

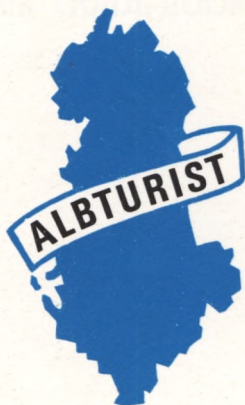


Tourist Guide/book of **ALBANIA**



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Tourist Guidebook of Albania



TOURIST GUIDEBOOK OF ALBANIA

THE «NAIM FRASHËRI» PUBLISHING HOUSE — TIRANA 1969

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE-BOOK

This guide-book is written with the purpose of serving the foreign tourists as well as all those that come to visit Albania; as such it offers them all the information they would need, be it prior to their arrival in the country, or during their trip and sojourn in Albania.

In Part One of the book the reader will find general data concerning Albania. In case you want to know the geographic position of the country in the Balkan Peninsula, its boundaries, the number of its inhabitants, the density of its population, the main towns and cities as well as its capital city — all this information you will find in Part One of the present Guide-Book. In this part you will get acquainted with the geographic relief of the country, with its climate, hydrography, with its plant and animal life. This information is followed by a short historical survey of Albania, beginning with the Illyrians, the most ancient inhabitants of our country and forefathers of the present day Albanians, and ending with the great National Liberation Struggle of the period 1941-1944. In Part One the reader will find data regarding the Albanian language and literature, about Albanian's archaeological, artistic, ethnographic and folkloristic heritage and treasures. Part One ends with some data concerning the great advances made in Socialist Albania within no longer a period of time than a quarter of a century, advances to be seen everywhere — in industry, education and culture, communications and health services.

What are the most interesting itineraries that the foreign traveller may follow during his sojourn in Albania? These itineraries are described in Part Two of the present Guide-Book according to the highway of access and those to be followed by the visitor while in Albania. In the itineraries the tourist will find information which he may need while travelling within the country, as for example, the state of the roads and highways, the distances between the various towns and cities, various localities and villages along the route to be followed, information about the archaeological, historical and artistic monuments to be found, information about the ethnographic peculiarities of the various regions, description of the landscape and scenic beauties, etc. Here he will get an idea of the profound changes that have taken place throughout the country: the great strides forward made in the sphere of agriculture, the model farms and plantations set up in the years following the liberation of the country in lands that once were barren wastes, the new industrial and residential centers, the exploitation of the natural resources and their employment to the service of the country and the people, etc.

In Part Three of the Guide-Book you will find a summary of the most important data of economic and practical nature. If you are interested to know something about the Albanian currency and its value in comparison with foreign monetary units, something about the banking system, the post, telephone and telegraph service, about the hotel and transport accommodations, etc., all these you will find in Part Three of the present Guide-Book.

The present Guide-Book, as one may well see, is prepared for and serves the foreign tourist by giving him all the necessary informations that he may wish to have on Albania. In separate circulars and in various publications handed to him during his visit to towns and regions, as well as archaeological centers and museums, he will find more information on Albania, a part of which will be imparted to him orally by the wardens at these places.

We hope that the present Guide-Book will help the foreign tourist and traveller to come to know Albania better, to know its ancient past and its wonderful present built by her hard-working people, to know its archaeological, artistic and ethnographic wealth, the rare natural beauty of the land.

First Part

SOME GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LAND

I. Its Geographic Position, Its Boundaries and Its Size

Albania is situated on the western part of the Balkan Peninsula between 39°38' and 42°39' northern geographic latitudes and 19°16' and 21°4' eastern geographic longitudes. On the northeast it borders with Yugoslavia, on the southeast with Greece, whereas in the west it borders with the Adriatic and Ionian seas. The total length of its boundary line is 1,204 kilometers, that is to say 419 kilometers for every 1,000 square kilometers of its territory. Of this total length, 577 kilometers are land boundaries, whereas 472 kilometers are sea and 155 kilometers are river and lake boundaries.

Albania possesses 16.4 kilometers of coast line for every 1,000 square kilometers of land surface. In this respect Albania occupies the second place in the Balkan Peninsula, its total land surface being 28,748 square kilometers.

II. The Relief of the Country

Albania is mainly a mountainous country. More than two thirds of the territory is made up of hills and mountains, whereas the plains with an altitude up to 200 meters above sea level do not comprise even one third of it. The average altitude of the country is 714 meters above sea level. Because of the numerous valleys that intersect the mountain ranges and of a whole series of depressed areas, sunken deep between the mountains, the relief is highly accentuated, with a large number of small units that form landscapes and sceneries of rare beauty and, therefore, of great touristic value. These small units are closely interwoven with one another to form larger units, quite distinct from one another: the Alps of North Albania, the Central Mountain Region, the Southern Mountain Region and the Western Lowlands.

The Alps of North Albania are situated along the right side of the Drin Valley. Although these represent the smallest natural unit, they offer the most rugged landscape full of contrasts caused by their tectonic and geological structure as well as because of the intensive action of outside agents upon them. On the whole, their average altitude is over 1,500 meters above sea level, but the greater part of them exceeds the 2,000 meters mark by far (the highest peak, Jezerca, is 2,693 meters above sea level). The form of the relief is very rugged,

with pyramid-like mountains full of deep ravines and valleys which make them look higher than they are. The topmost parts of the mountain ranges are dotted with a large number of glacial circles, many of which have taken the form of lakes, whereas their flanks are covered with pine and oak forests. The interaction of the glaciers is seen not only at the mountain tops but also in the valleys, which have the aspect of dales or depressions in the form of gigantic water basins, surrounded by mountains that rise up to 2,000 meters above them (the valleys of Boga and Thethi). The passage from one valley to another is difficult and possible only through the high passes.

Because of the highly accentuated character of the relief, the erosive activity of the streams and gullies is considerable. The structure of the northern Alps is quite characteristic. They look like gigantic vaults descending usually from the center towards the periphery. From the highest central point of the vault, the Jezerca block, a whole series of narrow valleys radiate in all directions, separated by mountain crests which, exactly like the valleys, converge towards the center of the Northern Alps. You will not come across such a relief in any other part of the territory of Albania. Because of the scanty surface of arable land, agriculture in these valleys is confined to the minimum. The economy of the region of the Northern Alps is based primarily on forestry and animal husbandry. The area is very sparsely populated.

The Central Mountain Region, situated between the valley of the river Drin and the valleys of the rivers Lower Devoll and Upper Osum, differs in aspect from the region of the Northern Alps. Although the average altitude of the Central Mountain Region differs slightly from that of the region of the Northern Alps, the forms of the relief here are not rugged. In the principal orientation of the relief, with the main mountain ranges and valleys pointing from northwest to southeast, one notices a much greater uniformity than in the Northern Alps, although the numerous crosswise valleys and depressions give it quite an uneven and rugged character. Because of the presence of quite a number of wider valleys, agriculture plays a much more important role in the economy of the region, although here too, as in the case of the region of the Northern Alps, forestry, animal husbandry and mining predominate over agriculture. The region has important deposits of several mineral resources (chromium, nickel, copper, etc.). The density of the population here is greater because of the greater width of its valleys. In the general structure of the relief there are three main mountain ranges running from northwest to southeast (the highest mountain peak Mt. Korabi — 2,751 meters above sea level — is situated on the easternmost range), as well as two long stretched depressions between them, running along the same direction (the depression

of Mati and Upper Shkumbini and the depression of Drini i Zi). In all these three ranges the powerful glacial activity has dug up circles, many of which form beautiful lakes glistening as jewels amidst the forest, thus forming one of the most fascinating landscapes of the region (the lakes of Lura). The mountain slopes are covered with forests, which, in the northernmost part of the region, are even more dense than those of the Northern Alps and constitute the main wealth of the region. At the southeastern end of the region there is a zone of deeply embedded depressions between the mountains, forming big and beautiful lakes (the Lake of Ohri and the lake of Prespa) as well as fertile plains where agriculture plays an important role in the economic activities. Among the latter is the plain of Korça, which, because of its size and economic importance, occupies a special place in our economy.

The Southern Mountain Region is situated south of the Central Mountain Region and offers a still more regular tectonic structure, characterized by the presence of a series of limestone mountain ranges and valleys, running parallel with each other from northwest to southeast. The average altitude of the zone is nearly the same as that of the Central Mountain Region and most of the mountain peaks are over 2,000 meters above sea level, but there are also valleys reaching sea level. Among the mountains here, with regard to their height, one discerns Mt. Tomori (2,417 meters) and the mountain range of Nëmërçka (the top of Mt. Papingi 2,495 meters). Unlike the other mountain regions of Albania, the mountains of the Southern Mountain Region are mostly bare or covered with scanty forests. They serve mainly as pasture grounds for livestock. Agriculture is practiced mainly in the valleys, of which the most important ones are the valleys of the Drino and Delvino rivers. Characteristic of this region is the practice of agriculture on hillside terraces which have become widespread all over the country. Because of the mild climate of the region, the people engage in cultivating subtropical plants and trees. The mountains of the Southern Mountain Region extend to the southwest as far down as the shores of the Ionian Sea, where the Albanian Riviera is situated. Its mild climate and its evergreen Mediterranean vegetation, its ever blue skies, its beautiful bathing beaches, make this place particularly attractive for tourists.

In the western part of Albania, along the Adriatic sea shore, extends the so called **Western Depression**, composed of low altitude plains, thus differing markedly from the three previous mountain regions. This depression stretches from the Lake of Hoti in the north to Vlorë in the south, along a length of 200 kilometers. In the east it extends

up to the western slopes of the North Alps, of the Central Mountain Region and those of the Southern Mountain Region, penetrating to a depth of 50 kilometers from the sea shore. The depression is not altogether even. A range of hills divides the depression into separate plains. On the whole the plains have a negligible inclination — in most cases they do not rise more than 20 meters above sea level. The subsoil waters rise very near the surface of the land. The rivers have eroded their beds and, during the rainy season, they overflow and flood the land round and about them. It is only in those parts of the plains which rise above 20 m. in altitude that the rivers have deepened their beds and the subsoil waters run considerably deep. The soil dries up in the summer months and needs irrigation.

Along the sea shore there are many lagoons and stretches of sand, the latter forming ideal bathing beaches (such as those of Shëngjin, Durrës, Diviaka, etc.) which are visited yearly by a large number of people. The land of this Western Depression suffered much in the past both from excessive humidity in the lower and severe droughts in the upper parts. Today, thanks to the drainage and irrigation systems projected and executed by the People's Government, the marshes and swamps have been drained and a widespread network of irrigation canals and reservoirs has solved the irrigation problem of the region.

The hillocks that rise in the midst of the Western Depression take the shape of numerous parallel hill ranges with main direction from northwest to southeast and with an altitude of several hundred meters. The hillsides are covered with bushes and shrubs as well as oak trees, which are continuously being replaced by fruit trees and plants cultivated on terraces (olive trees, vineyards, etc.).

Because of its geographic position and favorable soil conditions, the Western Depression is today the most important agricultural region of the country. Due to the great concentration of arable land, agriculture here is better developed than anywhere else in Albania. Livestock breeding finds here infinitely better conditions for development. Bountiful agricultural resources, mineral wealth in the form of oil and coal deposits and good communications have favored this region more than any other one to develop its industrial potential. For this reason this is the most densely populated region of Albania.

III. The Climate

Albania is situated in a zone which has a Mediterranean climate. But because of the mountainous character of the country and of the very accentuated relief of its surface, the climate is not the same all over

the territory. The greatly accentuated character of the relief and the orientation of the principal mountain ranges influence considerably the distribution of the sea and continental air masses. The meteorological conditions change rapidly from southwest to northeast, the temperatures go on falling and the precipitations go on diminishing in the same direction. The amount of rain and snow fall is sufficient (about 1,300 mm a year), but it is unevenly distributed during the year: it is concentrated mainly during the cold season, and the summer is, in the whole, hot and dry. Another characteristic thing about the climate of Albania is the limited overcasting and the very bright sunshine during a considerable part of the year, which makes the climate agreeable and the skies almost always crystal clear. The winds have a seasonal character: during the cold half of the year and especially during the winter months, the air moves from the land towards the sea, bringing on low temperatures, while in the summer, on the contrary, predominate hot sea winds. The peculiarities of the relief have conditioned the existence of certain local winds. Thus the most characteristic winter wind is the «murlan» — a cold, dry and very strong wind that is especially pronounced in the northeastern part of Albania, whereas the «sirocco», a warm moist oppressive wind laden with rain, is characteristic of western Albania and is felt predominantly in the autumn and spring months; in the regions along the sea shore predominate cool sea breezes that blow during the months of June-July-August.

Bearing in mind the peculiarities of the climate and the above mentioned distribution of the meteorological elements, it results that the western part of the territory of Albania, where the softening influence of the sea is more felt, has a much milder winter and a hotter summer, whereas the interior of the country, where the territorial winds prevail, has quite a severe winter with more pronounced contrasts in temperature between the winter and summer months.

IV. The Hydrography

Albania is rich in rivers and streams. The regime of the rivers and streams is torrential with great difference in the amount of water they carry from season to season, a fact that explains their great eroding and transporting capacity. Their torrential character is stressed also by the accentuated relief. Our rivers are of great importance for the irrigation of the land and for the production of hydroelectric power, and they have been exploited to a considerable degree by the People's Government of today.

There are in our country a great number of lakes and inshore lagoons of various origin. The greater part of the lakes are small and clustered

together in groups. Most of them are mountain lakes situated at an altitude of 700 meters above sea level and famous for their rare beauty. The preponderant part of the mountain lakes are of a glacial origin and belong to the type known as glacial circles (the lakes of Lura). The other mountain lakes are of tectonic origin (the lake of Ohri and the lake of Prespa) and are the biggest in Albania. Numerous are the hill lakes situated on the hills of Carstic origin (the lakes of Dumre, near Cerrik), which show considerable change in the level of the water during the various seasons of the year. The water of these lakes is used for irrigation purposes. Among the lakes situated in the plains, the principal one is the Lake of Shkodra which is, at the same time, the biggest lake in Albania. Along the sea shore there are quite a number of lagoons. The great lakes of Albania (the lakes of Shkodra, Ohri and Prespa), besides their beautiful panoramas, offer also rich fishing grounds. In the last 20 years, that is from the establishment of People's Power, quite a number of artificial lakes have been built, some for the purpose of running hydroelectric plants (the lake of Ulza, the lake of Shkopeti, the lake of Bistrica, etc.), others for irrigation purposes (the reservoir of Murrizi) and still others for bathing. Our country has a long seacoast (more than 472 kilometers). The seashore of Albania is of two distinct types: a low seashore along the Adriatic and an elevated one along the Ionian Sea. Besides the considerable seafaring activity our seashore has enormous fishing reserves and is endowed with many beautiful bathing beaches that are visited every year by a large number of people.

V. The Flora and the Fauna

The great climatic, geological, physical and geographic variety of the Albanian territory explains the presence of a rich and multifarious plant and animal life. Albania has a great variety of plants, representing the greater part of the plant life of the Balkan Peninsula. Some specimens are to be found only in the most distant lands. In general, the flora of the western part of the territory of Albania is represented mainly by the Mediterranean evergreen shrubbery and bushes, whereas in the interior of the land predominates the plant life of Central Europe: broad-leaf trees, like the oak, and coniferous trees, but here, too, Mediterranean varieties are not lacking. Under the direct influence of the mountainous character of the territory the plant life may be graded vertically in various zones or belts, but in the same belt one finds also local varieties, conditioned by the peculiarities of climate and geology. The lowest belt is that of the Mediterranean shrubs and bushes, which is found in the western part of the country at an

average altitude of 200-400 meters above sea level. The Mediterranean shrubbery and bush belt occupy one fourth of the entire forest area of Albania and include not only evergreen varieties that grow in the lowest and warmest places (brier, heath, genet), but also varieties that drop their leaves in winter, usually found in the more interior parts of the belt, at times even in the innermost valleys (beech, thornbush, etc.). In many places shrubs and the bushes are cleared away and replaced by Mediterranean cultures (olive, citrus and fig trees) as well as vineyards and other agricultural crops (cereals, tobacco, etc.). Above the shrubs and bushes, but also side by side with them, in places not protected from the cold, stretches the zone of the oak trees, which reach to an average altitude of 1,000 meters. The oak forests, which give start to the real forest zone of the territory, cover about 50 per cent of the forest land of the country, representing the most important forest zone of Albania. But being near the towns and villages and the lines of communication, the oak trees belt is the most damaged one, especially in the southernmost part of the territory, where, in the place of what was once a real forest, now there are only remnants of it and various kinds of shrubbery. Above the oak trees belt extend the forests that require much humidity and where beech forests are predominant. Then come the coniferous trees. The forests of this belt reach to an altitude of about 1,000 meters. Although the forests that require much humidity occupy a far smaller surface than those of the oak trees, they constitute the principal belt of the dense high altitude forests, which have suffered less because of their being far from the main communication lines. These forests form the main source of raw material for building purposes. Above this last forest belt comes the Alpine pasture zone, where the trees are replaced by various grasses, which extend up to the altitude where there is no plant life in general. The Alpine flora is quite rich in quack grass and vetch of rare varieties, forming excellent summer grazing grounds for sheep and goats.

The flora of Albania is rich in medical plants (juniper berry, sage, jimson weed, thyme, linden flowers, squills, saleg, mint, etc.).

Rich and multifarious is the animal life of Albania, represented by a great variety of wild animals (hares, foxes, weasels, bears, otters, wolves, jackals, wild goats, etc.) and wild birds (partridges, eagles, turtle-doves, wild cocks, pheasants etc.) as well as aquatic birds (wild ducks, wild geese, herons, swans, pelicans etc.). The fauna of Albania represents a considerable natural wealth, being a source of game supply and a source of costly skins and furs.

VI. The Population

The population of Albania numbers over 2 million inhabitants — a density of 69.5 per square kilometer. This number is more than twice that of the year 1923 and 70 per cent larger than that of the year 1945. The population of Albania is rapidly increasing due mainly to the increase in the birth and the decrease in the death rate. The increase in the birth rate, which is today nearly the double of that before the war, is due to the improvement of the economic, cultural and health conditions of the country.

With the advent of the People's Government to power, in the period 1961-1966, the births were on the average 36.1 per thousand, whereas the deaths 9.3 per thousand. Before the liberation of the country the deaths were twice as many as today — at present being among the lowest in Europe, due to the care of our Party and Government for the health and welfare of the people. The average age of the inhabitants is about 65 years in comparison with 38.3 years that it was in 1938.

As far as the age of the people of Albania is concerned, they are mostly young, over 42 percent of the inhabitants are under 14 years of age. About 33.4 percent of the population lives in towns and cities.

The urban population, which is today twice as big as that of the year 1938, has grown fast during the years of the People's Regime because of the industrialization of the country. The increase of the urban population has been effected through the growth of the old towns and cities as well as through the founding of new towns and industrial centers. The main towns and cities of Albania are: Tirana, the capital of the country (170,000 inhabitants), Durrës (52,000 inhabitants), Vlorë (50,000 inhabitants), Shkodra (49,000 inhabitants), Korça (50,000 inhabitants) and Elbasan (40,000 inhabitants).

A SHORT HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ALBANIA

The Albanian people are among the most ancient peoples of the Balkan Peninsula. «The Albanian people have hacked their way through history sword in hand» — these words of our great leader, Comrade Enver Hoxha, define perfectly the glorious road trodden by our people in their age-long history, the wars they have had to wage in order to preserve their liberty, their mother tongue and culture.

The forerunners of the present day Albanians were the Illyrians. What is more or less of great interest and what has been brought to light by the most recent archaeological discoveries, is that the Illyrians have inhabited Albania ever since the time of the bronze age (approximately 2,700 years B.C.). During the first millennium B.C. the Illyrians entered a new phase in their economic, social and cultural development marking the beginning of the disintegration of the primitive communal order. At that time, social differentiation in the midst of the Illyrian society had assumed considerable proportions. Beginning with the IVth century B.C. the Illyrians of the south set up their state formations (the kingdoms of the Encheleans, Taulantians, Molossians, Ardians) that played such an important role in the life of the Balkans during the antiquity. During the second half of the IIIrd century B.C., the Illyrians were attacked by Rome. The Illyrian struggles and uprisings against the Romans continued for two and a half centuries. The Romans finally conquered Illyria, but were not able to subjugate the Illyrians, especially those living in the mountain regions.

In the IVth century A.D., with the partition of the Roman Empire, the provinces of Albania passed over to the dependence of the Eastern Roman Empire — to Byzantium. But not even after this partition nor during the migrations and invasions of the barbarians — Huns, Goths, Avars and Slavs — was the ethnic composition of the population of Albania much affected. During the early Middle Ages, Albania was inhabited by the successors of the Illyrians. The civilization of Albania during that time is a continuation of that of the Illyrians.

Beginning with the XIth century A.D., the inhabitants of Albania, according to various documentary records dating from that time, are

known under the names of **Albanoi, Arbënesh**. They inherited this name from the Illyrian tribe of the **Albanes**, a tribe that inhabited the lands somewhere in the vicinity of Durrës, mentioned by the Alexandrine geographer of the IInd century A.D. Claudius Ptolemy. The name began to be generalized for all the people that inhabited that region, and the name **Arbënia, Albania**, began to be used to include the whole of the country.

With the consolidation of the feudal order in Albania, a feudal gentry came into being, which, profiting from the political crisis and chaos of the Byzantine Empire, set up independent principalities, the first feudal Albanian states. That was the period when the onslaught for plunder of the Bulgarians, of the feudal lords of Western Europe, of the Normans (XIth and XIIth centuries), of Manfred of Hohenstaufen of Sicily and of Charles of Anjou (XIIth century) were directed against the territory of Albania.

The Albanians, who were forced to meet the continuous onslaughts and conquests of these outsiders, at the end of the XIVth century were threatened by the peril of a new conquest, by the avalanche of the invading Ottoman hordes that literally poured in from the East. In their first attempts the Ottoman Turks did not succeed in imposing on Albania their feudal military domination, but nevertheless obliged the Albanian nobility to pay them a yearly tribute. Taking advantage of the advent of the Ottoman Turks as well as of the split among the Albanian feudal lords, Venice occupied the more important Albanian cities along the coast, like Durrës, Shkodra, Lezha, etc.

The onslaught of the Ottomans and Venetians interrupted not only the social and economic development of the Albanian principalities, but also their political consolidation. Albania embarked on the road of constant impoverishment.

In the year 1443 a general uprising took place against the Ottomans. A year later, at the Congress of Lezha, the «Albanian League» of the local princes was set up, headed by Skanderbeg. Thus, a very important period in the history of Albania was initiated — the period of the victorious war of the Albanian people. The author of these brilliant victories were the Albanian people themselves led by their farseeing statesman and commander George Castrioti — Skanderbeg — the national hero of Albania.

The Albanian armies scored one victory after another and fought against the armies of Venice, too, which took an unfriendly stand towards the Albanians during the Turkish-Albanian wars of the XVth century. Kruja, the main center of Albanian resistance, was thrice besieged by the

Ottoman armies in the year 1450, 1466 and 1467, but each time the Ottomans were obliged to retreat in disarray.

The Albanian people, led by Skanderbeg, successfully coped with all the furious assaults of the Ottoman armies for more than a century. In those heroic wars the Albanian people defended not only their own freedom and independence but made also a valuable contribution to the defence of European culture and civilization, a contribution that was greatly appreciated and made the name of the Albanian people and of Skanderbeg known all over Europe. When, after the death of Skanderbeg, the last Albanian fortresses were forced to surrender to the conquerors (Kruja in 1478, Shkodra in 1479, Durrës in 1501), the resistance of the people continued. Although their heroic efforts were not crowned with final victory, the Albanian people did not kneel down. Throughout the centuries that followed, our people continued their resistance against the Ottoman feudal regime.

During the uprising which followed in close succession and wrote glorious pages in the Albanian history of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, the Albanian people and, first and foremost, the peasantry of the regions of Himara, Dukagjini and Mirdita, dealt heavy blows at the ferocious Ottoman conquerors, although the feudal class of the country played into the hands of the enemy and tried with every means to thwart the efforts of the common people for freedom and independence. During the XVIIIth century some of the local feudal lords, relying on their strengthened position, having accumulated much land for themselves, began to be less and less obedient to the Ottoman central government. In the north, in the district of Shkodra, there was set up the great pashalik of the Bushatli feudal lords; in the south, that of Ali Pashë Tepelena. Put at the beginning of the XIXth century the Sultans succeeded in stamping down the revolutionary and separatist movements that had sprung up within the Ottoman Empire.

Beginning from the middle of the XIXth century the struggle against the Ottoman domination entered a new and more comprehensive phase. In the year 1878 an attempt was made to set up a political organization at the League of Prizren (called so because it was summoned in the city of Prizren, today in Yugoslavia) with the purpose of organizing the political forces, removing the threat of dismemberment of the country and putting an end, once and for all, to the Ottoman predatory regime. Following that course, the «League of Prizren» proclaimed the autonomy of Albania, set up a temporary government and succeeded in chasing away the Ottoman Government officials from a number of places. But at the end this League was suppressed by the superior force of arms (1881).

The widespread participation of the common peasantry and town folk in the patriotic struggle gave our national movement at the beginning of the XXth century its militant, progressive, democratic and antifeudal character. From the ranks of these common people came forth the most ardent fighters for the cause of freedom, independence and social progress, those very fighters who filled the ranks of the patriotic guerillas that fought in the years 1905-1912 arm in hand and dealt shattering blows at the Ottoman rule and prepared its final undoing. The widespread uprisings of the period from 1910 to 1912 paved the way for the 28th of November 1912, when, in the turbulent chaos of the Balkan wars threatening the very existence of the Albanian people, a handful of Albanian patriots in Vlorë declared the independence of Albania as the final achievement of the centuries-long struggles and aspirations of the Albanian people.

The proclamation of the national independence of the country marked an important turning point in the history of Albania. It marked the end of the five-centuries-long foreign domination. But the young Albanian State began its new life in very difficult circumstances. The old feudal class, profoundly hostile to the people, kept its position in the newly created state. A blind tool and a bulwark of the Ottoman Empire in the past, the feudal class of Albania became now a stumbling block for the development and advancement of the country, for the implementation of the democratic reforms that would have crowned the aspirations of the working masses, it became an agent and an instrument of the Big Powers which wanted to make of Albania an object of barter.

During the years of the First World War, Albania was not only transformed into a battlefield for the armies of Austro-Hungary, France and Italy, but, as a sequel of the secret Treaty of London in the year 1915, was in serious danger of losing her independence by being partitioned among the subscribers of the Treaty. The occupation by the foreign armies, which lasted until the end of the War, and the events that took place during these years, left profound scars on the land — about 70,000 persons lost their lives.

The end of the First World War, instead of bringing an end to the suffering of the Albanian people, made the political situation of the country more grave. The Big Powers had not given up the idea of partitioning the country. In the long and hard struggle against the foreign interventions, all the people united into a single gigantic effort to preserve their freedom and independence. Tirana was proclaimed the capital of the country. In the months of May-September 1920, the peasant masses of the country threw the Italian imperialist occupation

armies into the sea, and Vlorë, their last stronghold in Albania, joined the mother country.

The victory of Vlorë had important repercussions on the future of the country, which embarked now on a period of internal political struggles between the conservative feudal forces and the new progressive ones, which aimed at the democratization of the Albanian State. The revolutionary impetus of the people's masses precipitated the events leading to the Democratic-bourgeois Revolution of June 1924, which chased out of Albania the feudal clique of Ahmet Zogu within a short period of time. The new democratic government, which assumed control of the State, established diplomatic relations with the Government of the Soviet Union, but it failed to advance the revolution to its final conclusion — to carry out the democratic reforms and, first and foremost, to distribute the land to the peasants. It failed also to deal with the internal counter-revolutionary forces encouraged and assisted by the Imperialist Powers, which brought Ahmet Zogu back to power. Representative of the most reactionary forces of the country, of the feudal cliques, of the mountain chiefs and the well-to-do bourgeoisie, the dictator Ahmet Zogu concentrated all state power in his hands. In the year 1925 he proclaimed himself President of the Albanian Republic and, in the year 1928, King of Albania. As a king he did his utmost to abolish the last vestige of democracy in the country. He retained power only through sheer terror and the help given him by fascist Italy, to which he sold out the country by handing over to it all the economic and political key positions. The natural resources of the country, the mines, the land, the forests were all given away in the form of various concessions to Italian companies which tried in every way to impede the progress and development of the country.

During that period the dissatisfaction and hatred of the people towards the regime were reflected both on the social and political arena. It was during that period that the first communist groups came into being. As a consequence of the policy of Zogu, Albania was being transformed into a virtually Italian colony and experienced all the hardships and suffering inherent in a colonial regime. On the 7th of April 1939 Albania was made victim of an open Italian fascist military aggression: an army of 40,000 fascist Italian soldiers landed in Vlorë, Durrës, Saranda and Shëngjin. The old, decayed, and compromised state disintegrated in shame. The old exploiting class, lost no time in hurling itself into the arms of the invaders, whereas the people, although abandoned to their fate and unorganized, demanded arms and met the invaders with fire and sword at the places of landing, on the highways and within the towns and cities.

The profound and universal hatred engendered by the Italian aggression of the 7th of April 1939, became more manifest and intensive after the occupation. This hatred was directed not only against the fascist invaders but against their Albanian collaborators as well. In the struggle for the liberation of the people a new class surged to the fore — the heroic Albanian proletariat. Still weak and lacking in experience, it had created within its midst the first communist groups in the country as far back as the year 1930. Of these the lead was taken by the communist group of Korça, which had begun already to gain experience in the orientation of the working masses. A great event in the history of our people was the 8th of November 1941, the day of the founding of the Communist Party of Albania. The Communist Party, by creating a strong political basis in the National-liberation Front, organized guerilla units in the towns and cities as well as partisan detachments in the countryside. One year after the formation of the National-liberation Front, headed by its General Council, the armed struggle for the liberation of the country widened and intensified against the invaders and their collaborators, whereas the partisan detachments grew into battalions and, later on, into brigades and, finally, into a powerful army.

After the capitulation of fascist Italy, the National-liberation Army beat back the great offensive of the combined forces of the German Army and the local mercenaries in the 1943-1944 winter, in which four enlarged German divisions were engaged, and passed into a counter-offensive. It frustrated the violent offensive of June 1944 after which it engaged into a general assault for the final liberation of the country. With the break up of these two enemy offensives and with the operations aiming at the liberation of the country as a whole the outcome of the struggle was sealed. The reactionary forces of Albania, which had made common cause with the German invaders, were defeated.

On the 29th of November 1944 the whole of Albania was liberated. Two divisions of the Albanian National-liberation Army crossed over into Yugoslavia in pursuit of the German armies in retreat and in assistance to the fraternal peoples of Yugoslavia, marched deep into the territory of Montenegro, Kossovo and the plateau of Dukagjini penetrating as far as Vishegrad.

Going through such important stages as were the Peza Conference (16th of September 1942) where the basis of the political platform was considerably widened and the National-liberation Councils, as combat units and elements of the new State power set up, the Labinoti Conference, where the General Staff of the National-liberation Army as created on July 10th 1943, the Congress of Permeti (24 of May

1944), where the highest organs of the State — the General Anti-fascist National-liberation Council — invested with the functions of a Provisional Government, and the Second Assembly of the National-liberation Council in Berat (28th of October 1944), where the Anti-fascist Executive Committee of this Council was transformed into a Provisional Democratic Government, the national liberation struggle was crowned with success and a People's Government was set up in the whole of Albania.

Little Albania made its contribution to the historic victory over the nazi and fascist aggressors. During their struggle for freedom and independence the Albanians pinned down in their territory 100,000 Italian and 70,000 German soldiers. 28,000 dead, 2.48% of the entire population of the country, was the price Albania had to pay for its liberation. Material damage was immense — amounting to 1,603,000,000 dollars. Mines, forests, highways, bridges were almost entirely destroyed.

After the war, the People's Democratic Revolution, had to be carried further on with the purpose of doing away, once and for all, with the social and economic basis on which the old reactionary regimes rested. New social and economic premises were set up, which would serve the new Government. Measures were taken for the democratisation of the economy — industrial enterprises, commercial companies, large properties passed over under the control of the State. On the 11th of January 1946 the Constituent Assembly, chosen through free elections, proclaimed Albania a People's Republic.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ETHNOGRAPHIC AND FOLKLORISTIC WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY

Albania is a country of a rich civilization in the sphere of archaeology, folklore and ethnography. The traveller will have the opportunity to see it in his travels through the various regions of the country and in the museums of our towns and cities. His attention will be attracted by both the new Albanian landscape and the many relics of the ancient civilisations. He will have the opportunity to contemplate in different natural backgrounds various types of houses and, in the cities of Berat and Gjirokastra, entire complexes of dwellings and other buildings of great interest from the architectural point of view.

At the folkloristic festivals he will have the occasion to listen to charming folk music, to watch exquisite and multifarious folk dances and costumes.

Folk costumes are an expression of the rich material culture of the people. These costumes impress the tourist and traveller by their design, workmanship, technique, colours, and ornaments, which stand witness of the fine taste of our people. In museums he will find rich collections of Albanian costumes and articles of the artisan handicraft. In the realm of the latter we may mention works of gold and silver smiths, silken thread needle works, woolen fabrics (carpets, rugs, hand-bags, socks, etc.) as well as woodwork products.

THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

The Albanian language is an old language, as old as the people themselves. It belongs to the group of Indo-European languages, but forms a branch by itself, apart from the neolatin, Greek, Germanic, Slav and other languages. The linguists have accepted the fact that the Albanian language derives from the Illyrian-Thracian languages. This language suffered considerable changes by the numerous foreign conquests. But alongside with their freedom, the people preserved their language too, which, although somewhat slowly, went on evolving and developing according to the laws of its inner evolution.

The oldest document in the Albanian language known so far belongs to the XVth century. After the XVth century the testimonies on the Albanian language become more frequent and numerous. The Albanian language resisted the vagaries of a five centuries-long Ottoman occupation and was one of the most powerful factors for keeping alive the traditions of our people in the sphere of culture. The literature of our Revival, a patriotic literature, was born under the hard conditions of the Ottoman rule and was inspired by the ideas of freedom and national liberation. Our literature and language have gone through a great development, especially in the years following liberation. Today there are tens and hundreds of literary works, and important progress has been made towards the establishment of a unified literary language.

BUILDING NEW ALBANIA

A. THE STATE ORDER OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

The state order of the People's Republic of Albania is quite different from the old, pre-liberation, feudal and bourgeois order, both as regards its structure as well as its activity and the volume and form of this activity.

The state apparatus of the People's Republic of Albania was established as far back as the National-liberation War on the ruins of the old State apparatus, the break up of which was essential since its content and structure did not fulfil the historical needs of our people's revolution. The old state apparatus was built on a base which served the exploiting classes in power. Therefore, not even a re-organization could make it suitable to serve the new people's regime, the working class, which took the reins of state in its own hands, and its ally, the laboring peasantry. As early as the beginning of our National-liberation War, the Communist Party (now the Party of Labor) of Albania launched the slogan to break up the old state apparatus and to establish in its place an entirely new apparatus which would accomplish the tasks the further development of our people's revolution set and would set in the days to come.

The basis of this new apparatus lay in the representative organs, the national-liberation councils, which, after the complete liberation of the country, exercised state power throughout Albania. All the other systems of the state apparatus were set up, developed and improved on the basis of these organs as the new, higher and more democratic type of the state apparatus.

The state apparatus of the People's Republic of Albania is not confined to running the usual state administration alone, to protecting our socialist state from infringements upon it, but, what is more, through this apparatus, our socialist state takes a hand in and governs all the social, economic, cultural, educational and other aspects of life aiming, at the first stage, to build socialist society and, at a second stage, to build communist society.

The state apparatus of the People's Republic of Albania is built and functions in compliance with certain principles which, both in form and substance, determine its character as a socialist state apparatus. Democratization of the state apparatus is the most important principle that runs through the structure and activity of all our state apparatus.

This principle is the direct outcome of the fact that our social and state order is built on an economic basis which relies on the socialist ownership on the means of production, that is, property, subject of the right over which are directly and solely the laboring masses. Therefore, as long as these laboring masses, that is, the working class and laboring peasantry, have the means of production in their own hands, as long as they direct all the economic development of the state, the political superstructure too, that is, the state and its apparatus which express and carry out the will of these classes, cannot be thought of apart from connections with them, without their direct participation in carrying out state activities. Thus, the democratization of our state apparatus is expressed by the participation of working masses in its structure as well as its activity.

The participation of the working masses in the structure and activity of our state apparatus is manifested in certain forms, the principal ones being: election of representative organs, a systematic involvement of the workers in the activities of the state apparatus, the exercise of workers' control over the activity of the state apparatus in general or over the separate sectors of this apparatus. Of these forms, that of electing representative organs on the basis of the right to take part in general, equal, direct and secret voting, is of major importance. Democratic centralism is the organizational principle of the state apparatus of the People's Republic of Albania and runs through all its system. This principle is a direct outcome of the democratization of the state apparatus which combines the centralism of the various levels of the state apparatus with decentralism, creating the necessary conditions for the unified leadership of the whole state apparatus combined with the development of as many local initiatives and the creative genius of the laboring masses, as possible.

Socialist legality is one of the most important principles adhered to by the state apparatus in its activity, demanding the unconditional and strict observance of the Constitution, laws and other juridical acts issued by the state organs concerned, by all state organs, social organizations, officials and citizens.

It is on these principles that base their activity the state organs of the People's Republic of Albania, component parts having all the attributes of the state apparatus.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania, the highest organs of state power are: the People's Assembly and the Presidium of the People's Assembly. These are the sole organs of the whole state apparatus the Constitution has vested with the power

to fill the most important functions of the Albanian state including that of representing it in international relations.

The People's Assembly is the highest organ of state power in the People's Republic of Albania, as well as the sole representative of the sovereignty of the Albanian People, Nation and state. In exercising power, the People's Assembly, as a representative organ, acts **only as a representative**. In the Constitution, it is written: «All power in the People's Republic of Albania belongs to the workers of urban and rural areas...». Therefore, the People's Assembly exercises power only in the name of the urban and rural workers. Thus, the people alone are the original holder of power in the People's Republic of Albania. The Presidium of the People's Assembly, which exercises its functions in the interval between two sessions of the People's Assembly, is the collective Head of State, an organic part of the whole representative highest organ and, although it fills the function of Head of state, it is, nevertheless, dependent on and under the control of the People's Assembly.

The Government (Council of Ministers), as the Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania stipulates, is the highest executive organ of authority of the People's Republic of Albania.

In addition to the high organs of state and administrative power which fill state and administrative functions, there are also local state and administrative organs, local People's Councils and their Executive Committees, which exercise state and administrative power, within given competences, in districts and other administrative divisions of Albania.

People's courts of justice vested by the Constitution with the power to mete out justice, form a separate system of state organs in the state apparatus of the People's Republic of Albania. In their activity, our tribunals are guided by some principles like equality of citizens before the law, election of judges (assistant judges), participation of the people in exercising justice, independence of judges (assistant judges) and their subjection to law alone, publicity of legal proceedings, etc. Attorneys, whom the Constitution has empowered to see to the strict observance of law, function at the courts of justice.

B. THE PARTY OF LABOR OF ALBANIA

The Party of Labor of Albania was founded on November 8, 1941 by the Albanian communists with Comrade Enver Hoxha in the lead, on the basis of the worker and communist movement. At the outset it was called the Communist Party of Albania. It has always played the leading role in the people's revolution and in the socialist con-

struction of the country, because it has worked out and has continually applied a general revolutionary line. This line has always responded to the political, economic, social and cultural exigencies of the masses, to the fundamental interests of the people and country, to the interests of socialism on a national and international level. In working out this line it has consistently been based on the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, on the revolutionary experience of the country and on the specific conditions of development of Albania.

The line of the Party of Labor of Albania has been carried out with success, first and foremost, because it has been embraced by the broad masses of the people. It has become their line and the masses, together with and under the guidance of the Party, have striven might and main to put this line into practice.

The Party of Labor of Albania has ensured the uninterrupted development of the revolution both at the stage of the triumph of the national independence of the country through anti-imperialist and democratic struggle, at the stage of the construction of the economic basis of socialism as well as at the stage of completing the construction of socialist society which is under way. The Party of Labor of Albania led the Albanian people from one victory to another both in the armed uprising, the National-liberation War, to bring about the triumph of people's revolution and the liberation of the country as well as during the period of socialist construction. It led them from one victory to another, in bitter class battles both inside the country to overcome age-long backwardness as well as in the international arena in order to defend the achievements we have attained against the menace of imperialist and modern revisionist enemies. Under the far-sighted leadership of the Party of Labor of Albania, the Albanian people, relying on their own efforts, have transformed the looks of their homeland, have made progress bearing no comparison with the past in all domains of life and are raising their standard of living year in year out. Life itself has convinced the Albanian people that the Party of Labor of Albania is the only guiding force capable of leading them to a happy future. Hence, the solid unity of our people around their Party. Hence, the respect and prestige our Party and our country have won in the international arena, among the revolutionary peoples of the world.

C. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

From the past Albania inherited a very backward economic basis and an equally deplorable cultural and educational situation. It is hard to speak of industry, in the true sense of that word. A few mines, where

primitive technique prevailed, were exploited by foreigners. A few small cigaret factories, olive presses, village cheese dairies and grinding mills made up all the processing industry. Agriculture was that of the Middle Ages. Over 80% of the population were illiterate. This percentage was much higher for women. Not even one-third of school-age children had any opportunities to attend school. Add to these misfortunes, which had made Albania the most backward country in Europe, the great devastations the Second World War left behind, whole regions set on fire, seaports and mines blown up, fields laid waste and livestock decimated, and you will have a picture of Albania emerging from the war plundered, demolished and the Albanian people massacred.

It was under such circumstances that our People's Regime, guided by the Communist Party (now: the Party of Labor) of Albania began the work of reconstructing the country. At the first phase, the laboring masses of urban and rural areas who had liberated the country from the invaders and their lackeys through a heroic war replete with sacrifices, embarked on a self-denying struggle to reconstruct the country. This task was carried through at record time. All the principal projects were rebuilt within one year.

Development of our economy. — A decisive role was played by the major reforms, like the land reform laws which gave the land free of charge to those who till it, the nationalization of industry, of mines, banks, transports, foreign and wholesale trade, forests, which used to be in the hands of foreign concessionaries or the local capitalists and feudal lords. This is how the socialist sector of economy was set up and started to develop by leaps and bounds on the basis of scientifically worked out plans.

Having rebuilt what the war had destroyed, the laboring masses embarked, with the same zeal they had displayed in liberating the country, on major mass actions and built railroads, workshops and factories, and hydro-electric power-plants. The heroic youth of Albania rendered a major contribution of their own free will to setting up these schemes.

Industry. — A series of tasks were accomplished and conditions were prepared for a more rapid development of the economy of the country during the 1949-50 two-year period. Following this, the forces of the Albanian people were mobilized to carry through the subsequent five-year plans. In 1965, the last year of the 3d five-year period, industrial production was 34.8 times as much as that of 1938.

Our Party and Government have considered industrialization as one of the important tasks for the socialist construction of the country, without which the socialist revolution cannot make headway on the

economic front. In line with this, our Party and Government pursue with consistence the line of turning our country from an agricultural-industrial to an industrial-agricultural one and, eventually, to an industrial country with a complex, advanced and powerful industry and an advanced intensive agriculture. To this end, plans were drawn up and carried out for a rapid development of geological research work, as a vanguard of socialist industrialization, in order to discover the resources of our subsoil, a number of thermo- and hydro-power stations were built to provide the power basis of industrialization, as well as a number of combines, workshops and factories both of our heavy and light industries. It was only thus that such important industrial works could be put up as the «Karl Marx», «Frederick Engels», «Joseph Stalin» and «Lenin» Hydroelectric Power-plants, the numerous new mines, oil refineries, the Copper Metallurgic Plant at Gjegjan in the Kukës district, the Copper Treating and Processing Plant at Rubik in Mirdita, the Copper Treating Plant at Kurbnesh, the Ferro-metallurgic Plant in Elbasan, the cokery, the Soda Plant in Vlora, a number of light and food-processing plants, of paper and lumber processing mills as well as a number of other industrial works.

If we draw a comparison between the situation in 1965 and that in 1938, we will clearly see what vast proportions have been attained in the various branches of industry during the intervening years. Thus, the extraction of chromium ore has increased 44.9 times, that of blister copper — 61.5 times, of coal — 16.3 times, of refined gasoline — 151 times, of benzene — 9 times, of naphtha — 27.5 times, of spare parts — 153.2 times, and so on.

Hand in hand with stepping up, by leaps and bounds, the development of our heavy industry, special importance was attached also to the development of our light industry in order to turn out commodities for broad consumption which has direct bearing on the improvement of the material welfare of the people. During the 3d five-year period the production of light industry was 36% and that of the food-processing industry — 35% above those of 1960. Whereas, in comparison with the production of the year 1938, the production of the light and food-processing industries have increased at the following rates: fabrics — 69,3 times, knitted goods — 29.8 times, footwear — 9.4 times, sugar — 24.6 times, jams and compotes — 11.7 times, canned vegetables — 80 times, etc.

Industry is making still greater strides ahead during the 4th five-year period. In 1970, industrial production as a whole will increase from 50 to 54%, production of the means of production from 65 to 69% and that of the means of consumption from 33 to 38%. In other words, industrial production in 1970 will be 18% higher than that

realized during the five years of the 1st five-year period taken together. During the years of the present five-year period, in the sector of industry there have been built or are under construction a number of very important projects, the most important of which are: the «Mao Tse-tung» Hydro-electric Power-plant on the Drini river with a capacity of 250,000 kw, a metallurgic plant to smelt iron-nickel ore, an oil refinery, factories to treat coal, chromium ore, copper ore, the phosphate and nitrate fertilizer plants in Fieri and Laç respectively, the «Mao Tse-tung» Textile Mills in Berat, the plastic goods, electric bulb, glass and other factories.

The rapid development of the electric power industry, the establishment of a complex copper-processing industry, the home production of electric wires and so on, created the necessary conditions for stepping up the electric reticulation of the Albanian countryside. At its 4th Plenum in 1967, the Central Committee of the Party of Labor of Albania adopted a resolution to have all the rural areas of Albania electrified by November 8, 1971, the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Party of Labor of Albania. This decision of major importance to the further development of our countryside, filled all the urban and rural workers with enthusiasm, aroused their thoughts and feelings to take active part in this major mass action to bring light to every corner of the country. And work began at full tilt. 787 rural centers had been electrified by the end of 1967. An additional 343 rural centers received electricity during 1968, bringing the total to 44% of all the villages of the country. It is envisaged to electrify an additional 508' rural centers by the end of 1969. And the rate of the electrification of our rural areas keeps rising.

Agriculture. — The policy of stepping up the industrialization of the country would be of no avail if the development of agriculture were neglected. Socialist industrialization could not be fully effected without an advanced agriculture. Therefore, a solid and independent economy could not be built unless it stood on both feet, on industry and agriculture. Agricultural production has kept increasing and expanding thanks to this correct policy pursued with persistence by our Party and Government. In 1965, agricultural production was 36% higher than in 1960 and, by 1970, agricultural production is planned to be from 71 to 76% higher than in 1965.

These rates of development are due to the collectivization of agriculture, to the wide use of mechanized means, to the land improvement schemes, to the use of advanced agricultural and technical methods, and so on.

Major importance is attached to the mechanization of agricultural processes of work. Thus, the number of tractors employed in the fields of Albania today is 7,630 (reckoned at 15HP) as against 30, all told, in 1938. While, according to the directives of the 4th Five-year Plan, the number of tractors employed will reach the 10,000 mark, that is, 34% more than in 1965.

Most of the land of the Republic has been drained and brought under irrigation. Marshes which covered large areas of arable land and had become hotbeds of malaria-carrying mosquitoes were drained. Such were those at Maliqi, at Thumana, Miloti, Vurgu, Bedeni, Rushkulli and others which were turned into fertile arable fields. Hand in hand with this, irrigation canals were opened in many districts of the country and, today, 46% of the arable lands of the Republic have been brought under irrigation. This is 7 times as large as the irrigable land in 1938.

The newly set up chemical fertilizer plants at Laç and in Fieri have been placed at the service of agricultural intensification. They supply constantly increasing amounts of phosphate and nitrate fertilizers.

Higher yields of agricultural production have been received as a result of these measures. According to the directives of the 4th Five-year Plan, production of food grains in 1970 will be from 62 to 67% higher, that of sunflowers 5 times while that of potatoes will be 22 times as much as in 1965.

During the 4th five-year period a major increase will also be effected in fructiculture. State farms and agricultural cooperatives have long created large plantations of vineyards, of fig, citrus and olive trees the products of which are earmarked for home consumption and export. Thus, the production of fruits in 1970 will be 75% higher than that of 1965, that of olives — 21%, grapes — 120% and of oranges — 180%. Animal husbandry has kept pace with farming. Thus, dairy products during the 3d five-year period have been 20% higher than those of the preceding five-year period. By the end of 1970 they will have increased at the following rate: milk — 50%, meat — 30%, wool — 31%, eggs — 78%.

During the 4th five-year period and as a result of the increase of industrial and agricultural production, the supply of the staple products of broad consumption to the population will increase at approximately the following rate: meat — 65%, fats — 28%, potatoes over 12 times, vegetables — 66%, milk — 57%, cheeses — 49%, rice and beans — 39%, sugar — 29%, cotton and woollen textiles — 43%, knitted goods — 65%, footwear — 78%, cement — 142%, glassware — 150%, bricks and tiles — 83%, lumber — 22%.

During the 4th five-year period and on the basis of increased social production, the real per capita income of workers and employees will rise from 9 to 11%, those of the peasantry — 20 to 25%.

New Socialist Culture. — The anti-popular regimes had left the people without schooling. In order to have a clear idea of what we inherited in the field of education, suffice it to say that, in 1938, Albania boasted of only 650 schools with fewer than 60,000 pupils, that secondary schools were attended by 1,600 students and that only 61 students pursued their higher studies abroad. In the field of art and culture, the situation was worse. No professional institutions (theaters, operas, ballet troupes), no museums, art galleries existed in the country. Ignorance prevailed everywhere.

In Albania, socialism could not be developed without the flourishing of education, science, art and culture. Therefore, immediately following liberation, our Party and Government attached special importance to their development. Achievements attained in these fields are so brilliant that, as far as the rate of development is concerned, our country can match even the more advanced states of the world.

During the early years after liberation, primary education and, somewhat later, 8th-grade education became compulsory. By 1955 and as a consequence of the campaign undertaken against it, illiteracy, this great scar left over by former regimes, was obliterated on all persons below the age of 40. Schools were opened in cities, towns and villages and education in all categories of schools is free of charge. Textbooks are sold at reduced prices. Expenses for education and culture are met with by the State, and State investments in this sector have been steadily increasing.

This policy pursued by our Party and Government has brought about an increase of the number of students. Thus, while the number of persons attending school in 1955 was 211,000, in 1965 that number grew to 425,000 whereas in 1970, the last year of the 4th five-year period, it is expected to be 540,000 or 115,000 more than in 1965. It goes without saying that the number of educational and cultural institutions opened all along the five-year periods, kept pace with the growing number of pupils and students. Thus, there were set up, for the first time in Albania, the State University of Tirana, the Upper Agricultural Institute, the High School for Actors, the Institute of Figurative Arts, the Conservatory, the Upper Institute of Physical Culture, the 2-Year Teachers Training Institute in Shkodra in addition to many secondary vocational schools.

Cadres for nearly all the kinds of special branches necessary to the economy, culture and science of our country, are trained at the State

University of Tirana and the other higher institutes of our country. This is a major victory of the educational policy of our Party.

The 3d five-year period was characterized by a further development and deepening of our ideological and cultural revolution, of making consistent progress in the field of education, culture and science. The 4th five-year period will carry the ideological and cultural revolution further ahead. The poly-technization of schools will be spread by linking instruction and education with production work.

In line with the directives of the Party, letters, scenic art, music, painting, sculpture, the amateur artistic movement of the masses have made major progress. Suffice it to mention that over 1,600 cultural centers have been set up in rural areas alone in order to have a clear idea of the spread of culture in the countryside, formerly backward and almost entirely illiterate.

Theaters, choral groups and variety theaters have been set up in all the principal cities of Albania in addition to the People's Theater, the Opera and Ballet Theater, the Ensemble of Folksongs and Dances, the Ensemble of the People's Army, the Puppet Show theater, the State Variety Theater and the Circus which are set up in Tirana. Our economic enterprises and various institutions have created their own groups of amateur players, variety theaters, choirs and dancers. The new Albanian cinematography has been set up and the «New Albania» Film Studio turns out standard films and documentaries.

The press has developed to bear no resemblance whatsoever to that of the former times. In addition to the central daily and periodical press organs like the «Zëri i Popullit», «Bashkimi», «Sporti Popullor» («People's Sports»), «Mesuesi» («the Teacher»), «Zëri i Rinisë» («The Voice of Youth»), «Drita» («Light»), «Fatosi» («The Tenderfoot»), «Nentori» («November»), «Ylli» («Star»), «Shqiperia e Re» («New Albania»), «Shqiptarja e Re» («The Young Albanian Woman»), «10 Korrik» («10 July»), «Albanian Foreign Trade», during 1967, local press organs started to appear in the cities of Korça, Shkodra, Gjirokastra, Vlora, Durrës, Peshkopia, Elbasan and Berat.

Books, too, spread far and wide and became the favorite companion of the masses. The «Naim Frashëri» Publishing House in Tirana publishes Albanian literary works of all genres. New Albanian literature has taken the right course. It is the literature of socialist realism. Good work has been done in the domain of translations as well. Progressive works of classical and other contemporary writers of various countries have been translated into Albanian.

Fine arts, that is painting, sculpture, drama, have flourished at the same rate. It is for the first time that the sweet Albanian music has

been placed on the pedestal it deserves. Our composers have created a rich national repertoire of all kinds and genres of music.

The Palace of Culture in Tirana, cultural homes and centers in cities, towns and villages, public reading rooms, libraries and various clubs are centers of cultural and aesthetic education of tens of thousands of workers, employees, peasants and school youth. It is for the first time that the Albanian people are leading a cultured life.

In addition, physical culture and sports have been spread among the masses. In addition to the «Qemal Stafa» and «Dinamo» stadiums, there has been built of late also the «Partizani» Sport Palace for indoor sports in Tirana. There are playgrounds in all the principal cities of Albania. Tens of thousands of young men and young women are trained in them to become worthy builders of socialism and strong defenders of our homeland. Our representatives of sports and physical culture have honored the Albanian colours at various international meets.

Public Health and Sanitation. — Illiteracy, unemployment, bad living conditions, low standards of living, and the negligence displayed by officialdom regarding the life of the laboring masses in pre-liberation Albania, shortened the life span of man. It suffices to mention that in 1938 Albania boasted of only 10 hospitals with 820 beds all told, and these only in cities and none in the rural areas of the country, in order to have a clear picture of the state of public health at the time. Albania had only 102 physicians in all at that time. Tuberculosis, venereal diseases and epidemics were spread all over the country. It goes without saying that under these conditions, mortality, especially among children, was very high.

It was only after the establishment of People's Rule that man began to be considered, for the first time, as the most valuable asset and all interest was centered on him. The development of public health kept pace with that of education, culture, industry and agriculture.

The number of maternity houses, hospitals, sanatoria, anti-TB dispensaries, dental clinics and preventoria, rose from 10 in 1938 to 158 in 1965. In rural centers, where no health institutions existed before, their number in 1965 reached the 53 mark. The number of beds in health institutions in 1965 was 10,637 and by the end of the 4th five-year period it will increase about 23%. In addition to giving medical assistance and treatment, the rural health institutions do a lot of work in spreading notions of hygiene and sanitation to the people of the most remote regions of the country.

A number of other health institutions like stations of balneotherapy, nurseries and kindergartens, consultation centers for mother and child,

sanatorial creches, anti-TB preventoria, have been set up in urban and in many rural centers of the country.

In addition, the number of physicians has increased a lot during the years of our socialist order of things. The number of physicians in Albania rose from 102 in 1938 to 900 in 1965. In 1960 we had one physician for every 3,400 inhabitants, whereas in 1970 we will have one physician for every 1,200 inhabitants.

Ever since the liberation of the country, our socialist order has been expressing its concern about the life of man not only by increasing and extending health institutions, by taking prophylactic measures and spreading notions of hygiene and sanitation but also and, more so, by giving free medical service to the people as a whole. Moreover, the prices on medicaments for home use are very low.

Building Construction. — 62,475 houses razed to the ground, tens of thousands of others damaged, the Durrës, Vlorë, Shëngjini, Saranda and Seman seaports blown up, mines, electric power stations, bridges, telephone lines wrecked — this is what the Second World War left over to Albania. Large-scale work of a self-denial character was done immediately after liberation to repair the damages and soon after that to build New Albania with the same degree of enthusiasm and self-denial. There were set up new industrial and land improvement projects, irrigation canals, buildings for social and cultural purposes, apartment houses, while new towns like Maliqi, Cërrik, Patos, Kurbnesh, Bulqiza and Prenjas sprang up near the major industrial and mining sites of Albania.

Considerable sums have been allocated to building construction work all along these four five-year periods. The total volume of investments in building construction in 1960 was nearly 40% higher than those of the first five-year period as a whole. Total investments in building construction during the 3d five-year period, were 51% higher than those of the 2nd five-year period, or nearly as high as the investments made for this purpose during the 1st and 2nd five-year periods taken together, while those of the 4th five-year period will be 34% higher than those of the 3d five-year period.

430 projects for economic, social and cultural purposes were completed and put into operation during the 3d five-year period. The number of projects of this kind which will be build during the 4th five-year period is about 50% higher. Of the latter, 37% are earmarked for industry and 19% for agriculture.

Transport and Communication. — The situation of our transports at present and in the past is best expressed by these figures: in 1965,

the volume of goods transported by motor vehicles in 1938 was done in 6 days, while that of passengers in only 3 days.

During the 3d five-year period alone, there were built 460 kilometers of new motor roads, the Vorrá-Laç railroad, and the first stage of enlarging the Durrës wharves. The 4th five-year plan envisages the further development of all the kinds of transports in compliance and harmony with the targets set for the other branches of economy, of industry, agriculture and building construction.

In 1970, motor transport, will accomplish 78% of the total volume of the transportation of goods and will be 40% bigger than in 1965. Transportation by rail will increase 47%, and by sea will increase 126%. Transportation of workers by bus from their living quarters to their centers of work will also mark a considerable increase.

During the present five-year period, the work on the Rrogozhinë-Fieri railroad was completed and that on the Elbasan — Prenjas was begun, more roads will be asphalted, our seaports will be enlarged and the technical basis of transports will be strengthened.

Communications have developed and expanded at the same rate. In order to serve the population better and better, the postal, telegraph and telephone services have brought more and more rural areas closer to the cities and towns. Radio broadcasts have been raised to a higher level of efficiency throughout the country.

Trade. — During the years of People's Power, home and foreign trade marked a level of development bearing no comparison with the past. Immediately following liberation, foreign and wholesale home trade passed over to the State. Somewhat later, retail trade passed also over to the State. The circulation of goods took a turn for the better throughout the country.

The character and purpose of trade were radically transformed. Speculations and plunder were swept away together with the old regime. The highest aim of our Party and Government has been and will always be to keep improving the material and cultural level of the people. Our socialist trade has also served and will serve this great and noble purpose. As a consequence, the volume of goods circulating during all the five-year periods has continually increased at an ever higher rate than the natural increase of population.

In order to serve the working masses as well as possible, the network of trade and that of social service have been expanded not only in urban but also in rural areas. They were an important link in bringing the city closer to the countryside, in consolidating the alliance between the working class and the laboring peasantry. As a consequence of the development of the economy of the country and of the measures

which the Party and Government have continually taken, the purchasing power of the people is rising from one day to another. At a time when the prices of goods have risen and are continually rising in capitalist countries, in our country they have gradually fallen. This increased the buying power of the laboring masses. Thus, in 1965, our people bought through socialist trade: 21% more sugar, than in 1960, 56% more rice and beans, 42% more milk, 53% more fats, 62% more knitted goods, 8% more cotton textiles, 4% more cloths of various kinds, etc.

As a result of the increase of social production, during the 4th five-year period, our people, will be supplied with more goods through the network of socialist trade raising in this way their standards of living.

It must be stressed that the major successes attained in the socialist construction of our country have demanded a lot of hard work and sweat from our workers, the working class, the laboring peasantry and our people's intelligentsia. In coping with many hardships to overcome age-long backwardness, they have had to surmount also the many hardships created by the economic blockade imposed on our country by imperialist and modern Soviet revisionist enemies and their followers. But the latter's attempts to subjugate our Party and people have met, as always, with complete failure. Our socialist economy keeps forging ahead at posthaste speed.



Second Part

HIGHWAYS OF ACCESS TO ALBANIA

One can enter Albania by various routes. The foreign tourists may come by air using the air lines from Rome, Prague, Budapest and Berlin and descend at the airport of Tirana, from where they may proceed directly to the Durrës Beach.

The tourists may enter by land through the Albanian — Yugoslav boundary in the north and through the Albanian — Yugoslav boundary in the south, through the route Ohri-Struga-Qafë-Tanë-Pogradec, stopping there if they wish, or continuing their trip to Tirana. In the north, the route goes from Titograd, in Yugoslavia, to Shkodra, from where they can go on to Tirana or Durrës. From these two cities, the roads radiate in different directions of the country.

A TRIP THROUGH ALBANIA

The First Itinerary

I/1 From Han i Hotit to Shkodra (34 kilometers)

From Han i Hotit we enter the territory of the People's Republic of Albania. The asphalted highway to Shkodra passes through the mountain region of Kastrati, from where it proceeds through the village of Buzë Ujit and on through the small plain that stretches along the shores of the lake of Shkodra. Another road, built recently with the voluntary work of the youth of Albania, climbs in the direction of Malësia e Madhe, a rich region with ethnographic peculiarities and picturesque villages, dense forests and green meadows. Today every village in this region has electric light. In this region there are wild animals like bears, deer, wild goats and wild boars.

After 16 kilometers of travel we reach the town of Koplik, a locality center which in the last few years has grown considerably. In Koplik there are a 12th grade secondary school and other educational and cultural institutions, a hospital and a whole series of commercial and artisan shops.

The Shkodra Lake may be seen from Koplik and along the road to Shkodra. It is the largest of its kind in Albania with a surface of 372 square kilometers. The lake is shallow — the greatest depth is 10-13 meters. The Shkodra Lake communicates with the sea through the Buna river. It is rich in fish, and fishing goes on throughout the year. In ancient times it was called the Lake of the Labeates, the Illyrian inhabitants of the surrounding localities.

From Koplik another road proceeds towards the Alps of North Albania — towards the mountain health resorts of Razma, Boga and Thethi. The road is 74 kilometers long and, although very steep, it is very picturesque and rich in panoramas and landscapes. Even very deep in the mountains there are traces of the forerunners of the Albanians of today. Not very far from Koplik, on a steep hill-top over the place called Përroi i Thatë, the traveller may see the ruins of a small Illyrian town, built during the VIIth century B.C. On the top of this hill stand parts of 3,5 m thick walls built of large stones. The little Illyrian town of Marshenjt guarded the entrance to the deep mountain region. Not very far off ran the road that once linked Shkodra with the Northern Alps. Near Marshenjt there stretches the impressive canyon of Përroi i Thatë which is 20 meters deep and only 2 meters wide. Following the valley of Përroi i Thatë and passing through the villages that stretch along the feet of a range of high mountains, one reaches the

village of Boga, about 930 meters above sea level — a health resort visited regularly by workers and employees, and a station on the



The Albanian Alps —



Thethi

Lure

road to Thethi. The road from Boga to Thethi traverses the Pass of Thores, 1,630 meters above sea level, one of the highest passes in the country, over which climbs a motor highway.

Now we descend to the upper valley of the Shala river and arrive finally at Thethi. Thethi is a picturesque Alpine village transformed into a health resort and a base for alpine excursionists. The road from Thethi to Shkodra is 74 kilometers long. Thethi is surrounded by a range of high mountains where one can go on excursions and indulge in mountain climbing. These mountains are of a peculiar beauty at sunset, when they assume a glamorous pink colour and look as if they hang straight down from the sky. Here are the peaks of Mt. Radohina — 2569 meters high, of Mt. Harapi — 2216 meters high, of Mt. Popullka — about 2600 meters high, of Mt. Alia — 2400 meters high, and many other peaks. A number of passes link Thethi with the other mountain regions of the North.

The road from Koplik to Shkodra is 18 kilometers long. Just as the road from Han i Hotit to Koplik, it follows the traces of an old road running from the Southern Dalmatian seashore to Shkodra. In the old itineraries the last station before Shkodra figures as Cinna, which may be identified with Koplik, where interesting archaeological findings

have recently been made. The region across which the road to Shkodra passes is inhabited by mountaineers, a hardworking and brave breed. The history of the region abounds in wars and uprisings against foreign invaders. The people of this region have continuously staged uprisings against the Turks. They have defended their places against the Serbian chauvinists. During the National-liberation War, in 1943, a severe battle was fought at Reç, a village not very far from Koplik, between the partisans and a large Italian army. The Italians were routed and ran for their lives.

The road to Shkodra passes by many villages, today organized into flourishing agricultural cooperatives. On both sides of the road stretch extensive tobacco plantations and fields of wheat. The tobacco grown in these villages is widely known and in great demand in both home and foreign markets. At the very entrance to Shkodra, the road passes through extensive vineyards. They belong to the «Perlat Rexhepi» State Agricultural Enterprise, named after one of the bravest heroes of the National-liberation War. This enterprise was set up during the last few years on the lands of Shtoj which lay waste prior to the liberation. The «Perlat Rexhepi» State Agricultural Enterprise today possesses about 1000 hectares of arable land with extensive vineyards and fruit tree plantations, producing grapes and fruits of different sorts and varieties.

SHKODRA — Shkodra is the principal city and the most important economic and cultural center of northern Albania. It is, at the same time, one of the largest cities of Albania with a population of 49,000 inhabitants.

Shkodra is situated on a plain bounded in the east, south and west by the rivers Kiri, Drini and Buna; further to the east it is crowned by a range of high mountains like Maranaj (1,577 meters), and Cukali (1,723 meters). In the west the city borders with the lake and Mt. Tarabosh. In the south and south-east the city is surrounded by a range of hills, where a newly planted forest of cypress trees is growing fast. On the top of a high rocky hill rises the fortress of Rozafat. The city, which was clustered near the fortress during mediaeval times, is spreading now to the north. New quarters with four story buildings, wide streets and parks are replacing the old quarters with houses and buildings of the mediaeval and oriental types.

Known in the past as an old artisan center as well as a road and river junction with a considerable transit trade, Shkodra has now grown into an important industrial center. It has nowadays a number of factories and plants of the food-processing, light and machine-making industries, and an extensive cooperative handicraft industry. Its knitted

products of natural silk, its copper wire products of every description, its cigarettes, wines and wickerworks have made Shkodra well known on the foreign markets, too.

Shodra has an active cultural and artistic life all the year round. The city is one of the oldest cultural centers of Albania. It was here that a craftsmanship of a high artistic value flourished and the first theatrical and musical societies came into being. Shkodra, once an important center in the Balkan Peninsula, suffered a setback during the first part of the XXth century. The cultural, economic and artistic life of the city witnessed a revival only in the postliberation years.

The number of schools increased considerably, and Shkodra boasts today of a number of institutes of secondary and vocational training, a Teachers Training School and a veterinary Research Center. Besides the amateur groups, the city has its professional theater and vaudeville troupes, which give their performances in a new and magnificent building, it has its broadcasting station, as well as a local newspaper. The city has a rich library, a historical and ethnographic museum housed in a stately building. Of interest are three other museums, the first one dedicated to the three communist heroes Përlat Rexhepi, Branko Kadia and Jordan Misia, who in an odd battle against Italian fascists transformed a small Shkodra house into a veritable fortress; the second one is dedicated to the great poet of the poor man's lot Migjeni, and the third, one to the great Shkodran patriot Luigj Gurakuqi.

Exquisite and characteristic is the music of this Albanian northern city. One can still hear the old Shkodran songs full of lyricism and, together with them, the new songs of temporary composers, in which ancient and new melodies are blended to express the life and work of the young generation hard at work building socialist Albania.

A bit of history. — Shkodra is one of the most ancient cities of Europe. The beginning of the last millennium B.C. found it the capital city of the state of the Ardians, a fortress and a river port visited by numerous ships. Shkodra communicated with the sea through the navigable Buna river then known as Barbana. Occupied by the Romans, it remained for a certain period of time only a station on the road from Durrës to the North with a Roman colony settled in it. The city was occupied, later on, by Byzantium. Beginning with the XIV century, trade, commerce and handicraft industry flourished in mediaeval Shkodra. For the second time in its history there appeared in the markets round and about coins bearing the name of Shkodra on them. For a certain period of time the Albanian feudal lords, the Balshas, made Shkodra the capital of their state. At the end of the XIVth century, in the year 1396, the city was occupied by the Venetians, who held

it for almost a century in spite of many an uprising of the Albanians. In the year 1478 the fortress of Shkodra was besieged by a very large Ottoman army, which attacked the fortress with all the weapons known at that time.

The Shkodra warriors fought valiantly, determined to defend their city to the bitter end. After a year of siege, the mercantile Republic of Venice realized that the continuation of the war cost them too much and made peace with the Ottoman Empire. To the great astonishment of the enemy who had assembled a great army around the fortress, from the gates of the latter came out a small detachment of warriors who could hardly stand on their feet from hunger and exhaustion. The heroic defence of Shkodra echoed far and wide all over Europe. The great Renaissance painter Paolo Veronese dedicated one of his masterpieces to the «Siege of Shkodra». A masterly description of the steadfastness and bravery of the defenders of Shkodra has been left to us by the Shkodran humanist of the XVIth century Marin Barleti. After a period of decline that lasted for two centuries and with the disintegration of the military feudal Ottoman regime, in the XVIIIth century Shkodra began to regain its previous economic and cultural prosperity. This was the time when the city became a Pashalik center of the Albanian feudal lords of the time, the Bushatlis. During the reign of the most noted of the Bushatlis, Kara Mahmut (1775-1831), commerce and trade witnessed a great resurgence and so did the handicraftsmen, tailors, leather workers, armourers, etc. It was only through the force of arms that the rule of the powerful Bushatlis was brought to an end by the Sultans.

Shkodra was an important center especially during the eventful years 1876-1880. It played an important role in the uprising of the years 1910, 1911 and 1912. During the Balkan Wars Shkodra resisted the siege by the Serbs and the Montenegrins for six long months. Then, she was placed under the administration of an international commission and passed over, later on, to Austro-Hungary until, finally, she became part of the Albanian State.

Shkodra has been one of the main centers of the workers' movement since the beginning of the XXth century. May Day was celebrated here, for the first time in Albania, in 1905 and the first workers' associations were founded two years later. In 1936 one of the first communist groups of the country was formed in Shkodra, a group that in the year 1941 took part in the founding of the Communist Party of Albania, today the Party of Labor of Albania. During the National-liberation War, Shkodra was seething with guerilla units who undertook actions of the most audacious nature. In spite of the powerful reaction of the clergy and the efforts of the fascist and nazi invaders, the



Shkodra — The Citadel

city became a center of resistance in the struggle for freedom and independence.

The Fortress of Rozafat, situated on a rocky hill, surrounded, on one side, by the Buna river and, on the other, by the Drin river, is one of the oldest fortresses in Albania. Traces of the ancient Illyrian fortress here are very scanty. At the entrance of and outside the fortress there are remnants of walls built out of big blocks of stone. Until recently, the fortress has continuously been subjected to all kinds of repairs and reconstructions. The fortress has an almost oval planimetry, reinforced by seven towers. One enters the fortress from the east through three successive gates on the inner flanks of which

there are the living quarters of the guards of the gates. Three sets of walls divide the fortress into three parts. In the first part there are no buildings. In the second part there are the walls of a mosque built upon the ruins of a church and those of a building used for military purposes. In the third and last part there looms a big structure, situated on the side where the two rivers meet, used once for administrative and military purposes and apparently converted later into an ammunition dump by the Ottomans. Here is the entrance to a tunnel that used to link the fortress with the river Drin. In the fortress there are also water cisterns which furnished the besieged with water.

The fortress of Rozafat has a history dating from more than 2,000 years. Beginning with the Romans (in the IIIrd century B.C.) and ending with the time of the Balkan Wars, the fortress has been besieged and attacked several times by invading armies. It stands a mute witness of the protracted strifes and struggles of the Albanian people for freedom and independence.

Of the fortress and its construction an interesting legend has come from generation to generation over to the present day. It is often sung to a popular melody. Once upon a time three brothers worked at the erection of the walls of the fortress. To their great dismay, the wall they built by day crumbled by night. An old man that once happened to pass by, told them that the building of the walls demanded the sacrifice of a human life, only thus and only then would the wall built by day not crumble by night. The brothers decided to sacrifice one of their own wives — the one that would bring them their lunch the next morning. And on the morrow it was the wife of the youngest brother that brought them their lunch. The two elder brothers had secretly informed their wives of their decision and the latter had found the appropriate excuses not to go to the fortress and sent the wife of the youngest brother, although the latter had a baby boy on her breast. It happened just as the old man had predicted. The mother of the baby boy, Rozafa, was the one that was sacrificed but, before being immured, she foretold that the place would be inherited by her baby boy and his offspring. Both story and song praising the heroic act of this woman for the good of the country, close with the milk dropping, to this day, from the breast of Rozafa, down the walls of the fortress.

The medieval bridge of Mesi. — The medieval bridge of Mesi spans the Kiri river 8 kilometers northeast of Shkodra. It is one of the most exquisite bridges ever built by local master builders. Taking advantage of the place and of the terrain the builders have placed the supports

of the bridge on hard rock. The bridge is 112 meters long, made up of 5 arches, the longest of which is 27 meters long and 15 meters high. Beyond the bridge, on the left bank of the river, on top of a hill, stands the fortress of the village of Drishti with the ruins of the medieval town of Drivastum.

Drivastum (Drishti) is a settlement of Illyrian origin. During the Middle Ages it was one of the best known fortresses and, at the same time, an important trade and handicraft center of the region. For a period the town minted coins of its own. What has remained of its past glory are the ruins of what used to be once a triple wall that encircled the town, as well as some odd archaeological objects, kept now in the archaeological museum of Shkodra. In 1478 Drishti was occupied by the Ottomans. After its occupation it was ruined and no longer mentioned as an economic and cultural center.

From the medieval bridge of Mesi a new automobile road leads in the direction of the mountain region of Shllaku and a bridge links the villages and the forests of this mountainous region with the city of Shkodra.

Shiroka. — Along the shores of the lake, some 6 kilometers from Shkodra, stands the village of Shiroka. The inhabitants of this village are fishermen and, with their swift and manoeuvrable boats reminding one of the **Illyrian Liburnian galleys**, navigate and fish all over the lake as well as along the Buna river. Shiroka is today not only a village of fishermen but also a bathing resort frequented in the summer by thousands of people from Shkodra. Thousands of school children come here during the summer from all the corners of Albania to bathe and have good time in a beautiful palace with accommodations especially prepared for them.

Various roads, which link the city with the northern region, radiate from Shkodra in different directions. One of these roads, after crossing the Buna river and winding its way along the Buna valley, links Shkodra with Ulqin (Yugoslavia).

Another road, after crossing over the Drin river, heads for the north-eastern regions of Albania, linking Shkodra with the three administrative and economic centers of these regions: **Puka**, **Kukës** and the town of **Bajram Curri**. It is through a plain that the road travels as far as Vau i Dejës, crossing over the Drin river, 10 kilometers from Shkodra. Vau i Dejës or Medieval Danja (Dagnum), protected by a small fortress, has been transformed today into a vast work site. It is here, on the banks of the Drin river, that the largest hydro-power plant in Albania, with a capacity of 250,000 kw, is being built. Beyond the Vau i Dejës crossing, the road begins to ascend the



Shkodra — The Mesi Bridge

Highlands. And it was exactly through this place that in ancient times passed a road that linked the Northern Adriatic with the interior of the Illyrian regions. Today this road links Shkodra with a number of new industrial and mining centers.

I/2 From Shkodra to Tirana (117 kilometers)

Leaving Shkodra we cross over the Drin river bridge, leaving behind the city's peripheral quarter of «Bahçallëk» («Gardens»), a name given it during medieval times, because of the numerous gardens that surrounded it. The road runs along the banks of the Drin river and through the villages of Berdica, Bushati, Barbullushi, Kakarriqi, Balldreni, all situated in a plain. In all those villages there have been set up agricultural cooperatives where the peasantry engage in raising all kinds of crops. All around one sees newly planted blocks of vineyards and fruit tree plantations. On the hills that line up along the road there are new plantations of mulberry trees the leaves of which serve to feed silkworms. Bushati is a big village. Its name is connected with the great feudal family of the Bushatlis, who during the XVII-XVIIIth centuries played an important role in the life of the region. The Drin river, which used to flood the land of these villages, has been harnessed and today furnishes these peasants with plenty of water to irrigate their rice fields.

The road then continues along the foot of the Kakarriqi mountains, a dry and rocky low mountain range, where bee-keepers bring their bee-hives to feed on sage that grows here and gives to honey a sweet aromatic flavor.

At the very foot of the Kakarriqi mountains there is a little village that bears this name. At present there isn't a trace of the once marshy lands and swamps of Kakarriqi. These, like all the other swamps and marshes of Albania, figure only on the old maps of the country.

Facing these mountains, stretches the plain of Zadrima which, after the opening of the drainage system and the completion of the other land improving projects, has been converted into a fertile plain.

Leaving behind the mountains of Kakarriqi as well as the village of Balldren, we come to the small town of Lezha. Before entering the town and before crossing the Drin river bridge, the road bifurcates in the direction of Shengjini. **Shengjini** is the northernmost seaport of Albania, 7 kilometers away from Lezha. In ancient times this port was known under the name of Nympheon and, afterwards, Caesarea. At the time of the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey, Marc Antony landed here with reinforcements for Caesar.

Before the liberation Shengjini was almost uninhabited. There was only one building at the spot — the building where the customs offices were housed. Today Shengjini has new apartment houses, and its pier, besides the fleet of fishing craft, harbours Albanian cargo ships that load and unload goods for and from the northern regions. Shengjini has become also a preferred sea shore resort because of the fine sand of its bathing beach.

Lezha, 41 kilometers from Shkodra, is also an ancient town — the ancient Lissus. Upon a high hill nearby still stand the remnants of the old Illyrian walls and, under them, the walls that surrounded the old Syracusan colony, which, according to the ancient authors, was founded in the year 385 B.C. by Dionysius, the Syracusan tyrant. Dionysius aimed at monopolizing the trade and commerce of the Adriatic but the Greek colony was short-lived. Lissus became a part of the Illyrian state of the Ardians and remained as such until the Roman conquest. During the Middle Ages a new fortress rose there. Later on, the fortress passed over into the hands of the Serbs, then into the hands of the Albanian feudal princes of Dukagjini, after that the Venetians took possession of it and, finally, it fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks. It was in the town of Lezha that in March 1444 an important convention of Albanian princes took place, that the famous Albanian League was founded, appointing George Castriot Scanderbeg as the supreme commander in the war against the foreign invaders. It was in Lezha that on the 17th of January 1468, after 24 years of victorious battles, our National Hero Scanderbeg died. These events of great importance in the history of our people are commemorated in a monument erected in the town park to the memory of the Convention of the year 1444. On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of our National Hero Scanderbeg what was left of the ruins of the Shënkoll Cathedral, where our Hero was buried, have all been reconstructed and turned into a monument, where the people visiting the place honor the memory of our National Hero. The town of Lezha has today a small historical museum, too.

The small town of Lezha is today the administrative center of an important agricultural district.

Departing from Lezha in the direction of Tirana the visitor has the occasion to see the transformations that have taken place in the villages of this region and the irrigation schemes that have been set up and placed at the service of the collective farms. After having travelled through the fields of the various villages, the road begins at once to ascend and, after leaving in the rear the mountains of

Pëdhanë, we reach the banks of the Mati river with its widespread bed, hereas further down in the background our eyes discern the tall chimneys of a new industrial center — the chemical giant of Laç.

At the Mati bridge, we leave the road that leads to the region of Mirdita.

Mirdita is a mountainous region, whose inhabitants are engaged in agriculture, cattle raising and dairy farming. This region, whose inhabitants never laid down their weapons but fought courageously against all the invaders, had been neglected and exploited by the native feudal lords, especially by those of the family of the «kapedans», feudal chieftains who have played a pronounced reactionary and antipatriotic role in the history of the country. During these last years Mirdita is being continuously transformed. Rich in mineral resources, the region has witnessed the erection of new mining centers, the most important of which is Rubik, known for the extraction and processing of copper.

As soon as we cross the Mati bridge, following the road southwards, we leave behind another road which leads to two other regions of Albania — to Mati and Dibra. This road is called «Rruga e Dritës» («The Road of Light»), because it is along this road that two of the first hydro-power stations, the «Karl Marx» and «Frederik Engels» hydro-power plants on the Mati river were built and put into operation in our country. This is the road that links the two most important towns of the region, Burrel and Peshkopia, with the sea.

As the other regions of North Albania, Mati and Dibra are rich in forests and mineral resources.

After crossing the Mati bridge we enter **Miloti**, a road junction and a small center of an agricultural region. All along the road we pass through various villages. In the place where not many years ago nestled a tiny village, on the right side of the road, today rises majestically, with its tall chimneys, the chemical superphosphate plant of **Laç**, an entirely modern plant. The road here is at all hours crowded with traffic; in the vicinity of Laç there is a huge automobile park for trucks, further on an industrial woodworking combine, and still further away, at the foot, of a hill, the new town itself. Many storey buildings, schools, shops and various other institutions, all brand new. give this small town an attractive aspect. The town of Lag has also a railroad station. A number of trains go daily from Lag to Tirana, Durrës and Elbasan and vice-versa.

We leave Lag and come to Mamurras, the center of a large State agricultural enterprise. The road passes through cultivated fields and hills that have the aspect of extensive gardens and orchards. This panorama accompanies us as far as **Fushë-Krujë**, another small administrative



Laç — The superphosphate plant

center and road junction. What strikes one most along this trip is the advanced stage of agriculture and education in these regions. Not very long ago this region used to be a backward one, where deep ignorance and the standards of unwritten laws reigned supreme, where the blood feuds were on the order of the day. Today it has been strewn with new educational and cultural institutions. Laç and Fushë-Krujë have each a 12-year school, while 8-year schools of compulsory attendance have been set up in every village.

From Fushë-Krujë we take the road to the legendary hero town of **Kruja**. Five hundred years ago the names of Kruja, of its heroic defenders and of their brave commander-in-chief George Castriot

Skanderbeg became known to the whole of Europe. After it leaves the plain the road begins to ascend a range of calcareous hills and elevations. The higher we climb the more beautiful landscapes meet our eyes, some of which we will meet with in our travels further south along the coast of Albania — olive tree plantations and limestone rocks, limestone quarries and limekilns. Stones from these quarries have been used for centuries to build towns and cities. Ancient Durrës got its limestone from Kruja. Old are the olive trees, too, dating from most ancient times. An interesting story has come to us from times immemorial, transmitted from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation, about the olive trees and Skanderbeg. The Albanian hero tended not only to the defense of the land and the military training of the youth of that time but also to the olive trees. It was in those years that he decreed that no young man could marry before having planted twenty olive trees.

While ascending the asphalted road, we watch on our left the dense clouds of smoke balching from the chimneys of the numerous furnaces of the new cement factory which turns out cement of the highest quality. Now these limestone rocks are not used only for building houses and making lime, but also for making cement of a high grade. We soon come to the outskirts of the town of Kruja with its small and simple houses, surrounded on all sides by gardens reveling in a rich green colour.

Kruja is a small town of about 6,000 inhabitants. It is the center of a primarily agricultural region. At the small town square where we have just alighted from our car a most fascinating scenery meets our eyes and leaves us spellbound. Above us rises majestic the mountain of Kruja and, at its foot, the equestrian monument of Skanderbeg. His warlike pose gives us the impression that he is on the point of assaulting the enemies that have besieged his fortress. Under this impression we turn our gaze towards the fortress, which looms as an enormous warship on top of a huge mass of solid rock detached from the mountain (605 meters above sea level), as if a giant hand has picked it up and placed it at its feet. A narrow street that was once used as a characteristic medieval bazaar, but which the last World War did not spare, leads to the fortress itself. In the reconstructed part of this bazaar the visitor may take a rest in the shade during the hot summer days and buy himself a cold drink or souvenir at some local shop where all kinds of handicraft objects are exhibited. The view of the fortress from here is even more impressive.

The fortress of Kruja belongs to that group of fortresses that sprang

up in our country during the early Middle Ages, probably immediately after the migration of the various peoples that poured down from the north — of the Goths and Avars. The inhabitants of the city of the Albans — the Albanopolis described by Ptolemy of Alexandria — abandoned their city situated on a low hill down in the plain and settled higher up on the rocky slopes of the mountain of Kruja.

A big necropolis, unearthed recently near the fortress, shows that, during the VIIth and VIIIth centuries, the town had become an important economic and cultural center of the region and that its inhabitants were the successors of the ancient Illyrians but now known under the name of Arbëns or Arbëneshes. Thus, the name of an Illyrian tribe called the Albanes, inhabiting the lands beyond those of Durrës in the early Middle Ages spread far and wide over the territories of ancient Illyria and their successors, the present Albanians, were known by the same name. The name of the town of Kruja as such is mentioned for the first time in the documents of the IXth century. At that time the town was the seat of a bishop and the fortress was in the hands of the Byzantine invaders.

In the Middle Ages Kruja and its fortress are clearly connected with the Arbëns, the Arbënesh feudal lords and their attempts to set up a powerful principality. During the XIIIth century Kruja became the principal center of the first feudal Albanian state, of the state of the Arben. A century later the Arbënesh feudal lords of the Thopia family, who at that time had set up a powerful principality in Central Albania, had reconstructed the walls of the fortress and had transformed it into an important fortified center of the region. Kruja was coveted and occupied by the maritime states of the West also, by the Anjous and the Venetians, who transformed it into a fortress for the defense of Durrës.

The fortress of Kruja earned great fame during one of the most glorious periods in the history of Albania, during the 25-year-long war of the Albanians led by Skanderbeg against the Ottoman Turks. The invaders besieged the fortress of Kruja four times. Two Turkish Sultans at the head of a huge army came to the very walls of the fortress and directed personally the military operations for its conquest. Three times, in the years 1450, 1466 and 1467, they were shamefully defeated and had to retreat from the fortress. The fortress was defended by a handful of valiant fighters, commanded by such equally brave commanders as Count Urani and Tanush Thopia. But throughout all the sieges the fortress of Kruja was in fact defended by Skanderbeg himself who kept attacking the besieging Ottoman armies at times on one side, at times on the other, inflicting heavy losses to them. All the then known weapons and other means of

warfare were used against the fortress of Kruja. Not very far from the fortress the Ottoman Turks cast heavy cannons which poured 300-400 lbs shells on the walls of the fortress. The enemy tried to open an underground tunnel, but their efforts were of no avail. After two years of stubborn resistance and only because of lack of provision the Kruja garrison finally surrendered to the enemy in 1478, that is, ten years after Skanderbeg's death.

After the surrender of Kruja, the most beautiful and the biggest of all the fortresses of Skanderbeg, which according to the Greek chronicler Critoboulos of Imbros «was the guardian and defender of the whole land», the town was abandoned by its inhabitants. In order to wipe out the last vestige of the fame that the fortress had earned, the Ottomans changed its name and called it Akci Hisar — the white city. But the people later began to settle there again and the name of Kruja continued to be used as before. In the year 1832 the invaders levelled the walls of the town to the very ground as a sequel of the new uprisings that had swept the entire country — they feared lest the fortress fell again into the hands of the insurgents and became, as before, a nucleus of resistance for the Albanians.

Almost nothing has remained of the fortress of Kruja of the time of Skanderbeg. The walls are low. They have been rebuilt by the Ottomans. At the entrance, behind the gates have remained some small niches, apparently designed for the guards, and a small square. The administration and military buildings used to be located way up where a few houses stood. This is the highest and, at the same time, the best defended part of the fortress. A tower transformed later into a clock tower, still stands. From this part of the fortress one obtains a magnificent view. Looking in the direction of the mountains it is not difficult to see how the fortress communicated with the mountains: one can easily imagine the Albanian hero of heroes Skanderbeg encouraging the defenders of the fortress, in spite of the fact that the enemy was stationed inbetween. Looking down at the abyss one can see very clearly the natural defences of the fortress and understand why all the attempts of the enemy to capture it were doomed to failure.

Looking round and about the fortress the visitor can easily conceive the strategic position of the latter. The extensive plain that stretches below, as far as the eye can see, can be encompassed as if it were on the palm of one's hand, and beyond it comes the wide expanse of the sea. At night one distinguishes not only the lights of Durrës, but of the other seaports to the north too, even the lights of Ulqini, today on the other side of the Albanian boundary. If smoke and fire signals were used we could locate from the fortress of Kruja the

fortress of Petrela, the fortress of Rodoni and a series of other fortresses, too.

At the topmost part of the fortress stands today the historical museum of the town, dedicated to the struggle of the Albanian people against the invaders in general and to Skanderbeg in particular.

The echo of this 25-year-long war in the outside world finds its expression in numberless historical and literary works, portraits and sketches, the copies of some of which are exhibited in these rooms. The life and struggle of Skanderbeg and his war are vividly depicted in folk songs and legends, too.

The exhibits of the museum close with the National-liberation War as a crowning event of all the struggles for freedom and independence of the Albanian people.

The lower part of the fortress grounds is inhabited even today. The ethnographic museum is housed at the entrance of this quarter, in an old building of interesting architecture and architectonic details. Here there is an old bath of the oriental type. A small gallery, that once passed under the walls of the town, linked this part of the fortress with a number of fresh water springs. These springs were guarded by a special wall barrier, of which there have remained ruins. Departing from Kruja we leave on our right an automobile road, that goes in the direction of **Burrel**, the present day main center of the region of Mati. The road, after it enters a narrow valley, where the route has been blasted along a hard rocky mountain slope, comes out into a rich pine tree forest and thence to Qafë Shtamë. **Qafë Shtamë** is a mountain resort. The ice-cold water, the light pure air, the dense forests and beautiful places for excursions that surround it, have made it a much frequented center of rest and recreation.

From Kruja the road to Tirana proceeds along a plain. The road is straight. To the left the land blocks of the agricultural cooperatives stretch out as far as the foot of the mountains, whereas on the right it is hills that accompany us, first quite far from the road, then very near it. On the top of one of these hills rises a fortress of the late ancient period, where the visitor may see a Middle Age clock tower.

A road poster indicates the road to the airfield of **Rinas**, where passenger and cargo planes, coming from various countries come down and take off regularly. Further on, beyond the turn of the road, tall chimneys and long barrack-like buildings indicate the place where a big brick and tile factory has been set up. Almost parallel with the highway stretches the railroad track and both of them end at Vora, an important road and railroad junction.



Kruja — The Citadel

Vora is the center of a state agricultural enterprise which has been very much enlarged of late and which indulges in a wide variety of agricultural pursuits. Vora is 16 kilometers away from Tirana. In the opposite direction, a 24 kilometer tract of highway goes to the seashore and Durrës. The scenery is again similar to that of the Fushë-Krujë — Vora road: on the left an extensive plain whereas on the right a range of hills, which have been put of late under cultivation. Parallel to the highway stretches the railroad to Tirana, in one direction, and to Durrës, in the opposite.

Before entering the capital, at the foot of a range of hills to the right, there is a group of dwelling houses and towers of the recently opened new coal mine of **Mëzezi**.

A wide asphalted street notifies us that we are on the point of entering Tirana, the capital city of the People's Republic of Albania. It is a straight street, on both flanks of which tower many-storeyed apartment houses and other buildings, which takes us to the main square of the city — the Skanderbeg Square, and from there to Hotel Dajti.

TIRANA, the capital of Albania is situated almost in the center of the country, 41°19'31" northern geographic latitude (more or less on the same latitude with Naples, Madrid, and Constantinople) and 19 48'45" eastern geographic longitude (approximately at the same longitude with Budapest). The city has been extending with every passing year. In the year 1920 it had a surface of 3 square kilometers, in 1937 a surface of 8 square kilometers, whereas today it occupies a surface of 30 square kilometers.

A bit of history. — Tirana, in comparison with the other towns and cities of the country, is relatively young. According to some sources of information, it results that the city was founded in the year 1614 by the feudal lord of that region, at that time Sulejman Pasha Mulleti. In order to attract the population of the region to the new settlement, he built a mosque, a bath house and a bakery. The Shkodra humanist Marin Barleti tells us that in the XVth century people spoke of Little Tirana and Big Tirana not as settlements but as plains. Tirana began to develop as a town in the XVIIIth century, becoming quite a center and junction of caravan trails and roads. Thus the need for other buildings, stores and craftsmanship shops was felt.

In the year 1920 the Congress of Lushnja proclaimed Tirana the capital city of Albania. In February of that very year, the government elected by the Congress of Lushnja took its permanent seat here. Tirana thus became an important political and administrative center

and a stage for the future political clashes between progressive democracy and feudal aristocracy. In the year 1924 these clashes culminated in the triumph of the Democratic Revolution. This triumph, however, was shortlived. The democratic government was soon overthrown by the opposition reactionary forces aided by the neighboring states. From 1924 to 1939 anti-people's regimes reigned supreme.

With the occupation of the country by the fascist armies of Italy, Tirana witnessed the establishment of the Italian occupational authority in the city. The hatred and contempt of our people against the invaders, was clearly demonstrated to the fascists in the days that followed. The fascists themselves were obliged to admit this.

The Communist Party of Albania, today the Party of Labor of Albania, was secretly founded in Tirana on the 8th of November 1941. It organized the resistance of the people against the common enemy and led the country to its final and complete liberation and to the establishment of the People's Regime.

For three long and gruesome years the inhabitants of Tirana witnessed the unequal struggle that the communists, the youth and the people as a whole waged against the fascist and nazi invaders and the Quislings of the country.

Here was waged a three week-long fierce battle (October-November, 1944) for the final liberation of Tirana. On the 29th of November 1944 the members of First Democratic Government of Albania entered Tirana and were enthusiastically acclaimed by the population.

In street corners and squares of the capital one may see today busts and other monuments commemorating those remarkable events of major significance not only for Tirana but for the whole country.

Some other facts about Tirana. — The city of Tirana is situated at an altitude of 110 meters above sea level. The average temperature of Tirana is 15°C, quite a mild temperature. July is the hottest and January the coldest month of the year. The average temperature for July and, with some slight changes, for August also is 24°C, whereas the average temperature for January is 7°C. Tirana belongs to the humid zone of the country, with an average yearly rainfall of 1200 mm. As is the case with the rest of the territory of the Republic, the heaviest rainfalls are in the months of October and November. The prevailing winds in Tirana have a southeastern and northwestern direction. During the summer months the refreshing influence of the sea is felt. Tirana is not a place with strong winds and their speed never exceeds 1.5 m/sec. Springtime in Tirana is a beautiful season.

The population. — The population of Tirana has overreached the 170,000



Kruja — The Equestrian Statue of Skanderbeg

mark. In the year 1911 Tirana had a population of only 15,000 inhabitants, whereas in the year 1938 the capital of Albania had 25,000 inhabitants. The greater part of the population was comprised of merchants and handicraftsmen. Tirana grew very fast after the liberation.

The economic development. — Tirana is not only a big political but a big industrial center as well, accounting for 1/5th of the total industrial production of the country. Until the year 1939 the capital had but only one small thermo-power plant, a number of printing press establishments and two flour mills. After liberation Tirana witnessed the development of various branches of industry. In the electric power industry the year 1951 was remarkable for the completion of two new electric power plants: the thermo-power plant at the «Stalin» Textile Mills and the «Lenin» hydro-power plant of 5,000 kW each (before liberation the two existing electric power plants together accounted



Tirana

for only 740 kW). Later on Tirana joined the single high tension system of electric power distribution. Until two years ago the consumption of electric energy was 62 times greater than in the year 1938. Tirana has today a modern machine making industry comprising about 40 plants, and machine shops which produce not only spare parts but also various working tools and utensils, electric motors, metal articles for broad consumption, etc. The chemical industry has recorded a somewhat belated development. In spite of this, Tirana produces today about 600 pharmaceutical articles and 100 items of cosmetics. To this must be added various kinds of dyes, etc. The industry for building materials in Tirana produces today various construction materials as well as prefabricated house blocks. The city has a glass and porcelain factory.

The light industry has also had a considerable development in the capital. Tirana has a giant textile mill which produces cotton and woollen

fabrics not only for the needs of the people in Albania but also for export, a food-processing combine which is made up of a brewery, an olive oil press, a factory for refreshing drinks, macaroni, biscuits, etc.

Education and culture. — Tirana is also an important educational, cultural, scientific and artistic center. The capital has about 100 primary, 8th grade and secondary schools with more than 60,000 pupils and teachers, as many as the entire number of pupils and teachers in the whole of Albania in the year 1938. In Tirana there are vocational schools to train technicians for the different professions. The State University of Tirana was founded in 1957. It has seven departments training students in 28 specialities. Besides the State University of Tirana, there is the Upper Agricultural Institute training agronomists, zootechnicians and veterinarians, the Upper Institute of Arts where students receive instruction in painting, sculpture, dramatics and music, and the Upper Institute of Physical Culture.

At the huge Palace of Culture built recently on one of the biggest squares of the city — Skanderbeg Square — functions the Theater of the Opera and Ballet with an auditorium of 1000 seats, a professional theater, two vaudeville troupes, an artistic ensemble of songs and dances, a marionette theater, which give shows every day in the various halls of the Palace. Here we must add the various amateur groups which give successful performances before large audiences. Tirana has seven moving picture theaters. The number of Albanian films goes on increasing yearly. The «Shqipëria e Re» («New Albania») Film Studio was set up in the year 1952 and now produces many newsreels and feature films under the direction and with the participation of Albanian specialists, actors and film producers.

In Tirana there are a number of institutes of scientific research which carry out studies and research work in the sphere of social and technical sciences. Tirana has become the largest center of Albanological studies. At the National Library in Tirana, the working people and the scientists have at their disposal over 800,000 volumes — quite a considerable number if we were to consider that in the year 1939 that very library had only 13,000 books.

Tirana houses also the National-liberation War Museum, the Lenin-Stalin Memorial Museum, the Museum of Natural Sciences, the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum, the National Art Gallery and the Home-Museum where the Albanian Communist Party was founded and the Home-Museum where the Youth Organisation was founded.

At the foot of the hills situated at the south western part of the city stands the Biological Garden of the State University of Tirana,

which stretches over a surface of about 15 hectares, housing 1500 varieties of plants of the flora of Albania.

As far as the development of the various kinds of sports is concerned, there is no comparison with the past. Tirana has today 3 big stadia, 7 football fields, 60 basketball courts, 90 volleyball courts, 41 halls and gymnasia for indoor sports, all at the disposal of the city's sportsmen and athletes, in addition to those of schools and other educational institutions.

The enormous changes that have taken place in the sphere of public health in the country, are reflected in Tirana, too. Tirana has 4 big hospitals with twice as many beds as all the hospitals of Albania in the year 1938. Besides those, the population is being taken care of by a central polyclinic and other clinics stationed in the various quarters of the city. For the needs of public health cater various institutes and laboratories in the city.

Excursions. — Besides excursions outside the city — to the Durrës Beach, to the historic town of Kruja and elsewhere, interesting excursions are made to the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum, the beautiful mosque in the center of the city and the Migjeni Handicraft Cooperative.

The Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum is housed in a group of buildings within the university grounds at the southern end of the city. The «Shqipëria e Re» («New Albania») boulevard surrounded on all sides by parks of ever green trees leads to the museum. The Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum of Tirana is an institution set up after the liberation of the country. The exhibits have been procured from the excavations and findings made by Albanian archaeologists and ethnographers. Before the liberation of the country in the year 1944 the archaeological and ethnographic wealth of the country was left at the mercy of fate and, as a consequence, valuable objects of antiquity were stolen and smuggled out of the country.

In the very first room of the museum are exposed the objects dating from prehistoric and Illyrian civilisations. They prove that the Illyrians — the forefathers of the present day Albanians — were very ancient inhabitants of the land and had quite an advanced civilisation. Apollonia, Durrës, Butrint and a whole series of other Illyrian towns and settlements like Amantia, Byllis, Phoinike, in ancient times were prosperous and flourishing slave-owning centers. The statues, portraits and reliefs here give a very clear idea of their civilisation. In special show windows there are collections of ancient coins of very great value, coins minted by the cities and dynasties of Illyria and coins of the ancient world that had found their way into the Illyrian regions



Tirana

through the channels of trade and commerce and discovered in various centers. Miscellaneous materials belonging to the Middle Ages treat themes which speak of the transition of the Illyrian civilisation into that of the Arbën of the early Medieval period and of the development of art, especially, of that of wall painting, during the Middle Ages.

In the rooms assigned to ethnography, the visitor will see the agricultural implements of primitive workmanship used by our peasants till not very long ago. Comparing them with the present day mechanized implements he will get a clear idea of the great advances made by agriculture in our days when modern agricultural implements are replacing rapidly the old primitive ones even in the remote mountain regions of the country. Some interiors illustrate aspects of the life of our cattle-breeders, the northern highlanders and southern peasants. Then the attention of the visitor is attracted by various household objects and furniture showing the skilful work of the people. In the room of the textiles one may see various weaving tools and instruments and their products; garments cut and sewn by young girls and brides or by artisans, which are veritable objects of art. What strikes one's eye most is the choice of color, the wonderful craftsmanship, the combination of motives and the exquisite taste in distributing the ornaments. The carpets deserve close attention, too. They are famous even beyond the borders of our country. In another room the visitor will find handicraft articles made of copper and silver, the workshop of a silversmith, and objects made out of wood and filigree.

In the other rooms there are exhibits of folk garments. Of course they do not represent all our folk costumes and dresses of which there are more than a hundred different sorts.

The Mosque of Haxhi Ethem-Bey is one of the most exquisite monuments of the architecture of the XIXth century. The Mosque has the form of a rectangle and a vault with an octagonal base. In front, the mosque has a portico with arches that rest on polychromatic capitals decorated with acanthus leaves. Exquisite is also the supple minaret. The mural paintings of the portico, where rather unusual subjects for Islamic religious edifices are treated such as views of buildings, trees, bridges, waterfalls, etc., are also very interesting. Next to the mosque is the clock-tower, built at about the same time but reconstructed later on, which may be seen from all the corners of the city.

The Grand Palace of Culture is today the greatest center of education and culture in the country. It has 240 halls and rooms. There is the big hall of the Opera and Ballet Theater with sitting accomodations for about 1,000 persons and a revolving stage with a surface of 550

square meters and a height of 30 meters. The troupes of artists have at their disposal 40 rooms, studios and a huge hall for rehearsals. The Palace has also a huge exhibition hall, two big conference halls with 400 and 300 sitting accommodations, respectively. The Palace houses also the National Library with various reading rooms. To visit all the auditoriums, halls, refreshment quarters etc., one has to walk the equivalent of 5 kilometers. To get an idea of the grandeur of this Palace we will mention still another fact: the electric substation supplying the Palace with electric power generates as much electric power as Tirana consumed in the year 1945.

The Museum of the National-liberation War. — In the various rooms of this museum are housed various materials connected with the National-liberation Struggle — documents, photographic material, maps, etc. In the central back-ground of the first room are written in capital letters the words of Comrade Enver Hoxha about this epic struggle — «The National-liberation War constitutes the most brilliant chapter in the history of the Albanian people». In the show windows of the museum one sees exposed all sorts of weapons and military equipment captured and used by the Albanian commanders, commissars and partisans. Here we find the clothes and personal belongings of the heroes that fell on the battlefield during the National-liberation War. There are also press and propaganda materials, materials from the sanitary services, as well as implements and contraptions of torture used by the fascist invaders and their stooges in Albania.

Passing along the various stands of the exhibits the visitor gets acquainted with the main events of the National-liberation War and the decisions taken during those eventful years. A conspicuous place is allotted to the events connected with the founding of the Albanian Communist Party, with the organisation of the armed struggle of the people and the expansion of that struggle with the Peza Conference on the 16th of September 1942, with the convocation of the Antifascist Congress of Permeti and with the setting up of the first Democratic Government of Albania. Here the visitor will find materials in connection with the activity of the Anti-fascist Youth Organisation and of the Anti-fascist Women Organisation, material bearing evidence of the military actions undertaken during the struggle for the liberation of the country, etc. There are materials in connection with the war that the Albanian partisans waged in Yugoslavia, after the liberation of Albania. The exposition halls terminate with exhibits connected with the proclamation of the People's Republic of Albania on the 11th of January, 1946. Here, among other things, there are miniature models of the houses and homes, where important historical events took

place, the house where the Conference of Labinot was held, etc. Sculptures, busts and various paintings enrich the exhibition.

The «Migjeni» Artistic Craftsmanship Cooperative is housed in a big building in the center of the city. The cooperative has various departments such as that of national costumes and garments, the department of haberdashery, of handicraft articles made of straw, of carved wood, of silver, all kinds of embroideries, etc. The articles produced by this artisan enterprise have attracted the attention of many a visitor at international fairs and their demand in the foreign market is constantly on the rise.

I/3 From Tirana to Durrës (42 kilometers)

There are two roads to the city of Durrës and its beach. The one coming from Shkodra bifurcates at Vlora and continues westwards to Durrës. It is 42 kilometers long, asphalted and passes through villages typical of Central Albania, where, besides cereals, industrial plants like cotton, sunflower, are cultivated. To the right, after having left behind the village of Maminas, stretch the fields of the Sukth State Agricultural Enterprise. The later has put into cultivation new land surfaces that not long ago were covered with marshes and bogs stretching as far as the seashore. Leaving Sukth and after having crossed the Erzen river bridge, we enter the outskirts of the town of Shijak, an administrative center of an important agricultural region. After climbing a gentle slope on a range of hills ahead, we get the first glimpse of the city of Durrës and its bay. Before getting to the city or to its beach we pass through the village of Shkozë which is now incorporated into the precincts of greater Durrës.

The other road, an automobile road, is somewhat shorter. Only 31 kilometers separate Tirana from the Durrës beach and 37 kilometers from the city of Durrës itself. From Skanderbeg Square in Tirana we pass through the «Konferenca e Pezës» street which links the city of Tirana with its new industrial zone. Leaving behind the new residential quarters of the capital, the road passes in front of a number of industrial plants the more important of which are the «Enver» Machine Shop, the «Ali Kelmendi» Food Processing Combine, the «Misto Mame» Woodworking Shop, the Glass Factory and the «Stalin» Textile Mills. Midway to Durrës we pass through the village of Ndreq, where a medieval fortress stands on top of the hill overlooking the village. From here the road follows a long range of hills that accompany us to the very seashore. Before reaching it the visitor already feels the refreshing cool air of the sea.



Finally we reach the seashore and enter the bathing beach area through the sector called «Plepat» («The Poplars»). Here there are numerous rest and recreation camps, for school children and working people. Further on, in the direction of Durrës, comes the «Illyria» bathing center with numberless bathing cabins and attractive villas, packed with people during the summer season. In the central part of the bathing beaches zone rise the stately hotels of the Albturist — comfortable first class hotels such as the «Adriatic» hotel on the very edge of the sea. A beautiful bathing beach with the finest of sands and an equally wonderful sea welcome the tourists. The restaurants and bars serve tasty dishes cooked according to the wishes of the visitors, season fruits, soft and strong drinks. The tourists have various playgrounds at their disposal. At night, besides the spacious terrace of the hotel, there is a cosy tavern in the basement of the same.

The seashore resort of Durrës is one of the biggest on the Adriatic coast. Of late, it has been greatly extended; sliding tracks, boats, spring-boards etc., are all at the disposal of those that come to rest over here. Besides the numerous shops offering all sorts of services, there is a post, telegraph and telephone service, public health service, etc. The seashore resort is linked with the city of Durrës by a regular bus service functioning uninterruptedly until the late hours of the night.

DURRËS. — Durrës is one of the most ancient cities of our land and the second largest city, next to Tirana, as far as population is concerned (50,000 inhabitants).

The city is built along a bay that bears the same name. Its natural position favouring the growth and development of a seaport and its bay protected from the winds by an uninterrupted range of hills descending as far down as the sea must have struck the imagination of the ancient founders of the city. Today the city extends partly along the hills and partly along the stretch of a plain that separates the sea from the hills. Today Durrës covers a much greater expanse of land than it did in ancient and medieval times.

A Bit of History. — In ancient times Durrës was known under two names: Epidamnos and Dyrrhachion (Dyrrhachium in Latin), both of them Illyrian names. As late as the year 627 B.C. when a colony that had come from the Greek cities of Corinth and Corcyra was established there, the place represented a small settlement which served for a certain period of time as an emporium. Epidamnos or Dyrrhachium, with the establishment and development of regular trade and commercial exchanges with the neighboring Illyrians, became the largest commercial center on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. As a result its

population increased. The inhabitants erected stately buildings and encircled the city with protective walls. According to the Greek written records and the various inscriptions found there, it turns out that the city was the richest of the Hellenic colonies, participating in numerous and varied activities of the ancient world. In the middle of the Vth century B.C. coins minted in the city circulated throughout the ancient world. In the meantime Epidamnos broke away from the economic dependence of the metropolis. It is interesting to note that the city still kept its two names. According to the above-mentioned records, the upper quarters of the city were known by the name of Epidamnos while the commercial quarters by that of Dyrrhachium. The latter was also the name that figured on the coins minted in the city.

An event that is worth mentioning is the struggle that went on unabated between the slave-owning oligarchy and the other strata of the city. This struggle, that broke out in Durrës in the year 437 before our era served as a signal for the beginning of the war between the various Greek city-states known in history as the Peloponesian War. In its foreign policy Durrës, as a city-state, had its eyes turned towards the inland Illyrian regions. The relations of the city with its Illyrian neighbors were not always friendly. The Greek citizens were eager to draw as much profit as they could from their trade and commerce with the Illyrians. The Illyrians, after they established their own state, tried to place Durrës under their own dependence. In this struggle victory favoured the state of the Taulantes. The Illyrian king Monunes minted in Durrës coins with his own name on them and made Durrës the center of his own state. Under the pressure of Rome, especially when the Latin slave owners initiated the war for the occupation and plunder of the Balkan Peninsula, Durrës made common cause with the Romans and later became the seaport where the Roman armies landed in their conquest of the Balkans.

Under Roman rule, Durrës continued to be a seaport and a big city, an «admirable city», as Cicero, the famous Roman orator, called it, whereas the poet Catullus called it «the Tavern of the Adriatic». A land route, Via Egnatia, linked Durrës with the East. Other routes linked this city with other centers of Illyria. After the partition of the Roman Empire, Durrës remained part of the Eastern Empire, thus becoming the main port of the Byzantine Empire towards the West.

During the Middle Ages the city was harassed by continuous attacks. The Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (491-518), with origin from Durrës, fortified the city with three sets of walls. Durrës became a theater of war during the Xth and XIth centuries when the Byzantine Empire clashed with the Bulgarians and the Normans. As a seaport on the Adriatic, Durrës was the first target of the overseas states aspiring

to occupy the Albanian regions. Then, Durrës fell into the hands of the Anjous and the Venetians. It was attacked also by other states like that of the Serbs who were after an outlet on the Adriatic. Being a neighbor of the Medieval Arbanon, a region where the local feudal princes had set up powerful principalities as early as during the XIIth century, Durrës was annexed to their territories. In the year 1501 Durrës was occupied by the Turks and remained in their hands until 1912.

Within a span of four centuries during the Middle Ages it changed hands 32 times. The city was often wrecked by earthquakes, too. Many a time it was abandoned by its inhabitants only to rise up again. The population of the city during the ages were heterogeneous, but a solid nucleus of its inhabitants were of indigenous origin. In ancient times there was a considerable number of Illyrians that lived in it. From the inscriptions of monuments unearthed in the vicinity of the city one comes to the conclusion that the number of citizens bearing Illyrian names had increased considerably. The Medieval chroniclers say that the indigenous language was spoken in the peripheral quarters of the city. After every calamity that befell the city the indigenous population rushed to the city and injected new blood into it. In 1914, Durrës became the capital city of Albania. It had at that time a small port. Several years later a new and larger port had been constructed but it was blown up by the German invaders during the Second World War. Today the seaport of Durrës is being rapidly widened, and with every passing day more and more high tonnage ships cast their anchor at this port.

On the 7th of April 1939, the day when the Italian armies landed on our shores, the Durrës seaport became the scene of bloody street fighting. In one of these encounters against uneven odds, fell the Albanian sailor Mujo Ulqinaku, posthumously awarded the order of «Hero of the People». His bust stands today at the spot where he fought. During the National-liberation War, the citizens of Durrës rendered a valuable contribution to the common cause. The guerrilla units of the city engaged the enemy in many bold actions. Many a citizen and many a youth recruited in partisan detachments, battalions and brigades took part in the struggle for liberation.

During the Middle Ages and afterwards, the city of Durrës has given Europe distinguished men in the sphere of arts and culture. The philosopher and astronomer Leo Thomaeus, the architect and sculptor Andreas Alexis, the musician Jan Kukuzel and the actor of world fame Alexander Moisi, all of them came from Durrës.

Wandering Through the City. We visit first the medieval fortress of the city. Although, in ancient times, Durrës had been surrounded



Durrës — The Beach

by walls, no trace has remained of them. The walls of the fortress today belong to the time when the city was under Byzantine rule — they are the remnants of the three sets of walls built by Emperor Anastasius around the city at the end of the Vth century. Until the beginning of the XIth century the fortress was still very strong. Anna Comnena, the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexis Comnenius, describing the fortress, writes that its walls were so thick that four horsemen could ride abreast on top of them. Wars and earthquakes shook the fortress badly. It was rebuilt several times afterwards, but never completely. After the Ottoman occupation the fortress was reduced in size. Its perimeter became six times smaller. Only 200 houses with a population of 1000 inhabitants remained within its walls now. Until the middle of the past century the reduced walls of the fortress formed a complete circle. Later they were destroyed and today only the part that stretches from Hotel Volga in the direction of the hills has survived.

The city's amphitheater was unearthed at the southeastern part of the fortress. It is one of the biggest and most exquisite monuments that have survived from the ancient city. From a number of documentary records, it turns out that it had been built at the beginning of the second century A.D. In the early Middle Ages it was abandoned. In the Xth century, a chapel and a cemetery were built upon its arena and galleries. At the chapel, of special interest is a polychrome mural mosaic which has come intact to this day. In the XVth century, as Marin Barleti, the author of «The History of Skanderbeg», informs us, the amphitheater was very impressive indeed.

The amphitheater of the city of Durrës has not yet been completely unearthed. However, passing through the corridors and steps that lead to the tiers it becomes clear that the structure must have been of colossal proportions, a great work of a great city. From the records obtained so far the amphitheater must have been very big (its diameter must have been more than 120 meters) and it may well be compared with its contemporaries at Pompei, Pola and Arles.

The Palace of Culture and the Ancient Thermal Baths. — In the center of the city, facing the building of the Executive Committee of the People's Council of the district, rises the new building of the Palace of Culture housing also the «A. Moisi» theater. This Palace, built recently, has, besides the big hall of the theater, numerous minor halls and studios for various cultural activities. The works for its erection brought to light the ruins of ancient thermal baths. After the completion of the Palace, those ruins were reconstructed and represent today one of the many places that attract the visitors' eyes.

Of the various parts of the thermal baths, there is one hall paved with black and white marble flagstones, which give the floor the appearance of a chess board; the floor has also a hypocaust (heating system), a hall with a pool 7 meters long and 5.30 meters wide, paved with marble plates, etc.

The Mosaic. — Under a dwelling, in a residential quarter of the city there is one of the most exquisite and, at the same time, one of the most ancient mosaics ever discovered in our country. The mosaic represents a woman's head in the midst of flowers, made entirely of small polychromic stones. The mosaic, which belongs to the IVth or IIIrd centuries B.C. is an exquisite and rare work of art, showing the state of development of the city at that time.

The Museum and the Portico next to it. — In one of the buildings of the boulevard that runs along the seashore of Durrës is housed the Archaeological Museum of the city. It is one of the richest museums in the country. The various exhibits give the visitor quite a clear idea of ancient Durrës, ranging from the early years of its founding down to the latter part of antiquity. The portraits and reliefs of the forerooms bear testimony to a rare mastership in execution, reminding one of the famous schools of sculpture of the ancient world. The museum has a very rich collection of ceramics, especially of kitchen utensils with red figures painted on them. They were unearthed at a necropolis belonging to a period when the city had close ties with the city centers of Magna Graecia. The Museum of Durrës has a rich collection of tomb stones, too, especially of the «Chioniscol» type. Of great importance for the knowledge of the ethnical composition of the population are the Illyrian names inscribed on sepulchral stones. On these stones it has been possible to decipher some tens of Illyrian names, bringing thus yet another proof of the role the Illyrians have played in the life of the city. Of special interest are the toreutic and numismatic collections.

Big sculptures, numerous inscriptions on stones and various architectonic details are exhibited on the portico next to the museum. Standing in front of altars, which sometimes are of very huge dimensions, in front of pillars, cornices and capitals, one can easily image what magnificent buildings used to embellish the city in ancient times.

The Sukth Agricultural Establishment and Winery. — Leaving our hotel at the bathing beach, we take the road to Durrës, but before arriving there we take a turn to the right and, after a while, climb a pass overlooking the city on top of which we stop. Here is the Winery.

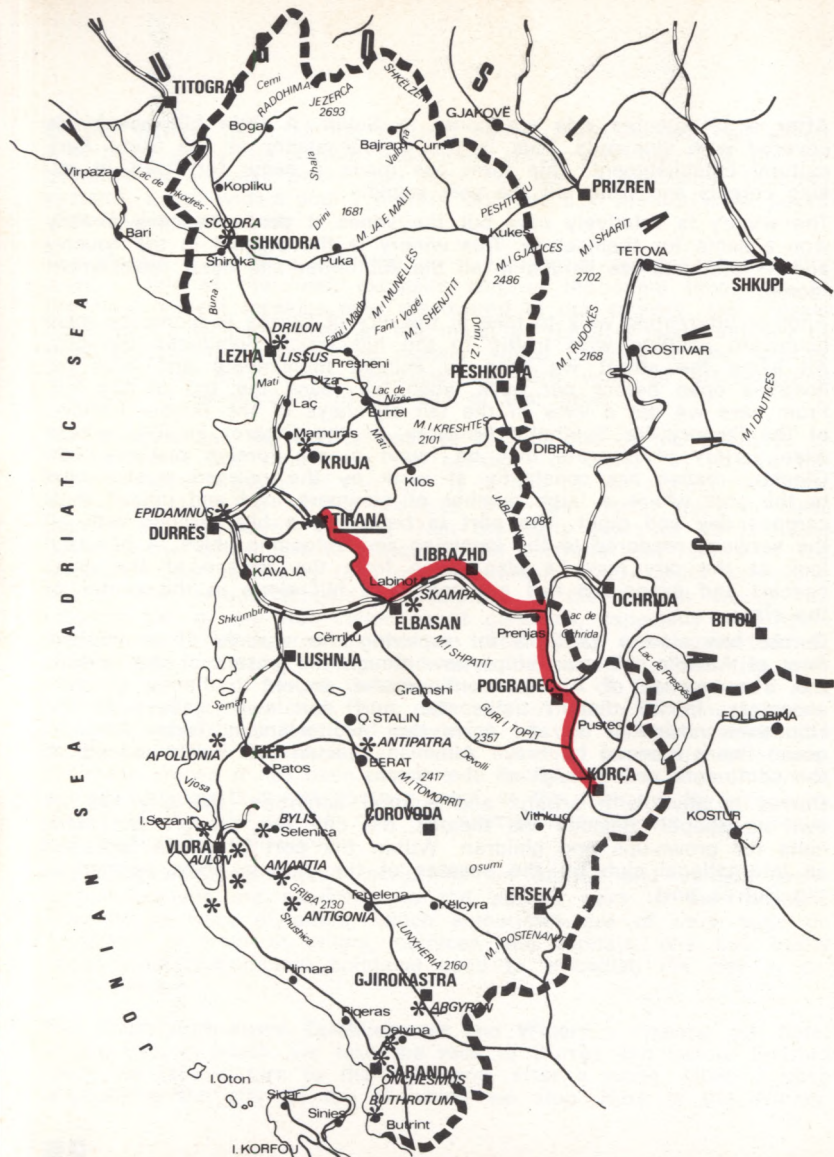
After a 10 minutes ride we come to Sukth. A little hill near-by is covered with vineyards. This is the central sector of the State Agricultural Establishment. This farm has made a name for itself in raising cereals and fruits all the year round.

The winery is relatively new but the wines it produces have already won a name for themselves. This winery is the biggest in the country and its products are served in all the Albtourist and other refreshment rooms.

Another interesting walk to take in the city of Durrës is along the main boulevard bustling with traffic to the hill which dominates the city. All along the street we pass by ancient monuments and wide panoramas open before our eyes when we reach the top of the hill. From here we get a view of the tall chimneys of the Rubber Factory, of the Factory for Synthetic Products, of the Cigaret Factory, whose wide variety of cigarets may be found in the foreign markets, too. Gigantic cranes are constantly at work by the railroad station next to the port where a large number of steamers load and unload their cargoes day and night. The port is becoming a big harbour with all the services rendered to the incoming and outgoing ships. A beautiful look at the city may be also taken from the terrace of the great concert and exposition hall situated on a hill slope in the center of the city.

Durrës has also a shipyard for repairing the vessels of commercial fleet of Albania. Albanian ships now plough the waters of the oceans, too. The seamen of Albania continue the ancient traditions of their ancestors. In far distant times the small but swift galleys of the Liburnians navigated up and down the Mediterranean. Today Albanian ocean liners manned by brave Albanian seamen sail boldly around all the continents and through all the oceans.

Durrës is alive with artistic and cultural activities. The city has its own newspaper. Besides the theater, the city has concert and show halls for grown-ups and children. Within the port precincts functions an international club for the seamen of the various ships berthed at the Durrës port.



The Second Itinerary

The Second Itinerary

II/1 From Tirana to Elbasan (53 kilometers)

No trip in Albania is alike. Every trip reveals something new, not seen before. From an entirely mountainous landscape the visitor, after a short time, finds himself in the plain. After having travelled along a valley, all at once a wide horizon opens before his eyes. After having travelled for hours through pine and fir tree forests, the traveller finds himself all of a sudden by the seashore with its rich variety of tropical trees and plants all abloom. Such is, more or less, the road that we are about to follow, but, this time, away from the sea and towards the interior of the country.

We leave Tirana and take a southeasterly route towards the very heart of Albania — to Elbasan. Hardly out of the capital the road begins to climb the range of hills overlooking Tirana, as if warning us that such, more or less, is to be the road as far as Elbasan. This is indeed a very picturesque road for tourists. After having passed the Palace of the Brigades, where Government ceremonies are usually conducted, we enter the precincts of the «George Dimitrov» State Agricultural Enterprise. The road here again passes through extensive vineyards — vineyards and fruit plantations are on the order of the day all over the country. These have now replaced the shrubbery, bushes and thorny weeds that not long ago dominated the scenery dotted here and there with small flocks of sheep and goats. We cross the Erzen river and find ourselves at the foot of hill on top of which stands a little fortress — the fortress of Petrela. A 3 kilometer road up a steep hill brings us to the walls of the fortress. The fortress has a triangular design and is reinforced by towers on two sides. The walls are quite well preserved. Within the walls there are the remnants of two water deposits and a watch tower. The fortress of Petrela was built in late antiquity with the purpose of defending the road that passed on to Durrës. It fulfilled this function as a fortress of Durrës until the XVth century. It played an important role in the campaigns of Skanderbeg, forming a part of the defense system of the fortress of Kruja. The fortress of Petrela was at that time the residence of Mamica, Skanderbeg's sister. When surrendered to the Ottoman invaders, the latter stationed a garrison of Turkish soldiers there.

Leaving Petrela and after having travelled for some time along the river banks, the highway begins to ascend the mountains of Kraba. Here the tourist may make a short stop at the station of Iba, with

its mountain springs of ice cold water and forests, a place recently converted into a small tourist center. The road through the mountains of Kraba is very picturesque. It winds around and around from hill to hill and from mountain to mountain, revealing to the tourist beautiful landscapes along the valley of the Erzen river, the mountains of Kruja further away and on the opposite side, picturesque plains and valleys as far away as the sea. Before reaching the summit of the mountain an automobile road leaves the main road and turns to the left to the lignite mines of Kraba. The mining of the lignite here began before the liberation but at that time it was done with primitive means. Today a small mining town has been set up with new buildings, installations and dwelling houses. The mine has been electrified and all the working processes have been mechanized. The road, for a certain period of time, winds along the crest of the mountain, through the Kaçulita Pass. At the 29th kilometer landmark we enter the confines of the district of Elbasan. To the south rises majestic the towering profile of Mt. Tomori, whereas to the southwest stretches the wide gravel-covered bed of the Shkumbin river. Here the road begins to descend rapidly towards the plain of Elbasan, which geologically represents a depressed zone, with an oval form of 17 kilometers long and 6 kilometers wide. Its level above the sea ranges from 75 to 125 m, and it is surrounded on all sides by hills and mountain ranges. On the northwest are the mountains of Kraba, from where the road descends to the plain, whereas on the southeast one range of hills following another lead to the Llixha thermal baths — sulphurous hotsprings of a temperature of 50°C.

Beyond the plain of Elbasan to the southwest stretches the plain of Dumre — a plateau whose surface made up of successive depressions and elevations nestles tens of small lakes. On the southwestern side of the plain of Elbasan stands the little town of Cërrik with the biggest oil refinery in the country.

The plain of Elbasan enjoys a mild climate (6°-25°C). Here grow all kinds of subtropical plants and trees. Hundreds of citrus and lemon trees may be seen in the gardens within the city.

ELBASAN. A bit of history. — Elbasan Is also an old city. In ancient times — as the written records and an inscription found in the ruins of the fortress testify — the city used to be called Skampa. It came into being and developed during the construction of the Egnatia route — a main road artery in the land communications and trade and commercial interchanges between the Apennine Peninsula, on one side, and the Balkan Peninsula and the East, on the other. As a natural route this road functioned many years ago, but its complete construction, the setting up of stations at equal distances, approximately of

25 miles or so, from one another, took place during the first half of the 1st century A.D. Skampa began its life as an ordinary road station of the Egnatia route — the second station from Durrës and the fourth from the Apollonia branch of the route. After it was set up, Skampa began to grow with leaps and bounds and from a tiny village it grew into a town; other secondary roads linked the town with the places round about it. It continued to be a town until the late antique period. During the Vth century A.D. Skampa became the seat of a diocese. As such the town is mentioned in two documentary records of the year 519. Skampa was heavily crippled during the migration of the Goths, but the town was quickly rebuilt. It was during the reign of Justinian that the fortress of the town was erected. Skampa figures in the list of fortresses noted down by Procopius of Caesarea.

Skampa is indebted to the Egnatia route for both its birth and destruction. As all the known records indicate, the town was badly battered in the IXth century by the Bulgarian invaders.

At the time of Skanderbeg the ancient name of the town is not mentioned any more. Marin Barleti, the biographer of our National Hero, mentions it under the name of the town of the Valmes (= Doubletrees). In the year 1466, Sultan Mehmet the IInd, with the view of establishing a point of support and a stronghold in his campaign for the capture of Kruja, rebuilt the fortress and gave it the name of Ilbasan (Elbasan). Of this reconstruction speak two inscriptions which may be seen — one in the city museum and the other on the main gate to the fortress. During the XVIth and XVIIth centuries Elbasan began to rise as a big center with a large number of handicraftsmen, artisans and merchants. During the Ottoman occupation and, especially, at the beginning of the XIXth century, the local feudal lords became so powerful that they staged an uprising. Fearing the spread of the uprising and the eventual capture of the fortress by the rebels, as was the case with the other fortresses, the invaders pulled down the walls of the fortress.

Elbasan has played an important role in the movements and struggles for freedom and national liberation and, in a particular way, for the creation of an Albanian written language. During the National-liberation War, as was the case with the other towns and cities of Albania, Elbasan aligned itself with it and its partisans took an active part in the struggle against the invaders, its guerrilla fighters engaged the enemy relentlessly and its men and youth filled the ranks of the brigades that eventually liberated the country.

Prior to the liberation, Elbasan was a little town, with a population of not more than 15,000 inhabitants, a town that had only one cigaret factory and a few olive oil presses. Today the city has entirely changed



Tirana — The «Dajti» Hotel

its aspect. A long and straight boulevard traverses the city. Leaving behind the fortress it passes through a quarter with new many-storeyed buildings. The population of the city has now overreached the 38,000 mark and the city itself has become one of the main industrial centers of the country. Here stand the «Nako Spiru» Wood-processing Industrial Combine with its 7 modern factories. The Metallurgical Iron Plant rises a few kilometers outside the city. There is a factory for the processing and fermentation of tobacco. A big oil refinery has been set up not far from the city (Cërrik). A cement factory has been set up just outside the limits of the city. There are a number of smaller food processing factories and shops. In the near future, the city of Elbasan will have the first metallurgical plant in Albania, with a capacity of 800,000 t. ferro-nickel a year. Today a railway links the city with Durrës, Tirana and Laç, and another links it with Fier. The city conducts an active cultural and educational life. It has a teachers' training school, the first one ever founded in Albania in the year 1909, graduating thousands of teachers that have spread to the most remote corners of the land, imparting knowledge to the Albanian youth. Elbasan has its own local paper. It has a professional theater, a museum, quite a rich public library, other cultural institutes and a whole lot of schools. In the past, too, Elbasan played an important role in the cultural life of the country. Elbasan is the birthplace of the talented Albanian painter Onufri, who has left many a painting all over the old churches of the land. The famous Albanian patriot Konstantin Kristoforidhi, called «the Father of the Albanian Language» and author of a number of lexicographical works and translations was born and worked in Elbasan. His monument rises in the center of the city.

The Fortress of Elbasan is one of the monuments of the city that most attracts the attention of the visitors. It is a fortress of the type that one sees in the plains — with a rectangular design (362 meters by 327 meters). In the state that it exists today it dates from the time that it was reconstructed in the year 1466. After the destruction that it suffered in the year 1832 only the southern part of the walls has remained in a more or less good state of preservation. The fortress has been reinforced in the corners and at the flanks by various towers. One of the gates of the fortress, leading to one of the quarters of the city, is still in use.

The Museum is housed within the fortress. Here the visitor will find assembled and exhibited various archaeological collections that narrate the history of the city and of its surroundings. Of interest are the archaeological materials that throw light on the culture of the Illy-

rian centers — the important contents of a tomb of an Illyrian warrior, unearthed in a fortress in the neighbourhood of Elbasan, composed of a helmet, arms and various pieces of household utensils. In the various rooms of the museum the traveller may see various objects unearthed within the city, among which an inscription giving the ancient name of the city — Scampa. The museum is rich also in ethnographic collections as well as in documents and exhibits relating to the National-liberation War.

Elbasan, situated in the center of the country is linked with the various regions of the country by a number of roads. An asphalted road links Elbasan with the Lixha — thermal springs and baths, situated in the midst of low hills covered with forests, as well as with the little town of Gramshi nestled in the Devoll river valley, to the South. Another road goes to Cërrik, a small town by the huge oil refinery, and from there, passing over plains and depressions, takes the westward direction to the plain of Myzeqe and the city of Lushnja.

Elbasan — Rogozhina — Durrës (75 kilometers). — From Elbasan there is another road that heads in the direction of the seashore of Durrës. It begins at the western part of the city and follows the valley of the Shkumbini river for 40 kilometers, as far as Rogozhina. At the 5th kilometer landmark, at the place where the Metallurgical Iron Plant is constructed, it departs from the main Tirana highway and heads towards Peqin, a small town and locality center. The highway runs parallel with the railroad, which links Elbasan with Rogozhina. In Peqin, of interest are the ruins of a Medieval fortress with a square planimetry. During the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries Peqin was the seat of influential local feudal lords. To that period belong some big houses, the mosque and the clock tower of the town. Peqin, just as Elbasan, came into being and developed thanks to the construction of the ancient road that led from the seashore towards the east. Here, it is thought, may have been Claudiana, a road station on the ancient Via Egnatia. The valley of the Shkumbini river, through which the road passes, at times narrows, at times widens until finally it reaches Rogozhina. Both sides of the road are dotted with villages characteristic of Central Albania.

II/2 From Elbasan to Pogradec (86 kilometers)

The road to Pogradec and to the boundary outpost of Qafë Thanë (to Yugoslavia) begins at the eastern extremity of the city and follows the upper course of the Shkumbini river. Shkumbini is one of the largest rivers in Albania (186 kilometers). Through the plain of Elbasan, Shkumbini widens its bed and beyond Rogozhina it assumes

the character of a river of the plains until it reaches the Adriatic Sea. Before the liberation of the country Shkumbini played havoc with the fields and homes when it overflowed its banks. Today this does not happen any more, because it has been harnessed by high embankments on both sides of its lower course. Today it has become, besides that, the most thoroughly exploited river for irrigation. Two big irrigation canals draw water from it and irrigate the fields in its vicinity.

After we have left Elbasan a beautiful panorama greets our eyes — a carefully cultivated valley raising a variety of crops like rice, cotton, tobacco. The flanks of the valley are covered with olive and fruit tree plantations and forests. Here we join one of the most ancient arteries of communication, the road through which passed in ancient times many invading and conquering armies as well as trade caravans heading for the east and the west alike. It was along the Via Egnatia that the Roman legions marched on their road to conquest towards the east. From the east, on the other hand, came the armies of Byzantium and the invading peoples like the Goths and Bulgarians. During the XIth and XIIth as well as the XIIIth centuries the Normans and, later on, the Crusaders marched over this very route coming from the sea. This very route brought from the east the numerous armies of the Osman Sultans, intent on occupying Albania and on crushing the resistance of its people. All along the road we come upon stone and concrete built memorials just as along all the other roads, too, commemorating the engagements and battles of our partisans during the Great War of Liberation. Today the road is bustling with all sorts of traffic-trucks charged with iron ore from the mines of southeastern Albania, with sugar from Korça, and bringing on their trip back the products of the other regions of the land.

At the 7th kilometer landmark, having left behind the limestone mountains of Krasta and the Mediaeval fortress of Mengli, an advanced post of the fortress of Elbasan, we enter the plain of Labinoti, where the General Staff of the National-liberation Army was formed on the 10th of July, 1943. Here the Albanian Communist Party (now the Party of Labor of Albania) held its First Conference on a nation-wide level and elected the first Permanent Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania with Comrade Enver Hoxha as Secretary General. It was at this conference that primary consideration was given to the organisation of the General Uprising of the people. The decisions taken at Labinot opened a new epoch to the National-liberation struggle. There is a museum in Labinot, today, with exhibits telling, through various documents and materials, of these two significant events in the history of our country.



Krraba

From here the road follows the left bank of the river. On the opposite side one discerns the traces of the old road, ruined or partially preserved bridges that served once the old route dug in on the slopes

of the mountain. After the bridge of Miraka, the road passes on the right side of the river which flows peacefully, and the valley gradually narrows down. Before entering the little town of Librazhdi we come across the Rapun river, a tributary of the Shkumbini, which flows from the mountains of Çermenika, northeast of Elbasan.

Librazhdi, once a road junction on the caravan routes along the Shkumbini Valley, today has grown into a small town with new buildings, stores and shops. Here there is a winery and a fruit cannery, as the region of Librazhd is famous for its fruit plantations.

Librazhdi is the starting point of a road that penetrates deep into the north of the country through the mountains of Çermenika and ends in Peshkopia — in the district of Dibra. To the east of this road rises majestic Mt. Shebenik 2,235 meters above sea level.

The road that goes from Librazhdi to Pogradec now turns to the south, but always along the valley of the Shkumbini river. On both sides of the mountains, on their slopes, covered with forests, nestle tiny hamlets. Up to Prenjas, where the road comes out in the open in the plain of Domosdova, the trip is very pleasant, because the traveller may contemplate to the full the mountains, forests and rivers. This valley is rich in lumber for the exploitation of which two motor saws have been installed. Here the road passes through the small center of Qukës, a village with a rural hospital and several shops and stores. In ancient times this was a station of the Egnatia route called «Tres Tabernae», and in Mediaeval times, until late the village was a caravansary. After Qukës we come to the little town of **Prenjas**, near the iron and nickel mines. The latter extends through the plain of Domosdova, a beautiful small plain, nestling in the arms of the Morava mountains to the south and Pishkash to the north.

During the quaternary period the place was transformed into a glacial lake, which later on vanished through a small stream, which flowed into the Shkumbini river. The plain of Domosdova, once a marshy and boggy land, very little exploited for agricultural purposes, is today a fertile plain, with warm climate, protected by mountains all around. A number of picturesque villages are perched on the slopes of these mountains, drawn up in line not far from one another.

The center of the plain of Domosdova has grown today into the little but bustling town of Prenjas. Not very far off (the road bifurcates before entering the town of Prenjas) is the iron-nickel town of Pishkash, where the iron-nickel ore is extracted on the open as well as in the galleries of the mine. The mountains adjacent to the Mokra range are also rich in iron-nickel ore. In the town of Pishkash there is a technical school which trains mining technicians.

The plain of Domosdova and its surroundings played an important role in the events connected with the exploits of our National Hero Skanderbeg and with the wars that the Albanian people waged against the Ottoman invaders during the XVth century. It is known as a battlefield and a route over which the Turkish invading armies fought and passed. It is presumed that it was in the plain of Domosdova

that the first encounter took place between the Albanian army, led by Skanderbeg, and the Turks in the year 1444, where the Albanians defeated badly the invading armies of the Ottoman Turks. In the nearby little village of Pishkash, upon a rocky platform called the «Tableland of Skanderbeg» have been unearthed of late traces of an ancient fortress, used during the Middle Ages. too. Numerous are also the toponyms and the legends that tell of Skanderbeg. One of them relates that Skanderbeg defeated the invaders while being under siege resorting to this tactics: during the night he opened a secret passage way in the rocks and launched a surprise attack on the Turks and routed them. In commemoration of this event, the people in the village of Raice, where the siege had actually taken place call the place to this very day the «Skanderbeg Stairway».

From the plain of Domosdova the road runs uphill to the Qafë-Thanë Pass — 391 meters above sea level — one of the highest passes in Albania. This altitude, with the exception of the tract of road immediately before the Qafë Thanë Pass, is imperceptible because the ascent is gradual and starts from the very moment we leave Elbasan.

On top of the Qafë-Thanë Pass there are three roads: on the left the road that goes to Struga (16 kilometers long and 4 kilometers away from the border line with Yugoslavia), on the right a road that goes to the Mokra mountain region, whereas the road inbetween descends down to the town of Pogradec. Hardly has the descent begun when suddenly before the traveller's eyes opens a wide expanse of water — the lake of Ohri. On a clear day one can see to the left the town of Struga and, further on something of the town of Ohri, both of them in Yugoslavia. In the forefront rises majestic the «Mali i Thatë» («The Dry mountain»). What attracts one's attention most during the descent is a tiny village at the foot of a rocky hill contrasted to the red roofs of its small houses. This is the village of Lin — a village of fishermen, very picturesque, with houses characteristic of their architecture. At the topmost rocky part of the village of Lin there have been recently unearthed archaeological materials showing that in ancient times there must have existed an Illyrian settlement here. During the excavation work, an exquisite mosaic, apparently belonging to a cultural structure of a late period of antiquity has been unearthed, too. After having descended the Qafë Thanë Pass, the road follows the shores of the lake and the foot of a range of low hills covered with vineyards, cultivated fields and meadows.

The lake of Ohri is one of the biggest lakes in Albania, with a surface of some 360 square kilometers. What distinguishes it from the other lakes is its depth — its maximum depth is 286 meters, — its

altitude of 695 meter above sea level and the clearness of its waters. Because of the limited development of microorganisms and the transparency of the lake, it is possible to see an object underneath to a depth of 17 meters. The surface of the lake, with the exception of a strip along the shores, is never turbulent, not even during the heavy rains and strong winds. Similar in its geographic position and origin with the lake of Ohri is the neighboring **lake of Prespa**. The latter has a smaller surface (285 square kilometers), a lesser depth (its maximum depth is 54 meters) and a lesser degree of transparency — one can see objects submerged to a depth of 7 meters. The altitude differs too: the lake of Prespa is 853 meters above sea level. Both lakes are rich in fish. Fishing is conducted today with the help of modern equipment.

On the way to Pogradec, before entering the town, there is a marble memorial commemorating the six partisans fallen in an encounter with an Italian tank and armoured car column in July of the year 1943. A little further on is the village of **Memaliaj**, where recent archaeological excavations have turned out valuable material. Still further on begins the little plain of Pogradec and the town of Pogradec itself.

Pogradec is a relatively new town, but with an ancient history. On the hill that rises at the entrance of the town have come to light parts of the walls of an Illyrian fortress on top of which other walls were built later on in the Middle Ages. The large number of archaeological materials found in the fortress, which are being kept at present in the local museum, prove that there must have existed a flourishing Illyrian settlement. Probably it was the town of Encheleana, which the ancient historians claim to have been situated in this region.

In the early Middle Ages the fortress was reconstructed, but it had more of a military character. The inhabitants were forced to come down and settle at the foot of the fortress and along the lakeside.

The place was named by the Bulgarians, who invaded southeastern Albania at that time, Pogradec — «a place under the fortress», and the town that grew and developed much later retained the name. The historical records show that the town began its life as an administrative center in the XVIIIth century, during the time of the Turkish occupation. Before that the village of Starova, seat of the local feudal lords, had served as a center of the region round and about.

Situated on a fertile plain, near low hills suitable for raising fruit trees and vineyards, on the shores of the lake, and favored by the establishment of the local administration there and, last but not least, because of its important position on the road that links it with Korça, Elbasan and Struga, Pogradec went on developing with leaps and

bounds, leaving all the other neighboring villages behind. To this new center, where people were engaged in fishing, animal husbandry and agriculture, in due course of time there came new inhabitants, craftsmen, etc.

During the First World War Pogradec found itself right on the front line, between the French armies, on one side, and those of Austro-Hungary and Bulgaria, on the other, and was heavily damaged. Pogradec suffered heavy damage during the Italian-Greek War of 1940-1941, too. During the National-liberation War Pogradec played an important role as a place which dominated the highway that linked south-eastern Albania and Macedonia with the sea. All along this road the partisans engaged in heavy skirmishes with the enemy, interrupting their communication and attacking their truck convoys. The partisans liberated the town during the winter months of 1943-1944. It was reoccupied by the enemy and then again liberated in May 1944, after being badly battered during the encounters that took place there.

Pogradec developed as a town especially after the liberation of the country. On entering the town and passing along its streets one sees the new buildings that have turned Pogradec into a really beautiful town. Renowned is the furniture produced in the town and so are its exquisite wines. In the surroundings of Pogradec there are a number of chromium and coal mines with great prospects for future exploitation.

Pogradec is one of the best and most preferred resort centers of the country. Situated at an altitude of 700 meters above sea level, on the shores of a lake with crystal-clear waters, with an excellent bathing beach, in a mountainous region with an abundance of agricultural, fruit and dairy products, it has grown into a big and very much frequented resort center.

Pogradec has a great future as a tourist center. Today Pogradec has a big and modern hotel on the very shores of the lake where the visitors may have a dip in its mild clear waters. The environment offers an Alpine-like scenery of rare beauty. The lofty mountains of Kamja and Guri i Topit stand over it like a crown.

II/3 From Pogradec to Korça (39 kilometers)

From Pogradec the road proceeds southward leaving behind to the left the lake and the road which bifurcates and goes straight on to the monastery of St. Naum (Yugoslavia). The road and the scenery are very attractive. We traverse fields and vineyards and, further on,



before reaching the Plloça Pass we come across a dense chestnut forest. The hills that surround the basin of the lake of Ohri, once stripped naked of their vegetation and left at the mercy of the forces of erosion, today are green with fruit trees. At this point radiate new local roads leading to new mining centers. Leaving in the rear the elevations of the village of Grabovica (where we have again the occasion to see new vineyards and fruit plantations) the road bifurcates again: to the left, reaching the village of Podgorie, the road passes at the foot of Mt. Mali i Thatë, joins the road that links Korça with the zone of Prespa and proceeds to Bitolje (Yugoslavia). In the meantime our route continues to the right through a hilly country until it comes to a wide and level plain — to the basin of Korça.

The basin of Korça is situated at an altitude of 850 meters above sea level, stretching 35 kilometers from south to north and 16 kilometers from east to west. The plain is surrounded on all sides by high and bare mountains: at the foot of these mountains stretch some green hills covered with grain fields, vineyards and forests that contrast with the rugged mountains above. Besides the many streams and gullies that run through the plain of Korça, the latter is traversed by the Devolli river and its tributaries.

Being far from the sea and at a considerable altitude, the plain of Korça has a continental climate with cold winters (in January 1° to 18°C.) and hot summers (in July the average temperature is 22°C.). The plain of Korça is one of the most fertile plains in Albania. Besides the cereals here they cultivate sugar beets, oats, products which serve as raw material for the Sugar Refinery at Maliq and the Brewery in Korça. Korça produces the best apples in the country. The vineyard blocks have also been considerably enlarged, especially on the hills around, thus turning Korça into an important viticultural zone.

Travelling through the plain in the direction of the city we pass through the town of Maliq — a new town built around the Sugar Refinery in the year 1951. In the immediate vicinity of Maliq stands one of the big state owned farms, known for its bountiful grain harvests.

The town of Maliq did not figure at all on the old maps of Albania nor the plain of Maliq for that matter. Two decades or so ago this plain was a big lagoon formed by the floods of the Devoll and Dunavec rivers. By regulating the beds of these two rivers and opening a series of drainage canals for the canalisation of the waters of the many streams and creeks that flowed into the lake, the People's Government set to work and completed the drainage of the lagoon.

In this manner 6,000 hectares of very fertile land were reclaimed and 7,000 other hectares, periodically inundated, were improved.

The land improvement schemes in the region of Maliq discovered a prehistoric settlement — the excavations that went on for several years brought to light rich archaeological material, belonging mainly to the neolithic and bronze ages. The archaeological discoveries made it possible to determine the true nature of the settlement, once palafitte dwellings on poles, which, after being burnt down, were rebuilt directly on the ground. The materials discovered during the excavations are exhibited at the local museum of Korça as well as at the archaeological museum in Tirana.

From Maliq to Korça the distance is some 12 kilometers. Along both sides of the road the traveller's gaze rests on beautifully built and wonderfully kept villages of the plain of Korça as well as on the fields cultivated with the greatest care. The wide boulevard we enter and the tall chimneys of the various factories and workshops indicate that we have reached the city of Korça.

KORÇA is the principal city of southeastern Albania, situated at the foot of the Morava mountains and the lower part of the hillock of St. Thanas. Its beginning as a feudal estate dates back to the XIIIth century. Two centuries later the local feudal lords set up a few buildings, a mosque, a public bath and other institutions with the purpose of attracting new settlers. The growth and expansion of the town was stimulated by the fertile plain around and its favorable conditions for developing trade and commercial exchange with the neighboring regions. During the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries Korça became quite a center of commerce and trade, but it witnessed still greater development during the XIXth century, after the destruction of some of the small towns and villages around as a result of the feudal anarchy that prevailed. The city has lived through difficult times, too, especially at the beginning of this century, which brought, as a consequence, the wholesale emigration of its inhabitants to Rumania, Egypt and America. Today, the plague of emigration is a thing of the past in Korça, poverty has disappeared, new spheres of production have been opened, new factories built and the inhabitants of the city can find work at home.

Beginning with the second half of the XIXth century Korça became one of the main centers of the national movement for freedom and independence. It has played a progressive role in the recent events of the country, too.

It was here that the first school teaching in the Albanian language was founded in the year 1887, which remained opened until the year 1902. The building where the school originally conducted its classes has been turned today into a local museum of education. Other schools



Pogradec

in the Albanian language were opened later on, both in the city and its surroundings, in spite of the savage opposition of the representatives of the Turkish government and the Greek chauvinists.

Both parties did their best to impede the teaching of the Albanian language, killing the teachers and hindering the movement of national revival in every way possible.

At the beginning of the XXth century, prior to the proclamation of our national independence, many able men from Korça and its vicinity joined the various detachments that took up arms and fought for the liberation of their homeland. In commemoration of their valiant deeds and supreme sacrifice, the inhabitants of the city of Korça have set up in the center of the city the monument of the National Combatant dressed in national costume. Korça has given distinguished patriots, like Mihal Grameno and Themistokli Gërmenji, to the movement and struggle for freedom and national independence. The patriots and combatants from Korça had to fight not only against the Turkish rule, but also against the Greek terrorist bands (during the year 1914) as well as against the French armies of occupation (in the year 1916). The French military authorities, under the pressure of the patriotic movement, were finally obliged to recognise the authority of the Republic of Korça, which continued to rule the place until the year 1920, when it joined the rest of Albania. The French authorities sustained, all along, the chauvinist claims of the Greeks, who wanted to annex this region to Greece. It was they who killed our brave patriot Themistokli Gërmenji, because he opposed the utterly unjust claims of the Greeks. Today, the citizens of Korça have erected a monument in memory of this courageous patriot in one of the parks of the city.

During the years of independent existence of the Albanian State (1920-1939) Korça was one of the principal economic and social centers of the country.

It was during that period that the workers' syndicates of Korça in general, and the «Puna» workers' society in particular, organized themselves and their activity. The later conducted a very rigorous and extensive propagandistic and cultural work. This society of workers and craftsmen was inspired and directed by the first Albanian communist group founded in Korça in the year 1930. This group played an important and positive role in the spread of Marxist ideas in Albania. It was in Korça that the eminent communist Ali Kelmendi exercised his activity.

In the year 1936 Korça was the scene of the big «bread demonstration», in which workers and peasants rose and demanded bread and

work. Against the peaceful demonstration, the Zogu antipopular regime leased its gendarm detachments, who pointed their firearms at the demonstrators and drenched the street of the city in blood.

Much more widespread demonstrations took place in Korça and much more blood flowed through the streets of the city during the fascist occupation of the country. In the demonstrations of the 8th of November, 1941, the day of the founding of the Communist Party of Albania, fell dead as a hero Koci Bako. In another demonstration in the year 1943 the square in front of the monument of the National Combatant was immersed in blood by the fascists who killed more than 70 persons. Today this spot is called the Square of Demonstrations. During the National-liberation War Korça and the surrounding regions played a very important role. Thousands of Korça partisans took to the mountains and filled the ranks of the various brigades of the National-liberation Army. On August 15, 1943, the 1st Brigade of the National-liberation Army was founded at the village of Vithkuqi, in the district of Korça. Along the streets and squares of the city, in the villages, valleys and mountains of the region the people have erected tens of busts and stone memorials to the brave deeds and heroism of those that fell in the great National-liberation Struggle. The city of Korça was liberated on the 24th of October 1944.

The economic and cultural life. — Korça is today one of the biggest cities in Albania, with a population of nearly 50,000 inhabitants. Parallel with the small one-storey houses, surrounded by small gardens, on the clean and narrow streets of the city paved with cobble stones there have been built big palaces and apartment houses. The streets themselves have been widened and asphalted. The economic development, favoured by the rich but, until not long ago, unexploited natural resources has made great strides forward. Korça has become today one of the principal industrial centers of the land. The city has today a big and modern Knitting Combine, many machine-shops and a number of factories of the light and food-processing industries whose products are widely known for the excellence of their quality. Among the more important of those are its Brewery, its Cannery, its Leather and Shoe Factory, its Glass Factory, its Sugar Refinery, etc. Korça is also a city with old handicraft traditions. The rugs and carpets of Korça are now well known in the foreign markets and are very much in demand. A visit to the carpet and rug producing cooperatives, which employ almost entirely women and girls, is of great interest. The mountains around Korça are rich in minerals. Not very far from the city stand the coal mines of Mborja-Drenova, among the largest in the country.

The city of Korça has great cultural traditions. Korça is the birth-

place of the first Albanian School. In the year 1967 the Lyceum of Korça celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding. During the post-liberation years the number of cultural and educational institutions has increased greatly. The city has secondary schools of various profiles, a Palace of Culture which engages in a wide variety of activities, a professional theater and a vaudeville theater, a museum and a library. Every day Radio Korça and the newspaper of the city tell the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings of the new successes that they have attained. Radio Korça broadcasts the beautiful melodies of the songs of Korça, to which the people listen with great pleasure. In one of the most picturesque quarters of the city, a big stadium and a huge swimming pool have been constructed of late where the youth of the city may engage in various kinds of sports.

The country's tourist bureau «Albturist» has opened comfortable hotels and restaurants in the city where one may find Albanian and foreign dishes, as well as a bar with all sorts of drinks produced in Korça like beer, cognac, etc.

Excursions in the city. — In order to get a through view of the city and of the plain that surrounds it, the visitor may climb the city's Belvedere, erected on the hill overlooking the big park of the city. From here his gaze encompasses not only the precincts of the city but also the villages and fields all around.

Interesting is the visit to the local museum, too. Through the materials and objects exhibited, the visitor acquaints himself better with the things he has heard and seen, with the history and development of Korça and its surroundings from the far off prehistoric times up to the present day reality. The archaeological materials, documents, records, photos, weapons, costumes and dresses of the people and the various products of Korça, illustrate the different periods of development of the city and its district, the more interesting historical events and the contribution that the inhabitants of the city and its surrounding zone have rendered to the wars for freedom and independence and to the Great National-liberation War, the ethnographic treasure of the place and the big changes that have taken place in the life of the people and in the transformation of nature.

The Museum of Education keeps valuable records and documents which witness the great thirst for knowledge as well as the great efforts and struggle conducted by the people for the creation and development of the Albanian school.

The mosque of Mirahori which is situated in the center of the city, was built in the year 1484 by a local feudal lord according to an inscription on the inner gate. It has a rectangular design and is co-

vered with a vault characteristic of the other monuments of this kind that were built during the early period of the Ottoman conquest. In the immediate surroundings of the city, in the village of Mborja, there is a small church belonging to the period before the Ottoman occupation — the Ristos church. It was built towards the end of the XIVth century, but there is an opinion that it was constructed upon the remnants of a still older church. The church has the design of a cross with the main vault in the middle and was covered with wall paintings on the inner side since the time it was built. It was reconstructed later. The outside wall paintings belong to the later reconstructions. From an architectural point of view the Ristos church of Mborja is an exquisite example of the Byzantine style of architecture.

Korçë



Korça is linked with the various localities of its region and with the more distant dwelling centers by a number of roads.

The road going to Mborja continues on through a number of villages and ends at the picturesque village of Dardha. **Dardha** is one of the most beautiful rural centers in the district of Korça, with great prospects of becoming a big tourist resort. The village is situated at an altitude of 1350 meters above sea level. What impresses the traveller most in this mountain village are the picturesque and, at the same time, very comfortable houses. Beautiful is also its natural environment. The pure air, the ice-cold and crystal clear water springs, the refreshing shadows of the forests and the magnificent panoramas all around the village, have made it a preferred center of recreation and repose. In winter, Dardha is an ideal spot for winter sports. To the northeast, another road leads to the zone of the lake of Prespa. All around this lake, with its crystal clear waters, are stationed picturesque villages with their inhabitants engaging mainly in fishing. Along the shores of the lake of Prespa there are a number of churches, which belong to the pre-Ottoman period. They are very simple in design. Among these there are also hermit caves, but their principal values consist in their wall paintings. Among these churches the most striking one is that of St. Mary on the tiny island of Maligrad, which represents a monument of great artistic value of the XIVth century in Albania.

Still another road links Korça with **Bilishti** in the region of Devoll. The road passes through the beautiful valley of the river Devoll, a very fertile valley this. On both sides of the road, at the foot of the hills, follow in quick succession villages that have the aspect of little towns. The villages in the valley of the Devoll, as most of the villages in the region of Korça, are electrified.

West of Korça, at a distance of 24 kilometers, stands the big village of **Voskopojë**, known since the XIVth century. During the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries Voskopojë has been a flourishing town. For a certain period of time the favorable position of the town was a positive factor conditioning its development. Voskopojë was situated in a mountain region at an altitude of 1,115 meters above sea level and, thus, sufficiently protected from the attacks of the plunder-seeking feudal lords. During the XVIIIth century Voskopojë had an academy and a printing press and was a renowned center of art, where some of the most talented Albanian painters practiced their profession. Beginning from the second half of the XVIIIth century, when feudal anarchy assumed widespread proportions, Voskopojë became the object of assaults and pillage by the local feudal lords. The plunder and sacking continued, obliging the inhabitants to abandon the town. Thus Vosko-

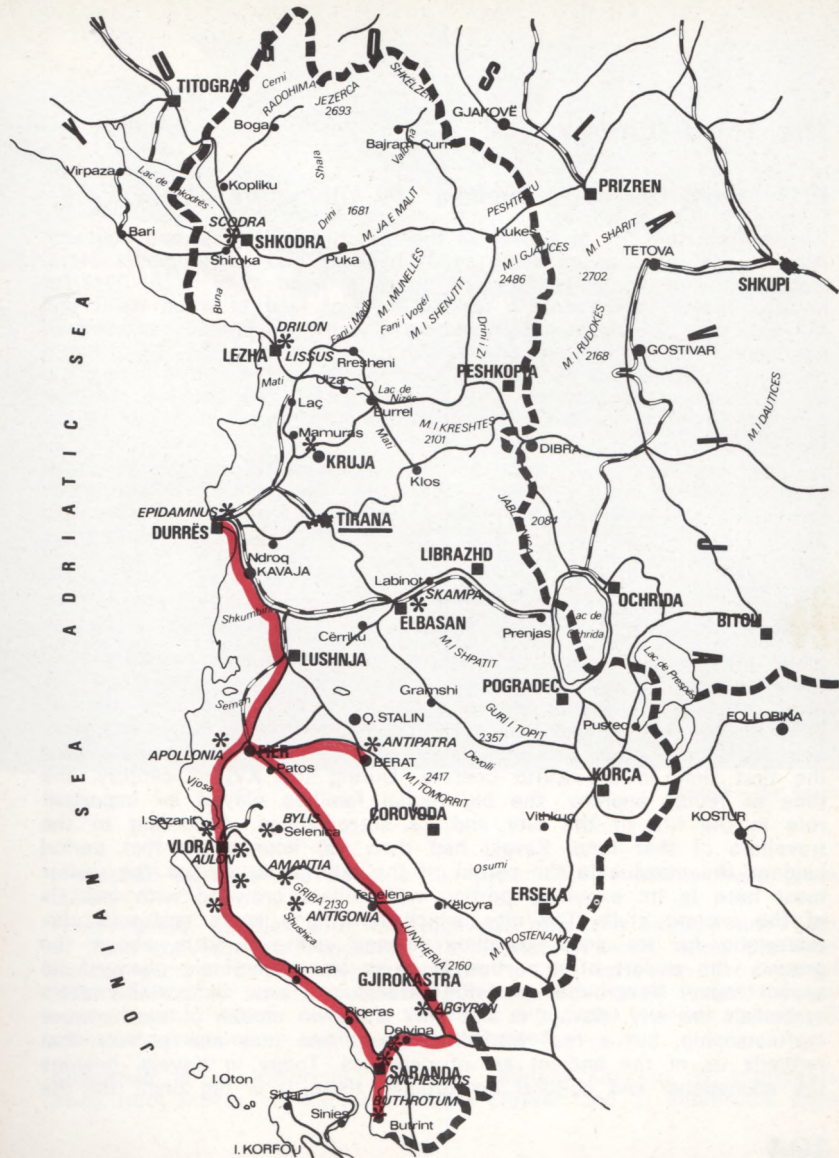
poja was ruined and turned again into a village as it had been originally. The sacking of the town, especially of its treasures, of the records and manuscripts of its churches, continued even during the First and Second World Wars. In 1916 it was plundered by the French occupation armies, and in the year 1943 by the retreating Italian fascist armies.

Of the many churches of this once prosperous town built during the XVth-XVIIIth centuries there have remained but few; of some interest are the St. Nicolaus' church, the mural paintings of which were made by the Korça painters, the Konstantin and Athanas brothers, and by David from Selenica, and the monastery of St. Prodhom, burnt down by the fascist invaders, where some of the exquisite mural paintings are still kept intact.

A southern road, which links Korça with the mountain region of Kolonja, continues, further on, to Permet and Gjirokastra. As was the case with all the other mountain regions of Albania, Kolonja served as a refuge for the combatants who, weapons in hand, conducted the struggle against the Turkish invaders as early as the XIXth century. Sharp encounters took place in that region during the National-liberation War, too. It is in this region that the village of Borova stands. Here the German Nazi armies showed their barbarism as soon as they entered Albania in July of the year 1943 by burning down the village and slaughtering its inhabitants — women, children and old folks. After liberation, this mountain region has made steady progress in the development of agriculture and dairy farming. Especially good progress has been made in the development of horticulture and viticulture. Erseka and Leskovik, two small administrative centers of the region, have completely changed their aspect and have been transformed into towns with quite a lively economic and cultural life.

On the way to Kolonja, a secondary road bifurcating westwards ends at the picturesque resort village of **Vithkuq**.

As in the case of Voskopoja, once a flourishing center, events did not spare Vithkuq either. Vithkuq was the place where very sharp encounters took place against the fascist enemies. During the Second World War Vithkuq was razed to the ground by the fascists. It has been completely rebuilt and various rest and recreation camps for the working people of the country are set up in and around it today.



The Third Itinerary

The Third Itinerary

III/1 From Durrës to Lushnja (56 kilometers)

Parting from the city of Durrës in the direction of Kavaja and southern Albania, the road passes along sandy beaches and fertile plains. Here, along the automobile road, rises steep a huge rock (the Rock of Kavaja), which leaves only a narrow strip of land between itself and the sea. It is the ancient **Petra** where Caesar and Pompey established the camps of their respective armies, in the year 54 B.C. during the Civil War. At the end of the XIth century a big battle took place in this very place between the Normans, who had besieged Durrës, and the Emperor Alexis Comnenus. The battle ended with victory for the Normans.

A little way further on rise the buildings and stretch the fields of a secondary agricultural school. At the place called Mali i Robit some interesting archaeological materials of a village settlement of the IIrd and IIIrd century of our era have been unearthed. Very interesting are some agricultural implements found here — a plough, a pick-axe, an axe, etc., hammered out of iron, which speak of quite an advanced agricultural technique. Opposite the school, behind a thick pine forest, stretches yet another bathing beach — the bathing beach of **Golem**.

After another short stretch of road we enter the city of **Kavaja** (20,000 inhabitants). It is a small locality town, center of an agricultural region. The plain of Kavaja, which is the northern extension of the big plain of Myzeqe, is very fertile, well systematized, with an extensive network of irrigation and drainage canals. Kavaja is mentioned for the first time in the XVIth century. During the XVIIIth century, the time of feudal anarchy, the big feudal families played an important role in the life of the city and its surroundings. According to the travellers of that time, Kavaja had then 400 houses. To that period belongs the mosque in the center of the city. What strikes the visitor most here is its exquisite portico with pillars crowned with capitals of the ancient style. The city, which not many years ago was characteristic for its small dwelling houses rising a little above the ground with a sort of a portico in front, has completely changed its aspect today. New buildings, wide streets and new industrial centers embellish the city. Kavaja is not only a known center of earthenware craftsmanship, but a real workshop where one may see pottery that reminds us of the ancient art of ceramics. Today in Kavaja, besides the educational and cultural institutions, there is a big plant for the



Durrës — The Beach

production of nails and belts, a big paper factory and a huge glass factory.

From Kavaja, parallel with the highway, runs the railway and both of them converge at Rrogozhina (17 kilometers away). Here the road passes across a plain which borders to the left with a range of hills which also stretch southward. Before arriving to Rrogozhina we come to the village of Gosa where a big State owned agricultural enterprise engaged in raising pigs is situated.

Rrogozhina is an important road and railroad junction 35 kilometers away from Durrës, 40 kilometers from Elbasan and 17 kilometers from

Lushnja. It is an ancient route junction, where the two branches of Via Egnatia converged, — the one that came from Dyrrachium (Durrës) and the other from Apollonia (Pojan of Fier). At this road junction there are two factories: a cotton gin and a soap factory. On the hills around the city, the cultivation of olive trees is widespread being favoured by the mild climate of the region.

From Rogozhina, crossing the Shkumbini river bridge we enter the **plain of Myzeqe**. The plain of Myzeqe is 70 kilometers long. In the middle of the plain a range of hills stretches from north to south. Before the liberation the plain of Myzeqe was swampy and boggy in the greater part of its extension. The Tërbufi, Mbrostar, Roskovec and Hoxhare swamps and marshes of yesterday do not exist any longer. The danger of their being submerged again has disappeared once and for all. The plain of Myzeqe has been improved and systematized. It is no longer a hotbed of malaria nor the home of feudalism «where — as a German geographer had once put it — reigns the tranquillity of an isolated place without a road at the end of the world». Today it has become a well developed region, where the population has increased threefold in comparison with some decades ago. It is the main region for the production of industrial plants and cereals. Along the seashore of the plain of Myzeqe — in Divjaka-stretch — there are a number of bathing beaches which, with every passing day, attract more and more people from the surrounding district during the hot summer days.

The road to Lushnja (17 kilometers long) is very picturesque. The country around has changed completely. Especially beautiful have become the hills along the road, transformed into vineyards, olive groves and blocks of fruit trees. Parallel with the highway runs the new railroad track. From this stretch the road bifurcates to the sea bathing beaches of Divjaka: these are of rare beauty, especially in the zone of the century old maritime pines that rise in its background. This picturesque spot has a great future as a seashore resort.

Lushnja is a relatively new town. The historical Congress of Lushnja, which announced the determination of our people for independence, refusing the Italian protectorate was convened in 1920. The Congress, after it declared the pro-Italian government established in Durrës null and void, appointed the new government and proclaimed Tirana the capital of Albania.

Lushnja has grown today into a modern town. The new many storeyed buildings have thoroughly transformed its appearance. The town has a number of secondary schools, one of which trains agricultural extension workers. Among the industrial objects recently set up in Lushnja the most prominent is the new paper and cardboard factory.

III/2 From Lushnja to Fier (29 kilometers)

Hardly out of Lushnja the road bifurcates in two directions — to Berat and to Fier, respectively. The road to Fier passes again through the middle of the plain of Myzeqe, amidst the fields of the State owned agricultural enterprises and agricultural cooperatives. Reaching the village of Kolonja, west of the motor road on top of a picturesque hill covered with Cyprus trees, stands the monastery of Ardenica. The monastery, sometime in the past, had a famous school. The church was of the basilical type. Its mural paintings were made by the talented painters Konstantin and Athanas from Korça. Among these mural paintings one distinguishes the figure of the famous musicologue of the XIIth century, a native of Durrës, Jan Kukuzel. Of the old icons special attention deserves that of Konstantin Shpataraku, a painter iconograph of the XVIIIth century, portraying the Albanian prince Karl Thopia.

After winding its way at the foot of the hills the road crosses the Seman river and from there heads straight to Fier.

Fier is also a new town, founded 100 years ago. Until lately it was considered a big village, known as an administrative center and market for the cereal trade of Myzeqe. Today it has become a great industrial center with a still greater future as such, especially for the oil refining industry. The town has today a cotton gin, a machine shop and a brick and tile factory.

Majestic stand in the outskirts of the city the Chemical Fertilizer Plant with its thermoelectric power-station of 75,000 kW as well as the big Oil Refinery — huge industrial projects built by Albanian technicians and workers within a very short period of time.

Fier has become today also a touristic center. Not more than 12 kilometers away from the city stand the ruins of ancient **Apollonia** — a well known archaeological center. Our tourist agency — the Albaturist — has built here a first class hotel with modern and comfortable rooms. On the ground floor there is a spacious dining room and a bar. The hotel is situated at the center of Fier.

From Fier a number of roads radiate in various directions. The one to the east, hardly out of the town, bifurcates in two directions. The first continues eastward, heading for Berat. It traverses an important oil field. The metallic towers of the oil wells accompany the traveller a good portion of the road. Leaving Roskovec (a locality center of this region) in the rear, and passing through a region of low hills, the road emerges in the plain of Poshnja, where it joins the road that comes from Lushnja and continues on to Berat.



Kavaja — The Portico of a Mosque

The other branch of the road traverses the region of Mallakastra, among a wide expanse of hills and olive groves. Twelve kilometers away from Fier, stands the oil center of **Patos**, which began to be exploited not long before the liberation of the country. Today, quite a big town of buildings and houses for the workers of the industry has taken form there.

The region of **Mallakastra**, through which the road to Tepelena continues as far as the valley of the Vjosa river, is rich in archaeological monuments and boasts of a history full of brave exploits in the country's struggle for freedom and independence, and, more recently, in the National-liberation War. Mallakastra is a hilly country where tobacco is extensively cultivated; there are also extensive vineyards, olive and fruit trees and forests. The center of this region is the town of Balsh, where the ruins of a Mediaeval church have recently been unearthed. Here stood Glavinica, a well known religious center during the early Middle Ages. On the topmost part of the hills of Mallakastra stand the ruins of a number of Illyrian fortresses. The most important of these is the fortress of Hekal, not very far away from Balsh, where an inscription engraved on a rock has brought to light the name of the ancient Illyrian town of Bylis. Bylis was one of the numerous towns founded in the southern part of Illyria during the IVth century. The town of Bylis was the main town of the Bylis tribe, who lived in the region of Mallakastra in ancient times. In the IIIrd and IInd centuries B.C. Bylis minted its own coins. Among the objects unearthed here, coins from the town of **Bylis** are not few. Among the ruins of the ancient town of Bylis, some of the remnants of the walls, which speak of the grandeur and economic development of the town in ancient times, are monumental. Within the precincts of the town one sees the foundations as well as traces of the walls of buildings, among which the contours of an antique theater, too.

Mallakastra is famous for the wars that its people have waged against the Ottoman invaders, especially during the XIXth century. In many of the native songs of the region, the people sing of the peasant uprising, of their leader Rapo Hekali, who fought against the Turks and the local feudal lords and did not submit to their rule until he was finally killed. In the hills and mountain valleys there are many places where bloody encounters have taken place during the National-liberation War. In that struggle the whole of Mallakastra rose as one and did not lay down their weapons until the whole country was liberated.

The road runs on through hills and valleys until it comes down to the river Vjosa. Here, a different landscape meets the eyes of the traveller — his gaze traces the snake — like contours of the wide

river bed. The road follows at the foot of the hills and the small plain along the river banks, while on the opposite banks rise high mountain ranges at the base of which the eye discerns tiny village houses; along the slopes of these mountains winds its way a road that at times comes down and then again rises. The two roads converge in Tepelena and continue from there in the direction of Gjirokastra and Permeti — a small town in the southeastern part of the country.

From Fier another road not very long runs in the direction of the sea, westwards. It takes the traveller to the ancient town of Apollonia (12 kilometers away from Fier) and to the fine sands of the bathing beaches of Seman which have been considerably expanded of late. The road to Apollonia bifurcates in the direction of the village of Pojan on a nearby hill rich in ancient ruins, too. On this hill, besides the ruins of the city discovered during the excavations, there is an archaeological museum rich in interesting ancient relics put on display there, as well as a church of the Byzantine style.

Apollonia is the biggest archaeological center in Albania. According to the testimony of written records it was founded during the first years of the VIth century B.C., in the year 588, by colonists coming from Corinth and Corcyra. There was a little Illyrian settlement at the place where the Hellenes settled, in the ancient world there were a number of towns dedicated to the god Apollo from whom they received their name, but the Apollonia of Illyria was the most renowned. The geographical position of the place has played an important role here; Apollonia was set up not very far from the sea with which it communicated through the Vjosa river — the ancient Aoos — and on one of the fertile plains of southern Illyria, inhabited by the Taulantian Illyrians. An important factor, responsible for the economic and cultural development of Illyrian Apollonia, was the exploitation of the riches of the place and the intercourse with the Illyrians. This made it possible for the town to break away from the mother cities that had founded it. The good relations with the Illyrians, the connections and cooperation with them, created the prerequisites for the transformation of Apollonia into a big trade and commercial center. In the middle of the Vth century B.C. a workshop for minting coins was set up here, which did not cease minting silver and bronze coins for a number of centuries in succession. Through trade and commercial transactions these coins spread throughout Illyria and even beyond its boundaries. Apollonia was conscious of the strength of the Illyrians not only in its surroundings, as it witnessed the establishment of the State of the Taulants, but within the town itself where a great

number of Illyrians had settled, occupying some of the highest posts in its administration and economic and cultural life.

Apollonia was not only a commercial but a renowned cultural and artistic center as well. During the IIIrd-Ist centuries B.C. Apollonia had reached a period of great prosperity. Judging by the place the town held, its population must have been from 50,000 to 60,000 inhabitants. It was as Cicero put it, a big and important city — «**magna urbs et gravis**». The fame of Apollonia as a big cultural center of the time had spread beyond the boundaries of Illyria. The ancient authors speak of Apollonian schools and of young Roman patricians such as Octavianus Augustus (first Roman Emperor) and Agrippa, his close friend and associate, studying in Apollonia. It was here that they received the news of the assassination of Caesar. Recent archaeological discoveries have shown the existence, during the first centuries of our era, of a school of sculpture and mosaics in Apollonia.

Beginning with the IIIrd century A.D. Apollonia felt the crisis that had descended upon the slave-owning society of the period, but what pushed definitely the town into the abyss of oblivion was the changing of the course of the river Aoos — its new course followed 9 kilometers further to the south. During the Byzantine domination Apollonia does not figure as a city any longer. For a certain period of time, the center of a diocese stood upon its ruins.

The excavations and the monuments of Apollonia. — Apollonia, because of its geographic position, of the monuments that have come to light there from time to time on the hill where once stood an ancient monastery (its walls have become a real museum) has long attracted the curiosity of travellers and archaeologists. This brought as a result the plunder and removal of many monuments to a number of museums in Europe.

The first attempts to conduct excavations in Apollonia were made during the First World War by Austrian archaeologists who unearthed and explored mainly the walls that encircled the city. Sistematic excavations began in the year 1924 by a French Archaeological Mission headed by Prof. Leon Rey, who brought to light a complex of monuments at the center of the city. The movable objects, unearthed during 15 years of continuous excavations and exhibited in the little museum of Vlora, were plundered during the Second World War by the Italian armies of occupation.

Apollonia has become a big theater of excavations during the last 20 years. These excavations have been made by Albanian archaeologists, at first sent out by the former Institute of Sciences, and now by the State University of Tirana. The various monuments and objects



Fier — The «Turizmi» Hotel

Fier — The Nitrate Fertilizer Plant



unearthed have been collected and exhibited in the rooms and portico of the structure that once was the monastery of St. Mary.

The Encircling Wall. — Apollonia, once a large and prosperous city, was surrounded by a protecting wall, with a perimeter of some 4,500 meters and a thickness of 3.40 meters. The wall encircled the greater part of the hills and, on the western side, the side of the village, descended as low down as the foot of the hill. The wall was constructed during the IVth century B.C. A good part of this wall has been unearthed on the side of the village of Kryegjatë and it is visible just as one comes out of the museum. In some sectors the wall was constructed entirely out of stones, and at others, only the socle was built out of stone whereas the upper part was made of bricks. Towers were incastated to strengthen the walls at various points. At regular intervals through the walls ran dry canals which served to drain the waters collected during the rains, thus evading the danger of flooding the lower quarters of the city.

The Terrace Wall with the Arched Gates. — In the center of the city a terrace wall has come to light, which is linked with the encircling wall and then continues along the foot of the elevation at a height of 104 meters up to the «stoa» or portico. The gate that had been opened in this wall allowed the entrance and ascension towards the hill top where the temple of Artemis stood, a goddess worshipped not only by the Apollonians but by the Illyrians as well. In front of the wall rises a cylindrical altar where the people offered their sacrifices before entering the precincts of the temple. Today an obelisk has been placed at the apex of this altar, an attribute of Apollo and one of the emblems that figures on the coins of the city.

The Monument of the Agonothetes was one of the monuments that decorated the center of the city. The structure had the form of a semicircle and served as an assembly place of the Council of the City — the «**bulë**». The front part of the structure was decorated in a special manner: there are six pillars crowned with capitals of the Corinthian style. An inscription which dates from the middle of the IInd century A.D. tells that the building was constructed by a high ranking functionary of the city, a slave-owner, with the purpose of commemorating the death of his soldier brother. On the day of the inauguration of the monument a show was staged in the city with the participation of 25 couples of gladiators.

Having climbed on top of this monumental structure, on the western side one can see the ruins of the small temple of Artemis (Diana) and, in front of it, the remnants of a principal street paved with

stone blocks and with side walks alongside. At the eastern side there was another street which passed under a triumphal arch. On the opposite side of the monument of the Agonothetes there was a colonnade, decorated with marble statues.

The Library and the Odeon were two other monumental buildings that rose behind the colonnades. The library stood immediately behind the colonnade: a couple of cornices, which, as it seems, must have served to fix the shelves, come to prove its destination, if not as a library, then as an archive. Leaning on the slope of the hill opposite the monument of Agonothetes, stands an «**odeon**» or a small theater, on the tiers of which could sit up to 200 spectators. The building had a stage, an orchestra and tiers, the last two of which were paved with marble plates. There they gave musical shows, recitals and held philosophical and oratorical discussions. As was usually the case and the partition nearby indicates, it had, next to it, a temple where sacrifices were made by the spectators who themselves participated in the show.

The portico. — As a continuation of the Odeon, along the foot of the hill stood another monument, the portico, partly covered, which was of great importance in the cultural, social and economic life of the city. In its origin this portico belonged to the IVth-IIIrd centuries B.C. but later on, during the Ist century of our era, it was reconstructed. It is composed of 17 partitions and a hall or covered alley, whose roof rested, in the front, on rectangular columns of the Ionic and, inside, on columns of the Doric style. The portico was 77 meters long. Other monuments have been unearthed at various points of the city. In the vicinity of the museum, a dwelling house of the time of the Roman occupation has been partially uncovered. Two other wings of the house, paved with marble, have been unearthed. Further down there has been uncovered a part of the main street of Apollonia, 6 meters in width, which began at one of the western gates and, climbing upwards, reached the top of the monument of Agonothetes.

The House with Mosaics. — A couple of meters away from the above mentioned street, the excavations have brought to light the ruins of a rich Apollonian dwelling house of the IIIrd century A.D. The house had a central atrium with columns, and niches and corridors paved with stone slates and multicoloured mosaics around it. The latter is in a more or less good state and attracts the attention of those who visit it. The mosaics are of all types: there are mosaics where the main decorative motives are simple geometric figures, there are others



Apollonia — The Ruins of a Theater



Apollonia — The Museum

that have as ornament mythological figures like hypocamposes (sea horses) accompanied by Nereids and Erotes. One of the mosaics represents a scene where Achilles holds the wounded Penthesilea, the beautiful queen of the Amazonas, in his arms.

Fontana is undoubtedly a monument that speaks of the mastership of the inhabitants of the city in building. Fontana represents in itself a complex structure: above, it had a wall which collected the waters that sprang from the earth and then four covered aqueducts forwarded them below. The water of these aqueducts was collected in a wall canal and flowed into a pool. The pool was divided into two parts: in the first part the water was purified, especially after the rains, and thence passed on to the other pool to which the inhabitants helped themselves.

The Museum of Apollonia, built on what was once a monastery, has seven rooms, a gallery and two porticos. In all those rooms and porticos are exhibited different objects that have come out from the excavations in the city and in the necropolis. As such they engulf more or less the entire period of the existence of the city.

A monument in itself is the church of St. Mary which is situated between the museum and the refectory next to it. The church is of the Byzantine style with a central vault resting on four pillars. The inner side of the church had once been painted, but today very few fragments from the mural paintings have remained. Of importance, as far as the date of construction is concerned, is a mural painting on the wall of the portico but it is considerably damaged. According to it, the church must have been built at the beginning of the XIVth century; the wall painting represents Emperor Andronicus Paleologus as the builder of the church. To a period before the advent of the Ottoman Turks, but somewhat later than the church, belongs the portico, where of great interest are the grotesque capitals of the Roman style of architecture.

The refectory of the monastery, with its mural paintings partly preserved, belongs to a structure with one nave. It was built at the same time as the church.

III/3 From Fier to Vlora (34 kilometers)

The fourth road coming out of Fier leads to Vlora, ascending the hills ahead and leaving on its left the huge plant producing nitrate fertilizers. At the foot of these hills stand also the main buildings of the State Agricultural Enterprise of Levan, where a big irrigation

canal taking water from the river Vjosa begins. We cross the river Vjosa near the village of **Mifol**. This is the second largest river in length in Albania (238 kilometers long). Not very far from the village the river comes out in the plain and winds its way into the Adriatic Sea. The road traverses again the plain of Myzeqe passing on both sides well kept and well cared for villages and fields. Near the city of Vlorë the scene changes — ahead of us stretches the Adriatic Sea with the salt pits of Vlorë, known since the Middle Ages. Further on stretch the vineyards of the picturesque village of **Narta**, famous for its excellent grapes and delicious wines. Very picturesque are also the dresses and costumes of the women of this village. Finally we ascend the interminable hills covered with olive trees. They belong to the biggest state owned farm in Albania, which specializes in the cultivation of olives, having under its administration 3,300 hectares of land under olive, fruit, and citrus trees, etc. Vlorë is surrounded on all sides by green hills on which grow 650,000 olive trees.

VLORE. — Descending towards the city we admire the beauty of the Gulf of Vlorë and, further off in the sea the island of Sazan and the Karaburun Peninsula. In a spot where sea, green hills and mountains come together, rises the city of Vlorë which today numbers 50,000 inhabitants. Vlorë belongs to the climatical Southern sub-zone of Albania, with an average yearly temperature that does not fall below 16°C. and a January temperature oscillating from 6° to 10°C.

A Bit of History. — Vlorë is proclaimed a Hero City. It is an old city where important events in the struggles for freedom and independence and during the National-liberation War have taken place. In ancient times, the city was known under the name of Aulon. At the beginning it was only a port. During the first centuries of our era, as the Alexandrine geographer Ptolemy writes, it became a seaport and a city. Aulon was famous for its olive groves and vineyards sung by the latin poet Martial in his poems: The ancient itineraries present Aulon as a road junction, too. The city acquired a much greater importance after the downfall of Apollonia and Orichon, two flourishing cities until the later period of antiquity. In the Vth century Aulon was the center of a diocese. The migrations of the barbarians damaged it badly and brought, as a sequence, the withdrawal of the city deeper inland.

During the Middle Ages the city was fused into one with the fortress of Kanina, which rises a few kilometers to the southeast. During the XVth and XIIth centuries the Normans descended in Vlorë and began



Vlorë

their penetration towards the other regions of Albania. In the XIVth century Vlorë lived through the events that swept over southern Albania. The Venetians, the kings Manfred of the Hohenstaufens and Charles of Anjou came there, the Byzantine armies visited it again, the Serbs as well as the feudal lords of the Balshas from North Albania. Vlorë had become a prosperous handicraft and commercial center at that time: the swords forged by the local craftsmen were widely known as well as their fine silken fabrics. There was a great demand for the white salt produced at the salt pits of Vlorë.

The port had shipyards for building small sea-faring vessels.

Under the Ottoman occupation, during the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries Vlorë and the fortress of Kanina were scenes of fierce battles. It was from Vlorë that the Ottoman expeditionary forces began their drive to subjugate the indomitable peasantry in the interior of the country. The rebels, who attacked the invaders that prepared to cross over to Italy in the year 1480 and 1536, had their eyes on the city, too. At the end of the XVIth century the city was known as a trade and commercial center.

During the XIXth century Vlorë and its district became the theater of sharp encounters: numberless are the peasant uprisings in the mountains of Vlorë. Vlorë played a special role in the uprising and encounters of the years 1911-1912. It was in Vlorë that an Assembly was convened which proclaimed Albania as an independent State, forming the first national government headed by Ismail Qemal on the 28th of November 1912. The government remained there until January 1914.

During the First World War Vlorë and its surrounding territory were occupied by the Italian armies. Italy did its utmost to retain this region after the end of the First World War in order to use it as a bridgehead for the eventual annexation of the whole territory of Albania. On the 5th of June 1920 the entire population of the district rose against the Italian occupation. The Italian armies were thrown into the sea. At the head of the uprising stood the peasantry. The Italians were driven away, but they retained the tiny island of Sazan.

In the year 1924 Vlorë played a paramount role in the uprising that chased the dictator Ahmet Zogu out of Albania as well as in the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of that year. As a signal for the uprising served the burial of the distinguished Albanian patriot Avni Rustemi, assassinated by Zogu.

The city of Vlorë put up a stubborn resistance to fascist Italy on the 7th of April 1939 — the first day of the Italian occupation of Albania. The struggle against the fascist rule was continued by the people of Vlorë after the 7th of April 1939: in the country around and

about Vlorë were formed the first partisan units that engaged the invaders in fierce combats; these units grew into battalions and brigades later on and, incorporating themselves into the National-liberation Army, they rendered a valuable contribution to the liberation of the country. The city of Vlorë was liberated on the 15th of October 1944. But this time the National-liberation Army freed also the island of Sazan, which returned into the folds of the motherland for good.

In 1962 Vlorë celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence. By a special decree Vlorë was declared a Hero City.

An excursion in the city and the surroundings. — Very few traces have remained from what had once been an ancient settlement. The foreign occupations and incessant wars have wiped out all remnants of ancient Aulon. Some traces have remained of the ancient port in the place called Plakë, north of the present day port. The various archeological documents found in the city have been plundered. Among them was the sculpture of a girl, known under the name of the Maid of Vlorë, of the IVth century B.C. of great interest because of its characteristic Illyrian apparel. On the 7th of April 1939 the fascist armies plundered the archeological museum that stood at the seaport of Vlorë.

The Museum of the City is a small historical and ethnographic museum where, through the exhibits, one forms an idea of the history and ethnographic peculiarities of the region. Among the various exhibits in the archaeological rooms there are objects from the city of Vlorë and the other Illyrian centers like Amantia, Bylis, Orichon, etc. Rich materials illustrate important events in the history of the place as, for example, the war of 1920 and, especially, the National-liberation War. The ethnographic section with its exhibits shows the ethnographic wealth and variety of the region.

The Museum of Independence is housed in a historic building, associated with the Proclamation of the Independence of Albania. The materials exhibited here illustrate the struggle of the people for freedom and independence, the events that brought about the raising of the flag on the 28th of November 1912, when Albania was proclaimed an independent state.

Uji i Ftohët. — Near the port of Vlorë stretches the beautiful bathing beach of the city and a few kilometers further south, on the Vlorë-Saranda road, stands the resort center of Uji i Ftohët (Cold Water), deriving its name from the cold waters springing in abundance at

that place. Here are located a number of excellent and very comfortable recreation and resting camps, visited not only during the summer season but also during the winter months. The vineyards, the fruit and citrus trees and many other kinds of subtropical trees and plants enhance still more the attractiveness of this spot.

Before the liberation of the country, Vlorë, did not possess any industry worth mentioning. Today, the products of the «V.I.Lenin» Cement Factory, of the Tannine Extraction Factory, of the Rice Processing Factory, of the Asbestos Tubes and Slabs Factory, of the Caustic Soda Factory, and of the recently set up Electric Bulbs Factory, are well known and widely used all over the country. Fishing is an important branch of the economy of the city. It is carried on today with motor boats and all the known modern means of fishing. In the city itself there is a cannery named after Ernest Thaelman, whose products are well known in the foreign market as well.

The region of Vlorë is rich in agricultural products, too, especially in fruits, olives and grapes, and in dairy products. For the processing of these products there is a whole series of workshops and processing plants. The trade marks of these products are well known to consumers. Vlorë, although an important city in the past, with the exception of some primary schools and of a commercial low middle school, had no educational or cultural institution whatsoever; today it has an elementary and secondary school in every quarter of the city as well as a secondary medical polytechnical school, a drama theater and vaudeville theatre of its own, a local newspaper, etc. Not so very long ago, Vlorë was separated from its port. Today, a beautiful boulevard, with green plants and orange trees lining its sidewalks, the «Orange Trees Avenue», as the local folks call it, with new tall buildings and parks, links the city with the bathing beach and the port. This is the road that leads to Saranda through the Albanian Riviera.

A road that bifurcates from the one that goes to Gjirokastra, links Vlorë with the mountain region of Labëria, a region known for its valiant fighters who rendered a valuable contribution to the National-liberation War. This road terminates at the village of Borshi, on the sea-shore.

Coming out of Vlorë the road heads eastward, again olive trees and vineyards accompany the traveller on his trip until the road enters the valley of the Shushica river. At the village of Peshkëpi the road bifurcates, taking the direction towards Selenica, the home of the famous natural bitumen mine. Ancient records and authors tell us that the Selenica bitumen was exploited since ancient times. In the Middle Ages its bitumen was known throughout the Mediterranean

area and was used for impregnating and smearing the various parts of ships and boats. At the end of the XIXth century the bitumen of Selenica began to be exploited by a French company and after that by an Italian one. Today Selenica has been transformed into a modern mine, and a small mining town has grown in its vicinity.

Small villages line up on both sides along the road that traverses the mountain region of Labëria. The major part of their houses were burnt down during the National-liberation War. Today they have been completely rebuilt. Every village here has been a mute witness of some memorable event and all along the road one encounters stone and concrete memorials commemorating these events. To immortalize the wars for freedom and independence, the brave exploits of the

Vlora — The Caustic Soda Factory



fallen and living heroes of these wars, the people here have composed beautiful songs. The rhapsodists of these regions do not sing only to the wars and victories over the enemy, but also to the great transformations that have been and are being made in nature and in the way of life of the people themselves.

III/4 From Vlorë to Saranda (124 kilometers)

We leave Vlorë through the beautiful «Orange Trees Avenue» and from there we travel along the sea shore. We pass through the bathing beach and the small and picturesque resort center of **Uji i Ftohtë** up to the village of Dukat. The valley that the motor road

Dhërmi



enters now is that of the river Dukat. The valley has a triangular form, getting narrower as it penetrates towards the mountains. Above the valley rise steep and craggy mountain slopes, with villages scattered here and there, where the people engage mainly in animal husbandry and dairy farming. Of late, they are cultivating bread cereals as well.

Then the road begins to ascend towards the Logora Pass. The distance from Vlora to Logora is 39 kilometers. Here, quite a different landscape meets the traveller's gaze. The pine trees grow taller and taller and their pungent aroma becomes more and more intense. In the hot days of summer a refreshing coolness permeates the valley as far up as the Logora Pass which has an altitude of 1,050 meters above sea level. All along the road there are numerous springs of ice cold water. At the tourist cottage built at the Logora Pass, the traveller may take a short rest. After having ascended the topmost part of the Logora Pass, the traveller gets his first view of the Ionian Sea with the characteristic dark blue colour of its waters. The Ionian Sea differs from the Adriatic. While the depth of the Adriatic in the zone between Shëngjin and Bari is 1,590 meters, the depth of the Ionian Sea reaches down to 4,594 meters, equal to the greatest depth of the Mediterranean basin. Along the Albanian seashore the Adriatic is quite shallow: 50 kilometers from the shore this depth does not exceed 100 meters. In the Ionian Sea this depth is reached much nearer to the seashore. Another peculiarity of the Ionian Sea is the high temperature and the clearness of its waters. Coming down from the Logora Pass the Alpine scenery changes all of a sudden into a Mediterranean landscape: the beautiful Riviera of Himara, the deep blue of the Ionian Sea and the small islands of the Corfu group.

The seashore of the Albanian Riviera, separated from the interior by a mountain range that runs parallel with it forms a real climatic oasis. The Riviera stretches along the foot of the Acroceraunian Mountains, Mount Çika and the other mountain ranges that follow, which rise sharply from the sea to an altitude of 800-2,000 meters. Here the seashore stretches some 70 kilometers. Fascinating here are the contrasts of nature and the rich vegetation by the seashore and at the foot of the mountains. Hills and the mountain slopes are covered with olive trees, citrus plantations, vineyards and other subtropical fruit trees. During the cold days of January while the pine forests and the alpine pastures are covered with snow, the almond trees below are already abloom and so are the violets under the shrubbery. Fourteen villages flourish in a row in this zone, some on the upper and others on the lower seashore.

The first village to come across after we come down from the Logora Pass is **Palasa**. It was here, in the Gulf of ancient Palesta, that Caesar landed his armies in the year 48 B.C. to face those of Pompey and it was after climbing the Logora Pass that his march against his opponent began.

We leave the village of Palasa and come to the village of **Dhermi** with its magnificent panorama. The village of Dhermi has the aspect of a little town. It stretches on both sides of a deep ravine at the foot of Mount Çika, to where the latter reaches its highest point — 2,050 meters above sea level. Through the once almost ever dry stream bed now runs plenty of water, furnishing the little hydro-power plant there. The stream, the olive and citrus tree plantations that descend in the form of terraces down to the very edge of the Ionian Sea, give a rare beauty to the scenery below. Dhermi is an old village. Deep in the mountains nestles the tiny church of St. Mary, a church with interesting Medieval wall paintings.

Vuno is another village that the traveller encounters along the road, 18 kilometers further on. It is one of the rather large villages of the seashore. The village was the scene of heavy fightings during the war and the village itself was razed to the ground, but was rebuilt, preserving its former aspect and characteristics. Just as the village of Dhermi, it gives the impression of a town more than that of a village.

The village of **Himara** is situated on a hill in the center of the Albanian riviera, 70 kilometers away from Vlora. On the very top of this hill are the ruins of an Illyrian fortress, the ancient **Chimera**. Below, on the very shore of the sea, is **Spilé**, a small quarter of the village of Himara.

The village of Himara has given its name to the entire region. Once it included the extensive territory of all the southwestern mountain region of Albania. This region has a history full of wars and heroic deeds, especially during the protracted encounters and uprisings against the Ottoman invaders.

In the various written documents and records of the past Himara is spoken of as the main center of the region. In the Middle Ages Himara was a center of a diocese. The inhabitants of Himara, just as the other Albanian fighters, never laid down their arms during the 25 years war of the XVth century against the invaders. They did not lay down their arms later either. Himara is one of the few regions of the country that remained out of the control of the invaders. At the end of the XVth century the uprisings in the region of Himara took great proportions, causing the failure of a big Ottoman



Porto Palermo



Saranda

land and sea operation headed by Sultan Bajazid the IInd himself. During the XVIth and XVIIth centuries the villages round and about Himara were again free: the region became an important center of Albanian resistance. 10.000 Albanians took up arms. The Ottoman punitive expeditions, especially that of the year 1713, met with complete defeat. During the period just mentioned the people of Himara concluded various alliances with sundry states: with the Kingdom of Spain, with the Reign of Naples, with the Venetian Republic and with Russia. The inhabitants of Himara did not let themselves to be subjugated by the big Albanian feudal lord Ali Pasha Tepelena. The Ottoman Sultans were forced to grant certain privileges and concessions to the local inhabitants: they were exempted from paying taxes and were not to be recruited in the Ottoman army.

The inhabitants of the region of Himara have given a valuable contribution to the National-liberation War, too. They fought the Italian and German invaders from the very beginning up to the complete liberation of the country.

Between Himara and the village of Qeparo, the first village on the way to Saranda, there is a very picturesque gulf — the Gulf of Porto Palermo — the ancient Panormon. Once there was a small sea port here, frequented by seamen in the Middle Ages. Here stands also a small fortress erected by Ali Pasha Tepelena.

Another village on the seashore, somewhat different from the others because of its being perched upon a rock in a mountain gorge, is the village of **Qeparo**. Lately it has begun to expand towards the seashore, too.

After Qeparo comes the big village of **Borsh**, that spreads over a considerable area. From the mountains above runs a stream which has cut in a rugged ravine. Borshi stands on the slopes of the mountains that come down to the very sea. The place has many cold and clear water springs, which make it an attractive tourist center.

Not very far from the village, on a rocky hill, there are still remnants of the fortress of **Sopot**, an Illyrian fortress built during the IVth century B.C. and used during the Middle Ages as such. This fortress has been the theater of bloody encounters between the inhabitants of the region and the Ottoman Turks. The fortress of Sopot guarded the road that descended from the mountains of Kurvelesh down to the sea, passing through the valley of Shushica. From Borsh, a motor road traverses a number of villages in the region of Laberia and joins the main road which links Vlorë with Gjirokastra.

Now the road to Saranda passes by other villages along the sea shore, lined with gardens and terraces of olive and citrus trees, where all

summer long oleanders of every colour are in full bloom and numerous little gulfs and sand beaches — future resorts and sea bathing stations — follow one another in quick succession.

Before reaching Saranda we pass on the opposite side of a range of hills, along other villages with different scenery. At the Gjashta Pass the road heads straight for the sea, ending at the small but beautiful town of Saranda.

Saranda is the southernmost port of Albania, 275 kilometers away from Tirana and 124 kilometers from Vlora. Because of its picturesque position and surroundings, its soft climate, the great number of hours of sunshine (2,900 hours a year), it has become a preferred center of rest and recreation and an important tourist center.

Although an ancient settlement, Saranda is a new town. Twenty years ago it had just begun to acquire the characteristics of a town. Today it is developing at a rapid pace along the slopes of the mountains and the neighboring hills in the form of an amphitheater overlooking it, with straight parallel streets and, in some places, with flights of stone paved stairs, with brand new buildings facing the sea.

Saranda is the center of an advanced agricultural region. The town has a number of small factories and workshops, cultural and educational institutions as well as its seaport. The town is situated in an opened sea gulf opposite which stands the island of Corfu, giving it the aspect of a huge lake. The green vegetation that keeps spreading incessantly through the town, the new tall buildings, the sea panorama, the glorious sunsets, all of them make of the place a really beautiful town.

The tourists that visit Saranda have at their disposal a modern hotel, with a restaurant and a bar, administered by the Albtourist travelling bureau, and both the sea and the bathing beaches next door.

In ancient times, on the spot where the town stands today, stood a sea port called Onchesmos, which was of especially great service to the big neighboring city of Phoinike (today the ruins of the village of Finiq). Among the recent archaeological discoveries are two mosaics, one under the present day post office building and the other near the Tourist Hotel. Other objects have been unearthed at various points in the town. During the Middle Age a monastery stood here, dedicated to the «40 saints». The ruins of another fortress, that rises on the hill south of the city, belong to the XIXth century. During the wars for freedom and independence and during the National-liberation War, Saranda was the scene of important events. In the year 1878 the inhabitants of the town and its surroundings defended Saranda against the onslaughts of the Greek terrorist bands. Thirty

years later a detachment of freedom fighters entered the town and chased away the Ottoman Turkish soldiers, seizing their weapons, ammunition and other equipment. During the National-liberation War the town seathed with guerrilla units that acted within the town as well as with partisan detachments and batallions, which by the end of September 1944 liberated the town which was badly battered by the fascist invaders.

From Saranda to Butrint (16 kilometers)

A beautiful and really picturesque asphalted road links Saranda with the archaeological center of Butrint. It passes by the Peninsula of Ksamil, once a forlorn rocky pasture land, which is being transformed today into a huge orchard of citrus trees and subtropical plants. On the right side of the road lies the sea and on the left the lake of

Butrint — The Theater





Butrint — The Citadel

Butrint. The scenery changes in quick succession — there is the island of Corfu, the smaller islands alongside the peninsula of Ksamil, the fish nursery and the canal of Butrint.

One may go to Butrint either by sea, by motorboat, passing through the canal of Corfu, or by land, as indicated above.

Butrint (Buthroton). — The ancient city of Butrint rises upon a hill on the edge of the Ksamil Peninsula and the shores of a small lake which in ancient times was called the lake of Pelod. Butrint has become today a much visited archaeological center, where antiquity and beauty of nature intertwine.

As regards the founding of Butrint, ancient tradition recounts various legends. Virgil's «Aeneid» (IIIId-292 and following), holds that the city was founded by the Trojans during their voyage from Troy to Italy. But legends do not coincide with the archaeological records. Sometime during the Ist millennium B.C. Butrint was a fortified center of the Kaonian Illyrians, one of the big tribes of southern Illyria. But according to the discoveries made round and about this area, the latter had been inhabited since the Middle Paleolithic Period. During the VIth century B.C. or somewhat earlier, Hellenes coming from the neighboring island of Corcyra, the present island of Corfu, settled here next to the Illyrians, just as they had done in the cities of Apollonia and Dyrrhachium. The new colony grew and prospered fast thanks to the trade and commercial exchanges with the inhabitants of the neighboring regions, especially because of the famous cattle, sheep and goats of the place. Ancient records have it that the region around Butrinto — ancient Cestrina — was known for its high breed oxen and its excellent pastures.

As an independent colony Butrint lived a short span of life. The city fell soon under the dependence of the Molossian kingdom and later remained as a city of the League of Epirus. The inscriptions on the theater of the city read that Butrinto had been also a center of the Prasaibian Illyrians. The city developed economically and culturally and became a prosperous slave-owning center. But still Butrinto depended on the State of Epirus and did not mint its own coins: coins with the name of Butrint went into circulation only when it was converted into a Roman colony, after the occupation of the land by the Romans. Big Latin landowners settled in the region around and about Butrint: in his letters Marcus Tullius Cicero gives many interesting facts about Butrinto of this time.

Under the rule of Byzantium Butrint continued to preserve its importance as a diocese center and especially as a stronghold in that

region. Butrint was captured by the Normans (XIth century), by Manfred of the Hohenstaufens (XIIIth century) and by the Venetians (XIVth century). At the end of the XVIIIth century the French also came to the fortress of Butrint but were chased away by the powerful ruler of Albania of that time — Ali Pasha Tepelena. This Albanian feudal lord fortified the place with two small fortresses — one at the entrance of the canal and the other opposite the ancient town.

The Excavations and the Monuments of Butrint. — The tumultuous events of the Middle Ages and, later on, the strategic position of the fortress that changed its masters every now and then explain the destruction of many a monument of Butrint.

From the year 1928 up to the Second World War an Italian Archaeological Mission engaged in the work of excavating in Butrint. The occupation of the country by fascist Italy and the Italian-Greek War, battered the place badly, especially the archaeological museum, and the major part of the monuments exhibited there disappeared.

Coming down to the small square of the city the visitor follows a street in the direction of a beautiful complex of monuments belonging to one of the main quarters of the city. To the right, another street leads him to a small port where the motorboat that comes from the sea is anchored. At this place the remnants of a thermal public bath of the centuries before our era have been unearthed. A two storey tower built by Ali Pasha Tepelena and used by him for hunting in Butrint and its immediate surrounding rises in the vicinity.

The Temple of Aesculapius. — The reconstructions of later dates changed the aspect of this quarter of the ancient city. The excavations, which have not ended as yet, will shed light upon its character. What attracts one's attention most in this environment is a fountain within a niche with a painted vault, and, particularly, the ruins of a small temple, dedicated to the God of Health, Asclepios or Aesculapius. The temple is made up of two partitions, a covered portico and a hall, built during the IInd century of our era on the foundations of an ancient religious structure. The ancient temple of Asclepios communicated with the theater that stood next to it.

The Theater. — On the walls of the western «**parodos**» (lateral entrance) there are some carved inscriptions, which, among other things, show that the theater was built from the proceeds of the neighbouring temple. The theater of Butrint is not big, but very beautiful and very well preserved in its lower portions. Like all other ancient theaters it has a «**cavea**», a tiered sitting space, an orchestra, a place where the choir stood and a stage. It had 19 rows of tiers that rested



Gjirokastra — The «Turizmi» Hotel

on the slope of the hill. The first row with its special chairs destined for the notables of the city is different from the others. The orchestra, with its almost semicircular form, is paved with limestone slates in its later reconstruction. The stage and its fixed background, belong also to a later reconstruction period. The background of the stage consisted of a high wall with niches decked with sculptures. In one of these partitions was placed the so-called «Goddess of Butrint» whose head (in reality it is Apollo's head stuck on the body of a woman) is a sculpture of rare beauty of a known Hellenic School of the IVth century B.C. From the inscriptions of the «**parodos**» it results that the theater was built at the beginning of the IIIrd century B.C. These inscriptions — mainly acts of emancipation of slaves — have

shed light upon the Prasaibes Illyrians of the region around Butrint as well as upon the state organization of that time.

Near the theater they have unearthed other buildings, as for example, a public bath — the largest building unearthed so far in Butrint — one of the big rooms of which — the «**frigidarium**» — has its floor paved with mosaic stones of two colors, black and white, with simple geometric motives. To the east of the theater one may see the remnants of a dwelling house of the peristylar type. Immediately above the theater, on the slope of the hill, a small temple has come to light with a front room (**pronaos**) and a room (**naos**), but without columns, belonging to the IVth century of our era.

The Store Rooms. — Apart from the above mentioned complex there are two rooms, built during the Ist century of our era and crowned with vaults. They were two-storeyed and were used as store rooms, depositories.

Beyond these two buildings more or less of the same period, there is a big public building, converted in the early Middle Ages into a church. In the absis there are traces of mosaics which covered its flanks.

The Baptistry is the most exquisite monument of the early Christian art that has come to light thus far in Butrint. During the VIth century over an older structure stood the baptistry with a rotund floor, with a basin for baptism in the center. In this monument are the multicoloured mosaics, composed of seven fields in the form of concentric circles. Five of them contain various geometric figures and plant motives, whereas the two others have 64 medallions with animals and birds. When it was converted into a baptistry some mosaics were replaced by others which contained symbols of Christianity.

Continuing his trip through the monuments the visitor comes to another thermal bath, in front of a brick structure, a nympheum, a little fountain of the beginning of the IInd century of our era. The fountain has also three niches for placing sculptures: two of them — a full lenght body of Apollo and one of Dionysius — are kept in the museum of Butrint. The high walls of a building, which stand beyond the fountain, belong to a big church built during the XIVth century.

The Gate with the Towers. — At the big church the visitor comes to the remnants of the walls that surrounded the Acropolis of Butrint. At this place they have unearthed the southern gate of the Acropolis reinforced by two towers. Even though not so well preserved, the towers and the gates between them give quite a good idea of the

magnificence of the walls of Butrint, of their strength and resistance and of the skill of the master builders that erected them.

Behind the gate there are some parts of the wall that stretched as far as the lake, and then the ruins of a house of the IVth and IIIrd centuries before our era.

The Big Gate rises straight up before the eyes of the visitor just at the turn of the encircling wall (it stands at the eastern side). It is in fact a really monumental gate. It rises 5 meters high and is technically perfect in all its details.

The Lion's Gate. — Not very far from the Big Gate there is another much smaller gate, to which a scene of an encounter between a lion and a bull has given its name. Among the many legends that are being passed from mouth to mouth about Butrint, is that of a lion that had come to those places and was devouring the cattle of the Amazons. A couple of stairs lead the visitor to a holy well, dedicated to the nymphs. Butrint, as a city with quite a big population, needed drinking water as well as water for its thermal baths. Water was procured by exploiting the springs and wells all around the city during the first centuries of our era, as is seen by the remnants of an aqueduct unearthed in the fields in front of Butrint. The same aqueduct was represented in the coins minted by the city administration. An inscription made on the parapet of the well tells that it was built by a girl and she dedicated it to the nymphs.

The visitor ends this part of the trip by climbing up the fortress reconstructed during the XIVth century.

The Museum. — The entrance to the museum is through a portico in which some of the sculptures unearthed during the excavation are exhibited. The archaeological materials in the first rooms of the museum belong to various periods, beginning from the prehistoric and ending with the first centuries A.D. Among those are also objects discovered in the surroundings of Butrint.

Portraits, sculptures, architectonic details and various inscriptions are exhibited in the second room of the museum. A considerable part of them has come to light during recent excavations. The exhibits of the museum, presented with quite a good taste, complete the information gathered during the visit of the monuments. They furnish still another proof of the prosperity and well-being of ancient Butrint.

After having left the museum we find ourselves at the square in front of the fortress. A number of big canons placed on the walls of the fortress, the exquisite tower and the walls with their bay windows are reminiscent of the fortresses of Medieval and later times.

Beautiful is the scenery that stretches before one's eyes from this dominating point. The visitor admires the peaceful landscape of the lake and the mountains and hills that surround it, the canal that winds its way until it comes out in the sea and the island of Corfu on the background. In the forefront is the beautiful plain of Vrina, which stretches as far away as the hills. Two decades ago one saw nothing here but swamps, marshes, degenerate and badly kept forests and shrubs and villages perched on top of the hills. There is a big State Farm in Vrina today. The old mosquito feeding swamps and marshes now belong to the past. The trunks of the old trees have been up-rooted. Vrina today is a veritable granary. Large new citrus tree plantations stretch all along the plain. Cattle breeding has undergone a great development, too. It is not only the plain of Vrina but the fields and hills all around as far up as the Greek frontier also that have been transformed into fertile fields and pastures.

In this very zone are the ruins of a number of Illyrian towns and citadels, silent witnesses that in the far distant past the inhabitants in and around Butrint had reached an advanced economic and cultural life.

Opposite Butrint, on the banks of the canal, is the fishing station of Vivari. Butrint mullet have a taste of their own and may be found in the menus of the Albturist restaurants.

III/5 From Saranda to Gjirokastra (65 kilometers)

Ascending the Gjashta Pass and leaving the road that comes from the sea above to the left, we descend on a wide plain. This is the plain of Vurgu — a plain not altogether even and in parts hilly. The rivers Kalasa and Bistrica were once tributaries of the lake of Butrint. When they overflowed, they brought great damage to the fields around. They are now confined into a common canal and empty their waters straight in to the sea. In the plain of Vurgu, improved and irrigated by a canal that takes its waters from the Bistrica river, the peasantry sow cereals and rice. There are also numerous citrus tree plantations, which together with the vineyards, are claiming more and more land; the higher hills are covered with olive and fig trees.

At the 10th kilometer landmark the road bifurcates and continues towards the southern villages of Albania. At the head of this road rises the Finiqi hill. On its topmost part once stood the city of **Phoinike**, which the well-known ancient historian Polybius has described as the richest, the strongest and the best fortified city in the region. Phoinike was once the capital city of the State of Epirus. During the period

of the greatest expansion of the Kingdom of the Ardan Illyrians, the city was occupied by the latter. During the Middle Ages it continued to be an important center of the region and the seat of a diocese. Of the greatness of Phoinike speak the ruins of its walls built out of big blocks of stone, which still stand 7 meters high and form a complex of zig-zags with gates and towers along more than 1,000 meters. During the excavations carried out here, various monuments, a thesaurus — a beautiful structure for keeping the treasury in, built in the IVth century B.C., a water deposit of a later date, and a number of sculptures were unearthed, some of which are to be seen at the museum of Butrint.

In the neighbourhood of Phoinike, at the village of Mesopotam, there is a church of the time before the Ottoman occupation, quite remarkable for its architecture. On the Bistrica river two hydroelectric power stations have recently been built, the bigger of which has been named after J. V. Stalin.

16 kilometers away from Saranda stands the small town of **Delvina**, the main economic center of the region. During the Ottoman rule it had been an administrative center and a seat of the local feudal lords. Delvina has a cannery, a refrigerator and other workshops. In addition to many elementary and secondary schools, Delvina has a secondary agricultural vocational school. Here are the ruins of a fortress built by Ali Pasha Tepelena.

After leaving Delvina the road begins a long climb with a wonderful backview of the plain of Delvina surrounded by hills and green vegetation. Higher up, at an altitude of some 490 meters, one may contemplate the sea and the islands of Corfu, Meslera and Fane. Still another steep climb brings us to the gay valley of Muzina, from where the traveller may see not only the village but also the artificial lake in front of the tunnel of the «J. V. Stalin» hydro-power station on the Bistrica river. Here we go over the Muzina Pass (570 meters above sea level) and way down in front of us stretches the valley of the Drino river.

The first village that we come upon here is Jorgucat and thence the road leads to the boundary post of Kakavia, between Greece and Albania. In Kakavia, Bodrisht and Vodhina villages, archaeological materials of great interest have come to light during the excavations made recently in some tumulus (tombs). These archaeological findings, belonging to the first millennium B.C. just as other data, come to prove that the inhabitants of those places, too, who are called Epirotes in the ancient literature, were in fact Illyrians.

Continuing the road to Gjirokastra very picturesque small and big



Gjirokastra — The Citadel

villages with two-storey houses clustered together file one after the other at the foot of the Gjerë Mountains. Underneath spreads a fertile plain. Here stands the Defli reservoir, with an embankment 1,900 meters long, which is calculated to gather 12,060,000 m³ of water and irrigate 5,200 hectares of land in the Gjirokastra and Dropulli plains. On the opposite side of the valley there are other villages, where ancient ruins and Medieval monuments are found. Such are the fortress of Melani and the church of Peshkopi, an exquisite monument of Albanian culture belonging to the period prior to the invasion of the Turks.

After the chain of villages of the Drino valley we arrive at the city of Gjirokastra, one quarter of which may be seen before we take the turn and begin to climb the last lap of the road to the city itself. Gjirokastra is situated at an altitude of 325 meters above sea level, 245 kilometers (via Berat) and 263 kilometers (via Vlora) away from Tirana.

GJIROKASTRA is the main city in the southern part of Albania, a city-museum of great touristic interest, called also the «City of a Thousand Stairs». Gjirokastra, situated as it is at the foot of the Gjerë Mountains, is of particular interest for its native architecture, the terrain on which it is built and its form resembling an extended cyclopic hand. «I don't think that there could be found another city in the world to match Gjirokastra. It seems as if it were the Kingdom of the Fairies of the Earth, a kingdom somewhat tired and veiled with a thin layer of haze» — that is what a foreign traveller wrote once about Gjirokastra. The characteristic houses clustered around the majestic fortress towering above them as a huge battleship, are small fortresses in themselves.

A Bit of History. — No traces have been discovered so far to prove that the fortress of the city was existent in ancient times. A folk legend says that Gjirokastra was founded by a princess whose name was Argjiro. It is possible that the name of the city has to do with the Illyrian tribe of the Argyres, that settled on lands not far from this region. In the historical records it is mentioned for the first time during the XIVth century, when it passes from Byzantine domination into that of the Albanian feudal prince Zanëbisha, who made Gjirokastra the central city of his dominions. In the year 1432, Gjirokastra, which had already fallen into Ottoman Turkish hands, was attacked by the Albanian insurgents led by Prince Depë Zanëbisha. During the Turkish occupation Gjirokastra became the seat of the local Albanian feudal lords. In 1811 Ali Pasha Tepelena, after bombarding the fortress with artillery, forced the city to capitulate. In

the years 1830-1847 Gjirokastra became again the center of numerous uprisings against the Turks. Later on, Gjirokastra was to play an important role as a cradle of the patriotic movement of the Albanians for freedom and independence. Gjirokastra is the birth-place of the brothers Bajo and Çerçiz Topulli, militant Albanian patriots. In the year 1908, the Albanian detachment led by Çerçiz Topulli inflicted heavy casualties on the Ottoman troops in the village of Mashkullorë. During the Balkan Wars the city and its surroundings became the object of attacks by Greek chauvinist bands. In 1940-1941 during the Greek-Italian War, Gjirokastra became a battlefield once more.

During the National-liberation War the whole region of Gjirokastra rendered a precious contribution to the common cause and was one of the main bulwarks of the struggle against the nazi-fascist invaders. Thousands of partisans from Gjirokastra and its surroundings fought the common enemy in towns and mountains. Gjirokastra is the birth-place of Comrade Enver Hoxha, the distinguished leader of the Albanian people.

In the past, Gjirokastra was a commercial and handicraft center of quite a large district, where the basis of the economy was animal husbandry and dairy farming. The dairy products, especially the white cheeses of Gjirokastra, are well known and in great demand in both home and foreign markets. Gjirokastra boasts today of its industry, too, which is concentrated in an area stretching down in the plain in the form of a semicircle. Here is a big leather factory, a factory for the processing and fermentation of tobacco and a factory for manufacturing cigarettes, a new metal workshop, a plant for the experimental production of phosphorites and a number of other plants and workshops.

The city-museum keeps its characteristic aspect — there are old houses but new ones have also been built preserving the features of the old Gjirokastra house. There is also a new quarter with big and comfortable homes and apartment houses. A huge hospital, a home of culture, and many schools, those are some of the recent structures built in the city. Gjirokastra prints its own newspaper and has a radio station.

The new Albaturist hotel stands in the center of the city, in the square bearing Çerçiz Topulli's name and his monument. The hotel, which has an architectural design of its own, is furnished with every up-to-date accommodations. From here the tourists have the possibility to visit the ancient city of Butrint.

Sight-seeing in the City. — In this city-museum there is much to be seen indeed. The first and foremost center of attraction is the fort-



Gjirokastra — The Museum of the National-liberation War

ress with its commanding position over the city and plain — one of the most magnificent and best fortresses in Albania. As far as its structure is concerned, it seems to belong to the Middle Ages. From that time, passing from hand to hand, it acquired its present shape. It has enclosures, casements and buildings. Within the fortress could be stationed 5,000 people, who had at their disposal 85 points for stationing their canons. Within the fortress there are also prison cells. The giant open air aqueduct built by Albanian master builders, which furnished the fortress with 129,000 liters of water a day, was brought down during the time of Zogu's antipopular regime.

The fortress is gradually being restored and will be converted into a huge museum of arms, telling the future generations of the wars and struggles their fathers and forefathers waged for freedom and independence, of their acts of heroism and self-sacrifice.

The District Museum of the National-liberation War is housed in the restored house where the great leader of the Albanian people was born. In the rooms of the museum, are exhibited documents, photos, charts and materials that speak of the Great National-liberation War in the various districts, of its continuous expansion and of the people that took part in it.



Berat

The Home Museum of the Brothers Topulli is housed also in the restored home of the latter. The exhibits, documents and various materials, are placed in typical Gjirokastra rooms: everything there speaks of the struggle of the two patriots — Bajo and Çerçiz Topulli, and of the people in their struggle against the age-long Turkish occupation.

The Houses of Gjirokastra. — What strike the visitors most in Gjirokastra are its houses and the way they are built. They do resemble little fortresses indeed. With their square foundations, extensive side-ways, their roofs protruding way out from the walls, their two to three storeys, the houses of Gjirokastra present themselves to the visitor as strange creatures with stone legs, stone body and stone head. There are no windows on the ground floor of these houses. The bay windows replace the ordinary windows on the second floor, whereas on the topmost storey, out of range from eventual attacks, the houses are more attractively decorated; there are lateral extensions and beautiful kiosks commanding a full view of the city and its surroundings. In the interior, the ceilings, the mural shelves, the doors and the divans, are made of carved wood. The fire-places are made of plaster and with plant and fruit decorations.

III/6 From Gjirokastra to Berat (123 kilometers)

For the return trip to Durrës and Tirana, there are three possible roads. Heading for **Tepelena**, a small but rapidly growing administrative center, the road passes again through the valley of the Drino river. Before reaching Tepelena, the road to Berat crosses the river and follows the direction of the Kelcyra gorge. The two remaining roads pass through the town of Tepelena.

Tepelena is situated on a very important spot — a key position — commanding the valleys of the river Drino and that of the Vjosa river which almost join here. Once these two valleys were dominated by the ancient city of Antigonea, the ruins of which are to be found in the little Illyrian settlement of the neighbouring village of Lekël.

The present fortress of Tepelena, built upon the foundations of a Medieval one, was built by Ali Pasha Tepelena, a powerful Albanian ruler who set up a great and autonomous Pashalik with a seat in Janina (now in Greece). Ali Pasha Tepelena possessed also a magnificent palace (which does not exist any more) within the fortress of Tepelena. We find an interesting description of this palace in the poem «Childe Harold» by Lord Byron who visited Ali Pasha Tepelena in his palace in the year 1810. As a remembrance of this visit on the walls of the fortress of Tepelena there is a commemorative plate. Tepelena

was badly damaged in the year 1914 by the Greek chauvinist bands, which committed there, as well as in the whole district, unheard — of acts of plunder and murder. In the year 1920, during the Vlora uprising against the Italian rule, the local peasantry rose in arms and forced the Italian garrison of the fortress to surrender. Tepelena and the region around became again battlefields during the Greek-Italian War of 1940-1941 and, especially, during the National-liberation War. In front of the new palace of culture are placed the busts of the heroes of Tepelena who fell in the struggle for the liberation of the country.

From Tepelena a road descending in the direction of the small coal mining town of Memaliaj crosses the Vjosa river and heads for the region of Mallakastra ending in Fler. The other road follows the valley of the Vjosa river, now ascending the slopes of the mountains, then winding its way in the vicinity of the river valley. It is an attractive, although somewhat tedious road, because of its many zig-zags and step climbs. The road overlooks the valley of the Vjosa river and the regions that stretch beyond. Of interest alongs this road are the ruins of the Illyrian town of Amantia, at the present-day village of Ploça, where archaeological excavations, among other things, have brought to light an ancient stadium, too. After descending to the valley of the Shushica river the road takes the direction to Vlora.

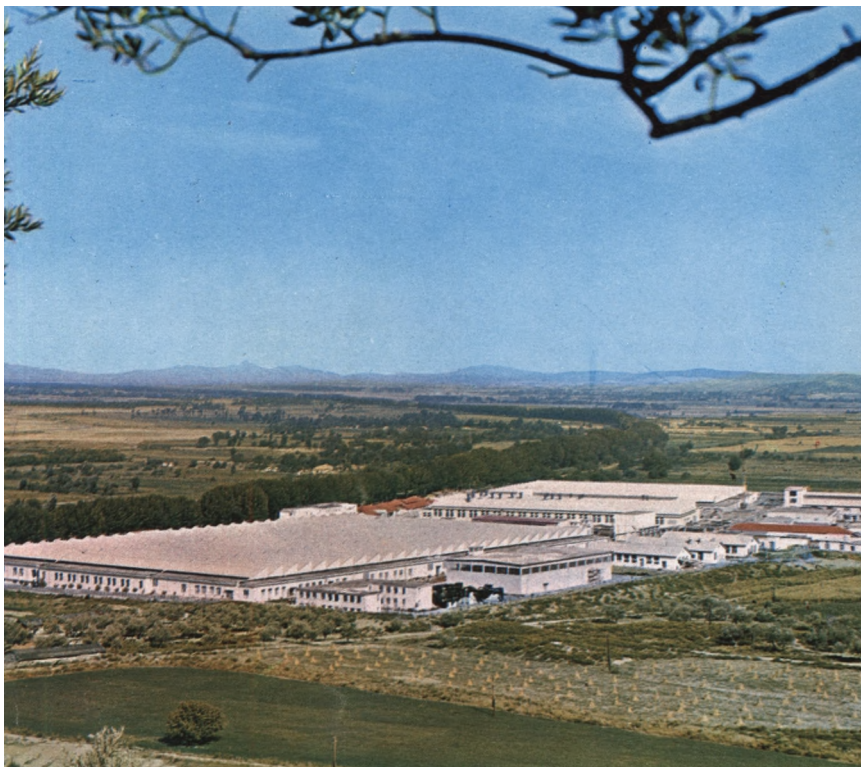
The road to Berat passes through the Kelcyra Pass, known in ancient times as the straits of Antigona. a narrow place that closed upon a road which came from the southeast and continued towards the seashore. Up to Kelcyra, a small inhabited center, the road passes along the Vjosa river valley. In Kelcyra the road climbs towards the mountains leaving behind the other road which goes to Permet, a small historical town 62 kilometers away from Gjirokastra. It was in Permet that the Anti-fascist National-liberation Congress met on May 24, 1944 (this date is written on the coat-of-arms of the People's Republic of Albania), and elected the General Anti-fascist National-liberation Council, with the attributes of a Provisional Government, and where a whole series of important decisions were taken, among which that of barring the return of Ahmet Zogu to Albania and that of cancelling the old treaties concluded to the detriment of the Albanian people. From Permet the road goes on to Korça.

The road, although mountainous, goes through a very picturesque landscape: on one side stretch the green hills of Mallakastra and on the other rise, staircase like, lofty mountains. Here we pass through the Kiçok Pass, 700 meters above sea level, and after that we come to the village of Buza, famous as the center of the peasant uprisings of the years 1837-1847. Further away we climb the Gilava Pass, 903 meters above sea level and, nearing Berat, the Çorotafa Pass. We

descend the valley of the Osum river and thence proceed to the city of Berat, passing over a characteristic bridge.

BERAT is situated on both banks of the Osum river, before the latter enters the plain of Myzeqe. Berat is the center of an important agricultural region. Because of its numerous monuments and of the beautiful and characteristic architecture of its houses, it has been proclaimed a city-museum. Its beauty is enhanced by the natural scenery round and about — the high mountains of Tomori (2,417 meters) and Shpiragu (1,213 meters). The hills and the mountain slopes around Berat, where not many years ago nothing but shrubs and thorns grew, today have taken the aspect of a green crown over the city; now we hear such names as the «Big Forest of Fig Trees», the «Valley

Berat — The «Mao Tse-tung» Textiles Mills





Berat — A mediaeval Church

of Fruit trees» indicating plantations with more than 200 thousand trees covering a surface of over 1,000 hectares.

A Bit of History. — Berat is one of the ancient cities of Albania. On the walls of its Medieval fortress overlooking the city one may see big stone blocks that once went to build the fortifications of that Illyrian city. During the IInd century B.C. the city was called Antipatrea. It was then a strategic fortress of the Illyrian Dasaretas tribe, dominating the entrance to the upper valley of the Osum river. It is possible that, during the Vth century, the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius the Young (408-450) christened the city Pulcherio-polis, after his sister's name — Pulcheria. During the IXth century the city was captured by the Bulgarians and became the residence of their rulers, after being re-named Belgrade. Its present-day name of Berat is derived from Belgrade. During the XIIIth century it was incorporated into the principality of the feudal lord Michael Angel Comneni, who reconstructed the walls of the fortress, but later on it was recaptured by the Byzantians. In later years it was occupied successively by Manfred of the Hohenstaufens, the Anjous of Naples, the King Stefan Dushan of the Serbians. Berat then passed into the hands of the Albanian feudal lords — the Muzakas, from whom eventually it fell into the hands of the Ottoman invaders.

The fortress and the numerous monuments of the city of Berat bear testimony to its prosperity and well-being during the Middle Ages.

The most widespread uprisings against the Turks in the surroundings of Berat took place in the year 1830-1850. The peasants rose against the Ottoman administration and the exploitation by the local feudal lords. The insurgents besieged the city and the fortress twice: in the years 1834 and 1847, but the powerful fortress withstood the assaults of the rebels who lacked artillery to bring down its walls.

During the National-liberation War the city of Berat and the region around it, rendered a valuable contribution to the common cause: a series of bold guerrilla actions were undertaken within the city. The inhabitants of this region filled the ranks of the brigades of the National-liberation Army.

Berat was liberated on the 12th of October, 1944. A few days later there was summoned the General National-liberation Council, which transformed the National-liberation Committee exercising the functions of a provisional government into the first Provisional Democratic Government of Albania. It was here that the National-liberation Council published the Declaration on the Rights of Citizens. It was here also that the important Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania (today the Party of Labor of Albania) held its sessions. It was in Berat that the decision was taken to form the National-liberation Front. Up to that time the National-liberation Council exercised both functions of State administration and political organization of the masses. The National-liberation Councils, after having taken State power into their hands, could not exercise the functions of a political organization of the masses at the same time. For this reason the National-liberation Front Organization, today the Democratic Front of Albania, came out as a separate organization. The Democratic Government held its first meeting in the building which houses today the museum of the town.

The City's Monuments. — The fortress of Berat was first built during the period of antiquity. It is situated upon a rocky hill that descends abruptly down, with only one possible entrance road, from the south. The entrance gate is situated on the southeastern side of the fortress.

A whole complex of towers and gates made the entrance very well protected. After being burned down by the Romans in the year 200 B.C. the walls of the fortress were rebuilt during the VIth century by Justinian. In the beginning of the XIIIth century (as indicate the initials of Michael Angel Comneni on a cross of bricks on the right wing wall of the second gate) a couple of new towers were built, the southeastern part was widened and the acropolis reconstructed. The fortress of Berat in its present state, even though considerably damaged, has remained magnificent indeed. The surface that it en-

compasses made it possible to house a considerable portion of the city's inhabitants.

The Churches of the Fortress belong to various periods of prosperity of the city: to the period between the XIIIth and XIVth centuries belong the Church of St. Mary of Vllaherna, of St. Trinity within the fortress, and that of St. Michael in the encircling walls. These three churches are typical constructions of the period.

The other churches belong to a later period (XVIth and XVIIIth centuries).

Beginning with the XVIth century a new element of construction — the mosque — entered the architecture of the city. To that period belongs the minaret of the mosque in the fortress, the mosque «Mbret» («King») and the Mosque «Plumbi» («Lead»).

Other monuments of the XVIIIth century are the Monastery of the Helveti Sect (Teqja e Helvetive) built in the year 1870, the clock tower and the bridge of Berat with 7 arches, built by Kurt Pasha in the years 1777-1780.

The city of Berat is very interesting for the architecture of its dwelling houses and the manner of their construction. The disposition of the town's quarters influenced considerably the forms of the houses. By building the city on slopes that faced each other, the inhabitants were obliged to construct the houses one above the other in order to exploit the space to the maximum. Such is the city quarter of Mangalem under the fortress. This quarter is unique for its narrow streets, the facades of its houses, their orientation and the large number of their windows, what have given Berat the name «The City of a Thousand Windows».

Berat, as a city, did not have a very conspicuous development before the liberation of the country. During these last years it has developed very considerably and is being transformed with every passing day. A wide and straight boulevard, flanked by new modern buildings, passes along the banks of the river. After the construction of a number of small factories and workshops, Berat has today the huge «Mao Tse-tung» Textile Mills — an imposing industrial unit, employing thousands of workers, and producing various kinds of textiles.

The educational and cultural life of the city has revived — a palace of culture has been set up and a whole network of schools of various profiles, including vocational training, have been opened.

A road that follows the river bed and valley of the Osum river, links Berat with the center of the mountainous region of Skrapar — **Çorovoda**.

As all Albanian mountainous regions, Skrapar is inhabited by a freedom-loving and hard-working population. The inhabitants of the region have never hesitated to take up arms against all foreign invaders. During the National-liberation War they answered the call of the Party and filled the ranks of the fighters for freedom and independence, meeting the enemy in bloody encounters. In spite of the fact that it is preeminently a mountainous region, agriculture has developed by leaps and bounds and, hand in hand with it, dairy farming and fruit trees growing are practiced.

The Albturist has recently built in Berat a new and comfortable hotel by the river side, furnished with the most modern equipment, a luxurious bar and restaurant.

From Berat to Durrës (90 kilometers). — The highway comes out of Berat and bends to the north. It is an attractive road through a plain full of beautiful scenery. At **Ura Vajgurore** the road bifurcates in the direction of the **Stalin city**, which is an important oil producing center. At the locality of **Poshnja** the road joins the one that comes from Fier and, continuing northwards, after crossing the bridge of the river Seman, the villages of Fier-Shegan and Karbunara, stops in Lushnja. From here it continues through Rogozhina, Kavaja and terminates in Durrës.

Third Part

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ALBTURIST CENTERS

The Albturist has established its centers for foreign tourists at the principal and most interesting cities and stations of Albania. These are to be found in:

TIRANA: The offices of the Albturist stand open for foreign tourists on the «Dëshmorët e Kombit» Avenue. On the one side of this avenue where one's eye rejoices at a sea of evergreen flowers and trees stands majestic the first rate «Dajti» Hotel. This hotel is run by the Tirana Albturist Branch.

The «Dajti» Hotel has single and two bed rooms as well as apartments with all the necessary modern accommodations. All the rooms possess their own WC with bathing tub or douche. Below, there are restaurant and banquet halls, a bar and a night tavern with dancing floor.

DURRËS: The Albturist branch is situated on the Durrës strand — a unique touristic and balnear center where the Albturist has built a series of hotels with accommodations for about 1,500 persons, with most up-to-date equipment and facilities.

The first rate «Adriatik» Hotel and the other hotels on its background were especially designed for home and foreign tourists.

In the «Adriatik» Hotel all rooms are equipped with douche, WC and warm and cold running water. Besides its restaurant and bar, each hotel possesses its own night local and dancing floor. Likewise, various sports grounds, table tennis halls, chess locals stand open for the amusement of the tourists.

SHKODRA: Here is the Albturist branch for Northern Albania. Besides one existing hotel, the Albturist is building in the center of the city a new one equipped with all the necessary modern accommodations.

LEZHË: In the outskirts of the city — in a spot called «Ishull» («isle») — the Albturist runs a modern characteristic hotel. There are rich hunting grounds in its surroundings.

ELBASAN: Here the Albturist has established its branch for Central Albania. Besides the existing hotel and its annexes, a new first rate hotel equipped with all modern accommodations is being built.

POGRADEK: Here on the shore of the Ohrida Lake the Albturist has set one of its branches. On the lake shore there are a hotel, a restaurant, a bar and other accomodations. In the middle of a wonderful garden dividing the lake-side from the hotel is a much frequented dancing floor.

KORÇA: Besides numerous tiny villas with all the usual hotel accomodations, here the Albturist runs a restaurant and a bar. A new first rate hotel with all the necessary modern equipment is well under way of being built.

GJIROKASTRA: It is here that the Albturist branch for Southern Albania is run. It comprises a hotel equipped with all modern accomodations, a restaurant, a bar and a night local.

SARANDA: Here the Albturist runs its branch on the Ionian sea coast. Besides the cosy villas with all the hotel accomodations there is a restaurant and a bar situated in a wonderful spot in the midst of lemon and orange trees. A great magnificent hotel of the international category is well under way of being accomplished.

VLORA: The Albturist branch here possesses a hotel, a restaurant and a bar.

FIER: The Albturist branch here runs two first rate modern hotels with restaurants and bars equipped with all up-to-date accomodations. Fier is only 15 km distant from the great archaeological center of Apollonia.

BERAT: This year for the first time the Albturist has established its branch in this ancient characteristic city. There is a modern hotel with all the necessary accomodations and equipment, such as restaurant, bar, etc.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

To enter the People's Republic of Albania, the foreign travellers should possess passports of their own states and Albanian visas released at one of the Albanian diplomatic representatives abroad. Visas are released for one trip, entry and exit. They are valid for a month's time. After their expiration they should be renewed.

For any other elucidation one should address oneself to the Albanian diplomatic representatives abroad where one has received or has to receive one's visa, or to any touristic firm the Albturist collaborates with.

CUSTOMS

For entering and staying for various periods of time in Albania, foreign tourists are entitled to bring with them, besides their personal belongings, any other indispensable objects such as, for instance, photographic apparatuses, portable radio-sets and other things. All these objects should be declared upon entering Albania and accordingly registered at the customs office.

Transit tourists travelling through Albanian territory on the request of the customs officer, should declare all objects they are carrying with. Upon leaving the country, they are allowed to take with them various souvenirs bought in Albania.

DRESSING

It must be borne in mind that in the summer season the climate is hot during the day, but grows very fresh during the night. When travelling on mountains, travellers should never forget taking warm clothes with them.

Tourists should see to it that they be properly dressed, particularly in towns. It is not permitted to walk about in a bathing suit. Women should avoid wearing mini-skirts or exaggeratedly deep décolletés.

CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATE

1) Tourists may bring with them foreign currency in bank-notes, checks, etc. without any limitation whatsoever, on the condition only that they should declare their value at the customs office. Foreign currency may be changed into Albanian currency at the State Bank or any other place designed by the same Bank, such as tourists' centers and hotels.

All unspent currency, after being duly declared at the customs office, may be taken out of the country.

2) **Exchange rate.** The sole Albanian currency is the Albanian lek. The exchange rate is the same throughout Albania and it is as follows:

1) U.S. dollar	lek	12.50	8) West German mark		3.10
2) British pound	»	30.00	9) Dutch gulden	lek	3.40
3) 100 Italian lire	»	2.00	10) Canadian dollar		11.50
4) 5 Belgian francs	»	1.25	11) Swedish crown	»	2.40
5) Austrian shilling	»	0,45	12) Australian dollar	»	13.75
6) French franc	»	2.25	13) Danish crown	»	1.65
7) Swiss franc	»	2.85	14) Norwegian crown	»	1.70
15) Finnish mark			»	3.00	

FOOD AND DRINKS

In general, the Albturist restaurant cook for tourists Albanian and oriental specialities that are widespread in the Balkan countries. They prepare also European dishes according to the consumers' wishes. Albanian dishes such as roast meat on a spit, various types of kebabs on a spit or paper, pot of fresh vegetables, Elbasan pot of fresh meat and vegetables, kukurec, etc. are very tasty.

Likewise, foreign tourists may find at the Albturist restaurants excellent fruits and vegetables, fresh and canned, as well as various sorts of stewed fruits and compots which have now succeeded in making the Albanian trade mark renowned in the foreign markets, too.

Local varieties of sweets are tasty and numerous. At the Albturist locals foreign travellers may find both French and oriental specialities (sorbets).

Besides meat and vegetable dishes, in the cities along the seaside such as Durrës, Shkodra, Saranda, Pogradec, etc. there can also be found various fresh fish dishes.

In Albania there are also numerous varieties of cheese and sausages with a characteristic taste.

At the Albturist bars, besides various sweets, express and Turkish coffee, there may be drunk the well-known Albanian cognac of the «Korça» brand, which is renowned also in the foreign markets, as well as various kinds of raki and harddrinks prepared of genuine grape spirit, red and white wines and various brands of liquors.

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