

## The events in Hungary and their perception in Tirana

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### Abstract:

*The events in Hungary began like a clash of democratic views in Budapest, in a club which held the name of the famous Hungarian poet Shandor Petef. The events in Hungary agitated the calm waters of the relations newly returned between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In fact the Hungarian revolution was crushed by Soviet tanks in the streets of Budapest. And the Albanian Labour Party appears that has learned enough lessons from what happened in Hungary. Those who had more fear of the events in Hungary seemed especially Hoxha and Shehu. In Tirana the anxiety was in the air. After a sort of reconciliation between Belgrade and Moscow, this was the moment of another split between the communist countries. And this was the moment for Enver Hoxha to be hopeful again toward the relations between Albania and Soviet Union.*

**Key words:** Enver Hoxha, Hungary, Soviet Union, Revolution, Tragedy

### Objective of the study

This paper aims to bring to the reader the situation in Albania after and along the tragic events in October 1956 in Hungary. How the Albanian communist leaders experienced the uprising in Hungary and the role of Soviet Union in these developments?

The dilemmas of the communist leader of Soviet Union and the crush of the revolution. This paper aim to describe the anxiety lived along those days in Tirana. The possibility to conquer Albania was very small, but Enver Hoxha feared the de-Stalinization and the liberal reforms. He was a Stalinist leader. He feared a similar scenario like in Budapest.

## **Introduction**

"What is happening now in Hungary? Terror as at the time of Hitler and demagoguery? The imperialist propaganda proclaims this as a glory of the democracy." This is what Enver Hoxha wrote in the pages of one of his creations, number 4, in the chapter dedicated the events of 1956 in Hungary. Based on these theses that Enver Hoxha wrote in the chapter on Hungary, it was prepared also the cover story, published on November 5th 1956 in "Zeri i Popullit" the official newspaper of ALP, titled " The Hungarian people shattered the fascist plot". The events in Hungary began like a clash of democratic views in Budapest, in a club which held the name of the famous Hungarian poet Shandor Petef. The events in Hungary agitated the calm waters of the relations newly returned between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In some radiograms dictated by the Soviet Union ambassador in Hoxha's office in November 1956 talking about the situation and the latest events in Hungary I found that at that time has been held a meeting between the representatives of the central committee of the communist party of the soviet union and the yugoslav communist union for the Hungarian issue and even had several correspondences.

In a letter to Tito, Kardelj and Rankovic, Nikita Khrushchev wrote that in Hungary everything was going as well as it was discussed. He supported the government of Janos Kadar which he relied on by the people. This letter looked like a report about what happened in Hungary along those difficult

days of 1956. On November 4th, at 12 o'clock, the revolution was crushed.

In fact the Hungarian revolution was crushed by Soviet tanks in the streets of Budapest. And the Albanian Labour Party appears that has learned enough lessons from what happened in Hungary. Here's what Enver Hoxha said in a speech at a solemn meeting on the establishment of the party on November 8<sup>th</sup> of '56:

"... the tragedy of the Hungarian people must be lesson for all the honest people of the world, must be a lesson for all those who sleep on the laurels, and those who are listening to ideological slogans from the imperialists, reducing their vigilance, and replacing it with opportunism and dangerous softness ...."

In a letter from the Soviet ambassador in Belgrade, Mr. Firjubin, directed to the central committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union about the latter talks he held with Kardelj, is written that the Yugoslavs had taken contact with Imre Nagy, while Imre Nagy, together with his former governmental group of 11 persons without Kadar were already in Yugoslav embassy in Budapest as immigrants. Firjubin reported that according to Yugoslavia would be good to negotiate with Imre Nagy and he called for supporting the government of Janos Kadar. Yugoslavs were of the opinion that this matter will facilitate the situation in Hungary and will help for the recognition of Kadar government. Also in these talks Kardelj asked to take measures to preserve the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest because while Imre Nagy was there, maybe, the embassy could be under different attacks. But it seems that the Soviet Union and its leaders did not agree with the views of the Yugoslavs. The Soviets thought and considered necessary that Imre Nagy with his whole group of 11 persons to surrender to the Soviet military authorities and then handed back to the Hungarian revolutionary government.<sup>3</sup> However, Tito sent a further letter to Khrushchev that seemed agreeing with the declaration of the revolutionary government of

Hungary. But he didn't forget to emphasize that the activity of the Soviet army in Budapest had aroused discontent in Yugoslavia. Yugoslav state news agency "TANIUG" conveyed a statement from the government on the situation in Hungary and on its position in the following events

And according to Tito this had helped calm the dissatisfaction. Also Tito tried to convince Khrushchev about the housing benefits of Imre Nagy in the Yugoslav embassy. According to him it would be bad if they would be housed in one of the Western embassies. Tito demanded Khrushchev to be understood correctly agreeing with their position in relation to the delivery of Imre Nagy group in Yugoslavia with their desire and he stressed that this group had also good communists. Despite that, Tito and his group, expressed satisfied with the development of events in Hungary and would do their best for the government of Janos Kadar for going quickly beyond the difficulties, they still disagreed that Imre Nagy and his group to surrender the Hungarian revolutionary government. Tito called this an incontinence.

On November 6<sup>th</sup> of 1956, Khrushchev responding to Tito in his last telegram sent the soviet leader wrote that the outlook for Imre Nagy had bitterly. In this letter, Khrushchev seemed disappointed. As he himself wrote, he thought that they had found a common language for Imre Nagy and for what he had done and remembered to Tito his words "what communists are those who kill and torture other communists in Hungary". Khrushchev wrote to Tito, that in these conditions there was no guarantee to maintain relations with Imre Nagy. He was so surprised that why Imre Nagy should be housed in the Yugoslav embassy. Khrushchev went even further when he said that for him it would be better if Nagy would be housed in the American embassy.

"... No one who respects his government cannot endure that Imre Nagy, who opened the road to the reaction in Hungary, to be sent to neighboring friendly country. This fact covers with fog Yugoslavia and makes this issue more complicated

according to the connections of the Yugoslav government with the Hungarian revolutionary government.”

Khrushchev's letter concluded with the unanimous opinion of the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that Imre Nagy and his group must surrender the Hungarian revolutionary government and warned that sending Nagy in Yugoslavia will not bring agreement between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

And so it happened. The events in Hungary brought the next frozen period in the relations between the two countries.

"... The issue should be resolved in a way for not bringing harm nor in our relations with different countries or the Soviet Union, nor in the development of socialism in Hungary. We believe that you will try to find another solution to this issue ", wrote Tito”

According to Khrushchev the departure of Imre Nagy in Hungary will not bring damage to anyone and to nobody would reduce the prestige. He thought that the Hungarian government and Kadar would consent to this. In these conditions, Khrushchev thought it was the only possible important way which should be realized as soon as possible.

The cooling relations between Yugoslavia and Soviet Union after the events in Hungary interested to Enver Hoxha. Josip Broz Tito in a speech at a meeting of the Yugoslav Communist Party held in Pula ( Croatia) stated that there was a divergence of opinion in the bay between the Stalinist Soviet leadership on the one hand and the advocates of democracy on the other side, while Yugoslavia defended the opposite position on the events in Hungary.

Enver Hoxha on the other side in an article published on November 8<sup>th</sup> for the soviet newspaper "Pravda" seriously attacked Tito calling him ignorant, dogmatist and opponent of democracy. This inflamed more Tito, who responded quickly to Hoxha, and did not forget to call him an attempted Marxist who knew only the words Marxism - Leninism and nothing more

than that. He called Enver Hoxha a Stalinist leader that not only attacked Yugoslavia but opened attack on the ideas and actions of the current leadership of the Soviet and Khrushchev himself.

The soviets was very unhappy about some issues which until then, were kept in the confidential level, and were made subject to a public speech. They were so unhappy because the position of the union of Yugoslav communists in the speech was in contradictions with what the respective delegations of the two countries had agreed in their first meetings. The most important issue that worried them, was the rebuilding debates that had been resolved before. According to the Soviets, Yugoslavia began to discuss again different issues for which was agreed earlier, as was the issue of the Soviet army in Hungary, the issue of supporting the revolutionary government of rural workers with Comrade Kadar at the top, the case of Imre Nagy, etc.

Khrushchev raised doubts about the position of Tito on all the events in Hungary, relating this to his insistence for not submitting Nagi and his group. Soviet leader impression was that, even before, the Yugoslav press shone Hungary internal order so that they openly supported those forces that in Hungary, later became leaders of the reaction.

"The whole development of the Hungarian events showed clearly that the counter-revolutionary uprising in Hungary was no other than that a reaction with an imperialist attempt to exploit the situation created in the raid of the serious mistakes that had made the previous leadership of Hungary for diminishing achieve the intended plan and prepare carefully for a long time against the socialist camp under the banner of so-called liberation of "eastern Europe"

On the other hand Enver Hoxha although triumphed at the Tirana conference that in 1956, killed and eliminated his friends and associates and it seemed that there was obvious that the paranoia feeling continued and the enemies were everywhere. The events in Hungary came at a time when it

seemed that Tirana was quiet and the communist leader positions safer. Hungary's democratic reform threatened to bring the same spirit even in the Albanian capital and its intellectual elite.

During the war the Hungarians had made alliance with Hitler, who sent troops to the Soviet Union. Those who had more fear of the events in Hungary seemed especially Hoxha and Shehu. In Tirana the anxiety was in the air. In contrast with the Stalinist line of the official Tirana, the liberal reforms of Hungary had begun since the death of Stalin, and before Khrushchev's bombastic speech at the XX congress of the communist party of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev took the decision for the intervention of Soviet troops in Hungary also under the pressure and under a reaction concern that the events in Hungary would have consequences in the Soviet Union. Independence and democracy in Hungary risked the unraveling of the Soviet Union. While all the communist leaders of the communist bloc were against the latest developments in Hungary, in the capitals of these countries had been some reactions, mass protests, etc.

In Albania, it was not like this, because it did not exist the culture of anti-government protests and the threat to the possibility for being killed was very big. But even though the situation in Tirana was calmer compared with the situation in other countries of the communist east, still anxiety in the center of the communist leadership was present. Enver Hoxha seemed to have done half the work when he had taken measures after Tirana conference. The 20<sup>th</sup> Congress failed to achieve the purpose. Hungary failed to democratize. In November 1956 the democratic revolution was crushed. Enver Hoxha now felt smoother.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was an inspiration for the whole world, at a time when the so-called Cold War was threatening the whole world with a third world war even bloodier. The 1956 revolution against the ruling Stalinist and Soviet occupation troops, was a testimony to their Hungarian

nation. In an article in the Italian newspaper "La Repubblica" dated October 3, 2006, I found some testimonies for the period.

"One of the most renowned scholars of the former popular democracies in Europe, Hungarian professor Francois feuilleton, said that in late October of 1956 the Hungarian aspirations had expressed by an explosion of a fireworks spontaneous and irregular as dreams, passions, weaknesses. The weight of oppression was bruised giving an enormous rattling explosion of the all the strata of a society that the real communism was not able to overcome. "

Viktor Sebastian, an English citizen, but Hungarian in his origin, and also a testimony of Hungarian events wrote for "La Repubblica"...

"On October 30, 1956 was besieged the building of the Central Committee of the Party. After a three-hour battle of the hated top officials, emerged from the building with white flags in their hands. Their bodies were immediately shot and hung upside down like Mussolini in Milan, then the bodies were set on fire ". One day after the Kremlin Politburo members saw the picture with several such scenes they decided to act. But I believe that they came to make a decision as all empires: they felt that if they leave Hungary, all the satellite countries of Eastern Europe, will rise one after another. Thus Moscow decided to send a huge number of tanks and special forces. "

Meanwhile in Tirana schools the students was propagated that the events in Hungary were another sacrifice that the people of the Soviet Union had made to save the socialism. The first days after the crushing of the Hungarian uprising, in Tirana the officials talked only about the number of those killed in the ranks of the Soviet army and not for about 20 thousand killed in the bay of retrograde, those who wanted to bring democracy. Suppression of the Hungarian revolution had brought tranquility to the mind of Enver Hoxha, it also related to the fact that Khrushchev was making a break in the path of the de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union.

In half of 1957, the remains of the Stalinist leadership of this great country will be eliminated. Molotov, Malenkov,



Kaganovic, Bulganin and Shepilov. In one of his books Enver Hoxha says that the spirit of the infamous 20th congress urged all anti-revolutionary elements in the socialist countries and the communist and workers parties, gave courage to those who were masked and watched the moment to overthrow socialism there where the socialism had won. For Hoxha, the role of Khrushchevites in the Hungarian tragedy was clear. The efforts of Khrushchev and Tito to liquidate what was healthy in Hungary, were coordinated in Oactions between them. Enver Hoxha accused Khrushchev that with the visit in Belgrade, the attacks headed from Tito, aimed the rehabilitation of the titoist conspirators Koci Xoxe, Rajk, Kostov etc. While the PLA headed by Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu did not fall prey to the pressures, the Hungarian party was broken. Tito and Khrushchev triumphed.

Ramiz Alia, who replaced Enver Hoxha after his death, in his book "My Life" writes about the events in Hungary:

"PLA had divergences with Khrushchev also regarding the events of Hungary in the autumn of 1956, an event that gave more rights the reserved attitude of the PLA for the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress ... As the events unfolded in Hungary, they could bring serious political repercussions in other countries in Eastern Europe, because "the Hungarian line" oppugned some socialist principles, which were related to the domestic and foreign policy throughout the Eastern bloc."

In one of his written works with the number 14, Enver Hoxha blames US imperialists for the outbreak of counterrevolution in Hungary. According to him, the plan of their overall plot against the Soviet Union and socialist countries played an important role also in the counterrevolution of Hungary. Bursting the counterrevolution in Hungary, the imperialists were aimed at the same time writes Hoxha, to create a focus of war and aggression between countries of the socialist camp, to disconnect the countries of this camp headed by the Soviet Union and to destroy them one by one. Enver Hoxhawrites also that one of the causers of the events in Hungary was Tito. He

says the events of Hungary Yugoslav such leaders are not washed. The Yugoslav leader was not innocent in terms of the events in Hungary.

After a sort of reconciliation between Belgrade and Moscow, this was the moment of another split between the communist countries. And the moment when Enver Hoxha to be hopeful again toward the relations of Albania and Soviet Union. Yugoslav leaders and their propaganda were against the reorganization of the Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants, against the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In contrast to other countries in the bloc Albania was an outlier. This small country was to some extent an exception in that, unlike the other satellites, it enjoyed the geographical isolation from the rest of the soviet bloc, and access to the west by sea. And the possibility to conquer it was much smaller. The Hungarian events of October 1956 were used by Enver Hoxha to overdraw the distance between Albania and Yugoslavia. Tito's initial support for the breakaway, still-communist government, although quickly withdrawn his relations with Yugoslavia. But it did not last. Soviet reconciliation with Yugoslavia prompted Albania's complete break with the bloc in 1961.

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