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TOP SECRET

C O P S E

6 (37)

INDEXED

Resistance in Albania

1. Evidence of unreliability or misbehaviour of any Albanian authority, and measures to tighten up the morale and/or reliability of any such authority.-----

Apart from the recent trial and execution of the ex-Minister of the Interior and No. 2 Communist, Koci Xoxe, (together with a number of alleged accomplices) for "Titoism", there is virtually no evidence on this count. But the following small points may have some relevance:

- (a) Security H.Q., Tirana, telegraphed in September 1947 to Security H.Q., Koritsa and Gjinokastra that those towns had not shown sufficient enthusiasm regarding the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the founding of Moscow, presumably the local parties' fault.
- (b) In April, 1949, the Koritsa Party Committee had to be strengthened by new blood sent by the Albanian Central Committee. The heads of the Agit-prop and Trades Union Section were changed.
- (c) There has been considerable traffic, covering Albania as a whole, ordering greater activity in Party work generally. This is no different from similar Russian traffic within the Soviet Union, or from many Satellite States' broadcasts.

2. Evidence of any security action against groups (religious or political).

- (a) Up to the winter of 1947 COPSE showed that the Security Forces were engaged in cleaning up small resistance factions. Balli Kombetar was the one chiefly mentioned.
- (b) In March, 1948, Security forces, Gjinokastra, reported that a band of fifty persons was operating in the area. There was no indication whether these people were ordinary bandits or had political affiliations.
- (c) A message of 14th December, 1948, from Security Forces, Gjinokastra, to Tirana gave a somewhat alarmed account of "reactionary" activities in a village in this area and mentioned the word "rising". Reliable Party members were said to have been sent to the area and security action was to be taken.
- (d) A message of 20th July, 1949, from Security Forces, Gjinokastra, announces that "the troops are in the appointed places", which may indicate security action against groups. It adds that two parachutes have been found.

3. Evidence of any Security Action against Individuals.

There is a constant stream of messages from Tirana, mostly directed to Security H.Q. in Gjinokastra, but also to a certain extent to Koritsa, ordering them to watch or arrest named individuals. Except in two or three cases, where they are accused of being pro-American or "fascist", these messages have given no concrete indication of the affiliations or crimes of these individuals.

4. Evidence of Clandestine Frontier-crossing.

- (a) We have no evidence to throw light on organised escape-routes

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by land, although there is evidence that in the period May-July, 1949, (i) two men left for Scutari and crossed into Yugoslavia (where their families lived); and (ii) three other men from the Bylyc district, who had escaped into Yugoslavia, returned to the Tropoje area with the alleged intention of causing trouble (the Security Service suspected that the UDB had sent them, but no supporting evidence was given).

(b) As regards the sea, we have (i) COPSE evidence that at the end of May, 1949, 7 men forced the captain of an Albanian boat, in which they were passengers, to take them from Albania to Brindisi; and (ii)

5. Evidence of the Albanian Government's internal preoccupations.

(a) Titoism - the trial of Xoxe has been referred to above and all Security H.Q. have been asked to report on the public's reaction to his execution. An answer from Bilisht (Gjinokastr area) of 20th June gives a nil return. This is the only reply we have seen.

(b) A COPSE message indicated that there was dissatisfaction among the peasants in connexion with food distribution and prices paid for their products.

(c) A message of March, 1949, to Scutari shows that the Security Forces were concerned with -

- (i) UDB infiltration
- (ii) Escapes from Yugoslavia to Albania
- (iii) Yugoslav opinion on Albania

6. Evidence of Titoist Activity organised from or in Yugoslavia.

(a) On 28th May, 1949, Koritsa Security Forces reported that Yugoslav propaganda material had been distributed on the previous evening.

(b) Tirana Radio alleged in April, 1949, that the Yugoslav Government had refused to hand over two Albanian "enemies of the people" who, they claimed, were now employed by the UDB. The two men apparently come from leading families in the Dobar area on the Albanian/Yugoslav frontier.

7. Evidence of anti-Government activity by groups or individuals.

(a) Anti-Government tracts were dropped in the Koritsa area in May, 1949.

(b) Two cases were reported in June, 1949, of anti-Government activity during the elections in the Gjinokastr area.

- (i) A pro-Zog ballot paper appeared in a ballot-box and anti-Government slogans were chalked on church walls.
- (ii) An anti-Government slogan was written on a wall protesting against the treatment of the peasantry.

(c) A message of 20th April, 1949, from the Gjinokastr area reports the distribution of anti-Communist tracts there, apparently emanating from Balli Kombetar. It was claimed that the "instigators" in one village (which revolted) were captured, but that the authors were not discovered.

8. Russian Activities.

The number of Russians at present in Albania has been variously reported as from 200 to 2,000. We have no hard information at all on this, but tend to believe that there are only a few hundred.

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9. The Albanian Security Services and Armed Forces.

(a) We understand that there are now two Intelligence Services in Albania, one under the Communist Party (apparently working into Greece), and one under the Ministry of the Interior. The latter is the normal Satellite/Russian State Security Police. In addition to the Police and Security Services, Frontier Control etc. is in the hands of the National Defence Division (DMP). In actual fact this force is said to comprise two divisions of trustworthy and reliable Communists organised on Military lines and armed with mortars and light machine guns, whose strength has been estimated variously from 15,000 to 3,000.

(Note: The above information is based on interrogations of Albanian escapees by the Italians. It is, however, thought to be correct by our section concerned. The statement that there are two Intelligence Services is confirmed by G.C.H.Q. who have inferred this from their own material.)

(b) Attached is a map (obtained from the War Office) showing the disposition of the Security and Armed Forces.

Notes:

(i) All Security H.Q. have recently been instructed to send in reports on resistance activities to their Central H.Q. in Tirana. If these reports are transmitted by wireless we may reasonably hope that the many gaps in our report will be, to some extent at least, filled.

(ii) Almost all the evidence in our report is from COPSE since in general there is no other source reporting on Albania on whose evidence we can rely.

(iii) It will be seen that almost the whole of our evidence derives from Southern Albania, and to a great extent from the Gjinokastras area.