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ENVER HOCHEA: ALBANIA'S ANTI-TITOIST

by Andrew Keller

(Writer on political, cultural and social aspects of Communism)

SUMMARY: Attached is one of a series of five profiles of key Communist personalities. Additional profiles, in groups of five, will be pouched to posts in the next several months.

With photo: 56-18384

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### ENVER HOXHA: ALBANIA'S ANTI-TITOIST

by Andrew Keller  
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Albanian Communist Party chief Enver Hoxha is one of the few leading figures in the Soviet satellite countries who is not Moscow trained. This fact has presented no special problems to the Kremlin. For the past twenty-five years, Hoxha has been a devoted adherent of Moscow's policies -- with one important exception.

The point on which Hoxha and his followers differ from their Soviet colleagues is on the matter of the USSR's desire for rapprochement with Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito. In 1948, when the Cominform (the now-defunct Communist information bureau) attacked Tito's national brand of communism, Hoxha was one of the first to support the denunciation.

Overnight Tito became, in Hoxha's words, "the greatest mortal enemy of the Albanian people." A number of prominent Party members, among them Vice Premier and Minister of the Interior Koci Xoxe, were eliminated on charges of being Titoists. Hoxha has admitted that some 12,000 Albanian Party members were expelled or had "deserted" to Belgrade because of the schism.

Still hostile to Tito, Hoxha today is constrained to follow Moscow's lead and strive for friendly relations with Yugoslavia. He is reportedly very distressed over the matter.

Hoxha has also been seriously embarrassed by another, more recent Soviet about-face. This is the demotion of Soviet Marshal Georgi Zhukov. When the Marshal visited Albania in October, 1957, Hoxha, elated at the visit of such an important Soviet personality, heaped praises of praise on him. On October 27, the day after Zhukov was ousted from membership in the Soviet Communist Party Presidium, Albanian papers were still carrying Hoxha's eulogies of the Marshal. The Kremlin apparently hadn't bothered to let Hoxha know of Zhukov's impending dismissal.

Enver Hoxha was born in 1908 in Gjinokaster, Albania, reportedly into a family of small landowners. Another report has it that his family was desperately poor and that Hoxha knew misery and hunger as a child. As with the lives of many Communists, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. However, it would seem that Hoxha as a youth had some kind of financial support for he managed to attend the National Lycee at Korca before going on to the University of Montpellier in France.

Hoxha left the University at the end of his first year, apparently because of poor grades. But he did manage to acquire a grounding in French which led to a post as clerk in the Albanian Consulate-General in Brussels. It was two years before the Albanian Government learned that Hoxha was a frequent contributor to the French Communist Party organ L'Humanité of articles highly critical of his government. His appointment was, of course, then cancelled but oddly enough no punitive action was taken against him. Returning to Albania he continued his political agitation but it was not until 1939 that he

ENVER HOXHA: ALBANIA'S ANTI-TITOIST

- 3 -

was arrested on charges of conspiring to overthrow the government. His prison term was brief and after teaching school at Korçe for a while he went to Tirana, the capital, where he opened a tobacco shop which became a meeting-place for Communists.

Physically Hoxha is a tall man whose rather handsome features were, until recently, somewhat marred by his excess weight. Of late, however, Hoxha has lost considerable poundage, reportedly due to illness.

He has considerable personal charm and is an excellent orator, with a rather appealing platform manner. He also has a marked capacity for leadership.

Hoxha founded the Albanian Communist Party in 1941, and he immediately began making positive plans for Communist take-over of the country. Indeed, so thorough was Hoxha that the Communist coup in Albania has frequently been cited as possibly an even more classic example of subversion than the coup d'état in Czechoslovakia.

During a period when his countrymen were attempting to repel first the Italian and then the Nazi invaders, Hoxha set as his task the maneuvering of non-Communist and anti-Communist factions in Albania into fighting for the Communist cause under the guise of nationalism. He formed the National Liberation Front as a rallying point for Albanians determined to liberate their country.

Hoxha's National Liberation Front had a formidable rival in the National Front, a genuinely nationalistic organization with members recruited from all ranks except the Communists.

ENVER HOXHA: ALBANIA'S ANTI-TITOIST

- 4 -

Indeed, Hoxha's organization was suspect from the first, but in various resolutions and proclamations its Communist affiliations were vigorously denied. For example, a proclamation issued on July 10, 1943, stated: "All Albanians must understand and brand as foreign propaganda the anti-national propaganda campaign which alleges the movement of National Liberation is a Communist movement."

Thus while in public statements the NLF was represented as non-Communist, Hoxha and his colleagues were issuing secret orders to Party cells to seize control of the National Front in order to destroy it or use it or use it for their own ends at the proper time.

In September, 1943, the Albanian Communist Party Central Committee issued the following secret directive to Party members: "[You are] with relentless work to discredit the National Front before the people, to detach the people from it and to unite them with us... to present it as striving for division and as an instigator of fratricidal fighting ... to make it so look that the whole people will revolt because of it. In this way the historical responsibility for the disunity of the Albanian people and for the armed conflict will fall on the National Front."

One device employed by Hoxha to discredit the National Front was to attribute to it the ruin of every village burned by the Nazis. Another was to portray National Front members as Fascists in the pay of Italy. The National Front was unable to withstand Hoxha's all-out attack and, with its disintegration, Hoxha turned his attention to the army.

Subversion of the army was directed through the Shpati circulars (so-called because the signature Shpati, one of Hoxha's pseudonyms

was affixed to them). The Shpati circular of November 3, 1943, for instance, had this to say: "Bear in mind that the army must be well under the control of the Party. Recently, we have noticed in many battalions a marked lack of Party influence. This must be remedied immediately and emphasis must be laid on complete control of all Party organizations. Party cells must be formed within the battalions, and through conferences and various courses the soldiers must be kept under the guidance of Party members."

In October, 1944, after the withdrawal of the Nazi forces from Albania, Hoxha's National Liberation Front, confident of its ability to seize and hold power, declared itself the Democratic Government of Albania. Hoxha was named Premier, a post he has since relinquished to Mehmet Shehu, an ardent Party member.

Communist control of Albania has meant that over the years the Albanian people have been persuaded to believe that the whole of the free world has sinister designs on their little country.

It has been said of Albania that its center of gravity is Moscow. Albanian youth looks to Moscow for cultural and ideological guidance. Despite the downgrading he has undergone in his own country and elsewhere, the late Soviet dictator Stalin is still a hero to Albanians. Portraits and statues of him are everywhere. They are outnumbered only by those of Hoxha.

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ENVER HOXHA: ALBANIA'S ANTI-TITOIST

CAPTION

A close-up of Enver Hoxha, Communist Party chief of Albania.  
Hoxha, an avowed enemy of Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito, is troubled by  
Moscow's insistence that he strive for friendly relations with Yugoslavia.

(56-18384)

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