

NATIONAL MEETING



To commemorate:
the 74th Anniversary of Albanian Independence;
the 42nd Anniversary of Albanian Liberation;

THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY

will present

on Saturday, November 29th at 5 p.m.

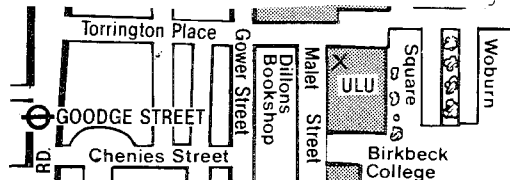
in Room 3a, University of London Union, Malet Street,
London WC1

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

A dramatisation of the Corfu Channel Case involving
Britain and Albania before the International Court of
Justice in The Hague

Dramatised by Bill Bland

To be followed by a social, with refreshments and
licensed bar and live Albanian café music by the Liria
Ensemble.

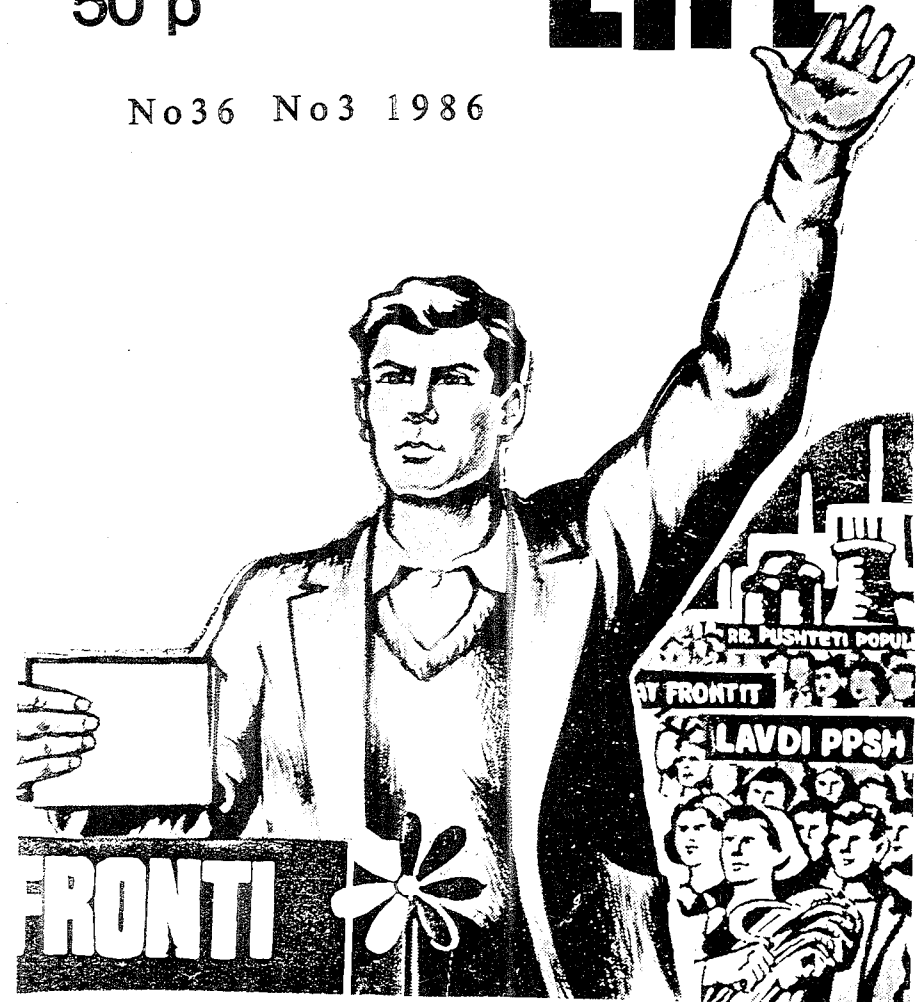


ALBANIAN LIFE

652

50 p

No36 No3 1986



JOURNAL OF THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY

CONTENTS

E. Hoxha: "The Men of our Renaissance"	1
Y. Kojaman: "'La Traviata' in Tirana"	5
"Mime", a short story by Gjergj Vlashi	8
B. Bland: "The Theatre in Albania"	14
B. Muço: Two Poems	21
Book Review: E. Durham: "High Albania", reviewed by S. Day	22
Radio Tirana	23
Correspondence	26
Albanian News	37
B. Mustafaj: Two Poems	42
Future London Meetings	43
New Magazines	44
E. Hoxha: "The Superpowers": Note by S. Day	45
Meetings of the Albanian Society	46
Holidays in Albania	47
Addition to Bibliography	48

The Men of our Renaissance

by Enver Hoxha

(Notes written in June 1978, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Albanian League of Prizren)

The men of our Renaissance form a pleiad of outstanding representatives of Albanian progressive thought and action. When we study their ideas, actions and writings, we see the great potential for progress that we have inherited from this brilliant cluster of great men.

They were inspired, above all, by the aspirations of our people for liberation, for national independence, for democracy. They were filled with the burning desire to give our ancient culture its due prominence, to disseminate it in all the countries where Albanians live, to develop and enrich this culture, to open schools, to educate their compatriots. These great scholars, philosophers, thinkers and men of action were enlightened men, inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, as their writings clearly show. The philosophers and thinkers who prepared the Revolution, such as Diderot, d'Alembert, Voltaire, and Rousseau, were well-known to these Albanian scholars and men of action. The actions and consequences of that revolution, its various stages from peasant uprisings against feudalism to the culmination of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, until Robespierre and Saint-Just were sent to the guillotine, after which the counter-revolution began, were also well-known to them.

Although they drew inspiration from that revolution and from the other revolutions which took place all over Europe later, in 1848, and from their consequences in the international arena, the great thinkers of the Albanian people were more advanced. This can be explained by the fact that time enabled them to view the situation of the Albanian nation, their homeland, and the political activity of the Great Powers from a standpoint different from that of the

earlier revolutionaries.

They were able to observe the domination and partition of small nations by the Great Powers of Europe, in whose treaties Albania was treated as a mere token to be bartered to satisfy the greed of one or other of these Powers. Hence, the whole Albanian nation had to wage a struggle on two fronts - against the Great Powers and against their satellites, the immediate neighbours of Albania, who wished to partition it. The grandeur of the unity, forged in the course of centuries of struggle, of the Albanian nation - a nation with its own language and culture, which no other nation has been able to extinguish - is apparent in its ability to cope with such a difficult and complicated situation. The Albanians who led the League of Prizren, that legendary epic, during the whole Eastern crisis, against all the intrigues hatched up by its enemies, displayed great ability and determination. The struggle they conceived was fierce and many-sided. It was fought with weapons, with propaganda, with knowledge.

Such were those men whom we are now celebrating - men whose history has been distorted by the ignorant despot Ahmet Zogu and by the fascist occupiers.

The entire history of the Albanian people is a brilliant never-ending epic, but the Party - guided by Marxism-Leninism and having a proper understanding of the development of history from the standpoint of dialectical materialism - has become the heir to all that is best and progressive in that history. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has become a granite fortress, built by the people through unrelenting struggle with arms, with the pen, built by means of economic, political and diplomatic struggle.

Our men of the Renaissance were men of the people, linked with the people. They felt the people's pulse and heart-beat, knew the people's virtues and weaknesses. And they fought to enhance those virtues

and to eliminate those weaknesses.

Today we see our country flourishing. We see socialist Albania, which emerged from the flames of war, from the barrel of the partisan rifle, as the outcome of all the heroic struggles of our forefathers.

When we compare the thoughts, the decisions, the progressive activity of the men of our Renaissance, we see that the leaders of current Soviet, Chinese and American thought are a hundred and fifty years behind the revolutionary thinking of the leaders of the Albanian League of Prizren.

Today we see that not only the old imperialist powers but the Soviet Union are keeping peoples in bondage. The new tsars have turned Eastern Europe into a prison of nations, and are seeking to extend their empire still further. The rulers of America claim the right to enforce their dictates anywhere in the world by means of financial pressure and armed intervention. The rulers of Yugoslavia, who oppress our brothers in Kosova, Macedonia and Montenegro, accuse us of being "irredentists"; they claim the right to oppress our compatriots, while we have no right to speak the truth or even to write our history as it really was. But they will not intimidate us.

In other countries there are immature communists who do not understand the great question of the progressive, revolutionary past of our people. When a certain communist leader from another country visited Kruja and saw the magnificent monument to Skanderbeg, he said: "But he was a prince, and communists should not praise princes in this way". Obviously he was not a mature communist, or only wore the mask of a communist. Yes, Skanderbeg was a prince - but he was a liberator prince, a prince linked with the people like flesh to bone, and his role was epoch-making because he fought against a very powerful empire of that time which threatened the whole of Europe. How could Albanian

communists fail to give prominence to this man, who emerged from the people, who fought for the people, who became an example to all the world of heroic struggle for freedom. The same can be said of our revolutionary democrats of every period - people who fought for freedom, for democracy, for the alphabet, for culture, and who for this were not infrequently imprisoned or murdered by the enemies of progress.

This is the history of our people. It must be publicised correctly and become an inspiration for our people generation after generation. Let this great, scientific campaign on the 100th anniversary of the Albanian League of Prizren also serve this aim. But this must also be done with all the periods of the glorious history of our people.

The duty devolves on us to further temper and strengthen our socialist Albania; to make it more beautiful; to make the life of the people happier, more joyful; to harness science to the chariot of progress and prosperity.

We are not conceited, but we are marching on the true course of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and that enables us to say that we are participants in the great world revolutionary movement. We will never betray this revolutionary movement, because he who betrays it has betrayed his own people, his own country. For us Albanian communists, the three things dearest and most valuable are the homeland, the people and Marxism-Leninism.

"La Traviata" in Tirana by Yeheskel Kojaman

(Yeheskel and Habiba Kojaman visited Albania in July 1986 as guests of the Albanian Committee for Cultural and Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries from the Albanian Society)

When we arrived in Tirana on the 10th of July, we saw an advertisement for Verdi's opera La Traviata on the 12th July in the Summer Theatre. We decided to attend.

The Summer Theatre is in the middle of the National Park. This is a big park, well arranged for the people to take walks, have refreshments, swim in the big artificial lake, rent rowing boats, visit the zoo or the botanical gardens, and so on.

On the shore of the lake, the Summer Theatre was built for performances during the summer, when the Palace of Culture is closed. About 1,200 seats are arranged in a semicircle, in the centre of which stands the large stage.

We arrived at the theatre at 6.30 p.m. Almost half the seats were already occupied, and hundreds of people were still coming to take their seats. There were people of all ages - elderly pensioners, middle-aged people, families with their children, boys and girls, soldiers, policemen, and of course some tourists like ourselves. By 7 o'clock all the seats were occupied and several rows of people stood at the back.

The orchestra began to play the overture. It was composed of about 40 musicians. It was noticeable that among the few older members of the orchestra there were no women, but among the younger musicians women made up at least 50%.

Then the opera started, performed by a company of about 60 singers. Being no opera critic, I am not qualified to discuss the opera from the artistic point

of view. It was sung in Albanian, so that everyone in the Albanian audience could follow the arias of the opera word by word.

What interested me most of all was to observe the response of the Albanian audience to this world-famous opera. I therefore spent most of the time looking at the people. The audience, which comprised a cross-section of the population of Tirana, was very attentive and serious in following the story of the opera and at the end the standing ovation for the performers lasted no less than 10 minutes.

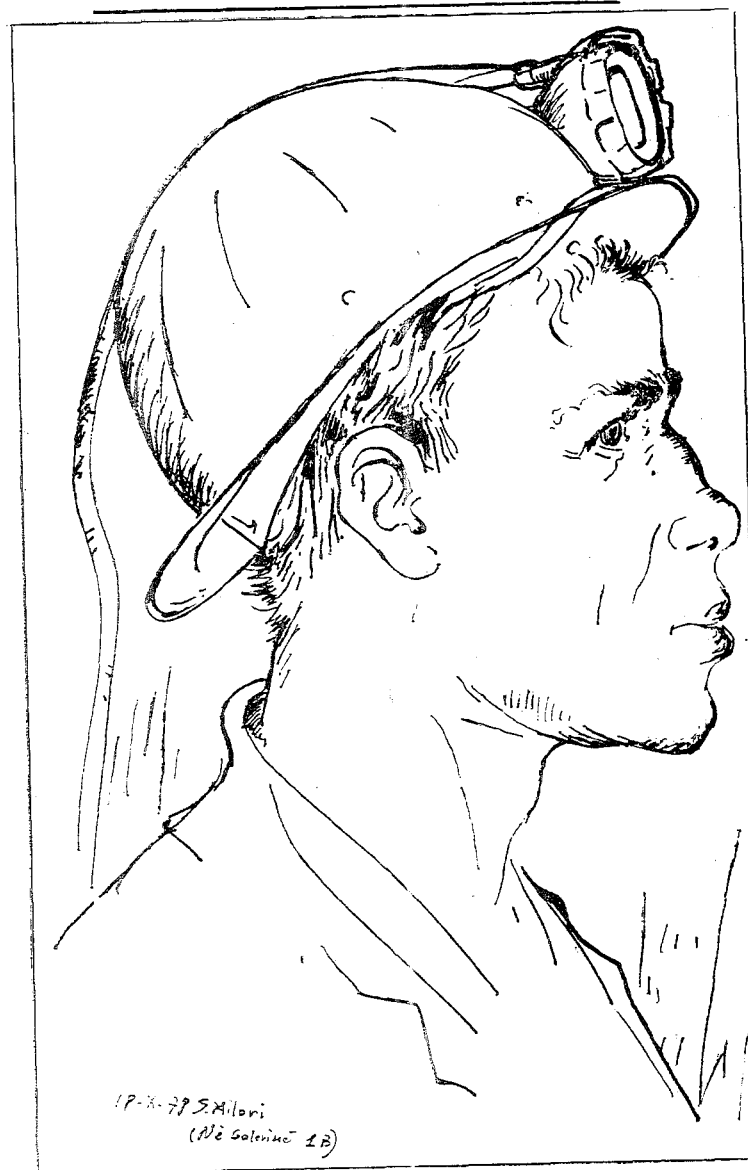
On the next day, the 13th of July, Shakespeare's Twelfth Night was to be performed in the same theatre. However, we could not see it because we left Tirana that morning.

I asked our guide about the price of tickets. He informed me that each ballet or opera, whether in the Summer Theatre or in the Palace of Culture, costs 3 leks (about 30p.), while the ticket for every cinema in Albania is 2 leks.

This reminded me of what is often said about the isolation of Albania. Today Albania has diplomatic relations with over 100 countries, and commercial relations with over 50. Tourists come to Albania from all parts of the world. This refutes any allegations of isolation. But in this case two performances of works of world culture were being performed on two consecutive days in Tirana alone, showing that Albania is not isolated from world art and culture either.

What, then, are the Albanian people isolated from? The Party of Labour and the socialist state are certainly selective in choosing art and culture from the world. They select works which have a real positive influence, or which treat a genuine social problem in a positive manner. They reject and deliberately isolate the country from all kinds of art and culture which have the effect of corrupting people, and especially

the youth. The Albanian people and the Albanian youth are, in my view, fortunate to be isolated from such influences.



The Miner Drawing by S. Milor

Mime

A short story by Gjergj Vlashi

I put my suitcase on the bed and began to unpack my things. This small hotel room was to be my home for the next three months, and I had brought a lot of clothes with me. I hung up my suit in the wardrobe, and laid my shirts out in one of the drawers of the dressing table. I put my books, notepads and chessboard on the chest of drawers, along with the coffee machine I always took with me on such trips, and a bottle of raki.

From the window one could see a part of the town I did not know, although I had been here several times before. "The other side of the moon", I said to myself with a smile.

I lit a cigarette and leaned on the window-sill. The sun had already set behind the hills. The quarter of the town which stretched before me consisted of little houses with square courtyards. From the third floor of the hotel they looked like dolls' houses. A street bordered with trees and high lamp-standards divided the district in half. How peaceful and quiet it looked; although it was only a few steps from the main square, one would have taken it for a distant suburb.

I gazed at the houses, the courtyards and the street, and thought: "This is what I shall see each evening, and each morning when I wake, for the next three months".

I puffed at my cigarette. What kind of people lived there, I wondered. What kind of work did they do? That woman taking her washing down from the line, what was her name? How many children did she have? And how old is that woman sitting at her window, knitting? It was a habit of mine to imagine the life of strangers I saw. I did it when travelling, at parties, at the theatre, in a restaurant.

Among these houses, one of them particularly attracted my attention. It was a small, two-storeyed house, the outside walls of which were painted a striking rose colour. There must be a kitchen on the ground floor, for I could see a stove through the open door of the living room. The two upper windows were clearly those of a bedroom, for I could see a large double bed and a wardrobe which seemed to take up the whole of the rear wall. At one of these upstairs windows a woman sat. She seemed restless, for she looked here and there, frequently getting up and pacing the room before resuming her seat at the window. Perhaps she was waiting for someone, or was worried about something.

My gaze wandered to the other houses, but always returned to the little rose-coloured house. The woman seemed calmer now. She no longer walked about the room, but rested her elbows on the window-sill. She seemed quite young, but she wore a dress which seemed a little too big for her slender body. She had thick, dark, silky hair.

Suddenly the ring of the telephone interrupted my musing. The theatre manager wanted to see me urgently.

I returned for a moment to the window. The woman was still at the window, but now she was talking to a little boy of about ten down in the courtyard. She nodded her head from time to time, but I could only guess what they were talking about. Then I saw a short man in a black beret go in through the front door. The boy ran into the house, and the woman moved from the window. The man came into the bedroom and threw his beret on the bed. The husband and wife - as I presumed they were - seemed to speak without looking at each other. Then he came to the window. He was shorter than she, and had a long, sullen-looking face. He spoke continuously with quick, extravagant gestures. She seemed to say very little. What were they discussing? It seemed like an ordinary conversation between husband and wife, yet I had the impression that it was about

something important.

The man turned and drew the curtains over the window.

I found the theatre manager in his office, and we discussed at length the play I had come to direct - the casting, the décor, the lighting, the date of the première.

I got back late to my hotel room. I opened the window and looked out. The houses below were now in darkness; the whole district below seemed dead. The only sound was the monotonous whirr of the refrigerator in the kitchen of the hotel, and that of a radio playing somewhere.

I undressed and went to bed.

During the next few days I saw the woman in the rose-coloured house only occasionally. She apparently got up early, made the bed, cleaned the house and then spent the morning in the kitchen preparing a meal. It seemed that she did not go out to work, but spent the whole day at home.

For the next four weeks I was busy with work. There were hitches, and the rehearsals did not go well. Each night I got back late from the theatre, and the district below seemed asleep. Even the rose-coloured house had its curtains drawn. In the second month, work went better and I had more time to spend in my room.

One afternoon - it was a Saturday - I was free, and I took a siesta. When I got up, I went to the window, lit a cigarette and leaned out. By now I knew

many of the residents by sight - even the children. As usual, my gaze turned to the house with the rose-coloured walls. I noticed nothing unusual, but I had formed the impression, without knowing why, that something was wrong there, that some sinister drama was being played out within its walls, that the house was filled with suffering.

This Saturday it seemed to me at first that things were as usual. The man was lying asleep on the big bed, his beret over his face to cut off the light. The woman was sweeping the courtyard. Her movements were slow and deliberate. Suddenly the man woke up, rose from the bed, went to the window and called out to his wife in a harsh voice. She clutched the broom tightly and stood motionless for a moment, without raising her head. Then she put down the broom, entered the kitchen and came out again with a glass of water on a tray. She climbed the stairs slowly and went up to her husband. He took the glass, drank a few mouthfuls and then threw the rest of the water in his wife's face. She did not flinch. The water trickled into her eyes, down her cheeks and into her mouth. He placed the glass back on the tray, picked up his beret and went out of the house without saying a word, slamming the front door behind him.

She stood motionless for a few moments. Then she turned towards the window, wiping her face with the back of her hand.

Several days passed. One morning I was in my hotel room, shaving. Lathering my face, my gaze turned to the house. It seemed empty. The woman was not there. Then I saw her coming in at the front door. Had she been shopping? Yet she carried nothing but a handbag. Perhaps she was now going out to work.

I was convinced of this after a few days when I observed that she came home each day at the same time. I wondered where she was working.

Despite this, it seemed that nothing material had changed in their relations. It was the same picture. Her husband came home after her, entered the bedroom, threw his beret on the bed and lay down for his usual nap. Meanwhile she busied herself with housework. When he woke up, she took him up a cup of coffee and came down again at once to the kitchen. Then he picked up his beret and went out of the house without saying a word.

One evening I returned from rehearsals very late. I was tired. Taking off my jacket, my gaze turned as usual to the tranquil district below. That night there seemed to be a wedding party going on in one of the houses, and I could hear the strains of a clarinet above the hum of the refrigerator in the hotel kitchen.

To my surprise, although it was so late I saw that the house with the rose-coloured walls was lit up from top to bottom. The nights were now warm, and almost everyone slept with their windows open. I saw the woman lying on her side on the bed, asleep, her long dark hair contrasting with the white pillow. The other side of the bed was empty.

Then her husband came in through the front door. It appeared from his somewhat unsteady gait that he had been drinking. He entered the bedroom and, as usual, threw his beret on the bed. He sat down in a chair near the wardrobe, his legs spread wide apart, his head resting on the back of the chair, his arms dangling down. He called out to her, but she did not reply. I was convinced that she was pretending to be asleep. Suddenly he got up from the chair, went to the bed and shook his wife violently. Still she made no move, and he seized her by the hair, lifted her head and struck her hard across the face.

The first night went well, and the audience was enthusiastic. When it was over, all of us, including

the technicians, went to a party in the club of the Palace of Culture. It was therefore well after midnight when I got back to my hotel room. I had to leave for home early the next morning, so I went to the window for a last look at the district I had come to know so well. I felt quite sad to leave it; it was like parting from an old friend. I looked at the courtyards, the tree-lined street and the little houses. All were dark, even the house with the rose-coloured walls.

I could not get to sleep for a long time, stimulated by the excitement of the première. My thoughts kept turning to the couple in the rose-coloured house.

I woke late, and realised that I had only half an hour to catch my bus. I dressed and packed my suitcase quickly, looking through the wardrobe and the drawers to make sure I had left nothing behind.

In the foyer of the hotel, some of the actors were waiting to see me off. We walked quickly to the bus station. Pausing for a moment at the entrance, I saw on the other side of the street the woman from the house with the rose-coloured walls. I recognised her by her walk, by her dress, by her hair style, by the handbag she carried. She was standing outside a large building that stood opposite the bus station. She hesitated for a moment, and then went into the building.

I pointed across the street, and asked the actors: "What is that building?"

"The district court", they told me.

The Theatre in Albania

by Bill Bland

(A lecture given to the London and South-East England Branch of the Albanian Society in September 1986)

Beginnings

The existence of the theatre in Albania in antiquity is known from archaeological evidence. In the Hellenic settlements of Dyrrah (modern Durrës), Apollonia (near Fier) and Oricum (near Vlora), theatre buildings date from the 5th century B.C. and here the theatre was closely linked with Greece, with which these cities maintained close cultural links for a long time.

But the theatre also existed in the Illyrian centres. The theatre at Foinike (modern Finiq) had 7,000 seats. that at Bylis (modern Hekal) 5,500, that at Butrot (modern Butrint) 3,000. The capacity of these theatres is taken as evidence that the performances must have been in the Illyrian language.

Apart from the excavated theatre buildings, other archaeological evidence - such as theatrical masks and pottery depicting scenes from plays - testify that the theatre in the Illyrian centres blossomed particularly in the 4th-3rd centuries B.C., when Illyrian society attained its highest economic and cultural development.

After the Roman occupation the ancient theatres carried on in general their traditional activity, and in the 2nd century A.D. a new theatre seating 3,000 was built in the Plain of Dropull near the present-day village of Sofratika.

The Folk Theatre

With the decline of classical civilisation, folk theatre became the dominant form of theatrical art in Albania for many centuries. These traditional plays

depicted, for example, the hunting of animals, with some of the participants wearing animal masks, or the Turkish invasion, with the Turks having blackened faces and the leading role representing Skanderbeg. Some of these "folk plays" were performed in mime, others had words which were passed on orally from generation to generation. Often these "folk plays" were performed on particular festivals during the year, and folk songs and dances were frequently interwoven into the action.

In addition, travelling showmen toured the country presenting puppet shows and shadow plays based on folk stories.

The National Renaissance

The modern theatre was born in the Albanian National Renaissance of the 19th century. This was a cultural movement which reflected and served the political movement for national liberation from Turkish rule.

A series of plays with patriotic themes appeared, mainly in the Albanian communities abroad. In southern Italy the former priest Anton Santori wrote in 1887 Emira, a love story set among the Albanian community of the author's native Calabria. In Turkey Sami Frashëri, the youngest of the three distinguished Frashëri brothers, wrote the six-act play The Vow in Turkish, but it was translated into Albanian in 1902. The Orthodox bishop Fan Noli - poet, historian, playwright, translator, composer and statesman - made brilliant translations of a number of Shakespeare's tragedies, as well as of Ibsen's An Enemy of the People, and was the author of Israelites and Philistines, ostensibly Biblical in theme but in fact portraying the problems of the contemporary Albanian national movement. In Egypt the lawyer-poet Andon Zako Çajupi wrote several plays, including the one-act comedies The 14-Year-Old Bridegroom and Post Mortem; and the classical verse tragedy Man of the Earth, based on Albania's 15th century leader of the resistance against the Turkish invaders, Skanderbeg. An émigré in Romania and America,

Mihal Grameno, was the author of the anti-clerical comedy The Curse of the Albanian Language and the historical drama The Death of Pirro. In predominantly Catholic northern Albania, the Franciscan priest and poet Gjergj Fishta translated plays by Euripides and Molière and was himself the author of the verse plays The Civilised Albanian and Judas Maccabaeus.

Within Albania at this time amateur drama groups came into being in the principal towns. The first known modern play to be performed in Albania was The Wedding in Lunxheria, written by the school teacher Koto Hoxhi and performed by children of his school in Gjirokastra in 1874.

Independence

The proclamation of independence in November 1912 brought little development of the Albanian theatre, since it was quickly followed by foreign occupation during World War I and then by the dictatorship of Zog, which gave virtually no support to the arts.

A number of historical plays were written during the period 1912-1939, including Kolë Mirdita's The Death of Skanderbeg and Moisi Golemi. Kristo Floqi wrote Karollo Topija and Mustafa Pasha of Shkodra, as well as a number of lively but minor comedies. The best known play of this period is Foqion Postoli's The Flower of Remembrance, based on his own novel of the same name, in which a personal story of frustrated love is interwoven with the national struggle against the Turkish occupation; after Liberation this play was made into an opera by the composer Kristo Kono.

The amateur dramatic movement continued to develop, but was hindered by the strict Zogist censorship, which banned even plays such as Ibsen's An Enemy of the People as "subversive".

The artistic level of the amateur theatre was not

very high. The actors were simple working people with a restricted culture and, for the most part, without training, who tended to adopt an artificial, declamatory style. Electric lighting and make-up came into general use only in the 1930s, when women appeared on the stage for the first time. Nevertheless a few really talented actors emerged - such as Zef Jubani and Mihal Popi, who became leading professional actors after Liberation. However, the greatest Albanian actor of this period, Aleksander Moisiu, although he dreamed of a national theatre in his mother country, was compelled to perform abroad and became world-famous above all for his interpretations of Shakespearean roles. Nevertheless, some talented artists - such as Kolë Idromeno and Vangjush Mio - gave their services to the amateur theatre as scenic artists, and a significant step forward was taken in 1934, when Sokrat Mio returned to Albania from drama school in Paris. Although compelled to support himself as a teacher of French, he devoted his energies to the amateur theatre as a skilled director who also ran training courses for actors.

The Partisan Theatre

The modern professional theatre came into existence during the War of National Liberation against the Italian and German occupation forces. Amateur actors in the partisan forces were formed into professional groups which presented short plays aimed at rousing resistance to the fascists and expressing the dreams of a better, more democratic society after victory. These plays, often interspersed with appropriate songs, were performed first on improvised stages to the freedom fighters in the mountains, later to the population of the liberated areas. Satirical sketches directed at the fascists and the collaborationists were particularly popular. At first these plays were improvised by the actors themselves, later they were written for them by playwrights who supported the liberation struggle. Some of these latter - such as Margarita Tutulani by Aleks Çaçi and Fratricide by Zihni Sako, were artistic works of high quality.

Even before the liberation of the country had been completed, on May 24th, 1944 the leading actors of the partisan theatre were formed in the liberated town of Përmet into the first civilian professional theatre in the history of modern Albania. After the liberation of the capital, Tirana, this company moved there to establish, on May 25th, 1945, the State Theatre - now the People's Theatre.

The Theatre in Socialist Albania

When the People's Republic of Albania (now the People's Socialist Republic) was established in January 1946, the guiding force within society was the Communist Party of Albania (now the Party of Labour of Albania), which had played the leading role in the War of National Liberation. Its programme was the speediest possible transformation of Albania, then by far the most backward state in Europe, into an advanced socialist industrialised society.

The new state adopted a policy of actively encouraging the arts and of making them available to the broadest masses of the people.

Today almost every factory, cooperative farm, school, military detachment and village has its own amateur dramatic society, and frequent drama festivals are organised for these thousands of amateur groups. Many local community centres contain theatres where these groups perform. On my last visit to Albania, I visited the village of Dervician in the Greek minority area, with a population of just under 2,000, where the Palace of Culture had a modern theatre equipped with a revolving stage which seated 470.

There are today in Albania 8 professional theatres, not counting the Opera and Ballet Theatre, variety theatres, puppet theatres and circuses. The best-known of these are the People's Theatre in Tirana (founded, as has been said, in 1945), the Migjeni Theatre in Shkodra (founded in 1949), the Çajupi

Theatre in Korça (founded in 1951), the Aleksandër Moisiu Theatre in Durrës (founded in 1953) and the Skampa Theatre in Elbasan (founded in 1962).

In 1946 the first art school with a drama department - the Jordan Misja School - was opened. This was followed in 1959 by the Aleksandër Moisiu Higher School of Drama, attached to the People's Theatre in Tirana, which in 1966 was merged with similar higher schools for music and the figurative arts to form the Higher Institute of Arts. It trains actors, directors and technicians not only for the theatre, but also for the cinema and for television.

Although each professional company has its own permanent theatre, it spends approximately 50% of each year playing to audiences in the countryside and in helping to raise the artistic standards of amateur drama groups. Those in the theatre who are considered the most outstanding artists may be awarded the decoration of "Honoured Artist" or "People's Artist".

The Party of Labour maintains that good art must be realist in form and, in the case of contemporary art, must accord with the principles of socialist humanism. Plays, whether Albanian or foreign, are selected for production on this basis. The most popular non-Albanian playwrights who figure in the repertoire of the contemporary theatre include Brecht, Chekhov, Gogol, Goldoni, Gorky, Ibsen, Miller, Molière, Ostrovski, Priestley, Pushkin, Schiller and Skakespeare. Successful recent productions have been of J. B. Priestley's An Inspector Calls and Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman.

Prime attention has, however, been paid to the development of a national drama, and among the most successful plays in recent years have been Our Land and Halil and Hajrija, both by Kolë Jakova; The Carnivals of Korça by Spiro Çomora; Koste Bardhi's Mill by Naum Prifti; The Girl from the Mountains by Loni Papa; The Fisherman's Family by Sulejman Pitarka; The Prefect by

Besim Levonja; and The Lady from the City by Ruzhdi Pulaha. In addition a number of novels have been successfully adapted for the stage: The General of the Dead Army, dramatised by Pirro Mani from the novel of the same name by Ismail Kadare; The Marsh, dramatised by Esat Okrova from the novel of the same name by Fatmir Gjata; and Unforgettable Years, a dramatisation by Shari Mita of Shefqet Musaraj's novel Before the Dawn.

A whole galaxy of gifted actors - such as Naim Frashëri, Pjetër Gjoka, Zef Jubani, Loro Kovaçi, Marie Logoreci, Violeta Manushi, Mihal Popi and Sander Prosi - and directors - such as Andrea Malo, Pirro Mani, Esat Okrova and Pandi Stillu - has emerged, many of them having graduated from the ranks of amateurs.

Conclusion

The 15th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, held in October 1965, was devoted to the question of the arts. In the closing speech, Enver Hoxha said:

"Of course we must make our people acquainted with the finest foreign creative works. This is indispensable. But this healthy foreign dish should be only one among many healthy and delicious dishes from the Albanian cuisine.

Our writers and artists must base their work on reality. But one cannot reach reality within the four walls of a study or a studio, or by sitting in a café, cigarette in hand, watching people pass by in the street, or by paying a flying visit to a factory. If their work is not to be superficial, our writers and artists must work with the people, alongside them and among them.

Only in this way can the writer and artist really become, in Stalin's words, 'the engineer of the human soul'".

Two Poems by Betim Muco

IMMORTALITY

Mortal indeed we are;
we cannot live for ever.
but the more we live for others,
the further away is death.

So will our heart live on
within the people's heart,
as a tiny drop of water
lives on within the sea.

GOOD NIGHT, SAGITTA

Good night, Sagitta,
my little girl,
who tells her age
by holding up three fingers.

You lie awake.
What do you seek among the stars,
whose light drips on the glass
like the milk from a fig-tree?

You harass your father
with thousands of questions,
but when you dream of your future
my tiredness vanishes.

I can still smell the mimosa
from the streets we walked together;
I can still hear the songs
we sang last Sunday.
I can still see the figures
from the stories we read:
the monster fought by Gjergj Elez Alia,
the fascist who killed a partisan.

Book Review

Edith Durham: High Albania; Virago Press; £4.50.

Reviewed by Steve Day

First published in 1909, this book is a fascinating record of Edith Durham's expeditions into the mountains of northern Albania, at that time part of the crumbling Turkish Empire.

Her sympathetic observations give us a picture of the tribespeople as generous, hospitable and friendly, yet at the same time ferocious in defence of their land and traditions. Of course, Durham was in a position to see the most noble aspects, since she travelled for the most part with one or two guides who were known to many of the people. Her courage and faith in human nature shine through this book and won her many friends in Albania - where she is still remembered with respect to this day.

Of all the customs she describes, the blood feud is the most notorious. Whole families became involved and the adult males lived their lives as potential victims and potential killers. This custom was swiftly eradicated in post-war Albania, though it is still known in other parts of the world.

The status of women is something that has also undergone a radical change. Durham describes the buying and selling of brides, the betrothal of infants, and the blood feuds that arose if the groom or bride refused to comply with the arrangements made. Interestingly, the bride could escape the match if she swore virginity for life and Durham describes such "Albanian virgins", many of whom dressed as men and were accorded the property rights and status of men. However, if the bride broke her vow and married another, the honour of the betrothed groom, even if he had since married, demanded that he kill the husband. The notable progress towards full equality of women in modern Albania is

even more remarkable when we see their utter subjugation observed by Durham less than eighty years ago. The religious question is also perceptively dealt with in the book: Durham notes that, while the tribespeople were prepared to observe Catholicism, Orthodoxy or Islam, their religious practice was always subservient to their ancient customs and above all to their Albanian nationalism.

Edith Durham's journeys in the Balkans led her to the view that peace would never exist in the region as long as the Powers arbitrarily drew boundaries without regard to ethnical considerations. She became a great propagandist for the cause of Albanian independence, and was instrumental in setting up the Anglo-Albanian Society in London.

This new publication of High Albania is well worth reading as an adventure story, an ethnological study and a historico-political work.

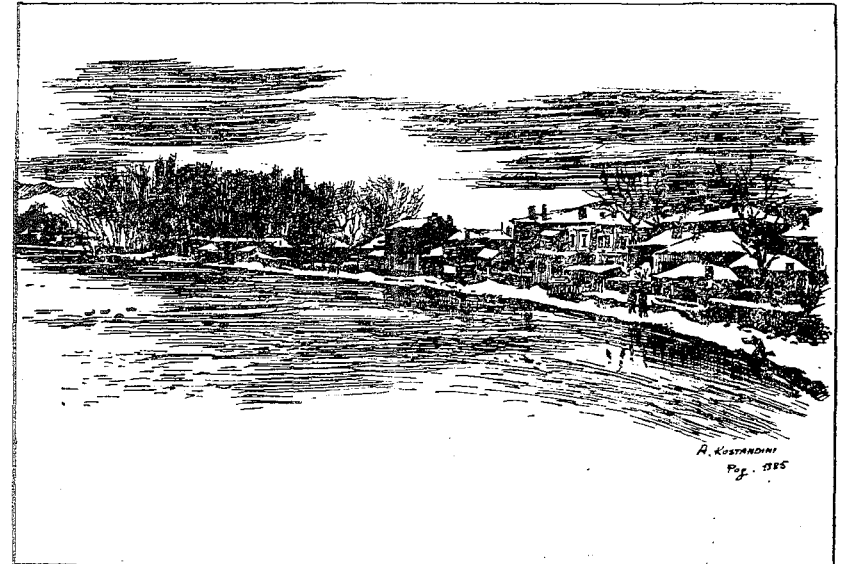
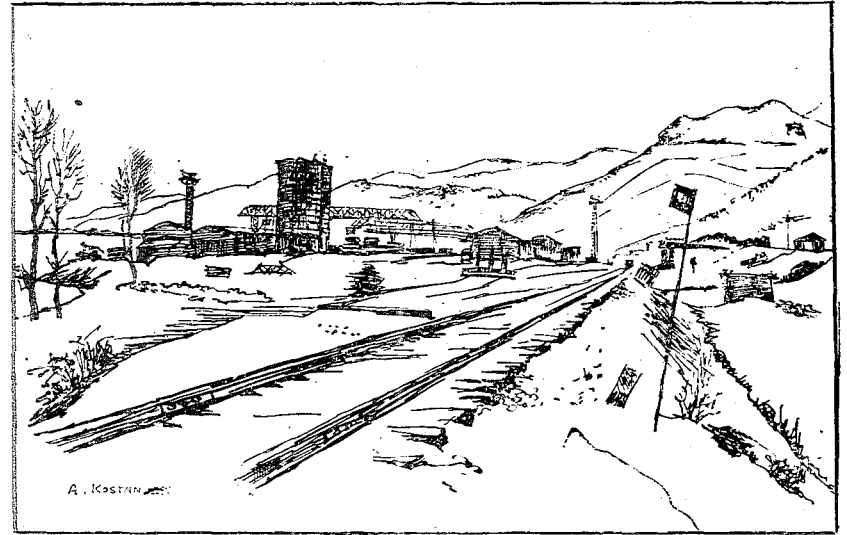
RADIO TIRANA



BROADCASTS IN ENGLISH DIRECTED TO THE BRITISH ISLES

<u>Greenwich Mean Time</u>	<u>Waveband</u>
0630	31, 42
1630	31, 42
1830	31, 42
2230	31, 42, 215

Views of Pogradec



Drawings by A. Kostandin

Correspondence

To the Editor:

In the course of his review of The Artful Albanian, edited by Jon Halliday, ("Albanian Life", No. 35), Bill Bland seems to be claiming that the great terror in the Soviet Union under Stalin was, in fact, an invention of the post-Stalin leadership, who denounced him for their own purposes just as his Tudor successors denounced Richard III for theirs. But the real evidence for Stalin's crimes rests, not upon denunciations, but upon the testimonies of those who were the actual victims of them.

The most authoritative work is probably Forced Labour in Soviet Russia by David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky (1947), which names hundreds of labour camps and reproduces official prison documents, but first-hand accounts by men and women who were incarcerated and tortured therein are legion. Survivors who have written books describing the horrors of life in the camps include Margarete (Neumann) Buber, Antoni Ekart, Evgenia Ginzburg, General A. V. Gorbатов, R. V. Ivanov-Razumnik, Victor Kravchenko, Jozsef Lengyel, Eleanor Lipper and Alexander Weissberg. I have omitted titles and dates of publication for reasons of space, but can supply these if necessary.

Many highly gifted writers and intellectuals also suffered during Stalin's régime, including Isaac Babel, Osip Mandelstam, Dmitri Mirski and Marina Tavetayeva. Babel, Mandelstam and Mirski all died in labour camps, while Tavetayeva committed suicide after her husband had been executed and her daughter imprisoned.

Lenin held Stalin in very low esteem, recommending in 1923 that he be dismissed from his post as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party (Collected Works, 4th Russian Edition; Volume 36; p. 544-546). According to Halliday (p. 96), even Hoxha criticised Stalin at the 3rd Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania in 1956, though this has long since been deleted from the official records.

Bill Bland accuses Halliday of "political naivety", but surely the real naivety belongs to those who, in spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, continue to deny that Stalin was responsible for some of the most hideous atrocities of our blood-stained century.

John L. Broom,
Stromness, Orkney.

Bill Bland replies:

However it may seem to Mr. Broom, I did not suggest in my review - nor have I elsewhere - that serious crimes did not occur in the Soviet Union during the period when Stalin held the post of Secretary-General of the Communist Party. Indeed, Stalin himself is on record as saying precisely this.

It is, of course, true that many historians subscribe to the theory - which I will call Theory A - that these crimes were carried out on the initiative of Stalin.

But there are serious difficulties in accepting Theory A. Dallin & Nicolaevsky, cited by Mr. Broom as "authoritative", maintain that the number of political prisoners in the Soviet Union in the 1930s embraced

" . . . at least 16% of all adult males", (1)

that is, almost one in six. This would mean that there could hardly have been a single family in the Soviet Union which did not have a political prisoner among its members or its neighbours. Although most reliable historians accept that such figures are exaggerated, it is extremely difficult, on the basis of Theory A, to reconcile this picture with the undoubted fact that Stalin's death in 1953 was a matter for genuine and country-wide grief on the part of the Soviet population. One has to note also that Stalin's successors felt it prudent to wait for three years after his death

before launching their denunciation of Stalin - and even then in a secret speech which has never been published in the Soviet Union itself. Furthermore, it is clear that these crimes caused serious damage to the Soviet Union and to the cause of international socialism; yet even Khrushchov admitted in his secret speech that Stalin's actions were dictated by what he (Stalin) considered to be

" . . . the position of the interest of the working class, of the interest of the labouring people, of the interest of the victory of socialism and of communism". (2)

Faced with such difficulties, a number of historians concerned to distinguish fact from propaganda have put forward Theory B - the essence of which is that the crimes concerned were committed not on the initiative of Stalin, but on that of his political opponents.

The "Yezhovshchina"

It is abundantly clear that Stalin and his close colleagues were surrounded by a large number of opposition elements, many of whom successfully concealed their political opposition until some years after his death.

Over a long period these opposition elements controlled the state security organs through such figures as Genrikh Yagoda and Nikolai Yezhov, who successively held the key post of Minister of Internal Affairs. Yagoda admitted at his public trial in 1938 that he had organised the murder of his predecessor, Vyacheslav Menzhinsky, in order to obtain promotion to his post and that the opposition conspirators had

" . . . entrusted me with the task of guarding the organisation . . . against exposure. . . .

I fully confess this guilt of mine before the Soviet Court". (3)

It was on Stalin's initiative that Yagoda was removed from his position, and afterwards placed on trial, Unfortunately his successor, Yezhov, proved also to be a concealed opposition element who took advantage of the criticism of Yagoda's inactivity to be extremely active - in organising the so-called "Yezhovshchina", in which many innocent people, including honest Communists, were victims. As Stalin told the engineer A. S. Yakovlev in 1940:

"Yezhov was a rat; . . . he killed many innocent people" (4)

But again it was on Stalin's initiative that Yezhov was removed from his post and the "Yezhovshchina" brought to an end. As Western press correspondents reported, all political cases were reviewed and thousands of unjust sentences quashed.

The "Cult of Personality"

The fact that Stalin was, to a considerable extent, circumscribed by opposition elements from 1934 on was disguised by the "cult of personality" built up around him. The "cult" was begun by Karl Radek, who confessed to treason at his public trial in 1937. Its most ardent exponents were concealed opposition elements such as Nikita Khrushchov, who, for example, characterised Stalin at the 18th Party Congress in 1939 as

" . . . the greatest genius of humanity, teacher and vozhd who leads us towards Communism, our very own Stalin". (5)

Stalin himself publicly denounced the "cult" of his personality on numerous occasions, and expressed to the German writer Lion Feuchtwanger the view

" . . . that 'wreckers' may be behind it in an attempt to discredit him". (6)

The Public Trials of the 1930s

It was in the situation noted above that, following the "bungling" by the security organs of the investigation into the murder of the Leningrad Party leader Sergei Kirov in 1934, Stalin extended his personal secretariat, headed by Aleksander Poskrebyshev, into an intelligence service under his control. It was this unofficial intelligence service which collected evidence of treason against a number of genuine Opposition conspirators, forcing the leaders of the official security organs to put them on trial or risk exposure. It was in these circumstances that the public trials took place between 1936 and 1938 of such figures as Grigori Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev, Karl Radek and Nikolai Bukharin - many of them with a previous history of open political opposition. Indeed, Zinoviev and Kamenev are remembered for having leaked the planned date for the Russian Revolution to the press!

Much ink has since been spilled to explain - on the basis of mysterious oriental drugs unknown to Western science, etc.! - that the admissions of treasonable conspiracy by the defendants concerned were false. Yet almost without exception the foreign correspondents and diplomats who attended the trials were convinced of their genuineness. For example, Joseph Davies, himself a lawyer before his appointment as US Ambassador to Moscow, wrote:

"It is my opinion . . . sufficient crimes under Soviet law . . . were established . . . beyond a reasonable doubt to justify the verdict of treason. . . . The opinion of those diplomats who attended the trial most regularly was general that the case had established the fact that there was a formidable opposition and an exceedingly serious plot, which explained to the diplomats many of the hitherto unexplained developments of the last six months in the Soviet Union". (7)

Indeed, I suggest that it requires a superhuman effort of imagination to accept the picture of judges, lawyers

and defendants rehearsing the script of a fictitious "trial" until word perfect, with the award of the death penalty to the defendants if they gave a good performance.

In fact, the defendants admitted just so much as the evidence established, relying on their "frank" expressions of regret to conceal the undetected layers of the opposition conspiracy. It is, however, interesting that the plan to which they admitted had their conspiracy been successful - the restoration of the essence of a capitalist social system based on profit but presented as a "reformed socialist system" - was put into effect by Stalin's successors. That the latter should "rehabilitate" many of their late friends is understandable, but is in no way evidence of their innocence.

Lenin's "Testament"

Mr. Broom misrepresents Lenin's opinion of Stalin. Lenin's writings contain the highest evaluations of that

" . . . marvellous Georgian", (8)

and bitter denunciations of

" . . . Judas Trotsky". (9)

It was indeed on Lenin's proposal that Stalin was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and was in 1922 elected General Secretary of the Party.

The sole exception to this assessment is the letter referred to by Mr. Broom, dated November 23rd, 1922 - January 4th, 1923, which praised Trotsky as

" . . . perhaps the most capable man in the present CC", (10)

and recommended the removal of Stalin from his post on

the grounds that he was

" . . . too rude". (11)

On which Stalin commented to the Central Committee:

"Yes, comrades, I am rude to those who grossly and perfidiously wreck and split the Party. . . . Perhaps some mildness is needed in the treatment of splitters, but I am a bad hand at that". (12)

The letter concerned was not written by Lenin, but was alleged to have been dictated by him from his sick-bed. It came into being after Lenin had suffered two severe strokes, which had caused extensive brain damage, at a time when he was isolated from the outside world except through his wife Nadezhda Krupskaya (a supporter of the Opposition) and persons approved by her.

The significant point, however, is that, after Lenin's death, the letter

" . . . was read out to the delegates of the 13th Party Congress", (13)

who unanimously confirmed Stalin in his post and decided that the letter

" . . . should not be published, since it was addressed to the Congress and not intended for publication". (14)

Although the contents of the letter were leaked abroad by supporters of the Opposition, it was officially published only in 1956 as part of the propaganda campaign of the new Khrushchovite leadership directed against Stalin.

The 3rd Congress of the PLA

Halliday is correct stating that Stalin was

criticised in the main report delivered at the 3rd Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania held in May/June 1956.

Such a report is not, however, an expression of the personal view of the reporter, but the collective view of the Central Committee. Hoxha himself had personally rejected many of the formulations presented at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February of the same year, including the denunciation of Stalin's "crimes". Indeed, Halliday asserts that "since 1948 it is fair to say that Hoxha has been consistent in his Stalinism". (p. 83)

But it is customary for a Marxist-Leninist Party to accept the evaluations of another Party concerning the latter's own country, as long as it considers the latter to be a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party. And at this time, as the Foreword to Volume 2 of Hoxha's Selected Works points out:

" . . . the PLA was not yet finally convinced that N. Khrushchov and his group had betrayed Marxism-Leninism". (15)

It is, however, untrue, as Halliday alleges, that the criticism made of Stalin in the Report to the 3rd Congress of the PLA has been deleted from the official records of the Congress. Perhaps Halliday means that the passages concerned have been replaced by dots in Volume 13 of Hoxha's Works and are not included in the extracts published in Selected Works. But most authors, if their work is republished, take the opportunity of deleting errors discovered in the original. The purpose of this practice is, in the case of the PLA, not, however, to foster a myth of the infallibility of the Party. As Hoxha told Mao Tse-tung:

"We cannot say that there have been no mistakes, but the main thing is that we struggle to make as few mistakes as possible or none at all and, when mistakes are discovered, we struggle to

eliminate them immediately". (16)

"Political Naivety"

My criticism of Halliday, which Mr. Broom regards as unfair, was based on the fact that he accepts Theory A on Stalin, not after analysing and rejecting Theory B, but apparently in complete ignorance of it. Thus, he finds Hoxha's admiration of Stalin inexplicable, speaking of this as a "paradox" (p. 6) and saying: "The conflict between Hoxha's shrewd observation and his purblind Stalinism" is one of the oddest aspects of the memoirs". (p. 7)

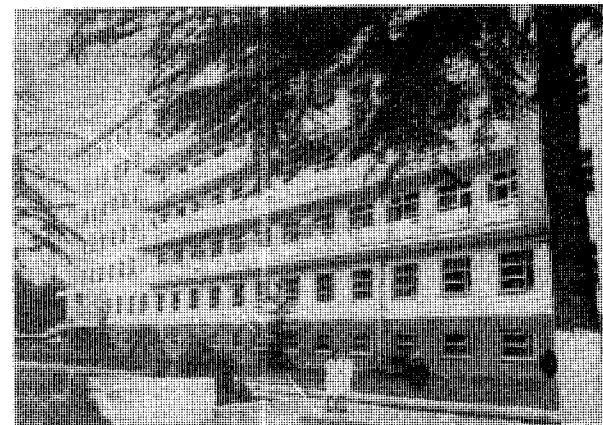
I see no reason to modify my view that to write a book on the world's leading Stalinist in apparent ignorance of the basis of his views on Stalin is inexcusable.

However, I spoke in my review of Halliday's "political naivety" not in relation to Stalin, but in relation to Tito. For Tito was the architect of the restoration of the profit motive in Yugoslavia, and of the policy which brought that country into financial dependence upon the Western Powers and into a military bloc with their allies. I maintain that to describe such a figure as "on the left wing of the world Communist movement" (p. 4) reveals extreme political naivety!

W. B. Bland

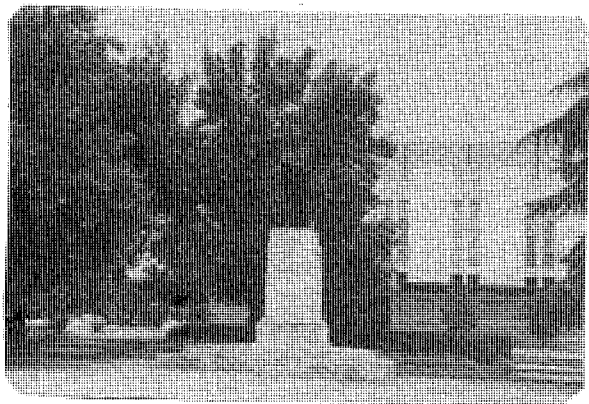
1. D.J.Dallin & B.I.Nicolaevsky: "Forced Labour in the Soviet Union"; London; 1948; p. 87.
2. U.S. State Department: "Khrushchov's Secret Speech"; Manchester; 1956; p. 32.
3. Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'; Moscow; 1938; p. 568-9.
4. A. S. Yakovlev: "Tsel'zhizni zapiski konstruktora"; Moscow; 1966; p. 179.

5. "XVIII s'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B.)"; Moscow; 1939; p. 174.
6. L. Feuchtwanger: "Moscow 1937"; London; 1937; p. 95.
7. J. E. Davies: "Mission to Moscow", Volume 1; London; 1942; p. 178-9,
8. V. I. Lenin: "Collected Works", Volume 25; Moscow; 1966; p. 84.
9. V. I. Lenin: "Collected Works:", Volume 17; Moscow; 1963; p. 45.
10. V. I. Lenin: "Last Letters and Articles"; Moscow; 1971; p. 7.
11. V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 8.
12. J. V. Stalin: "Works", Volume 10; Moscow; 1954; p. 180-1.
13. Note to: V. I. Lenin: "Last Letters and Articles"; Moscow; 1971; p. 63.
14. *Ibid.*; p. 63.
15. Foreword to: E. Hoxha: "Selected Works", Volume 2; Tirana; 1975; p. ix.
16. Enver Hoxha: "The Khrushchovites"; Tirana; 1980; p. 243.



A recent new building at the civil hospital in Tirana

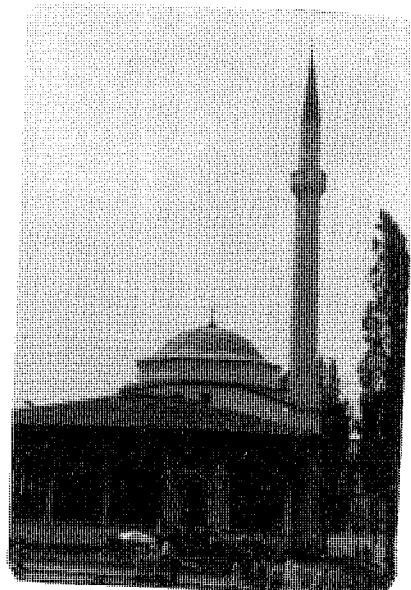
Three views of Tirana



Above: Statue of Lenin

Below left: At the kindergarten

Below right: The Mosque of Ethem Bey, Tirana



Albanian News

(Covering May - August 1986)

Politics

In May:

May Day was celebrated throughout Albania.

Martyrs' Day (5th) was commemorated.

1st Secretary Remiz Alia visited the districts of Elbasan and Gramsh.

The 42nd anniversary of the Congress of Përmet was commemorated (24th).

In June:

Prime Minister Adil Çarçani visited the district of Durrës.

The Presidency of the Democratic Front of Albania was convened (3rd)

A Plenum of the Central Committee of the Labour Youth League of Albania was convened (17th).

The 15th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania was convened (27-28th).

In July:

The 9th Session of the 10th Legislature of the People's Assembly held its proceedings.

The draft directives of the 9th Congress of the PLA on the 8th Five Year Plan (1986-90) were published (4th).

Diplomacy

In May:

The Iraqi Ambassador, Mando Abdul, presented his credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

In June:

The Japanese Ambassador, Hirohito Otsuka, and the Brazilian Ambassador, Ramiro Guerriero, presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

The Albanian Ambassador to Sweden, Shpëtim Çausi, presented his credentials to King Carl Gustav.

The Albanian Ambassador to Kuwait, Alkyz Cerga, presented his credentials to Amir Jabir Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In July:

The Thai Ambassador, Pramal Navabusya, and the Argentine Ambassador, Jorge Taiana, presented their credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

In August:

The Albanian Ambassador to the United Nations, Bashkim Pitarka, presented his credentials to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar.

The Albanian Ambassador to Norway, Shpëtim Çausi, presented his credentials to King Olav V.

Foreign Visitors

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

In May:

Trade union delegations from Brazil, Britain, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, Nigeria, the Organisation of African Unity and Portugal for May Day.

Gunar Brodin, rector of the Technological University in Stockholm.

A delegation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Salonika (Greece).

Edward Sauma, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Franz Jozef Strauss, Prime Minister of Bavaria (on a private visit).

A government trade delegation from France.

In June:

A parliamentary delegation from Switzerland.

Nicholas Kuhanga, Vice-Rector of the University of Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania).

A delegation of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist), led by Raul Marko.

A government trade delegation from the German

Democratic Republic.

The German writer Luise Rinser.

The Turkish violinist Ismail Ashan.

The Prefect of Ioannina (Greece).

A delegation of the Communist Party of Labour of the Dominican Republic, led by Rafael Chaljub Mehia.

In July:

A delegation of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), led by Michael Hamilton.

The Mayor of Bregenz (Austria), Fritz Mayer.

The Secretary-General of the International Railway Union, Jean Boulet.

A delegation of the Albanian Society (Britain), led by Yeheskel Kojaman.

A delegation of the New Zealand-Albania Friendship Association.

A government trade delegation from Algeria.

Abraham Behar, Secretary of the France-Albania Friendship Association.

In August:

The Vice-Chairman of the Commission for External Relations of the French National Assembly, Jean-François Deniau, on a private visit.

Foreign Visits

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

In May:

The Albanian Folk Song and Dance Ensemble to Turkey and Greece.

A delegation, led by Minister of Agriculture Themie Thomai, to an FAO Conference in Istanbul.

A trade union delegation to Congo.

A delegation, led by Minister of Health Ajli Alushani, to the 19th World Assembly of Health in Geneva.

In June:

A trade union delegation to Vietnam.

The conductor Eno Koço to Egypt.

The Çerçiz Topulli Artistic Ensemble of Gjirokastra to Greece.

A government delegation to the inauguration ceremony of the Titograd-Shkodra railway.

The Children's Artistic Ensemble of the Palace of Enver's Pioneers in Tirana to the Children's Balkan Festival in Preveza (Greece).

In August:

A delegation of the Women's Union of Albania to Tanzania.

Minister of Energy Lavdosh Ahmetaj to Turkey.

Foreign Trade

In May:

A trade agreement for 1986 was signed with France.

In June:

Albania was represented at the International Fair in Barcelona (Spain).

A trade agreement for 1986-90 was signed with the German Democratic Republic.

In July:

A trade agreement for 1986 was signed with Egypt.

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

In August:

An agreement in the field of health services was signed with the German Democratic Republic.

Albania was represented at the 5th Balkan Exhibition of Handicrafts in Volos (Greece) and at the International Fair in Frankfurt (German Federal Republic).

Culture

In May:

Albania was represented at the Figurative Arts

Exhibition of European and Asian Countries in Ankara (Turkey).

The May Concerts were organised in Tirana.

An exhibition of Albanian folk art was held in Helsinki (Finland).

The 24th National Song Festival for Children was held in Shkodra.

An agreement for 1986-88 was signed between Albanian and Swedish Televisions.

In June:

A cultural and scientific agreement for 1986-87 was signed with Zambia.

In July:

An exhibition of Albanian folk art was held in Turku (Finland).

Among new books published during the period under review were:

E. Hoxha: "Works", Volume 49 (May-December 1972)

E. Hoxha: "Works" Volume 50 (Jan.-April 1973)

V. Naço: "World Population".

- "The Albanian Encyclopaedic Dictionary".



Obituary

On July 30th the funeral took place in Tirana of the writer Shevqet Musaraj, Hero of Socialist Labour.

Two Poems by Besnik Mustafaj

MY BIRTHPLACE

Today I shall seek out
what you offered me so generously,
but which I threw aside,
because my eyes were weak
and my soul could not contain you.

I was a child; now I am older
and have seen the world.

Today I come to seek your riches,
my heritage of rocks and earth,
of snow and trees,
the fragrant breath of streams and hills,
those eternal things which bind me to you
and keep my soul alive.

THE CYPRESS

I pass by chance near to you
and think of your awful solitude.
You grow old alone, summer and winter,
without the joy of living in a forest,
the joy of resisting the anger of the wind,
the joy of roots which cling to the rock
on the edge of a precipice.

With barren exoticism you fear the earth,
and soar towards the sky. You fear the autumn,
and do not shed your leaves. You fear yourself,
and sleep in silence. You fear even life.

Yet as a single squirrel can caress you with its tail,
as a single bee can brush you with its wings,
so there will be someone who will think of you
the day your withered trunk has burned to ash.

How big is the world, my daughter;
it is yours to dream about!
How beautiful is life, my daughter;
it is yours to live!

Good night, Sagitta,
my little girl,
who tells her age
by holding up three fingers.

Future London Meetings

The London and South-East England Branch of the Albanian Society will hold meetings during 1987 in Tolmers Square Community Centre, Hampstead Road, London (Euston Square or Warren Street Underground Stations) as follows:

Sunday, February 15th: Report on the 9th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania, and colour video of May Day 1986.

Sunday, June 14th: Illustrated Lectures on Edward Lear by Bill Bland and on Edith Durham by Steve Day.

Sunday, October 11th: Anglo-American Relations with Albania: 1912-1944, by Bill Bland; 1945-1986. by Norberto Steinmayr.

All meetings will commence at 3 p.m.

New Magazines

Price
(inc. postage)

NEW ALBANIA, No. 2, 1986

50p.

Women textile workers; the Milot-Rrëshen-Klos railway; lowland agriculture; Professor Hamit Beqja; the steel works in Elbasan; the Tirana metal products factory; the rivers of Albania; Albanian chrome ore; the Durrës agricultural machinery plant; Kosovar epic poetry; two new feature films; demography; Majlinda Zylfo, gymnast; Haxhi Aliu's cave; the secondary school of ballet; the English painter Joseph Cartwright; Albanian folk music.

NEW ALBANIA, No. 3, 1986

50p

Enver Hoxha's "The Superpowers"; the War of National Liberation; building the Milot-Rrëshen-Klos railway; preventive medicine; the Fier fertiliser plant; divorce; football; invalid benefits; archaeological excavations in Butrint; the May Concerts; the new ballet "The Tenth Wound"; folklore; the relation of Albanian to other languages; the characteristic ceilings of Shkodra.

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 3, 1986

50p.

The work of Enver Hoxha; elections; Ramiz Alia's tour of the country; May Day in Tirana; the Milot-Rrëshen-Klos railway; numismatics; Enver Hoxha's new book "The Superpowers"; the role of People's Councils; the population of Albania; social psychology in Albania; the biological sciences in Albania; the Albanians in the Middle Ages; foreign trade; Albanian cinematography; the electoral system; economic planning; art in the service of the masses.

ALBANIA TODAY, No. 4, 1986

50p.

Albanian youth; Enver Hoxha and People's Power; the Anti-Fascist Coalition and the Albanian national liberation movement; the development of agriculture; the geographical distribution of industry.

THE SUPERPOWERS

by Enver Hoxha

This compilation from Enver Hoxha's political diary covering the years 1959-1984 will be of great interest to students of history and politics, containing as it does the Albanian view of the world in relation to the activities of the two superpowers. Written from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism, it throws a searchlight on the devious actions of the USA in defence of the "free world" and the USSR in defence of "socialism". Hoxha clearly shows that all their propaganda, "peace talks", rearmament, "disarmament", destabilisation and outright invasion can be reduced to the contentions of imperialists for hegemony.

Hoxha's viewpoint is consistently objective, all-sided and always in defence of the rights of the people against the predatory ambitions of the superpowers.

This book has commentary on every significant event and trend in the politics of the last quarter-century - from the Cuban missile crisis to the invasion of Grenada. All serious students of this period of history will find it of great value.

Steve Day

Enver Hoxha: "THE SUPERPOWERS"

£4.50

Meetings of the Albanian Society

In June/July 1986 the Albanian Society organised a series of meetings in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Birmingham, Llandrindod Wells and Swansea. In each centre Norberto Steinmayr spoke on "The Albanians in Kosova", Bill Bland spoke on "The Albanian Economy", illustrated with slides, and two videos were screened.

On August 26th the South Wales Branch of the Society held a meeting at the Ex-Miners' Club in Ogmere Vale. Secretary Ron Gregory showed slides of his visit to Albania and spoke on "The Economy of Albania".

On August 29th the South Wales Branch held a meeting in the Bridgend Recreation Centre; Ron Gregory gave a talk on his visit to Albania, illustrated with slides.

On September 4th the South Wales Branch held a meeting at the Pyle Club, near Bridgend. Ron Gregory spoke on Albania and the question of diplomatic relations with Britain, and a video of the last Gjirokastra Folk Festival was screened.

On September 11th Ron Gregory showed slides of Albania to the Porthcawl and Pyle District Photographic Society.

On September 14th the London and South-East England branch organised in the Teatro Technis, London, a rehearsed reading by professional actors of "The Ghost at the Wedding", a three-act play by Bill Bland based on the novel "The Wedding" by Ismail Kadare. The reading was preceded by a lecture by Bill Bland on "The Theatre in Albania", published in this issue of Albanian Life.

Holidays in Albania

Regent Holidays announce tours to Albania in 1987 as follows:

Tour A visits Shkodra, Tirana, Durrës, Kruja, Gjirokastra, Saranda and Butrint (8 days).

Tour B visits Cetinje, Shkodra, Lezha, Durrës, Elbasan, Korça, Berat, Apollonia, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Saranda, Butrint, Kruja and Tirana (15 days).

<u>Depart London</u>	<u>Tour</u>	<u>Cost</u>
18 April	A	£370
23 May	A	£370
30 May	B	£560
11 July	A	£390
8 August	B	£575
12 September	B	£575
10 October	B	£560
24 October	A	£370

The cost includes return flight (via Belgrade), transfers, full hotel accommodation in twin room, excursions, services of tour leader and Albturist guide-interpreter, and airport taxes.

Full details from:

Regent Holidays (UK) Ltd.,
13, Small Street,
Bristol BS1 1DE

Telephone: 0272-211711.

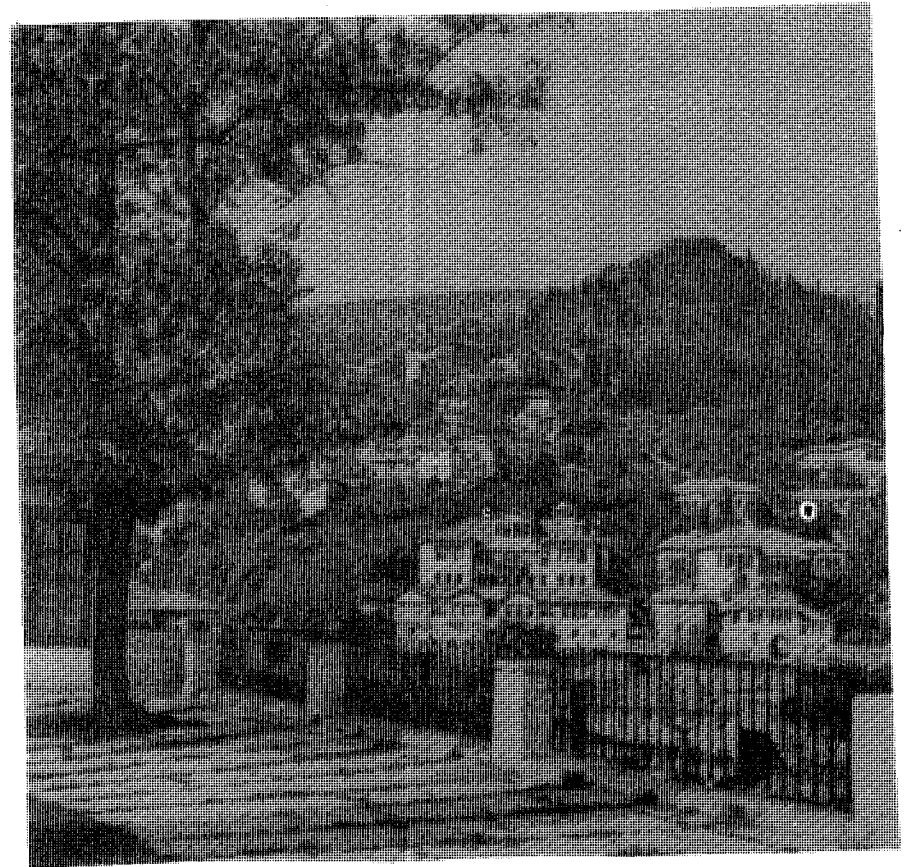
Addition to Bibliography

OF BOOKS ON ALBANIA IN ENGLISH

(Inclusion of a work does not necessarily imply that the Albanian Society regards it as objective)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------|
| BETHELL, Nicholas: | "The Great Betrayal" | 1984 |
| BLAND, William B. & PRICE, Ian: | "A Tangled Web" | 1986 |
| CAMAJ, Martin: | "Albanian Grammar" | 1984 |
| DRIZARI, Nelo: | "Scanderbeg" | 1968 |
| ELIOT, Sir Charles N.E. ("Odysseus"): | "Turkey in Europe" | 1900 |
| ELSIE, Robert: | "Dictionary of Albanian Literature" | 1986 |
| FISCHER, Bernard J.: | "King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania" | 1984 |
| HALLIDAY, Jon (Ed.): | "The Artful Albanian" | 1986 |
| HODD, Martin E.: | "Basic Albanian Etymologies" | 1983 |
| PIPA, Arshi: | "Albanian Folk Verse: Structure and Genre" | 1977 |
| | "Hieronymus de Rada" | 1978 |
| SCHNYTZER, Adi: | "Stalinist Economic Strategy in Practice: The Case of Albania" | 1982 |
| SMILEY, David: | "Albanian Assignment" | 1984 |
| WARD, Philip: | "Albania" | 1983 |

GJIROKASTRA



Published by:

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