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ALBANIA SEEKS TO RESUME TRADE WITH ITALY

Rome -- The visit of an Albanian governmental delegation, consisting of two cabinet ministers and a police colonel, which recently spent several days in Rome, has aroused speculation in political circles. According to reliable sources, the official reason for the visit was an attempt on the part of Albania to resume trade, with Italy as the first Western European country.

The delegation offered the Italian government 150,000 tons of Albanian crude oil, simultaneously making it understood that Albania was prepared to enter into a general trade agreement with Italy. The Italian government is supposed to have been willing on the condition that Albania return or pay compensation for the Italian property in Albania seized by the Hoxha regime. The offer of petroleum indicates that the transport of crude oil extracted in Albania to the refineries in Rumania or the Caucasus is too costly for the Russians. Albania has no refineries.

The presence in the delegation of Police Colonel Kambas, who obviously had nothing to do with the trade negotiations, served a double purpose. First of all, he had to keep a close watch on the two other members of the delegation to prevent any possible defection on their part. Such a watch is perfectly natural in view of the suspicion now pervading even the highest Albanian governmental and Party circles. Secondly, Kambas was commissioned by Hoxha to investigate the crisis in the Albanian mission in Rome involving the flight of the "press attache," Josef Nesti. Nesti actually was one of the chiefs of the espionage and information service established by Albania in Italy and the bordering countries. His primary function was to check on the Albanian emigrants and to seize and occasionally to liquidate individuals considered particularly dangerous.

In recent months, murder and attempted murder were committed against two Albanian emigrants residing in Rome. The Albanian refugee Velatzi, who had a great deal of money and who was believed to be financing a large part of the Albanian emigration, was shot at in front of his house on the Via Eleonore Duse from a passing automobile. Velatzi escaped by throwing himself to the ground. Somewhat later, the corpse of the refugee Albania professor, Kosmo Sotir, was found in the Tiber. He had been shot and strangled.

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The Italian police have failed in both cases to apprehend the assailants. When Nesti, the press attache at the Albanian mission in Rome, was recalled to Tirana a short time thereafter, the rumor spread through well-informed circles that the recall was in connection with both assaults. In any event, Nesti decided not to return to Tirana, but to flee.

Investigation of these affairs would provide a satisfactory explanation for the presence in Rome of the Albanian police colonel.

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