think, love and do not hate.

There is more than one message in the above sentence. Did you notice that with one single pronoun we can conjugate more than one verb provided we insert a dot in their action signs.



In a church or a synagogue your eyes will not see God and if you want to hear from God you will have to open your heart not your ears.

George Kastrioti Scanderbeg, by Lec Shllaku, Firenze, Italy, 1983.

In 1968, Mr. Lec Shllaku, editor of the renowned Albanian quarterly *Koha e Jone* (Our Time) attempted to immortalize the fifteenth century Albanian national hero George Kastrioti Scanderbeg in the French capital. After many years of tireless efforts, his actions were rewarded when in May 1980 the City of Paris solemnly dedicated Scanderbeg Square.

Now, three years later, we have happily received a copy of Shllaku's book detailing his efforts in the realization of this historic project. The book, written in French, Albanian, English, German and Italian contains many photographs of the dedication ceremonies, as well as a valuable collection of old and recent paintings of Scanderbeg and of the personalities of his time. It also contains a generous supply of maps of Albania throughout the years and of photographs of monuments and places connected with Scanderbeg's name.

The impact of the Albanian hero's fame on European literature and music is richly depicted in this luxurious large format edition of 300 pages.

George Kastrioti Scanderbeg is indeed a most valuable and useful adjunct to scholars and serious students of Albanian history as well as admirers of this extraordinary world statesman. Mr. Lec Shllaku is to be applauded and commended for this prestigious work, which, like his previous efforts undoubtedly will serve the common cause of all Albanians.

George Kastrioti Scanderbeg by Lec Shllaku is available by writing to the author at: Tipografia Pagliai, Via della Ruote, 14 R. Firenze, Italy.

A Duhet Feja? (Is There a Need for Religion?), by Rev. Ali Kraja, Albanian Islamic Center, Michigan, 1983.

This work, in Albanian, originally published in Shkodra, Albania, forty-nine years ago has been reprinted by the Albanian Islamic Center of Michigan and available to the public. The book tells, from a Muslim viewpoint, the importance of religion in people's everyday life and the influence it exerts on society as a whole. This book is a confirmation of this fact and presents a convincing refutation to the official government propaganda about the lack of religious sentiments on the part of Albanian people in general and of the Albanian muslims in particular.

The book is available through the Albanian Islamic Center, 20246 Country Club Drive, Harper Woods, Michigan 48225.

Sinovi Orla (Sons of the Eagle) by Stjepan Djurekovic, "Kroatische Buch", 8190 Wolfratshausen, West Germany, 1983.

The Croatian patriot, Stjepan Djurekovich, a top economic advisor to the Yugoslav government defected last year to West Germany. He took with him several manuscripts and soon after had them published under the following titles: *Ja, Josip Broz-Tito* (I, Josip Broz-Tito); *Kommunizam, Velika Prevara* (Communism, the Big Lie); *Sinovi Orla* (The Sons of the Eagle); *Crveni Menageri* (The Red Managers) and *Slom Idealna* (Shattered Ideals).

These remarkable books, all in Croatian, proclaim the total failure of the communist political and economical structure. Djurekovic presents in a moving style his own experiences as a high ranking Yugoslav government official. Particular emphasis is given to the privileged class of the communist hierarchy in Yugoslavia.

We are specially interested in Stjepan Djurekovich's third book *Sinovi Orla* (Sons of the Eagle). This work presents in detail the suffering of Albanians in Yugoslavia caused by rank inequality and national discrimination. *Sinovi Orla* also gives a true account of the Albanian demonstrations of Spring 1981, which were brutally suppressed by the Yugoslav military and police force.

Having been a member of Tito's inner circle, the author was witness to many behind the scene machinations of Yugoslav communist power. Testimonies of such a personality reveals to the reader a different, indeed, an unknown perspective of the Yugoslav society.

Since these important works are, as far as we know, printed only in the Croatian language, their value internationally is of limited impact, particularly to those who follow the situation in Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe.

Stjepan Djurekovich's works can be obtained by writing to: "Kroatische Buch", Postfach 1213, 8190 Wolfratshausen, West Germany.

Editor's note: We were shocked and saddened to learn, as this issue was in print, that Stjepan Djurekovich was gunned down in August of this year by the Yugoslav secret agents in his West German home. This treacherous murder has aroused indignation of not only the Croatian freedom loving people, whose devout son was Djurekovich, but of all who are concerned with the Yugoslav terrorist actions in the past decades.

"Our Lady of Grace" Publishes Arberesh Newsletter For Second Year

The Italian Byzantine Rite Catholic Society of "Our Lady of Grace" is publishing a bimonthly newsletter for the second year devoted to Italo-Albanian-Greek culture and heritage in Europe and the United States.

The illustrated newsletter features articles and the heritage of Italo-Albanians (Arberesh) and Italo-Greeks from Italy, Calabria, Sicily, Naples, Corsica, Abruzzo, Malta and Algeria, as well as reports on various religious and cultural activities of these ethnic groups. The newsletter is edited by John F. De Meis, National Secretary.

Copies of this useful Arberesh publication may be obtained by writing to him at 51 Redgrave Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10306.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

History has shown that at times of national crisis, Albanians have put aside their differences, and united as one body to meet the challenge of the day. Within the past century, there have been three occasions when the times called forth precisely that kind of united effort among Albanians. In 1878, Christian and Moslem Albanians, Ghegs and Tosks, beys and peasants, shopkeepers, writers, craftsmen, and merchants united to form the League of Prizren to resist Big Power plans to dismember their nation. In 1909-1912, they united again to wage a successful armed struggle for Albania's independence from five centuries of Ottoman rule. In 1918-1920, they fought in the diplomatic tribunals of Paris and Geneva, and on the battlefield of Vlore, to preserve Albania's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in the face of aggressive designs and actions of neighboring states.

Today the critical issue is Kosova. The age-old home of over two million Albanians, Kosova today is bleeding under the spiked boots of Serbian oppressors. The Kosovars are being abused, mocked, vilified, persecuted and slain for being Albanians and wanting to live as Albanians.

But as in the past, so also today, they are facing the savage storm of Serbian repression with characteristic courage and heroism. And they are resolved to win. At the same time they look to Albanians outside of Yugoslavia for support and help. In this time of crisis, they need expressions of solidarity with their struggle by Albanian men and women everywhere. Albanians can differ — if they like, or if they must — over anything else: politics, religion, economics, language, history, literature, etc. But they can no longer afford to differ over the issue of Kosova. For the issue of Kosova is a national issue, and an urgent one. It concerns not only the ethnic rights of over two million Kosovars, but their honor, their national identity, their lives.

Whether or not to give full support to the cause of the Kosovars is no longer a matter for debate or hesitation. As in the days when the fiery tongued Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine spoke for the cause of American liberty, so also Albanians today need to speak with one voice in support of the demands of the Kosovars.

The oppressors of Kosova leave us no choice. Rather than rely on reason and democratic processes to resolve the issue of Kosova, the Serbs seem determined to maintain their colonial rule there at all costs. Their policies on Kosova are plainly geared to serve that purpose. The policeman's club, the torturer's whip and the soldier's bullet are only the more extreme means they are using to enforce those policies. The arsenal of their weapons includes also a relentless propaganda campaign against the Kosovars, pressure on historians and educators to falsify the history of Kosova to serve Serbian interests, diplomatic efforts to influence leaders of nations in favor of the Serbs and against the Albanians of Yugoslavia and so forth.

In their all-out propaganda drive, they have tried also to enlist the services of religion in Kosova. They got the Serbian Orthodox community to issue a strong denunciation of the Kosovar demonstration in the Spring of 1981. Then they tried to obtain similar denunciations by the Muslim and Catholic religious communities in Kosova. But here their hopes and expectations were dashed to the ground. The Muslim and Catholic leaders refused to condemn the demonstrations. They knew that reason and justice were on the side of the

Dear Mr. Sinishta,

His Holiness Pope John Paul II has directed me to thank you for the letter and recent publication that you sent to him. He wishes you to know that he is grateful for your thoughtful gesture and that he appreciates the sentiments of courteous respect which prompted it.

His Holiness cordially invokes upon you and those associated with you in this Bulletin God's gifts of peace and joy.

Sincerely yours,
Msgr. G.B. Re
Assessor

I read in the Boston newspaper "The Pilot," about the tenth anniversary of your Center. My congratulations and best wishes for the important work which you are doing.

Charles N. Bransom
Bridgeport, Connecticut

You are doing a great service to the Church and to the memory of Albanian martyrs and heroes by documenting the tragic events of our days. Here, in Italy, many are still unaware of the suffering which Albanian believers are enduring so valiantly.

Robert A. Graham, S.J.
Rome, Italy

All Albanians and others concerned for the safeguard of religious rights are indebted to you for such a wonderful Bulletin. Please continue with your efforts to let the world know about the plight of religion in Albania.

Zef Mëhilli
Detroit, Michigan

I read the *Albanian Catholic Bulletin* and was impressed with the quality and variety of its content. Keep up the good work.

John Quanrud
London, England

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to Dave Provitali, James Torrens, Fr. Francisco Remedios, Charles Fisher, Michael McNaughton, Stella Pilgrim, Michael Mollers, Cornelius Buckley, S.J., and Gus Waggfield for their assistance in preparing this issue.

We also gratefully acknowledge the generous letters of support and prayers of so many of you who are genuinely concerned for the well being of the Albanian people. Without such help certainly our task would be impossible to fulfill and bless you all!

HUMBERTO CARDINAL MEDEIROS
(1915-1983)



where he combined working and studying. After completing studies for the priesthood at the Catholic University of America, Cardinal Medeiros was ordained in June, 1946. Ten years later he was appointed Bishop of Brownsville, Texas where he faithfully served for four years. In 1970, Pope Paul VI promoted him Archbishop of Boston, and in March 1973 he was created a Cardinal.

Cardinal Medeiros excelled in dedication to the teachings of the Church and the ministering to the people under his care. Although he was immersed in the tasks of the second largest archdiocese in the United States, the Cardinal devoted much time and care to the needs of other people, particularly oppressed such as Albanians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians. Cardinal Medeiros allied himself to our cause for religious freedom in Albania in a special way. Before the U.S. Bishops' Conference in 1977, he introduced the plea of Albanian believers and interceded for their support. In the same year, on the occasion of the 55th Anniversary of the Albanian Independence Day, the Cardinal joined the Albanian Orthodox Bishop Mark Lipa in an ecumenical service prayer. At the same time, both prelates issued and signed the "Joint Appeal for Religious Freedom in Albania."

The Cardinal's care and dedication to the plea of the persecuted Albanians continued throughout the years until his unexpected death. Truly, he was not only a driving force behind our work, but also a caring father who extended a helping hand when we were in need.

We grieve at his passing, yet rejoice for the privilege of having his support and friendship all these years. His loving warmth will remain with us as an inspiration to continue our work on behalf of our silent brothers and sisters in Albania.

With profound sorrow we learned of the untimely death of a great supporter and benefactor of our Center, Humberto Cardinal Medeiros. The Cardinal died on Saturday, September 17, 1983 during a heart operation in Boston.

He was born in the Azores, Portugal, on October 16, 1915, where he received his primary education. In 1931 Medeiros came to the States

HAVA DULY SEIT KELCYRA
(1903-1982)



In late December, 1982, the Albanian community of Detroit was shocked by the unexpected death of Mr. Hava Kelcyra. Well known for her generosity and support to Detroit's Albanian religious communities, Mrs. Kelcyra was much respected and admired by all who came to know her. Her warmth and conviviality was enjoyed by many at home and abroad. The newly arrived refugees in the Detroit area were greatly aided by her in their difficult task of adjustment to the new American way of life. We will always remember her as a good and dedicated Albanian patriot and activist. With her passing the Detroit Albanian Community has felt a great void.

MARIA STAJKA
(1890-1982)



We were saddened to learn of the death of the much loved, Albanian born, Maria Stajka in Detroit, Michigan. This respected embodiment of Albanian motherhood, affectionately called "Nana Marie" (Mother Marie) was born in the picturesque fishing village of Shiroka on the banks of Lake Shkodra. When the communists overran Albania, she managed to escape with her family to Yugoslavia. After many hardships in labor and refugee camps, she eventually settled in Detroit, Michigan, where for many years her home became a haven for Albanians of all ranks and beliefs. Although uneducated, Nana Marie overflowed with rich human experiences. She spoke in that beautiful tongue of Shkodra dialect, colorful and characteristic to the Catholic woman of that city. Although her life was filled with sorrow (her brother Franciscan Father Frano Kiri, spent 17 years in Albanian prisons) Nana Marie possessed so much strength that she was able to impart to many who visited her and were suffering for their families, a sense of peace and endurance. With her passing, a treasure of memories remain in the hearts of many who had the privilege of knowing her.

AHMET DERVISHI
(1916-1982)

As the Bulletin was going to press we learned of the unexpected death of Ahmet Dervishi. Mr. Dervishi was a long time President of Pan-Albanian Federation of America VATRA, and prime mover of its activities. He will be sadly missed by all and remembered for his positive efforts and contribution to preserve the ethnic culture of Albanians in America.

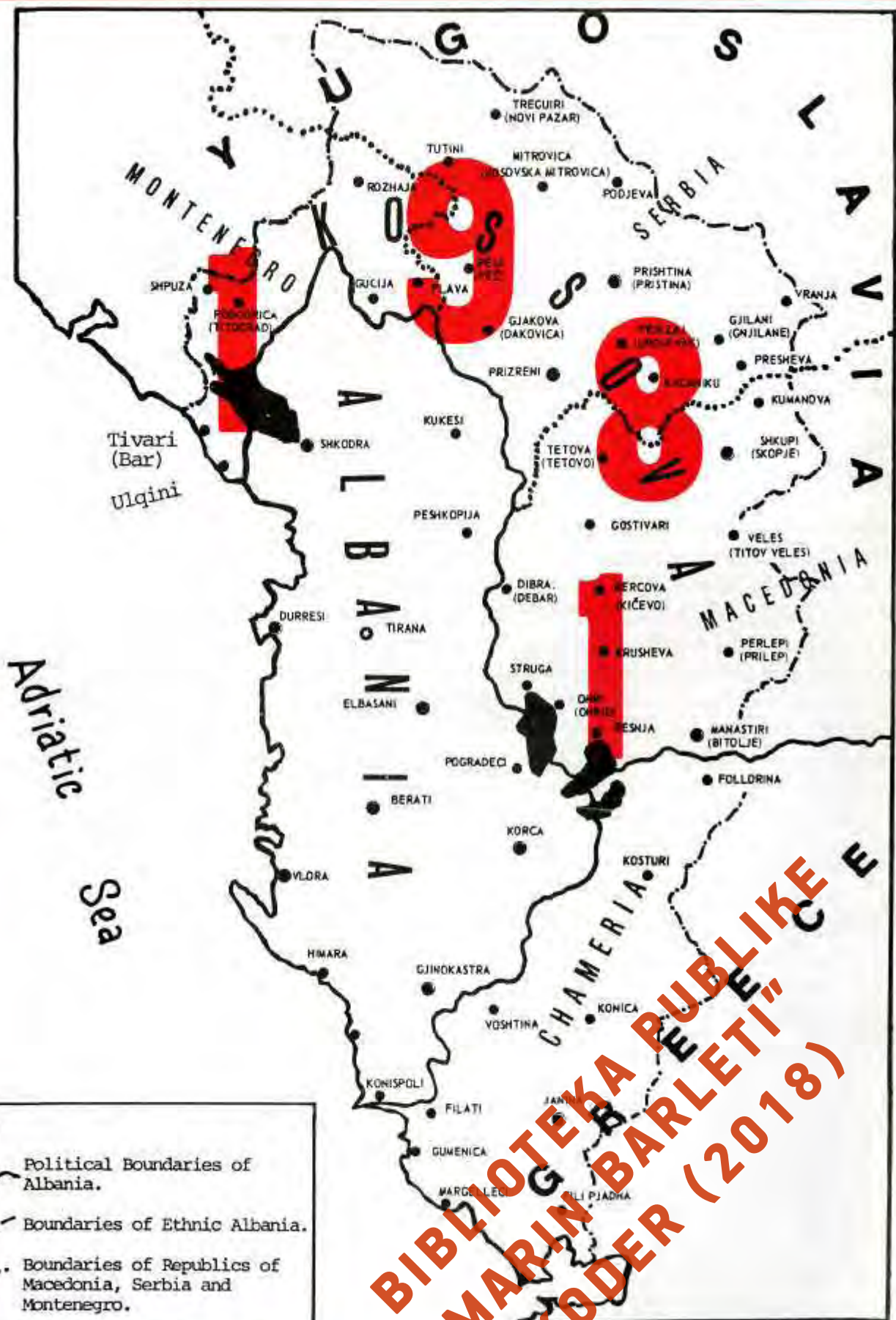
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