

Enver Hoxha and Eurostalinism

UDC: 930.32.25

DOI: 10.15421/172250

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Abstract

Enver Khalil Hoxha - Albanian statesman, politician, military and party leader, the leader of Albania in 1944-1985. Having come to power, he focused on rebuilding the country destroyed by the war. The article shows that for more than forty years of his leadership, success has been achieved in the development of the economy, education and social security of the population. At the same time, Hoxha is criticized for political repression, which included extrajudicial killings and executions of competitors and "disloyal elements" among party members, a complete ban on any religious activity, and the creation and use of forced labor camps.

As a leader, Enver Hoxha belongs to the recent past of a political and economic system that practically does not exist today. Nevertheless, according to the authors of this article, it makes sense to remember him and evaluate his activities from the point of view of the present day.

The methodological basis for writing the article was the concept of a political leader, as "insight" into the essence of the personality of the Albanian leader. The authors consider that the definition of a political leader proposed by Jean Blondel is the most appropriate in this context. The content of the article substantiates the implication of this definition in relation to the activities of the Albanian communist dictator.

Attention is drawn to the fact that already the I Congress of the Albanian Communist Party (1948) declared adherence to the experience of the USSR and the CPSU (b) and called on the Albanians to fulfill Stalin's five-year plans. At the same time, a campaign against the "enemies of the people" was launched in the country, led by Sigurimi, the Albanian counterpart of the NKVD. The article emphasizes that Hoxha was in sharp disagreement with the liberalization policy of the USSR initiated by Nikita Khrushchev. As a result, the political vector changed: Soviet-Albanian relations deteriorated and were cut off permanently after a few years, while the Albanian leadership became closer to China.

In 1957, the People's Republic of China assured Hoxha of political and economic support and actually provided quite substantial assistance. Attention is called to the fact that Albania for the People's Republic of China has long been the only political ally in Europe and the world, a spokesman for the United Nations and an important propaganda partner. However, according to the authors, in the late 1970s, Hoxha broke off relations with China and closed the country to the rest of the world.

At the end of the article, analytical conclusions are given regarding Stalin-Lenin socialism in Europe and the role of Enver Hoxha as the last representative of orthodox communism in Europe. The authors summarize that he was an atypical figure among the socialist leaders of that time, surrounded by the halo of the people's leader and "father of the nation." The historical traditions of Albania contributed to the fact that the ideas and methods of implementing people's power, put forward by Enver Hoxha and his inner circle, proved to be in wide demand by the society.

Keywords: Enver Hoxha, political leader, Eurostalinism, autarky, anti-Revisionism

Citation: Gugnin, A., & Lisnievska, Yu. (2022). Enver Hoxha and Eurostalinism. *Grani*, 25(4), 50-59. <https://doi.org/10.15421/172250>

Енвер Ходжа і Євросталінізм

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Анотація

Енвер Халіл Ходжа – албанський державний, політичний, військовий та партійний діяч, керівник Албанії у 1944-1985 роках. Прийшовши до влади, зосередився на відновленні країни, зруйнованої війною. У статті показано, що за понад сорок років його керівної діяльності було досягнуто успіхів у розвитку економіки, освіти та соціальної захищеності населення. Водночас Ходжу критикують за політичні репресії, які включали позасудові вбивства та страти конкурентів та «нелояльних елементів» серед членів партії, повну заборону будь-якої релігійної діяльності, створення та використання таборів примусової праці.

Енвер Ходжа як лідер належить нещодавньому минулому політико-економічній системі, яка практично сьогодні не існує. Проте, на думку авторів цієї статті, є сенс згадати про нього та оцінити його діяльність з погляду сьогодення.

Методологічною основою написання статті став концепт політичного лідера, як «вживання» в сутність особистості албанського ватажка. Автори вважають, що у даному контексті найбільш адекватним є визначення політичного лідера, запропоноване Жаном Блонделем. У змісті статті обґрунтовано імплікацію цього визначення щодо діяльності албанського

Стаття надійшла / Article arrived: 07.07.2022

Схвалено до друку / Accepted: 31.08.2022

комуністичного диктатора.

Звертається увага, що вже І з'їзд албанської компартії (1948 р.) декларував відданість досвіду СРСР і ВКП(б) і закликав албанців виконувати сталінські п'ятирічки. Водночас у країні розгорнулася кампанія боротьби з «ворогами народу», яку очолює Сігурімі – албанський аналог НКВС. У статті наголошується, що Ходжа був різко незгодний з політикою лібералізації СРСР, започаткованою Микитою Хрущовим. В результаті відбулася зміна політичного вектора: радянсько-албанські відносини погіршилися і за кілька років були перервані назавжди, тоді як албанське керівництво зблизилося з Китаєм.

КНР у 1957 році запевнив Ходжу у політичній та економічній підтримці та насправді надав досить суттєву допомогу. Звернуто увагу на факт, що й Албанія для КНР тривалий час залишалася єдиним політичним союзником у Європі та світі, глашатаєм в ООН та важливим пропагандистським партнером. Однак, як пишуть автори, наприкінці 70-х років Ходжа розірвав відносини з Китаєм і заклав країну для решти світу.

Наприкінці статті наводяться аналітичні висновки щодо сталінсько-ленінського соціалізму в Європі та ролі Енвера Ходжи як останнього представника ортодоксального комунізму в Європі. Він, резюмують автори, був нетиповою фігурою серед тогочасних соціалістичних вождів, оточеної ореолом народного вождя і «батька нації». Історичні традиції Албанії сприяли тому, що ідеї та методи втілення народовладдя, висунуті Енвером Ходжей та його найближчим оточенням, виявилися широко затребуваними суспільством.

Ключові слова: Енвер Ходжа, політичний лідер, євросталінізм, автаркія, антиревізіонізм

Цитування: Гугнін О., Лісневська Ю. Енвер Ходжа і Євросталінізм. *Науково-теоретичний альманах Грані*. 2022. Том 25. №4. С. 50-59. <https://doi.org/10.15421/172250>

Introduction

Enver Hoxha, as a leader, belongs to the recent past of a political and economic system, which practically does not exist today. Nevertheless, according to the intention of the authors of this article, it is advisable to assess his role in the history of the European country from the point of view of the present day. As one of the founders of the Communist Party, the commander-in-chief of the National Liberation Army and the first person in the party-state system, E. Hoxha has undeniable merits before Albania of the twentieth century. Under his leadership, the country was liberated from occupation, the economy was restored, the cultural and educational sphere was developed, and the country's political and military independence was strengthened. Rather a resident than a citizen of a small, backward and poor, non-Slavic country of the Balkans, in his activities E. Hoxha became a propagandist and implementer of the ideas of Stalinism in the state of Southern Europe. However, one should not minimize the negative aspects of the politician's activities aimed at maintaining his own leadership role: the use of violent methods of socio-economic transformations, mass repressions both in relation to representatives of the highest party and state leadership, and in relation to ordinary citizens, doctrinairism, servility, unjustified distance from the rest of the world.

The determinants of the author's intention are explained by experience in the study of the role and specifics of modern political leaders and the interest in the social development of Albania

The aim of the work is an attempt to highlight (from the current point of view) the ideological and pragmatic activities of E. Hoxha as a conductor of Stalin's plans in governing the state and society. The article describes the historical environment in which Hoxha came to power and held it for 40 difficult years. It is shown that, while maintaining servility to Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet Union, Hoxha largely relied on his own resources and goals, achieving the country's autarky and turning it into a military camp.

Reference publications, monographs, periodicals and journalistic works, scientific and historical literature, as well as the works of Hoxha were used as sources in this work. In addition, thematic publications on the Internet were used to supplement the dictator's psychological profile.

The methodological basis for writing the article was the concept of a political leader. The authors use the term "concept" in its primary understanding (by Pierre Abelard) as "insight", in this case, into the essence of the personality of the Albanian leader.

This topic is of particular relevance today, when there is an urgent need to define the differences between leadership and pseudo-leadership. Pseudo-leaders do not regard the norms of international law, unleash wars, seize the territories of countries that in the recent past were called friendly and even fraternal. We believe that the definition of a political leader proposed by J. Blondel is the most appropriate in this context: "Leadership is power because it consists in the ability of one person or several individuals on top to force others to do something positive or negative that they would not do or, ultimately, might not do at all... A leader is someone who, due to certain circumstances, is "above the nation" in the case of national political leadership and can give orders to other citizens" (Blondel, 1992)

Youth, universities

Enver Khalil Hoxha was born on 16 October 1908 in Gjirokastra, the Ottoman Empire. But not in the family of the employee, as Alexey Leshin claims (Leshin, 2022). His father was a textile merchant and, in addition to Enver, had a son and three daughters. It is known that he entrusted Enver's upbringing to his brother Hysen. The Hoxha clan lived in a one-story wooden house on the outskirts of the city that burned down in the early 1960s. Although one of the family photos shows how Uncle Hysen puts on a traditional fez for his young nephew, the Hoxha family did not belong to devout Muslims. They were Bektashi, representatives of the so-called Sufi brotherhood that appeared in Asia Minor in the fourteenth

century¹. At the beginning of the 20th century, the center of the Sufi brotherhood moved to Albania, where it played a positive role in the struggle for independence. Hysen Hoxha, as a Bektash, took an active role in this struggle, in 1912 he was elected a delegate to the All-Albanian Congress in Vlora, which proclaimed the independence of the country. It should be noted that Enver shared his uncle's views from an early age, especially after King Ahmet Zog came to power in 1928 (Iskanderov, 2008, p. 93).

Coming from a wealthy family, young Enver received a very good education as for a country in which at that time more than 85% of the inhabitants were generally illiterate (Polonsky, 2015, p. 25). He received his primary education at the mosque's religious school, where the basics of Arabic and Turkish were taught as compulsory subjects. Then his uncle assigned him to a local lyceum for the children of wealthy parents, where, according to Hoxha's biographer Petr Iskanderov, "French was taught weekly" (Iskanderov, 2008, p. 26). After graduating from Gjirokastra, on the advice of the same uncle, he moved to the city of Korçë, where he continued his studies at the French Lyceum. There he first met representatives of the left wing in the social movement of the country. Enver continues to be fond of literature, music, organizes public debates². At the same time, the lyceum student discovered the works of the classics of Marxism.

After graduating from the Lyceum in the summer of 1930, Hoxha went to France, where he entered the natural faculty of the University of Montpellier, receiving a state scholarship from the Queen Mother. Having little interest in biology, he moved to Paris, where he completed the Sorbonne courses in philosophy and began writing articles about Albania in *L'Humanité*. Hoxha joined the French Communist Party and he managed to get acquainted with such prominent figures as Marcel Cachin, Maurice Thorez, Henri Barbusse and Louis Aragon. At the same time, the young communist began to study Stalin's activities and the history of the CPSU(b), believing that Albania needed just such a party (Polonsky, 2015, p. 12).

In April 1932, Hoxha moved to Brussels, where he began working at the Albanian consulate as a secretary. Biographers explain such a rise in a career not only by connections, but also by "the individual abilities of the future Albanian leader" (Iskanderov, p. 13). Along with working at the embassy, Hoxha is studying at the Faculty of Law of the University of Brussels, but he never managed to graduate from it.

In 1936, he retired and returned to his homeland. His biographer explains this step by exposing him as the author of publications in *L'Humanité* (Iskanderov, p. 13).

Formation of the communist worldview and party career

In the spring of 1936, Hoxha returned to Albania, where he began teaching French at the Korça Lyceum (Mussky, 2004, p. 538). By that time, he was fluent in languages such as French, Italian, Serbian and Russian (Rajmer, 2018).

At this time, he met one of the founders of the Albanian communist movement - Ali Kelmendi, this acquaintance played an extremely important role in the political development of Enver Hoxha. After the death of Ali Kelmendi, Enver Hoxha, with the support of the leader of the Bulgarian communists, Georgy Dimitrov, was elected as a head of the Korça party organization. Thus began, Ilya Polonsky writes, his ascent to the very top of the Albanian communist movement, and later the Albanian state (Polonsky, p.14). One of the modern Albanian critics of Hoxha, Blendi Fevznu, considers him a narcissistic politician, always and under all circumstances striving to be in the center of what is happening, possessing a truly iron will and obsessed with a thirst for power (Khudoley, 2016, p. 43). To this characteristic, it is necessary to add another communicative aspect of Enver's personality: he had a "model appearance", 189 centimeters tall, dressed with taste. In the book "Soviet-Albanian Relations" (Volkov, 2010, p. 84) we read: "Hoxha had a good looks, the talent for persuading both one interlocutor and a wide audience" (Mussky, p. 538). According to colleagues, Hoxha knew how to motivate his subordinates and had an excellent sense of humor.

Taking into account the objective and subjective predispositions of Enver, at the insistence of the Albanian section of the French Communist Party and at his own request addressed to Cachin and Dimitrov, in March 1938 he was sent to the USSR, where he stayed for more than a year.

In Moscow, Enver studied at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and the Institute of Foreign Languages, while continuing to translate speeches and works of Stalin, Molotov, Vyshinsky into Albanian. In April 1938 he met Stalin and Molotov for the first time. This meeting was the most important event in the life of the Islamist-Communist, made an indelible impression on him, contributed to Hoxha's ideological conviction. Even then, he promised his ideological interlocutors to rally the Albanian communists into a single Bolshevik party along the Soviet lines (Mussky, 538). As we shall see, he kept his promise. Actually, Hoxha never hid that he considers the Soviet dictator his mentor and idol. Later, he recalled his first meeting with Stalin: "... a few minutes after the first words we said, we had the feeling that we were not talking with the great Stalin, but were sitting

¹ The main rites of the Bektashi are a conglomeration of Islam, Christianity and paganism - communion with wine, bread and cheese, confession to a mentor and celibacy.

² His classmate at the lyceum was Sabiha Kasimati, the first Albanian who received a higher education and later became a doctor of science. In 1951, on suspicion of participating in the attack on the Soviet embassy in Tirana, she was shot. In the 90s, she was rehabilitated and posthumously awarded the Order of Honor of the Nation

with a comrade whom we knew before, with whom we talked many times” (Hoxha, “Mir”, 2021).

In April 1939, Albania was occupied by Mussolini's troops. According to the decision of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, Hoxha was transferred to Albania along with two assistants from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, who provided communication with Stalin. Returning home, Hoxha was immediately fired from his teaching job due to his refusal to join the Albanian Fascist Party. However, “Enver continued to be on the territory of his native country, engaged in propaganda activities among the workers of seaports and oil fields, for which he was sentenced to death in absentia by an Italian court” (Polonsky, p. 16). There was growing discontent among the Albanians with the Italian occupation, with anti-fascist sentiments spreading in different sections of Albanian society. The first Albanian partisan detachments appeared, which began to sabotage. Hoxha himself opened a tobacco shop in Tirana, which became the center of the capital's resistant group.

On November 7, 1941, the anniversary of the October Revolution, the creation of the Communist Party of Albania was proclaimed at a secret meeting in Tirana³. Koci Xoxe (1911) was elected as the first secretary. And Enver Hoxha, Ilya Polonsky writes, became his deputy and commander-in-chief of the controlled partisan formations operating in the regions of Southern Albania.

By July 1943, the Albanian partisan forces numbered 10,000 men, operating in 20 battalions and 30 detachments. Colonel General Enver Hoxha led the partisan forces, called the People's Liberation Army.

On November 17, 1944, units of the Albanian National Liberation Army took Tirana. On November 29, Shkoder, the last city held by the occupiers, was taken. It was the Day of the liberation of Albania from the fascist invaders.

It is important to emphasize that Albania was cleared of occupiers without the direct participation of Soviet or Anglo-American troops. However, Enver Hoxha tirelessly repeated that “the Albanian people consider the Soviet Union their liberator. For the victory in the Great Patriotic War and the subsequent assistance of the USSR in Albania were decisive factors of our victory” (Volkov, p. 85).

Enver Hoxha revisited Moscow, where he held meetings with the top Soviet leadership - Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov, Mikoyan and Zhdanov, as well as Georgy Dimitrov. He once again “emphasized his intentions to start the construction of socialism of the Leninist-Stalinist style, as well as the need to restore the full political independence of Albania” (Polonsky, p.16). This statement by Hoxha violated the plans of the British and American allies of the USSR, as Churchill admitted the

possibility of a post-war partition of Albania between Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy. It is clear that Churchill's plans put an end to the political independence of Albania and the future of the Albanians as a single nation. Therefore, not only Hoxha and the communists, but also other representatives of the patriotic forces of the Albanian people were categorically against the implementation of the "British project" and supported the idea of building an independent Albanian state after the war.

Rise to power

In this direction, elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in 1945, which ensured the victory of the candidates of the Democratic Front (this name was given to the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Front in August 1945). Candidates from this front received 91.1% of the votes; Enver Hoxha was its chairman until his death (Smirnova, 2003, p. 224).

The Constituent Assembly proclaimed Albania a People's Republic, and on March 14 approved a democratic constitution and instructed Hoxha to form the first People's Republic Government. In the government formed on March 23, 1946, Enver Hoxha took the post of prime minister, minister of foreign affairs and minister of war. Hoxha, back in 1942, declared his desire “... to see Albania liberated and its independence restored” (Vyshinsky, & Lozova, 1948, p. 16). His government based its foreign policy on a close friendship with the USSR; in accordance with this course, Soviet-Albanian diplomatic relations were restored on November 10, 1945.

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, Enver Hoxha, who led the Albanian delegation, presented fair reparation demands to Italy. Thanks to the support of the Soviet delegation, the peace treaty with Italy included Italy's commitment to respect the independence and integrity of Albania and to pay it \$5 million in reparations.

As for the prime minister's personal life, in 1942 Hoxha married Nexhmije Xhuglini, the daughter of a Muslim Albanian. Evgeny Kazakov writes that the Queen Mother Pedagogical Institute in Tirana, an elite university for women where Nexhmije studied, “became a real forge of Albanian communist cadres” (Kazakov, 2020). When the schoolteacher Nexhmije Xhuglini, the author continues, went underground and adopted the field name Delikatya (Fragile), “she joined a party of only a few hundred members, and by the end of the war she was already serving in the division's propaganda department— one of six in the National Liberation Army of Albania, numbering more than 20,000 soldiers”. Many authors believe that it is to her that Hoxha owes his impeccable image of a leader who works tirelessly for the good of the nation, a loving husband and father. However, almost paranoid desire of E. Hoxha to always be in the center of what is happening, the iron will and the obsession with

³ Of the thirteen participants in the meeting in Tirana who survived the period of occupation, eleven were physically destroyed or politically repressed during the post-war inner-party purges carried out under the leadership of their then colleague and “temporary” secretary. K. Dzodze in 1949 was convicted by the Khojaists for his pro-Tit orientation and hanged. – See P. Iskenderov. Enver Hoxha.

the lust for power also increased significantly under the influence of Nexhmije. She played a significant role in the political life of the country, holding high positions both under her husband and under his successor R. Alia in 1985 (Fevziu, 2016, p. 206).

Acceptance of Stalinist ideology and practice

In June 1945, the commander-in-chief of the National Liberation Army of Albania, Colonel General Enver Hoxha, visited the USSR, where he attended the Victory Parade and met with Stalin. During his visits to Moscow, Enver Hoxha did everything to make the leader of all nations believe in his sincere devotion. According to the Soviet diplomat Kliment Levychkin, the Soviet ambassador to Albania, the Albanian leader looked at Stalin like a loving son to his father, but it was almost impossible to find the favor of the leader, who considered the Albanian a “petty bourgeois” prone to nationalism. Enver Hoxha said during the toast: “There are one million Albanians, and together with you - two hundred million of us.” To which Stalin remarked: “There are two hundred million of us without you” (Zhironov, 2004).

But at that time, it was impractical to refuse Hoxha’s help. However, Albanian and Soviet leaders interpreted proletarian internationalism differently. Hoxha counted on donations, but Anastas Mikoyan, who was entrusted with organizing the supply of Albania, immediately became interested in what could be obtained in exchange for Soviet supplies. Hoxha’s indignation knew no bounds. “His behavior,” he wrote in his memoirs about Mikoyan, “can be called the behavior of an international huckster, and not an internationalist communist. Mikoyan did not care at all about Albania’s problems in building socialism and life of the Albanian people. For him, Albania was only a geographical name, one of the sources of speculative market profits”. (Hoxha, 1980, p. 34)

And Levychkin was appointed ambassador to such a difficult partner in the socialist camp for a reason. He knew how to build a dialogue so that the partner himself came to the conclusion necessary for the ambassador, and then agreed with his “absolutely correct” opinion. As a result, Hoxha got the impression that all his requests were accepted in Moscow (Hoxha, p. 35). The government of the USSR took a number of important steps to provide assistance to Albania. Thus, despite the extremely difficult situation that had developed by that time in the USSR, on September 22, 1945, the first official Soviet-Albanian agreement on the supply of grain and chemical fertilizers on the terms of a loan of \$ 1.5 million was signed in Moscow. According to Mikoyan’s plan, the loan was supposed to be repaid within two years with commodity supplies (tobacco, copper ore, leather raw materials). Later, Enver Hoxha described this assistance of a brotherly country as follows: “In 1945, when our people were facing famine, Comrade Stalin changed the course of ships loaded with grain, which were intended for the Soviet people, who themselves were suffering from food shortages at that time, in order to send them

immediately to the Albanian people” (Hoxha, p. 35).

In a letter dated July 21, 1945 from the Albanian government to the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, a request was made to meet the urgent needs of the Albanian army, economy, finance and culture. In response, Stalin made appropriate orders to send certain types of weapons, vehicles and military equipment to Albania, for which the USSR People’s Commissariat of Finance released Goznak 20 kg of gold and 125 kg of silver, and instructions were given to print banknotes worth 1 billion Albanian francs. Specialists in the extraction of oil, iron, and chromium, asphalt production, finance, agriculture, education were immediately sent to Albania. Twenty places were allocated for citizens of Albania in higher educational institutions of the USSR (Volkov, 2010, p. 84). Special mention should be made of teaching the Russian language in this country. Despite serious political difficulties, language was taught in schools until 1992. In addition, all the political works of Enver Hoxha were immediately translated into Russian - the language of the “revisionists”.

By the way, the loans of the USSR were written off without repayment, the Albanian leaders in that difficult socio-economic situation could not imagine any other way but to build a socialist society with indispensable industrialization and socialist transformations in the countryside, similar to those that were implemented in the USSR at the time.

“The most faithful and reliable ally” - such an assessment of Albania was given by the former USSR ambassador to the NRA Dmitry Chuvakhin (Gromyko, Tikhvinsky, 1986, pp. 579-580). It does not contradict the facts recorded in the history of Soviet-Albanian relations. The Albanians responded to the help and benevolent steps of the Soviet Union with sincere, even fanatical, devotion and cordiality. Enver Hoxha himself, among the leaders of the Eastern European states, was “indeed an ideological, and not a situational, Stalinist” (Polyansky, p. 26).

Alexey Alexeev summed up that the first years of Hoxha’s term in power were a time of “the happy political romance of the USSR. Comrade Stalin was a role model for the Albanian leader” (Alekseev, 2021).

Soon after the war, a conflict arose between Hoxha and Tito. Tito, Djilas and Kardelj persuaded Enver to support the idea of forming a confederation and the integration of Albania into Yugoslavia. However, Hoxha was adamant. He convinced Moscow of the danger of Tito’s policies, warned that Belgrade was deceiving the Stalinist leadership.

Hoxha and his supporters, backed by Moscow, in 1947 carried out a coup in the party. Enver became the first secretary of the Central Committee, and Mehmet Shehu became his first deputy. In the summer of 1947, Hoxha returned to the USSR, where he was awarded the Order of Suvorov, which he always wore during official ceremonies.

In the erupted conflict, Stalin-Tito Hoxha made an unconditional choice in favor of the Soviet leader. Albania was the first to recognize the Comintern resolution, in which the leadership of Yugoslavia, headed by Broz Tito, was accused of nationalism and an attempt to restore capitalism. On July 1, 1948, the Albanian government announced the expulsion of Yugoslav advisers and elimination of all treaties with Yugoslavia, with the exception of the Treaty of Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which Yugoslavia later annulled on November 12, 1949.

Enver Hoxha, with the approval of Stalin, carried out a purge in the party among the "Titoists", during which the Minister of Internal Affairs of the country, Koçi Xoxe, was beheaded in June 1949. The latter led punitive operations in Albania in the post-war period⁴.

From that moment on, Albania changed from a country closer to Yugoslavia into a full-fledged satellite of the Soviet Union. This step of the leader had positive consequences. Thanks to joining the CMEA, the country created its own industrial base - the USSR supplied machinery and equipment, modern enterprises were built, a large number of Soviet specialists in various fields worked in Albania. In 1952, a naval base for Soviet submarines was built on the island of Sazan near the port city of Vlore.

The two-year plan for the restoration and development of the Albanian national economy in 1949-50 was largely based on Soviet loans. Building the foundations of socialism was "impossible without the moral, political and material assistance of the Soviet Union" (Arsh, 1992, p. 410). In fact, Albania's loan repayment obligations were soon cancelled.

Against the backdrop of accelerated industrialization and forced collectivization, popular uprisings broke out, violently suppressed by the authorities. There was a start of the bloody activities of "Sigurimi" - the Directorate of State Security) - the Albanian analogue of the NKVD. Purges and political processes were also carried out under the guidance of experienced Soviet specialists⁵.

During his reign, Yuri Kovalchuk states, Enver Hoxha "managed to argue with all his allies except Stalin" (Kovalchuk, 2020). Perhaps he would have argued with Stalin, but the leader, generously feeding the Albanian leader, soon died, so he had to quarrel with Nikita Khrushchev. Formally, because of the struggle against the cult of personality, which the leader of the Soviet Union began to actively carry out. However, according to Kovalchuk, the more relevant reason is the Albanian leader's habit of "forgetting" about accumulated debts,

then suddenly accusing recent friends of Trotskyism, fascism, revisionism, adherence to counter-revolution, and so on" (Kovalchuk, 2020). It should be noted that the Albanian Party of Labour followed a course of cautious criticism of a "cult of personality" until the end of 1956. Already in the same year, some party leaders stopped hiding which personality cult annoys them the most. Hoxha was rapidly losing his majority - the April conference of the party organization of Tirana in 1956 almost removed him from the post of first secretary. But Minister of Defense Beqir Balluku warned Hoxha's wife about the hatching plans, and she herself appealed to Minister of Internal Affairs Kadri Hazbiu for help. He, in turn, alerted the Sigurimi services, the security forces defeated the party members and the repressions of the opposition began. They were sentenced to be shot (including the pregnant Liri Gega, whom Khrushchev tried to protect) or to maximum prison terms (Kazakov, 2022).

Khrushchev invited the Albanian leader in April 1957 for consultations. During the meeting, he called on Hoxha to improve relations with Yugoslavia and rehabilitate former PLA members who were deprived of membership for supporting Yugoslavia and the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Hoxha refused to make concessions, to which the Soviet leader remarked: "Do you think we should return to the deeds of Stalin? ... You are like Stalin, who killed people." Hoxha replied: "Stalin killed traitors, we also kill them" (Hoxha, 1996).

The Fourth Congress of the ATP (February 13-20, 1961) was the last event in Albania visited by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. During the work of the congress, its participants condemned the Soviet Union, approving China, claimed that the country was headed by genuine Marxists. In response, the USSR threatened to stop economic support, and in April all Soviet specialists were recalled from the country. In May, the entire personnel of the naval base were withdrawn, leaving the Albanians 4 submarines and other military equipment (Rech, 1972)⁶.

On November 7, 1961, Hoxha delivered a speech in which he called Khrushchev "a revisionist, anti-Marxist and defeatist". Hoxha called Stalin the last communist leader of the Soviet Union and emphasized the political independence of Albania. He boldly declared: "... the Albanian people and their Party of Labour will even eat grass, if necessary, but they will never sell themselves for 30 pieces of silver. They would rather die standing than live in shame on their knees" (Rech, 1972). By November 11, 1960, the USSR and other Warsaw Pact

⁴And in general, not one of the six ministers of internal affairs of people's Albania died a natural death. It is characteristic that a similar fate befell Genrikh Yagoda, the Soviet People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, ten years earlier.

⁵The famous Russian diplomat and writer of the 19th century, Konstantin Leontiev, noted: "An Albanian loves only war, self-interest and hospitality; until recently, he was a stranger to both the Turk and the Greek - and equally a friend when it was to his advantage. In personal affairs, the Albanian highlander is completely unfaithful to friendship and word; he loves blood and revenge and is not afraid of death." Quoted from: Y. Kovalchuk. Enver Hoxha: a parable for the whole of Albania. Gas. Balkanist.History.03.12.2020 If you listen to this characteristic, then Enver Hoxha is the true son of his people.

⁶From 1948 to 1960, Albania received \$200 million in Soviet aid for technical and infrastructural expansion. The submarine base built on Sazan Island has become a serious military facility that poses a potential threat to the US 6th Fleet.

countries broke off relations with Albania and preferred to pretend that they had “forgotten” about it.

Rejoicing at the removal of Khrushchev from the political arena, Hoxha nevertheless has no sympathy for his successors. For some time, the embassy mansions in Moscow housed three technical staff each, but then, at the initiative of the Albanians they were recalled. In 1964, an empty Soviet embassy building in Tirana was requisitioned. The complete rupture of all relations has become a *fait accompli*.

On the other hand, after Brezhnev came to power, there was no information about Albania in the Soviet press. “Why is nothing written in the press about the events in Albania?”, “Why is Albania not mentioned in our press now?” - was regularly repeated at party meetings and lectures on international issues (Kamenskaya, 2017, p. 46). The loss of Albania was perceived by the population of the country very painfully and became the starting point for discussions about the development of relations between the USSR and the socialist countries.

Change of focus

When relations with Moscow began to cool down, Hoxha tries to get closer to another patron - the PRC. From September 13 to October 3, 1956, he visited China as the head of an Albanian delegation to attend the VIII Congress of the CPC. Hoxha had high hopes for meetings with the Chinese leader Mao Zedong, intending to gain significant support from the Chinese in order to ease Soviet pressure on Albania. Although the Albanians hoped that Chinese support would be even greater than the Soviet one, the People’s Republic of China did not want to unconditionally become Hoxha’s new donor. Chinese support began to arrive only in 1963, but neither in scale nor in effectiveness could it be compared with the Soviet one. In addition, the Chinese sought to develop the agricultural sector, which ran counter to the aspirations of the Albanian leadership for the development of heavy industry. However, China provided the NRA with a \$12.5 million grant loan. In 1955, PRC loans covered 4.2% of Albania’s negative trade balance, in 1956 - 17%, in 1957 - already 21.6% (O’Connell, 1999, p. 160).

In an interview with the Chinese ambassador on the anniversary of Albanian-Chinese relations, it is indicated that China in those years provided great assistance to the country, sending about 6,000 specialists. (Though, the level of qualification of these specialists was lower than that of the Soviet ones). Albania, in turn, provided support in restoring the legitimate rights of the PRC at the UN (russian. people.com.cn., 2022). Andrei Dorozhkin notes that even in the 60s, during the “honeymoon” period of Tirana and Beijing, relations between them were not at all cloudless. Thus, the Albanian leadership took the “Cultural Revolution” rather timidly and was not entirely satisfied with the direction and nature of economic assistance to their country (Dorozhkin, 2019, p. 94). However, one should recognize the great importance

of Chinese assistance in 1960-70s both for the sustained economic development of Albania and for maintaining a relatively high standard of living for the population.

It is also interesting that the economic cooperation between the two countries was accompanied by ideological rapprochement. The Albanian leadership adopted, for example, some Maoist postulates - about “self-reliance”, “besieged fortress”, “two superpowers”. In the 1960s, inspired by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Hoxha abolished military ranks in the army, and the institution of political commissars was reintroduced. The construction of bunkers and pillboxes has been deployed throughout the country. At first, long-term pillbox firing points were planned to be built in strategic locations, but then Enver Hoxha changed his intentions “Every inhabitant is a soldier, and the people are an army” (Ksaverov, 2022). This phrase of his became law. According to the doctrine of the People’s War, Albania did not need a professional army, officers. Now the dictator could unfold - he could not be overthrown by the military. Moreover, these postulates formed the basis of the Albanian state autarky (Smirnova, 2003, p. 329).

Hoxha later sharply criticized the “three worlds” theory and the idea of creating a united anti-Soviet front led by Mao. “The Mao Zedong idea”, he wrote, “is a theory that has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism. All Chinese leaders, in the struggle to achieve their goals, used it to carry out their counter-revolutionary plans” (Aleshin, p. 25). Enver Hoxha also considered the principle of political pluralism totally unacceptable. “Preaching the need for the existence of many parties in the leadership of the country, the “Mao Zedong idea”⁷ comes into direct contradiction to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the undivided role of the Communist Party in the socialist revolution and socialist construction” (Aleshin, p. 24).

In the early 1970s, China’s leadership took a course of increasingly intensive “bridge-building” with the Western states and Japan. Albanian leader sharply rejected the change of policy of the Chinese leadership. His attitude eventually led to the rupture of the NRA’s alliance with China. In the summer of 1978, the Chinese leadership, headed by Hua Guofeng, officially broke off all relations with Albania. After an argument with China, Albania became even more closed than after the break with the USSR.

Since 1978, Enver Hoxha’s regime has been deprived of a foreign alliance and pursues a policy of economic “self-sufficiency” (autarky), which leads to the impoverishment of the population. Even in the kitchen of the dictator himself, Hoxha’s cook writes, “it happened that there was not enough meat or milk” (Shablovsky, 2020, p. 139). Maintaining diplomatic relations with the outside world, Albania remains the most closed country in Europe, and also the last custodian of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

⁷ Enver Hoxha’s term. See A. Aleshin. Comrade Enver. Historical and biographical essay.

Hoxha - Eurodictator

a) achievements in the service of the country

The 40 years of Enver Hoxha's reign were marked by remarkable achievements in the development of health care and education. The Capital University (named after him) was reformed and the Academy of Sciences was established, a professional theater, television and literary society were created. The literacy rate of the population increased from 5 to 98%, and the population itself increased from one and a half to 3.5 million people. First railway line was built (Hoxha, Wikipedia, 2022).

Hoxha developed and determined the party's independent economic line. On the way to transforming the country from poor to developed, the Albanian Party of Labour mobilized and led the people. During his long reign, the country's economy underwent a revolution. Agricultural land was confiscated from wealthy landowners and united in collective farms, Albania was almost self-sufficient in food products. Electricity has been brought to the countryside, illiteracy of the villagers and epidemic diseases have been eliminated (Britannica, 2022). The barbaric custom of blood revenge was legally banned, and in 1960 the income tax was abolished. The family of every deceased Albanian citizen received a payment in the amount of the deceased's annual salary or pension. "Those who have worked at the same enterprise for at least 15 years are entitled to an annual free voucher to a resort (with a 50% discount for family members), they pay only 50% of the cost of medicines. Workers, schoolchildren, students enjoy free meals at the place of work or study, school uniforms and textbooks are also free. Men have the right to retire at 65, women at 60" (Chichkin, 1989, p. 46).

As a ruler for 40 years, Hoxha succeeded in transforming Albania from a semi-feudal remnant of the Ottoman Empire into an industrialized country with the most tightly controlled society in Europe.

It should be noted that based on the Stalinist paradigm, Hoxha created a cult of his own personality, which was developed and implemented in the 70s. Hoxha was portrayed as a genius commenting on almost every aspect of life, from culture to economics and military matters. Each Albanian textbook contained one or more quotations from Hoxha on the subjects studied. The Party honored him with titles such as Supreme Comrade, Great Teacher, and Sole Power. Hoxha introduced a new army salute - the Hoxhaist salute, in which the soldiers clench their right fist and raise it to shoulder level (Glenny, 1993, p.143).

b) repressions and purges

To eradicate the activity of the internal opposition, the Albanian dictator resorted to systematic "purges" - regime opponents were fired from their jobs, sent to hard labor and even executed. Minister of Justice Bilbil Klosi (1951-1966) stated that the political articles of the NRA Criminal Code should be tougher

than the Soviet counterparts of the period of Stalinist repressions (Abrahams, 2015, p.37). The number of political executions during the forty-year reign of Enver Hoxha is estimated at 5-7 thousand people, more than 34 thousand were sentenced to various prison terms, of which about 1 thousand died in custody (Albanians want Hoxha stripped, 2016). 50,000 people were interned and deported. Detentions, interrogations, forced labor, police supervision were reportedly applied to one third of the Albanian population (Stan, 2008, p.7).

A report by the Albanian Institute for the Study of Crimes of Communism, published in 2016, lists the total number of socialist-era political prisoners as 26,768 men and 7,367 women. Of these, 984 people died in custody, 308 went insane. 5577 men and 450 women were sentenced to death. In addition, people had been deported from their places of origin and displaced to internment camps. Life in these camps was little different from living in forced labour camps. All major construction projects of the socialist era in Albania - the construction of railways and roads, plants and factories - were practically carried out by prisoners and internees.

These figures, we read in Kommersant, may seem small at first glance (Kommersant, 2021). But in 1950, the population of Albania was 1.275 million people⁸.

Kommersant also cites other figures - the number of citizens who helped the special services: "In 1985, the number of such voluntary assistants was 14,765 people. Including 1297 agents, 1163 residents, 10355 informants and 1950 owners of safe houses" (Kommersant, 2021).

c) Hoxha and religion

Hoxha, like all communist leaders, brutally persecuted religion and the church. But no one, writes the historian Valery Yemelyanov, "except Enver Hoxha, thought of "taking and abolishing" religion by officially proclaiming his country the world's first atheistic state" (Emelyanov, 2008). The anti-religious campaign probably started under the influence of the Chinese "cultural" revolution. But it seems that the main reason for such a rash step is the hypertrophied nationalism of the Albanian dictator. At the initiative of Hoxha, archaeological and historical studies of the Illyrian past of the nation were intensified. In his speeches, he often repeated "The religion of the Albanians is Albanianism" (Emelyanov, 2008).

Article 55 of the Criminal Code, adopted in 1977, provided for punishment up to the death penalty for religious activity. And although in imposing total atheism, party and state directives prescribed to act only by political-propaganda methods, there was certainly violence. More than 2,000 churches, mosques, and Sufi monasteries were closed, converted or even destroyed. Hoxha ordered to convert churches and mosques of the country into warehouses, gyms, cinemas, stables, and other facilities (Emelyanov, 2008).

During the years of socialism, Igor Nikolaev writes,

⁸ By 1990, the population of Albania had grown to 3.225 million; in 2022 is 2.876 million URL: https://countrymeters.info/ru/Albania#population_2022.

1820 Orthodox and Catholic churches, and mosques were destroyed in Albania, and hundreds of clergymen were imprisoned or executed (Nikolaev, 2020).

Last years of reign

In 1981, Hoxha ordered the execution of several leading party and state figures in order to “ensure” the succession of the leaders of the younger generation. Then he handed over most of the state functions to Ramiz Alia, who succeeded him after his death (Britannica, 2022). (However, Hoxha remained Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces until the end of his life).

On September 25, 1982, a group of anti-communist emigrants led by Xhevdet Mustafa entered Albania illegally to assassinate Hoxha (Encyclopedia Communist, 2022). Mustafa set the task of overthrowing the communist regime and restoring the monarchy. On the way to Tirana, he committed several murders. On September 27, 1982, he was blocked by Sigurimi officers and died, unwilling to surrender. Mustafa’s action is the only documented attempt to assassinate the leader of Albania (Bykov, 2022). It created an additional pretext for another campaign of repression. Close relatives and employees of Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu were arrested. They were accused of planning the murder of Hoxha, later sentenced to death and shot on the night of September 10, 1983 (Pashtriku, 2022).

In the last years of his life, Enver suffered several micro-infarctions and micro-strokes. The situation was aggravated by diabetes, which Hoxha had suffered from since his youth. The immediate cause of the dictator’s death on April 11, 1985 was a cerebral hemorrhage. The Albanian leadership allowed only delegations of states that “remained committed to Marxism-Leninism” to the farewell ceremony. All telegrams of condolences from foreign countries, including the USSR, Italy and Yugoslavia, were sent back by the Albanians, except for the condolences of Castro, Ceausescu and Kim Il Sung. Farewell to Hoxha took place in Stalin Palace in Tirana.

Conclusions

Enver Halil Hoxha was certainly the leader of the European type, despite his selfless Stalinist affection. Study and life in the West, respect for his culture and civilization affected the style of his management of a freedom-loving, proud, but at the same time very law-abiding people.

During the years of his 40-year reign, his guidelines in foreign communication changed, depending on the state-utilitarian direction of Albania’s development. Hoxha was in strong disagreement with the liberalization policy of the USSR initiated by Nikita Khrushchev. His persistent attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Albania, indignation at Hoxha’s willfulness eventually led to a rupture of inter-party, and then interstate relations. As a result, there was a change in the political vector of the country - the Albanian leadership began rapprochement with China. In 1957 China assured Hoxha of political and economic support, and in fact provided quite substantial

assistance. It is noteworthy that Albania itself for the People’s Republic of China for a long time remained the only political ally in Europe and the world, a mouthpiece in the UN and an important propaganda partner. However, in the late 70s, Hoxha broke off relations with China and closed the country to the rest of the world.

After the break with the USSR, Enver Hoxha perceived everything Soviet in a negative way. This concerned, in particular, the attempts of the Soviet Union to restore ties or at least normalize interstate relations. Hoxha’s book “Khrushchevites” (1980) breathes hatred for all Soviet. The Albanian dictator despised the “endless meals of the Soviet leaders”, their appearance, and especially their arrogance in circumvention. (Hoxha himself was effective in all forms of communication, including appearance - handsome, elegant, very tall and slender, in addition, he had remarkable oratorical and motivational skills). Despite the huge loans that he received and, following the example of the Albanian king Zog, was in no hurry to return, Hoxha was dissatisfied with Soviet financial assistance, as well as with Soviet specialists.

Declaration of Albania as completely laistic, with all the ensuing repressive consequences, and building bunkers throughout the country - these decisions of Hoxha defy rational explanation. Albania is literally covered with bunkers designed to protect the country from the outside. Until the 1980s, about 700,000 reinforced concrete bunkers were built, about one for every four inhabitants of the country (Dimitri, 1978, p. 82). It has now been proven that they were designed in such a way that during the battle the soldiers in them would simply suffocate from powder gases.

And the last. The authors of the work had a cognitive dissonance caused by an attempt to understand the holistic enthusiasm and pragmatic acceptance of Stalin’s ideas. A person with a European education, respect for the French and Italian cultural traditions, and finally, a Muslim, brought up in the spirit of Sharia from early childhood, was able to imbue faith in primitive autocracy and primitive leaderism with a strategy of destroying competitors and false opponents. Although Hoxha did not have respect for Khrushchev, the latter revealed the genesis of Stalin’s crimes. And Hoxha, if he were objective, should have understood the essence of the criminal rule of his idol. One can still understand the transfer of the practice of exaltation and cult on one’s own personality, but not the acceptance of the methodology of the demonic extermination of yesterday’s associates.

Enver Khalil Hoxha lived and died as a European Stalinist. The basis of his leaderism (Hoxhism) was the first country that unconditionally relied on the Marxist-Stalinist ideology. Hoxhism began to form as a dogmatic version of Marxism-Leninism and as a development of Stalinism. Hoxhism sharply criticizes all rejections of communist ideas, calling them revisionist. At the same time, according to Hoxhism, each country has the right

to decide how to adopt socialist ideas. Hoxhaism gained a certain popularity in the Third World countries, where many organizations of Hoxhaist orientation operated and still continue to operate in a number of countries.

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