



History of Albania (Albanian Studies) (Volume 1)

Tajar Zavalani

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The History of Albania by Tajar Zavalani (1903-1966) is the first full-length history of Albania to have been written in English. It covers the period from ancient times to the mid-twentieth century and provides the reader with a good overview of the historical development of a Balkan nation, which has to a large extent been ignored, even by scholars and specialists in Southeast European history. Retrieved after fifty years of oblivion, the fruits of Zavalani's imposing project are now available to the reading public for the first time. Tajar Zavalani was born in Korça (Albania) and fled to Italy with the rise of the dictatorship of Ahmet Zogu. There, Soviet agents recruited him and offered to let him study in Russia as a "victim of counter-revolution." In November 1930, after several years of study in Moscow and Leningrad, he left Russia, about which he now had serious misgivings. After the Italian invasion of Albania in 1939, Zavalani was interned in northern Italy, from where he escaped with his wife, Selma Zavalani (1915-1995), former lady-in-waiting to Queen Geraldine, via Switzerland to France and then in 1940, with King Zog's party, on into exile in England. In November 1940, Zavalani was given a job in the BBC's new Albanian-language service, which he came to head and where he worked until his death in an accident on 19 August 1966. He was a well-known and active figure of the Albanian exile community in Britain. The present History of Albania was composed for the most part between 1961 and 1963. About the Editors: Robert Elsie is an internationally recognized expert in the field of Albanian studies and the author of many books on the history and culture of Albania. Bejtullah Destani is a British-Kosovar scholar and founder of the Centre for Albanian Studies in London. As a diplomat, he has served recently at the Embassies of the Republic of Kosovo in London and Rome.

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