

23 OCTOBER 1957

RFE NEWS AND INFORMATION SERVICE - EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SECTION

Background Report
(General Desk)

"BORBA" ATTACKS ENVER HOXHA

Almost three months have passed since the last anti-satellite attacks were launched in the Yugoslav press. On July 27 the two major BELGRADE newspapers "Borba" and "Politika" published sharp attacks on Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria respectively; since then there have been no more criticisms of Soviet bloc countries in the Yugoslav press. On the contrary, the KHRUSHCHEV-TITO meeting in Rumania (on August 2 and 3) has contributed to an ever increasing rapprochement which culminated on October 15 in TITO's recognition of the East German Communist state.

Now, however, a new attack in the October 20 issue of "Borba" on the Albanian Communist Party Secretary, Enver HOXHA, has raised once more the problem of how far TITO has undertaken not to quarrel openly with his Communist comrades in the Soviet bloc.

There is one fact which must not be overlooked when this latest Yugoslav anti-Albanian outburst is considered. The attack on Enver HOXHA appeared in the same issue of "Borba" as a still sharper article on the West German Government, expressing Yugoslavia's extreme "surprise" and "disgust" over the rupture of West German-Yugoslav diplomatic relations.

The majority of western papers have interpreted TITO's recognition of the GDR as the crowning evidence of TITO's reversion to the status of a Soviet satellite. Since recognition of the GDR by TITO took place in the period of increasing improvement of the Soviet-Yugoslav relations, in which no Yugoslav criticism whatsoever has been made on MOSCOW's policies, it seems natural to assume that TITO's move has followed a request from KHRUSHCHEV. By publishing simultaneously attacks on both West Germany and Albania the Yugoslav regime may be deliberately seeking to undermine this assumption of their subordination to MOSCOW. By establishing a sort of "balance" between criticisms of the West and of the East, the Yugoslav leaders have endeavored to provide evidence for their own people, too, that Yugoslavia is being again unjustly attacked both by the West and by the East, because of her "non-bloc" and "middle-of-the-road" policies.

Appeal to People

The attack on the Albanian Communist leader by TITO's "court" commentator, Joze SMOLE, deals with a pamphlet by Enver HOXHA published under the title "The Influence of the Great October Revolution on Albania" by the Soviet State publishing house "Gospolitizdat" in MOSCOW. This pamphlet was published only recently but was certainly written several months ago as a contribution to a special Soviet series in connection with the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution. According to SMOLE, Enver HOXHA's pamphlet

"was printed in 100,000 copies" although it represents Yugoslav-Albanian relations "in an untruthful and biased way".

Although Yugoslavia's answer to the West German rupture of diplomatic relations with BELGRADE and SMOLE's attack on HOXHA are two completely different things, in both of them there are some points which surprisingly coincide. West Germany is said to have severed diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia in the same manner as Germany in 1914 and 1941 by attacking the Yugoslav (in 1914 the Serbian) people. In SMOLE's criticism of Enver HOXHA stress is laid on the fact that the Albanian Communist leader called the Serbian army, which in 1915 entered Albania, retreating before Austro-German invading troops, "chauvinist" and that it cherished "conquering intentions" after having been sent by the then "chauvinist government of Serbia" to "plunder and kill" all over "middle and northern Albania".

In both instances the Yugoslav leaders have obviously attempted to appeal to the Yugoslav people by asking support on a national basis. This has always been the case when the Yugoslav Government got into trouble and when broad popular support was needed. In his attack on HOXHA, SMOLE defends the "Serbian army which had resisted the aggression of the Central Powers" (i.e. Germany and her allies) in the course of World War I. In a poetic way which is aimed at the sentimentality of the Serbian population, SMOLE tells the story of the "bleeding, starving Serbian army" which fought Austro-German invading armies in order to escape through Albania after having been "decimated". Said SMOLE: "However, it is precisely this heroic epic period of the Serbian people in 1915 which HOXHA represents as a conquest expedition of Serbia against Albania".

Three Points Quoted

Only after this excursion into the past does SMOLE begin to criticize HOXHA's attitude toward the present Yugoslav-Albanian relations. From SMOLE's article one gains the impression that the words spoken by Koca POPOVIC (Yugoslavia's Foreign Minister) on 26 February 1957 still apply. Speaking to the Yugoslav National Assembly, Koca POPOVIC said: "Albania is the only country of the socialist camp with which -- through no fault of ours -- our relations have never been really normalized, even at a time when conditions for normalization were very favorable..."

If after the KHRUSHCHEV-TITO meeting in Rumania conditions for normalization of the relations between BELGRADE and TIRANA were not favorable, then when could they be? Three points in HOXHA's pamphlet have especially disturbed SMOLE: 1) HOXHA's treatment of the executed (1949) Albanian "Titoist" leader Koci Xoxe; 2) the problem of "revisionists" and 3) the interpretation of the present Yugoslav-Albanian relations.

As far as Koci Xoxe is concerned SMOLE said: "That part of the pamphlet dealing with Koci Xoxe deserves special attention. From this part it is seen that Enver HOXHA has remained on his old positions from which at that time Koci Xoxe was killed. As is

known, the trial of Koci Xoxe (in 1949) was an expressly anti-Yugoslav case.

"Among other things Enver HOXHA writes that the Albanian Workers' Party had unmasked 'the treacherous activities of Koci Xoxe's gang' which attempted to destroy the unity of the Party and to transform our Party from a Marxist-Leninist Party, into a bourgeois one..."

In his pamphlet HOXHA mentions Liri Gega, Dalli Ndreu and the Yugoslav citizen Petar Bulatovic who were executed in November 1956 for their "treacherous work" for Yugoslavia.

SMOLE continues: "In several places in the pamphlet HOXHA speaks about the 'revisionists of Marxism and Leninism', about the followers of 'national Communism', of their 'treacherous role', etc. Enver HOXHA uses these terms in that very tendentious manner and he used them in the same connection in the recent past, which one assumed had been overcome."

SMOLE also criticizes HOXHA for the "false and unconstructive way" in which he approaches the present Albanian-Yugoslav relations. SMOLE scolds HOXHA for saying that Albania has wanted to have good relations with Yugoslavia, but the latter has not shown any readiness for them.

In his pamphlet HOXHA said: "The Albanian Workers' Party has maintained a Marxist-Leninist attitude in its relations with our Yugoslav neighbors..." After saying that mistakes were made only after World War II, HOXHA adds: "Neither the Albanian people nor the Albanian Workers' Party have been in favor of the worsening of relations with Yugoslavia...However, much has depended on the Yugoslav leaders who should have made similar efforts."

SMOLE commented on this point: "From the above mentioned quotations, as well as from the whole pamphlet, only one conclusion can be drawn: Enver HOXHA does not approach the problem of relations with Yugoslavia in a constructive and well-intentioned way. With the untruthful and biased representation of the state of things, Enver HOXHA is continuing a course which is opposed to the new spirit in the international workers' movement."

X X X

As already said it seemed that HOXHA's pamphlet was written some time before the rapprochement between MOSCOW and BELGRADE took place. It is known, however, that Yugoslav leaders Alexander RANKOVIC and Edvard KARDELJ had talks with Enver HOXHA in MOSCOW in the second part of July. If they then agreed on "non-aggression" pact, and still more, if KHRUSHCHEV and TITO promised each other not to allow any public criticism between Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc, why then did the Soviets not prevent the publication of HOXHA's pamphlet -- published in Russian in MOSCOW -- in which Yugoslavia and TITO are treated in the "old spirit"? Is this only a bureaucratic error? In any case it has enabled TITO to appear to his people as being attacked by both the West and the East.

S.S.

End