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Andrey Edemskiy*

*Institute for Slavic Studies,
Russian Academy of Sciences*

Additional Evidence on the Final Break between Moscow and Tirana in 1960–1961

Abstract: Disagreement between Khrushchev and Enver Hoxha, leaders of the Soviet Union and Albania, had been ripening since the mid-1950s. Until the spring of 1960 the leadership of the small country did not show readiness to challenge the Soviets perceived as the great power at the head of Socialist bloc countries and the world Communist movement. But when the Chinese leadership indicated their disagreements with official Moscow in the spring of 1960, Albania joined them without fearing the inevitability of open confrontation with the Soviets. The article reveals the further course of events in chronological order during the deepening rift between the two leaders and their entourage, and analyses the Soviet decision-making process at the highest level consulting newly-declassified documents from the Russian State Archives of Contemporary History in Moscow. By the end of 1961, within less than two years, relations between the Soviet Union and Albania sank to their lowest. The Soviet leadership, presumably Khrushchev himself, failed in their attempts to stop another growing conflict in the Soviet bloc by discussing controversial issues face to face with the Albanian leadership. Researchers have already accumulated considerable knowledge about these processes, but substantial gaps are yet to be filled. Many relevant Soviet documents from Russian archives are not yet declassified. Nevertheless, the already available ones allow researchers to take a broader look on the developing Soviet-Albanian rift and to establish how, in parallel with the collapse of Soviet-Albanian connections in the early 1960s, Soviet-Yugoslav contacts intensified.

Keywords: nationalism, national interest, confrontation, Soviet-Albanian conflict, Enver Hoxha, Khrushchev, RGANI, failed Communist brotherhood

The huge complex of turbulent historical processes in the Balkans in the second half of the twentieth century undoubtedly is a promising scholarly topic now that much more archival documents are becoming accessible. The Soviet-Albanian conflict in the early 1960s in all of its aspects, ideological, political and economic, has attracted the attention of researchers since its inception.¹ A serious advance in investigating the problem has been made in the last few years

* and-edem@yandex.ru

¹ W. E. Griffith, *Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963); R. O. Freedman, *Economic Warfare in the Communist Bloc* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970); E. Biberaj, *Albania and China. A Study of an Unequal Alliance* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986).

owing to the use of rich documentary materials in Albanian from Albanian archives; researchers of that country have made their precious contribution to the study of these events.² Regrettably, the results of research using the relevant Soviet documentary materials are not so significant. Many important documents are still classified, but the already available documents from Russian archives make it possible us to shed more light on past events nonetheless. This article is the first attempt to make a further contribution in this direction, along with the task to identify the signs of an intensification of Soviet-Yugoslav contacts at the same time.

The Soviet-Albanian differences that arose in the mid-1950s, because of the Albanian leadership's disapproval of Khrushchev's move towards normalizing relations with Yugoslavia and the condemnation of the "personality cult" of Joseph Stalin, continued to accumulate negative potential. In 1959, the Soviet leader Khrushchev's ill-received remarks about further prospects for the development of Albania made during his visit to that country in May and Moscow's efforts to negotiate with Washington on a range of pressing global issues added even more difficulties to relations between Moscow and Tirana. However, until the summer of 1960, Soviet-Albanian relations continued their relatively conflict-free development within the framework of a fairly stable economic cooperation and, above all, of considerable and comprehensive Soviet assistance to Albania. The differences mentioned above remained latent until the spring-summer of 1960. As leaders of a small country, Enver Hoxha and his entourage did not consider it possible to challenge the Soviets, the great power at the head of the Soviet camp.

The situation changed in the spring of 1960. In late April several articles that appeared in the Chinese press (a little later they were collected in a brochure entitled *Long live Leninism!*) demonstrated that the Chinese leadership openly, albeit indirectly, expressed, even declared their disagreement with the Soviet position on the strategy of the Soviet bloc and the world communist movement in a set of issues concerning the approach to the state of international affairs and their prospects. Until June 1960, Moscow did not respond to these views in any way, believing that mutual ideological differences should not be discussed publicly, in the media, but rather in personal meetings.

An opportunity for criticizing the Chinese position presented itself, or so it seemed to Soviet leaders, in late June in Bucharest during the meetings of the delegations to the Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP). It had by now become necessary to stop dissension in the Soviet camp given that the

² E. Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao. Albania and the Socialist World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017); Y. Marku, "Communist Relations in Crisis: The End of Soviet-Albanian Relations, and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1960–1961", *International History Review* (May 2019), 1–20.

collapse of the Great Powers summit conference in Paris in mid-May over an American spy-flight over USSR territory on the 1st of May, a Soviet national holiday, seemed to confirm that Chinese warnings were more solid than they had appeared. The American plane was shot down, and its captured pilot's admission that he had been on a spy mission seemed to prove Khrushchev wrong in his course towards achieving *détente* with the United States and easing international tensions.

In early June Soviet leaders came up with the idea of holding a "meeting of fraternal communist and workers' parties" in Bucharest (decisions of the Presidium of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee/ CPSU CC/ of 2 and 7 June). Initially, their main goal was to discuss the crisis in the international situation, which became embarrassing after the disruption of the Paris summit.³ It was only later that, on Khrushchev's personal initiative, an information note was prepared in Moscow criticizing the theoretical views of Chinese leaders as false and harmful. On 22 June, the Soviet leadership decided to distribute this document to the leaders of the communist bloc countries. And then, in Bucharest, at improvised meetings of foreign delegations that had arrived at the RWP congress as guests, the Soviet leader Khrushchev criticized the Chinese leadership. The Albanian delegation was only headed by a "third player" in its party-state hierarchy, Hysni Kapo, member of the Political Bureau of the Party of Labour of Albania Central Committee (PLA CC). He coordinated his conduct with Enver Hoxha, who had remained in Tirana, and, unlike other participants, was not active in the improvised condemnation campaign against the Chinese leadership's views from the very beginning of the meeting, when he refrained from speaking first in alphabetic order.⁴ Even such a relatively passive conduct of Kapo annoyed Khrushchev.

The fact that the Albanian leadership had avoided supporting Khrushchev in his critique of the Chinese views in Bucharest did not prevent the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania (PRA), Mehmed Shehu, from sending a letter to the Soviet government requesting 50 thousand tons of wheat to be shipped to Albania from August to December that year, needed as a result of unfavourable weather conditions and an unfulfilled crop plan. The letter was left unanswered. It was only in August, when the Albanian Minister of Trade sent the same request to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade, but stressing the urgent need for at least 10–15 thousand tons of grain in September, that Moscow proceeded to meet the request. According to the decision of September 1, Albania was to be supplied with only 10 thousand tons

³ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (RGANI) [Russian State Archives of Contemporary History], F 10, inv. 1, f. 62, pp. 1–9 [F - Fonds/*fond*; inv. - inventory or records group/*opis*; f. - file/*delo*; p. - page/*list*].

⁴ Ibid. p. 53.

during September–October 1960. It was stressed that, under the bilateral Trade Agreement, Tirana had to pay for them in Albanian goods next year. Since the Soviets had no stocks of free grain, it was decided to supply the requested amount from state reserves, taking into account that the specified 10 thousand tons would be delivered in excess of grain intended for export in 1960. The grain was to be shipped by Soviet Navy vessels from Soviet Black Sea ports.⁵

Another surge of controversy in Soviet-Albanian relations took place in November 1960 during the world meeting of Communist parties held in Moscow. As can be seen from archival documents, unlike in Bucharest in late June, this time the Albanian delegation came to Moscow intent to take the Chinese side on all issues that had arisen in the diverging positions of China and the USSR in recent months. Their stance had been decided at the ALP CC plenum on 1 November 1960. As the delegation was headed by Enver Hoxha himself, there was no need to waste time on consultations with Tirana, as Kapo had in Bucharest in late June. This change in the Albanian approach has been variously explained. According to a long tradition in Western historiography, it was the result of an intra-party struggle which had ended by the end of August 1960. The winners took a firm pro-Beijing line in its rising challenge to Soviet leadership of the Communist bloc and world movement.⁶ On the other hand, contemporary Albanian historiography has offered a fresh look at these events, according to which the rumours about a fierce intra-party struggle were false, since already after Khrushchev “secret speech” in February 1956 Hoxha had eliminated all potential opposition by purging many party members and high-ranking officials potentially willing to subscribe to the Soviet criticisms of the “cult of personality” in Albania that year.⁷

Several Soviet attempts to get the Albanians to agree to an open bilateral discussion in order to heal their widening rift had been in vain. Just upon Hoxha’s arrival in Moscow the Soviets distributed to the foreign delegations the Soviet response to the September letter of the Communist Party of China (CPC), describing Albania as a tyranny where being a friend of the Soviet Union was dangerous. With such a beginning, Hoxha was too furious to meet with Khrushchev. It was only through the mediation of French communists that the Albanians agreed to meet with Soviet representatives on 10 and 11 November. Hoxha finally met with Khrushchev a day later, on 12 November. According to Albanian accounts, the Soviet participants in the first meeting were Mikhail Suslov, Yuri Andropov, Frol Kozlov, Anastas Mikoyan, and Petr Pospelov. The discussion began as a quite open one. In reply to the Soviet question: “What do

⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 12, f. 420, p. 21.

⁶ L. M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split. Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 202.

⁷ Marku, “Communist Relations in Crisis”, 11.

you want in exchange for an improvement of your relations with us?"; Hoxha reminded them of all the incidents that had happened during the summer as the Soviet attempt to undermine the unity of the Albanian leadership, supporting political dissidents, and past incidents between Albanian and Soviet sailors and officials in the naval base at Vlora. Hoxha put forward a set of demands in order for such incidents to be prevented in the future, but the Soviet side rejected them, pointing to an anti-Soviet sentiment spreading across Albania. In the further course of discussion Hoxha argued that there had been disagreements between the two sides even before, such as those over Yugoslavia and other issues, and that all were coming from the Soviet side. Khrushchev seemed surprised: "that we have had different views on this issue is news to me. I hear it for the first time [...] The Yugoslav matter, which you consider as contentious between us, we may set aside for the moment. That is not a principal issue." But Hoxha insisted that the issue was indeed a principal one, which Khrushchev had neglected to understand for a long time. The Albanian leader blamed Khrushchev for the deterioration of their relations after the Bucharest meeting. But Khrushchev suspected that "it seems you have not been in agreement with us even before Bucharest". Then they exchanged heated accusations regarding possible Soviet support to the recently purged prominent Albanian leaders sympathetic to the USSR. Khrushchev attacked his interlocutors for "expelling a strong woman like Belishova in a Stalinist way". Then the already tense conversation switched to the issue of the naval base at Vlora over Albanian accusations of Soviet seamen and officers allegedly quarrelling with Albanians in their territory. In a polemic mood, Khrushchev mentioned the possibility of removing this military installation from Albania. The conversation finally came to end when Khrushchev compared Hoxha's manner of discussion to British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, who "also wanted to talk to me this way", and when Mikoyan commented that Hoxha "speaks worse than MacMillan". The Albanian delegation stood up and left the room. Mehmet Shehu's last words to Khrushchev on his way out were "that Albania will always remain faithful to the Soviet Union and a member of the socialist camp".⁸

Obviously, what lay at the core of the failed attempt to repair the initial split were differences in mentality, exacerbated by the painful perception by the representatives of a small country of some liberties that their interlocutors as representatives of a great power took in their statements. On the other hand, the conversation ran as if the Albanian side had awaited a reason to cut it short. And this indeed happened as soon as such an opportunity was presented by the Soviets. Since researchers are now aware of the mood in which the Albanians arrived in Moscow after the PLA CC plenary session of 1 November, it is obvi-

⁸ Report on the meeting of the ALP delegation with leaders of the CPSU, 12 November 1960: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117494>

ous that the liberties taken by the Soviet side during the 12 November meeting played into the hands of the Albanians.

Already on 14 November, aware of their mistake and trying to put it right, the Soviet leadership sent a short letter to Albanian leaders, addressing it to the "PLA delegation" and calling them "comrades". The Soviet leaders proposed "resuming the meeting between representatives of our parties at a time convenient for your delegation". They also expressed their regret that the Albanian side had interrupted the meeting, trying to assure them that "none of us had or has any intention to offend any of the Albanian representatives". They regretted that the Albanians had left too early to hear the end of the interrupted sentence ("had they listened to the end of the sentence"), "misinterpreted and interrupted sentence", "despite the sincere desire of the CPSU delegation to continue" the talks. The Soviets proposed resuming the meeting either in the previous composition or between other "authorized representatives" of both Central Committees to discuss issues of interest to "both parties". The Soviet side demonstrated patience, promising to wait until "the Albanian comrades are ready to re-establish contacts" with CPSU representatives. At the same time, the Soviets expressed their readiness for a meeting at the heads of government level, drawing attention to "some issues concerning our two states that need to be discussed", in fact proposing to meet at any level "which Albanian comrades may find acceptable". Researchers have not yet clarified whether the Soviet hosts managed to deliver this letter to the LPA delegation the same day (14 November), as proposed by Yuri Andropov who was responsible for drawing it up.⁹

The Soviet 14 November message to the Albanians was ignored by Hoxha. He indirectly replied to Soviet proposals in his speech at the general session of the communist delegations on 16 November. He expressed his support for the theoretical part of Deng Xiaoping's report, reiterated Chinese arguments and expressed disagreement with the Soviet position on a number of issues, such as peaceful coexistence, paths of transition to socialism, and criticism of Stalin's personality cult. A substantial part of his speech was devoted to Yugoslavia. Hoxha dwelt on the Yugoslav problem at some length, noting the need to return to the definitions contained in the resolution on the Yugoslav question adopted at the 3rd Cominform meeting in 1949. He also argued on attempts of Yugoslav communist leaders to impose their revisionist ideas by force. He focused particularly on the activities of Aleksandar Ranković as coordinator of the Yugoslav state security services, who, as Hoxha alleged, led a campaign for the extermination of the Albanian population in Yugoslavia. The Albanian leader accused him of preparing a Yugoslav secret service operation for the escape from Albania to Yugoslavia of a group of high-ranking officials in order to use them to "lead an offensive against Albania". Hoxha also denounced the Yugoslav leader

⁹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 12, f. 809, p. 88.

Tito as organizer of counter-revolutionary activities in Hungary in 1956. According to him, Tito also plotted with Greece to divide Albania. In both cases, as Hoxha claimed, the Yugoslav leadership acted with Khrushchev's approval. A considerable part of the Albanian leader's speech criticized the Soviet Union's economic assistance to Albania, accusing the Soviet leadership of wishing to turn his country into an agrarian semi-colony. Thus, Hoxha sought to make it clear that the dispute between him and Khrushchev was not caused by individual disagreements, but by the Soviet government's great-power, chauvinistic policy. Soon after this speech, Hoxha left Moscow and returned to Albania, still ignoring the Soviet proposal for resuming the talks interrupted on 12 November.

Since Soviet leaders became convinced of Hoxha's unwillingness to resume the talks, they tried to use (unsuccessfully) economic leverage to coerce him into meeting them. On 13 December 1960, the Soviet side suspended the implementation of the Agreement on Material Assistance to the Albanian Army, temporarily blocking the shipping of military supplies and related products. As for future cooperation, the Soviet Defence Ministry informed the Albanian government that the extension of this Agreement for 1960–1961 should be decided at government level.¹⁰

Hoxha's 16 November speech with its firmly defined views was truly shocking for most participants. Nevertheless, it had no decisive effect on the formal outcomes of this meeting. The Chinese delegation demonstrated restraint as the meeting was drawing to its end. Only Deng Xiaoping participated in theoretical discussion, while Zhou Enlai, head of the delegation, remained in the shadow. On 1 December, he was the first to sign the final document of the meeting. Following him, the Albanian delegation signed it too. The restraint shown by the Chinese helped avoid an open scandal and maintain the image of the world communist movement's unity intact. The Soviet leadership also used the Chinese tactic of creating the impression that there were only secondary differences between Moscow and Beijing.

Summing up the results of the Moscow meeting, Soviet leaders maintained a pretence of optimism for a few weeks. They praised Khrushchev's 20 November speech and the activity of the Soviet delegation at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the topmost Soviet leadership of 16 December 1960, included the conclusion that "as a result of a friendly discussion, a unanimity of views was reached on the principled basis of Marxism-Leninism regarding the most important issues of international development and the communist movement, on which the CPC delegation, joined by the PLA delegation, initially held positions diverging from Marxist-Leninist."¹¹

¹⁰ RGANI, F 3, inv. 3, f. 463, p. 9.

¹¹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 443, p. 2.

Nevertheless, two weeks later the Soviet leadership returned to Albanian themes. The rather dubious earlier statements about the success of the international meeting of communist parties in Moscow in November, recorded in the decision of the CPSU CC Presidium, were forgotten. Already at the end of December, the Soviets returned to the assessments that had prevailed in Moscow before the November meeting. The “Questions on Albania” was again an item on the agenda of the meeting of the CPSU CC Presidium on December 30. Its participants discussed the situation at the negotiations with the Albanian side about economic issues. As a result of the discussion, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kuznetsov) was instructed to “prepare a reply to the note of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding negotiations on economic issues”. As is known from the declassified and published protocol of decision, the discussion went beyond purely economic matters. Khrushchev spoke “about the naval base and submarines”. As a result, the Ministry of Defence (Malinovsky) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kuznetsov) were instructed “to develop relevant documents”, “taking into account the exchange of views”.¹²

The reference materials that the Soviet leaders had received before the 30 December meeting are still inaccessible to researchers, but additional consulting of declassified documents has been useful to collecting further details concerning this discussion (item 12 of the CPSU CC Presidium meeting agenda of 30 December). It seems that the reference materials were prepared jointly by the Defence and Foreign ministers (Malinovsky and Gromyko, as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy of the USSR, Admiral Gorshkov) as early as 11 November 1960 (no. 655 under the heading “top secret”). Only one new document for this 30 December meeting was added – “the telegram of comrade Novikov from Tirana” (no. 423 of 27 December 1960). It is also known that invited to participate in the December 30 discussion on this issue were Malinovsky and Gorshkov, as well as three deputies of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko (Kuznetsov, Semenov, Firyubin). Given the lack of declassified sources, the content of Khrushchev’s statements regarding the naval base and submarines in Vlora can only be guessed from what he said at a meeting with the Albanian delegation led by Enver Hoxha on 12 November: “Now we say that, if you want, we can remove the base. The submarines are ours.”¹³

¹² *KPSS i formirovanie sovetskoi politiki na Balkanakh v 1950-kh – pervoi polovine 1960-kh* g.g. *Sbornik dokumentov* [CPSU and the formation Soviet Balkan policy in the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. Documents], eds. L. A. Velichanskaia et al. (Thessaloniki: Paratiritis, 2003), 298.

¹³ Report of the meeting of the Albanian Labor Party delegation with leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 12 November 1960: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117494> (last accessed 30 December 2019).

At the same time, the exchange of New Year's greetings between the Soviet and Albanian leaders these days did not reflect the divergence that continued to grow at the end of 1960. Khrushchev and Brezhnev sent their telegram to Tirana to all four Albanian leaders and received an almost identical text from Tirana. In both cases, greetings began with: "dear comrades".¹⁴ The festive mood was also marked by the Soviet decision of 4 January, when the Presidium endorsed the proposal of the USSR Ministry of Defence to transfer to the Albanian People's Army special materials for the 46th naval detachment OSNAZ (special forces unit). An order of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on this issue had been adopted on 27 July 1960, but at that point remained unendorsed by any decision of the CPSU CC Presidium, probably because of the unexpected outcome of the meetings in Bucharest in late June.

But already on 7 January 1961, the Foreign Ministry in Moscow instructed its Ambassador in Tirana to lodge protest against the discrimination of Soviet transport ships at the Albanian port of Durres. Soviet discontent was caused by the situation that "most Soviet ships transporting grain and other cargoes to Albania" were left waiting to be unloaded while other foreign ships had no such problems. Soviets thought that "Albanian authorities create more favourable conditions for ships of other countries in comparison with the Soviet ones". The Foreign Ministry called on the Albanian authorities to take measures to prevent such practice.¹⁵

As the Soviets came to the conclusion that Albanian leaders had not made any serious step to normalize relations with Moscow after more than five weeks of the signing of the Moscow Declaration, the previous positive assessments had to be changed. It was done by ideologist Mikhail Suslov in his report submitted at the CPSU CC session on 12 January 1961. It was exclusively devoted to the Moscow meeting and its results. This time he gave a rather bleak assessment of the prospects for further relations with the Albanian leadership. If the state of relations with the leadership of the CCP was presented as settled, Suslov described the actions of the Albanian leadership very sharply. He noted that the source of their "erroneous positions", "the reason for their departure from the Soviet positions is dogmatism in leadership, political immaturity, regime of personality cult and nationalist positions, especially in relations with Yugoslavia".¹⁶

Despite such a sharp shift in assessments, Moscow continued to exercise restraint in its approach to Albania. Albanian leaders invited a CPSU delegation to the upcoming LPA congress. It seemed to the Soviet leadership that this provided an opportunity to settle relations and relieve tensions. On 16 February 1961, the CPSU delegation (Petr Pospelov, Yuri Andropov and Yosif Shikin,

¹⁴ *Pravda*, 4 January 1961, p. 2.

¹⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 448, p. 16; f. 450, p. 1.

¹⁶ RGANI, F 2, inv. 1, f. 535, p. 140.

Soviet Ambassador in Tirana) was instructed to “uphold the conclusions and assessments of the Moscow meeting in a firm and principled manner, while trying to avoid engaging in direct polemics with Albanian leaders”. They should also harmonize their “general line of conduct at the congress with the delegations of other communist and workers’ parties of the socialist countries”. Trying to predict future developments, the Soviet leadership did not rule out the possibility of Albanian leaders’ “open hostile attacks against the CPSU” at the congress, warning the delegation to be prepared. But Moscow did not rule out the possibility of Albanian leaders offering “to meet with the delegation of the CPSU” either. In that case, the delegation was supposed to “accept the offer” and use the conversation with Albanian leadership to reiterate the points of Khrushchev’s 23 November speech at the Moscow meeting. It was also stated that “we would not want to have a discussion with them at the PLA congress, but should such a discussion be forced upon us, the delegation will have to offer a strong rebuttal”. It was pointed out that “the delegation should not ignore possible attacks against other fraternal parties at the congress as it will be needed to give the necessary rebuttal to such attacks”. The directives stressed one more time that the delegation should not start a polemic with the Albanian leadership on its own. Bearing in mind earlier practice, Moscow believed it possible that the Soviet delegation might be invited to participate in mass rallies after the congress and recommended not to decline the invitation.¹⁷

The Soviet predictions about the Albanian side’s behaviour proved partly correct. As Hoxha and his entourage refrained from attacking the Soviet leadership, there was no need for Pospelov to launch a counterattack. He delivered a constructive speech. The Soviet press published abridged versions both of his text and of Hoxha’s report to the delegates to the forum. But Hoxha outplayed Khrushchev again. Contrary to the expectations of the authors of the instructions to the CPSU delegation, he received Pospelov and Andropov not before but on the last day of his party’s congress, on 20 February. He probably wanted to see their reaction, as it was clear that there was no opposition to him among the delegates and that the party was firmly under his control. As is clear from the Albanian memorandum of their conversation, the meeting was formal.¹⁸

The results of the CPSU delegation’s trip to Tirana were discussed at a meeting of the CPSU CC Presidium on 24 February. Pospelov’s report gave no reason for enthusiasm. An entry in the minutes indicates that an active discussion followed (Andropov, Mikoyan, Khrushchev, Kozlov, Suslov, Furtseva). Once again, it became evident that Enver Hoxha did not want another personal meeting with the Soviets. The activity of the delegation was approved of and its “tactic steps” described as “correct”. However, the discussion revealed some

¹⁷ RGANI, F 3, inv.14, f. 454, pp. 7–8.

¹⁸ Marku, “Communist Relations in Crisis”, 13.

divergence of opinion between Mikoyan and Khrushchev. A brief minutes entry indicates that Khrushchev “speaks from the positions of principle in economic and trade relations with Albania”, insisting that there was no need to sign a trade agreement at the moment. He saw a way out in resuming negotiations “at the highest level in Moscow”. In his turn, Mikoyan argued against steps that might give the Chinese an opportunity to say that “we are putting pressure on a small country.” Mikoyan also considered it important not to break off trade relations with Albania. And, should the Albanians refuse to correct their positions, he proposed not to invite the PLA delegation to attend the 22th CPSU congress in October. In the course of this discussion participants came to the conclusion that the Soviet stance in the growing dispute with Albania should be thoroughly substantiated, including by preparing broadcasts explaining the situation.¹⁹ It was decided, based on the results of the discussion, to prepare (Kozlov, Brezhnev, Mikoyan, Pospelov and Andropov) proposals concerning economic issues in relations between the USSR and Albania and a draft letter from the CPSU CC to the PLA CC on Albanian-Soviet relations in general.²⁰

At the end of the winter of 1961, it was obvious that the Soviet-Albanian conflict continued to deepen. A new phase was an intense exchange of letters in late winter and spring. This exchange has so far been studied only partially and selectively. It requires full use of the available documents and a more careful and objective study than before. It was in this period that letters between the Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, Soviet Marshal Andrey Grechko, and Albania’s Defence Minister, Colonel-General Beqir Baluku (25 February, 27 March, 28 March), were exchanged, as well as the Soviet memoranda of 22 March, then again between Grechko and Baluku on 24 and 27 March.²¹ At that time, a special factor in the further deterioration of relations was the controversy over the situation in and future of the naval base at Vlora, established by the Soviet naval forces in 1959 at the request of the Albanian side within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The correspondence was later continued, including Mehmed Shehu’s letters of 5 April and 8 May.

A fairly significant indication of Khrushchev’s stance on the conflict was his speech at the meeting of the Warsaw Pact alliance leaders on 29 March 1961.

¹⁹ *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954–1964: Chernovye protokol’nye zapisi zasedanii. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniia* [Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU Sessions 1954–1964: Stenographic Minutes. Decisions], ed. A. A. Fursenko (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), vol. 1, 493–494.

²⁰ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 456, pp. 1–2.

²¹ RGANI, F 3 inv. 3, f. 463, p. 2. For the Albanian response to this letter see V. Mastny and M. Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact 1955–1991?* (Budapest – New York: Central European University Press, 2005), 110–111 (Albanian Minister of Defence Beqir Baluku’s letter to Marshal Grechko of 28 March 1961).

Before the meeting, the Soviet leader was still hopeful of the growing conflict being resolved in a personal meeting with Hoxha. He again invited him and Shehu to visit Moscow to attend the meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee at the end of March. It is possible to assume with much certainty that the Soviet leadership's "On instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana" of 18 March 1961 (still inaccessible to researchers)²² was devoted to this matter. Hoxha and Shehu declined the invitation "for health reasons". Instead of them Defence Minister Baluku and Foreign Minister Behar Shtylla were appointed to take part as their delegates.²³

A considerable part of Khrushchev's 29 March speech was devoted to Albania. Wishing to "make some remarks regarding the actions of Albanian comrades, who have recently departed from the agreed foreign policy of the socialist camp countries", he set out a few points. As for the Albanian stance on developments in the Balkans, he was unhappy about their refusal to support "the concrete proposals of the socialist countries on the issue of intra-Balkan cooperation, on the creation of nuclear-free zones in the Balkans and the Adriatic", as it "even hinders the implementation of these proposals". The Soviet leader also made some clarifications about the situation with the naval base at Vlora. He emphasized that it "now is virtually unable to perform its tasks" and became "an additional source of friction". According to him, "the combat effectiveness of the base has been paralyzed", and "under current conditions there is no sense in maintaining" it. As the only condition for its preservation and "normalization of situation", Khrushchev stressed "the need" to accept the proposal contained in the letter of Marshal Grechko for "a single command at the military base, so that all ship crews may remain Soviet". In this case, Khrushchev made it clear that he would not even respond to any allegations against him from Albanian leaders.²⁴

There is no doubt that the Albanian representatives' obligation to consult with Enver Hoxha and their different political weight in comparison with the other participants in the meeting did not allow them to respond actively and sharply to various claims and accusations levelled primarily at the highest Albanian leaders. It is obvious that everything that happened at the meeting, including the criticism by the Bulgarian and Polish leaders, with whom Khrushchev concurred, of Enver Hoxha's claim at the recent PLA congress about a conspiracy against Albania by Greece and Yugoslavia with the participation of the US 6th Fleet was passed on by both ministers to Tirana word for word. According to Khrushchev's remark suspecting Enver Hoxha of intentionally "inflating

²² RGANI, F 3 inv. 14, f. 462, p. 58.

²³ Marku, "Communist Relations in Crisis", 13.

²⁴ RGANI, F 10, inv. 3, f. 6, pp. 63, 69.

military hysteria”, the Soviet leader even seemed to defend Yugoslav leaders in this particular case.²⁵

It is obvious that Khrushchev’s 29 March comments on relations with Albania were linked with Soviet further well-planned steps regarding Albania in both the economic and political spheres. Two days earlier Soviet leaders had approved economic policy recommendations concerning Albania to be implemented by the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the State Committee for Economic Cooperation and the Foreign Trade Ministry. The recommendations had been worked out within four weeks in accordance with the decision of the CPSU CC Presidium of late February.

These prepared “proposals” constituted a fundamental memorandum in which all issues concerning economic relations between the two countries were thoroughly worked out and the development of bilateral relations in recent years summarized. All elements of previous cooperation were presented in full detail, such as Soviet material, technical and financial assistance to Albania, including the exact sums of allocated and used loans, the state of facilities under construction, and the number of Soviet specialists with specification of their specialization in different sectors of the Albanian economy. The document also offered a political evaluation of the state of relations between Albania and the USSR. The authors believed that the “foundations of friendly fraternal relations between the Albanian and Soviet peoples, between the governments of both countries are undermined” in Albania. This state of affairs was, according to the authors, “the main reason for the abnormalities that have arisen in relations between Albania and the Soviet Union”. They considered it “necessary in the future, until the moment that PLA leaders have changed their nationalist and hostile policies towards the USSR and the CPSU”, to carry out a set of measures “in the field of economic relations between the Soviet Union and Albania”.²⁶ Among financial measures, it was advised to close the opportunities for Albania to get loans according to the Agreement of 3 July 1957. Proposals were put forward not to extend any new loans for agricultural development and not to provide incentives for previous loans. The use of previous loans to Albania was restricted to the payment for Soviet equipment or goods.²⁷

In a similar key, recommendations “on Soviet-Albanian trade relations” were developed. Experts pointed out the necessity of a balanced implementation of the bilateral Protocol on Trade in 1961. It was advised not to sign a long-term trade agreement for 1961–1965 with the same purpose of pressurizing the Albanian leadership into accepting to meet again with Soviet leaders (“if the Albanian side asks about it [...] reply that this issue can be discussed at the highest

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 72–73.

²⁶ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 463, p. 9.

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 10–11.

level"). Not even the final stage of the construction of the Palace of Culture in Tirana was overlooked. If the Albanian side inquired about it, it should be replied that it was a "matter subject to additional consideration at governmental level".²⁸ A special section of the recommendations concerned the Soviet experts in Albania, with a clear schedule of their withdrawal by the end of 1961. It was decided, "due to the inappropriate attitude of the Albanian side towards many Soviet specialists located in Albania, to refrain from sending new Soviet specialists and not to extend the term of stay for the specialists already located there". Some exceptions were envisaged for the specialists engaged in the design and construction of hydroelectric power plants and geological exploration. Given the possibility that "abnormal conditions may be created for the remaining Soviet specialists in Albania to continue working", in that case, "it is necessary" to arrange for their "being recalled to the Soviet Union ahead of time".

Separate recommendations envisaged the cessation of the supply of military-technical equipment, food and fodder for the Albanian Army, suspending the agreements of 28 September 1949, 24 March 1956, and 26 February 1959. The latter one regarding supply of missile technology was especially stressed. It was also decided to ignore the Albanian request for a loan of 125 million rubles for the needs of the Albanian Armed Forces in 1961–1965 under the Agreement of 26 July 1960.²⁹

An analysis of these recommendations shows that the main ones were aimed at coercing the Albanian leadership into resuming talks at the highest possible level. The elaborate programme devised to force Enver Hoxha and his associates to meet again in person was thwarted by Albania's intensifying cooperation with the People's Republic of China. In less than a month, on 23 April, a Sino-Albanian trade agreement was signed. As it follows from the recommendations approved by the CPSU CC Presidium in late April, Khrushchev and his entourage expected that the financial-economic pressure on Albania would result in Albanian leaders' consent to another bilateral summit meeting in order to try to relieve tensions. Even today, almost sixty years later, the whole set of documents in Russian archives related to the preparation of Kosygin's letter, as well as the text of the letter itself, remain unavailable to researchers. We can only assume that this unjustified secrecy is due to unwillingness to reveal what highly likely was a furious Soviet reaction to the Chinese leadership's really political decision to sign a trade agreement with Albania. Therefore, we are still forced to rely on what Western historiography claims about this problem since the early 1970s. According to it, Soviet First Deputy Premier Alexei Kosygin sent a letter within five days of the signing of the Chinese-Albanian trade agreement. His letter effectively signalled the end of the Soviet-Albanian trade and credit agree-

²⁸ RGANI, F 3, inv. 3, f. 463, p. 12

²⁹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 463, pp. 11–14.

ments. Among other things, Kosygin stated that, "It is understandable that the Albanian leadership cannot expect that the USSR will help it in the future as it has in the past, with aid from which only true friends and brothers have a right to benefit."³⁰

Late April and early May marked a new phase in Soviet-Albanian relations. With the activation of Chinese-Albanian relations at the end of April, the Soviets realized it was necessary to clarify the current situation with the Vlora naval base to the Chinese leadership, justifying their decision to dismantle it. As a result, the Soviet Ambassador in Beijing was instructed on May 16 to meet with Zhou Enlai, who had raised the issue on his initiative a few days earlier. Moscow wanted to convince others (in this case, the Chinese) that "the Soviet government did not want to withdraw ships and equipment from Albania, and if this issue has now arisen, it is not at all our desire. Our steps to withdraw [...] are a forced move, since the Albanian side, pursuing a line unfriendly to the USSR, has created a completely intolerable situation at the base. As a result, the base has actually lost its combat capability and the continued presence of Soviet sailors there due to the direct provocation of the Albanian military authorities is fraught with undesirable incidents." The Soviet side provided several examples of such cases, noting that the Albanian government did not respond to Soviet appeals in any way. "No measures have been taken by the Albanian side to remedy this situation", on the contrary, "every time we address them, they try to justify the unruly and sometimes provocative actions of the Albanian military authorities, as a result of which the situation at the Vlora base continues to deteriorate." It was noted that "only thanks to the high political maturity, conscientiousness and endurance of Soviet officers, petty officers and sailors, it is still possible to avoid conflicts and clashes between our and Albanian sailors", reminding of the previous proposal to put all crews and ships under the command of the WTO commander-in-chief. The Albanian leadership's refusal to accept this proposal convinced Moscow to withdraw Soviet ships from Vlora.³¹

The final chord in this phase was the arrival in Tirana on 19 May of the Soviet delegation headed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolai Firyubin to negotiate about the withdrawal of Soviet naval forces from Vlora. At first, the Albanian side refused even to meet with Firyubin. Moreover, Tirana wanted to divide the fleet.³² The final Soviet decision was that Firyubin and his

³⁰ Freedman, *Economic Warfare*, 79.

³¹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 475, pp. 11–12.

³² For somewhat more detail on the positions of the two sides on this controversial issue and the Albanian side's opposition to the plan for the withdrawal of Soviet ships see *KPSS i formirovanie sovetskoi politiki*, 302–307.

delegation could leave Tirana “after the withdrawal from Albania of eight submarines, floating base and personnel of the Soviet Navy”.³³

The final negotiations took place under the dark shadow of preparations for a trial of Teme Sejko, Rear-Admiral and Commander of the Albanian Navy, and several senior PLA officials. The trial was held in May 1961 and the accused were found guilty. Several of them, including Sejko himself, were sentenced to death. Officially, all of them were indicted for collaborating with the Greek and Yugoslav intelligence services and planning a coup d'état. However, there were unofficial rumours, well known even to the highest party-state bureaucracy, that all the involved were suspected of a pro-Soviet conspiracy to overthrow the current leadership.³⁴

Events surrounding the withdrawal of Soviet submarines, auxiliary ships and military equipment from the naval base at Vlora led to a reduced cooperation in other areas as well. In early June, the Soviet leadership decided on an “early withdrawal from Albania of the Soviet specialists who provide technical assistance in various sectors of the national economy of Albania”. In June, thirty-three of them were to return to the USSR, followed, in July, by two more specialists who provided technical assistance for the reconstruction and production capacity expansion of sugar and cement plants.³⁵

A remarkable testimony to the growing distrust in relations between Moscow and Tirana was the decision of the Soviet leadership of 14 June concerning the sharing of information about the meeting between Khrushchev and Kennedy in Vienna on 3–4 June 1961. If the leaderships of all socialist countries and the leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro, were given the full recording of the talks, the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana was instructed to inform Enver Hoxha about it only verbally. It was also decided to inform verbally, “in confidence”, the heads of state or government of Afghanistan, Burma, Brazil, Cambodia, Finland, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iraq, Morocco, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, UAR, Somalia, Ceylon, Ethiopia as well as Yugoslavia.³⁶ This decision was a clear sign that in the eyes of the Soviets the leadership of Albania was placed on the same level as the leadership of Yugoslavia, not so long ago described as revisionist and almost hostile.

The state of relations with Albania and the necessity to send a response to its Foreign Ministry was on the agenda again at the meetings of the Soviet leadership on 13 June. Khrushchev and his associates were informed “about the

³³ Ibid. 306.

³⁴ For more detail see A. A. Ulunian, “Gotovilsia li perevorot v Albanii? ‘Delo T. Seyko’: versii.” [Was a coup planned in Albania? “Case of T. Seyko”: versions], *Slavianovedenie* 1 (2012), 16–32.

³⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 482, p. 51. Protocol no. 333 of CPSS CC Presidium session of 8 June 1961.

³⁶ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 485, p. 30.

facts of unworthy behaviour of Albanian military cadets studying at Soviet military schools". A note to that effect was to be sent to the government of Albania.³⁷ On 17 June, Khrushchev and Mikoyan were the main speakers in the discussion on Albanian issues, an important item on that day's agenda. It was decided "in view of the Albanian government's continuing unfriendly actions leading to the deterioration of Albanian-Soviet relations"; to send to Tirana an official note concerning the misconduct of the Albanian cadets. Copies of this document were also to be sent to the "leaders of the socialist camp countries".³⁸

During the summer of 1961 relations between Tirana and Moscow continued to slide down, becoming even more complicated. In early July Hoxha made an attempt to restore dwindling economic and military contacts with the Soviet bloc countries. His attempts ended in failure. Moreover, Albania was not invited to the meeting of the leaders of the communist and workers' parties of the Warsaw Pact countries, which took place in early August.

Having concluded that a break was inevitable, and ready for a tough confrontation with the Albanian leadership, Soviet leaders clearly wanted to minimize the damaging effect that mutual accusations would have on the image of the USSR among the population of Albania as a result of its leadership's anti-Soviet propaganda. This is evidenced, for example, by Moscow's instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana of August 31 concerning the upcoming month (*mesiachnik*) of Albanian-Soviet friendship in Albania. In previous years, Albanian authorities had marked this month throughout the country. This time, in the considerably changed circumstances, Moscow proceeded cautiously. On the one hand, it assessed that "unfriendly policies pursued by the Albanian leadership regarding the Soviet Union give reason to believe that they can use the opportunity presented by these weeks to deceive the Albanian people". As it had already become a tradition for Soviet senior diplomats or people from other Soviet organizations in Albania to take part, at the invitation of Albanian authorities, in various celebrations, rallies and meetings, it was recommended "to accept the invitation and take part in the events". Moscow's directives to Soviet representatives were not to refuse to give a speech if invited: "they can speak in the spirit of the speech of the head of the CPSU delegation to the PLA Congress". They also stressed as necessary "to use these speeches to acquaint the working people of Albania with the successes of communist construction in the USSR". Moscow still sought to avoid further deterioration, warning Soviet diplomats that "they should not touch upon Soviet-Albanian relations when covering foreign policy issues", but should instead put the main emphasis "on explaining the peaceful foreign policy of the Soviet Union and Khrushchev's activities [in that area]". The Soviet personnel in Albania were instructed to "immediately leave

³⁷ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 485, p. 29.

³⁸ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 486, p. 3.

meetings and further evade participation in the events of the month” should any anti-Soviet incidents be allowed.³⁹

The differences between Moscow and Tirana entered a new phase at the 22nd CPSU Congress (held 17–31 October 1961 in Moscow) as Khrushchev openly declared as unacceptable the political practice and ideological views of the ALP leadership. Apart from Khrushchev, several other congress participants spoke in a harsh anti-Albanian tone. Anti-Yugoslav rhetoric also sounded in a number of statements, and in the new Programme of the CPSU adopted by the Congress as well. This was an addition to the ideological dispute with Belgrade following the adoption of the new Programme of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in April 1958 combined with the Soviet desire not to irritate the Chinese leadership with new accents in the Soviet approach to “Yugoslav revisionism”.

The Soviet side continued to intensify economic contacts with Yugoslavia, while economic relations with Albania continued to deteriorate. On 30 October, the Soviet leadership supported the proposal of the Polish government not to deliver to Albania a merchant ship built in Poland.⁴⁰

The changes in Moscow's relations with Tirana and Belgrade were clearly visible at the end of November in relevant decisions of the Soviet top decision-makers regarding the attitude to the state holidays of Albania and Yugoslavia. With regard to Albania, the Soviets' congratulatory telegrams were limited to a low level. Unlike in previous years, formal congratulations were sent only to the Presidium of the People's Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania. The Soviets sent “heartfelt congratulations to the brotherly Albanian people on the occasion of the 17th anniversary of the liberation of Albania from the Nazi occupiers”, noting that “the decisive factor providing the opportunity for the Albanian people to throw off the foreign yoke and establish the people's power in the country was the defeat of Nazi hordes by the Soviet Army.” It was decided that the Soviet congratulatory texts only be read on the radio without being published in Soviet newspapers. As for the Soviet press, it was decided to publish articles containing congratulations to the Albanian people while condemning “the schismatic activities of the Albanian leadership”. Soviet leaders recommended preparation of several radio broadcasts to Albania in the same ideological spirit. Special attention was paid to the possible request by the Albanian side, usual on previous occasions, to give the Albanian Ambassador the opportunity to speak on the Soviet radio and television. It was decided to reject such a request on the grounds that “the Soviet ambassador in Albania was not given a similar opportunity”. In addition, it was decided not to hold

³⁹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 503, p. 16.

⁴⁰ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 1, p. 30.

any public official celebrations by Soviet nongovernmental organizations, and to limit the level of presence at the reception at the Albanian Embassy in Moscow to Soviet officials engaged in foreign cultural exchange. At the same time, the Soviet ambassadors abroad were instructed to avoid participating in any celebrations organized by Albanian embassies, and to send instead "a counsellor or the first secretary to the reception at the Albanian Embassy". Special instructions were also sent to the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana: he was to refrain from participating in any celebratory events organized by Albanian authorities and to attend governmental receptions accompanied by no more than two other Soviet diplomats.

In the same period, Soviet authorities took further steps to warm relations with Yugoslavia. They demonstrated a considerably more attentive and friendly approach to the state holiday of Yugoslavia (FNRY) on 29 November both in comparison with their attitude to the Albanian state holiday on 29 November and to the Yugoslav central state holiday on 29 November in previous years. The Soviet plan for marking the Yugoslav holiday included a letter of congratulations of Khrushchev and Brezhnev to Tito expressing the wish "to strengthen and comprehensively develop friendly relations between our countries", with the publication of this text in the Soviet press after Tito's reply; attendance of Soviet senior state representatives at the reception hosted by the Embassy of the FNRY in Moscow; publication of articles relating to the FNRY national holiday in the major and most-widely distributed Soviet dailies *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*. The plan even envisaged a speech of the FNRY Ambassador in Moscow on the Soviet radio and television in case of the Yugoslav side's request.

This significant decline in the level of cordiality in Soviet-Albanian relations in connection with the celebration of the Albanian national holiday was overshadowed by other developments related to Albania's tightening control over the activity of Soviet diplomats in Tirana. On 25 November, after the demand of Albanian authorities to the Soviet Ambassador to reduce the embassy staff by nearly two-thirds, accusing them of carrying out hostile activities in Albania, the Soviet leadership decided "to recall the Soviet ambassador, comrade Shikin I. V., from Albania". Simultaneously the Soviets informed Tirana about the impossibility of the Albanian Ambassador further stay of the in the USSR. The Soviet note indicated that after the 22th Congress of the CPSU the Albanian authorities created an intolerable environment for the normal activities of Soviet diplomats in the People's Republic of Albania. It was concluded that the Soviet Embassy in Tirana was *de facto* in a position of isolation as a result of violation of all basic norms of international law related to its day-to-day activities. The statement noted that the Albanian authorities deliberately created conditions under which the Soviet Ambassador in Albania was unable to fulfil his duties

and carry out his assignments as instructed by the Soviet government.⁴¹ Further Soviet measures against Albania followed immediately. Already on 3 December, Moscow decided on cancelling customs privileges for the Albanian citizens granted by the Soviet Union to the citizens of socialist countries. Instead, they became subject to customs rules applied to citizens of capitalist states.⁴²

At the end of the year, Moscow found a solution to the problem of Soviet property in Albania which was in temporary use by local organizations, but was not legally registered. It was decided to credit local organizations in Albania for lease and temporary use of Soviet property (airfield, drilling and geophysical equipment, a floating pile driver, two scows, cars and other property), on account on the net debt of the Soviet Union under previous Soviet-Albanian agreements (22 November 1957 and 3 July 1959).⁴³

Even more striking was the change in Moscow's attitude towards Albania as reflected in New Year greeting telegrams on behalf of the Soviet leadership. On 28 December 1961, Soviet leaders approved lists of the states to which greeting telegrams should be sent. This time Albania was dropped out of the list of socialist countries. Moreover, it was not on the list of capitalist countries either. As if Soviet leaders had erased Albania from the globe. By contrast, on the list of eleven socialist countries appeared Yugoslavia (after Romania and Czechoslovakia).⁴⁴

At the beginning of 1962, the fabric of Soviet-Albanian relations, seemingly so strong until recently, was in shreds. At that time, diplomats of both countries were sounding the Balkan states about their diplomatic representation in Moscow and Tirana respectively. Still, a paradox remained. Amidst the controversy and growing deterioration of relations with Moscow and its allies, Albania did not announce its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact military organization. On 15 December 1961, the Soviet leadership recommended that the representation of the joint armed forces of the socialist countries in Tirana be maintained.⁴⁵

By the end of 1961, within less than two years, relations between the Soviet Union and Albania had sunk to their lowest ebb. The Soviet leadership, presumably Khrushchev himself, failed in their effort to stop another growing conflict in the Soviet bloc by convincing Albanian leaders to discuss controversial issues

⁴¹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 8, pp.73–77; 89–96; 111; 126.

⁴² RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 10, p. 64.

⁴³ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 14, p. 9.

⁴⁴ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 16, pp. 3–5.

⁴⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 10, p. 5.

face-to-face. Researchers have already accumulated considerable knowledge of these processes, but considerable gaps are yet to be filled. The bulk of relevant Soviet documents in Russian archives remain classified, but the use of the available ones makes it possible for researchers to take a more comprehensive look at the progression of the Soviet-Albanian rift and to identify how, along with the collapse of Soviet-Albanian contacts in the early 1960s, a Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement began to take place. At the moment, the urgent need for a comparative study of Soviet, Albanian, as well as Chinese and Yugoslav archival documentary materials is obvious and inevitable.

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