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# 1945: Albania's International Relations

The following is taken from a report that the American Head of Mission, Jacobs, sent to US State Department in 1945 prior to the official recognizing of the Albanian new post-war government by the former.

Despite his recommendation, the American government decided not to recognize the Hoxha regime.

This specific section discusses the attitudes of the Albanians towards others, first in general sense highlighting their positive approach and then in specific terms vis a vis certain countries and powers, both eastern and western.

**Excerpt from Final Report of Special Mission in Tirana – J. E Jacobs (1945)**

## **ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

In spite of their alleged nationalistic tendencies, the general attitude of the Albanian people and of the present regime is friendly toward all foreign peoples and yet, as stated above, distrustful. One bit of concrete evidence of this statement is found in the fact that, while Italy took over complete control of the country and imposed its sovereignty upon the Albanian people, there was little ill treatment of aliens as a people after the Albanian authorities resumed control, although thousands of them, including soldiers, remained in the country until very recently.

A few Italians were shot during the first days of the regime, but such persons are generally conceded to have been particularly aggressive against the Albanians and could be held responsible for specific "crimes" in the eyes of the Albanians. While many of the Italians, both soldiers and civilians, have had to work on Albanian public works projects under trying conditions, these individuals have not fared worse than Albanians themselves working on the same and similar projects. Even in the cases of Germans and Austrians who still remain in the country, there seems to be no feeling of resentment in spite of anti-Nazi programs of the regime. Only very recently have these aliens even been called upon the register. In general, therefore, it can be said that there is no anti-foreign feeling existent in Albania.

While, as indicated above, the Albanian people are not generally anti-foreign, they have certain preferences with respect to foreign countries which may be divided into two main groups, viz.: the pro-western and pro-eastern.

The pro-western group, which is definitely the larger, looks toward Western Europe and the United States as sources of economic and cultural inspiration. The pro-eastern group, although in the minority numerically, is quite strong and influential because of its shrewd and capable leaders and looks toward the east, i.e., Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, for guidance, inspiration and protection. Subdivisions of these two main groups are dealt with below.

## **1. Pro-Western Group:**

**a. Pro-American Group:** The first group with western leanings is the pro-American group which is believed to be the largest group numerically, although it is not and

never has been the strongest group politically. The first explanation of the existence of this pro-American group is the fact that, according to the most conservative estimates, at least 25% of the people of Albania (around 250,000 people) have either been a continual exchange of ideas and funds up to the time the United States entered the war. This large pro-American group lives almost entirely in the southern third of the country where there is hardly a town or village in which at least 50% to 75% of the people have been to the United States or have friends and relatives there. Before the war almost the entire economic structure of this regions was supported by contributions from friends and relatives in the United States and by contributions from friends and relatives in the United States and returned with sufficient capital to establish themselves in business in their homeland. This group, aside from its economic dependence upon the United States, looks to such men as Bishop Fan Noli, head of the Albanian Orthodox Church in America, and Mr. K. Cekrazi, the first Albanian Commissioner to the United States, for cultural inspiration.

Another important source of this pro-American feeling is the result of the activities of the Albanian Vocational School which was maintained jointly for twelve years in Albania by the American Junior Red Cross and the Albanian government under the direction of Mr. Harry T. Fultz. More than 5,000 Albanian attended that school during its lifetime and almost one thousand graduated. Not only in southern Albania but everywhere one goes, one is bound to meet some Albanian who speaks some English and who will speak of Mr. Fultz in glowing terms. In fact, one hears even in official circles including the Albanian groups which are not pro-American, the statement that it was Mr. Fultz who taught the Albanians the arts and crafts and how to work. This group has a very high opinion of the United States and entertains nothing but the friendliest of feelings toward Americans.

Still another smaller pro-American group consists of graduates of the Agricultural School operated and maintained for some years at Kavaja by the Near East Foundation and, finally, there is a still smaller group of officials or ex-officials who worked with the Rockefeller Foundation in public health and malarial control activities.

In addition, there is a general background of pro-American feeling among all Albanians because of kind remembrances of assistance rendered by the United States after the last war in bringing about the creation of an independent Albanian state. Albanians of all ranks and classes have a feeling that without the friendly and persistent support of President Wilson, there never would have been an independent Albania.

There is, therefore, unquestionably a larger percentage of pro-American people in Albania than in any other Balkan country. There may be more Greeks in Greece and even Yugoslavs in Yugoslavia with pro-American leanings for reasons similar to those that have existed in Albania but the proportion of these groups in those countries to the total population smaller than in Albania. This pro-American feeling has, however, been largely a one-way traffic since the American people have never made any attempt to exploit this situation either for business or for cultural reasons.

**b. Pro-British Group:** The second most important pro-western group is pro-British, but in the sense that this group is politically strong rather than numerically. This group consists chiefly of wealthy Bey and merchant families who, since the creation of an independent Albania, have seemed to look to Great Britain for support in their conservative and even reactionary control over every phase of Albanian activity.

The fact that all the British have given moral support to this group in the past and still continue to do so places the British at a decided disadvantage at the present time in as much as the present regime in control is communistic and socialistic and views with suspicion British efforts to bolster up the wealthy land-owning and industrial classes.

There is also a strong feeling in Albania, even down to the common people, that Great Britain is far more interested in strengthening Greece than Albania and that, therefore, Great Britain supports Greek claims to Northern Epirus. Reuter's press reports and BBC broadcasts add color to this suspicion.

As a result, British influence for any constructive purposes in Albania is not strong at the present time. This British attitude, moreover, furnishes political capital to the pro-eastern group in its effort to reorient Albania's political outlook eastward toward Yugoslavia and Russia. The argument is that Great Britain is trying to restore the old conservative and reactionary ruling Fascists, that France is too weak to give any help and the United States too far away to care.

**. Pro-Italian Group:** The third most important pro-western group is the Italian. While it may be thought that the Italian occupation antagonized all Albanians, this is by no means the truth. The pro-western group in looking westward naturally finds Italy as its nearest neighbor. The basis of Albania's ability to finance its imports and find the first customer just across the Adriatic in Italy and in return Italy provides a source of needed manufactured articles.

It naturally follows that there is a large commercial group interested in restoring friendly relations with the Italians. This natural commercial relationship is further enhanced by the fact that thousands of Albanians of all walks of life now, as a result of the Italian occupation, speak Italian. They can read Italian newspapers and understand the Italian radio broadcasts. It is inevitable, therefore, that if the pro-western group has anything to say in the future destiny of Albania there will ultimately come about a closer rapprochement with Italy both politically and commercially. There has been much intermarriage between Italians and Albanians and the Roman Catholic group about 10% of the population is strongly pro-Italian. In addition, as indicated above, there are fairly large Albanian colonies in Calabria and Sicily.

If the Italians forget their imperialistic designs and play their cards well, they can easily secure an economic advantage in Albania without anybody complaining except the pro-eastern group trying to orient the future destiny of the country with Yugoslavia and Soviet Russia.

**d. Pro-French Group:** The fourth pro-western group is probably the pro-French. The French at one time had considerable influence in Albania, especially during the latter part of the Turkish rule. French has been taught in Albanian schools and most

Albanian officials have visited France and drawn deeply upon French culture for inspiration. For the moment, due to French reverses, this pro-French group is not active although recently steps have been taken to resume closer relations with France. The French government is trying to strengthen its Mission here, at present purely military, and the Albanian authorities have asked France to send some French teachers for Albanian schools.

### **. Pro-Eastern Group**

There has always been a pro-eastern group in Albania, small numerically it is true, but sometimes strong politically and influential as at the present time. It is believed, as an attempt will be made below to show, that for deep-rooted reasons this group has had and will continue to have difficulty putting across a pro-eastern policy.

**a. Pro-Yugoslavia Group:** As Yugoslavia is Albania's nearest and biggest neighbor, it is natural that there should be close ties between the two countries. King Zog himself at one time held to such a view and was brought back to the throne in 1924 with Yugoslav help. He later turned his eyes toward Italy. At the present time, the regime in control is collaborating closely with the Tito government in Yugoslavia and the first and only government to date to recognize Albania is Yugoslavia. In addition an agreement, exact terms unknown, has been signed with respect to commercial relations under which Albania is supplying petroleum products, wool and hides to Yugoslavia and receiving foodstuffs in return.

As will be shown below, however, this pro-Albanian rapprochement is believed to be engineered by the present leaders and has no real, hearty support among the people unless Yugoslavia by some bold *beau geste* should hand over the Kosovo area to Albania.

**b. Pro-Soviet Group:** The same leaders who are trying to draw Albania and Yugoslavia closer together are also attempting to draw Albania closer to the Soviet Union to which Yugoslavia is also closely bound at present. This movement has the backing of the communist members of the regime such as Professor Malëshova, Dr.

dischnica, Maj. Gen. Spahiu, Lt. Col. Gen. Xoxe and probably Col. Gen. Hoxha himself. The ideology of the present regime is patterned closely after the Soviet model which believes in absolute control by one party, the liquidation of opposition and the training of the people along chosen lines which they must follow. Some of this ideology fits in with Albanian customs and habits and some does not, how far these pro-Soviet leaders can carry out their program remains to be seen but it seems certain they intend to succeed even possibly at the price of a blood bath. That part of the program which proclaims the betterment of the common people finds popular support and, as the British and possibly even the American are believed to be in sympathy with the reactionaries, lends much strength to the leaders desiring to follow a pro-Soviet and pro-eastern policy.

**c. Pro-Turkish Group:** As Turkey ruled over Albania for nearly four hundred years and as 70% of the people are Muslims of the Sunni and Bektashi sects, it is natural that there should still exist today certain strong cultural ties with Turkey and with other Near eastern countries, such as Egypt. Fairly large colonies of Albanians, many political exiles, are living in Istanbul, Cairo, and Alexandria. Although this group, for the time being, is politically inactive, especially as most of its adherents come from the former Bey and wealthy classes who are not strong in the present regime, it is, however, potentially strong and may later become an important factor in Albania's political life.

### **The West versus the East**

As has already been indicated above, there is a struggle going on in Albania between the pro-western and pro-eastern groups. It is believed beyond much doubt that the pro-western is numerically and strategically stronger than the pro-eastern but it is equally true that the pro-eastern leaders are better trained and more astute and they are actually in power. This pro-eastern group may, however, have much difficulty in reorienting Albanian policy toward the east.

The first difficulty which must be overcome is the fact that the Albanian people are not pro-eastern minded. The Albanians are a small minority in the Balkans who

are not Slavs and take pleasure in declaring the fact; they are not Bulgars; they are not Macedonians and they are not Greeks.

As a people, they naturally look with alarm and fear upon attempts to federate them with their Balkan neighbors because they know that, as a minority, they will inevitably become submerged politically and culturally in the mass of alien elements, especially the Slavs who have for centuries tried to engulf them.

Also, the pro-eastern group cannot get around the fact that from five hundred to seven hundred thousand Albanians are now living in Yugoslavia, largely in the Kosovo area, and their lot is not too happy. The Albanians, see in the treatment of their fellow countrymen under Yugoslav sovereignty a situation which they do not want to happen to them. This area, moreover, constitutes an Albanian Irredentia. The importance of this situation can be better visualized when one learns that there are almost as many Albanians in Yugoslavia as there are in Albania itself and efforts of Albania to have the areas in Yugoslavia where Albanians predominate added to Albania have been frustrated.

Still another reason why Albanians are not pro-eastern minded is the strong pro-western influence which has been described in the preceding paragraphs. In other words, any effort to reorient Albanian destinies eastward is bound to run counter to ingrained efforts of the Albanian people to free themselves from eastern rulers, formerly Turkish and more recently a Slavic tide that threatens to engulf them.

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About the only real strength of the pro-eastern group, aside from the ability of its present leaders, is the fact, already mentioned, that the western nations, specially Great Britain, seem to be supporting the conservative and reactionary groups. There may also be some fear of a strong, recreated Italy. The western nations, however, definitely have more sympathizers numerically than the pro-eastern and they are in a position to assist Albania in practical ways more than the other group. If the western powers, especially the United States and Great Britain, set themselves to the task of winning over the present regime, it is believed that it can be done. The first step in this direction is recognition and then sympathetic consideration of the needs of a new Albania which will take account of the common man more than has been done in the past.

A struggle is going on, however, in Albania as well as in all Balkan countries between these pro-western and pro-eastern groups, the end of which nobody can foretell with certainty. There is a clash of ideologies which is worldwide-Albania just happens to be one of the focal points where both sides meet on common political ground-tomorrow it may be military.

## **SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Having discussed the general attitude of Albanians toward foreign powers, there will be mentioned briefly below certain matters of interest and concern between Albania and specific countries.

### **1. The United States and Albania:**

The chief matters at issue in our relations with Albania are as follows:

- a. The recognition and resumption of diplomatic and consular intercourse, which, for the moment, is the most important matter at issue between the two countries.
- b. Resumption of the inculcation of our ideas and ways of life through a cultural relations program which would involve the distribution of suitable printed material, dissemination of radio broadcasts and the showing of suitable films throughout the country.
- c. Possible resumption of the support of the Near East Foundation in the Kavaje Agricultural School and the resumption of the Rockefeller Foundation in anti-malarial control.
- d. The lending of experts in agriculture and in the development of petroleum products which has become a state monopoly, as well as mining, road construction and bridge-building experts.
- e. The selection and sending to the United States of official, commercial and press groups to visit our cities and industrial establishments and institutions.
- f. The selection of suitable students to study in the United States particularly in the agricultural pursuits, mining (petroleum, chrome, coal, iron, asphalt) and education.
- g. Some financial support until Albania can become self-supporting. This assistance, however, should not be attempted by the United States alone and might best be handled either jointly with Great Britain, France, and Italy or it might be turned over to the United Nations Organization.

## 2. Great Britain and Albania:

The biggest problem for the British in Albania is to convince the Albanian officials and people that Great Britain really desires to see an independent Albania. Next in importance, would be an attempt to disabuse the Albanians by and large of the idea now prevalent that Great Britain supports the reactionary Albanian cliques and is therefore opposed to social and cultural innovation.

distribution of wealthier among all Albanian classes. The third British problem is to disabuse the minds of the Albanians of the idea that Great Britain supports the Greeks in their demands for territorial adjustments in favor of Greece. On the constructive side, Great Britain could join with the United States in various activities which were listed above in connection with United States-Albanian relations.

### **. Italy and Albania:**

As has already been indicated, Italy can also play an important part in the future of Albania and probably will become Albania's best customer and largest supplier of manufactured goods. Every encouragement should be given to Italy not only to strengthen the pro-western position but also to help Italy herself to get on her feet and assume a position in the modern world to which she is entitled. Italian engineers and advisers, like the French, would probably be better suited for service in Albania than the British and Americans. They know the country and the language of the people and are by nature tolerant.

There are certain special problems outstanding in Italian-Albanian relations which will need consideration through direct negotiations between Italy and the Albanian authorities, such as, the status of Italians still remaining in Albania, a more just settlement of the problems of Italian investments and property in Albania, and certain special problems due to the close proximity of Italy to Albania, such as the status of the island of Sazanit which was formerly Albanian and taken over by Italy as a naval base. None of these problems should, however, constitute any serious difficulty in future Italian-Albanian relations.

### **4. France and Albania:**

The French can play an important part in holding and developing Albania as an oasis of western ideas and democracy. As was indicated above, French influence has been strong in the past and that influence can be redeveloped for the good of all. France is not viewed with suspicion as is Great Britain and the French government should be encouraged to take a more active part in Albanian affairs possibly by sending teachers and advisers, as the Albanian government seems to

wish this. In fact, French advisers and engineers might be satisfactorily employed in Albania than American or British because the Frenchmen temperamentally are more inclined to be indulgent to the shortcomings of other people among whom they live.

### **. Yugoslavia and Albania:**

uture Yugoslav-Albanian relations are probably the most important group of relations confronting the Albanian people because of latent danger involved in them. As has already been indicated, due to Yugoslavia-Soviet influence, the present regime is dominated by a few strong personalities, strongly favoring Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, all out of proportion to the real desires and needs of the Albanian people, as Yugoslav national destiny, as interpreted not only by their present rulers but also by their former rulers, contemplates the eventual absorption or federation of Albania into Yugoslavia. There are already over 500,000 Albanians (conservative estimate) living under Yugoslav rule in the Kosova region.

The Yugoslavs desire to control or to absorb Albania in order to seek a port on the lower Adriatic, possibly at Durazzo, which port the Yugoslavs long desired to link up by rail to their railhead at Pec. This desire on the part of Yugoslavia seems to have the backing of the Soviet Union which, according to all outward signs, wishes to exercise a dominating influence in the Balkans and on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. It is probably this aspect which provokes the British attitude-the criticism of the British in this respect being that they are handling the matter in the wrong way.

Whatever group, therefore, may be in control in Albania, whether pro-eastern or pro-western, there is always going to be an Albanian-Yugoslav minority and boundary question as long as more than one half million Albanians are living just across the present boundaries in Yugoslav territory unless and until some adjustment of the frontier can be made in favor of Albania so that the majority of this large Albanian minority in Yugoslavia can be incorporated in their homeland.

Such a practical settlement is, however, most difficult because of the expansionist policy of Yugoslavia which seeks to control all of Albania, at least the

northern part, and by reason of the fact that at least part of the Kosova region which is inhabited by the Albanian minority is as historically revered by the Serbians as by the Albanians because of historic battles fought there against the Turks.

The Yugoslav policy in this matter bears watching always because both Yugoslavia and Greece are stronger powers than Albania and both are seeking Albanian territory. The result, therefore, may well be that some day the two powers will agree to divide the country between them, Yugoslavia taking the northern portion and Greece the southern.

There are even rumors in Albania that there is a certain segment of British opinion, particularly among the military, which favors such a division of Albania. The argument of this British group is that with Greece controlling the southern portion and, particularly the ports of Valona and Saranda, Great Britain would be in a better position, through its control of Greek activities, to dominate the outlet of the Adriatic and thus, through the maintenance of another Gibraltar at one of these ports, checkmate Yugoslavia's expansion through the Adriatic. The same British group believes that Great Britain will for some time to come dominate in Italy and direct Italian foreign policy and with such control on the western side of the Adriatic and control on the eastern side through Greek sovereignty over southern Albania, Great Britain would control over the outlet to that sea for checking Yugoslavia and possible Soviet expansion.

Strictly speaking, this sort of British policy is of no concern to the United States except that if pursued in and brought to its logical conclusion, it constitutes just another step toward the next war in which the United States will probably be drawn as it was in the last and present war.

To this extent it behooves the United States to try to bolster up an independent and free Albania as far as a better policy for all interests concerned instead of permitting the country to be absorbed by Yugoslavia and Greece.

Another impediment to real Albanian-Yugoslav relations is the fact that the products of each country are about the same and could never be developed

between them beneficial trade, or at least not nearly so mutually beneficial, as the trade that could be developed with the western powers, especially Italy supplying manufactured products and Albanian raw materials such as oil, chrome, coal, wool, olive oil and asphalt.

In brief, therefore, although there is at present considerable effort being made by Yugoslavia and the pro-Yugoslav elements in the FNC regime to develop closer relations between the two countries, such an alliance is an unnatural one and cannot be developed on stable lines. About the only alliance that could be reached which would be mutually beneficial to the two countries would be some sort of non-aggression pact signed generally by all Balkan powers in which they would agree to pool resources in the event that any of them were attacked by an outside aggressor. Had such a pact existed prior to 1939, it is highly unlikely that Italy would ever have attacked Albania and risked at the time a war with all Balkan states. Likewise, Germany would have hesitated longer before invading Rumania had she felt certain that all Balkan states would have united to repel her. This leads to the question of a Balkan Federation to be discussed below.

## **6. The Soviet Union and Albania**

There is really nothing logical or natural in any close relationship between Albania and the Soviet Union. Certainly the Soviet Union needs none of the products of Albania and is unable at the present time and possibly for some time to come to supply Albania with any of the manufactured articles which she needs to rehabilitate herself. The Albanian people have been mountaineers and individualists for centuries as evidenced by their history and there is certainly nothing in their makeup which naturally draws them to the Soviet communist ideology.

The only two ties that can be said to exist at the present time are as follows: Albanian land, mines and other sources of wealth hitherto have been controlled by the so-called Beys and industrial classes. According to Soviet ideas such control would be broken up and a strict state control substituted.

The Albanian peasants and white collar classes desire to see the strange hold of the industrialists and Beys broken but they have no desire to see strict Soviet control would be broken up and a strict state control substituted therefore as their objective is to participate in this wealth themselves. As this underprivileged class, however, is receiving no support from the British and Americans and in fact finds the British supporting the privileged classes, it naturally listens to the pronouncements of the pro-Soviet group which keeps telling the people over the radio and in the press that the Soviet and Soviet-dominated Yugoslavia and their friends in bringing about social reforms.

It is believed, therefore, that the Soviet influence in Albania is really non-existent except for the type that is drummed up by a small clique in the government controlled by very astute and Soviet-minded individuals. They may go a long way with their propaganda. If they are to be successful, they will have to inaugurate a stern and drastic regime or eliminate by executions and murders a large proportion of the intelligentsia of Albania. If the western powers do not watch this movement and handle the situation properly, especially the British, this is what could and might happen. The Soviet Union need not appear openly in the picture; it need only support Yugoslavia's policy.

Whether Russia really desires to extend its control, even remote control, over Albania as indicated above, is not definitely known. Everyone knows that it has been historic Russian policy, even from the days of the Czars, to extend its control over the Balkans. There is a reason to believe, therefore, that the Soviet Union would like to see Albania along with all Balkan powers under its domination even though the controls were exercised through governments established in the various countries friendly towards the Soviet Union and doing the Soviets' bidding. The question of desire is, however, one thing and the question of how far the Soviet Union, particularly at this time, is willing to risk antagonizing and provoking active opposition by the western powers is another. It might be that she prefers to go slow, hoping that gradually her control will be extended and consolidated while the Western Allies, tired and weary of war, go to sleep.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that, although Molotov in December 1942, as did Secretary Hull and Mr. Eden, came out for Albanian independence, since that date the Soviet Union has taken no action or spoken no word publicly that would indicate any sincerity in that statement. On the other hand she has not attempted to meddle openly in Albanian affairs as she has done at Belgrade, Sofia, and Bucharest.

### **. Greece and Albania:**

In some ways Albania and Greece should be the best of friends as they are the only people of the Balkans who do not like the Slavs, Bulgars and Macedonians.

However, instead of being friendly the Greeks are forever making claims to the southern portion of Albania, the maximum extent of which are absolutely preposterous.

Although the Greek government, whatever its character, except possibly the ELAS group which definitely has Soviet connections, goes merrily on demanding incorporation into Greece of a large portion of Albania in which there are no Greeks at all or in which the Greeks are definitely a small minority, taking over of this area would leave a truncated Albania without enough territory to support itself and drive that portion completely into the arms of the Yugoslavs and other Balkan people toward the Greeks. This would only mean struggles and bloodshed in which the powers would have to intervene as Greece, without outside help, could not withstand an Albanian-Yugoslav-Bulgar combination.

Between Greece and Albania there is little opportunity for extensive commercial intercourse because the products of the two countries are too much alike. Greece, of course, could use Albanian oil but she has no exports of the type desired by the Albanian with which to pay for such oil. The trade, therefore, would have to be three-cornered, balanced by Greek exports to some other country which would purchase Albanian products.



Next, therefore, to the problems between Albania and Yugoslavia, the Greek-Albanian problems are the most dangerous and most inflammable in Albanian foreign relations. If the Greek government cannot be persuaded to desist from its provocative demands broadcast almost daily over the radio and in the Greek press, some explosion is likely to happen.

### **. Turkey and Albania:**

At the present time, relations between Albania and Turkey are practically nonexistent but culturally there is much in common between the two countries and, as counter-balance to the intrigues between the pro-western and pro-eastern groups, might be well for Albania to attempt to renew its contacts with Turkey. As stated above, there are considerable numbers of Albanians in Istanbul, Cairo, and Alexandria which are centers of Muslim culture. This could easily be done by re-establishing closer contacts between Sunni and Muslim elements in Albania and their religious brothers in Turkey and Egypt. The 400 year rule by Turkey over Albania has left indelible impressions and the new Turkey might be able to assist Albanians without evoking political repercussions.

## **9. Relations with Other Countries:**

### **ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

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economic dependence upon the United States, looks to such men as Bishop Fan Noli, head of the Albanian Orthodox Church in America, and Mr. K. Cekrazi, the first Albanian Commissioner to the United States, for cultural inspiration.

Another important source of this pro-American feeling is the result of the activities of the Albanian Vocational School which was maintained jointly for twelve years in Albania by the American Junior Red Cross and the Albanian government under the direction of Mr. Harry T. Fultz. More than 5,000 Albanian attended that school during its lifetime and almost one thousand graduated. Not only in southern Albania but everywhere one goes, one is bound to meet some Albanian who speaks some English and who will speak of Mr. Fultz in glowing terms. In fact, one hears even in official circles including the Albanian groups which are not pro-American, the statement that it was Mr. Fultz who taught the Albanians the arts and crafts and how to work. This group has a very high opinion of the United States and entertains nothing but the friendliest of feelings toward Americans.

Still another smaller pro-American group consists of graduates of the Agricultural School operated and maintained for some years at Kavaja by the Near East Foundation and, finally, there is a still smaller group of officials or ex-officials who worked with the Rockefeller Foundation in public health and malarial control activities.

In addition, there is a general background of pro-American feeling among all Albanians because of kind remembrances of assistance rendered by the United States after the last war in bringing about the creation of an independent Albanian state. Albanians of all ranks and classes have a feeling that without the friendly and persistent support of President Wilson, there never would have been an independent Albania.

There is, therefore, unquestionably a larger percentage of pro-American people in Albania than in any other Balkan country. There may be more Greeks in Greece and even Yugoslavs in Yugoslavia with pro-American leanings for reasons similar to those that have existed in Albania but the proportion of these groups in those countries to the total population smaller than in Albania. This pro-American

feeling has, however, been largely a one-way traffic since the American people have never made any attempt to exploit this situation either for business or for cultural reasons.

**. Pro-British Group:** The second most important pro-western group is pro-British, but in the sense that this group is politically strong rather than numerically. This group consists chiefly of wealthy Bey and merchant families who, since the creation of an independent Albania, have seemed to look to Great Britain for support in their conservative and even reactionary control over every phase of Albanian activity.

The fact that all the British have given moral support to this group in the past and still continue to do so places the British at a decided disadvantage at the present time in as much as the present regime in control is communistic and socialistic and views with suspicion British efforts to bolster up the wealthy land-owning and industrial classes.

There is also a strong feeling in Albania, even down to the common people, that Great Britain is far more interested in strengthening Greece than Albania and that, therefore, Great Britain supports Greek claims to Northern Epirus. Reuter's press reports and BBC broadcasts add color to this suspicion.

As a result, British influence for any constructive purposes in Albania is not strong at the present time. This British attitude, moreover, furnishes political capital to the pro-eastern group in its effort to reorient Albania's political outlook eastward toward Yugoslavia and Russia. The argument is that Great Britain is trying to restore the old conservative and reactionary ruling Fascists, that France is too weak to give any help and the United States too far away to care.

**c. Pro-Italian Group:** The third most important pro-western group is the Italian. While it may be thought that the Italian occupation antagonized all Albanians, this is by no means the truth. The pro-western group in looking westward naturally finds Italy as its nearest neighbor. The basis of Albania's ability to finance its imports and find the first customer just across the Adriatic in Italy and in return Italy provides a source of needed manufactured articles.

It naturally follows that there is a large commercial group interested in restoring friendly relations with the Italians. This natural commercial relationship is further enhanced by the fact that thousands of Albanians of all walks of life now, as a result of the Italian occupation, speak Italian. They can read Italian newspapers and understand the Italian radio broadcasts. It is inevitable, therefore, that if the pro-western group has anything to say in the future destiny of Albania there will ultimately come about a closer rapprochement with Italy both politically and commercially. There has been much intermarriage between Italians and Albanians and the Roman Catholic group about 10% of the population is strongly pro-Italian. In addition, as indicated above, there are fairly large Albanian colonies in Calabria and Sicily.

If the Italians forget their imperialistic designs and play their cards well, they can easily secure an economic advantage in Albania without anybody complaining except the pro-eastern group trying to orient the future destiny of the country with Yugoslavia and Soviet Russia.

**d. Pro-French Group:** The fourth pro-western group is probably the pro-French. The French at one time had considerable influence in Albania, especially during the latter part of the Turkish rule. French has been taught in Albanian schools and most Albanian officials have visited France and drawn deeply upon French culture for inspiration. For the moment, due to French reverses, this pro-French group is not active although recently steps have been taken to resume closer relations with France. The French government is trying to strengthen its Mission here, at present purely military, and the Albanian authorities have asked France to send some French teachers for Albanian schools.

## 2. Pro-Eastern Group

There has always been a pro-eastern group in Albania, small numerically it is true, but sometimes strong politically and influential as at the present time. It is believed, as an attempt will be made below to show, that for deep-rooted reasons this group has had and will continue to have difficulty putting across a pro-eastern policy.

**a. Pro-Yugoslavia Group:** As Yugoslavia is Albania's nearest and biggest neighbor, it is natural that there should be close ties between the two countries. King Zog himself at one time held to such a view and was brought back to the throne in 1924 with Yugoslav help. He later turned his eyes toward Italy. At the present time, the regime in control is collaborating closely with the Tito government in Yugoslavia and the first and only government to date to recognize Albania is Yugoslavia. In addition an agreement, exact terms unknown, has been signed with respect to commercial relations under which Albania is supplying petroleum products, wool and hides to Yugoslavia and receiving foodstuffs in return.

As will be shown below, however, this pro-Albanian rapprochement is believed to be engineered by the present leaders and has no real, hearty support among the people unless Yugoslavia by some bold beau geste should hand over the Kosovo area to Albania.

**b. Pro-Soviet Group:** The same leaders who are trying to draw Albania and Yugoslavia closer together are also attempting to draw Albania closer to the Soviet Union to which Yugoslavia is also closely bound at present. This movement has the backing of the communist members of the regime such as Professor Malëshova, Dr. dischnica, Maj. Gen. Spahiu, Lt. Col. Gen. Xoxe and probably Col. Gen. Hoxha himself. The ideology of the present regime is patterned closely after the Soviet model which believes in absolute control by one party, the liquidation of opposition and the training of the people along chosen lines which they must follow. Some of this ideology fits in with Albanian customs and habits and some does not, how far these pro-Soviet leaders can carry out their program remains to be seen but it seems certain they intend to succeed even possibly at the price of a blood bath. That part of the program which proclaims the betterment of the common people finds popular support and, as the British and possibly even the American are believed to be in sympathy with the reactionaries, lends much strength to the leaders desiring to follow a pro-Soviet and pro-eastern policy.

**c. Pro-Turkish Group:** As Turkey ruled over Albania for nearly four hundred years and as 70% of the people are Muslims of the Sunni and Bektashi sects, it is natural that there should still exist today certain strong cultural ties with Turkey and with other

Near eastern countries, such as Egypt. Fairly large colonies of Albanians, many political exiles, are living in Istanbul, Cairo, and Alexandria. Although this group, for the time being, is politically inactive, especially as most of its adherents come from the former Bey and wealthy classes who are not strong in the present regime, it is, however, potentially strong and may later become an important factor in Albania's political life.

### **he West versus the East**

As has already been indicated above, there is a struggle going on in Albania between the pro-western and pro-eastern groups. It is believed beyond much doubt that the pro-western is numerically and strategically stronger than the pro-eastern but it is equally true that the pro-eastern leaders are better trained and more astute and they are actually in power. This pro-eastern group may, however, have much difficulty in reorienting Albanian policy toward the east.

The first difficulty which must be overcome is the fact that the Albanian people are not pro-eastern minded. The Albanians are a small minority in the Balkans who are not Slavs and take pleasure in declaring the fact; they are not Bulgars; they are not Macedonians and they are not Greeks.

As a people, they naturally look with alarm and fear upon attempts to federate them with their Balkan neighbors because they know that, as a minority, they will inevitably become submerged politically and culturally in the mass of alien elements, especially the Slavs who have for centuries tried to engulf them.

Also, the pro-eastern group cannot get around the fact that from five hundred to seven hundred thousand Albanians are now living in Yugoslavia, largely in the Kosovo area, and their lot is not too happy. The Albanians, see in the treatment of their fellow countrymen under Yugoslav sovereignty a situation which they do not want to happen to them. This area, moreover, constitutes an Albanian Irredentia. The importance of this situation can be better visualized when one learns that there are almost as many Albanians in Yugoslavia as there are in Albania itself and efforts

of Albania to have the areas in Yugoslavia where Albanians predominate added to Albania have been frustrated.

Still another reason why Albanians are not pro-eastern minded is the strong pro-western influence which has been described in the preceding paragraphs. In other words, any effort to reorient Albanian destinies eastward is bound to run counter to ingrained efforts of the Albanian people to free themselves from eastern rulers, formerly Turkish and more recently a Slavic tide that threatens to engulf them.

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About the only real strength of the pro-eastern group, aside from the ability of its present leaders, is the fact, already mentioned, that the western nations, especially Great Britain, seem to be supporting the conservative and reactionary groups. There may also be some fear of a strong, recreated Italy. The western nations, however, definitely have more sympathizers numerically than the pro-eastern and they are in a position to assist Albania in practical ways more than the other group. If the western powers, especially the United States and Great Britain, set themselves to the task of winning over the present regime, it is believed that it can be done. The first step in this direction is recognition and then sympathetic



consideration of the needs of a new Albania which will take account of the common man more than has been done in the past.

A struggle is going on, however, in Albania as well as in all Balkan countries between these pro-western and pro-eastern groups, the end of which nobody can predict with certainty. There is a clash of ideologies which is worldwide-Albania just happens to be one of the focal points where both sides meet on common political ground-tomorrow it may be military.

## **PECIFIC INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Having discussed the general attitude of Albanians toward foreign powers, there will be mentioned briefly below certain matters of interest and concern between Albania and specific countries.

### **1. The United States and Albania:**

The chief matters at issue in our relations with Albania are as follows:

- a. The recognition and resumption of diplomatic and consular intercourse, which, for the moment, is the most important matter at issue between the two countries.
- b. Resumption of the inculcation of our ideas and ways of life through a cultural relations program which would involve the distribution of suitable printed material, dissemination of radio broadcasts and the showing of suitable films throughout the country.
- c. Possible resumption of the support of the Near East Foundation in the Kavaje Agricultural School and the resumption of the Rockefeller Foundation in anti-malarial control.
- d. The lending of experts in agriculture and in the development of petroleum products which has become a state monopoly, as well as mining, road construction and bridge-building experts.

- e. The selection and sending to the United States of official, commercial and press groups to visit our cities and industrial establishments and institutions.
- f. The selection of suitable students to study in the United States particularly in the agricultural pursuits, mining (petroleum, chrome, coal, iron, asphalt) and education.
- . Some financial support until Albania can become self-supporting. This assistance, however, should not be attempted by the United States alone and might best be handled either jointly with Great Britain, France, and Italy or it might be turned over to the United Nations Organization.

### **. Great Britain and Albania:**

The biggest problem for the British in Albania is to convince the Albanian officials and people that Great Britain really desires to see an independent Albania. Next in importance, would be an attempt to disabuse the Albanians by and large of the idea now prevalent that Great Britain supports the reactionary Albanian cliques and is therefore opposed to social and cultural innovations looking toward the better distribution of wealthier among all Albanian classes. The third British problem is to disabuse the minds of the Albanians of the idea that Great Britain supports the Greeks in their demands for territorial adjustments in favor of Greece. On the constructive side, Great Britain could join with the United States in various activities which were listed above in connection with United States-Albanian relations.

### **3. Italy and Albania:**

As has already been indicated, Italy can also play an important part in the future of Albania and probably will become Albania's best customer and largest supplier of manufactured goods. Every encouragement should be given to Italy not only to strengthen the pro-western position but also to help Italy herself to get on her feet and assume a position in the modern world to which she is entitled. Italian engineers and advisers, like the French, would probably be better suited for service in Albania than the British and Americans. They know the country and the language of the people and are by nature tolerant.

There are certain special problems outstanding in Italian-Albanian relations which will need consideration through direct negotiations between Italy and the Albanian authorities, such as, the status of Italians still remaining in Albania, a more just settlement of the problems of Italian investments and property in Albania, and certain special problems due to the close proximity of Italy to Albania, such as the status of the island of Sazanit which was formerly Albanian and taken over by Italy as a naval base. None of these problems should, however, constitute any serious difficulty in future Italian-Albanian relations.

#### **4. France and Albania:**

The French can play an important part in holding and developing Albania as an oasis of western ideas and democracy. As was indicated above, French influence has been strong in the past and that influence can be redeveloped for the good of all. France is not viewed with suspicion as is Great Britain and the French government should be encouraged to take a more active part in Albanian affairs possibly by sending teachers and advisers, as the Albanian government seems to wish this. In fact, French advisers and engineers might be satisfactorily employed in Albania than American or British because the Frenchmen temperamentally are more inclined to be indulgent to the shortcomings of other people among whom they live.

#### **5. Yugoslavia and Albania:**

Future Yugoslav-Albanian relations are probably the most important group of relations confronting the Albanian people because of latent danger involved in them. As has already been indicated, due to Yugoslavia-Soviet influence, the present regime is dominated by a few strong personalities, strongly favoring Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, all out of proportion to the real desires and needs of the Albanian people, as Yugoslav national destiny, as interpreted not only by their present rulers but also by their former rulers, contemplates the eventual absorption or federation of Albania into Yugoslavia. There are already over 500,000 Albanians (conservative estimate) living under Yugoslav rule in the Kosova region.

The Yugoslavs desire to control or to absorb Albania in order to seek a port on the lower Adriatic, possibly at Durazzo, which port the Yugoslavs long desired to link up by rail to their railhead at Pec. This desire on the part of Yugoslavia seems to have the backing of the Soviet Union which, according to all outward signs, wishes to exercise a dominating influence in the Balkans and on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. It is probably this aspect which provokes the British attitude-the criticism of the British in this respect being that they are handling the matter in the wrong way.

Whatever group, therefore, may be in control in Albania, whether pro-eastern or pro-western, there is always going to be an Albanian-Yugoslav minority and boundary question as long as more than one half million Albanians are living just across the present boundaries in Yugoslav territory unless and until some adjustment of the frontier can be made in favor of Albania so that the majority of this large Albanian minority in Yugoslavia can be incorporated in their homeland.

Such a practical settlement is, however, most difficult because of the expansionist policy of Yugoslavia which seeks to control all of Albania, at least the northern part, and by reason of the fact that at least part of the Kosova region which is inhabited by the Albanian minority is as historically revered by the Serbians as by the Albanians because of historic battles fought there against the Turks.

The Yugoslav policy in this matter bears watching always because both Yugoslavia and Greece are stronger powers than Albania and both are seeking Albanian territory. The result, therefore, may well be that some day the two powers will agree to divide the country between them, Yugoslavia taking the northern portion and Greece the southern.

There are even rumors in Albania that there is a certain segment of British opinion, particularly among the military, which favors such a division of Albania. The argument of this British group is that with Greece controlling the southern portion and, particularly the ports of Valona and Saranda, Great Britain would be in a better position, through its control of Greek activities, to dominate the outlet of the Adriatic and thus, through the maintenance of another Gibraltar at one of these ports, checkmate Yugoslavia's expansion through the Adriatic. The same British group

believes that Great Britain will for some time to come dominate in Italy and direct Italian foreign policy and with such control on the western side of the Adriatic and control on the eastern side through Greek sovereignty over southern Albania, Great Britain would control over the outlet to that sea for checking Yugoslavia and possible soviet expansion.

Strictly speaking, this sort of British policy is of no concern to the United States except that if pursued in and brought to its logical conclusion, it constitutes just another step toward the next war in which the United States will probably be drawn as it was in the last and present war.

To this extent it behooves the United States to try to bolster up an independent and free Albania as far as a better policy for all interests concerned instead of permitting the country to be absorbed by Yugoslavia and Greece.

Another impediment to real Albanian-Yugoslav relations is the fact that the products of each country are about the same and could never be developed between them beneficial trade, or at least not nearly so mutually beneficial, as the trade that could be developed with the western powers, especially Italy supplying manufactured products and Albanian raw materials such as oil, chrome, coal, wool, olive oil and asphalt.

In brief, therefore, although there is at present considerable effort being made by Yugoslavia and the pro-Yugoslav elements in the FNC regime to develop closer relations between the two countries, such an alliance is an unnatural one and cannot be developed on stable lines. About the only alliance that could be reached which would be mutually beneficial to the two countries would be some sort of non-aggression pact signed generally by all Balkan powers in which they would agree to pool resources in the event that any of them were attacked by an outside aggressor. Had such a pact existed prior to 1939, it is highly unlikely that Italy would ever have attacked Albania and risked at the time a war with all Balkan states. Likewise, Germany would have hesitated longer before invading Rumania had she felt certain that all Balkan states would have united to repel her. This leads to the question of a Balkan Federation to be discussed below.

## 6. The Soviet Union and Albania

There is really nothing logical or natural in any close relationship between Albania and the Soviet Union. Certainly the Soviet Union needs none of the products of Albania and is unable at the present time and possibly for some time to come to supply Albania with any of the manufactured articles which she needs to rehabilitate herself. The Albanian people have been mountaineers and individualists for centuries as evidenced by their history and there is certainly nothing in their makeup which naturally draws them to the Soviet communist ideology.

The only two ties that can be said to exist at the present time are as follows: Albanian land, mines and other sources of wealth hitherto have been controlled by the so-called Beys and industrial classes. According to Soviet ideas such control would be broken up and a strict state control substituted.

The Albanian peasants and white collar classes desire to see the stranglehold of the industrialists and Beys broken but they have no desire to see strict Soviet control would be broken up and a strict state control substituted therefore as their objective is to participate in this wealth themselves. As this underprivileged class, however, is receiving no support from the British and Americans and in fact finds the British supporting the privileged classes, it naturally listens to the pronouncements of the pro-Soviet group which keeps telling the people over the radio and in the press that the Soviet and Soviet-dominated Yugoslavia and their friends in bringing about social reforms.

It is believed, therefore, that the Soviet influence in Albania is really non-existent except for the type that is drummed up by a small clique in the government controlled by very astute and Soviet-minded individuals. They may go a long way with their propaganda. If they are to be successful, they will have to inaugurate a stern and drastic regime or eliminate by executions and murders a large proportion of the intelligentsia of Albania. If the western powers do not watch this movement and handle the situation properly, especially the British, this is what could and might happen. The Soviet Union need not appear openly in the picture; it need only support Yugoslavia's policy.

Whether Russia really desires to extend its control, even remote control, over Albania as indicated above, is not definitely known. Everyone knows that it has been historic Russian policy, even from the days of the Czars, to extend its control over the Balkans. There is a reason to believe, therefore, that the Soviet Union would like to see Albania along with all Balkan powers under its domination even though the controls were exercised through governments established in the various countries friendly towards the Soviet Union and doing the Soviets' bidding. The question of desire is, however, one thing and the question of how far the Soviet Union, particularly at this time, is willing to risk antagonizing and provoking active opposition by the western powers is another. It might be that she prefers to go slow, hoping that gradually her control will be extended and consolidated while the Western Allies, tired and weary of war, go to sleep.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that, although Molotov in December 1942, as did Secretary Hull and Mr. Eden, came out for Albanian independence, since that date the Soviet Union has taken no action or spoken no word publicly that would indicate any sincerity in that statement. On the other hand she has not attempted to meddle openly in Albanian affairs as she has done at Belgrade, Sofia, and Bucharest.

## **7. Greece and Albania:**

In some ways Albania and Greece should be the best of friends as they are the two people of the Balkans who do not like the Slavs, Bulgars and Macedonians.

However, instead of being friendly the Greeks are forever making claims to the southern portion of Albania, the maximum extent of which are absolutely preposterous.

Although the Greek government, whatever its character, except possibly the ELAS group which definitely has Soviet connections, goes merrily on demanding incorporation into Greece of a large portion of Albania in which there are no Greeks at all or in which the Greeks are definitely a small minority, taking over of this area would leave a truncated Albania without enough territory to support itself and drive

that portion completely into the arms of the Yugoslavs and other Balkan people toward the Greeks. This would only mean struggles and bloodshed in which the powers would have to intervene as Greece, without outside help, could not withstand an Albanian-Yugoslav-Bulgar combination.

Between Greece and Albania there is little opportunity for extensive commercial intercourse because the products of the two countries are too much like. Greece, of course, could use Albanian oil but she has no exports of the type desired by the Albanian with which to pay for such oil. The trade, therefore, would have to be three-cornered, balanced by Greek exports to some other country which would purchase Albanian products.

Next, therefore, to the problems between Albania and Yugoslavia, the Greek-Albanian problems are the most dangerous and most inflammable in Albanian foreign relations. If the Greek government cannot be persuaded to desist from its provocative demands broadcast almost daily over the radio and in the Greek press, some explosion is likely to happen.

## **8. Turkey and Albania:**

At the present time, relations between Albania and Turkey are practically non-existent but culturally there is much in common between the two countries and, as a counter-balance to the intrigues between the pro-western and pro-eastern groups, it might be well for Albania to attempt to renew its contacts with Turkey. As stated above, there are considerable numbers of Albanians in Istanbul, Cairo, and Alexandria which are centers of Muslim culture. This could easily be done by re-establishing closer contacts between Sunni and Muslim elements in Albania and their religious brothers in Turkey and Egypt. The 400 year rule by Turkey over Albania has left indelible impressions and the new Turkey might be able to assist Albanians without evoking political repercussions.

## **9. Relations with Other Countries:**



Albania has no particular relations with any other foreign countries. The Czechoslovak merchants before the war had a considerable interest in the retail trade of the country and it is possible that there may be a renewal of that interest especially as the Czech government has already sent a representative here who spent a few weeks looking over the ground and returned to Prague. It is rumored that Czechoslovakia will soon recognize Albania and that this representative, Major Dalibor Koreja, will return here as the Czech Minister. There is also a certain amount of cultural, sentimental and commercial connection with German-speaking Europe, particularly Austria, as a number of Albanian doctors and engineers have studied in Austria and a few in Germany. There was, however, little commercial connection between the two countries prior to the German period of occupation when considerable German goods were sent in by the German military to pay for their military expenditures. In view of the prostrate condition of Germany and Austria, it is highly unlikely that there will be any renewal at an early date of relations with those countries.

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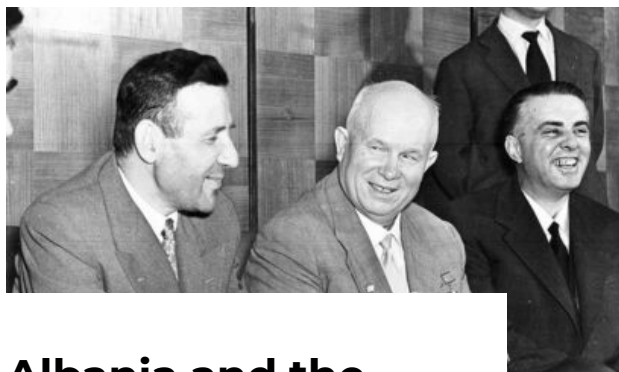
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