

March 23, 1949

Record of I. V. Stalin's Conversation with E. Hoxha concerning Albanian-Yugoslavian Relations and the Foreign and Domestic Policy of Albania

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Summary:

Stalin and Hoxha discuss a variety of topics relating to Yugoslav-Albanian relations, focusing specifically on economic, political, and military ties between the two countries. In addition, Stalin provides recommendations as to strengthen the Albanian communist regime.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of I. V. Stalin's Conversation with E. Hoxha
concerning Albanian-Yugoslavian Relations and
the Foreign and Domestic Policy of Albania

Moscow

March 23, 1949

22 hours, 00 minutes

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Present from the Soviet side:

A. Ya. Vyshinsky, USSR Envoy to Albania D. S. Chuvakhin, and V. I. Erofeev
(interpreter). □□□

□□□□

Form the Albanian side:

Chairman of the State Planning Commission of Albania Spiro Koleka and Albanian
Envoy to the USSR M. Prifti. □□ □□

After the exchange of mutual greetings, Comrade Stalin asks if the Albanian
delegation had a good trip.

Hoxha responds that the Albanian delegation had a very good trip.

Hoxha says that first of all, he was instructed to express the deepest feelings of love
and gratitude on behalf of the party and the Albanians for everything, which has been
done and is being done for Albania, to Comrade Stalin.

Comrade Stalin thanks him. Comrade Stalin asks if everything that was promised has
been delivered to Albania.

Hoxha responds affirmatively.

Comrade Stalin says that it is good that the Soviet people took the Italian battleship
and brought it back.^[1] The ship was brought back intact. The cruiser, however, was
steered by the Italians. They damaged it in the Black Sea before they released it to
the Soviet Union. Comrade Stalin notes that the Italians acted as bad guys in this
situation.

Hoxha says that this is what always happens with the Italians.

Comrade Stalin asks what questions does Hoxha have.

Hoxha responds that first of all, he would like to describe the situation, which
developed in the country and in the party, and then turn to the presentation of
several requests of economic order; and also he would like to tell Comrade Stalin
about the Albanian army and its needs. Beside that, he would like to raise several
questions, on which the Albanian comrades would like to get explanations from
Comrade Stalin. In conclusion, Hoxha would like to give a brief description of the
situation on the Albanian borders.

Comrade Stalin notes that Hoxha is not constrained by anything and may raise any
questions he wants.

Hoxha says that the letters of the Bolshevik party, which were sent to the Central
Committee of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, and the resolution of the
Informbureau saved Albania from an imminent catastrophe.

Comrade Stalin asked, what would that catastrophe manifest itself.

Hoxha responds that the Yugoslav nationalists pursued certain goals directed against
the Soviet Union, against the democratic and anti-imperialist camp, and against
Albania itself.

Comrade Stalin adds: "And against the Muslims".

Hoxha agrees with that. Hoxha states that the Yugoslav nationalists, belonging to the
Tito's group, conducted their subversive activity in Albania beginning from the
moment of the country's liberation. The Albanian communists could not but see that

the economic and other relations between Albania and Yugoslavia were developing poorly. However, the revolutionary alertness of the Albanian party turned out to be insufficiently sharp. The biggest responsibility for this lies with him, Envar Hoxha. The fact that the Albanians, already during the War, used to believe in friendly relations with the Yugoslavs, also played a certain role. All these factors taken together led to the situation, where the Albanian leaders did not notice that, as the folk saying goes, the fish rotted from its head. The

Yugoslav trotskists were engaged in all kinds of intrigues inside the Albanian party, trying to lead it to a split. In their subversive activity, they relied on support of their proponents Kochi Dzodze, Pandi Kristo and others.[\[2\]](#)

Comrade Stalin asks whether the named people are Slavs.

Hoxha responds affirmatively, pointing out that Kochi Dzodze is a native of Macedonia, and Pandi Kristo is from Korchi.[\[3\]](#)

Comrade Stalin asks, what religion do those people belong to.

Hoxha responds that they are Orthodox.

Hoxha states that the letters of the CC VKP(b) exposed the hostile position of the Yugoslav trotskists. If they had not received those letters, then honest Albanian Communists would have to return to the mountains sooner or later, in order to start new struggle once again. Analyzing its work, the Albanian party came to a conclusion that everything mentioned in the letters of the CC VKP(b) really was entirely relevant, with the exception of the fact that the Albanian Communists never lost their feeling of love and loyalty to the Soviet people, the Bolshevik party, and Comrade Stalin.

Comrade Stalin says that not all issues were covered in those letters, because we did not know everything at that time. It was only later that we learned, for example, that when the Yugoslavs wanted to send their division to Albania, they had a completely different goal from that, which they stated, not the goal to defend Albania from the Greek aggression, but to overthrow the regime, which existed in Albania. We learned about it later. Comrade Stalin says that not only the Albanians were not alert enough, but we did not understand everything either.

Hoxha says that the Albanians had close ties with the Yugoslavs, and they should have been able to figure their behavior our first. Hoxha adds that when he found out about the Yugoslavs' intention to send their division to Albania, he thought that the Yugoslavs had coordinated this issue with the Soviet government.

Comrade Stalin responds that the Yugoslavs were preparing to send that division in secret from us, but it is quite possible that to the Albanians they made it sound like that was done with the USSR consent. We learned about the Yugoslavs' intentions only accidentally from Hoxha information. When we criticized the Yugoslavs, they apologized, and said that it was a mistake.

Comrade Stalin asks what percentage of non-Albanians are there in the national population of Albania.

Hoxha responds that there are the Greeks and the Jews in Albania, but few of them. Besides, there are 5 to 6 thousand Macedonians in Albania. They live on the Southern border of Albania.

Comrade Stalin asks if there are many Albanians in Yugoslavia.

Hoxha responds that approximately 1 million Albanians live in Yugoslavia.

Comrade Stalin asks, what religion do those Albanians belong to.

Hoxha responds that those are primarily Muslims, and partially Catholics from the Northern regions of Albania.

Comrade Stalin asks if there are many Orthodox Christians in Albania, and also individuals of other denominations than Islam.

Hoxha responds that there are 30 to 35% Orthodox Christians in Albania, and 10 to 15 % Catholics. Catholics live mainly in the Northern part of the country, Orthodox Christians -- in the central regions, and partly in the Southern regions, and the Muslims--mostly in the South.

Comrade Stalin asks, what language do the Orthodox and the Catholics speak in Albania.

Hoxha responds that all of them speak Albanian.

Hoxha states that after the letters of the Bolshevik party and the resolution of the Infonnbureau, the Albanian Communists undertook decisive measures against the Yugoslavian nationalism, both within the party, and in the economic life. It was difficult to immediately undertake a full analysis of this situation in the party and in the country. It could be explained by the fact that one of the main proponents of the Yugoslav trotskists Kochi Džodže staged a strong resistance and concealed many things from the party. Considerable time was needed in order to establish what substantial work for sabotage of the economy, and what subversive activities inside the party were undertaken by the Yugoslav trotskists and their stooges in Albania. The country came to the party Congress already having some realization about the activities of the Yugoslav trotskists in Albania, and their subversive actions inside the party. Many serious mistakes were made in the party, but the intra-party democracy almost did not exist. The organizational structure of the party, which was fully copied from the Yugoslav model, was faulty. The party lived under the complete control of the security organs. Laws and instructions on economic issues in the country were not implemented. The reaction to the treason of the Toto clique was very strong in Albania. The struggle against the Yugoslav trotskists and their supporters got out of the party boundaries, and all the people were united in this struggle around the party. Hoxha notes that the feelings of the Albanian people to the Yugoslav people did not suffer from all of this. The party took care of that.

The party Congress showed that in the struggle with the Yugoslav trotskists, the party cured itself, and became even stronger. Congress also showed that the party, even though it is a young party, possessed great power and energy for the struggle for the correct line. Sharp criticism of the activities of the pro-Yugoslav elements unfolded in front of all the Albanian people. The mistakes made by the party were admitted, and the ways to correct those mistakes were determined. The party did not use repressive measures on a large scale, and acted in this respect very carefully, starting from the assumption that many comrades, who took the false way, believed that the line, which was suggested by the Yugoslavs, was correct. Therefore, the comrades, who admitted and criticized their mistakes, were given an opportunity to correct them. Only Koehl Džodže, Pandi Kristo and three other people were arrested. Kristo Temelko [\[4\]](#), one of the people who was mostly responsible for the implementation of the harmful Yugoslav line, and who repeatedly expressed his hostile attitude to the Soviet Union and the Soviet comrades working in Albania, was not arrested. Kristo Temelko presented all the facts related to his activity at the session, and sharply criticized his own behavior. His self-criticism was considered sufficiently honest and objective.

Comrade Stalin asks what position did Kristo Temelko have.

Hoxha responds that he was a General and had a position of the political leader of the army.

Comrade Stalin asks, where is Kristo Temelko now, and what is he doing.

Hoxha responds that he is now in Tirana, and that he was barred from his responsibilities, and currently is not doing anything.

Comrade Stalin asks, who is Kristo Temelko by nationality.

Hoxha responds that Kristo Temelko is a Slav. Hoxha adds that some time ago, the Albanian government asked the Soviet government to allow Kristo Temelko to come to Moscow to study in the Lenin's Military Academy.

Comrade Stalin asks, whether the Albanians received a response to that request.

Hoxha responds that initially the answer was positive, but then the issue was postponed.

Comrade Stalin asks if the Albanians want to get rid of Christo Temelko by sending him to Moscow.

Hoxha responds that they would like to send Kristo Temelko to the USSR to study, and hope that he would be able to rehabilitate himself.

Comrade Stalin asks, if the party trusts Kristo Temelko in the political sense.

Hoxha responds that the party continues to hope that Kristo Temelko would be able to improve, but he cannot give him its complete political trust now.

Comrade Stalin notes that the Albanians currently do not need Kristo Temelko. Hoxha

responds affirmatively.

Comrade Stalin states that the Albanians do not need Kristo Temelko, but we do not need him either. Comrade Stalin asks, whether the Albanians want to send Kristo Temelko to the USSR from the considerations of their own security.

Hoxha responds that Kristo Temelko always wanted to apply to study at the Military Academy of the USSR.

Comrade Stalin states that if the Albanian comrades want, we will accept Kristo Temelko in the USSR.

Hoxha says that after the Congress, they took certain measures for cleaning the party. A number of comrades, who compromised themselves by their connections with the Yugoslav trotskists, were removed from the leadership positions in the party and in the army. They undertook measures designed to improve the intra-party democracy, renounced all decrees and instructions made under the Yugoslavian influence. They elected the Central Committee at the Congress, which was supplemented by young loyal comrades. Apart from that, they took measures in regard to the Ministry of the Interior, which permitted exaggerations and incorrect actions, and committed many dirty deeds. Fresh forces were added to that Ministry. Currently they are holding elections to the primary party organizations in the cities and in the entire country, and also to the regional party committees. As a result of these elections, time-tested and loyal comrades are coming to the leadership of local party organizations in the cities. Soviet comrades working in Albania provided very significant assistance in correcting the mistakes committed in the country's economy.

Hoxha notes that the events that had transpired, had certain negative influence on the situation inside the party. In a number of party organizations, one can observe the weakening of the discipline. Anarchic inclinations emerged among the weak elements. Moreover, at the present moment, when the class struggle became intense, the opportunistic moods of some party members became more pronounced. Hoxha says that in the period when the party was engaged in the work for fighting the Yugoslav nationalism and its proponents inside the party, it somewhat retreated on the issue fighting against the village bourgeois elements. That retreat was made with the goal not to complicate the situation in the party. However, that led to the situation that as a result of village bourgeois actions, government could not get the sufficient amount of bread and com in the village. The country faces serious economic difficulties. Another cause of those difficulties was that when the Yugoslavs were preparing the attempt against Albania, they did not give Albania anything in 8 months. The Albanian market plunged into an economic chaos. Peasants stopped selling their goods on the market, which sharply increased the prices. Only the assistance from the Soviet Union gave them an opportunity to start working to improve the present situation. Hoxha states that in spite of all these difficulties, the Albanian people give their full trust to their state leadership. The Albanian people suffered a lot, they experienced many troubles and they are not afraid of difficulties.

Comrade Stalin notes that it seems that the Albanians are creating collective farms.

Hoxha responds that they decided at the Congress to start creating collective farms, but not to rush with this.

Comrade Stalin says that Albanian comrades should not rush with creating collective farms. Albania is a backward country, it is also a mountain country. Even in the Soviet Union, there are no collective farms in the mountain regions. Therefore, they should not create collective farms yet in Albania. If the peasants do not have fertilizers, life stock, and technology, the state can come to their assistance. For this, it is necessary that the state has its own tractor and technology stations, so that if the peasants would want to get assistance in form of machines, then the state will be able to plough up the peasants' land with the help of those machines, and during the harvest they would help the peasants to thresh the bread. In return for this assistance, the state can take some payment in products from the peasants. How the peasants divide the bread and the com between themselves -- this is not the state's business. The state will receive the payment in products. The state should have its own economy with tractors, threshing machines, and other machines in order to provide assistance to the peasants, if they ask for this assistance. This is not like

collective farms, but at the same time, it gives peasants an opportunity to examine the technology and to realize its importance. We called it machine-rental stations some time ago. Peasants could rent machines, which they had to return back to the state. You should do the same in Albania. As far as the distribution of harvest is concern, then those peasants, who have more land will get more, and those peasants who have less land will get less. It is not a struggle against the village bourgeoisie, but it will teach the less affluent peasants to work together.

Comrade Stalin asks if Albania has national commercial bourgeoisie.

Hoxha responds that Albania has national trade bourgeoisie, but it does not have factories or shops, or houses. Everything was expropriated^[5].

Comrade Stalin says that this is not good. National bourgeoisie could help to produce some goods and engage in some sort of trade, while the state is getting stronger, especially if there are elements, who value freedom and independence of Albania among that national trade bourgeoisie. Such patriotic elements among the bourgeoisie should be used, not rejected. Comrade Stalin says that he can give an example from the practice of Northern China. There are some elements among the Chinese bourgeoisie, among petty and midsize factory owners and midsize trade bourgeoisie, who support the Communists. We recommended to the Chinese Communists not to reject those elements. That national patriotic part of the bourgeoisie believes that only Communists can protect the independence and freedom of China, and that all other parties are bankrupt. Therefore, they established contacts with the Communists. That part of the national bourgeoisie distanced itself from Chiang Kai-shek, because they saw that Chiang Kai-shek's party was not capable of standing up for a united and independent China, because they realized that only Communists would continue their fight for such a China. And the bourgeoisie is genuinely helping the Communists. As is well known, China is divided into two parts -- the Northern and Southern China. Some trade societies in the North of China supply Southern goods, including even American goods, to the Chinese Communists. To the question, why they are doing it, and why they are sacrificing their money, they responded that they did not see anybody, who would be able to stand up for the Chinese independence against Japan and America, except for the Communists.

Lenin had always believed that if a revolution had an anti-imperialist character, a character of defending the independence of a county, which was threatened, then Communists can have some cooperation with the national bourgeoisie. Such cooperation is permitted at a certain stage in the first period. The Albanian comrades should remember this Lenin ' s recommendation.

In the countries of people' s democracy, the national bourgeoisie has embarrassed itself by its connections with the German and Italian occupants. Therefore, when the Russian troops entered those countries, the bourgeoisie retreated with the Germans. In the Albanian territory, there were no Yugoslav or Soviet troops. Therefore, some elements of the national bourgeoisie stayed in the country--if the Albanians comrades did not kill all of them. We should not push away that bourgeoisie, which stands up for the national independence of the country, and which can help us. The same refers to some elements among the intelligentsia, which do not agree with the Communists, but see that only Communists can defend the independence of their country. We should not push them away either.

The Russian Bolsheviks did not follow that policy. Nobody occupied Russia at the moment of revolution and nobody threatened it, if you do not take the war with Germany into account. The Russian revolution, therefore, did not have an anti-imperialist character, its focus was inside the country. Therefore, there is a difference between what was happening in Russia, and what is happening now in China, Korea or other countries. Because Russia did not experience an immediate external threat, the Russian national bourgeoisie was an irreconcilable enemy of the revolution. The struggle with the bourgeoisie dragged on for several years. The Russian bourgeoisie was not patriotic. It appealed to the French and the British for help, appealed for an intervention. The Albanian comrades should not copy what happened in Russia or in other countries in their policy. They should take local features into account.

If there are petty capitalists, who open small enterprises, shops or craft shops in Albania, you should give them licenses, levy taxes, but give them an opportunity to

engage in trade and industrial activity, as long as the Albanian economy is not completely improved. When that happens, we would have a different situation, and then we will raise the question of the bourgeoisie once again.

Comrade Stalin asks how many people have arrived as members of the Albanian delegation.

Hoxha responds that the Albanian delegation contains 8 members.

Comrade Stalin asks him to list the members of the delegation specifying their positions.

Hoxha responds that the Albanian governmental delegation includes him, Chairman of the State Planning Commission Spiro Koleka, Deputy of the Chairman of the State Planning Commission Kocho Teodosy, Deputy Minister of Trade Vasil Katy, Deputy Minister of Industry Djafer Spahiu, Deputy Minister of Public Works Shinazi Drogoty, Deputy Head of General Staff Colonel Nedjip Vinchani. Also, Albanian Trade representative in Moscow Teohar Fundo is included in the delegation. Hoxha adds that the Albanian government nominated Kocho Teodosy as their representative to the Council of Economic Cooperation.

Comrade Stalin asks, who is the commander of the Albanian Army.

Hoxha responds that he himself is the commander.

Comrade Stalin says that the Soviet people, as Bolsheviks, have the following principle of building the leading organs of the state: if the Muslims prevail in the country, then the majority of government members should also be Muslim. You cannot violate people's religion. People will not understand, why the state is not led by the Muslims, while the majority of the country 's population is Muslim. These are elementary things, but they did not understand that in Yugoslavia. It does not mean that only Muslims should be in the government. We should select capable people from among the national minorities in order to keep the unity of the people intact. Participation in the government of the representatives of ethnic and religious minorities will ensure the stability of the government.

Comrade Stalin says that he would like to ask whether the Albanians have received the uniforms for the army from the USSR, about which the Head of the Albanian General Staff asked them some time ago.

Hoxha responds that so far, they did not receive any uniforms, but that as he has heard, they are on the way.

Comrade Stalin says that it was decided to send the uniforms.

Hoxha asks for a permission to turn to the economic issues, and says that they have developed a two-year plan of reconstructing the economy of the country. This plan presupposes, first of all, a creation of new industrial enterprises for production and for recasting of textiles, cotton, sugar, lumber and other goods for the needs of Albania itself. Secondly, the plan puts emphasis on expanding the geological works and increasing the extraction of natural resources. They plan to build a petroleum pipeline Patos -- Valona [6], and an oil-refining plant with capacity of 1 50 thousand tons a year. The plan presupposes development and search of natural resources, such as cooper, chrome, and bitumen. According to the plan, they will build an electric power station to provide the textile complex with energy. In regard to the transportation, the plan includes improving the automobile transportation, and the continuation of building of the railroad Durazzo -- Elbasan. As far as the agriculture is concerned, according to the plan, they plan to increase the area of irrigated land by using new agricultural technologies. The plan does not presuppose increasing the production of agricultural machines, because the country has enough tractors, which it has received from the Soviet Union.

Comrade Stalin asks what railroad they plan to build.

Hoxha responds that they are building the railroad Durazzo -- Elbasan in Albania. Last year they finished the first part of that railroad Durazzo - Beijing, 37 kilometers long. The two-year plan includes finishing the strip from Beijing to Elbasan, which is 30 kilometers long.

Comrade Stalin asks whether the Albanians received rails from the USSR.

Hoxha responds that the Albanians have received rails, railroad cars and other materials and equipment. Hoxha says that the two-year plan presupposes expanding

the network of schools, and increasing the number of hospital beds. To implement the plan, Albania counts on the assistance from the Soviet Union in machines and equipment. On the other hand, Albania concluded trade treaties with the countries of people's democracy, and received credits from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. Currently, the Albanian delegation is engaged in negotiations with Romania, after which it will go to Bulgaria.

Comrade Stalin responds that we will provide assistance as much as we can. Comrade Stalin also notes jokingly that we hope that the Albanians themselves will work too.

Hoxha says that the Albanians will put all their efforts in order to fulfill the plan. Hoxha states that Albania would like to ask for Soviet specialists, in particular to help in building the textile and sugar complexes.

Comrade Stalin responds that we will send our people, but that Albania should grow its own cadres. Our people will work in Albania temporarily, and then they will return to the Soviet Union. Albania should have permanent national cadres. This is most important.

Hoxha says that the Albanian government will do everything to follow this way. Hoxha states that the Albanian government asks Comrade Stalin to send a geological group to Albania, and also a group to analyze energy resources of Albania.

Comrade Stalin responds that this can be done. Comrade Stalin asks if Albania has coal.

Hoxha responds that there is very little coal in Albania, small resources of coal could be found in the areas of Tirana and Korchi. Besides that, the Italians discovered a layer of coal in the very South of Albania.

Comrade Stalin asks, whether the railroads use coal or petroleum.

Hoxha responds that the railroads work on coal, but the coal in Albania is not of a good quality. Hoxha says that the organization of the leadership of the state security organs poses a serious problem for Albania now. In this connection, the Albanian government asks for a permission to send 20 officers for special courses to the USSR. After those officers finish the courses, the Albanian government would like to send 20 more officers. If that is impossible, then the Albanian government would ask to send several Soviet instructors to Albania, who could organize such courses in Albania itself.

Comrade Stalin responds that the officers, who would come to the Soviet Union for the special courses, would have to learn Russian first, and then go on to study their specialty. Therefore, it would be more effective if we send our instructors to Albania.

Hoxha says that Albania also needs two instructors for the Ministry of the Interior: one instructor for the police and another for criminal investigation.

Comrade Stalin says that we could send such instructors.

Hoxha asks, if the Albanian government can get written materials from the USSR on work and organization of the police organs.

Comrade Stalin responds that the Albanian government can get such materials.

Hoxha says that he would like to touch on one other very important for Albania issue. The problem is that the Albanian codes were developed on the basis of the Yugoslavian code. Therefore, the Yugoslavs have an opportunity to decode all the Albanian telegrams. The Albanian government asks to send a Soviet instructor, who would be able to help the Ministry of the Interior to work out a new code.

Comrade Stalin asks, whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs need such an instructor. Comrade Stalin asks, whether the Albanian Foreign Ministry uses a code.

Hoxha responds that the Albanian Foreign Ministry does use a code, but that that code is kept in the Ministry of the Interior. Hoxha says that the Albanian government asks to send them two radio direction finders with the necessary equipment, and the technicians. Hoxha adds that the Albanian organs of state security have established that there were several secret radio transmitters somewhere in Albania, one of which, in particular, was located somewhere in the region of Skutarty.

Comrade Stalin responds that radio direction finders could be sent. Comrade Stalin points out that comrade Vyshinsky will be in charge of preparing responses for the

Albanian government delegation, and that he would consider all the requests. Hoxha can inform comrade Vyshinsky about all the issues that interest the Albanian government. Comrade Stalin repeats that we will help Albania.

Hoxha says that he would like to touch upon the Yugoslavian issue. The economic and political relations between Albania and Yugoslavia are broken.

Comrade Stalin asks, who broke those relations.

Hoxha responds that the relations were broken by Albania. Hoxha says that the Yugoslavs are engaged in extensive propaganda campaign against Albania, both from the territory of Yugoslavia itself and inside Albania, and they methodically create their agent network there. Moreover, the Yugoslavs carry out intensive propaganda along the northern borders of Albania, trying to induce the Albanian citizens to escape from Albania to Yugoslavia. That propaganda had certain successes, and a significant number of peasants escaped from Northern Albania to Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs are trying to take the leadership of the gangs, acting in the mountain regions of Albania, in their own hands. The Yugoslav leaders are trying to unite and organize the reactionary elements inside Albania, so that they could use them in order to overthrow the regime existing in Albania now. Recently, they exposed a gang, which was led by the Yugoslavian mission, and on March 21 the bandits stood before the Albanian court.

Comrade Stalin asks if the Albanian ambassador was still in Yugoslavia, and if the diplomatic relations were preserved.

Hoxha responds affirmatively.

Hoxha says that the Albanians are not sitting with their hands crossed. They are developing their activity directed against the Yugoslavian trotskists, and support contacts with the Albanian minority living in Yugoslavia. On top of that, the Albanians organized the Yugoslav immigration, although they are very cautious about the Yugoslavs, because some of them are often Rankovich's people.

Comrade Stalin notes that Rankovich throws in his agents.

Hoxha says that in his opinion, the Tito clique will be wiped out as a result of the political struggle, which will grow into an armed guerilla movement.

Comrade Stalin says that he would not exclude that possibility.

Hoxha, turning to the Greek issue, says that the Albanian comrades would like to know Comrade Stalin's opinion on the issue of whether Albania feels an immediate threat from Greece, taking into account the constant provocations of the monarchy-fascist troops and all kinds of conversations about the division of Albania. The morale of the monarchyfascist army in Greece is very low, in spite of the constant American assistance to the Greek Army. At the same time, the morale of the democratic army is very high. The Greek democratic army is currently well armed and equipped. Hoxha says that nonetheless, some moments in the Greek comrades' behavior create some doubts. In particular, he, Hoxha, believes that the Greek democratic army is separated from the people, because the monarchy fascists evacuate the population from the regions, which were threatened by the democratic army, and the democratic army, in its turn, evacuates the population from the regions occupied by it to Albania.

Comrade Stalin explains that this is happening in the areas of combat.

Hoxha agrees with it.

Hoxha says that he thinks that the form of the leadership organization in the Greek government and in the democratic army is somewhat strange. From his conversation with Zahariadis and the Greek comrades, Hoxha had an impression that they are hiding the leading role of the party somewhat. There are no political commissars in the army. Zahariadis is still not the leader of the government, due to his modesty, which is not clear to Hoxha. Hoxha believes that this is all caused by the mistakes of the Markos time, and that on the issue of the political commissars you can see the reflection of former mistakes of the EAM and ELAS.

Comrade Stalin says that the Greek comrades do not emphasize the role of the Communist party, because they appealed to the democratic masses, and they want to show that all the people are fighting the war. This is the correct way. As far as the political commissars are concerned, the Soviet Army does not have them any more

either. The political commissars are not necessary, when the leadership of the party is in the hands of Communists themselves.

Comrade Stalin points out that all the conversations about the division of Albania are designed in order to scare the Albanians. As we know, the independence of Albania is guaranteed by the declaration of three powers - - America, Britain and the USSR. Of course, they can violate the declaration, but it is not all that easy. As far as the Tsaldaris Greeks are concerned, they are too weak on their feet in order to seriously talk about a division of Albania. If the Albanians behave properly-if they do not criticize imperialists too much, do not tease them, but behave modestly--nobody would touch Albania. Both, America and Britain, do not want Albania to belong to Italy, because that would strengthen Italy; they do not want Albania to belong to Greece, because it would strengthen Greece; they do not want Albania to belong to Yugoslavia either. More than that, America does not want Albania to belong to Britain. That is why they all stands for the preservation of the Albanian independence.

The conversation lasted 2 hours and 10 minutes.

Recorded by V. YEROFEEV

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[1] Stalin refers to the Battleship "Julio Cesare" (Julius Caesar), received by the Soviet Union as part of the reparation payments from Italy. In the USSR it was renamed "Novorossiisk." It exploded in Yeisk Bay (Near Sevastopol) on October 29, 1955.

[2] For more detail see: Volume 1, Document no. 302, 305.

[3] In E. Hoxha's book *With Stalin. Memoirs* (Tirana, 1984) only Christ Temelko, mentioned below, is identified as a Macedonia, i.e. a Slav. In the Soviet version of the record of conversation all Orthodox Albanians are identified as Slavs.

[4] Christo Temelko was one of the closest supporters of E. Hoxha in the years of the national liberation struggle, member of the organizational Congress to found the CPA, who later joined the first CC CPA.

[5] The private sector in the industry and commerce was practically abolished by the series of decrees issued by the Interim Democratic Government in January 1945.

[6] Here and below in the text, they use the Italian names of the Albanian cities: Valona instead of Vlor (or Vlera), Durazzo, instead of Durrës, Skutari, instead of Skodra.