

LETTERS

From the *Slavic Review* Editorial Board:

Slavic Review publishes signed letters to the editor by individuals with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be restricted to one paragraph of no more than 250 words; comment on an article or forum should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. When we receive many letters on a topic, some letters will be published on the *Slavic Review* website with opportunities for further discussion. Letters may be submitted by e-mail, but a signed copy on official letterhead or with a complete return address must follow. The editor reserves the right to refuse to print, or to publish with cuts, letters that contain personal abuse or otherwise fail to meet the standards of debate expected in a scholarly journal.

To the Editor:

In a review of Elidor Mëhilli's *From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World* (Fall 2019), Melissa Feinberg writes: "The Albanian communists had taken power on their own; they did not need the Soviet military." This version of history was long favored and propagated by the Albanian communist leader Enver Hoxha, but it is specious. The devastating counteroffensives launched by the Soviet Red Army against the German Wehrmacht from early 1943 on forced the Germans to redeploy vast numbers of troops they had been planning to use for an occupation of the Balkans. If the Red Army had not waged those counteroffensives and defeated the Wehrmacht, the Germans would have occupied the entire Balkans, including Albania, and the Albanian communists would have been annihilated.

Hence, even though it is true that Soviet troops were not present in Albania when the Albanian communists gained power, the political fate of Albania was crucially dependent on the outcome of the war—an outcome that was determined by the Soviet military, not by Albanian communists.

Sincerely,

MARK KRAMER

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Professor Melissa Feinberg has chosen not to respond.