

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY	
CLASSIFICATION	
Cancelled	
Changed to	<i>Secret</i>
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Date	<i>30 APR 1962</i>

APR 30 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/P
 VIA: C/OP
 SUBJECT: Tirana Trials of CIA Agents

REFERENCE: Top Secret Memorandum from C/SE to DD/P dated 13 November 1953
 Top Secret DD/P Log Item dated 4 January 1954

1. The trial of 8 CIA Albanian agents whose capture and impending trial were originally announced by Radio Tirana on 29 December 1953 commenced on 5 April 1954. The trial lasted approximately 5 days and ended with the conviction of all defendants. The following members of Apple Team were sentenced to death by shooting: Zanel Shani, Halil Branitza (both recruited by former King Zog personally), Ahmet Kabashi, Namu Sula, Gani Malushi and Rapush Agolli (a principal agent recruited by Apple Team inside Albania). Hamit Matiani, a guide and adviser recruited by CIA, was sentenced to death by hanging and Ibrahim Lamchi, a minor contact of Apple Team, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The sentences were carried out approximately 15 April 1954.

2. Three other members of the Apple Team are claimed by the opposition to have been killed immediately upon landing. Two members of the team thus remain unaccounted for, e.g. Tahir Frenchi, the original radio operator, and Pal Nikolla, leader of one of the sub-teams. A very slight possibility remains that these two men are still at large. More likely, however, they were killed in the course of their interrogations or else sentenced administratively for refusing to co-operate at the trials.

3. The trials in effect were aimed at the United States in a propaganda attempt to show that the United States was the main organizer of all clandestine activities against the Communist Government in Albania. In view of this, only brief mention was made of the operational aspects of the agents' capture and subsequent control; for example we are still without confirmed information as to the date when the team came under opposition control.

4. The collaboration between the United States and former King Zog in the recruitment of agents and mounting of agent teams into Albania was disclosed. In addition the close working relationship between Greece and the United States was elaborated upon with special emphasis on the alleged subordinate position held by Greece and other Western Nations to the United States, and the relative ease with which undocumented American agents are able to cross borders and operate in these countries.

5. Some information 93000

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5. Some information concerning the methods of training and the physical location of holding areas for agents in Greece was made public. However, most of the compromised locations and methods of team movements have already been changed. The remaining changes required are in the process of being made. In addition, all of Apple Team's supplies and equipment (weapons, clothing, poisons, radio equipment, and gold) were captured and exhibited in the court room during the trial. With regard to CIA staff personnel, no true names were disclosed during the trial except that of [] a contract agent who left the [] in the Fall of 1951. Other CIA personnel involved used only first-name pseudonyms in all contacts with agents.

6. With a view to counteracting (at least partially) the internal propaganda effect of the trial, a leaflet was dropped in Tirana shortly after the sentences were executed, holding up the condemned agents as martyrs to the cause of Albanian liberation. A second leaflet effort has been proposed to the field and we are awaiting field comments on this proposal.

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[] C/SE []

CC: Chief of Operations