

ADIL CARCANI

Adil Carcani. Albanian Communist leader died in Tirana on October 13 aged 75. He was born on May 4, 1922.

ADIL CARCANI was the last Communist Prime Minister of Albania, and a loyal and conscientious servant of the one-party state constructed by Enver Hoxha and his associates after the liberation of Albania from the Axis in 1944. For nearly fifty years he held high offices in Tirana, in a career built on his own participation in the Partisan resistance in southern Albania, where he grew up.

He was one of the generation of young southern Tosks who flocked to the Albanian Party of Labour, the Communist party, in 1943-44, on the strength of the achievements of the resistance, and his loyalty to the ideals of his youth never wavered.

After the war, he underwent some technical training in Russia, and became part of the generation of technocrats who built their careers on the close link with the Soviet Union and the construction of the great hydroelectric dams in northern Albania, which brought electrification to the hitherto medieval conditions of the country. He was also involved in the development of the mining and extractive industries, presiding over developments based on the widespread use of forced and prison labour and appalling human rights violations.

By 1956 he was Minister of Industry and Mines. The development of the pyrite mine at Spac was a notorious example, where prisoners were often worked to death on the exposed terraces of a northern Albanian mountain. In many ways, this was the height of his career, and at that time he was widely seen, aged only 34, as a possible successor to Hoxha himself.

This promise was never fulfilled in the conditions he might have envisaged. Carcani did not belong to the inner circle of senior ex-Partisans around Hoxha, and his main political base was outside the Politburo. He had little knowledge of foreign affairs or defence. His progress to the top slowed as the political zigzags of the

regime began to defy any economic rationality, even within the communist framework, and his identity as a pro-Moscow technocrat became a handicap.

Although as deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers he presided over the turn from Russia to China after 1960-61, became deputy Prime Minister in 1964, and signed the main trade agreements in



Beijing in 1975, he was associated with economic stagnation and relative decline in these years. The pro-Soviet period had produced high economic growth rates for the country, if at an appalling human cost, but these were never subsequently repeated.

The break with China in 1976-78 was a further setback, and produced more stagnation. Carcani remained at the top, becoming Prime Minister in 1982, and closely associated with the efforts of the party boss Ramiz Alia to modernise Albania while keeping the one-party state intact after Hoxha's death in 1985. But it was a hopeless task which collapsed in ruins with the overthrow of communism in 1990-92. In 1994 Carcani received a five-year suspended jail sentence from the new Government of Dr Sali Berisha.

Married with two daughters, he was in private life a relatively approachable and informal man, compared with most other Albanian Communist leaders. A favourite recreation was spending time at his villa on the coastal beach south of Durrës.