

Balkan crisis over 'Greater Albania'

by Edith Hassman in Wiesbaden

The Balkan peninsula, which gave its name to the strategy of fragmenting nation-states for the benefit of imperial strategic goals, is primed to explode once again. The footsoldiers of British and Soviet intelligence services are on the march there, as are the overlapping freemasonic and religious fundamentalist networks of the ancient European oligarchy whose historical headquarters is Venice.

An old piece of Venetian turf, the Albanian ethnic province of Kosovo inside Yugoslavia, is the point of leverage. The Albanians of Kosovo, which is a part of the Serbian Republic, have demanded from Belgrade recognition as an independent republic and thereby the right to secede from the Yugoslav federation and seek merger with the "motherland," Albania.

Riots swept Kosovo last spring, in the wake of which the communist party there has suffered one purge after another. Local police were reinforced with special units for combatting the underground nationalist movement, providing at least the appearance of calm. But in October, the London *Economist*, which reflects the priorities of British intelligence circles, advised the Yugoslav government to grant the Kosovars their republic now in order to avoid "a bigger explosion later." The Kosovo story is by no means over.

Abroad, the anti-Yugoslavia activities of Kosovo Albanians have reached the point of terrorism. In July, a "Croatian-Albanian" underground organization, founded in Sweden not long before, claimed responsibility for an attack on two Yugoslav diplomats in Brussels. According to the West German Press Agency (DPA), this group announced that there would be further acts of terror unless its demands for an independent Croatia and "the return of Albanian regions to Albania" were satisfied. The Kosovo Albanians are demanding that their future "republic" encompass Albanians who live in Macedonia and Montenegro, two more of Yugoslavia's six constituent republics. At demonstrations held this past summer in Washington, Stockholm, Geneva, and Frankfurt, Kosovo emigrées distributed a map depicting "Greater Albania." It provoked heated debates in the Greek parliament, because the map not only covered areas within Yugoslavia, but also claimed a part of northern Greece. "Great Albanian" chauvinism revived

in Kosovo could set in motion all the other nationality questions in the Balkans which remain "unsolved" since World War II. While Greek commentators and politicians now charge that Greeks living in Albania are oppressed, the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia reproaches the Tirana (Albania) regime for repressions against Albania's Macedonian minority.

When unrest broke out among the Albanian population in Kosovo last March, it was difficult for some outside observers to understand why the people of this province in southern Yugoslavia, who, thanks to geographical proximity, common language and kinship relations, are better informed than anyone else about the wretched conditions within Albania, could nevertheless take to the streets under such slogans as "Long Live Enver Hoxha" or "We Want a United Albania." One example suffices to illustrate the difference in living standard. In Kosovo, there is one car to a family in the cities and one to every three families in the countryside; in Albania, there are not even bicycles.

To discover why British intelligence finds Albanian chauvinism the best lever for shaking the entire nationalities structure in the Balkans with the aim of destabilizing Yugoslavia, one must examine the historical connections, networks, and traditions which the British have already mobilized many times in history for political power purposes. The catchword is Balkan War.

Secret societies of Dervishes

A comparison may be drawn with the destabilization of Iran by Khomeini's hordes. Ninety percent of the Albanians in Yugoslavia are Muslims, and only 10 percent are Christians. As one observer stated recently, the Catholic population in Kosovo—most likely on instructions from the Vatican, mediated through local priests—has maintained strict distance from the unrest, which was *exclusively* carried out by Albanian Muslims. In his recently published book *Sonderfall Albanien (The Case of Albania)*, Albanian affairs expert Bernhard Tönnies writes that these Muslims are influenced to no small extent by a numerically small group of orders of Dervishes. These Dervish orders are organized as secret societies, so that very little is known about them.

Even if the uprisings in Kosovo were carried out by Muslims, the reader may object, this does not explain the "Great Albanian" character of the movement. How can a Muslim consider as his homeland atheistic Albania, where all religions are banned and the mosques (and churches) locked?

At this point, an error must be cleared up: the communist leadership of Albania has always waged a bitter struggle against the *Catholic* religion, as a representative of Western culture, while the historically "positive" role of Islam and the Orthodox Church is dignified even in the writings of Albanian communist chief

Enver Hoxha. One effect of the Kosovo unrest, an ironic but perhaps an intended one, was to thrust the *Serbian Orthodox Church* into prominence in “a spectacular rapprochement with the central authorities” in Belgrade, as one French report put it. To combat Albanian nationalism, the government employs Serbian nationalism, which has given Serbian Orthodoxy new opportunities.

In its own right and as catalyst of such processes in neighboring territories, Albania, which first came under Venetian control in the 12 century and then lived 500 years under Turkish rule, has remained, from the acquisition of official independence in 1912 up to the present day, a bulwark of *orientalism* on the European continent.

The Bektashi

This historical continuity stems above all from the fact that Albania for centuries has been the homeland of the Bektashi Dervishes, who today still control approximately 15 to 20 percent of the Albanian population, and most probably have installed several of their members in the Central Committee, if not the Politburo, of the Communist Party. Despite Turkish republican Kemal Atatürk's having banned the order in 1925, there are probably 7.5 million Bektashis in Asia Minor.

The Bektashi Order, whose founder Haxhi Bektash Veli came from Persia, expanded into the Balkans during the period of Turkish rule. Tönnies describes it as “a pantheistic Shi'ite sect with pronounced Manichean influences.” It unites “pagan, Christian, and Islamic” elements in its philosophy and its members are the only ones, besides the Sufi mystics, to accept the so-called “Hurufi” number theory, a “revelation” which holds that divine creation repeats itself in a recurring cycle, and that each cycle lasts 1,360 years.

Since the order is organized as a secret society and its members are sworn to protect the secrets from outsiders, few details of Bektashi mysticism are known. Bektashi holy men are distinguished, however, by their view that they, unlike normal mortals, are able to achieve unity with God—who not only dwells in every man, but also peeps out from behind every plant, every leaf and every musical note—in one moment of “passionate love.” Their opponents in the orthodox Islamic camp reproach them for holding orgiastic cult ceremonies, in which at night, behind locked doors, they enjoy unveiled women and alcoholic means of intoxication. The Bektashis also believe in transmigration of souls; it has been reported that their monks used to wear bells on their shoes to scare away insects, for they feared they might otherwise trample an ancestor to death. Like that of the freemasons, the Bektashi organization has different degrees of initiation into the secret knowledge—from the lower degrees of downright silly hocus-pocus

up to the highest degree of “enlightened pantheism.”

Politically, the Bektashis over the centuries were always enemies of the Ottoman Empire, a fact which proved useful for their rapid expansion under the Albanian tribal chiefs and feudal lords. Their Shi'ite beliefs reject any worldly governmental power. This sect possessed enormous influence in the Ottoman Empire: until the Sultan's infantry, the Janissaries, was disbanded in 1826, it was the military arm of the Bektashis rather than that of the empire. In the areas of Bektashi influence in the Balkans and Asia Minor, the monasteries of the order never lay more than six hours journey apart, so that any traveler in the Ottoman Empire was compelled to make use of their “hotel service.” The Bektashi Grand Vizier Ali Pasha employed the brothers of the order as spies and diplomats. In the 19th century, they were the main movers of the so-called Young Turk movement, which, as the British Empire wished to expedite the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, was assigned appropriate subversive tasks by the English and Italian freemasons.

It might seem a paradox that the Bektashis, throughout their long political career, always supported the fundamentalist, anti-Western and anti-progress lines in the Islamic world, while their leaders, right up until today, cultivated personal contacts with the “intellectual elite of Western Europe.” In the last century, for example, the blending of Bektashis and freemasons went so far in Albania that the two cults founded joint lodges. Regardless of any East-West coloration of the issue, the commonality of world views between the Bektashis and the freemasons resides in the fact that both are *pagan* cults, which, although rightly banned by the great religions as heresies, nevertheless enjoy great support among certain circles, as instruments for establishing a *neo-feudalist*, oligarchical world order. We need only refer to the examples of Club of Rome co-founder Alexander King, who is a Sufi mystic, and the recently killed Ayatollah Beheshti, who belonged to a freemasonic lodge in Hamburg. In Albania, these pagan, pantheistic ideologies have survived in unadulterated form.

'The religion of Albanians is Albanianism'

This key phrase from the vocabulary of Enver Hoxha brings us back to the circumstances under which “Albanian nationalism” was formulated in the second half of the last century. The Albanian national myth must somehow deal with the fact that the tribal chiefs and feudal lords occupied a privileged position under the Turkish occupation and that the “Beys” looked down with great contempt on the neighboring Slavic populations, who were employed as guest workers on their estates. Albania was “Bektashiland.”

The two leaders of the so-called national rebirth of

Albania, Naim Frashëri (1846-1900) and his brother Sami (1850-1904) were just right for the task. Naim, a Bektashi theologian and Sufi mystic, made no secret of his hope that Bektashi mysticism would one day become "the religion of all Albania" and be the connecting tissue binding together the various Albanian tribes and religions. He is the creator of a racist national ideology, still alive today, which is mixed together with the pantheistic Bektashi outlook and Nietzschean superman philosophy. Here is a morsel from Naim's poetry:

Men are based all in certain races,
 Each one has its different type,
 The white race is the best of them,
 As in everything, so also in its face.
 The others all have different colors,
 Yellow, black, red, brown;
 However many men there are in these races,
 They are all, so to speak, barbarians. . . .
 The white race is divided into nations,
 And is split into branches. . . .
 Of that race which came into Europe,
 And then divided into many pieces,
 The foremost obviously are the Pelagians
 And their sons, we Albanians.

—*Science*, 1888

Since Albania became independent in 1912, the Bektashi have played an important role in running the government apparatus. Many ministers came from this group and dominated cultural life. When the Albanian Fascist Party was founded in 1939, under the Italian occupation, its party newspaper bore the name of the greatest Bektashi shrine in Albania, the Tomori mountain. During World War II, the Bektashi leader Martaneshi fought in the communist resistance movement led by Enver Hoxha. Martaneshi, who made Hoxha a Bektashi chief, was killed in 1947 by other Dervishes because, following Hoxha's policy of isolation, he wanted to sever the order's ties to its brothers in Asia Minor and other countries.

The latest accomplishment of the order may be the ideological, if not—despite the official ban—the personal preparation of rapprochement between Albania and Khomeini's Iran, which found its preliminary culmination in the visit of Iranian Deputy Prime Minister Yasbi to Tirana (etymologically, "little Teheran") in February.

Splitting the Soviet Union

At the turn of the century, the British empire, working through freemasonic networks, steered Albanian nationalism and that of other Balkan nations first against the Turks and then against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A slight strategic miscalculation occurred in these efforts, which led to World War I. Britain's

goal in the region for this century is to fragment the Soviet Union.

During World War II, the British were already cultivating the Bektashi Albanians as a future Trojan Horse in the Soviet bloc. Churchill's "generous" concession to Stalin, that Albania would belong to the communist sphere of influence while the Soviets withdrew from Greece as a return favor, must be interpreted against this background. Sir Julian Amery, the British liaison officer in Albania, had strict instructions to promote, as best he could, only the communist part of the resistance movement, which was also supported by the Bektashi and a great number of the Albanian feudal lords. The chief of the "Special Operations Executive" (SOE) bureau in Cairo, responsible for the entire Middle East including Albania, was James Klugman, the very same Klugman who in the 1930s had built a communist cell at Cambridge University together with Guy Burgess and Harold "Kim" Philby, the "master spy" of later years. In the 1950s, Klugman attained the post of Politburo member in the Communist Party of Great Britain, while his comrade Philby defected to the Soviet Union. All this was preceded by an SOE operation in Albania, intended to heighten Philby's worth in Soviet eyes. In 1947, Albanian monarchists planned a landing operation by sea and by land, to free their homeland from "the communists"—with promised British and American assistance, naturally. Philby, at that time on duty at a high-ranking post in British intelligence, "betrayed" this ridiculous undertaking to the Soviet Union. Since his flight east, Philby has enjoyed a meteoric career, reaching the rank of KGB general. From this position, he promoted Khomeini's seizure of power in Iran and is generally known to spur the Soviet leadership toward support of Islamic fundamentalism.

British intelligence counts on his influence in its present-day Albanian operation. There are indications that London is speculating on the possibility of inducing, by means of the current manifestations of Great Albanian nationalism, the appropriate KGB networks in the Balkans to support the rebellion of Kosovo Albanians against Yugoslavia. London hopes that, while this policy could be sold to the Soviet Union as a possible power gain in the Balkans, the various nationalities in the Soviet Union would follow the example of the Kosovo Albanians and push the Moscow leadership to grant the right of self-determination to nationalities in the Soviet Union itself.

Ironic as it may sound, the Albanian party chief Enver Hoxha, maintaining his obstinant anti-Soviet ideology, has opposed so far the construction of this strategic sand-castle, which would destabilize not only the Balkans, but the entire international situation. "When Hoxha is gone, all the dams will break," recently commented one expert on Albania.