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Enver Hoxha's

75th. Birthday

In the name of the Albanian Society, the Committee sent to Enver Hoxha a telegram of greetings on the occasion of his 75th. birthday on October 16th., 1983.

The Society has received the following telegram in reply:

I WHOLEHEARTEDLY THANK YOU FOR THE WARM GREETINGS YOU SENT ME FOR THE 75th. ANNIVERSARY OF MY BIRTHDAY.

ON THIS OCCASION I EXPRESS TO YOU MY BEST WISHES FOR FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE STRENGTHENING OF THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE ALBANIAN AND BRITISH PEOPLES.

ENVER HOXHA
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY OF LABOUR
OF ALBANIA

The Current Situation in Kosova

by Norberto Steinmayr



"Gjakova" (Kosova), drawing by Kujtim Buza

The inclusion of about two million Albanians in the south of Yugoslavia has its origins in the arbitrary decision taken at the Ambassadors' Conference in London at the beginning of the century and in the policy pursued by the Yugoslav leadership during and after the Second World War.

As is known, in 1913 the six Great Powers of Europe divided the territory of the Albanian nation into two halves. One part constituted the new Albanian state, while the other half of the Albanian people and territory - including Kosova, which had been one of the most active centres of the Albanian national movement - passed under the rule of Montenegro and Serbia, later part of Yugo-

slavia (that is, the state of the 'South Slavs'). Under the inter-war royalist government, the Albanians in Yugoslavia were dominated by terror and discrimination. It is sufficient to point out that between 1913 and 1927 more than 200,000 Albanians were killed in Yugoslavia and that between 1913 and 1941 about half a million ethnic Albanians were forced to emigrate from Yugoslavia (380,000 of them settling in Turkey). Moreover, between 1919 and 1941 more than 58,000 Serbian and Montenegrin colonists settled in Kosova, creating more than 370 villages of colonists, and, as a result, 381,245 hectares of land were seized from the Albanians between 1920 and 1940.

In the early forties, during the anti-fascist national liberation struggle, the main and obvious aspirations of the Albanian partisans in Yugoslavia (50,000 of whom fought in the Yugoslav Liberation Army) were to put an end to the unjust discrimination of the past and to secure a correct solution of their national question. Ignoring these aspirations, at the end of November 1943 the 2nd. meeting of the Anti-fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, with not a single Albanian representative, took the decision to include Kosova and other Albanian-populated regions in the "new" Yugoslavia. Such a decision was just as arbitrary and just as detrimental to the Albanians as the decision taken about the Albanian frontiers by the Great Powers three decades before. In fact, at the 1st. Conference of the National Liberation Council for Kosova and Metohija, held in Bujan from December 31, 1943 to January 2, 1944, the delegates adopted unanimously a resolution which proclaimed that

" . . . the Albanian population . . . today, as always, wishes to be united with Albania. . . . The Albanian people, too, will have the possibility to decide their own future through the right of self-determination up to secession"

("People's Council of the Autonomous Region of Kosova-Metohija, 1943-1953"; Prishtina; 1955; p. 10).

What was decided by the legitimate representatives of the Albanian-inhabited regions of Yugoslavia at Bujan was severely criticised and partially rejected by the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (through a letter of March 28, 1944 signed by M. Djilas) and then, in February 1945, a military administration was established in Kosova.

Despite the blood shed by the Albanian partisans from Yugoslavia in the anti-fascist war and despite the military assistance rendered by the Albanian Army of National Liberation in the liberation of Yugoslavia, terror and discrimination were once again imposed upon the Albanians in that country - this time by the Titoite leadership. Under various pretexts, in the autumn of 1944 10,000 Albanians were arrested in Tetova, of whom 1,200 were shot and many others died in prison; in November 1944 thousands of Albanian peasants were shot in Macedonia; and in the next winter 30,000 men, women and children were massacred in Drenica. Altogether more than 40,000 Albanians were killed by the Yugoslav authorities between 1944 and 1948, while Tito and the new Yugoslav leadership were allegedly establishing "people's democracy" and were proclaiming the right of "self-determination" for the nations within their country. Furthermore the Yugoslav authorities, not content with such acts of genocide, were also trying, unsuccessfully, to incorporate Albania into Yugoslavia.

As a result of this policy, the Albanian population within Yugoslavia was tactically divided between the three republics of Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. "Kosova and Metohija" was formed into an "autonomous region" within the republic of Serbia until 1963, when it was raised to the status of an "autonomous province", as it remains today, although its name was changed to "Kosova" in 1971.

Today the two-million-strong Albanian population in Yugoslavia constitutes the third largest ethnic entity, after the Serbs and Croats. It is numerically larger than the Montenegrins, the Macedonians and the Slovenes, all of whom have their own republics. Of the 1,626,000 inhabitants of Kosova, about 80% are Albanians - the rest forming Serbian, Montenegrin and Turkish minorities. As an autonomous province within the republic of Serbia, Kosova (and therefore the Albanian population there) has little representation in Yugoslavia's federal bodies. As

A. Fira, chief judge of the Federal Constitutional Court, writes:

"Unlike the socialist republics, whose links to working people and citizens assume the legal form of republican statehood, . . . an autonomous province is not a state community".

(A. Fira: "Constitutional Law"; Belgrade; 1981; p. 447-8).

The lawful demand for "Kosova-Republic" - which can still be read on the walls - has been repeatedly refused for specious reasons. Instead of a correct solution of the problem, the Yugoslav leadership has chosen an active policy of denationalisation towards the Albanians in their country through various means: repression, emigration (between 1955 and 1958 alone some 203,000 Albanians left their homeland for Turkey), denial or restriction of their language rights, as well as of education and culture - not to mention the bloody military reprisals against the Albanians in 1944-48, in 1955-56 (when hundreds of Albanians were murdered in the so-called action to confiscate weapons), in 1968, and in 1981 (when hundreds of Albanians were killed, wounded or imprisoned).

In the spring of 1981 ample coverage was given in the international press to the tragic events in Kosova, which was militarily occupied by many police and army units dispatched there from the north of Yugoslavia. The peaceful demonstrations of the Albanian people were repressed with force; arrests and searches were carried out; the schools and the University of Prishtina were closed down; public gatherings were banned; Kosova was shut off from other regions of Yugoslavia; the cultural agreements made between institutions in Kosova and in Albania were annulled; and the demonstrators were denounced as "counter-revolutionaries", "enemies" and "Albanian irredentists". In 1981 the Albanians in Kosova experienced once more the terror, bloodshed and discrimination which have characterised their history since 1913.

The political and social contradictions of that province of Yugoslavia, together with its pronounced economic backwardness, are obvious to everyone travelling there. Nevertheless, the Kosova countryside is full of

beautiful, high, wooded mountains - ideal for skiing in winter - with rivers and deep gorges. There are also archaeological remains from prehistoric and ancient times, mediaeval towns and fortifications, mediaeval churches and monasteries, as well as mosques and Turkish bridges. Prishtina is the largest town, with about 150,000 inhabitants, and is the business centre of the province. Amongst the most interesting sights of the town are the Carska Džamija (Emperor's Mosque) of 1461, erected by the Sultan Mohammed II, and the Taš Džamija (Stone Mosque). Near Prishtina, too, one can find the monument to the Kosova heroes, located in the field where the historic battle of Kosova was fought in 1389. One can also make an excursion to Grmija, a forest-park at 700-1,010 metres altitude, and visit - 9 kilometres to the south - Gračanica,, one of the most beautiful of the mediaeval monasteries, built in 1321 at the memorial to King Milutin.

In the south of Kosova of particular interest is the town of Prizren (70,000 inhabitants), situated at the foot of Mount Sara on the banks of the Bistrica, only 18 kilometres from the Albanian border. One cannot fail to admire the Bogorodica Ljeviška, its oldest church with interesting architecture and belfry; the Kaljaja, the interesting and strategically famous fort above the town; the 17th. century mosque Sinan Pašina Džamija; the beautiful Turkish bath Mehemed Pašin Hamam; and other monuments of Islamic-Turkish architecture. Prizren was mentioned as a town with a developed trade as early as the 14th. century, when it had a mint where money was coined. Furthermore, it was the cradle of the Albanian resistance movement against the Ottomans at the end of the last century, the League of Prizren exercising great influence on events inside and outside Albania. However, this seems to be denied in Yugoslavia today - as in the recent official publication "Enver Hoxha's Albania" (Tanjug; 1981) where the role of the League of Prizren is dismissed as "useless" and Albania's national hero Skanderbeg is portrayed as a figure of minor historical importance.

In spite of the beautiful natural scenery of Kosova and the architectural and historical interest of its

places and monuments, tourism is not much promoted there. This phenomenon is in striking contrast to the tempo with which tourism has been developed in recent years in other parts of Yugoslavia. In the hotels of Prishtina and the other towns, one mainly meets foreigners staying just overnight on their way from the Dalmatian coast to Greece and vice versa. The lack of tourist facilities in the province (18 hotels altogether) and the almost non-existent publicity given to Kosova by the Yugoslav Tourist Offices abroad may perhaps constitute a deliberate means of preventing the many tourists who visit Yugoslavia every summer from becoming directly aware of the economic and social backwardness and political repression which is typical of that province and which hardly accords with the "socialist" image which today's federative Yugoslavia wishes to present.

As is customary in many parts of the Balkan peninsula, in the evening local people pour into the main street of the town centre, walking and meeting friends. This form of social behaviour seems to attract the particular attention of the police in Kosova, and every tourist must become aware of the heightened tension at that time of day. In the evening, in fact, around the main street of each Kosova town, a considerable number of armoured cars and armed police can be noticed, ready to intervene in case of "disturbances", and one can witness local people being taken away by soldiers, as well as clashes between the population and the police.

Tourists can also not fail to notice how the Albanians, despite their constituting 80% of the population, are almost denied the genuine expression of their traditions. While looking for a restaurant, for example, one will hardly be able to sample the Albanian cuisine, since nearly all the restaurants and cafes are owned by Serbs and Turks. The town centre of Prishtina has been totally modernised; in the shopping centre one can buy nothing typically Albanian: almost everything - from fashion to pop music - has been westernised. In order to divert the Albanians from their own cultural identity, western and pornographic films are shown in the cinemas and Albanian music is not to be heard. In the shops it is almost compulsory to display Tito's

portrait, and it is regarded as suspicious and provocative to sell or display the Albanian two-headed eagle emblem, even though this right was granted as a "concession" in the late sixties. In the bookshops, too, one finds that all the books in the Albanian language, even those dealing with grammar and linguistics, are published in Yugoslavia. The import of literary-type books from the People's Socialist Republic of Albania to Kosova has recently been halted on the grounds that Albanian culture fosters "national romanticism" and "chauvinism" among the Albanians in Yugoslavia. It goes without saying that political publications from Albania are illegal, and the possession or reading of them carries the risk of imprisonment.

This political and cultural repression is closely linked with social discrimination towards the two-million strong Albanian population in Yugoslavia. In the secondary streets of Kosova's towns, just outside the town-centre, poverty and misery are evident: one can witness bad living conditions, unpaved roads, badly-dressed young and old people, and even some beggars. One feels the same sense of desolation visiting the small villages in the countryside of Kosova. Local people often speak foreign languages, mainly German, not because of the high level of foreign language teaching in Kosova, but because tens of thousands of Albanians have recently been forced to emigrate outside Kosova and Yugoslavia in search of work.

Kosova, potentially one of the richest zones in the Balkans, is also the least economically and industrially developed region of Yugoslavia, despite the influx of foreign and Yugoslav capital and the "assistance" which the province has received from the Federal Fund for the Accelerated Development of the Underdeveloped Regions. According to "Borba" (25.1.1983, p. 4) and "Politika" (13.12.1982, p. 4) in 1982 total industrial production in Kosova fell by 3.3%, losses in the provincial economy grew to 10 billion dinars, while the number of unemployed rose from 72,000 Kosovars in 1981 to 82,000 in 1982. As the rate of growth of agriculture has been only 1% a year in 1976-80, people have left the countryside to settle in the towns of Kosova as surplus labour which the province's industry is unable to absorb. This being

the situation, it is not surprising that, according to the "Statistical Pocket Book of Yugoslavia" (1980), Kosova, when compared with the other regions of Yugoslavia, has the highest percentage of illiterates and the lowest percentage of those with higher education. It still figures at the bottom of the statistics so far as per capita income, expectation of life and living conditions are concerned. Whom do the Yugoslav authorities blame for this situation? The Albanians, of course! According to A. Sukrija, a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists ("Rilindja", 12.6.1983) they suffer from

". . indifference and lack of ambition".

In more detail, Radio Belgrade (21.10.1982, 1600 hours) accuses the Albanians of

". . many cases of physical attack, attempted rape, damage to crops, desecration of Serbian monuments and gravestones",

and so on. Since all these sorts of anti-Albanian slanders are published in the official media, one can understand the stereotyped and racist way in which the Albanians are often regarded by the "average" Yugoslav citizen.

An interesting, current feature of Kosova today is the relationship between emigration and demography. Between 1971 and 1981 the acute economic situation compelled over 100,000 Serbs and Montenegrins to leave the region. According to the "Komunist" of 24.6.1983, the pace of Serbian and Montenegrin emigration has recently accelerated: in 1982 alone 5,810 of them left Kosova, and during the first three months of 1983 another 1,180. Despite emigration, the Albanian population in Kosova, having one of the highest birth-rates in Europe, has grown constantly - both in absolute and relative terms. While the proportion of Albanians in Kosova has risen from 65% in the early fifties to 80% today, the proportion of Serbs has fallen from 23.6% in 1961 to 13.2% in 1981, and that of Montenegrins from 3.9% in 1961 to 1.7% in 1981. ("Politika", 3.6.1983). The Serbian and Montenegrin flow from Kosova, further strengthening the Albanian

majority there, represents a worrying issue for the Yugoslav authorities which is at present being discussed at the highest political and administrative levels in Yugoslavia. To investigate and somehow halt this flow, commissions have been set up and eight bodies have dealt or are dealing with this problem. Official Yugoslav propaganda places the blame for the exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosova on

"... the enemy, the Albanian nationalists and irredentists (who put) persistent pressure on Serbs and Montenegrins to move out of Kosova in an attempt to achieve one of their strategic goals - ethnically pure Kosova".
 ("Tanjug", 5.7.1983).

In line with this policy, M. Ribicic, Chairman of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, has recently called for a "counter-emigration" of non-Albanians into Kosova, mainly experts, under the pretext of developing the province economically. ("Vjesnik", 31.5.1983, and "Tanjug", 30.5.1983). Such a call, which resembles the inter-war royalist policy of Serbian colonisation of Kosova, has been regarded, both inside and outside Yugoslavia, as an ineffective and dangerous colonialist plan, as indeed it is.

Although the People's Socialist Republic of Albania has consistently disclaimed any territorial claims in relation to the regions of Yugoslavia inhabited by Albanians, the Kosova "problem" is also laid, by the official Yugoslav propagandists, at the door of the Albanian state, which allegedly

"... represents a great danger for the entire region, ... giving opportunities to Cold War forces, to the forces of confrontation and to bloc competition".

(N. Dizdarevic: Speech at 8th. Plenum of the Yugoslav Central Committee, "Tanjug", 1.7.1983).

The hysterical campaign against the PSR of Albania has for its aim the hiding of the great neglect on the part of the Yugoslav authorities of their political and moral responsibilities, in the past and in the present, towards the Albanian population living in the "self-

administered" Yugoslav federation. This is obvious to everyone who has visited that part of the Balkans, or has an elementary knowledge of the question.

In accordance with its aim of promoting friendship and understanding between the Albanian and British peoples, the Albanian Society, as a matter of principle, gives it full support to the legitimate demands of the Albanians within Yugoslavia for republican status within the federal Yugoslav state. In connection with the tragic events in Kosova in 1981, for instance, the Albanian Society joined in the world-wide condemnation of the Yugoslav repression. For that purpose it held successful public meetings and actively participated in the picketing of the Yugoslav Embassy, besides presenting a factual account of the position of the Albanians in Yugoslavia through the publication of a specific pamphlet and through the columns of its journal ALBANIAN LIFE.

¹ A comprehensive and detailed analysis of Yugoslav-Albanian relations from 1941 to the present day, including the question of Kosova, is contained in Enver Hoxha's book "The Titoites", obtainable from the Albanian Society at £3. 50 including postage.

SHADOWS

Cartoons by Bardhyl Fico



The Surrealist



The Anarchist

Impressions of Albania

by Ted Armstrong



A new street in Shkodra

The sun shone down on our air-conditioned coach as we descended to the plain on the way to Shkodra. People of every age momentarily stopped their work in the orchards to wave to us in welcome, and this alone was sufficient to demonstrate to us how Western publicity distorts the facts about this nation.

As we entered the ancient town of Shkodra, people were still waving to us. Looking up at the roofs, one could see TV aerials everywhere. Our first hotel was a modern building overgrown with creeping plants, adorned everywhere with potted plants. The first evening ended with a thunderstorm - sending happy couples scurrying for home after a friendly Friday night out. Police were conspicuous by their absence. Plenty of time was allowed

for walks around the town, to visit the shops, cafeterias, post office, and so on. The scheduled visit, for those interested, was the Ethnographic Museum - a beautiful building containing Islamic, Christian and Masonic designs.

Shkodra was followed by a visit to the memorial tomb to Skanderbeg. All around, people went about their work or holiday-making as we wandered round the area. As the tour went on, it began to dawn on us that the majority of the latter were not foreign tourists, but Albanians on holiday.

Tirana is a bustling city free of pollution. We took a look around the Palace of Culture at children's paintings, and followed this with a lemonade in the rooftop cafeteria, looking out at the mountains. We visited the busy department stores for souvenirs, clothing, etc., and that night paid a visit to a ballet at the theatre in the Palace of Culture.

Our holiday was full of experiences. Notable among these was the marvellous museum-city of Gjirokastra. Here the people receive 100% grants to keep their homes restored. There was friendliness everywhere, as people wandered in and out of stores, coffee shops, bread shops, and so on. The Ethnographic Museum of Shkodra almost met its match in Enver Hoxha's house.

Over the mountains and past the swiftly-flowing streams, Saranda awaited us. This pearl of the coastline is full of treasures. Take a stroll along "lovers' lane", sniffing the blossoms. Follow this in the seafront cafe with a welcome nut-flavoured ice-cream. At night, sample the excellent beer. A few miles down the coast is the Tsamil State Farm, where our party sat on the verandah of the enterprise restaurant, drinking lemonade produced from local fruit. Then, a dip in the warm, sparkling sea, followed by a meal of fresh fish caught in the inland lake which borders on Butrint.

Butrint is a fascinating, enthralling classical complex. Crickets sing and bright yellow butterflies flutter around the terrapin-filled pools of the ancient remains. Cacti adorn the hills of the fortress. Flowers are thrown down the well in thanks to the goddess of the area. We

mingled with Albanian tourists in the museum atop the fortress.

Butrint is comparable to the unsullied Apollonia, where I discussed Shakespeare and Sheffield with the guide, while a group of soldiers sang happily at this still-used ancient meeting-place. Fruit trees overshadow the galleries containing classical objects found on the site. In the ancient church a detailed history of its icons commenced once the light switch had been uncovered. As we left, passing an ancient oak, girl soldiers waved to the party.

Entering inland Berat, a city of mosques and churches, I saw what was for me a moving event. As the coach sped past an infants' school, the whole school ran to the edge of the playground, laughing and waving. Berat is a city of atmospheric beauty. Here one can understand why our nature poets loved Albania. In the mosque is a copy of a pre-Raphaelite painting. The Albanians love the land and refuse to rape it for the profit of any landowner.

Byron, were he to return, would be proud of such a people. High over Berat stands the citadel, Entrancing churches dot the hillside. One was closed for restoration. However, a tiny chapel near the fortress entrance held everyone in awe as we were shown icon after icon of exquisite beauty. Thank goodness that, since Liberation, foreigners have not been able to plunder Albanian religious works of art. After drinking a tasty coffee overlooking the ant-like streets, backed by towering mountains, and watching children playing hopscotch and king of the castle, we headed for the coach. Spontaneously, cheery children ran up with bunches of Sweet Williams as contented cats milled around the pavement. The bus plunged down a narrow cobbled street to yet another adequate hotel. It was sad to leave Berat, a friendly city where people ask: "How are you? What is your name?", English now being the second language.

The events, the cities, the talks, were endless. At Pogradec, on the shore of an inland lake, one of the older ladies (about half our party were over 60) tripped on the steps. The gash was stitched within half-an-hour, including the ambulance call.

Korça is the shopping place in Albania. The shops are full of goods - tea towels, copperware, glassware, shoes made to measure, drink shops. Get your Poric here! It was here that we saw our first policeman - showing passers-by his bad leg! The houses of Korça are beautiful. Little fruit gardens produce local wine. Marmalade cats bask in the sun. People greet you as you walk the steets. Children laugh. Washing hangs on the railings of the mosque. Why enter it when life is everywhere?

A few days later the villages, towns and cities of the country faded into the distance and, after two weeks of freedom, the keys came out to lock our luggage.

ALBANIAN WINES

The Albanian Shop, 3, Betterton Street, London WC2 (off Drury Lane; nearest Underground station: Holborn) can make available - to members of the Albanian Society and by personal call only - the following Albanian wines, etc.:



	<u>Per bottle</u>
Malaga (red)	£4. 40
Merlot (red)	£4. 40
Riesling (white)	£4. 40
Raki	£9. 80
Ouzo	£9. 80
Skanderbeg Brandy	£9. 80
Ekstra Brandy	£9. 80

Democracy in Albania

by Brian Anderson and Simon Drake

In November 1982 elections for the People's Assembly were held in Albania. The Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania says clearly that the state is a dictatorship of the proletariat, which rules in alliance with the cooperative peasantry and the people's intelligentsia, and the composition of the People's Assembly, the highest state body, reflects this central tenet. As Lenin - quoted in Enver Hoxha's "Proletarian Democracy is Genuine Democracy", put it:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat alone can emancipate humanity from the oppression of capital, from the lies, falsehood and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy - democracy for the rich - and establish democracy for the poor, that is, make the blessings of democracy really accessible to the workers and poor peasants".

It was in this spirit that the entire people of Albania went to the polls, voting by 99.9% for the candidates of the Democratic Front. The 250 deputies included 95 of worker origin and 73 from the cooperative peasantry. 45% had been elected for the first time and 30% were women, while more than half were under 40 years of age. The deputies take up their tasks not as full-time politicians, but continue to work - drawing their full wages while fulfilling their duty to the Assembly. This ensures that they never lose contact with the people they represent, nor derive financial gain from their position. They have to render account regularly to their constituents, and may be recalled if the electors are dissatisfied with them. All this contrasts with our MPs, who are usually seen by their constituents only at election time, soliciting their votes in order to continue their careers in politics. As Lenin expressed it, again quoted by Enver Hoxha in "Proletarian Democracy"; these full-time politicians hold no real power:

"In any parliamentary country . . . the real busin-

ess of 'state' is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs".

In contrast to this, Hoxha states,

"The representative organs of the people are the People's Assembly and the People's Councils. Under the constitution of the PSRA 'the representative organs direct and control the activity of all other state organs, which are responsible before them and render account to them' . . .

With us, democracy is not a game to mislead the people; on the contrary, it is put into practice. Here there is no dual power, one recognised by the law and the other existing de facto; here there is only one unified state power, which stems from the people and belongs to them".

The massive and increasing support for the candidates of the Democratic Front at elections for the People's Assembly, People's Councils and People's Courts is reflected in the voting figures, which the British press, with no experience of a truly popular government, like to ridicule. In fact, the figures are an accurate reflection of the political situation. Why is it, at a time of world crisis, that the Albanian government receives such massive support from the people? Why should only 5 electors vote against the candidates of the DF at urban polling stations, and only 119 at those in the countryside? Simply because in the post-war period the Albanian people have never known declining living standards, unemployment, inflation, cuts in social services, degeneration of culture, etc. As one elderly cadre of the Party of Labour told the authors:

"The Party never lied to the people; we never promised what we could not deliver; but what we did promise, we always fulfilled".

Many, but not all, of the deputies are members of the PLA, and it is the line of the Party which has guided the entire progress of the country since Liberation. The PLA, and Enver Hoxha in particular, enjoy tremendous prestige among the people, and this is reflected in the leading role accorded to the Party in all spheres

of life.

Democracy is not limited to the People's Assembly and People's Councils: it permeates the whole of Albanian life. Thus, the five-year economic plans, the foundation of socialist Albania, are discussed and amended by the people at workplace and neighbourhood meetings throughout the country. This is the strength of proletarian democracy, as opposed to bourgeois democracy: it directly reaches the lives of the working people.



Delegates at a local meeting

The election of judges and assistant judges to the People's Courts provides another contrast with Britain, where appointed judges with no experience of the lives of working people wield such power. Yet the majority of law-breakers in Albania never reach the courts, but are criticised by their peers at workplace and neighbourhood meetings.

In order to strengthen proletarian democracy, Workers' Commissions have been introduced at workplaces. These bodies, elected periodically by the workforce, have the right to investigate any area of the enter-

prise right up to the top management, and to make recommendations which have the force of law. They also have competence to concern themselves with local services, such as hospitals and schools - in which cases a team is drawn from the various enterprises involved. One small example of the work of the Commissions was given to the authors on a visit to the Copper Wire Factory in Shkodra: it had been alleged that office workers in one department had spent an afternoon "skiving"; the workers' Control Commission investigated, found the case proven, and docked the pay of those concerned! Workers also have, through their trade unions, a direct say in the appointment of foremen and managers.

We have tried to show, from facts and personal observation, that far from being an undemocratic society, as her many enemies abroad constantly aver in the pages of the "Sunday Times", etc., Albania actually has a democracy unknown in the rest of the world today. It is a democracy for the people, but repression for those who would destroy socialism, for the bourgeoisie and its supporters. Perhaps this is why the writers in our "democratic" press hate it so much!

HOW THE WORLD LOOKS FROM TIRANA

A cartoon by Bardhyl Fico



Liberty for
Grenada!!

ALBANIAN SOCIETY MEETINGS

On August 7th. the London Branch held a meeting on the subject of "Women in Albania", addressed by a speaker from the Women's Union of Britain. On September 24th. the branch held a film show in the Roxie Cinema: film director Barry Ackroyd spoke on "The Albanian Cinema" and the feature film "Poppies on the Walls" was screened, together with a colour documentary on the new town of Tsamil in southern Albania.

On September 12th. the Secretary of the Welsh Branch, Ron Gregory, spoke on Albania to the Women's Guild of Bridgend. Other meetings, also addressed by Ron, were held in the Garw Valley Centre on August 26th. and in the Bridgend Recreation Centre on October 2nd.

The Welsh Branch has now been split into a North Wales Branch, with Martin Smith as Secretary, and a South Wales Branch, with Ron Gregory as Secretary.

On October 8th. the Midlands Branch held a meeting in Birmingham at which a member of the Progressive Cultural Association rendered Albanian songs, Bill Bland (Secretary of the Society) read Albanian poems, John Puntis (Branch Secretary) spoke on Albania's foreign policy and a video of the feature film "Old Wounds" was screened.

On November 9th. the Scottish Branch held a meeting in Edinburgh at which Alex Shepherd gave an illustrated talk on "Albania's Story through Stamps".



A Meeting in Tirana

On 5th. September, 1983, the President of the Albanian Society, Professor Martin Smith, and his daughter Lucinda had the honour of being received in Tirana by Mr. Jorgo Melica, President of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

On behalf of the Albanian Society, Lucinda presented Mr. Melica with a bouquet of flowers and with a Kosova dress, the gift of a member of the Society who wishes to remain anonymous. The dress will be placed in an Albanian museum.

After delivering a message of warm greetings and good wishes from the Albanian Society to the Committee and to the Albanian people, Professor Smith thanked Mr. Melica for the Committee's co-operation and assistance in supplying films, literature, and other material, and in providing information and advice. He stressed that the Society greatly valued its friendly and fruitful relations with the Committee. He went on to give an account of recent activities of the Society and referred to several forthcoming events.

Mr. Melica congratulated the Society on its activities and expressed warm appreciation of the contribution which it makes to friendship and understanding between the British and Albanian peoples. He asked that the Committee's good wishes be conveyed to the Society's officers, committee and members.

Mr. Melica pointed out that the last two years have been years of great achievement for the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in the economic, socio-political, educational and cultural spheres, and emphasised that these notable successes are in no small measure attributable to the increased unity of the people around the Party and its Central Committee, headed by Enver Hoxha, since the suicide of the traitor Mehmet Shehu in December 1981. He affirmed that the Albanian people are full of optimism and revolutionary fervour.

In the course of a discussion of British-Albanian relations, Mr. Melica stated that Albania's foreign policy remained unchanged from that defined and expressed at the 8th. Congress of the Party in November 1981, and that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Britain cannot be considered until Britain has returned the Albanian gold held in London since 1945, together with the accumulated interest.

After the meeting, which was held in the warmest and most harmonious atmosphere, Professor Smith and his daughter were guests at a luncheon given by Mr. Melica in the Hotel Dajti.



A new district of Tirana

Albanian Cinema

by Barry Ackroyd

It is true to say that the Albanian cinema began only after Liberation in 1944. Until then there had been only 17 cinemas in the entire country, and these cinemas showed only foreign films - mainly Italian and American.

It was in the most modest way that the Albanians took up the question of establishing a national cinema. By a decree of the People's Assembly of April 17th., 1947, the Albanian Cinematographic Enterprise was set up, and in the following years the first newsreels were produced. These newsreels began the development of a cinema that has reflected and served the construction of Socialism in Albania. The need, however, was to have fully-trained filmmakers who could develop the feature film industry, in order to produce films which would entertain, educate and reflect the development of their country. In 1952 the New Albania Film Studios were created, giving rise to the regular production of documentaries as well as newsreels. In 1957 the first short feature, "Her Children", was produced, and the next year saw the screening of the first full-length feature film, "Tana". It was this historic event which enabled Albania to take its place in world cinema.

From this time on Albania has been able to develop its own cinema, reflecting the national character and the socialist nature of the society, a cinema dealing with the reality of Albanian life both past and present. It is particularly the themes of the historic struggle against fascism and for national liberation, and of socialist construction, which have formed the basis of Albanian cinema.

The Albanians place great emphasis on the education of their people, and the cinema has obviously played its part in this task. So it is that the Albanians have increased the number of cinemas to more than 400, including travelling cinemas, apart from 16 mm. projection facilities in schools and colleges. Furthermore, elect-

rification has been brought to every corner of the country, ensuring the availability of television to everyone.

Last year 25 feature films were produced, in addition to many documentaries and newsreels, animated films and films for children. The genre of films is varied and includes films based on novels, comedies, dramas, and historical films; and the range is constantly widening. Internationally, too, the Albanian cinema is becoming better known. Albanian films have been screened at international film festivals, a number of them winning prizes, and they are a feature of the programmes of the Friendship Societies throughout the world.



In Albania there is a biennial film festival where the best of the country's productions are screened, and discussed by writers, directors, actors and the public. At this year's festival it was significant that the proportion of films having a contemporary theme had greatly

increased, showing the trend towards dealing with the present rather than reflecting the past. The festival awards many prizes for acting, direction and, of course, for best film - which this year was won by the film "The Good Man". This has only three characters - Vera, a university student; Telo, a scientific research worker; and Vera's corrupt brother, Kiço. Its theme is a simple one: the love affair between Vera and Telo, and the efforts of Kiço to break it up by means of slander and the abuse of his powers as an employee of the government.

In Albania the content of all literature and art is under constant scrutiny to ensure that it faithfully reflects

"... the activity of the people, their history, the socialist revolution, the day-to-day work and problems, and the battle for the triumph of the ideals of communism".

The proceedings of the 8th. Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania demonstrated both these ideals and the high importance which is attached in Albania to the arts, a main theme being the task of

"... quickening the transition to a new qualitative leap in literature and art".

Albanian art takes a clear stance on the issues it portrays, on the principle that

"... true art is tendentious, since without being tendentious the artist cannot defend his views and fight for his lofty aims".

The Albanians quote Engels when he says

"I think that tendentiousness should emanate from the milieu and from action, that we must not over-stress it, and that the writer is not compelled to provide the reader with ready-made historical solutions to the social conflicts which he depicts".

It is these qualities which differentiate Albanian art from that in both "West" and "East", that contrasts so sharply with the decadent, degenerate and criminal forms of art which emanate from the USA and the USSR. The Albanian critics describe this so-called art as

". . . an entire industry of words, colours and sounds which, although ramified in literary and artistic trends, boils down to one and the same thing: Literature and art are used as a drug against human consciousness, a drug against what is truly human".

Because it is the cinema which spreads these trends throughout the world, the Albanian film makes an important contribution to world cinema, because in it we see the finest aspirations, the loftiest aims, presented in a real and tangible way. The Albanians show whatever is human, progressive and revolutionary without fear, and it is this which makes an Albanian film such a pleasure to see. It is this that is Socialist Realism.

Letters To The "Sunday Times"

In response to two recent articles in the "Sunday Times" concerning Albania, the Secretary of the Albanian Society wrote the following letters to the Editor. After a protest from the Society, a few lines were published from the first letter a fortnight after the original letter had been published. Publication of the second letter was refused.

* * * * *

With regard to the article by Stephen Aris on the Greek-speaking minority in Albania in your issue of August 14th., it should be pointed out that the figure of "400,000" for this minority is greatly exaggerated, being based on statistics of the former Ottoman Empire (which classified all Orthodox Christians as "Greeks"). The Greek government found it convenient to adopt this grossly inflated figure in connection with its territorial claims on southern Albania. The actual number of Greek-speaking people in Albania is approximately 35,000 (a figure which is agreed by the Albanian Orthodox Church in America).

Having travelled extensively in southern Albania, I can say categorically that there is no foundation for the allegations that the Greek-speaking minority is subject to "repression". The community has its own newspaper, radio and TV programmes, schools, a teachers' training college, etc., in the Greek language and its ethnic culture is certainly fully encouraged by the Albanian authorities.

You quote from Euro-MP David Enright (who states that "it has been difficult to establish the full facts") the figure of "23,000" as the number of prisoners from the Greek-speaking community in Albania. The absurdity of alleging that 71% of the Greek-speaking population is in prison speaks for itself. This figure, again, is that of Greek government propaganda. It should be pointed out that the Albanian authorities gave (on November 10th. last) the very different figure of 33, including 3 found guilty of what are termed in the Penal Code "political offences".

It is to be noted that the Greek-American Nikolaos Stavrou, whose report you also quote, describes the main sources of his "information" as "visits to Greece and Yugoslavia" and "Greek official records".

I have no direct experience of conditions within Albanian prisons. It is, however, worth noting that the primary emphasis of Albanian penal law is laid firmly on rehabilitation, so that textbooks for the training of lawyers and prison officers stress that the slightest affront to a prisoner's human dignity runs counter to the whole aim of penal legislation and is subject to the severest punishment should such a thing occur. The prison regulations lay down that a prisoner must be ensured all the conditions necessary for health and mental development, and prescribe his right to make any complaint to the Attorney-General's Office, which is required to investigate any such complaint forthwith.

It must be said that Mr. Aris's whole article is simply a restatement of official Greek propaganda in relation to Albania - the propaganda of a government which over a long period claimed southern Albania as "Greek territory" and which still regards itself

as in "a state of war" with Albania. This propaganda is remarkably similar to that of the Nazi government in relation to the German-speaking minority in Czechoslovakia prior to the German invasion of that country in 1930.

* * * * *

The Editorial Committee's Note

In order to keep his letter short, the Secretary did not add that these claims by the Greek government of "repression" were investigated by British officers and intelligence agents in 1944-45 and found to be untrue. British official records also reveal that the persecution and massacre of the Albanian-speaking minority in northern Greece (the Çams) by the right-wing forces of Zervas in 1944-45 were carried out on the instructions of the British Military Mission in Greece at that time.

The Second Letter

Brian Moynahan, in a report entitled "MARX AND LENIN SHORTEN YOUR LIFE" (your issue of September 25th.) points out that life expectancy in the Soviet Union is now less than in "ramshackle" Albania.

In fact, the expectation of life in Albania has been raised from 38 years in 1938 to 69 - a development related to the parallel rise in production (x5 for agriculture, x131 for industry), to the non-contributory free health service, to the low income differentials (a maximum of 2:1), to non-contributory pensions (at 70% of pay, payable as young as 50 in some occupations), to the complete abolition of unemployment, inflation and taxation, etc.

Since Albania is at present the only country in the world which operates the fully-centrally planned economy which Marx and Lenin regarded as basic to socialism, neither your headline nor your description of the Albanian economy as "ramshackle" seems appropriate.

The Institute of People's Culture

by Dave Smith



Tish Daia

(This article is fundamentally a report of two meetings with workers from the Institute of People's Culture in Tirana. The first of these meetings took place in August 1981, when I visited the Institute and met the assistant director Mustafa Gërcaliu; Tish Daia, one of Albania's leading composers; and Ferial Daja, a young female ethnomusicologist).

The Institute is divided into four sections, of which two are concerned with ethnography and two with folklore. One of the ethnographical sections deals with material culture, which includes the many varied and beautiful national costumes, silk embroideries, carpets and rugs, and the characteristic dwelling-houses notable for their architecture and rooms full of ornamentation and carved woodwork. Another section concentrates on social and spiritual culture - investigating the ways of life, such as weddings, movement of the population, death and other demographic concerns. The ethnographic archive contains some 25,000 items ranging from carpets and national costumes to pottery and agricultural tools. The other two sections make up what was originally the Institute of Folklore, which was founded in 1960. The literary section covers folk prose and poetry (and includes tales, poverbs, riddles and anecdotes) of many different genres - epic, legendary, historical and folk-lyrical, for example. About forty books have already been published by this section and the archive contains about a million verses. A collection of some 15,000 poverbs is in preparation.

The musical and choreographic section deals with the highly varied folk music and dances and the devel-

opment of folklore. I was shown the archive, which includes nearly 21,000 recordings of folk music, systemised and catalogued for easy reference, films of 600 dances, another 200 films concerning costumes and weddings, as well as catalogues of folk melodies and folk lyrics. This seemed an enormous collection for a small country, but Mustafa Gërcaliu indicated that they considered it "small in comparison to what we must have". An extensive historical study of folk instruments will be published shortly, as well as a two-volume work on folk dances arranged according to geographical location and content.

The work of the Institute is, like the economy of the country, planned in advance. The collection and study of different cultural phenomena and the publication of the results of such studies constitute major concerns. During the present five-year plan (1981-85) they intend to produce 45 books. Extensive areas of work are not carried out by just a single individual - for instance, Ferial Daja was part of a group working on a project which involved detailed analysis of the best songs heard at three national folk festivals which took place at Gjirokastra in 1968, 1973 and 1978. Furthermore, it would be difficult for the 60 employees of the Institute to carry out their activities without the assistance of volunteers and associate workers from all walks of life spread throughout the country. They collect materials, participate in scientific discussions and give opinions about publications.

Students at the Higher Institute of Arts also participate in investigative expeditions - indeed, it is an essential part of their practice, since folklore is not just a peripheral part of the studies of musicians and dancers. For instance, in the School of Choreography folk dances are taught as well as the classical repertoire and Albanian ballets display elements of both. Choreographers and composers often come to the Institute to study - Tish Daia works there and therefore has a foot in both camps, but he was quick to point out that all Albanian composers study folklore in order that their work may have a truly Albanian national foundation. Instrumentalists learn folk instruments in school and

folklore constitutes an element within the normal middle school curriculum. Any visitor can hear the influence of folk music in the bands that play in the tourist hotels even when they are playing Western tunes.

In August 1983 I had an equally interesting (and good-humoured) encounter with folk dance specialist Skënder Selimi and ethnomusicologist Beni Kruta. I was particularly pleased to meet Kruta since A. L. Lloyd had once indicated in a letter that he considered him to be

"... a brilliant musicologist, particularly in respect of musical folklore. He has it in him to become a world figure in that field".

The Institute's archive was progressing well - for instance, some 4,000 recordings of folk music and 400 films of folk dances had been added since 1981. The Institute's main preoccupation at that time was the National Folk Festival at Gjirokastra (held every five years) which took place from the 6th. to 12th. October 1983. This constituted the grand finale of an event of mass participation - the preliminary stages, which took place last year, involved some 2,300 groups and 69,000 people. This festival begins in the brigades of the co-operatives or the departments of the factories and then proceeds in an unbroken chain at the level of the village, zone, town and district - the most distinguished representatives going forward to the national festival.

A committee of specialists chooses those songs, dances and instrumental pieces which are considered to be of the greatest scientific value and, although this involves judgment of both the old and the new, the festival does not admit altered or modernised folk music (there is another festival for this category). The principal aim is the presentation and preservation of traditional techniques and the varied characteristics of different parts of the country. At Gjirokastra, each of the 26 districts presents a programme of 30 to 45 minutes duration - essentially a selection of what is available but one which is utterly typical of that district. The festival is filmed and relayed to the population by means of radio and television.

Beni Kruta also spoke of an important symposium that will have taken place immediately before the festival itself. Entitled "The Legendary Heroic Epic", this symposium focussed on a literary musical form found in Northern Albania and adjacent areas of Yugoslavia and is most familiar to folk music enthusiasts as a semi-improvised vocal performance of sometimes several hours duration with the accompaniment of the lahuta (in Yugoslavia, the gusle), a one-stringed fiddle. The symposium presented an all-round scientific analysis, examining many aspects of the genre - musicological, literary, ethnographic, historical, linguistic, folklorist, etc.

Foreign specialists have always considered this to be an essentially Slavic creation dating from the late Middle Ages. Most of these scholars have been ignorant of the Albanian contribution, and a lack of publication on the Albanian side did not help. But since Liberation the Institute has published a good deal about the Northern heroic epic. Taken together with materials published before Liberation, Albanians have come to the conclusion that this form of culture originated in Albania rather than having been inherited from the Slavs. This is not to say that the genre is uninfluenced or separate from the culture of neighbouring countries. But the Balkan origins are thought to pre-date the 7th. century when the Slavs entered the area.

Beni Kruta also indicated that the musical aspects have largely been ignored - to separate the very long texts from the music was, he felt, a basic error of scholarship, since the two were always connected. He also stated that, contrary to what many Western publications maintain, the readily apparent differences in vocal practice between North and South are mirrored in the instrumental folk music. In addition, certain instruments found in the North are not used in the South (and vice versa). For an instrument such as the fyell (a shepherd's pipe) the Southern repertoire is rhythmically freer and the music more descriptive and panoramic than in the North.

Folk dances, too, display these very characteristics - solo dances dominating in the North and group dances in the South. Skënder Selimi pointed out an interesting development within dance whereby old ritual elements

of patriarchal times are being replaced by elements more in tune with the new socialist consciousness, a phenomenon unique to Albania. These new elements have made their strongest impact on humorous and wedding dances. Also the development of group dancing is encouraged (especially in the North) as well as dances accompanied by singing.

In 1981, Mustafa Gërcaliu pointed out that the Gjirokastra Folk Festival serves as a fine example to counter views which allege that folklore has lost its role in the century of technical progress, that its use is only for commercial purposes or tourism, that now it is destined to be locked up in archives and museums and is useful only to historians. He criticised the kind of Western propaganda which promotes the cosmopolitanising of culture and art and which claims that the stage of national schools has passed. Albania maintains that this is aimed at opening the way for ideological diversion in order to destroy the culture of the peoples. Hence the struggle to preserve national features in art and to develop and enrich popular culture becomes even more important today.

CAMPAIGN FOR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA

On November 2nd., with Dafydd Wigley, MP, in the chair, Bill Bland, Deputy Secretary of the Campaign for Diplomatic Relations with Albania, spoke in the House of Commons on "A Tangled Web", the history of Anglo-American relations with Albania from 1912, as revealed in official British, American and UNRRA records.

The meeting passed two resolutions: one calling for the declassification of the "retained" files on relations with Albania, the other calling for the British government to take the initiative in returning to Albania, with accumulated interest, the Albanian gold which lies in the Bank of England.

The Labour Code

35

Reviewed by Steve Day

The Labour Code lays down the legal requirements in relation to all aspects of work in Albania. It is

"... an important instrument of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat for regulating the social relations of the workers at work". (Article 1)

The code outlines the rights and duties of workers, proceeding from Article 8:

"Labour is the duty and right of every citizen capable of work. . . Labour legislation is pervaded by the socialist principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work".

Article 8 would, of course, be meaningless without the reality of full employment, which is the foundation of the rights of the workers. After all, where are the democratic rights of the unemployed? The right to emigrate in search of work? Or to bend the knee to state or charitable institutions for the means of subsistence? The right to work is a reality in Albania. What of the duty to work? The workers' state is quite clear that it does not support any citizen capable of work who prefers to be idle. "Work or starve". This hard line against malingerers does not, however, mean that there is any lack of compassion for the sick and disabled. On the contrary, the law is quite specific about the protection of these people (Article 10).

The health and safety provisions are interesting in that they place the well being of the individual above all. British health and safety legislation, while very progressive in many ways, is pervaded by the phrase "where reasonably practicable", which is all too often the employer's bolt-hole if it would cost too much money! The main problem in Albania, from my experience touring factories there, is to persuade the workers to use the safety equipment provided. Publicity from the trade unions is everywhere in evidence, but many of the

younger workers, reared on tales of bold partisans, resist! However, accident rates are remarkably low, due to generally safe working practices and the primacy of safety over "profit".

The Labour Code lays down the responsibilities of the workers and managers towards socialist property, including financial penalties for damage arising from negligence (Article 87). Articles 98 and 99 specify the circumstances in which a worker may be dismissed, from which we can see that this is not at all a common occurrence. Indeed, in cases of malingering, negligence or other negative attitudes to work, the workplaces will make repeated efforts to correct the problem before the stage of dismissal or judicial action is considered (Article 83).

This informative pamphlet is recommended to any reader interested in the nuts and bolts of Albanian society; its study, along with other material, will give the reader many insights into the reality of Albanian working life.

("THE LABOUR CODE" is available from the Albanian Society, 26, Cambridge Road, Ilford, Essex, at 50 p. including postage).



SHORT STORY

37

The Application

by Iljaz Kapxhiu

Nimet Çyçka had not been his usual self for several days. His face wore a permanent frown. He opened his mouth only to eat, performing even this silently and with apparent distaste, as though each mouthful required unwelcome effort. Each evening he would sit, brooding, in his big armchair, resting his chin on his hand. Time and again his wife would try to say something to him, only to be told shortly:

"Please don't bother me".

"But what's the matter, Nimet? You're upsetting the whole house".

"Nothing's the matter. Just leave me be".

"Mummy's right", said his daughter, who was in her third year at secondary school; "it's like living in a morgue".

"Don't moralise at me, girl", snapped Nimet; "just leave me alone!"

"Is something wrong at work?", persisted his wife; "or aren't you feeling well?"

Eventually the pressure of his family broke down Nimet's sullen silence.

"It's the directress of the plant, Comrade Nesli", he said; "she's leaving".

"Well, perhaps it's just as well", remarked his wife, "if she upsets you so much".

Then a thought struck her, and she brightened:

"Perhaps they'll make you director!"

His son, who was reading a book on the divan,

looked up and said:

"They couldn't find anyone better. You're the obvious choice".

"Maybe", said Nimet, "but you know how these things are done. There's a staff meeting, someone puts up his hand and proposes someone, and everybody agrees. It's all fixed beforehand".

"But everybody respects you. Get someone to nominate you".

"Who?", asked Nimet.

"Why don't you ask Rifat?", suggested his wife; "you were friends at school".

"As a matter of fact", responded Nimet, "I did go round and see him at home. But there was a meeting of the racing pigeon club going on. He's the secretary".

"Why don't you go and see him in his office?", his wife suggested.

"That's a good idea", replied Nimet; "after all, it is an official matter".

And that night he slept soundly

* * * * *

As the time for his appointment with Rifat approached, Nimet felt himself becoming increasingly nervous. He had given much thought as to how he should raise the matter, and had rehearsed a little speech for the occasion.

In Rifat's outer office he glanced round at those who were waiting to see the assistant director with a sense of relief. There was no one there who looked at all like a potential director. When the girl at the desk called out his name, he straightened his tie and smoothed back his hair with his hand. In the inner office Rifat rose from his desk, greeted him with a smile and shook his hand warmly, saying:

"Please sit down!"

"Thank you", said Nimet; "I'd rather stand if you don't mind".

At one side of the room was another, smaller desk at which sat a girl secretary in spectacles, her ballpen poised above a thick note-pad.

"What's the trouble?", asked Rifat.

"No trouble", replied Nimet. He felt his face growing a little red. "It's . . . it's a social matter".

"I'm listening", said Rifat.

Nimet's embarrassment grew.

"Do you think I could speak to you alone?", he asked.

"There are no secrets from my secretary", answered Rifat; "and she's particularly good on social questions".

Nimet hesitated.

"I wanted to speak", he said, "about Comrade Nesli".

"The directress?"

"Precisely. I understand that she's getting married and moving to another town. We all wish her every happiness".

"Is that all?", asked Rifat, surprised.

"And this raises a social question", Nimet went on.

"What social question?", queried Rifat, growing a little irritated at all this beating about the bush.

"I have been thinking about who will take her place".

"As directress?", asked Rifat.

"As directress. . . Or director".

"There's no problem there, Nimet. We have any number of good workers capable of taking her place".

"I thought", said Nimet uncomfortably, "that perhaps I . . ."

Rifat smiled, understanding at last the purpose of the visit.

"The staff will decide on Comrade Nesli's successor", said Rifat; "but why don't you put in an application? It should be in writing, with a brief curriculum vitae so that the staff may know all about you before they vote".

Nimet noticed out of the corner of his eye that the secretary too had a slight smile on her face.

"In writing?", he queried.

"It's better in writing. Stick it up on the notice-board".

"Thank you very much", said Nimet; "I'm most grateful to you for your advice. I don't know how to express my thanks".

"It's nothing", declared Rifat amiably, "and I wish you every success".

* * * * *

Back in his own office, Nimet took some sheets of paper from a drawer in the desk. He would get someone to type it out later. He began to write:

"To the Comrades of the Enterprise.

Application.

I, the author of this application, am Nimet Qamil Çyçka. I have worked at this enterprise since its foundation and now hold the post of planning director. I am married with two children and live locally. During my 15 years' service I have served under three directors (two of them women), who have invariably found my work exemplary".

He had paused to look up the word "exemplary" in the dictionary, and now looked at what he had written. It was vital to word it in a balanced manner, avoiding either any impression of boasting or any false modesty. Suddenly the factory siren sounded. Ah, well, he thought, it would be better to finish it at home, in peace and quiet.

He was locking the door of his office behind him,

when a bony hand gripped his shoulder. He turned to find the directress standing behind him. Her face wore an angry frown.

"Where on earth have you been?", she demanded fiercely; "I've been ringing your office most of the afternoon, and there was no reply".

"I'm sorry", stammered Nimet; "I had to see Comrade Rifat. On . . . on a social matter".

"I've been summoned to the Ministry tomorrow", said the directress; "and you too!".

"Me?", echoed Nimet.

The directress nodded grimly.

"We failed to meet the quota on couplings", she said; "yet production is 15% up. We couldn't make out what had gone wrong. We've spent two whole days going over the figures. Then we found it: your planning report! You'd put a decimal point in the wrong place!"

In My Eyes

A poem by Ali Podrimja

(The Kosovar poet Ali Podrimja was born in Gjakova in 1942)

In my eyes
there are no tears;
there are only fires.

On my hands
the marks of chains,
the bites of serpents.

In my words
there are no prayers.
only the quaking of the earth,
the fall of citadels.

ALBANIAN NEWS

(April - July 1983)

POLITICS

In April the Permanent Commission of the People's Assembly on Education and Culture was convened. The Chairman, deputy Kristaq Rama, presented a report including the results of working parties from across the country and the report of the Ministry. The Minister of Education and Culture, Tefta Çami, was present to explain various points and answer questions. After considering many aspects of education and culture, the Commission set concrete tasks for the Ministry and the various institutions to carry out.

Also in April, the National Scientific Conference on the Problems of the Economy during the 7th. Five Year Plan was held in Tirana over three days. Party and State leaders, specialists in production, economics and science, and vanguard workers took part in the proceedings. In her opening speech, Nexhmije Hoxha, Directress of the Institute of Marxist-Leninist Studies, said:

"The aim of our conference is to analyse the most important processes of the development of the economy over the past two years, to draw conclusions from them, and to make generalisations so that all these help to fulfil and solve the problems of the whole 7th. Five Year Plan, as well as to raise problems that have to do with the future development of the economy".

Among the papers presented were ones on the intensification of agriculture and the field of socialist relations in production. In closing the conference, President Ramiz Alia summed up the important discussions of the previous three days and looked forward to the nationwide preparations for the drawing up of the 8th. Five Year Plan.

On May 1st. the traditional celebrations were held all over Albania. In Tirana the May Day demonstration

was attended by thousands of inhabitants, who gave a noisy and colourful welcome to the various contingents of workers, cooperativists, students, schoolchildren and mass organisations, and to the tribune where Enver Hoxha, along with other Party and state leaders and revolutionary trade unionists from around the world, were gathered.

On June 10th. the 105th. anniversary of the Albanian League of Prizren was commemorated throughout the country. The League played the leading role in uniting Albanian patriots against the Turks, and against the machinations of the neighbouring states who wished to dismember Albania.

On June 28th. the 3rd. Session of the 10th. People's Assembly, attended by Enver Hoxha, Ramiz Alia, Adil Çarçani and other Party and State leaders, as well as by vanguard workers in industry and agriculture, was opened in Tirana.

On July 10th. meetings were held around the country to celebrate 40 years of the People's Army. The largest rally was in the Qemal Stafa Stadium in Tirana, attended by Enver Hoxha and other leaders.

DIPLOMACY

In April the Albanian representative to the UN Economic Commission on Europe, Bujor Kolaneci, spoke on the causes of the economic crisis and pointed out that Albania had avoided the ills of inflation and unemployment because of her independence from the capitalist and revisionist system. This did not mean, however, that Albania was isolated, and Albania welcomed trade relations on a principled basis with many different countries.

During the period under review, the Albanian Ambassador to Austria, Idriz Bardhi, presented his credentials to President Rudolf Kirschl#ger; the Albanian Ambassador to Mexico, P#rparim Sinani, presented his credentials to President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado; the Albanian Ambassador to France, Maxhun Peka, presented his credentials to President Fran#ois Mitterand; the Albanian Ambassador to China,

Dhimitër Stamo, presented his credentials to Vice-President Chue-Hsue Fan; the Albanian Ambassador to Japan, Dhimitër Stamo, presented his credentials to Emperor Hirohito; and the Peruvian Ambassador, Carlos Alberto Higuera, presented his credentials to President Ramiz Alia.

INDUSTRY

Many branches of industry reported good results in overfulfilling the targets of the plan. In chrome ore extraction the miners produced 9,800 tons over the target in June alone, while the workers of the chrome upgrading plant at Kalimash (Kukës district) exceeded the plan by 400 tons of concentrate.

Similar results were achieved in copper, iron-nickel, quartz and bauxite extraction.

AGRICULTURE

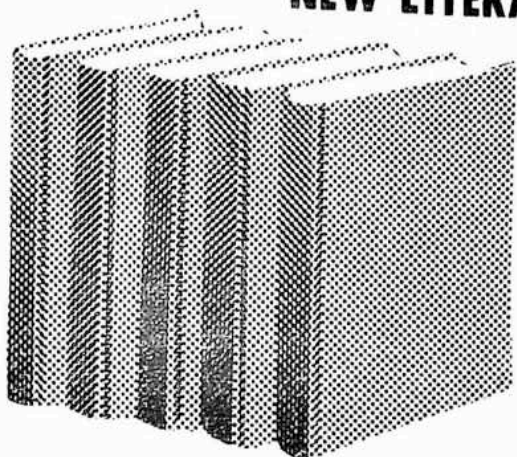
53% of all arable land in Albania is now irrigated, placing it among the top countries in the world in this respect. Of this irrigated land, 12% is irrigated by the "rain-like" method and this is planned to increase to 15% by 1985. In the Plain of Korça nearly 500 hectares of land sown with sugar beet, maize, cotton and fodder will be irrigated by this system this year, as will nearly 46,000 hectares of the coastal zone, in order to meet the planned targets for intensification of production in these areas.

Many districts reported a fine wheat harvest, with the plan overfulfilled and yields higher than last year.

FOREIGN TRADE

Albania was represented at the Milan International Fair in April. The pavilion was visited by many thousands of people, including many Arbëresh. Albania was also represented at International Fairs in Tokyo, Algiers and Barcelona.

NEW LITERATURE



Price (inc. postage)

- Kiço Blushi: "Beni Walks on his Own" (novel) £2
- "Problems of the War of National Liberation and Socialist Transformation" £2
- "Monuments of Culture in Albania" £2
- "NEW ALBANIA", No. 3, 1983 50p.
 (Planned economy; May Day; Women's Union Congress; the chemical industry; the People's Army; reservoirs; crime prevention; Byron and Albania; the painter Vangjush Mio; the May concerts; UNESCO's Week of Albanian Culture; the Albanian Alps; Albanian marble; the art of filigree; the film festival)
- "NEW ALBANIA", No. 4, 1983 50p.
 (The third dam on the Drin; Durrës; Hasan Prishtina; the Enver Hoxha Engineering Works; milk production; the composer Tish Daia; Shkodra castle; the island of Sazan; the Albanian Export Exhibition; the river Langër-ica; Albanian glassware; Piana degli Albanese; the National Folklore Festival; Albanian philately)
-

"Our Women"

- woodcut by Pandi Mele



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