

THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF
THE PSR OF ALBANIA
THE INSTITUTE OF HISTORY

**THE HISTORY
OF THE SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION
OF ALBANIA**

(1944-1975)

ALBANIA REPORT
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TIRANA 1988



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has been prepared for the foreign reader by:

LUAN OMARI and **STEFANAQ POLLO**

It is based on Volume 4 of the HISTORY OF ALBANIA (1944-1975) published by the Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences of the PSR of Albania and prepared by the group of authors: **Luan Omari, Apostol Kotani, Arben Puto, Mentor Belegu, Viron Koka, Stavri Naçi, Niko Deçka, Stefanaq Pollo, Burhan Çiraku and Shyqyri Vlashi.**

It was translated by the foreign languages editorial board at the «8 Nëntori» Publishing House.

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It is based on Volume 2 of the HISTORY
OF ALBANIA (1944-1975) published by the
Institute of History of the Academy of
Sciences of the PDR of Albania and prepared
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It was translated by the foreign languages
editorial board at the "Naim Frashëri" Publishing
House.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ECONOMIC BASE OF SOCIALISM

CHAPTER ONE

STRENGTHENING OF THE STATE OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BUILDING OF THE ECONOMIC BASE OF SOCIALISM

1. The Triumph of the People's Revolution and the New Ratio of Class Forces

On November 29, 1944, with the triumph of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War and the people's revolution, a new page was opened in the history of the Albanian people. Albania was liberated from the fascist occupation, and for the first time in their history, the Albanian people gained genuine national independence. They overthrew the power of the exploiting classes, of big landowners and the bourgeoisie, who had linked their fate with that of the fascist occupiers, and simultaneously established the people's state power. As a consequence, Albania broke away from the world capitalist system.

During the National Liberation War the unity of the popular masses in the National Liberation Front around the Communist Party of Albania, led by its founder Comrade Enver Hoxha, had been greatly

strengthened. This unity was the main factor which made possible not only the successful defence of the victories of the National Liberation War, but also the further continuation of the people's revolution for the construction of a new social order, which would ensure the genuine liberation of the working people from oppression and exploitation.

However, although the new people's power, which had been established step by step during the Anti-fascist National Liberation War in every region liberated from the enemy, now extended throughout the whole territory of Albania, the situation in the country was not fully stabilized. The forces of reaction, which had been routed militarily and politically, had not been completely liquidated.

A small part of the population was still under the influence of the forces of reaction. The influence of the bajraktars and the Catholic clergy was still active, especially in certain zones of the North. This influence was fostered not only by the imperialist propaganda, but also by the activity of bands of fugitives, made up mainly of the remnants of the reactionary organizations, Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti, which had collaborated with the occupiers.

The strengthening of the internal situation, the struggle against the bands and the work of convincing and educating those strata of the population which adopted an ill-disposed or indifferent stand towards the new reality in Albania, was an urgent major task for the people's state power.

The conditions were favourable for the accomplishment of this task. The Communist Party, which had succeeded in raising the people in the liberation war and setting up the revolutionary regular army and the new people's state power, was the sole leading and organizing force in the country. Despite the efforts made not only by the open enemies of the revolution, but also

by disguised enemies, the ambitious and careerist anti-Party elements that had managed to penetrate the top organs of the Party in order to undermine its authority and leading role, the Communist Party enjoyed very great prestige.

On the other hand, from the time it was created during the war the new people's state power was not simply a revolutionary democratic dictatorship, but comprised the dictatorship of the proletariat in its embryo. This was made possible because the National Liberation War was transformed into a thorough-going people's revolution which, under the leadership of the Communist Party, was directed also against the exploiting classes which were the political and social support of the occupier. The rapid development of events, the further change in the ratio of class forces in favour of the working class and the working masses, led to the rapid development of this embryonic form. So, with the complete liberation of the country, the new people's state power, which was established throughout Albania, began to exercise the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the form of the state of people's democracy.

The popular character of the state power and the leading role of the Communist Party were the main factors which ensured that the people's, democratic, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution was carried through to the end in the economic, social and cultural fields, too, developing further, immediately and without interruption, into a socialist revolution.

After the main strategic aim of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War, the complete liberation of Albania and the establishment of the people's state power, had been achieved, the new strategic aim that was placed before the country was the construction of socialism. However, in order to achieve this objective measures had to be taken to accomplish urgent tasks

which were indispensable premises for the subsequent deepening of the socio-economic transformations. These urgent tasks were: a) the safeguarding of the independence of the country against the American and British imperialist enemies and their allies by strengthening the state power and preventing the imperialists from interfering politically and economically in Albania; b) the liquidation of the remnants of fascism and its collaborators, which meant also the elimination of all the political, juridical and ideological consequences of the fascist occupation; c) the completion and perfection of the new state apparatus on the basis of the national liberation councils, by enlarging the people's participation in the governing of the country and taking all the necessary measures to ensure that these national liberation councils performed their role as representative organs of the masses of the people in the best possible way; d) the further development of the revolution in its uninterrupted process, which meant the carrying out of social and economic reforms of a democratic character, combined with more radical reforms of a socialist character.

The accomplishment of these tasks was conditioned not only by the internal situation, but also by the international situation, by the new ratio of forces which was being established in the world with the victory of the anti-fascist coalition.

Albania was liberated when the Second World War was still going on. The war in Europe ended with the unconditional capitulation of Nazi Germany on May 9, 1945 and in Asia with the capitulation of Japan on September 2, 1945.

As a result of the defeat of the fascist powers by the Soviet Union, the other allied countries, and the armed struggle of the oppressed peoples, great changes occurred in the world. Despite the heavy human losses and material destruction it suffered, the Soviet Union

emerged from the war stronger from the military standpoint and with extraordinary political prestige. The people's revolution triumphed in a series of countries of Europe and Asia and its ceaseless development led to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The people's revolution in China entered a new decisive stage which was to end, some years later, with the liberation of that country from feudal and imperialist bondage, and with the proclamation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. The colonial system of imperialism began to disintegrate.

New fraternal relations of friendship and mutual assistance, previously unknown to the capitalist world, were established between the first socialist state, the Soviet Union, and the countries of people's democracy, liberated from the rule of the capitalists and big landowners.

The democratic, anti-imperialist camp, which began to play its role as a main factor for progress, peace and democracy in the development of mankind, was created. Albania was included in this camp of which the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy were members. For small, backward Albania this had importance not only for the defence of its independence against the threats from imperialism, but also for its development on the road of economic and cultural progress. The inclusion of Albania in this camp was the logical result of the Albanian people's revolution, of the social and political transformations that took place in Albania, of the establishment of a new order which was similar in character to the socio-economic order which had been established in the Soviet Union and which was being established in the countries of people's democracy.

The imperialist powers, headed by the United States of America, could not reconcile themselves to these radical changes in favour of democracy and socialism.

They began to co-ordinate their efforts to save the capitalist system, to suppress the anti-imperialist movements in the colonial and dependent countries, to stop the upsurge of the revolutionary workers' movement in the capitalist countries, and to organize the counter-revolution in the countries of people's democracy. With their policy from positions of strength, they began to interfere openly in the internal affairs of those states which did not agree to submit to their dictate.

In these circumstances the victories achieved could be defended, the national independence could be preserved and peace could be ensured only through resolute struggle against imperialism. The resolute revolutionary and anti-imperialist line which the Communist Party of Albania and the people's state power pursued was one of the main factors which determined the development of Albania after its Liberation from fascism.

The successful accomplishment of the new tasks was closely linked, in the first place, with the strengthening of the state of people's democracy. The creation of the people's state power was the greatest victory of the Albanian people and the fundamental condition which would enable radical changes in favour of the working masses to be carried out in socio-economic life.

The process of the construction of the new state mechanism, which had begun during the National Liberation War, parallel with the destruction of the state apparatus of enemy classes, continued after the liberation of the country. The new state mechanism was set up on the basis of the national liberation councils, as the only organs representative of the people.

In the zones where the war had been fiercest, the councils had long been established and enjoyed complete authority as organs of state power. In some zones of the North which were the last to be liberated the setting up of councils began immediately. In the first

three months of 1945, new elections to the national liberation councils were held in the regions of the Southern and Central Albania. They were followed by the elections held in the other regions of the country. The earlier elections had been conducted during the war and the composition of the councils had to be completed and renewed. The elections were conducted by open ballot, on the basis of a law adopted at the 2nd Meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council (ANLC) of Berat, in October 1944. These elections served to strengthen and enliven the organs of the new state power,

The administrative apparatus was set up in accordance with the administrative-territorial division of the country. The former division into prefectures (totalling 10), sub-prefectures and villages was retained temporarily. New cadres emerged from the Anti-fascist National Liberation War were brought into the new state apparatus. They lacked experience in the field of administration, but they were loyal to the people and the people's state power, full of revolutionary enthusiasm and would gain experience in the course of work, while also benefitting from collaboration with those former officials who were patriots. At the outset the organs of the people's state power considered the officials of the former regime dismissed from their posts, while those who were recalled to their duties were appointed temporarily, pending verification of their stand in the past. The introduction of new cadres, the strengthening of the leadership and control of the Party over the administrative apparatus, brought about the transformation of this apparatus into a powerful lever for the successful continuation of the people's revolution, and the attack against exploiting classes.

The organization of the army and the organs of state security on modern lines, to defend the victories of the people's revolution, was of special importance.

In the first period after Liberation the ranks of the army were filled through collaboration between the national liberation councils of the precincts and villages and the army commands. The councils compiled the lists of the young over 17 years of age and handed them to the commands. The mobilization in the army was partial, and to some extent, voluntary, since the maximum and minimum ages for regular recruits had not been defined. The reorganization of the army from the stand-point of its composition and commanding cadres, the arming of it with up-to-date means, and its training on the basis of contemporary military art, combining this with the experience of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War, led to its modernization. Every soldier discharged from the army had not only learned to read and write, but had also acquired much general knowledge which would help him in life. To provide qualified cadres for the army, officers' training courses were opened. In March 1945 the Cadets' School, which later assumed the name the «Skanderbeg» Military School, was organized at the school for the qualification of officers, in Tirana. Many other officers were sent to military schools in the Soviet Union for specialization in different branches.

In order to strengthen the defence of the country and ensure its independence, the Border Force was organized in April 1945, while the Naval Fleet was created in August of the same year.

The People's Police Force, the successor to the local and regional commands set up during the National Liberation War, was created, too, for the protection of public order after Liberation. The police force, as an armed organ for public security, was set up attached to the national liberation councils of prefectures, sub-prefectures and localities and was directly dependent on these councils. The policemen of each locality were appointed by the population of that locality, while the

policemen of prefectures and sub-prefectures were appointed by the executive committees of the respective national liberation councils.

Likewise, measures were taken for the setting up of the new court apparatus in the service of the people. The new people's justice had its roots in the courts organized by the partisan detachments and the national liberation councils against traitors and enemies of the people. After the liberation of the country, however, the regular court organs were created. At the end of 1944, sections of justice for the settlement of the most urgent civil questions were set up attached to the councils. The military courts, which, besides their powers to deal with crimes committed by military personnels, also had authority to try war criminals and enemies of the people, were created in January 1945. However, an overall court system, which would investigate and settle all penal and civil cases by normal procedure, had still not been established. This was achieved with the law promulgated in May 1945, when all the instances of the general court system were created.

The people's courts — the basis of the new court system — were set up in the centre of every prefecture and in the centres of most sub-prefectures. The judges were elected by the respective national liberation councils.

The setting up of the new state apparatus took place along with the creation of the new revolutionary legislation. A preliminary condition for the creation of such legislation was the destruction of the old juridical system established by the anti-popular regime of the past. The ANLC law of May 17, 1945 revoked and declared invalid all the statutes, laws, by-laws, regulations and decrees promulgated during the time of the Italian and German occupation. This legal measure sanctioned the factual situation created during the war and was expressed explicitly in the decisions of the Na-

tional Liberation Conference of Labinot (September 1943) on the annulment of all the old state organs. Later the dispositions in existence before the fascist occupation, that is, before April 7, 1939, were abrogated explicitly, too. Thus, the people's state power overthrew everything in the field of legislation which was contrary to the new democratic principles.

In the process of the democratization of the life of the country the social organizations of the masses played a major role in wiping out the grave consequences which the landowner bourgeois regime of Zog and the fascist occupation had left in this field, too.

The biggest mass organization was the National Liberation Front, which had ensured the unity of the people in the war against the occupiers and traitors, and now, based on the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry, was again the main lever of the Party for the mobilization and political education of the broad masses of the people. In Albania, unlike certain other countries of people's democracy in which the Front was set up as a coalition of parties, even after Liberation the Front retained its character as a monolithic organization. No other political groupings were formed within its ranks and under its label. The efforts of various reactionary elements to create such groupings, both inside and outside the Front, failed because they found no support among the people.

The Front, which at its 1st Congress held on August 5, 1945 was called the Democratic Front of Albania, followed the course of its further enlargement, including not only the masses of the people who had taken part in the war, but also those elements who had remained passive or had been under the influence of reactionary chieftains. Greeting the Congress on behalf of the Democratic Government, its Chairman, Enver Hoxha, pointed out: «Everyone, apart from fascists, pro-fascists,

not only has his place in the Front, but also has the sacred duty to take part in it actively.»* The Congress set the task of enlarging and strengthening the Front in struggle against the manoeuvres of reaction, its organizational consolidation, the activization of the masses in concrete actions, the political mobilization of the whole people to wipe out the remnants of fascism in the political, economic and cultural fields. The Congress demanded that the Constituent Assembly be convened to take the final decision on the final form of the new Albanian state, just as had been laid down in the decisions of the 1st National Liberation Congress at Përmet in May 1944.

The Congress and the new elections to the organization of the Democratic Front marked a further enlargement of it. In the policy of the enlargement of the Front, however, under the influence of the opportunist stand of Sejfulla Malëshova who, at that time, was a member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPA and minister of People's Culture, concessions were made to reactionary elements. Speaking in the Congress against «sectarianism», he demanded that even those officials, intellectuals and officers who had collaborated with the occupier should be activated in the ranks of the Front. The opportunist line of Sejfulla Malëshova led to the admission of enemy elements who strove to split and undermine this organization from within. Nevertheless, the leadership of the Party and the militant spirit of the working masses safeguarded the profoundly popular and revolutionary character of the Democratic Front.

The working class of Albania, the leading force of the Front and the whole new society which was being created, was organized, on a national scale, in trade-unions. The provisional General Council of Trade

* Enver Hoxha, *Works*, vol. 3, p. 72, Alb. ed.

Unions was elected on February 11, 1945. The 1st Congress of the Trade Unions of Albania, which was opened on October 28, 1945, summed up the achievements of the working class inside less than one year since Liberation; the workers and employees were united in 14 local trade-union organizations with more than 25,000 members. Thanks to their people's state power, the workers had secured a 40-100 per cent increase in income, the 8-hour workday, one day off per week and paid annual holidays had been implemented, the principle of equal pay for equal work was established, etc. With its endorsement of the Constitution and determination of the political, economic and educative tasks of the trade-unions as «schools of communism» (Lenin), the Congress marked an important step in the enhancement of their role in the process of the revolutionary transformations.

The youth made a special contribution to the development and running of the country. The broad participation of the masses in running the country implied, first of all, the activation of the youth, the most vital and revolutionary section of the people. Tens of thousands of young people organized in voluntary work battalions and brigades took an active part in the reconstruction of the country. There was no sector in which the great contribution of the youth was not felt. Immediately after Liberation, the Anti-fascist Youth Union of Albania (AYUA) set up its organizations in all districts of Albania. The reactionary forces tried to impede the extension and strengthening of the youth organization and to revive the activity of fascist organizations in another form; the catholic clergy, in particular, attempted to organize part of the youth in alleged cultural societies under its guidance (such as the Antonian Society, the Don Bosco Society, etc.). But only isolated individuals, under the influence of enemy propaganda, joined those societies. The overwhelming bulk

of the Albanian youth joined the ranks of the AYUA. The 2nd Congress of the Anti-fascist Youth Union, which was held in April 1945 under the slogan «No young person outside the AYUA», was evidence of the maturity and the revolutionary tempering of the youth organization as an inseparable part of the people and a loyal reserve of the Party. In presenting the task for the most active participation of the youth in the construction of the country, the Congress laid special emphasis on the problem of the education of the masses of the youth, on equipping them with schooling, culture and contemporary science. Especially after its 2nd Congress, the youth organization accomplished great work in the reconstruction of the country. It organized summer courses for the pupils who had been deprived of the possibility of attending school during the war, set up sports societies, organized children's holiday camps, etc. These major actions became real schools in which hundreds of young folk from the ranks of the people learned in practice how to administer the country.

For their part, the Albanian women were placing their creative abilities, inhibited by centuries of slavery and obscurantism, in the service of the country. The Albanian women were just setting out on the road to their emancipation. Raising their cultural-educational level, and especially, their participation in production were indispensable factors in the struggle for the emancipation of women, for ensuring their full equality with men in the social life and in the family, in the future. The 1st Congress of the Anti-fascist Women's Union of Albania, convened on November 4, 1944, the eve of the liberation of the country, had laid down important tasks for the activation of the Albanian women and the strengthening of their organization. These tasks began to be fulfilled immediately after Liberation. In the southern regions women's organizations were set up

in all the villages; in the North, too, despite the propaganda of reaction and the pronounced fanaticism, the women began to take part more actively in political life, and alongside men, participated actively in the reconstruction work, especially in the most heavily damaged zones. In Vlora, Elbasan, Gjirokastra and elsewhere work battalions of women only were formed.

The tasks for the democratization of the life of the country were difficult and complex. They could not be accomplished by decrees from above alone. The formal establishment of the rights and freedoms of the people, denied or violated by the anti-popular regimes, was not the problem. That was being achieved quickly, because state power was in the hands of the people. The main thing, in order to make these rights and democratic freedoms effective, was the struggle against all the reactionary and backward forces, against all the concepts that hindered the broad participation of the masses of the people, the women, the youth, the working people who still lacked the necessary schooling and culture, in the governing of the country. The Party activated the broad popular masses in this struggle. The positive results were soon apparent.

The people's state power played an important role, also, in the struggle against the remnants of fascism and reaction. Before the liberation of the country, on May 28, 1944, the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council had decided to set up a commission to investigate and verify the crimes committed by the occupiers and their collaborators. Apart from this, by decision of this Council on December 15, 1944, the special court was set up in Tirana to try war criminals and collaborators with the enemy. In each prefecture, commissions to investigate war crimes and to detect war criminals were set up with representatives of the Front, the youth and women's organizations. These commissions were directed by the Central Commission. The latter called on

the people to denounce the war criminals and to assist actively in uncovering the crimes committed by the occupiers and their tools. The assistance of the popular masses, the support which they gave the investigation commissions, the forces of the army and state security organs made possible the documentation of the crimes of fascism, and at the same time, the capture of most of the collaborators who had not managed to flee the country. Nevertheless, some of the war criminals and enemies of the people hid themselves in the hope that the people's state power had its days numbered and that they might be saved through the intervention of the imperialists powers. The detachments of the army and state security forces, aided by the people, were mobilized for their capture or liquidation.

The wiping out of the fascist remnants was an important task of the people's revolution, a necessary retribution for the sufferings which the Albanian people had suffered at the hands of the fascist aggressors and their tools, and at the same time, a factor for the democratic development of the country. Moreover, the whole people demanded it.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of February 4, 1944, the day when scores of innocent citizens were massacred in Tirana by the German nazis and their collaborators, tens of thousands of people held demonstrations in Tirana, Korça, Shkodra, Berat and other cities, demanding the punishment of collaborators with the enemy and the handing over by the Allies of war criminals who had fled the country.

At the end of February 1945 the Central Commission for the detection of war criminals requested the International Commission for the Defection of war crimes and war criminals in London to extradition of 42 Albanian war criminals. This request was never complied with, because the American and British im-

perialists intended to use the collaborators with fascism as tools for the accomplishment of their plans for the overthrow of the people's state power in Albania.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary justice began to try and condemn the war criminals and enemies of the people who had been caught. After a trial which lasted from March 1 to April 13, 1945, the special court in Tirana sentenced 60 major war criminals and enemies of the people to the punishment they deserved. The proceedings of the special court proved the responsibility of the exploiting classes in the preparation of the conditions for the fascist occupation and their collaboration with the occupiers against the people's national liberation movement. The verdicts of the special court, the military courts, as well as the persistent struggle of the state security forces against the bands of fugitives were a heavy blow to the remnants of the traitor organizations.

Nevertheless, exploiting the difficulties through which our country was going and the aid provided them from abroad, the remnants of reaction began to set up new counter-revolutionary organizations and to hatch up anti-state plots to sabotage the recovery of the national economy.

Internal reaction, which, even with the backing of the armed forces of Italian fascism and German nazism, had been unable to cope with the revolutionary national liberation movement, now had even less hope that it could overthrow the people's state power with its own forces. The situation was developing in favour of this state power which was steadily consolidating its positions. Therefore, reaction pinned its last remaining hopes for a change of the situation in Albania on the intervention of the imperialist powers. In order to prepare this intervention it linked up with American and British imperialism and placed itself in the service of its secret agencies.

After Liberation, the American and British missions had replaced the military missions which had been attached to the forces of the National Liberation Army in Albania, and represented the respective states pending the establishment of normal diplomatic relations. These missions undertook to unite, direct and co-ordinate the efforts of internal reaction with those of the imperialist powers.

In January 1945, internal reaction, especially the Catholic clergy, under the guidance of American and British agents and in collaboration with the Vatican, organized a counter-revolutionary movement in Northern Albania, which was supposed to result in the capture of Shkodra, Lezha and Shëngjin. This was to serve as a justification for intervention by American and British forces allegedly in order to restore order and to prevent the outbreak of a civil war. However, the real aim of the British and American forces was to occupy Albania militarily, to overthrow the Democratic Government and to restore the state power of the exploiting classes. The staff of this movement had its headquarters in the palace of the archbishop of Shkodra. The uprising began with an attack on Koplik which was captured and held by the bands of criminals for a few hours. But the forces of the army and state security counteracted immediately, liberated Koplik and wiped out the bands operating in the vicinity of Shkodra. The uprising was suppressed within the day. Included among the leaders captured carrying weapons were some Catholic clergymen. The main participants in this activity received the punishment they deserved, while those they had misled, the men who had been drawn into this hostile attempt by the reactionary chieftains, were released.

After the prompt response of the forces of the army to this counter-revolutionary movement, reaction adopted a new tactics in the struggle against the peo-

ple's state power, using mainly acts sabotage, terror and diversion, but without abandoning preparations for an eventual armed attack.

The conspiratorial efforts of the overthrown landowners and bourgeoisie within the country were combined with the pressures and provocative interference of the imperialist powers.

From the first days of the complete liberation of the country, at the end of November 1944, officers of the British Military Mission contacted the Italian managers of the AIPA Enterprise at Kuçova (today Stalin City) in order to sabotage the work of the Oil Commissariat which had been set up after the liberation of Kuçova in October 1944, and to collect information for the British. The acts of sabotage which were committed later caused heavy damage amounting to nearly 2 million Albanian francs.¹ In February 1945, the group of saboteurs set fire to the oil storage tanks, but this attempt failed because the workers fought the fire heroically until it was extinguished. The saboteurs were discovered, tried, and sentenced.

The sabotage at Kuçova was only the first act in the series of plots, acts of sabotage and terror perpetrated by the forces of reaction and their organizers, the foreign imperialists. Before the war was ended, some big merchants, industrialists, landowners and intellectuals, who for ulterior motives had supported the platform of the National Liberation Front for the liberation of the Homeland from the fascist yoke, but who, in reality, were against the hegemonic role of the working class and the Communist Party, against the radical socio-economic reforms, had begun to put forward their plan for the creation of an opposition party with «moderate» tendencies within the Front to oppose the Communist Party. In February 1945 they

1 An Albanian franc was equal to five leks of that time.

set about forming such a party which, by this time, was included in the plans of the foreign imperialists to fight the people's state power. After extending their circle with other representatives of the bourgeoisie such as Gjergj Kokoshi, Riza Dani, and others and with bajraktars like Cen Elezi and Faik Shehu, they decided that until conditions more favourable for the announcement of the formation of their party, they should set up a secret organization which became known later as «the group of deputies» which established contact with the representatives of imperialist states.

The British Military Mission also assisted in the formation of several reactionary groups such as «the resistance group», «the monarchist group», comprised of former members of the Legaliteti organization and other supporters of the Zogite regime, and «the social-democratic group», the members of which were representatives of the «social-democratic» trend in the ranks of Balli Kombëtar. The most active amongst them was «the resistance group» which established contact with the fugitive criminals who had returned to the country. But these groups had no influence among the masses and all told amounted to no more than a few score members. In order to strengthen them and extend their activity, on the instruction of British agents, it was decided in the autumn of 1945 that the three organizations should merge into one, called the «Democratic Union», which was supposed to be especially active on the eve of the elections for the Constituent Assembly.

Besides this, in the middle of 1945, the British Military Mission, bringing instructions from Mithat Frashëri¹, took measures for the reorganization of Balli Kombëtar. The remnants of Balli Kombëtar formed a central committee and several regional committees, es-

1 Chief of the reactionary organization, Balli Kombëtar, who fled the country on the eve of Liberation.

tablishing contact with the bands of fugitive criminals who had returned and were operating in the North and the South. They were linked with the reactionary Catholic clergy and the Vorio-Epirote agency in the pay of the leading circles of Greek chauvinists who had territorial claims on Albania.

The conspiratorial activity was further enlivened after May 1945 with the arrival in Tirana of the American civilian mission. Harry Fultz, the assistant head of the mission, had organized a network of secret agents in Albania, in the time of ex-King Zog. In July that year he gathered his agents and gave them instructions on the extension of the network and the creation of counter-revolutionary groups. These groups, united into one organization, were charged with the task of carrying out sabotage in the economic field, of penetrating into the state organs in order to obstruct the social-democratic reforms, of creating disturbances and provoking a military intervention from abroad.

The plans of the enemy groups supported by the American and British imperialists, were in accord with the instructions that the Catholic clergy had received from the Vatican to organize the struggle against the people's power. In the spring of 1945, at a meeting of all the bishops, it was decided to create a «Christian Democrat» party which would remain illegal for a certain period. Some other organizations, one of which was «Bashkimi Shqiptar» (Albanian Union) were to act jointly with this party. It organized terrorist activity and, besides contacts with the bands of fugitive criminals such as Pashuk Biba, Mark Gjon Marku and others, established contacts with other reactionary groups which acted illegally.

In this manner, the threads of all these enemy organizations led to the American and British missions. The imperialists and their tools also tried to organize an opposition within the Democratic Front and outside it

on the eve of the elections to the Constituent Assembly. This opposition was to be used as a weapon of the Anglo-Americans in the Constituent Assembly. When it became clear that the efforts to create such an opposition failed, the reactionary forces went over to the attack to create disturbances which would serve as a pretext to cancel or postpone the elections. A new counter-revolutionary uprising was prepared in the North, under Muharrem Bajraktari in collaboration with Mark Gjon Marku and Figri Dine. At the same time, at the beginning of November 1945, a memorandum was handed to the American and British missions on behalf of the groups of plotters, in which they demanded the postponement of the «non-democratic» elections and that the governments of the USA and Great Britain should intervene to ensure «freedom of action» for all the political forces within the country.

These attempts failed, because the Democratic Government rejected every pretext of the Anglo-Americans to interfere in the internal affairs of Albania and also because the security forces discovered the counter-revolutionary organizations. On January 1, 1946 it was made known that the «Albanian Union» was uncovered and several clergymen at its head were arrested. In the search of the monasteries of the Jesuits and the Franciscans in Shkodra, weapons and munitions were found under the altar where the priests preached «Christian charity». On January 24, when the heads of the American and British missions gave their secret agents new instructions, the members of the «Democratic Union» and the leaders of the Greek agency of the Vorio-Epirus Syllogos* were arrested. The forces of the army began systematic chasing of the bands of Muharrem Bajraktari and co.

In this manner the large-scale co-ordinated plan of internal reaction and imperialism to undermine and

* Association, organization (Greek).

overthrow the people's state power which was being strengthened and was leading the great work for the reconstruction of the country was foiled.

2. The Revolutionary Socio-Economic Transformations

The reconstruction of the country devastated by the war and the carrying out of the most urgent socio-economic transformations were a great and difficult task with which the people's power was faced. The situation was very grave. In the first period after Liberation, Albania was a backward country from the economic, social and cultural point of view, with a small population reduced in number by chronic diseases, emmigration and the losses sustained during the war. According to the census of September 30, 1945, the country had 1,122,044 inhabitants, of which 21.3 per cent were townspeople and 78.7 per cent peasants. Only one city, Tirana, had more than 50,000 inhabitants, whereas Shkodra had more than 25,000. Apart from Korça and Durrës, the other small towns had virtually no industries and from many aspects were not different from the backward villages of the time. Over 80 per cent of the population was illiterate. The foreign occupiers and the exploiting classes left Albania in this situation of chronic backwardness. The picture was made even more gloomy if the great destruction and damage inflicted by the fascist occupiers are added to it. Hundreds of villages were reduced to ashes, the number of burnt down and ruined houses was in excess of 62,000, the population of entire regions was left homeless, hungry and without clothing. All bridges, big and small, had been blown up, roads, seaports, telephone and telegraph networks, electric power stations and water

supply systems were in ruins or heavily damaged; mines had fallen into disuse; the industrial installations of Kuçova, Patos, Selenica, Pishkash, etc., had been blown up by the Germans; nearly all vehicles had been destroyed, heavily damaged or stolen by the enemy.

It was very difficult to normalize the economic situation. Trade was at a standstill on account of great poverty, of the other consequences of the war and lack of means of communication. Agriculture and livestock-farming had been severely damaged. The treasury of the new government was empty. The German occupiers not only had plundered 253,615,390 Albanian francs which guaranteed the circulation of the currency which had increased during invasion, but in collaboration with the traitors to the country had stolen the gold of the Albanian state estimated at 8,062,827 gold francs.

Apart from these difficulties, the Democratic Government had to take urgent measures to shelter and secure food for about 25 thousand people from the Albanian population of Çamëria (Northern Greece), who had abandoned their homes to escape extermination by the Greek monarcho-fascist circles and had sought refuge in Albania.

Our people had to cope with all these difficulties, which would have been great even for more developed countries, relying basically on the internal forces. The Soviet Union did not spare its aid, and from the first months after Liberation it supplied Albania with wheat, but the Soviet state was still locked in war and had also suffered immense destruction by the fascist aggression. The new countries of people's democracy were also in a difficult situation. The western allies, and in the first place, the United States of America which had become richer during the war, tried to impose on Albania an «aid» with political aims to subjugate the country and place it under their control. The Democratic Government of Albania rejected the demands of the American

and British imperialists to extend their military missions and later, to bring to Albania over 1,500 officers of the Military Liaison under the pretext of organizing and supervising the distribution of their «aid». In fact, they wanted to create more favorable conditions for interference in the internal affairs of Albania. In January 1945 the Democratic Government accepted the aid of UNRRA, because this was an international organization dependent on the United Nations Organization. On the basis of the agreement which was signed between the Albanian government and UNRRA the latter was to supply 10,000 tons of goods each month. This amount of goods was quite insufficient to fulfil the needs of the country for food and reconstruction. Moreover, UNRRA, which was in fact entirely under the direction and control of the USA and Great Britain, raised many obstacles to delay the implementation of the plan for supplies. The materials needed most urgently such as lubricating oils, spare parts and tyres for vehicles were either not delivered at all or sent in very small supply, so hundreds of cars stood idle. The same occurred with the supply of construction materials, telephone and telegraphic materials, etc.

Within some months it became obvious that the «aid» of UNRRA would not make any important contribution to the reconstruction of the country and the revival of the national economy; moreover the American and British imperialists tried to use that organization for their political aims.

The Democratic Government had to take urgent measures to secure food and board for thousands of war victims. The committees of Social Assistance, which had been created on instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania in December 1944, did a great deal of work. Immediately after Liberation in Devoll of Korça all the homeless families of the region were given shelter within December

1944. In the beginning of 1945 thousands of people in Tirana were fed from the free kitchens of the city quarters and 30,000 people throughout the country were sustained with food given by the organs of the state power. Assistance for the families affected by the war became a great popular movement; within three months after Liberation the Social Assistance had collected from the people about 3 million Albanian francs as aid. The great popular solidarity was the main factor that saved the war victims from starving.

Alongside the measures to assist the population stricken by the war, the people's power managed with great efforts to normalize the supply of the entire people with the indispensable things. Two months after Liberation, in Tirana, where the situation was relatively better than in many other towns, supplies were in great shortage: the sugar ration for January 1945 was 100 grams per person, because of the lack of oil the electricity was often cut off at 6 pm., for days on end there were great bread shortages and the speculators profited from this situation. But in the beginning of the summer of 1945 these negative phenomena began to be eliminated, first of all, through the regular supply of the people with bread at a fixed price.

The efforts of the Democratic Government to ensure the regular supply of the people, and in general, to get over the consequences of the war as quickly as possible, met with resistance by the overthrown exploiting classes which drew profits from the continuation of this situation. One form of sabotaging the measures of the government was the smuggling of gold from Albania to Kosova. Apart from this traffickers in Kosova had gathered a great amount of Albanian paper money and began speculations in agreement with merchants from Albania. To bar the way to this the Standing Committee of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council (ANLC) prohibited the trade of gold. The industrial-

ists and merchants were compelled to declare the clothing, food-stuffs, building materials, etc., over the needs of their families. State monopoly was established over the procurement and selling of bread grain. Alongside the stabilization of prices, consumer cooperatives were created and later, the first state-owned shops were opened to facilitate the supply of the working people at lower prices.

By mobilizing the workers, great technical difficulties were overcome, factories, mines and electric-power stations were repaired and put into operation; within 25 days from the liberation of Kuçova the production of petrol, oil and kerosene began and was continually increased. The damaged galleries at the mine of Selénica were repaired within a few months, whereas in Rubik the installations were immediately cleaned out.

Early in 1945, in order to give an impulse to industry, agriculture, livestock-raising, forestry and trading, more than 200 agronomists, veterinaries, foresters, and controllers were sent to all centres and all technicians available were taken into service.

People organized themselves into voluntary units for the reconstruction of the damaged buildings and units with the same spirit of self-sacrifice as during the war. The reconstruction of all blown-up bridges within a year after the liberation of Albania was a great victory.

With these measures, within a short period the people's power was able to normalize the situation, to rebuild most of the units destroyed by the war and to put the economy of the country on the road of a new development.

The rebuilding of the country and the further development of the economy were accompanied with radical revolutionary measures in the socio-economic field. The democratic transformations in the conditions of the existence of the people's state power, which

carried out the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, went beyond the limits of ordinary bourgeois-democratic reforms, restricted and paralyzed the strength of the bourgeoisie, thus becoming an indispensable premise for going over to more profound changes of a socialist character, in combination with the latter.

A very important measure of the people's state power to restrict private ownership of the main means and tools of production and to prepare the conditions for its change into property of the state was the law of December 1944 of the Standing Committee of the ANLC which decided that, in the extraordinary circumstances created after the war for the reconstruction of the country, all Albanian industries and companies should be placed under state control. This measure, which was a form of worker control by state-appointed commissars, helped in estimating the productive capacity of private enterprises and their reserves, in organizing and extending production. This measure was an implementation of Lenin's idea that worker control is «... the first fundamental step indispensable for every worker, socialist government...»* Prior to the enactment of this law, when Albania had not been entirely liberated, the people's state power had taken measures to place the private property in industry under control and to keep the state property in efficiency. Since the 2nd Meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council in Berat in October 1944, the councils had been given the task of supervising the administration of the property under their jurisdiction, of protecting and safeguarding the public property and controlling the industrial enterprises, which had importance for the supply of the army and the civilian population.

In the conditions created after Liberation, when

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, p. 144, Alb. ed.

the working class was in power, its control over the private enterprises could be exercised not only through state control but also directly by the trade-union organizations of the enterprises, when these organizations were created. Both these forms of control complemented one another. The commissars who exercised control on behalf of the state were nominated to each important work centre by the Ministry of Economy and maintained connections with the local organs of power as well as with the ministry itself. For its part, the trade-union organization appointed a group of working people who were to exercise control as its representatives. This parallel control from above and below had the same aim: to protect the new state from acts of sabotage, to ensure the regular continuity of the economic activity of the enterprises.

All the workers were mobilized for rebuilding the paralysed and destroyed industry. They assessed the production capacities of the enterprises, raised them, and discovered reserves of primary materials and other material hidden by capitalist owners.

The experience gained prepared the working class for a more effective and planned management of the economic enterprises when they were later nationalized.

In December 1944, with the ban on the export of precious metals and manufactured products, to prevent speculations which damaged the reconstruction of the national economy, important restrictions were imposed on private trade. Internal private trade was effectively placed under control of the state organs. State control was also established on foreign trade, which later on was changed into state monopoly. At the same time the property of the political fugitives was decided to be confiscated. By this measure a considerable amount of assets was transferred to the state, because many exponents of the landowners and the local bourgeoisie were among the ranks of the fugitives.

Based on the decisions of the Congress of Përmet on the revision and annulment of all the agreements which the Zog government had concluded with foreign states to the detriment of the Albanian people, at the beginning of 1945, by decision of the Standing Committee of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council, all state and government-controlled¹ assets of Italy and Germany in Albania were confiscated. Simultaneously state control was established over all the assets in Albania which belonged to Italian and German citizens, and to Italian, German, Albanian-Italian and German-Albanian units, undertakings and firms which operated in Albania. The concession of the National Bank of Albania and all its shares were likewise annulled. Its entire assets and debits were transferred to the Albanian state.

In the circumstances of the fierce class struggle for the reconstruction of the economy of the country, and the restriction and liquidation of the economic power of the bourgeoisie the government measures in the field of finances, especially the extraordinary taxation on war profits, which was decided in January 1945, had great importance. This law was designed for different intents and purposes: in the first place, political, because it struck a heavy blow to the rich bourgeoisie which was a force opposed to the people's power; financial, because it would bring in important revenue to the state, at a time when the treasury was empty and it lacked financial means; economic, because it would put into circulation a capital which was immobilized. Subject to it were all merchants and industrialists who had realized profits above 500,000 Albanian francs during the time of the war. The taxation was pro-

¹ All enterprises or companies under the direct or indirect control of the Italian or German state were considered state-controlled assets.

gressive, from 15 up to 80 per cent of the profit. The law on extraordinary taxation envisaged severe punishment for those who did not make their declaration on time, who declared under their real profit, or who hoarded or destroyed their assets. These sanctions provided even the confiscation of the assets of the taxed subject.

The extraordinary taxation was directed against the non-productive or parasitical forms of capital, against the accumulations of money by the mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie. The economic importance of this measure emerged clearly in the conditions when more than half the budget expenditure during the first two years after Liberation were mainly secured from the revenue accruing from extraordinary taxation.

The extraordinary taxation was an expression of the deepening and aggravation of the class struggle; it dealt a blow at the financial basis of the counter-revolution and gave the revolution considerable financial means without waiting for them to be accumulated with ordinary methods. From the moment the taxation was imposed until it was paid, uninterrupted struggle was waged against the capitalists who hid the documents of their accounts, made false declarations, tried to deceive or to corrupt the members of the commissions.

Although in form the confiscations and the extraordinary taxation were democratic measures taken in the framework of the struggle against fascism and those who had profited from it, in content they were socialist measures which attacked the richest section of the bourgeoisie. With these measures a broad sector of the state economy was created in Albania, which would be continually extended and strengthened.

Another important task in the field of democratic socio-economic transformations was the overthrow of the old agrarian relations, the elimination of the remnants of feudalism. The solution of this task was an

indispensable condition for the carrying out of transformations of a democratic character and for the further strengthening of the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry, which is the loftiest principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a premise for the later development of the country on the road of socialism.

Before the implementation of the Agrarian Reform in Albania, 7 landed families owned 3.70 per cent of the land, 4713 land-rich families owned 23.16 per cent of it, 129,961 families of middle and small proprietors owned 60.43 per cent of the land, whereas the rest was owned by the state. There were 21 544 peasant families, representing 13.88 per cent of all the families in the countryside, which had no land at all and slaved as farm hands on the properties of beys and aghas.

The Agrarian Reform was prepared with great care by the Party and the people's power. During the war, immediately after the Congress of Përmet the economic department had organized the drawing up of complete agricultural statistics for every village. This work continued after Liberation. One of the first steps towards doing away with the old agrarian relations was the directive of the economic department of September 22, 1944 on the confiscation of the lands of traitors and their transfer to the peasants for use. The peasants were also given for use the beasts of burden of these owners and the products which they secured through their own work. In January 1945, a law was promulgated to annul the land rents before 1944, whereas rents of 1944 and 1945 could be possibly reduced down to 75 per cent. This measure served to ease the difficult economic situation of the masses of peasants and to restrict their exploitation by the landowners. But it did not eliminate this exploitation, it even sanctioned it by law.

The working peasantry regarded as a great in-

justice the possibility still given to the landowner class, which had linked its fate with all the anti-popular regimes, to rob the producers of the fruit of their labour. Therefore, in mass rallies they demanded the immediate carrying out of the Agrarian Reform. In May 1945, it was decided to carry out the nationalization without remuneration of all water courses which served for irrigation or for the industry and their free use by the agricultural economies.

These first blows dealt to the landowners and the rich peasants were followed by the law on the Agrarian Reform which was proclaimed on August 29, 1945. Implementing the slogan launched by the Communist Party of Albania, «The land to those who till it», the lands of the big beys and aghas, state farms and the estates of religious institutions, including their buildings and tools, were expropriated without remuneration and were distributed without cost to the tillers.

The landless and landpoor peasants were allotted 5 hectares per head of family and 2 hectares per married couple. The owners who managed their land with modern means were given up to 40 hectares of land, the religious institutions up to 20 hectares, whereas the owners who did not engage in agriculture at all were given up to 7 hectares of land on the condition that within 2 years they would manage or work it themselves. Alienation of the land in any form such as selling, buying, leasing was prohibited. Under a special provision of the law on the Agrarian Reform the owners of the land were entitled to an income from the products of the year 1945. This measure diminished the effect of the Agrarian Reform which, in general, was not radical, did not respond properly to the interests of the peasantry and the possibilities for a more complete transformation of the economic relations in the countryside, which had been created with the establishment of the state of the workers and the working peasantry.

The shortcomings in assessing land rents and in the law on Agrarian Reform were the consequence of the influence of Sejfulla Malëshova's opportunist views which had become a hindrance to the further development of the people's revolution, and which on this problem, as on other problems, were in conformity with those of the representatives of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

The implementation of the Agrarian Reform, although partial, met with opposition of the landowners who, with threats and pressure tried to intimidate the peasants. In this they were actively assisted by the propaganda of the clergy. Faced with intimidation by reaction, some wavering peasants hesitated to take the land that belonged to them. On the other hand, the work for the implementation of the Agrarian Reform had shown that there were cases of formalism and bureaucracy in the state organs and some land commissions. The spirit of their work was not always in favour of the poor peasantry. Wherever the state organs did not try to gain the support of the mass of peasants, work was lame and manifestations of clanishness and bias were noticed.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania had foreseen that the Agrarian Reform could not be carried out without fierce class struggle against the reactionary forces. Before the enactment of the law, poor peasants' committees were set up on the initiative of the Party to smash this resistance and to hasten the application of the Agrarian Reform. They became an expression of the interests of the broad masses of the peasantry, levers of the Party in the struggle against the remnants of feudalism and the other reactionary forces.

The organization and activity of the poor peasants' committees as an expression of the line of the masses which the Communist Party of Albania pursued, played a great role not only for the application of the Agrarian

Reform, but also for the strengthening of the revolutionary consciousness of the poor peasantry. On some occasions wealthy people or enemies, who tried to distort the implementation of the Agrarian Reform, joined these committees. Nevertheless, the poor peasants' committees carried out their duty in struggle against these class enemies.

The Agrarian Reform was carried out within a short period, smashing the opposition of the overthrown classes. On November 26, 1945, Comrade Enver Hoxha in an atmosphere of indescribable enthusiasm distributed to thousands of peasants of Myzeqe, gathered in the village of Gore of Lushnja, the land deeds which the Agrarian Reform gave them.

Despite the shortcomings of the law on the Agrarian Reform, the giving of the land to the working peasants was a great historic event which would be followed later by more profound revolutionary measures.

3. The Proclamation of the People's Republic of Albania, the New Constitution

The great victories achieved by the Albanian people in the Anti-fascist National Liberation War and during the first period after the liberation of the country were also sanctioned constitutionally.

By decision of the Standing Committee of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council the 3rd Meeting of that Council was convened in September 1945. In conformity with the decisions of the Congress of Përmet, which envisaged that the people must express their opinion on the future of Albania and themselves decide finally, after the complete liberation of the country, on the form of government they wanted, the Committee adopted the law on the Constituent As-

sembly. The law provided that the Assembly should decide on the political form of the government and on all acts passed by the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council and the Standing Committee before it was convened. After this it could adopt the Constitution of Albania. The law defined the terms under which the Constituent Assembly should be convened and its procedure. The ANLC also adopted the law on the election of representatives of the people to the Constituent Assembly and the law on the lists of candidates. The procedure of elections was defined in the spirit of democratic principles: general, equal, direct and secret ballot, and the necessary guarantees for the free exercise of the citizens' electoral right.

All Albanian citizens above 18 years of age without distinction of sex enjoyed the right to vote, except former ministers and members of the quisling governments, political fugitives, war criminals, enemies of the people and others who were deprived of this right.

The electoral campaign was held under the slogans of the Democratic Front, in struggle against the forces of reaction. The 4th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party which was convened in November 1945 during the election campaign, stressed that the elections should become a great political school for the people, the Front and the Party and pointed out the need to fight against all the open or secret enemy forces which tried to create an opposition against the state and the Front, with the support of imperialism and fugitive traitors.

The Democratic Front presented its own list of candidates for the elections. Apart from this list there were also some separate candidates who represented the bourgeois circles, but they failed completely from lack of support among the people. The reactionary elements who were in the ranks of the Front decided to wait for more appropriate moments, after the elections, to create a group or an opposition party within the Constituent Assembly.

Neither the efforts of reaction nor the interference and pressure of the American and British governments, which went so far as to demand permission to control the development of the elections through their missions in Albania, were able to hinder the further strengthening of the unity of the people in the ranks of the Democratic Front and the determination of the Party and the people's power not to allow any interference in the normal development of the elections.

On December 2, 1945, for the first time in the history of the country, general elections of a democratic character were held. Over 90 per cent of the electors took part in the elections and over 93 per cent of the voters cast their ballots for the candidates of the Front. By this the people expressed their approval of the policy of the Democratic Front and the Communist Party of Albania, their organizer and leader.

The Constituent Assembly, which emerged from the elections of December 2, was convened on January 10, 1946. At its second session, on January 11, Hysni Kapo, on behalf of the delegates of Vlora, proposed to the Assembly that Albania be proclaimed a People's Republic. It was supported by representatives of other prefectures. At 12.00 of the same day the Assembly unanimously proclaimed Albania a People's Republic. With this decision, adopted on behalf of the Albanian people, as the Congress of Përmet had envisaged, the question of the political form of the Albanian state was solved definitively, and, as a result, the monarchy was abolished forever. Ahmet Zog and his heirs lost all their previous rights and were forbidden entrance to Albania.

After the proclamation of the People's Republic the Constituent Assembly endorsed the legislative activity carried out by the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council, and, with its sanctioning, gave a definitive character to the laws adopted by the Congress of Përmet till the convention of the Assembly itself.

On January 12, 1946, the Presidium of the Constituent Assembly was elected. During its election it was noticed that a group of deputies who tried to oppose the line of the Communist Party and the Democratic Front, had been created within the Assembly. This group which had begun to organize itself during the war with the support of reactionary elements, especially within the ranks of the Front, now, after establishing contacts with the American and British missions, was trying to act in an organized manner within the Assembly. In the name of several members of this group, Riza Dani proposed a second list for the Presidium of the Constituent Assembly in which several top personalities of the National Liberation Movement who appeared on the first list, were not included. In their place some others were proposed, including some of deputies who formed the opposition group behind the scene.

Both lists were put to secret voting and the first one won with a great majority of votes. Omer Nishani was elected chairman of the Presidium. The Presidium was comprised of Enver Hoxha, Myslim Peza, Nako Spiru, Medar Shtylla, Sami Baholli, Ramadan Çitaku, Qirjako Harito and others.

The Democratic Government presented the draft Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania to the Assembly, and then brought it to the people for discussion. On February 5 the Assembly suspended its proceedings and convened again on February 25, 1946. In the meantime the draft Constitution was studied and the criticisms which were made during the great popular discussion held at broad meetings in all institutions, enterprises and with all working collectives of the towns and villages of the country, were examined.

On March 14, 1946 the Assembly adopted the Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania. Its historic task accomplished, the Constituent Assembly decided to be turned into the People's Assembly.

The proclamation of the Constitution was an event of great importance for the new Albanian state. It sanctioned the social order of the People's Republic of Albania, the class structure of the society, the economic base, the main rights and duties of the citizens, the system of state organs and the sphere of their competences as well as the election system.

The Constitution of the PR of Albania was one of the most democratic constitutions in the world, for the principles it proclaimed and the guarantees it provided for their implementation.

The main principle of the Constitution was that of the sovereignty of the people. The principles of the unity of the state power and democratic centralism derived from this fundamental principle.

The sovereignty of the people was expressed in the principle: all power derives from the people and belongs to the people. The Constitution of the PR of Albania sanctioned the effective sovereignty of the people and its genuine representation. This was guaranteed not only juridically, through a democratic system of elections, and through the right of electors to control and revoke their representatives, but also through the existence of the socialist system of the economy, which would develop continuously from its initial stage.

The Constitution also sanctioned another principle of importance, that of the unity of the state power. This principle was expressed in the fact that the state power at the centre and in the districts was realized only by the representative organs of the state: the People's Assembly, the people's councils, and the executive organs elected by them and answerable to them.

The Constitution sanctioned democratic centralism as an organizational principle of the state mechanism. This principle, which combines the need for rigorous centralism in the implementation of the state policy with the demands for the broad initiative of the local

organs of the state power and the administration, was expressed in the election of the state organs, in the subordination of the lower organs to the superior ones and the administration organs to the representative ones, in the compulsory character of the acts of the superior organs for the lower organs. The organization of the state mechanism was built, without major alterations, on the sound bases laid during the National Liberation War, especially at the Congress of Përmet. The People's Assembly, which represented the sovereignty of the people and the nation, was at the top of the pyramid of the state organs. The People's Assembly elected the Presidium which carried out some of its functions in the period between two sessions of the Assembly. The Presidium of the People's Assembly had the functions and prerogatives of the head of the state. Unlike the bourgeois system, this organ was not created to weaken the power and competences of the legislative organ, the People's Assembly; it did not have the power to sanction the laws and decisions of this Assembly, did not enjoy the so-called right of veto.

The political basis of the state were the People's Assembly and the people's councils, which elected the executive organs from their ranks and gave them administrative functions. The government was the highest executive and legislative organ. Besides the representative and administrative organs, the Constitution sanctioned the democratic principles of the organization of courts, which were elected, and the attorney general's office as the organ of the People's Assembly on the supervision of the laws.

The Constitution was the sanctioning by law of the great victories achieved by the Albanian people during the National Liberation War and during the first period of the construction of the new social order. It was not only distinguished for its profound democratic

spirit, but also constituted the legal basis for the development of the country on the road of socialism.

The Constitution recognized three forms of ownership of the means and tools of production: state, co-operativist and private ownership. The state and co-operativist ownership were the support for the construction of the bases of socialism, the private ownership was destined to be limited and later liquidated with the intensification of the class struggle in town and countryside, whereas the personal property created by the work of the working people and not through the exploitation of the others would be preserved. While recognizing the private property, the Constitution at the same time proclaimed that: «Nobody can use the right of private ownership to the detriment of the community.» An important restriction was imposed on the private property by the constitutional provisions which stipulated that the land belonged to the tiller, that large estates by no means should be left in the hands of private owners, and that the buying and selling and other forms of alienation of the land were prohibited. Apart from this, the proclamation of the principle that the private property could be restricted and expropriated in the general interest, was of special importance because it opened the way to the socialization of the main means of production.

The Constitution proclaimed the underground, mines, forests, waters, etc., property of the state, defining that the state directs the life and economic development of the country. The state monopoly of the foreign trade was also proclaimed. The Constitution said that the state supported «...the working masses of the people to unite and organize against economic exploitation.»

The Constitution sanctioned the democratic rights and freedoms of citizens and their duties, completing and extending the rights and freedoms proclaimed in «The Declaration on the Rights of Citizens», approved

at the Berat session of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council in October 1944.

The Constitution proclaimed and guaranteed these fundamental rights of citizens: equality regardless of nationality, race or religion, and the equality of men and women; the socio-economic rights such as the right to work, rest, protection of health and material insurance, education, democratic freedoms such as the freedom of speech, the press, organization, association, public manifestation, the right to join in social organizations and workers' associations, the freedom of conscience and religion; individual freedoms such as the inviolability of the person and the residence, the secrecy of correspondence, etc.

Alongside rights the citizens had definite duties towards the society and the socialist state. The respect of them and their conscious implementation by the citizens secured the necessary conditions for the strengthening and development of the social and state order.

The provisions of the Constitution were a clear indication of the character of the popular democracy in Albania, which from the beginning was presented as a social order of a new higher type, in opposition of principle to the bourgeois democracy. With the adoption of the Constitution the process of the political organization of the state of the people's democracy as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completed and the new period of the deepening of the revolution and the process of the construction of socialism began.

On March 18, 1946, the People's Assembly at its first meeting charged Enver Hoxha with the task of forming the new government, and on March 22 approved its composition. The new government had the duty of putting into practice the directives worked out by the 5th Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPA on carrying the country forward on the road of the socialist revolution.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY ON THE ROAD OF SOCIALISM

1. The Main Directions

With the attainment of the main strategic aim, which the Communist Party of Albania had defined during the National Liberation War, the people's revolution, in ceaseless development, faced the task of carrying out such socio-economic changes which would put Albania on the road of socialist development. The carrying out of changes of a democratic character was an indispensable precondition for the realization of more profound changes of a socialist character.

The premises for transition on the road of socialism existed in Albania. The lack of a developed capitalist production and the remnants of the feudal and patriarchal relations were, in fact, a great objective obstacle in this direction. But this could be overcome because there were a series of favourable internal factors such as the establishment of the people's state power as the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat which would be used to liquidate the old relations and to

create the new socialist relations, and the great enhancement of the conscience of the masses of the people who were prepared subjectively for these revolutionary transformations.

On the other hand, in the epoch of imperialism international conditions play a greater role in the social development of different countries. The development of the socialist revolution cannot be considered only as a result of the solution of the internal contradictions of a definite country, but also as a result of the sharpening of contradictions in the entire world system of imperialism. In these circumstances, the premises for a socialist revolution in a country like Albania existed, considering the fact that the entire system of world capitalism has reached the point that the socialist revolution could triumph in its weakest links. In addition, these premises were strengthened by the existence of the socialist camp as a factor of great importance which objectively favoured the development of the revolution in different countries. Therefore, the level of the capitalist development of a country could not be considered as the only or decisive factor for the triumph of the socialist revolution.

Relying on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and the concrete national and international conditions, the Communist Party of Albania elaborated the program for the socialist transformation of the country. However, before implementing it, the Party had to combat the opportunist stands voiced by Sejfulla Malëshova. His opportunist manifestations, supported by the anti-Marxist stand of the Yugoslav leadership, were further developed after Liberation in the political and economic fields. Defending the interests of the bourgeoisie, Sejfulla Malëshova considered the people's revolution in Albania as a bourgeois-democratic revolution which should lead to the consolidation and development of the capitalist relations. In this context, he was against measures

of a socialist character and regarded the private sector as a reliable basis for the state. In the field of international relations, Sejfulla Malëshova was a partisan of an opportunist stand towards the imperialist powers and underrated the threat of foreign reaction. He defended the views that by following a policy of capitulation towards the Anglo-Americans, making concessions to them time and again, avoiding the open alignment of Albania beside the Soviet Union and other countries of people's democracy, the recognition of the government would be hastened and the international position of Albania normalized. Sejfulla Malëshova was a supporter of the idea to extend the Front not only with vacillating elements, but also with opponents. He criticized the «sectarian line» which the Party allegedly had pursued in this field.

The influence of these opportunist views was reflected in some directions. The stand towards reaction was a lenient and opportunist stand which was manifested in the opening of the doors of the Front and the proposal made to the Catholic clergy to join in a coalition with the Front in the electoral campaign, which the clergy did not accept. These stands led to the admission into the Constituent Assembly of pseudo-nationalists who represented the reactionary forces. The stand of compromise with reaction in the political line of the Front was also reflected in the economic policy. The revolutionary measures such as nationalizations, extraordinary taxation, the Agrarian Reform, etc., were adopted with some delay. A very liberal stand was maintained towards the private sector, promising it aid under the pretext of activating private initiative and the increase of production. Profiting from the situation, some private speculators tried to create exploiting economic organizations, disguised as «cooperatives», and tried to gain the support of the state by charging monopoly tariffs for the services to the people.

The 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA, held in February 1946, which had special importance for the life of the Party and the entire country, was called to define the main directions of socialist transformation of the country, to attack the opportunist line of Sejfulla Malëshova and eliminate any influence of his views.

The Plenum severely criticized the flaws noticed in the political and economic line of the Party, denounced the views of Sejfulla Malëshova, expelled him from the Political Bureau and the Central Committee and orientated the Party toward the deepening of the revolutionary socialist measures in all fields. Since the question of state power had been solved, the Plenum orientated that all forces should be concentrated on the economic policy as the most delicate sector where the enemy attack was expected. It pointed out that the existence of the new people's democratic state and its future were connected closely with the existence and strengthening of the state and cooperativist sector. The main course defined in the economic policy was: «Everything for the strengthening of the state sector, merciless struggle against private capital, as much help as possible from the state for the producer and consumer cooperatives so that they become a great support for the state.»* At the same time, it pointed out that the state sector could be strengthened not only by means of nationalizations in different fields and the control of the private sector, but also by creating a state-owned heavy industry, which would become the main support for the setting up of the light industry and for the entire economic development of the country. The state sector would be extended and strengthened on the basis of a definite plan harmonized for all branches of the economy, based first and foremost on the internal forces.

* Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1975, p. 501, Eng. ed.

In the field of agriculture the task was laid that the Agrarian Reform should be completed quickly and radically, the agricultural cooperatives of production created and the policy of restriction of kulaks pursued. At the same time, the Plenum pointed out the need for imparting a special impulse to the entire development of agriculture, the forestry and livestock farming and for arousing in the peasants the feeling of systematic work. In order to open perspectives to agriculture the task was set to create some model farms in which work would be based on advanced methods and which would become an encouragement for the acceleration of the collectivization of land.

In the field of education and culture, a great revolution should be carried out, as in the social and economic spheres. The Plenum decided to carry out an educational reform which would make education and culture the property of the broad masses of the people and imbue them with a new revolutionary content. For this it was necessary that teachers should be trained at rapid rates, illiteracy eliminated and as many primary schools as possible be opened; programs with a new content should be drafted, technical schools set up, and the broad masses of town and countryside should be educated and take education into their hands. At the Plenum Enver Hoxha stressed: «Education should no longer be a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie, but in the hands of the workers and peasants.»*

In the field of foreign policy, the task was set for the strengthening of collaboration with the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy, for fighting resolutely against any pressure and threat of the American and British imperialists.

An indispensable factor for the development of

* Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1975, p. 501, Eng. ed.

the country on the road of socialism was the strengthening and continuous democratization of the people's power. Comrade Enver Hoxha warned that the enemy would do its utmost to fight the people's power, both in connection with the form of the regime, using the arguments of the mistakes and laxities of some officials, who in the majority of cases were placed in the state administration by reaction itself, and by endeavouring to penetrate the state power to sabotage, to slow down the work and to introduce all the vices of the bourgeois regime into it. Therefore, the Plenum advised that the check-up of the masses of the people on the state apparatus be increased in order to prevent manifestations of bureaucracy, which could be transmitted especially by the old specialists.

On the basis of the orientations of the Plenum, the revolutionary measures of a socialist character were deepened.

The spirit and orientations of the 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA were reflected in the Constitution and the program of the first government of the PRA. This government, elected on March 22, headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha, was sworn in before the People's Assembly two days later and presented its program, putting the construction of a new socialist Albania at the foundation of all tasks.

2. The Deepening of Socialist Transformations in Industry

In the spirit of the decisions of the 5th Plenum of the CC of the CPA and in conformity with its program the government carried through to the end the expropriation of the local bourgeoisie and turned the main means of production into socialist social property. The new phase of nationalizations began with the

decrees of March and April 1946 which proclaimed the nationalization of the power stations and the enterprises of the building materials industry.

During April all pharmacies were turned into state property. A month later, all the polygraphic, lithographic and zincographic enterprises were nationalized along with all the oil, soap and leather factories which had remained in private possession. The flour, macaroni and rice-husking factories were nationalized in the beginning of September and the mechanical workshops in the following month.

All other enterprises of local private capital such as the textile and knitwear factories, the ice factories, the soft drink factories, the alcohol and cigarette factories, etc., were nationalized in February 1947. Through these decrees all the key positions of the economy of the country passed into the hands of the people's state power. A total of 111 capitalist industrial production centres passed into the hands of the state without compensation. Only the small enterprises and workshops which employed less than five workers were not nationalized.

As in the first phase, the nationalizations were not carried out as a single act but gradually, in conformity with the importance the enterprises had for the reconstruction and economic development of the country and the material-technical and organizational possibilities to manage them. Nevertheless, the nationalizations were carried out within a very short period. Although the bourgeoisie was unable to organize a resistance on a broad front, the capitalist owners who were affected by the nationalizations tried to disorganize production and to create insecurity among the workers about the functioning and development of the nationalized factories. However, these efforts were immediately foiled by the working class, which powerfully supported the revolutionary measures of the state.

Immediately after the transfer of the private industrial enterprises into the hands of the state, they were organized on entirely new bases. In the realization of this task a series of difficulties arose from the backward technique, worn out and damaged by the war, from the shortage of primary materials and other materials, the bad repair of buildings, the lack of the means of transport, the limited possibilities of the state to give them immediate and effective material-technical aid, and from the lack of cadres and experience for the organization and management of the work.

These difficulties were gradually overcome. In the nationalized enterprises new regulations began to be applied and new relations among the workers and managers were established. The experience gathered served as a basis to carry forward the work for the organization and management of the state enterprises.

In March 1947, all state economic enterprises were proclaimed common property of the people, managed by the state. They were to act on their own initiative, but would also be subject to the general economic plan of the state. Beginning from April 1947 the management of the activity of the enterprises was organized on a new basis. They were divided into national economic enterprises which were directly dependent on the central departments and local enterprises which were created on the decision of the executive committees of the people's councils of prefectures and which were dependent both on the local state organs and the departments. The enterprises had to cover all their expenditure with their income and to give a certain amount of surplus to the state.

Through these measures the people's power began to play in a more organized and active way the role of the organizer and manager of the people's economy, a role which would assume an ever greater importance in the future.

Planning is an indispensable condition for the socialist economy. However in the conditions of that period it was impossible to make a comprehensive planning based on all the financial and economic indices of the enterprises and the harmonious development of all the branches of the economy, because there were no thorough studies or accurate calculations of work norms, labour productivity, the structure of prices, the system of wages, supply and distribution, etc. Therefore, until March 31, 1947 the economic enterprises worked mainly on the basis of a tentative plan. Despite its shortcomings this plan served to control the economy better and to establish order and discipline in the enterprises.

In August 1946 the law on the general economic plan of the state was promulgated. Subsequently the Economic Council and the State Planning Commission, created respectively in the years 1945 and 1946, drafted the general economic plan of the state for 1947. This plan, too, was aimed at solving some urgent tasks for the rapid reconstruction of the country. It was the starting-point of the development of the people's economy on the basis of unified state plans on a national level.

The achievements of 1947 and the experience gathered enabled the planning organs to further develop the planned management of the people's economy. The plan of 1948 marked a further step forward in the development of this economy. It envisaged a 267 per cent increase of industrial production and a 165 per cent increase of agricultural production compared to 1938.

However, the attainment of the planned targets came up against the hostile sabotaging activity of the Yugoslav leaders and their agents in Albania with Koci Xoxe at the head. Consequently, the working class and all the working masses had to make great sacrifices, mobilizing all their energies to overcome the obstacles and difficulties and to fulfil the planned tasks.

An important role in this direction was played,

apart from the deep-going socio-economic transformations which were carried out especially after the 5th Plenum of the CC of the Party, by a better organization of the socialist emulation and all the construction work in general.

The entire people rose to their feet in the struggle for the reconstruction of the country. All over the country, more than half a million people, men, women, boys and girls volunteered for work. About 22 thousand volunteers worked during 1946 for the draining of the Maliq swamp alone. Tens of thousands of others were engaged in the production of building materials, in clearing away ruins in the cities, in rebuilding houses, schools, bridges, irrigation canals, etc. To this period belong the initiatives of large-scale actions of voluntary labour like those for building the roads from Kukës to Peshkopia, from Berat to Çorovoda, etc., in which thousands of young men and women were engaged. The wave of actions of voluntary labour continued in the following years, too, and became a method for the construction of the country.

This revolutionary drive and the great mobilization of the broad masses of the people brought about the successful completion of the reconstruction of the country and the economy within a record time. During reconstruction greater attention was paid in the first place to those objects and projects which were of greater interest for the present and the future. Apart from the 2031 m of bridges built during 1945, during 1946 another 3516 m were constructed, that is, nearly all the destroyed bridges were reconstructed within two years. Alongside them 240 m of new bridges were built, too. The seaports and the damaged road network were completely reconstructed and 202 km of new roads were built such as the 65 km-long Kukës-Peshkopia road which was constructed within 5 months, the Berat-Çorovoda road, the Qafë-Pëllumb and Kuç roads as well

as 114 km of roads of a local character. During 1946 the electric power stations were reconstructed and put into operation. The entire telephone network of 4,257 km and its 121 stations and substations were reconstructed.

In the mining sector, work began with great vigour for the reconstruction of the mines and mining installations. Until the end of the first semester of 1947, compared with the same period of 1938, 61 per cent more crude oil, 62 per cent more purified bitumen, 15 per cent more cement and 733 per cent more timber were produced.

In the construction sector, the work for the production of construction materials, the reconstruction of houses, schools, etc., continued with increased vigour. During 1946 and 1947 about 7800 houses were rebuilt, most of which in the districts of Gjirokastra and Korça, as well as 530 school buildings.

The method of mass actions was broadly used also in the construction of new projects. In 1947 the 44 km-long Durrës-Peqin railway, the first in the country, was built. In January 1948, a year later the Party entrusted the youth with the construction of the Durrës-Tirana railway. This action was completed in a record time of about 8 months. More than 25 thousand young men and women worked on it.

In this manner within a short period the great tasks for the reconstruction and the economic recovery of the country were carried out successfully. In 1946 the country had on a whole coped with its war destructions and the 1938 level was achieved both in industry and agriculture. In 1948 total industrial production increased more than double that of 1938. Agricultural production also surpassed that level.

In order to cope with the great demands of socialist construction, about 30,000 workers and employees were employed in the first post-Liberation months. Tens and

thousands of others volunteered for different fields of activity.

Apart from this, in order to combat the parasitism of functionaries of the former regimes, of the former landowners and speculators, in general, people who still lived on capital and did not work, in August 1947 the compulsory mobilization for work of all that category of people was promulgated.

Besides measures to secure the labour force, other measures were also taken to train workers, engineers and technicians. During 1946 many short-term courses were opened for this purpose all over the country. So 600 people were trained at a course which was opened in Tirana in April 1946, 550 workers were trained in 25 courses who replaced 95 per cent of the foreign skilled workers and technicians in Kuçova (Stalin City), etc. Special courses were run for managers and accountants of consumer and buying and selling cooperatives, forest technicians, land surveyors, mechanics for farming machines, nurses, etc. By the end of 1947 about 1,700 cadres had gone through special courses organized in Tirana.

Mass actions were also important means for the training of skilled workers, specialists and cadres.

The attaching of three apprentices to each skilled worker or specialist was an important measure in this direction, which was compulsory for all enterprises.

In this manner the skilled workers and specialists needed for the development of the economy and culture of the country were trained.

Small-scale handicraft production still occupied an important place in the people's economy. According to the census taken in 1946, in some of the more common trades the number of handicraftsmen was about 17,000.

The interests of the people's economy demanded that this sphere of production and services should be

organized on socialist bases so as to fulfil the demands of production and consumption better, to prevent the emergence and development of capitalist elements and pull the craftsmen themselves out of poverty and want. This could not be done by administrative measures, as in the case of the big property of the bourgeoisie, or by immediate transition to the form of socialist common property of the entire people. Therefore the road of socialist cooperation was followed according to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the socialist transformation of small-scale handicraft property.

In the end of March 1946 the General Committee of Cooperatives was set up with the task of organizing and directing the cooperatives of production and services in the town and countryside. At the same time the General Constitution of the handicraft cooperatives came into force.

Under this Constitution the means and objects of work and production as well as work itself were cooperated. Means of work were evaluated and paid to their former owners by annual instalments. Remuneration was done according to the quantity and quality of the work done. The cooperative member was also entitled to an equal part of the yearly profit. For his part he was obliged to pay the cooperative a fixed quota and take part actively in its productive activity.

By the end of 1946 there were 48 handicraft cooperatives, in 1947 this figure doubled and by the end of 1948 it rose to 109.

The handicraft cooperatives showed very soon their superiority over small-scale handicraft production. The state aided them with credits, tools, primary materials, cadres, etc. Despite some difficulties in the first phase of their activity they played an important role in the increase of industrial production, in the fulfilment of the needs of production and consumption and in the

struggle against the black market and profiteering. They became auxiliaries of the socialist sector of the economy.

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The deep-going expropriations of the main means of production and circulation which were carried out in the towns eliminated the economic base of the industrial, mercantile and financial bourgeoisie and, together with that, the big bourgeoisie itself. As a result of the policy of prices, procurement and levies and other measures the economic position of the middle bourgeoisie was weakened, too. With the transformations carried out during this period the structure of the economy and classes changed, too. The socialist sector was created in industry, transport, trade, finance, construction, etc., and became the predominant sector, which secured the commanding positions for the new state power in the economy, too. This sector was established in the form of state property, the property of the entire people, which is the highest form of socialist ownership. Alongside it, the cooperativist sector was created in the sphere of handicraft production and services as a special form of socialist property. However, small private property lived on for a certain period, especially in the sphere of trade and handicrafts.

To these sectors corresponded: the working class which became the dominant class in the economy, too, the stratum of cooperated handicraftsmen which from its nature, economic position and political interests stood closer to the working class, and the petty bourgeoisie which was mainly represented by tradesmen, petty entrepreneurs and individual craftsmen.

3. The Deepening of Socio-Economic Transformations in the Countryside

The transition to the road of socialism was conditioned also by the complete elimination of the old agrarian relations and the establishment of the socialist relations in the countryside, too. An important step on this road was the completion of the Land Reform. Its first phase which began with the promulgation of the law of August 29, 1945 and continued in the winter of that year was realized successfully. However, the law on the Land Reform like that on land rents did not fully satisfy the peasantry who demanded a more thorough-going and radical reform. Not only individual peasants or groups of them, but also local organs and organizations of the Party and the state sent such demands to the central organs of the Party and state.

Their suggestions and proposals prompted the CC of the Party and the government to revise the Law of August 1945 and draft an amendment for a more radical expropriation of the big landowners.

According to the amendment promulgated on May 27, 1946 all land, vineyards, olive groves, gardens, farm buildings and implements in excess of the limit set by law were subject to expropriation. Workers, handicraftsmen, office workers and self-employed persons with families in the countryside and those with land property in the town were allowed up to half a hectare of garden and fruit grove, or 2,000 square metres of vineyards, or 30 olive-trees.

According to these criteria the law on Land Reform affected nearly half the area of land and one third of the olive-trees of the country at that time. A total of 4714 big landowners were expropriated, 480 big estates of religious institutions and 4000 middle landowners who either did not till the land themselves or

had their property confiscated as enemies of the people. Ten thousand six hundred forty-one middle landowners who tilled the land themselves but who had land in excess of these norms were also affected by the Land Reform. A total of 288 400 hectares of land were distributed to the peasants, of which 90 per cent to 21 544 peasant families without land and to 48 667 families with little land. Fifty per cent of the olive-trees, about 6 000 work animals and a great amount of farming implements were also distributed to the peasants.

The Land Reform was completed throughout Albania on November 17, 1946.

The Land Reform was the first revolution in the socio-economic relations in the countryside. Its main content was the democratic transformation of the agrarian relations in the countryside. However, as it was carried out under the dictatorship of the proletariat it also contained elements of a pronounced socialist character. Such elements were expropriation and distribution of the land free of charge; prohibition by law of the selling, buying, mortgaging, renting of the land and prohibition of hired labour. The Land Reform fully applied the principle: «The land belongs to him who tills it».

The Land Reform was carried out through a fierce class struggle. The enemies of the reform went over to open terrorist acts. Their struggle assumed greater proportions especially after the promulgation of the amendment to the Law on the Land Reform, when the expropriation of the big landowners, kulaks and the rich peasants was made more radical. This struggle also deepened the process of differentiation in the countryside. The reactionary forces began to unite, to work the program of their resistance and struggle and to coordinate their hostile activities. These activities were more accentuated in the districts of Tirana, Elbasan,

Shkodra, Bregu i Matit and Bregu i Bunës, and Koplik. However, the vigilance of the Party, the state and the working masses made it impossible for the enemies to put up a general resistance against the socio-economic reforms and the people's power not only on a national scale, but even on a regional scale.

Under the Land Reform, forests, pastures and big herds of livestock were nationalized. Albania had about 1 million 130 thousand hectares of forest in 1938, of which nearly 94 per cent were supposed to be state forests, 1 per cent communal forests and 5 per cent of them private forests. In reality the greater and better part of the forests was owned by the exploiting classes. They not only owned 99 per cent of the private forests, but also exploited the better part of the state forests. All the larger tracts of forest were nationalized without compensation. The smaller tracts of forest were made the collective property of the villages to be administered in common by the peasants through the people's councils. Along with forests, saw-mills were nationalized, too. The amendment to the Law on the Agrarian Reform also included the complete nationalization of pastures. About 10 000 hectares of pastures on the plains were distributed among the peasants who would convert them into arable land. Winter pastures (450,000 ha) and summer pastures were turned into state property.

The other pastures, common property of the peasants or small owners on the outskirts of villages, were given to the people's councils to be administered in common by the peasants themselves.

By the law of May 11, 1948 the People's Assembly of the PRA decreed the nationalization without compensation of all larger herds of livestock (above 400 head) together with the implements belonging to them.

Ten state livestock raising enterprises with about 100 thousand head of sheep and goats and the necessary implements were set up on the basis of the na-

tionalized livestock. The herdsmen, freed from the savage oppression and exploitation of the big livestock-owners, were employed by the state on the basis of new, socialist relations.

The complete solution of the agrarian problem presupposes the transformation of all the main means of agricultural production into socialist property of the entire people. This is an indispensable condition for the construction of socialist society and the development of large-scale socialist production in general and the productive forces in the countryside, in particular. Initially state socialist ownership was established only over a limited area of land. In the rest of the countryside there would be a gradual transition from the small private property to the cooperated property of the group and then to the common property of the entire people.

The basis for the creation of the socialist state sector (state enterprises) in agriculture was represented by over 5,000 hectares of the former state farms and nurseries, part of the land gained through reclamation and drainage, the nationalized forests and pastures, half the olive groves expropriated and all the nationalized livestock.

The creation of the state sector in agriculture was of great importance, because it laid the foundations for the construction of the economic base of socialism in the countryside, as it became a model of the large-scale socialist economy and an example of organization and production for the individual peasants.

The development and rapid progress of the state farms and agriculture in general was closely linked with the mechanization of work processes in agriculture. For this purpose first the machine and tractor stations were set up in 1947, mainly with machinery imported from abroad because pre-Liberation Albania had only a few tractors and threshing-machines.

After the Land Reform was carried out, the fur-

ther development of agriculture brought to the fore the problem of the socialist cooperation of the small agricultural economies. Based on the Leninist teachings and considering the concrete conditions of the country, the Party decided that the socialist transformation of the peasant economies should be done in the form of the socialist property of the group, of agricultural cooperatives of production. The land and the other main means of agricultural production, work animals, work and production were collectivized. Initially remuneration was reckoned at 60 per cent on the basis of the work done and 40 per cent on the basis of the land contributed. However, this was subsequently changed and from 1949 on remuneration was done only on the basis of the socialist principle, to each according to the quantity and quality of the work done. For their private needs the peasants were allowed to own a certain area of land, a number of livestock, one work animal, all these making up the personal plot of the cooperativist.

According to the directives of the Party the cooperatives were set up relying on the mass of the poor peasants, who were given the land by the Land Reform, as well as the middle peasants, by using the method of conviction and free will. Collectivization proceeded at a careful pace parallel with the creation of the objective and subjective conditions. According to these directives, along with the implementation of the Agrarian Reform work was done to convince the peasants about the benefit of the collectivization of agriculture. During October-December 1946 the first agricultural cooperatives were set up in Upper Krutja and in Serava (Lushnja district), in Dobrac (Shkodra district), in Kamica of Koplik, in Tale and Grykë-Lumë of Bregu i Matit, in Novosela and Risilia (Vlora district) and in Çiflig (Saranda district).

In 1948 the number of agricultural cooperatives

was 56 with about 11 thousand hectares of land, or 3.4 per cent of the arable land of the country. In April 1948 the first livestock cooperative was created in the district of Gjirokastra.

The state gave the cooperatives great economic and financial, technical and organizational assistance. Taxes on collectivized agricultural economies were halved and dues in bread grain reduced 10 per cent, the cooperatives were granted credits amounting to about 12 million Albanian francs during 1946-1948. Thanks to this aid and the work of the cooperativist themselves, the cooperatives were strengthened and developed, thereby becoming a positive example for the remaining individual peasants, who in the following years joined the cooperatives in which they saw the only way to emerge from poverty and backwardness.

So the socialist sector in agriculture was born and developed, it was comprised of the property of the entire people administered by the state, and the cooperativist property. At the same time, along with the increase in the number of agricultural workers a new social category was born: the cooperativist peasantry. Apart from the two afore-mentioned sectors, private property, made up of small individual economies yet predominant in agriculture and the economies of the kulaks, still remained in the countryside. Although based on the private ownership of the land and the other means of production as well as on the private appropriation of the products of labour, due to the provisions of the law on the Land Reform, the small individual economy had little possibility of being transformed into capitalist property. Even after the Land Reform class differences still remained in the countryside, the peasants were divided into poor, middle and rich. However, a distinctive characteristic of the peasantry was that from now on its differentiation was not done in two directions, on the contrary most of the

poor peasants were rising to the level of middle peasants, whereas the bourgeoisie of the countryside was dying away as a class.

On the basis of the directives of the Party, the peasantry was given a relatively big aid. Despite the difficulties in the first years after Liberation and the limited possibilities of the state at that time, several hundreds of millions of leks were spent on the development of agriculture and over 1100 specialists were placed at its disposal, about 3 thousand km of canals were built, over 9 thousand 300 ha of land were reclaimed. In May 1946 work began on the draining and reclaiming of the Maliq swamp, from which 4,250 hectares of new land were reclaimed and 3,500 hectares of land were improved in record time. Compared to 1938 the arable area increased 143 per cent and the irrigated area 167,5 per cent.

State aid was of great importance for the development of agriculture on the road set by the Party. Compared to 1938 in 1948 the area planted with bread grain increased 127 per cent.

The results achieved in agriculture staved off the threat of hunger, secured a better supply of the countryside and the city with agricultural and livestock products and of industry with primary materials.

4. The Organization of Trade on Socialist Bases

The supply of the working masses of the town and countryside with the more necessary articles of the food and clothing industry as well as with agricultural and livestock products became an acute economic and political problem, as the economic situation was very difficult during the first post-Liberation years both because of the great backwardness inherited from the past and the devastations of the war and because of

the efforts of the exploiting classes to sabotage the supply of the people.

This problem could not be solved as long as the products were in the hands of private owners and tradesmen. So in April 1946 it was decided that, whether owned by big or small merchants all industrial articles destined for the market were to be blocked and declared, and unified and stable prices established. In June the state system for the buying, procurement and selling of bread grain was established, a measure which made it impossible for the private merchants to speculate with the bread of the people.

In September 1946 the rationing system was established for a more correct and regular distribution of food-stuffs.

This was a temporary measure dictated by the circumstances created in the country during the first post-Liberation years. The state took it upon itself to supply with bread grain and other articles the peasants who did not secure their bread for the whole year round. Internal wholesale trade and foreign trade passed into the hands of the state. The administration and distribution of goods was done in both forms of the socialist sector of trade, state trade and cooperativist trade.

The state sector of trade created since 1945 also took over the procurement and reselling of bread grain and its by-products, tobacco, olives, as well as livestock products, depriving private tradesmen of this right.

The cooperativist sector of trade was comprised of the consumer cooperatives and buying and selling cooperatives.

The consumer cooperatives, as economic organizations of the working people of the towns began to be created since July 1945, initially in the main towns and later in the other towns, too. Created on voluntary

bases, they functioned on the contributions of their members and state aid. Their organization and management were established on sounder bases after the creation of the General Committee of Cooperatives (March 1946).

The buying and selling cooperatives were set up in the countryside by the end of 1946, but their organized activity began in January 1947. Their task was to take industrial goods to the countryside and procure agricultural products for the supply of the towns.

The unions of selling and buying cooperatives were created at every prefecture centre for the organization and coordination of the activity of these cooperatives.

The state and cooperativist trade played a big role in the supplying of the working masses, in the struggle against the black market and profiteering, in the reduction of turnover expenses and in the lowering of the cost of living and strengthening of the economic ties between the town and countryside.

However the difficult conditions of that period demanded the collection of the surplus bread grain from the productive peasantry in the form of dues leaving them what was needed for the maintenance of their families and for reproduction. This was realized through the system of the compulsory procurement of bread grain (wheat, rye, maize, rice, barley and oats), as well as olives and tobacco.

The compulsory procurement of the surplus bread grain and some other products was not the rule in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism; it was only a temporary phenomenon dictated by the difficulties of the time. The working peasantry who took part en masse in the Anti-fascist National Liberation War and made great sacrifices for the liberation of the country, seeing that the war devastations were great and that the class enemies had not yet let down their arms and that their activity like that of the external

enemies, posed a serious threat to the victories of the revolution, accepted it and carried it out as an indispensable means to secure the supplying of the army, the working class and the towns.

However, with the passage of time and the normalization of the situation the peasantry began to feel it as an extra burden. The enemy propaganda did not go without leaving its mark. Serious difficulties were created in the procurement of bread grain and the supplying of the masses. The situation was made even more difficult by the interference of the Yugoslav revisionists. Through unequal agreements they imposed on the country a disproportionate extension of the areas planted with industrial plants to the detriment of the bread grain and opened the doors to the Yugoslav trading enterprises and private tradesmen to plunder the products of the country.

In such circumstances, after the creation of the state sector of industry and trade the government not only was not able to replace the compulsory procurement of the surplus produce with the system of market exchange, but in 1947 was obliged to release a series of ordinances on procurements which were onerous and unstimulating for the peasants, although in principle they preserved their class character and responded to the general vital interests of the working class and the poor peasantry.

Only in August 1948 were some changes made in the procurement system, collecting not all the surpluses from the peasants but only part of them according to differentiated tariffs which considered both the quality and quantity of the land.

However this form of procurement, although it satisfied the interests of the peasantry and to a certain extent stimulated production still left room for distortions which led either to the compulsory procurement of all surpluses or to excessive amounts of bread grain

and other products remaining in the hands of the producers. This derived both from the lack of precise statistics on the acreage of each peasant economy and from the lack of experience in determining the quality of the land and the amount of dues.

However, in the then conditions of the country, the policy pursued by the Party and the people's power in the field of procurement was necessary. It achieved an important purpose, because it secured the supplying of the working class and all the other working masses of the town and countryside as well as the army.

Radical changes were made in taxation, too. The former financial system was abrogated and a new system was established on the basis of progressive taxation on income from agricultural products. According to this system of taxation the poor peasants paid less than half the tithe. They were excluded from taxation of livestock, buildings etc., and a policy of their constant unburdening from taxation was followed.

5. Development of Education, Culture and Improvement of Living Conditions

After Liberation work began for the reconstruction of the schools destroyed by the war and the opening of new schools, for training teachers and securing the necessary material base. This was one of the major problems of the period of the reconstruction of the country and it was rapidly solved. Many initiatives were taken throughout the country. A brilliant example was set by the Hero of the People, teacher Ndreç Ndue Gjoka¹,

¹ Ndreç Ndue Gjoka was murdered by the enemies of the people's power at the Varra Gorge on 17.2.1946.

who trained tens of teachers himself and opened schools and courses against illiteracy throughout the entire region of Mirdita.

The orientations of the 5th Plenum of the CC of the Party for the construction of socialism were also carried out in the field of education finding their concrete expression in the Educational Reform. The fundamental principles on which this educational reform was based were sanctioned in the Constitution of the PRA in which it was said that the state guarantees all strata of the population the possibility to attend schools and other cultural institutions free of charge, that it pays special attention to the education of the youth. The separation of the school from the church and its dependence on the state were sanctioned, as well as prohibition of private schools and compulsory primary schooling for all.

On August 17, 1946 the law on the Educational Reform was promulgated in all its links: pre-school education, general education, vocational education and adult education. The structure of the 11-year general education school was defined in its basic links: 4-year primary education and 7-year unified education. Primary education was made compulsory for all children, girls and boys, from 7 to 14 years of age. The school years 1946-1948 were years of intensive work for the application of the principles of the Reform. During those years primary education covered 2 378 inhabited centres out of the 2 602 Albania had at that time and included 93.7 per cent of the children subject to compulsory education. Seven-year education also assumed broad extension in all the districts of the country.

For the children of remote mountain villages, of nomad shepherd families and others, summer schools were opened and ambulant teachers engaged. Pre-school education was also developed at rapid rates.

At the same time the bases were also laid for lower

and medium technical vocational education, in which over 12 thousand pupils were included since the first year. In 1946 the Two-year Pedagogical Institute was opened which prepared the later transition to complete higher education, etc. Part-time education for adults was organized, too. In the school year 1947-1948 there were 948 primary, 7-year and secondary schools with 28 171 students.

Great attention was paid to the training of teaching cadres. Going to the countryside as a teacher was an act of high patriotism. Responding to the call of the Party hundreds of communists and youth of the southern regions went to work in the mountainous regions of Central and Northern Albania. Teachers with insufficient training went through part-time courses. In this period the training of higher cadres was done mainly abroad, in the Soviet Union and other countries of people's democracy. From 1945 to 1948, 815 students were sent abroad for studies. Cadres were trained not only for education, but also for the other branches of the people's economy, the health service, etc. So in this stage the foundations were also laid for the training of the new people's intelligentsia, the main base of which were the sons and daughters of the workers and the working peasantry, tempered in the fire of the people's revolution.

The Reform radically democratized the educational system and was the most important step for the beginning of a profound, all-round cultural revolution which was realized in the later periods.

At the same time the struggle against illiteracy continued. By government decision of February 1947, all illiterates, men up to 50 years of age and women up to 40 years of age, were obliged to learn writing and reading at special courses.

In the course of the struggle against illiteracy in 1948 119 thousand illiterates learnt to read and write,

which showed that this struggle had entered a decisive phase.

In the spirit of the decisions of the 5th Plenum the entire material base of propaganda work, printeries, cinemas, publishing houses etc., passed into the hands of the state and were placed at the service of the working masses. This material base was extended and strengthened further. The press assumed great development. Apart from its central organs, local organs were created in every prefecture. In 1948 25 press organs were published throughout the entire country with a circulation of about 1 million copies as against about 8 thousand copies before the Liberation. The number of libraries increased, too. Three hundred seventy-three new libraries were set up in the countryside. Alongside with them pioneer and youth houses, houses of culture and reading halls were set up, and artistic groups were created everywhere.

State institutions were founded for the organization and direction of the cultural creativity such as the enterprise for the Book Publishing and Distribution, the Enterprise of Cinematography and the Committee of Culture and Art. During these years the first Albanian newsreels were produced. The all-round development of the country on the road of socialism called for the organization and development of scientific work. For this purpose in January 1948 the Institute of Sciences was founded. In 1948 the Archaeological-Ethnographic Museum and the Museum of Natural Sciences were founded. These organisms laid the bases for the scientific-research work.

Immediately after the Liberation of the country, an important task was that of the overcoming of the backwardness inherited from the past in the health service. Disinterest of the anti-popular regime of Zog had led to the spread of many contagious diseases. Economic difficulties and the war destructions further

aggravated the health condition of the masses of the people. Urgent and energetic measures were called for. Therefore the necessary apparatus of the health service was immediately set up at the centre and the base. The existing health institutions were taken over by the state. Out-patient medical service became free of charge and prices for all medicines were reduced by 25 per cent.

On this material basis measures began to be taken against the more dangerous contagious diseases. The anti-malaria campaign began. At that time this disease affected nearly 60 per cent of the population. In 1946 32 dispensaries and 18 centres for anti-larvae spraying were set up in the more populated and more contaminated areas. Measures were also taken for the draining and disinfection of swamps, canals and other hotbeds of infection. As a result of this campaign which continued until 1948 the level of malarie infection was reduced by 41 per cent and the rest of the population, especially the workers and youth who worked in these zones, were protected from that disease.

In 1947, an organized campaign began also against syphilis and tuberculosis. Within a few years the sources of syphilitic infection were eliminated, whereas through treatment and preventive measures tuberculosis was greatly circumscribed.

Since 1946 the mass vaccination of the children began against diphtheria, typhoid, etc. Consultation clinics for mothers and children were set up and the medical control of school children was organized. A series of measures were taken for the protection of the health of the workers, through the improvement of working and living conditions.

Together with prophylactic institutions, many new hospitals and clinics were also set up. The number of hospitals increased from 8 there were in 1938 to 12 and the number of beds from 810 to 2,180, apart from 29

rural hospitals, sanatoria, maternity homes, out-patient clinics, centres for the prevention of diseases, dental clinics and children's crèches.

For the training of the health cadres short-term and long-term courses were opened at which nurses, midwives, laboratory workers, radiologists, health inspectors were trained. In 1948 the 3-year school for assistant doctors was opened from which hundreds of cadres graduated. One hundred fifteen students were sent abroad to study medicine.

With all these measures the threat of epidemic was averted, and the health of the people was protected and improved.

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The proclamation of the program of socialist construction of the country and the consistent implementation of socio-economic reforms, according to the decisions of the 5th Plenum of the CC of the Party, infuriated the enemies even more. They tried by all manner of means to sabotage the carrying out of these reforms. A group of reactionary deputies in the new parliament began to express themselves openly against socialist transformations, trying to create all sorts of obstacles to the endorsement and implementation of the laws; gangs of criminals started a terrorist activity against the cadres of the Party and the people's power, as well as against ordinary people who fought consistently for the implementation of the line of the Party. The enemy launched an unrestrained propaganda campaign against the people's power so as to arouse doubts about its stability. This was accompanied by pressures and threats on the part of the main imperialist powers.

On September 9, 1946 the internal enemies, abetted by the Anglo-American imperialists, after mustering about 450 people, among whom many ordinary people they had managed to deceive, launched an attack against the city of Shkodra. This attack was to serve as a signal for the armed intervention of the Anglo-American armies. However, this counter-revolutionary movement was nipped in the bud within one day.

In the meantime the enemies began large-scale sabotage work through the recruitment of bourgeois technicians formerly linked with reaction and fascism to wreck the major project of the draining of the Maliq swamp, the industrial installations at Kuçova and Rubik, the construction of roads and bridges, etc. Along with this and their efforts to hinder the implementation of economic reforms, the enemy did their utmost to damage the new state power through the smuggling of gold, the falsification of money, the sabotage of the procurement system, etc. The reactionary clergy, especially the Catholic clergy, carried out an intense hostile activity.

During 1946 a series of enemy groups and organizations were uncovered and condemned. Their trials exposed the desperate attempts of the forces of internal and external reaction to change the situation in Albania and showed the dangers which threatened the people's power and the gains of the Revolution. In these conditions the Party and state called on the masses and these did everything to assist the People's Army, the State Security and the people's police in uncovering and combating the activity of the class enemy. They took an active part in a series of military operations and other activities which resulted in the wiping out of 103 counter-revolutionary organizations and groups of agents, 145 armed gangs and the successful coping with 1 035 border provocations.

Despite these achievements in the directive released in June 1947 the Party stressed that «The work of the enemy should be taken seriously, therefore, vigilance, constant revolutionary vigilance is demanded...»*

* *Principal Documents of the PLA*, Tirana 1971, vol. 1, p. 458, Alb. ed.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE PRA IN THE YEARS 1944-1948

1. Defence of the Rights of Albania in the International Arena

One of the greatest achievements of the people's revolution in Albania was that it gave birth to an Albanian state that was entirely new, not only from the stand-point of its internal socio-political order, but also as an active positive factor of foreign policy.

The new Albania based its foreign policy on its own national interests as well as on those great ideals of progressive mankind — socialism and communism, with which the fate of its people was closely linked.

One of the problems which the people's power encountered in the field of foreign policy after Liberation was that of the recognition of the Democratic Government. In its first programmatic declaration of October 23, 1944, the Democratic Government of Albania had made clear its desire for recognition by the Great Allies, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, and by all the members of the anti-fascist bloc, as the only government of Albania.

At the end of December 1944, after the whole country had been liberated, the head of Government, Comrade Enver Hoxha, wrote to the governments of the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain, in the first place, seeking their official recognition of the new Albanian government.

The Democratic Government had all the attributes necessary for immediate recognition and the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with it. Its position was clear both within the country and on the international plane. Not only did it exert full authority over the whole country, but even abroad there was not any nominal «government» or reactionary organization which could raise doubts about its right to emerge as the only representative of Albania in international relations. Nevertheless the question of recognition of the Democratic Government was delayed for some time, and this occurred because the governments of the imperialist powers, Britain and the USA, hindered the settlement of it.

At first London and Washington posed as allies and well-wishers of the Albanian people, therefore they did not dare come out openly against the people's power, the Democratic Government. They asked for time, allegedly to inform themselves about the representative character of the government and the basis and support it had among the people, before finally deciding to recognize it.

In January 1945 the British and the Americans withdrew the missions they had in Albania during the time of the war and sought to replace them with other missions whose duty would be to «prepare the terrain» for the recognition of the Democratic Government.

In order to deprive the British and the American governments of any pretext, the Albanian government gave its approval for this temporary measure, considering it as a means to smooth the way to the establishment

of full official relations with the Allied Great Powers. A new British military mission arrived in Tirana in March 1945 and a diplomatic mission of the Department of State of the USA arrived in May.

Despite the close links it had with our government at that time, the government of the USSR, also, sent a new military mission to Tirana in June 1945. Having approved the «Declaration on Liberated Europe» adopted at the Yalta Meeting, on the basis of which the three allied powers undertook to co-ordinate their stands in regard to the newly formed governments in the liberated countries of Europe, the Soviet government was obliged to act in the same way as the two other allied powers.

This situation continued until the autumn of that year, when seeing the unjustified Anglo-American procrastination on this problem, the Soviet government decided to take independent steps. In a note delivered in Tirana on November 10, 1945, it announced its recognition of the new Albanian government and diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in December.

Meanwhile the Albanian government had been recognized by a number of other countries of Eastern Europe, which had affinities with the new Albania by virtue of their common efforts in the Anti-fascist National Liberation War. Thus in May 1945 it was recognized by Yugoslavia, in October-November by Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, and later, in 1947, by Hungary and Rumania as well. In December 1945 the Albanian government was recognized by France, too, the only one of the three main Western powers which established normal diplomatic relations with the Democratic Government of Albania.

In November 1945 when the Albanian government was recognized by the Soviet Union, it seemed, at first, as if the governments of the USA and Great Britain would act in the same way. Indeed they presented the

step taken by the Soviet government as a result of preliminary consultation between the three powers. Precisely on November 10, the day when recognition of our government by the Soviet Union was announced, the British and the American missions each delivered a note to our government in which instead of immediately and explicitly recognizing the Democratic Government they linked recognition of it with certain conditions and demanded «assurances.»

First of all the two governments tried to exploit the question of recognition in order to interfere in the internal affairs of the country, especially in the elections to the Constituent Assembly which were to take place on December 2, 1945. With the clear aim of inciting the reactionary elements, they demanded assurances that the elections would be free and foreign correspondents would be permitted to observe the way they were conducted, at first hand. In its note the Department of State of the USA went even further: it demanded that the Albanian government recognize that «the treaties and agreements signed between the USA and Albania before the war, up till 7 April 1939, remain in force.» It was not hard to understand that with this the American government aimed to attack one of the main decisions of the Congress of Përmet, which demanded a review of the international agreements of the former Albanian state and the abrogation of all those acts which could infringe the sovereignty of the Albanian people and the independence of the new people's Albania.

The Democratic Government's reply to the Anglo-American attempts was clear and unequivocal.

In the note handed to the British and American missions in Tirana those days, Enver Hoxha firmly restated the intention of the Democratic Government to respect the freedom of elections irrespective of any sectional interest or external pressure, by adhering

strictly to the law on the elections adopted by the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council. At the same time, in order to deprive reactionary circles of any possibility of subsequent misrepresentations among international public opinion, about the conduct of the elections in Albania, Enver Hoxha announced that the Albanian government gave its approval for press representatives of the East and West to come to observe the development of the election campaign at first hand and to witness the complete freedom of the electors to express their will. As to the special condition put forward by the American Department of State, without in any way infringing the spirit and essence of the decisions of the Congress of Përmet, the reply of the head of the Albanian government pointed out that the Democratic Government could hold separate talks with the American government on the issue of pre-war treaties, but only after diplomatic relations between the two countries had been established.

The great victory of the Front in the elections of December 2, 1945 was another heavy blow to the plans of external reaction in connection with Albania. It showed clearly that the new people's power was based firmly on the people. The British and the American official representatives, together with the correspondents of foreign newspapers and agencies, were obliged to admit publicly that the results of the elections of December 2 were a faithful expression of the real situation and the aspirations of the Albanian people. For a moment it seemed that, after this, the governments in London and Washington would not close their eyes to this reality and would decide their policy towards Albania in conformity with it.

At the beginning of 1946 the British government announced its desire to exchange normal diplomatic representatives with the Albanian government. Indeed

the two sides reached agreement on the establishment of legations in their respective capitals.

Meanwhile, however, at a series of trials held in our country many facts began to come out about the active involvement of members of the British missions in Tirana in the plots hatched up against the people's power. This showed that the leading circles of Britain had not altered their former stand. It was clear that they considered the establishment of relations with the Albanian government as a means to lull the people's power to sleep. The press and the entire Albanian public did not hesitate to denounce the secret intrigues and two-faced stands of the British.

Infuriated by the discovery and foiling of its plots the government in London decided to take «a hard line» towards Albania. It described as «impermissible» the «attitude of the Albanian authorities» who, by making known the above-mentioned facts, had allegedly impugned the dignity of Britain as a great power. In February, it imposed certain new conditions for the despatch of its representatives to Tirana; it demanded that the Albanian government accord them special treatment and recognize them certain rights in excess of those normally accorded diplomatic representatives.

The Albanian government rightly rejected this demand. As a countermeasure London ceased any effort to establish relations with Albania. In March it withdrew its military mission from Tirana, while in May, on the pretext of a minor incident provoked by two British warships off the southern coast of our country, it announced that it would not send its minister to Tirana. From then on, the British government completely abandoned the question of establishing relations with the Albanian government.

The outcome of the issue was the same with the government of the USA, too. The State Department persisted in its demand for «the continuation of the

pre-war treaties and agreements» which had been entered into with the former Albanian state. The Americans stepped up their pressure, especially, after the turn which Anglo-Albanian relations took, hoping that now the Albanian government would yield and make concessions. In the talks which were held in the summer of 1946, however, the government of the PRA made it clear that it had no intention of deviating from the fundamental principles of its foreign policy defined during the time of the war. On this occasion it repeated its readiness to examine this problem concretely after the establishment of normal relations. Like the British government, however, the American government had already decided to pursue an openly hostile policy towards the new Albania and in November 1946 it, too, withdrew its mission from Tirana. From that time on there have been no official relations whatsoever between the two governments.

Assessing the experience of the struggle which the Party and the people's power waged against the hostile attempts of the Anglo-American imperialists, Comrade Enver Hoxha writes: «The consistently correct revolutionary stand of the CPA during the war and in the first post-Liberation years, towards the anti-Albanian policy and hostile interference of the Anglo-Americans and towards every other problem, played its vital role in the achievement and consolidation of the complete independence of our country. Later, the experience of this stand was to serve us in determining and pursuing a correct, principled, open and consistent policy towards friends and enemies of every type.»*

After breaking off even those few links which they had with the Albanian government the two imperialist

* Enver Hoxha, *The Anglo-American Threat to Albania* (Memoirs), «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1982, pp. 432-433, Eng. ed.

powers of the West did their utmost to prevent it from emerging in the international arena. Nevertheless, they were unable to reverse the process of the consolidation of the external position of the new people's Albania. During 1947-1948, a considerable number of governments of foreign countries, both socialist and capitalist, recognized the Albanian government and established normal diplomatic relations with it.

The hostile policy of the USA and British towards new people's Albania was displayed not only in regard to recognition of the Democratic Government. The two western powers adopted an anti-Albanian attitude on all issues which had to do with the rights of Albania after the Second World War.

There was not the slightest doubt that at the end of the war the international position of Albania was quite clear. Albania was one of the countries which had fought shoulder to shoulder with the United Nations in the anti-fascist coalition, hence a triumphant allied country.

Fully within its rights, in March 1945, the Albanian government demanded that Albania be invited to take part in the San Francisco Conference which was to be held at the end of April that year in order to found the United Nations Organization (UNO). However, its demand was rejected by the Department of State of the USA on the formal pretext that those governments which had not yet been recognized by the allied powers could not be invited to send their representatives to the San Francisco Conference. Thus, a vicious circle was deliberately created; the Albanian government was not recognized and this fact was used as a pretext for not inviting Albania to the international conferences on major post-war problems. At the end of January 1946 the Albanian request was taken to the Security Council and thus was included in the normal procedure envisaged by the UNO Charter for the admis-

sion of new members. Albania's application for membership was the first recorded in the annals of UNO, but it had to wait 10 years before it could enter the ranks of that organization.

At first, neither USA nor Britain expressed open opposition to the admission of Albania to UNO. The American and British representatives in this organization called for more careful study of the problem and for delaying a decision until more opportune moments. Only the government in Athens came out openly against the Albanian application. In January 1946, when the Albanian application was discussed in the Security Council for the first time, the Greek foreign minister, Rendis, presented the non-admission of Albania as an issue of principle. He came out with the slanderous thesis that Albania had taken part in the war against Greece and that countries that had taken the side of the fascist powers could not be admitted to UNO. These allegations encountered the firm, well-reasoned opposition of the representatives of the Soviet Union and the countries of the people's democracies. Indeed doubts about these allegations were expressed by the representatives of certain Western countries, also. In August 1946 the Albanian application for admission was put to the vote in the Security Council. Although the majority of the members voted in favour of Albania's application, it was vetoed by USA and Britain. Thus, these two governments, which up till then had acted covertly, mostly through the Greek government, now came out openly against the admission of Albania to UNO.

The Albanian government had to overcome great obstacles, also, in connection with the participation of Albania in the formulation of peace treaties with Italy and Germany. Albania had raised the problem of its right to take part in the drafting of these treaties as early as September 1945, when the question of the Peace Treaty with Italy was discussed at the first meet-

ing of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the four big powers in London. Nevertheless, the PRA was not included in the list of states invited to send representatives to the Paris Peace Conference at the end of July 1946.

In the end, the Conference was obliged to discuss the specific question of the participation of Albania, and despite the open opposition of Greek representatives, it invited the Albanian government to send a delegation to Paris. But, because of the insistence of the western powers, headed by the USA and Britain, Albania's rights were still violated, since it was invited to take part not with full rights like all the other participating countries, but only with consultative rights, allowing it to be heard in regard to the Peace Treaty with Italy. Despite this the government of the PRA deemed proper to send its delegation to Paris because it was important that the Peace Conference should hear the voice of Albania. The Albanian delegation went to the French capital in August and was headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha in person. The first step it took upon its arrival in Paris was to issue a statement in which it condemned the injustice done to Albania by treating it differently from the other participating countries.

During the proceedings of the Peace Conference, both the profoundly hostile attitude of the USA and Britain towards the PRA and the tendency of the government in Athens to take advantage of this in order to realize its old plans for the partitioning of Albanian territories, emerged clearly.

Taking no account of the altered circumstances after the Second World War and with a total lack of political realism, the leading circles of Greece wanted to repeat at the Paris Conference in 1946 those same intrigues to the detriment of Albania that had been hatched up at the Peace Conference after the First World War. Again taking up the thesis that Albania was

allegedly «in a state of war» with Greece since October 1940 when fascist Italy declared war on Greece, the Greek prime minister, Tsaldaris, declared that this situation would come to an end only with the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries. This was just a new way in which the Greek ruling circles could present their old territorial claims to the district of Korça and Gjirokastra in Southern Albania, the annexation of which was presented by Greece as a condition for the restoration of peace between the two countries. Aware of the weakness of its position, the government in Athens also tried the course of secret agreements: during the proceedings of the Conference, at a secret meeting it proposed to the Yugoslav government that they should come to terms over the division of the Albanian territory, just as they had done at the Peace Conference after the First World War with the Titoni-Venizellos Agreement of 1919. Moša Pijade, the Yugoslav representative at the Peace Conference, refused Tsaldaris' proposal, and moreover denounced it publicly at one of the sessions of Conference. But, as subsequent events showed clearly, the aim of the Yugoslav leaders was to annex the whole of Albania themselves.

The head of the Albanian delegation, Enver Hoxha, made a very important speech at the Conference: «The Albanian people, few in number, but great in the sacrifices they made for the common cause», he said, «are not here to discuss their borders, but to express and demand their rights.»* After expressing his protest against the injustice which had been done to Albania by not inviting it to the Conference as a member with full rights, Comrade Enver Hoxha demanded that the Peace Treaty with Italy should create conditions which would

* Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1975, p. 610, Eng. ed.

prevent the repetition of the Italian aggression against Albania, that it should contain provisions limiting the size of the Italian armed forces, and include fair compensation for the damage Albania had suffered from the fascist aggression.

Despite the support of the Soviet Union and some other countries, none of the demands of the Albanian delegation found a positive solution at the Conference.

It was only at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the four powers in November-December 1946 in New York at which the final editing of the Peace Treaty with Italy was done that, on the insistence of the USSR, Albania was described as «associated power» in regard to the implementation of the Peace Treaty with Italy. Likewise, at this meeting Albania's right to war reparations from Italy was recognized, but a sum totalling only 5 millions dollars, far less than the value of the damages claimed by the Albanian government.

The Peace Treaty with Italy, together with the peace treaties with Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania and Finland, was signed in Paris on February 10, 1947. In October of the same year the PRA joined the Peace Treaty with Italy.

The Peace Treaty with Italy contained a series of provisions which had to do directly with Albania. However, two were the most important: article 27, on the basis of which Italy promised to respect the sovereignty of Albania, and article 28, which placed Sazan Island fully under the sovereignty of Albania. That island had long been recognized as belonging to Albania by the international acts on the borders, but it had been arbitrarily held by Italy. In general, the provisions of the Peace Treaty with Italy which had to do with Albania constituted an important success achieved in the foreign policy of the PRA. Despite the opposition of the USA and Britain, Albania was officially ranked among the

states that emerged victorious in the Second World War.

After this, the diplomatic activity of the PRA was concentrated on the question of Albania's participation in drafting the Peace Treaty which had to be concluded with Germany, on which talks were being held at that time. This question had been discussed in a preliminary and partial way as early as November 1945, when the Conference on the Reparations from Germany met in Paris, according to the decision of the Potsdam Conference.

The Albanian government was invited to take part in this Conference and presented its claim there. Once again Albania's rights were violated because the sum of reparations from Germany allocated to it was far less than the real damage the nazi invaders had inflicted on it. Nevertheless, the fact that Albania was included among the states which were entitled to reparations from Germany had political importance. This was reflected, also, in the final act of the Paris Conference of January 1946, on the basis of which Albania became a member with full rights of the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency (IARA). Thus, the question of Albania's participation, too, in the drafting of the Peace Treaty with Germany could be considered solved positively, from that time on.

Later, when the governments of the USA and Britain took an openly hostile stand towards the PRA, the repeated requests of the Albanian government to have its representatives in the procedure of drafting the Peace Treaty with Germany met the stubborn opposition of the two western powers. In this case the USA and Britain displayed their total disregard for both the final act of the Paris Conference of January 1946 and the Peace Treaty with Italy of February 1947, which clearly defined the position of Albania as a country which had been a victim of the nazi-fascist aggression.

A serious threat to the independence and territorial integrity of PRA began to develop from the Greek monarcho-fascists, in particular. At this time a great clamour was raised about the so-called «Greek question». The aim of this clamour was to divert attention from the open armed intervention by the Anglo-Americans in Greece to crush the Greek people's forces and to focus it on the unfounded accusations about an imaginary «intervention» in the civil war in Greece by its northern neighbours, including Albania. In connection with this a whole propaganda campaign was whipped up and this occupied a large place in the sessions of the General Assembly of UNO.

The leading circles in Athens, and the British and the American governments hiding behind them could not forgive Albania its stand of sympathy and solidarity with the Greek progressive forces. Besides this, the Greek monarcho-fascist forces thought that the appropriate time had come for them to put into practice their plans for expansion at Albania's expense.

As a consequence, a grave situation which threatened the territorial integrity of our country was created in the southern border regions. This situation was further aggravated by Greek provocations along the border. By continually organizing incidents and clashes on land, sea and air, the Greek government hoped to gain a means of pressure in order to separate the regions it wanted from Albania.

One of the many problems in the field of foreign policy which the PRA had to cope with after the war was the incident which occurred in the autumn of 1946 with some British warships in the waters of the Corfu Channel close to the Albanian coast. This incident would not have assumed the proportions it did, but for the hostile policy of Britain towards people's democratic Albania. The British government deliberately concocted this incident, exaggerated it beyond all reason, and

used it as a pretext to launch another anti-Albanian campaign.

At the end of October 1946, while sailing in battle formation in the waters of the Corfu Channel off Saranda in an attempt to intimidate the Albanian people, some British warships struck mines and suffered material damage and human losses.

The British government used this incident as a pretext to violate the territorial sovereignty of the PR of Albania, by sending a large number of units of the British fleet to the waters of the channel (which is divided down the middle by the sea border between Albania and Greece) allegedly to clear mines.

Immediately after this, the British government raised a number of accusations against Albania, blaming it for the explosion of the mines and demanding compensation for the material and human losses. The government of the PRA rejected these accusations as complete fabrications on the part of the British.

In January 1947, the British government raised this matter in the Security Council of UNO, presenting it as a question which allegedly constituted «a threat to international peace and security».

The British resolution which laid the blame on the Albanian government was not adopted by the Security Council because the Soviet Union vetoed it. Then the Anglo-American majority procured a «recommendation» from the Security Council that the parties should take the problem to the International Court.

The Anglo-Albanian conflict linked with the Corfu Channel incident remained before the International Court for two and a half years, from June 1947 to December 1949. In its final verdict announced in April 1949, however, the International Court trampled underfoot the most elementary principles of justice and sound reason. It blamed Albania for the mines that exploded in the channel in October 1946 and declared that the

Albanian government should pay the respective compensation. In order to create the impression of impartiality, the Court also «rebuked» the British government for its violation of the territorial sovereignty of the PR of Albania in November 1946, when it sent its fleet to the territorial waters of Albania allegedly in order to clear mines.

The injustice of this verdict was so flagrant that even some members of the Hague International Court themselves pointed this out. Of the 16 members of the court that heard the case, 5 dissociated themselves from the majority verdict and drafted a dissenting opinion. In this they pointed out that the conclusion about the so-called «Albanian culpability» had been reached without any basis of proof. Indeed, the majority verdict on the responsibility of Albania was based not on direct and indisputable proofs, but on the utterly formal reasoning that «since mines were found in the channel, the Albanian authorities could not but have known that they had been laid». With its verdict of April 1949, the International Court proved clearly that it was a tool in the hands of imperialist great powers.

Furthermore the International Court committed another flagrant violation when it went far beyond its authority defined in agreements between the disputing parties, and took upon itself to decide the amount of compensation that the Albanian side had to pay. Faced with the violation of the most elementary rules of justice, the government of the PRA refused to recognize the decision of the International Court as lawful and rejected the demand for compensations.

In retaliation the British government committed an act of robbery by seizing a quantity of gold which had been deposited in the former Albanian National Bank and which belonged to the Albanian State. This gold, which had been held in Rome by the Italian government since before the war, had been stolen by the German

nazis in 1943 after the capitulation of fascist Italy. A tripartite commission, comprised of representatives of the USA, Britain and France, was set up to share out the gold found in Germany after the war, decided in 1948, on the basis of documents presented by the government of the PRA, that part of the stolen gold should be returned to Albania. However, the handing over of this gold to the Albanian government was delayed while the «Anglo-Albanian dispute» over the Corfu Channel incident was being considered by the International Court.

After this, in connection with the Albanian gold, claims were made both by the British government which wanted to take it instead of the compensation assigned by the International Court, and by the Italian government, which regarded the gold as its own on the pretext that the majority of the shares in the former Albanian National Bank had belonged to Italian capital. On this basis the tripartite commission froze the gold which it had recognized as belonging to Albania. From that time on, the government of the PRA has never ceased asserting its right to the coined gold belonging to the Albanian state.

2. Foiling the Yugoslav Interference

Guided by the principle of proletarian internationalism, the Party and the government of the PRA thought that after Liberation the relations between the Albanian people and the peoples of Yugoslavia would be strengthened and develop on a correct course, in the interests of both sides and the cause of socialism.

To this end the treaty of friendship, collaboration and reciprocal aid between the People's Republic of Albania and the People's Federative Republic of Yugos-

lavia was signed in July 1946. Likewise an economic convention was signed in November 1946. It envisaged the conclusion of a series of bilateral protocols regarding the co-ordination of economic plans, the creation of several joint companies, and the regulation of relations in the fields of currency, customs and prices.

But the Yugoslav leadership had other aims. During the National Liberation War it had tried to make the Communist Party of Albania subservient to it, with the long-term aim of annexing Albania to Yugoslavia. In order to realize these ambitions it had recruited some members of the leadership of the CPA, such as Kogi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo, Sejfulla Malëshova, and others. The open Yugoslav interference in the internal affairs of the CPA was displayed especially at the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the CPA held in Berat in October 1944, on the eve of the complete liberation of the Homeland.

Continuing this policy, after Liberation the Yugoslav government aimed to exploit the Albanian—Yugoslav collaboration for its chauvinist ambitions, therefore it presented a series of draft protocols with a hostile, enslaving, anti-Marxist content to the Albanian side. The leadership of the Party and the Albanian government sought a series of explanations and expressed reservations and objections to a number of aspects of the projects presented.

It resolutely opposed the projects on establishing parity between the currencies, the unification of prices and the customs union, as unacceptable in principle and unrealizable in practice. Neither the equalization of the currencies nor the unification of prices, which were conditional on each other, were possible, because of the great differences in the economic situations of the two countries.

In regard to the customs union, the Albanian side thought that for the socialist countries in which trade

is conducted by the state, the removal of customs duties would be a measure with mutual benefit. But the Albanian government wanted the buying of goods to be done on the basis of agreements by state institutions and enterprises, and not haphazardly, and that neither the lek nor the dinar, which would be used as means of exchange, should circulate freely in unlimited amounts. The aim of these proposals was to eliminate the possibility that the customs union would be used for purposes of profit and speculation by one side to the detriment of the other. But the Yugoslav leaders were pursuing other aims. They wanted the Yugoslav enterprises and private merchants to have complete freedom to buy various products which were sold on the Albanian free market. This would have gobbled up all the local products, and led to price rises and deterioration of the living conditions of the Albanian people. For these reasons the Albanian side opposed this firmly and in the trade agreement for 1947 everything was done as the leadership of the Party and the Albanian government wanted. In 1948, however, the protocol was violated and scores of Yugoslav black marketeers and speculators invaded the Albanian market and bought up everything they found there, thus creating a very difficult situation for the economy and working people of Albania. Apart from this in July 1947 the Yugoslav leadership imposed a second monetary reform on Albania, which established an unfair exchange rate between the lek and the dinar, reduced the purchasing power of the Albanian currency, and gave rise to the danger of inflation.

Another means the Yugoslavs employed in order to realize their aims was the co-ordination of economic plans and the commission set up for this purpose. Through this commission for the co-ordination of plans, they wanted to take control of Albanian's economy, to paralyze the economic organs of the Albanian state, to

remove the Albanian government from the management of the joint companies and to turn the commission into a government above the Albanian government. Thanks to the resolute opposition of the Albanian government and the CC of the Party, however, up until 1947 this commission was unable to carry out its aims. The Yugoslav government also openly violated the provisions of the agreements on the joint companies and the economic plan for 1947. The six joint companies that were established, were not set up on an equal basis but with the existing Albanian capital while the Yugoslav government did not invest a single lek of the 60 millions it had promised, did not supply any machinery or make any investment, while on the other hand it unjustly appropriated half the profits made by these companies.

Another means which was employed by the Yugoslav leadership to damage the Albanian economy was its failure to provide all the credits promised Albania for 1947. Of the 2 billion leks promised it provided less than 50 per cent. Moreover the goods supplied on credit were reckoned at prices two to four times higher than international market prices. The whole of the so-called Yugoslav aid consisted of four small factories, completely worn out and long since written off.

Seeing the wrong turn which relations with Yugoslavia had taken and the plunder which was being carried out, the sound part of the Central Committee of the Party, headed by Enver Hoxha, persistently opposed the anti-Albanian activities of the Yugoslav leadership and demanded that these agreements should be put right.

After this, the situation became even more tense and the interference more brutal. The Yugoslav leaders organized another, heavier attack on the PRA. This began with the presentation of a draft five-year plan

for the economic «development» of Albania for the years 1948-1952, which was based, to a large extent, on a credit of 21 billion leks which the Yugoslav government was supposed to supply, while in reality the Yugoslav budget envisaged not one dinar for this purpose. On the other hand, this draft envisaged that Albania would remain an agricultural country producing raw materials for Yugoslav industry, precisely as the imperialists operate with the «aid» they offer the undeveloped countries.

Although the conditions in Albania at that time were still unsuitable to undertake a five-year plan, on the instructions of the government, the State Planning Commission drafted a five-year plan which, unlike the Yugoslav draft, gave a correct orientation for the development of the country. It envisaged the development of industry, the electrification of the country, and the development of agriculture on socialist bases.

Seeing that he was unable to conquer the will of the Albanian leadership, and in order to exert pressure on it, in June 1947 the leader of Yugoslavia, J. B. Tito, wrote to the leadership of the Party and the state making the accusation that «an anti-Yugoslav second line was being crystallized» in Albania. However the Political Bureau of the CC of the Party rejected this unjust accusation made with hostile intentions.

Relations deteriorated further when, after the rejection of the draft five-year plan proposed by the Yugoslav leadership, a state delegation headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha went to the Soviet Union in July 1947, on the invitation of the Soviet government, and signed an economic agreement with it. This visit infuriated the Yugoslav leaders who had long tried to restrict to the minimum the direct contacts of Albania with the Soviet Union, justifying this with what had become a current slogan for them and their agents in

our country, that «the road to Moscow runs through Belgrade». The fact that the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow protested to the Albanian government over the visit of an Albanian cultural delegation to the Soviet Union early in June 1947, is evidence of the efforts of the Yugoslav leadership in this direction. «We do not understand,» said the Yugoslav representative, «how at a time when we are linked economically, you seek to make other economic and trade agreements with other countries, we cannot understand how you can take such actions without consulting us and reaching prior agreement with us.»* This shows that the Yugoslav leadership considered Albania not a sovereign country, but a country dependent on it in practice until such time as it would be gobbled up officially as the seventh republic of the Yugoslav Federation.

In November 1947 the Yugoslav leadership made another even graver accusation against the CPA. It made the accusation that Comrade Enver Hoxha, after his return from Moscow, «had changed the policy towards Yugoslavia», that «our Party had allegedly permitted the creation of an anti-Yugoslav front in Albania, that the government was pursuing a policy which was diametrically opposed to the desires of the Albanian people», that an unrealistic and autarchic plan had been drafted which would lead the economy of Albania towards severance from the Yugoslav economy. The Yugoslav leadership also accused Nako Spiru¹, member

* Enver Hoxha, *The Titoites (Historical notes)*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1982, p. 346, Eng. ed.

¹ Before the Liberation of the country, Nako Spiru had collaborated with Tito's emissaries in Albania for the implementation of their plans against the Communist Party of Albania and the General Secretary, Enver Hoxha. After Liberation he gradually parted company with them and since he no longer obeyed their directives, the Titoites decided to eliminate him

of the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPA and Chairman of the State Planning Commission, of being an agent of imperialism.

The Yugoslav leaders also tried unsuccessfully to sabotage the signing of the treaty of friendship and reciprocal aid between Albania and the PR of Bulgaria in December 1947.

Following the accusations of the Yugoslav leadership, an extremely grave situation was created in the life of the Party and the country. Several members of the Political Bureau of the CC of the Party, such as Koçi Xoxe, Pandi Kristo, and others, had long become the most ardent supporters of the hostile anti-Marxist platform of the Yugoslav leadership and used it as a weapon to attack and eliminate the sound part of the leadership headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha who became an insurmountable obstacle to the enslaving aims and plans of the Yugoslav leadership.

In his position as organizational secretary of the CC of the Party and minister of the Interior, Koçi Xoxe had gravely violated the norms of the internal life of the Party as well as the socialist laws. He took up the banner of the «saviour» of the Party and, with the direct assistance and encouragement of the Yugoslav leadership, hatched up the greatest plot against the Party, the 8th Plenum of February-March 1948. Having the support of the Koçi Xoxe group, the delegate of the CC of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Savo Zlatić, began to exert pressure on the members of the CC of the Party and on the Political Bureau of the CPA to make them accept the accusations of the Yugoslav leadership.

All these things created a very tense situation in the leadership of the Party. In these circumstances,

by making slanderous accusations against him, which in fact were also directed against the General Secretary of the CPA, Enver Hoxha.

Nako Spiru, faced with the attacks, slanders, and grave accusations of the Yugoslavs and their tools like Koçi Xoxe and Pandi Kristo, fearing that the Titoites would reveal his former links with them, and lacking the courage to carry the change of stand he had begun to make through to completion, committed suicide. This made the situation even more complicated and enabled the Yugoslavs and the Koçi Xoxe group to prepare the terrain for the 8th Plenum.

The 8th Plenum, which was held in an unhealthy atmosphere in which the slanders, intrigues and personal ambitions of Koçi Xoxe and company prevailed, accepted the unfounded accusations of the Yugoslav leadership, thus undermining the correct Marxist-Leninist line of the Party and the independence of Albania. At the Plenum the General Secretary of the Party, Enver Hoxha, was attacked and Nako Spiru declared an enemy. The Albanian-Yugoslav economic links were described as correct and normal. The Plenum opened the doors to further Yugoslav interference and the colonization of Albania by Yugoslavia. On account of all these things the 8th Plenum has been described as a black stain in the history of the PLA.

Following the plenum, the Yugoslav leaders, supported by the group headed by Koçi Xoxe, thought that the appropriate moment had come for them to speed up the implementation of their schemes. They imposed on Albania the plan for 1948 which put the economy of the country on a distorted anti-national course. From Yugoslavia came a special commission which was to accomplish the integration of the Albanian economy into the economy of Yugoslavia, a thing which was to serve subsequently as a basis for the political unification of the two countries which had been officially proposed by the Yugoslav leadership and raised for discussion in the Political Bureau of the CC of the CPA by Koçi Xoxe and company. The Yugo-

slavs' interference in the army was stepped up; they demanded the withdrawal of Soviet advisers and the merging of the Albanian command with the Yugoslav command. After this, in such grave circumstances, on the pretext of the threat of aggression from Greece, the Yugoslavs urgently demanded that two divisions of their army should be dispatched to Albania. Their aim in this was to occupy Albania militarily.

Understanding the real aims of the Yugoslav leadership, the leadership of the CPA categorically rejected these demands. This was an historic decision which saved the Albanian people from a new enslavement and further great bloodshed. Enver Hoxha informed J. V. Stalin of this demand of the Yugoslav leadership, just as he had informed him earlier about the activity and unjust interference of the revisionists of Belgrade.

Precisely in this very critical and difficult situation the Communist Party of Albania was informed of the letters which the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had sent to the CC of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The Resolution of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties in connection with the situation created in the CPY as a result of its deviation from the positions of Marxism-Leninism was publicized later. These historic documents were of great assistance to the Albanian Party and people to escape the danger threatening them. They were also «an indirect confirmation of the correctness of the line of the CPA.»* «We arrived at the same opinions and conclusions... while doing battle alone with the revisionist leadership of the CPY, without any knowledge that others,

* Enver Hoxha, *The Titoites, (Historical notes)*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1982, pp. 508-509, Eng. ed.

in the first place the Bolshevik Party headed by the great Stalin, were engaged in the same struggle.»*

After this the re-examination of all the Albanian-Yugoslav agreements with the exception of the treaty of friendship, collaboration and reciprocal aid, was demanded. Since the Yugoslav side refused this, the government of the PRA abrogated them.

The 11th Plenum of the CC of the CPA was held in September 1948 in order to analyse the situation created in the life of the Party and the country as a result of the interference of the Yugoslavs and their agents. The Plenum unmasked and condemned the brutal interference of the Yugoslav leadership and the activity of its agents in Albania. The Plenum annulled the main decisions of the 2nd Plenum of Berat of October 1944 and all the decisions of the 8th Plenum of the CC of the Party which had been taken under the pressure of the Yugoslavs, and imposed severe punishments on the members of the anti-Party group.

The decisions of the Plenum found the unanimous approval of the whole Party and the working masses. They further strengthened the unity between the Party and the people and the confidence of the masses in the correct Marxist-Leninist leadership of the Party headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha.

3. Relations with the Soviet Union and the Countries of People's Democracy of Europe

The recognition of the Democratic Government of Albania by the Soviet Union and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was an

* Enver Hoxha, *The Titoites (Historical notes)*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1982, pp. 508-509, Eng. ed.

event of major importance for Albania, which opened up to it new prospects for the strengthening and extension of friendship and collaboration in the political, economic and cultural fields.

Nevertheless, from 1945 to the middle of 1947, the relations with the Soviet Union and the other countries did not assume any great development. In fact they showed that the PR of Albania was somewhat isolated from these countries in regard to economic relations. This state of affairs was a consequence of the stand of the Yugoslav leadership toward Albania. As Comrade Enver Hoxha has said, not only on the eve of Liberation, but also for several years afterwards, the Soviets «were acquainted» with us through the tales that Tito, Kardelj, Djilas and others concocted.*

In regard to relations with the countries of the people's democracy in those years they were at an ebb. The aim of the Yugoslav leadership was to alienate Albania from the Soviet Union and to isolate and cause it to break away from the socialist camp. Evidence of these attempts can be seen in the fact that when the Information Bureau of the communist parties of Europe was set up in 1946, only one party in power, the Communist Party of Albania, was left out of it. «Our conviction is that the black hand of the Titoite agency is hidden in this. They did not want the CPA to be acknowledged in the international communist movement as a separate party, as the party of a sovereign country...»** However in face of the principled, consistent, internationalist policy pursued by the PRA, the attempts of the Yugoslav revisionists at isolating Albania failed completely.

An event of great importance in the relations of

* Enver Hoxha, *The Titoites (Historical notes)*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1982, p. 142, Eng. ed.

** *Ibidem*, p. 507.

Albania with the Soviet Union was the visit that a delegation of the Albanian government, headed by Enver Hoxha, made to Moscow in July 1947. The meeting of Enver Hoxha with J. V. Stalin, the top-level exchange of opinions over various political, economic, and other problems which were worrying the PRA, the results of the talks and the documents signed in conclusion on this occasion, constituted a notable advance in the consolidation of the friendship between the Albanian and Soviet peoples as well as in the development of relations of fraternal collaboration between the two countries. The Soviet government accepted all the requests which the Albanian delegation presented and accorded a credit to equip agriculture with tractors and to build a number of industrial projects.

However the Soviet aid in the direction of industrialization was somewhat delayed and limited at first due to the difficult situation created in the Soviet Union as a result of the terrible wartime devastation.

These steps taken by the Albanian government towards the extension of relations with the Soviet Union aroused concern in the Yugoslav leadership, which raised the question that «before reaching agreement with any other country, Albania should first seek the approval of Yugoslavia.»* This was another flagrant attempt by Belgrade to place Albania under its tutelage and supervision. The Albanian government refused to accept this and protested to the Yugoslav government.

Continuing to oppose the chauvinist concepts of the Yugoslav leadership, the Albanian government undertook further steps to strengthen its relations with the countries of people's democracy. In particular, the visit which our state delegation made to Bulgaria in December 1947 on the invitation of the Bulgarian govern-

* Enver Hoxha, *Works*, vol. 5, p. 64, Alb. ed.

ment served this aim. This visit was made at a very difficult moment for our country, when the Yugoslav pressure had increased and when the hostile activity of the American and British imperialists and external reaction had become fiercer.

At the end of the talks held on this occasion, the two delegations, headed by Enver Hoxha and George Dimitrov, signed the Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Reciprocal Aid, the Convention on Cultural Collaboration and the Economic Protocol. The treaty laid the basis for an alliance and close fraternal collaboration between the two countries.

After the exposure and condemnation of the activity of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the resolution of the Information Bureau in June 1948, the development of relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy assumed a new impetus.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORIC TURNING-POINT IN THE LIFE OF THE COUNTRY (1948-1950)

1. The 1st Congress of the CPA

With the routing of the Yugoslav interference and the hostile activity of its secret agency, an important change began in the life of the Party and the country for the all-round, consistent application of the Marxist-Leninist line of the Party in all fields. This change was sanctioned by the 1st Congress of the CPA, held in Tirana from November 8-22, 1948. It had a great historic significance both for the Party and the state and for the entire Albanian people.

The report of the Central Committee, delivered by the General Secretary, Enver Hoxha, was a penetrating analysis of the whole activity of the Party and the successes the Albanian people had achieved under the leadership of the CPA, in the Anti-fascist National Liberation War and in the early post-Liberation years. It set important tasks for the development of the country on the road of socialism.

The Congress re-established the Marxist-Leninist norms on the building and the internal life of the Party,

which were violated by the group of Koçi Xoxe. It changed the name of the Party from the CPA to the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA), and endorsed its Constitution. In the preamble of the Constitution the aims of the Party were formulated in general lines: the immediate aim — the construction of socialism, and the ultimate aim — the construction of communism.

The Congress made a detailed analysis of the successes achieved in the reconstruction of the country; it condemned the mistakes noticed in the practice of the construction of socialism and gave the basic orientations for the building of the bases of socialism. It examined and endorsed the directives of the two-year plan for the economic and cultural development of the country for the years 1949-1950.

The 1st Congress marked an important turning-point in the political field for the further strengthening of the socialist democracy. It condemned the Party-state duality, the underration of the role of the organs of state, the manifestations of hostile activity in the organs of the State Security, the violations of socialist law, the use of arbitrary methods towards the working masses and communists, and other hostile actions of the Koçi Xoxe group. The latter, as well as Pandi Kristo, were expelled from the ranks of the Party. On the request of the delegates to the Congress their group was put on trial, which, in May 1949, passed the respective sentences on the members of this group.

The Congress gave orientations for the defence of the socialist law. It considered correct all the measures taken by the Party after the 11th Plenum of the CC for the elimination of illegitimate methods in the organs of the State Security and their purging of Koçi Xoxe's collaborators. These organs were placed under the leadership and control of the Party.

The Congress devoted a special attention to the foreign policy of the PRA, which aimed at protecting

and strengthening the national independence, territorial integrity and the friendship and collaboration with the socialist countries, and at supporting the liberation struggle of the different peoples against imperialism, defending peace and establishing normal relations of peaceful coexistence with the other countries, and in the first place, with the neighbouring ones. The Congress condemned the Yugoslav hostile policy towards Albania.

At the end of its work the Congress elected the new Central Committee. Enver Hoxha was re-elected the General Secretary of the Party.

The 1st Congress of the CPA consolidated the change in the internal life of the Party and the whole country, which began from the 11th Plenum of the CC, opened new perspectives for the further strengthening and democratization of the Party and the people's state power, and for the political, economic and social development of the whole country on the road of socialism.

Proceeding from the concrete political, economic and social conditions of the country, the Congress defined the fundamental economic objective of pulling the country out of backwardness through the rapid development of the productive forces. This task consisted essentially in the socialist industrialization and the electrification of the country, and alongside them, the intensive and many-sided development of agriculture. The socialist industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture are the principal links in the construction of the bases of socialism. The necessity for the socialist industrialization was also dictated by the fact that the new political state and the new socialist relations of production, which were being established in the early post-Liberation years, could not rely for a long time on a backward economic base and the very low level of the productive forces inherited from the past. The creation of a new material-technical

base was an imperative need, therefore, in the further specification of the general line of the Party for the construction of socialism, the 1st Congress of the PLA pointed out, «The Party has always considered the industrialization and electrification of the country as an important objective.»*

The economic policy of the Party was aimed at gradually creating a multi-branched heavy and light socialist industry, giving priority to the industry of the production of means of production, which, in the concrete conditions of the country, would be concentrated mainly on the development of mines, in the first place, on the increase in the production of oil, bitumen, chromium, coal, copper, etc. Tasks were also set for the development of the light and food-stuffs industries.

The industrialization would be carried out at rapid rates, so as to overcome the backwardness inherited from the past within the shortest possible time, to ensure the independent development of the national economy, and to build up the defence capacity of the PRA.

Besides the socialist industrialization, the Congress devoted special attention to lifting agriculture out of its state of backwardness and its development on the road of socialism. Therefore, it orientated toward the strengthening of the socialist state sector of agriculture (agricultural state farms) along with «the gradual, cautious and voluntary collectivization of the land of the countryside in agricultural labour cooperatives, with the political, economic and organizational ... support of the state.»**

The collectivization of agriculture was necessary for the creation of a single base — the economic base

* *Principal Documents of the PLA*, vol. 1, Tirana 1971, p. 546, Alb. ed.

** *Ibidem*, p. 565.

of socialism. The people's economy, which had set out on the road of the socialist transformation, could not rely for a long time on two economically different bases, on the socialist industry, with a social ownership of the means of production, and on the small fragmented and backward agricultural production, with a private ownership of the means of production. This contradiction would be solved by uniting the small peasant economies in agricultural cooperatives.

However, in the backward agrarian Albania where the peasantry made up the overwhelming majority of the population, the socialist transformation of agriculture, and to a smaller degree, the socialization of the private property of the small urban producers, was the most difficult and complex problem of the socialist revolution next to the establishment of the political power of the working class. The difficulty of this problem consisted in the fact that the sense of small individual economy was deeply rooted in the consciousness and way of thinking of the peasants and the small urban producers in town. But the fact was that, the overwhelming part of the small owners especially the peasantry, had taken an active part in the National Liberation War.

For these reasons the transformation of the small individual property into social cooperativist property could not be carried out along the same lines as the socialization of industry. It could not be achieved either through decrees, or through violence, because both the peasantry and the small urban producers were allies of the working class and the reliable support of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the collectivization of agriculture the Party was guided by the teachings of Lenin on cooperation, the Leninist principle of the free will, that the peasantry should set out on the road of socialism when convinced of the superiority of this road. Since the political and the material-technical conditions for

the collectivization of agriculture on a large scale were not yet ripe, the Party expressed its policy in this field by the slogan «In the question of collectivization, we must neither rush it, nor mark time.»

But, the principle of voluntarism and conviction did not mean that cooperation would proceed spontaneously, without the leadership of the Party of the working class and without the all-round assistance of the socialist state.

Since the collectivization of agriculture was not to be carried out immediately and seeing the low level of development of the fragmented agricultural economies with 0.1 to 5 hectares of land which accounted for most of the people's economy, the Congress issued the orientation that the individual working peasant should be given all-round assistance so as to increase farm production. But, on the other hand, the Congress instructed that the danger of the development of capitalism in the countryside should never for a moment be overlooked. Hence, at that time the main directive of the policy of the Party on this question, which was embodied in the slogan «reliance on the poor peasant, alliance with the middle peasant and struggle against the kulak», was to enforce economic limitations and political isolation on capitalist elements.

The 1st Congress once again pointed out the need for the rapid development of education and culture so as to eliminate the profound cultural backwardness of the country. For this reason it paid special attention to the further development of the cultural and ideological revolution. It gave important directives that education, culture and arts should become the property of the people's masses, develop on national bases and have a socialist content.

The Congress examined and defined the main directions and targets of the two-year plan 1949-1950 for the development of the economy and culture in the

PRA. This plan, which began to be implemented in January 1949, was endorsed by the People's Assembly on June 2, 1949.

The two-year state plan was an important step forward toward the development of the productive forces and the building of the bases of socialism. Its aim was to increase production in the most important sectors of the economy such as the mines, industry, agriculture, and to develop transport and communication. The investments in the most important four sectors totalled 4 billion 147 million leks or 86.78 per cent of all the investments of the two-year plan.

2. The Policy of Strengthening Economic Links Between the Working Class and the Peasantry

Despite the victories achieved in the reconstruction of the country in the first post-Liberation years, the consequences of the general backwardness, the low educational-cultural level of the population, the lack of specialists and skilled workers, the shortage of material and financial resources, the economic sabotage and the systematic plundering of the market by the Yugoslavs, were beginning to be acutely felt in the development of the economy.

The year 1949, the first one of the two-year plan, found the Albanian people in drastic shortage of staple consumer goods. Bread grain was in short supply; besides this part of it was hidden by the kulaks and other peasants, who sold it at an exorbitant price on the black market. The market was short of such indispensable articles as salt, sugar, kerosene for lighting, etc. For the construction of the main projects of the two-year plan raw materials such as cement, iron, timber, as well as the means of transport and communication were deficient.

In order to come out of this situation, the Central

Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers instructed the working masses to rely mainly on their own forces. The compulsory mobilization in work of various specialists and all skilled workers was enforced in the beginning of 1949. Not only office employees, but workers, too, were under compulsory transfer to another work place, according to the needs of the state. In this manner, the spontaneous movement of the labour force was restricted and the work forces were disciplined. These measures were accompanied with steps to ensure their housing, and especially, with the establishment of an improved pay system, which, apart from the quantity and quality of production, took account also of the difficulties of the job, qualification, schooling and seniority at work of the working people.

Understanding the importance of investments for the development of the economy and culture correctly, the working class undertook a series of revolutionary initiatives. The workers of the «Enver» plant proposed to the Presidium of the People's Assembly to issue a decree on a domestic loan. In support of this proposal, which was backed up by the working collectives of other state enterprises and cooperativist organizations, on July 16, 1949 a decree was issued on the first state loan for the development of the economy and culture of the PRA, for a term of 20 years.

Within 15 days (July 16-30), the working people subscribed to a loan of 305 million leks, as against 250 million leks envisaged in the decree, for their state.

The youth of town and countryside pledged to make their contribution by working voluntarily on the biggest projects of the two-year plan. During 1949, more than 6,000 young men and women participated in voluntarily work for the building of the textile mill in Tirana, the sugar factory at Maliq, the Peqin-Elbasan railway. On the latter, tens of thousands of young men and women worked also during 1950.

The Congress of the Unification of the Youth, held in September 1949, gave a new impulse to the revolutionary drive of the youth. The Congress decided to unite the Communist Youth Organization and the Antifascist Youth into a single organization that was named the Labour Youth Union of Albania (LYUA). Comrade Ramiz Alia was elected its General Secretary.

An important and urgent problem at this time was the strengthening of the economic links between the working class and the peasantry and the development of the productive forces of agriculture. The existing system of procurement no longer responded to the new conditions of development. It had become an obstacle to the development of the productive forces in the countryside, because it left the peasant the amount of bread grain needed for his family and the seed, and collected all the surplus of agricultural products. It failed to encourage the peasant to increase production and to modernize farming. The kulaks and part of the middle peasants under the influence of the former, refused to hand over to the state the obligatory quotas and sold the bread grain on the black market. Failure to realize the procurement of bread grain weakened the supply of the urban population with farm products.

The existing system of procurement and supply of the population left a free field of operation to the black market, speculation and parasitism. On the basis of this system, the urban population was supplied with food-stuffs, clothing and footwear on the basis of ration cards. Those who worked and produced, and those who did not work and exploited others' work, alike, secured their food-stuffs, clothing and footwear at very low prices.

The peasantry, also, was supplied by the state with cards for rationed industrial goods, but did not feel the

obligation to supply the town with those agricultural and livestock products which did not come under compulsory state procurement.

Thus, the existing system of procurement and supply of the population had weakened the economic links between the working class and the working peasantry and had become an obstacle to the construction of socialism.

For these reasons in the beginning of January 1949, the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers instituted a new system of procurement and supply.

Under this new system, the peasant was obliged to sell the state only part of the bread grain, meat and some other agricultural products, which was determined by the size and the quality of his land. What remained after handing over the dues to the state, was freely disposed by the producers. So, the peasant was interested in producing as much as possible because the amount of produce for himself, after deducing the fixed quota, increased.

The peasants might sell the surpluses of their products to the state in return for the right to buy rationed industrial goods at prices fixed for the countryside in state stores or in the purchase cooperatives. Surpluses were allowed to be freely sold only after all the economies of a district had handed over all their dues to the state.

Through the new system of procurement the state ensured the fund of agricultural and livestock products for a better supply of the new socialist industry with primary material and the working class and the working masses of the town with agricultural and livestock products.

The new system of supply, which was linked with that of procurement, guaranteed the bread, food-stuffs, clothing and footwear and other industrial articles for

all the workers, office employees, craftsmen organized in cooperatives, and for the family members in their charge, the craftsmen who were not incorporated in cooperatives as well as for some categories of individual workers in other services, who did not exploit others' work. It exempted the private traders, speculators and the owners of restaurants, hotels, and others from guaranteed supply. The peasantry, too, was not supplied with coupons for industrial products which it secured through the barter market.

This new system of procurement and supply was based on three kinds of markets: the state guaranteed market, the barter market and the free market.

The guaranteed market, on the basis of ration cards, supplied the working people of the city with food-stuffs, clothing and footwear. The prices on the guaranteed market were very low.

The barter market supplied the working peasantry by exchanging the surpluses of agricultural and livestock products with rationed industrial goods. The purchase cooperatives served as the main link to promote the mutual exchange between town and countryside.

The free market, where prices were much higher than in the state guaranteed market and the barter market, provided various food-stuffs, clothing and footwear, etc., in order to satisfy the demands of the working masses of town and countryside for goods not included in the guaranteed and barter markets. The free market provided also for that category of people who were not supplied with ration cards.

Hence, a correct policy of prices, in conformity with the incomes of the working people and the contribution they made to the construction of socialism, was implemented.

The first results of the new system were seen in 1950. There was an increase in the agricultural and

livestock products, most of the peasants began to hand over the dues and exchange the surpluses on the barter market or sell them on the free state market. There was also a satisfactory growth in the circulation of the industrial and agricultural goods. In April 1950, the growth of production of the national industry and handicrafts, as well as the development of agriculture and livestock-raising, created the possibility of a 20-40 per cent reduction of state prices of some industrial goods and articles of mass consumption for retail trade on the free and the barter market. The reduction in prices ensured a better supply of the population and boosted the development of the state free trade, thus leading to the liquidation of the black market.

The new system of procurement and supply was accompanied with changes in the organization of the agricultural cooperatives.

The 1st Congress of the agricultural cooperatives, which was held in February 1949, approved the new constitution of the agricultural cooperatives, which corrected a series of mistakes and shortcomings.

It envisaged the distribution of the incomes only on the basis of the socialist principle «to each according to his work», determined the minimum number of working days that the members of the cooperatives were obliged to put in, the procedure of the elections for the leading organs, the strengthening of the internal democracy and the order and discipline in the cooperative.

3. The Further Strengthening and Democratization of the People's State Power

After prior discussion by the people, on 11 March 1949 a new territorial-administrative division of the PR of Albania was made. The former organization

(November 6, 1947), defined the district and town councils, among others, as organs of state power. On the basis of this division, the former dealt mainly with the problems of government in the countryside and the latter with those of the towns. This had led to the artificial separation of these problems. The new division of 1949 dissolved the people's councils of the towns (with the exception of the capital city) leaving only the people's councils of the districts. The territory of the PR of Albania was divided into 25 districts and 1 city-district (Tirana), while each district was divided into localities and villages. On the basis of the new administrative division, the new elections to the people's councils of the villages, localities, districts and the city of Tirana were held in June 1949. A total of 18,351 members of people's councils, representing the popular masses, were elected to the various organs of state power at the base. This was an indication of the further democratization of the state power and its closer connection with the working masses.

The new elections to the People's Assembly were held on 28 May 1950. The second legislature approved some amendments and additions to the Constitution. More than four years had gone by since the Constituent Assembly had adopted the Constitution of the PR of Albania. During these years important changes had been made in economic, social and political life and these had to be reflected and sanctioned juridically in the Constitution.

The following clause was added to the Constitution: «The People's Republic of Albania is a state of workers and working peasants» (Article 2). This definition expressed the political reality of the PR of Albania, in which the working class, as the most advanced class, runs the state and, in alliance with the working peasantry, constitutes the social base of the state of people's democracy. The economic, social and politi-

cal transformations, and the strengthening and further democratization of the people's state power were reflected in Article 4, which said: «All state power in the People's Republic of Albania belongs to the working people of town and countryside, represented by the people's councils.»

As a result of the changes made in agriculture and its advance towards collectivization, the following was added to Article 12: «The state supports the socialist development of agriculture by organizing state, agricultural enterprises and machine and tractor stations and by assisting the agricultural cooperatives...»

In the 1946 Constitution the failure to define the leading role of the PLA was a serious shortcoming which contradicted the existing reality. The PLA led the entire life of the country, and this, too, found expression in the fundamental law of the state. An addition was made to article 21, dealing with the mass organizations, to the effect that the PLA is the «organized vanguard of the working class and all the working masses in their struggle for the construction of the base of socialism, and the leading nucleus of all the organizations of working people both social and state». Although not in the proper form or place this expressed the leading role of the Party. Likewise, a number of amendments and additions were made to the second part of the Constitution, which spoke about the organization of the state, the election of people's judges, etc.

The People's Assembly elected its Presidium and the new Government, headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha.

In his programmatic speech to the People's Assembly, the head of the government assured the Assembly that the new government would remain loyal to the Constitution of the PR of Albania and the Albanian people, that it would defend the freedom and indepe-

ndence of the PR of Albania from internal and external enemies, and would fight with all its might for the construction of the base of socialism.

4. The PR of Albania Strengthens Its International Position and Intensifies Its Struggle Against Internal and External Reaction

With the breaching of different agreements and economic conventions with Yugoslavia and the denunciation of the anti-Albanian and anti-socialist policy of the Yugoslav leadership, relations between the two countries deteriorated.

The stand of the Yugoslav government towards the PR of Albania was becoming more and more hostile. The Yugoslav agents and especially the Yugoslav Legation in Tirana organized economic sabotage and the defection of reactionary anti-Party elements to Yugoslavia. Belgrade carried out provocations against Albania by air, land and sea. Bands of saboteurs and spies entered Albania from Yugoslavia. Resolutely pursuing its foreign policy for the defence of the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of the PR of Albania, the Albanian government protested again and again to the Yugoslav Legation in Tirana and to its government over the anti-Albanian activity of the Yugoslav diplomats in Tirana and over the border provocations. Instead of normalizing its diplomatic relations with Albania the Yugoslav government moved towards a total breach. On 12 November 1949, it announced its unilateral denunciation of the «Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Aid» between the two countries, concluded on 9 July 1946. The government of the PR of Albania con-

sidered this act of the Belgrade government unjust and protested energetically. Some months later, on May 27, 1960, the Yugoslav government demonstratively withdrew its diplomatic staff from Tirana and, since the Albanian government did not retaliate with a similar measure, on November 11 that year the Yugoslav government demanded the recall from Belgrade of the diplomatic representation of the PR of Albania.

After the breach relations with Yugoslavia, the PR of Albania found itself surrounded geographically by states which maintained a hostile stand towards it. Nevertheless the external enemies were unable to isolate Albania from other countries, especially those of the socialist camp. On the contrary, its links with the socialist countries became steadily stronger.

To this end, in March 1949 an Albanian government delegation headed by Enver Hoxha went to Moscow and held talks with the government delegation of the USSR. On April 9, 1949 an agreement under which the Soviet Union would accord the PRA a credit to buy various equipment and machinery, and a protocol on the mutual exchange of goods between the two countries for the year 1949 were signed.

Similar agreements to supply industrial machinery to Albania on credit and protocols on commercial exchanges were signed with Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In February 1949, the PR of Albania became a member of the «Council for Mutual Economic Aid», Comecon, in which the Soviet Union and the other countries of people's democracy took part. Comecon was founded on the basis of the principle of mutual respect and equality between the member countries, with the aim of raising their economic cooperation to a higher level. Cultural relations with the countries of the socialist camp were extended, too. An ever increasing number of Albanian students were sent to study in those countries while they sent specia-

lists to Albania to work in various fields of the economy and culture.

The PR of Albania established diplomatic relations with the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, the German Democratic Republic, Italy, etc. The signing of various economic agreements with the USSR and some countries of people's democracy, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with different countries greatly strengthened the international position of the PR of Albania.

Meanwhile, the imperialist powers never ceased organizing subversive activities against the PR of Albania. To this end, they activized the war criminals who had fled from Albania when the German occupiers were driven out and had been assembled in various countries which were under American and British influence, such as Italy, Greece, West Germany, etc. They were kept and subsidized by the Americans and the British, who reorganized them in order to use them against socialist Albania.

With the assistance of the Americans, the traitor organization Balli Kombëtar, headed by Mithat Frashëri and Hasan Dosti, was reformed from its remnants. It became the biggest organization of war criminals abroad.

In Egypt Ahmet Zogu and Abaz Kupi reorganized the remnants of Legaliteti, which included former top functionaries of the Zogite regime and collaborators with the fascist occupiers. The «Independent» bloc was created in Italy, with the former closest collaborators with the fascist occupiers, such as Kolë Bibë Mirakaj, Gjon Markagjoni and others. Meanwhile, the old anti-Albanian organization (QEFA) — the Central Committee of Northern Epirote Efforts, which became even more aggressive after the liberation of Albania, was operating in Greece.

The so-called «Agrarian Party» or the «Agrarian Union» group headed by Seit Kryeziu, a British agent who had placed himself in the service of the Yugoslavs, as well, was formed in the Regio Emiglia camp in Italy.

Regardless of the names they adopted all the criminals were united by the one aim — to fight against the people's state power in Albania.

Early in 1949, the agencies of American imperialism took the initiative to unite all the groups of fugitive Albanian criminals and in August 1949 announced the formation in Paris of the «Free Albania» committee headed by Mithat Frashëri and subsequently by Hasan Dosti. Attached to this organization of traitors, a so-called military staff, headed by the war criminals Abaz Kupa and Abaz Ermeni, was formed.

The American and British imperialists and their tool, the «Free Albania» committee, set up bases in various countries for the organization of espionage, saboteurs and any other activity aimed at overthrowing the people's state power in Albania and the restoration of the old feudal-bourgeois regime. A whole propaganda apparatus, including radio stations, newspapers, magazines, leaflets etc., besides the central organs of the press of enemy countries carried on widespread hostile propaganda, slandering the PLA and the Albanian people.

At the end of 1948 and during the years 1949-1950, scores of armed bands and counter-revolutionary groups and organizations were formed within the country from the remnants of the overthrown and expropriated classes and former collaborators of the fascist occupiers, with whom the kulaks and some new capitalist elements of town and countryside joined forces. Such were the «Northern Epirus» groups, the «Shqiponja» group, the «Resistance» group in Tirana, etc. The latter which subsequently called itself the

«Resistance Front» formed a so-called «central committee» and local committees in some towns and regions.

All the foreign intelligence agencies, the fugitive traitors and the remnants of internal reaction, began to establish contact with the «Resistance Front» in an attempt to make it representative of the counter-revolutionary forces in order to overthrow the people's state power in Albania by armed force.

Added to this anti-Albanian activity were the military provocations on the border by the Greek monarcho-fascists, which in August 1949 were transformed into a real military attack on the southeastern borders of the PR of Albania.

On August 2, incited and supported by the American imperialists, the Greek monarcho-fascists launched their offensive against the Greek Democratic Army (GDA) which was fighting for freedom and the establishment of democracy in Greece. On the same day, they carried out an open military attack against the PR of Albania.

Three battalions of the Greek regular army, with artillery and air support, launched a surprise attack on Albanian territory in the Bozhigrad sector (Korça district).

The provocation on 2 August was a continuation of the previous provocations, but on a more extensive scale and the prologue to a series of planned combined grave provocations, which continued throughout the first half of August, by regular detachments of the Greek infantry, artillery and airforce in the sectors of Bilisht, Leskovik and Saranda. In the fighting in the Bilisht sector, in particular, the Albanian border guards and the units of the Albanian People's Army not only successfully withstood those attacks, but with their counter-offensive forced the enemy to withdraw from all the border sectors, leaving dead soldiers or many prisoners on Albanian soil. In the fighting, our sol-

diers, border guards, commanders and commissars provided lofty examples of heroism.

The provocations against the PR of Albania continued during the second half of August, too. At this time, the class enemies within the country, encouraged by those provocations and the bands of mercenaries parachuted into Albania, became even more active, spread various reactionary slogans and carried out acts of terrorism in order to pave the way for the intervention of foreign forces. On August 7 they killed Bardhok Biba, the first secretary of the Party Committee in Mirdita. At the time when the Greek armies were violating the borders of Albania, the Yugoslav forces, besides committing border provocations, undertook threatening troop movements on the northern and eastern borders of Albania.

The August provocations were a serious threat and danger to the independence and territorial integrity of the PR of Albania. The aim of the monarcho-fascist forces was not just to outflank the GDA via the territory of Albania but mainly, to carry the flames of war into Albania, to test the defence capacity of the PR of Albania and, if possible, to accomplish their chauvinist policy for the annexation of Korça and Gjirokastra. But these plans failed.

The entire Albanian people rose to their feet in military readiness to defend the independence of the Homeland and the victories of the revolution. Thousands of people, of all ages and both sexes, in town and countryside volunteered to fight, arms in hand, against the foreign aggression. Many inhabitants of the border zones, especially of those villages which were the direct targets of enemy attacks, took up arms and rushed to the front line. Upon the decision of the Party and the government, thousands of peasants were armed, and together with the state security forces and the border guards, took part in the liquidation of cri-

minals and mercenaries and mopping up in the rear of the army.

The aggressive acts of the American imperialists and the Greek monarcho-fascists in August 1949 proved completely abortive.

Subsequently, the external enemies of the Albanian people concentrated their efforts in the struggle against the PR of Albania on activizing bands of wreckers and assassins and organizing the counter-revolution within the country. In the name of the «Free Albania» committee the imperialists sent scores of bands of saboteurs and groups of spies, made up of Albanian criminals who had fled the country, against the PRA. During the years 1949-1950 they were sent by land (via Greece and Yugoslavia), by sea (from submarines) and by air (parachuted), into various regions of Albania. The Yugoslav agents in the former Directory of Railways and the officials of the Yugoslav Legation in Tirana organized groups of agents especially in the border zones.

The bands of saboteurs, in collusion with the local enemies, carried out various acts of sabotage, recruited agents and killed activists of the Party, the state and the Democratic Front.

The armed popular masses, the defence forces and the state security organs fought bravely against these bands of saboteurs and espionage groups.

Thanks to a series of important operations, the internal and external diversionist and sabotage activity was uncovered and paralysed. Hundreds of saboteurs and spies were captured or liquidated.

The frenzied anti-Albanian campaign which erupted in all its fury during the years 1949-1950 against the freedom, independence and socialist construction in Albania, did not achieve the results intended.

Apart from enemies and war criminals, living abroad as refugees, there were also ordinary Albanians

who had committed no crimes but who had fled the country because they had been frightened by the illegal and arbitrary actions of the K. Xoxe group or deceived by foreign propaganda. With the aim of preventing these innocent people being used for the sinister purposes of external or internal enemies and having them return to the bosom of their families and their people, in January 1949 the Presidium of the People's Assembly proclaimed an amnesty for persons living abroad as refugees. Under the decree, major concessions and facilities were offered to innocent, rank and file people, in the first place, but also to those persons who had committed state or civil crimes, provided they returned to the country by March 15.

5. The Results of the 2-year Plan for the Development of the Economy and Culture

Despite the great care of the Party and organs of the state and the self-sacrificing toil of the working masses, the results envisaged for the plan of 1949 were not attained.

The Second National Conference of the PLA (April 1950) and the joint meeting of the Plenum of the CC of the PLA and the Council of Ministers (August 1950), which analysed the fulfilment of the plan during 1949 and the first half of 1950, severely criticized the weaknesses and shortcomings which had been observed in connection with technical and financial control, discipline at work, the consequences of earlier sabotage by Yugoslav specialists and the hostile activity of an anti-Party group which ran the oil industry, etc. These meetings set the tasks of making up for the deficits and fulfilling the 2-year plan from the stand-point of the total volume of production.

The instructions of the CC of the Party and the Council of Ministers helped in the elimination of a series of weaknesses and shortcomings, led to the strengthening of check-up and discipline at work and resulted in better mobilization of the working masses. Nevertheless, although the plan for 1950 was overfulfilled all the deficits of 1949 could not be covered. The 2-year plan was only 91.4 per cent fulfilled. The Peqin-Elbasan railway was completed and work continued successfully on the construction and installation of machinery at the «Stalin» textile combine, the «8 Nëntori» sugar refinery in Maliq and the Selita hydropower station. Other important projects, such as the reclamation of the Maliq swamp, the Myzeqe irrigation canal and the Shëmri-Kolgecaj (Shëmri-Bajram Curri) road were completed.

Although the plan was only 91.4 per cent fulfilled in the very difficult conditions Albania had to cope with, this was a major success for the Albanian people. Total industrial and handicrafts production, not including the major projects which came into operation in 1951, increased 4 fold, while total agricultural production increased 30 per cent as against 1938. In 1950 the state investments on education, culture, the health service and housing, were about 5 times greater than in 1948.

The economic and cultural successes achieved in the years 1949-1950 led to improvement of the working and living conditions of the working masses. In 1950 the national income was 16.8 per cent larger than in 1948. From the reduction in prices in April 1950, the population gained about 300 million leks, at the existing prices. The number of workers employed in the socialist sector amounted to nearly 50,000. The participation of women in production steadily increased, too. At the end of the 2-year plan they comprised 18 per cent of the total number of workers.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALBANIA IN THE YEARS OF ITS TRANSFORMATION FROM A BACKWARD AGRARIAN INTO AN AGRARIAN-INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY (1951-1955)

1. Laying the Foundations of Modern Industry

The 2nd Congress of the PLA was held from 31st March to 7th April 1952 in Tirana. The delegates listened to the report of the Central Committee of the Party, delivered by the General Secretary, Enver Hoxha. The report made a detailed analysis of the international situation, the exacerbation of imperialist contradictions and the cold war, and pointed out the tightening of the hostile encirclement of the country and the danger of aggression. In connection with this, the report called for enhancement of the vigilance and anti-imperialist spirit and strengthening of the patriotic and revolutionary education of the people.

The report also examined the internal questions of the economic and political development of the country. It emphasized that after overcoming the obstacles created by the interference of the Yugoslavs and internal

enemies, Albania had entered the phase of rapid industrialization. The first five-year plan which was presented to the Congress for discussion and approval, was a major step towards the accomplishment of this task. That is why the 2nd Congress has gone down in history as the congress of the industrialization of the country. The accomplishment of the plan required great mobilization of the people at work and the strengthening of the role of the Party and the state in running the economy.

The Congress elected the leading forums of the Party. Comrade Enver Hoxha was re-elected leader of the Party.

After a broad popular discussion, during which many additions were made to it, the draft of the 1st Five-year Plan was endorsed by the 2nd Congress. The main political task of the 1st Five-year Plan was: «To strengthen the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry and consolidate the leading role of the working class in this alliance; to restrict capitalist elements and speculators in town and countryside; to raise the cultural level of the working masses; to strengthen the socialist consciousness of the working class and enhance the revolutionary vigilance and patriotic spirit of all the working masses.»

Meanwhile, the main economic task was «to continue the work for the construction of the economic base of socialism at a higher rate, so that by the end of the five-year plan our country will be transformed from a backward agrarian country into an agrarian-industrial country.»*

Rapid industrialization, in order to liquidate the technical and economic backwardness, was considered as the main link for successful accomplishment of the major tasks of socialist construction. In conformity

* Enver Hoxha, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 171, Alb. ed.

with this, it was decided that by the end of 1955 the volume of industrial production would be more than 3 times greater than in 1950 and 12 times greater than before the war.

The Congress envisaged that agricultural production at the end of the five-year plan would increase 171 per cent as against 1950, or 2.5 times more than before the war.

The increase in agricultural production would be secured satisfactorily by solving the problem of the mechanization of agriculture, by extending the reclamation work, and by increasing the quantities of chemical fertilizers and selected seeds. However, the most radical and effective measure for the development of agriculture was its further collectivization.

The plan set important tasks also for further raising the standard of living and the cultural level of the people. According to the plan, in 1955 the incomes of the population would be more than doubled, trade and socio-cultural services would be improved, prices for industrial goods would be reduced and rationing of some essential goods would be abolished. Likewise, the extension of education, culture, sports, etc., was envisaged. All these forecasts were fully realizable, but required self-sacrificing efforts and work to turn them into reality.

In the first years, despite the successes achieved in production, contradictions and difficulties which had to be overcome emerged. The major contradiction lay in the considerable disproportion in development between industry and agriculture. In 1953, while industrial production was 9.5 times higher than in 1938, agricultural production increased only about 60 per cent, while production of bread grain, the most important branch of agriculture, had reached only 130 per cent as against 1938. This disproportion came about because of the backwardness which agriculture inheri-

ted from the past, the low level of culture and education of the peasant masses and the small-scale private property in the countryside, which impeded the extensive use of machinery and increased yields in agriculture. It began to become an obstacle to the development of the economy.

In order to eliminate this disharmony, the necessary corrections to the plan and a more reasonable distribution of investments in favour of agriculture were made. The Plenum of the CC of the PLA, held in December 1953, decided that some of the investment funds allocated to industry should be transferred to agriculture. On the basis of this instruction, the government eliminated from the plan certain industrial projects that were premature and postponed the completion of some others. As well as this, a number of other measures in favour of the peasantry were taken such as the writing off of arrears in compulsory deliveries of agricultural products and the increases in the prices paid by the state for many of these products. As a result of these changes the situation of agriculture improved and the production of articles for mass consumption expanded. On the basis of the satisfactory achievements of 1953, the Plenum held in April 1954 raised the figures which had been set by the 2nd Congress, for the final two years of the plan.

In the years 1951-1955 the branches of heavy industry, such as the fuel industry, the mining industry, the electric power industry, the building materials, engineering and other industries, assumed great development. The fuel and mining industries were considered the base of heavy industry, and this was in conformity with the needs and natural conditions of the country. The main branch on which most attention was concentrated was that of oil production.

At the end of the five-year plan, oil production had increased 158 per cent compared with that of

1950. It met 39 per cent of the needs of the economy. Through improving its equipment and building new refineries the oil industry also increased its refining capacity.

In order to meet the great needs for fuel, special care was displayed for the development of the coal industry. The existing coal mines at Memaliaj, Mborje-Drenova and elsewhere were expanded, greater resources of electric power, machinery and labour power were allocated to this industry. Through these measures, coal production in 1955 increased almost 5 fold as against 1950 and 50 fold as against 1938.

In the metal mining industry, attention was focused on the production of chromium ore at Bulqiza, because this was the main export commodity. In 1955 chromium production increased 234 per cent as against 1950 and 17.4 fold as against the pre-war period.

Progress was made, also, in copper production, which had been centered on the Rubik mine. At the beginning of 1954 the Derven mine commenced production, but an important event of that year was the discovery of the Kurbnesh copper deposit which contained ample amounts of ore. In 1955, copper ore production went up 170 per cent.

During the first five-year plan the foundations of the country's energy industry were laid and the needs of industry for electric power and the people for light were fulfilled better. In 1955 production of electric power increased four fold as against 1950.

With the massive proportions that construction work was assuming the building materials industry was becoming ever more important. A sound basis for it was laid with the construction of two up-to-date projects, the «V. I. Lenin» cement factory in Vlora and the timber combine in Elbasan.

With the commissioning of the new cement factory, with a production capacity of 42,000 tons, cement

production was trebled in 1955. Likewise, the setting up of the timber combine created, for the first time, the possibilities to process the abundant reserves of timber locally and meet the needs of the building and furniture industries and communications. To supply the new timber industry with raw material, the number of saw-mills was increased and they were further mechanized. The amount of timber handled by the industry reached tens of millions of cubic metres. In 1955 the building materials industry increased its production more than four fold as against 1950.

The engineering industry, which was the embryo of the future metallurgical and machine building industries occupied an important place in heavy industry. During the first five-year plan, the engineering industry, the foundations of which had been laid in the years 1949-1950, played a major role in the strengthening and maintenance of the productive apparatus. During the first five-year plan it supplied 15 per cent of the country's needs for spare parts.

Although heavy industry developed rapidly, during the 1st Five-year Plan light industry still had great weight in total industrial production. The growth of the production of light industry 7 fold, as against 1950, and 26 fold, as against 1938, was evidence of notable progress. This development came about as a result of the commissioning of some big modern projects and the further mechanization and modernization of the existing factories and workshops. The branches of light industry that developed most were the textile and food-stuffs industries.

The textile and clothing industry increased its production 40 fold as against 1950 and 42 fold as against 1938. The building of the «Stalin» cotton textile combine with a capacity of 20 million linear metres per year and the woollen textile factory with a capacity of 1 million linear metres per year, laid the modern

foundations of this industry and brought a radical improvement in production.

A characteristic of the 1st Five-year Plan was the expansion and increase in the production of local industry in the districts. At the beginning of the five-year plan, industry had spread to a few main districts, such as Tirana, Durrës, Korça, Shkodra and Elbasan, while it was developed in other districts later. Of especially great importance was the industrial development of the North which was more backward than the rest of the country.

In this way a more rational geographical distribution and a more harmonious development of industry was brought about. A useful auxiliary of light industry, supplying the people with mass consumer goods and the peasantry with work tools, was handicraft production, especially that part of it organized in cooperatives. At that time, however, in order to meet the needs of the population, the state gave great encouragement and assistance to private craftsmen, through tax concessions and aid with raw materials. As a result of these measures, the number of private craftsmen increased.

2. Socio-Economic Measures in the Field of Agriculture

At the beginning of the five-year plan, Albania was still a country with very low yields in agriculture. It did not produce even half the bread grain the people needed.

The aim of the 1st Five-year Plan was to raise the technical level of agriculture to the point that bread grain production would be increased sufficiently to enable the abolition of the rationing system and to ensure good production from industrial crops.

A fundamental factor for the development of agri-

culture and the countryside was the economic-financial aid provided by the state. This aid was given mainly to the socialist sector, so that it would be strengthened and extended, but also to the private sector, without the development of which agricultural production could not be increased at that time.

Initially, the five-year plan allocated 14.1 per cent of the investments in the economy to agriculture. With the amendments made to the plan this figure was increased. The bulk of these investments was used for land reclamation and the technical re-equipment of agriculture. More than 6,000 hectares of land were reclaimed from swamps, a further 14,000 hectares were improved and protected from flooding, and 15,000 hectares put under irrigation. Important measures were taken also to equip agriculture with modern machinery. Both the number of agricultural machines and implements imported and local production of them were increased considerably. In 1950 there were only 285 tractors in Albania while in 1955 the number of them reached 1177. The number of combine harvesters of which there were none, in 1950 reached 103.

Many more ploughs, cultivators, harrows, pack and draught animals, chemical fertilizers, insecticides and selected seeds were supplied to the peasants.

In order to improve the life of the peasantry and encourage its productive capacity, corrections were made to the taxation system. At the beginning of the five-year plan, taxes on the income from the peasant economy were cut by 25 per cent.

In September 1953 the peasantry was exempted from paying all the arrears in compulsory deliveries of cereals, beans, rice, meat, wool, eggs etc., for the years 1949-1952 and 50-100 per cent of the unpaid taxes. The state raised the prices of agricultural products and lowered those of the farming implements. These concessions meant millions of leks in income to the peasant-

try, enabling it to produce more and ensure surpluses for the market. Thanks to these measures and the corrections made to the five-year plan, notable improvements were observed in the sector of agriculture.

The main condition for raising agriculture from backwardness remained the collectivization of the countryside, but the rates of collectivization were conditioned by the successes of the existing agricultural cooperatives, by the work to persuade the peasantry to join the cooperatives, and by the possibilities of the state to assist the cooperatives materially and financially.

In the years 1951-1953 the collectivization of agriculture proceeded slowly, mainly because attention was focused, first and foremost, on consolidation of the existing cooperatives. During that period only 29 cooperatives were set up and the number of peasants that joined them was small.

In November 1953, the Political Bureau of the CC of the Party issued instructions to speed up the collectivization relying on the successes of the agricultural cooperatives and the increased state aid for agriculture. It instructed that, while the principle of voluntary membership must be rigorously respected on the issue of collectivization, spontaneity must be combated and propaganda work with the peasants stepped up.

The intensification of the struggle of organs of the Party and state against the hostile activity of kulaks who aimed to hinder the setting up of cooperatives, as well as against tendencies to violate the principle of voluntarism by exerting pressure on the peasants to join cooperatives or by making them false promises, also influenced the speeding up of the collectivization.

As a result of these measures and efforts, in the autumn of 1954, the rates of collectivization of the countryside had accelerated and the setting up of agricultural cooperatives began even in the backward districts. The rate was especially rapid in 1955 when

168 new cooperatives were set up raising the total number of them from 90 in 1950, to 318. The area of collectivized land increased from 19,106 hectares in 1950, to 47,284 hectares in 1955 and the number of the families belonging to cooperatives from 4,517 to 15,313. Korça, Gjirokastra, Berat and Vlora were the most advanced districts for the collectivization of agriculture.

Basing itself on these results, the Plenum of the CC of the PLA held in December 1955 decided to go from gradual collectivization to mass collectivization of the countryside in the coming years, so that the economic base of socialism in the countryside would be finally laid and the rapid development of agriculture ensured.

A major factor for the development of the productive forces in agriculture was the extension and intensification of the activity of the machine and tractor stations (MTS) and the state farms.

In 1955 nearly 3 million quintals of bread grain or 53 per cent more than in 1950 were produced. The advanced state cooperatives and individual economies got 16-23 quintals of wheat and more than 35 quintals of maize per hectare. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of agricultural economies, especially the individual ones, still produced with low yields. Thus, the final solution to the problem of bread remained something for the future.

Important successes were achieved in the production of industrial crops, such as cotton, sugar-beet and tobacco.

The year 1953 marked the beginning of the 15-year plan for the extension and improvement of olive growing. The state enterprises which included large plantations of olives were extended and new ones were created in various districts.

In the first two years of the five-year plan, animal husbandry was still at a low level and, in general, in decline. The main reasons were the inadequate measures

to secure the fodder base for the livestock, the droughts of the first years which led to the slaughter of animals by the hungry peasantry, and the insufficient care on the part of the peasants for the welfare and housing of animals. However, the basic reason was the existence of the very backward private sector which did not have the conditions for a good development of livestock-raising.

The decisions of the 2nd Congress of the PLA and the special measures which were taken in 1953 put an end to further decline in livestock numbers and ensured a satisfactory increase in numbers and marked improvements in breeds.

3. The Political Situation of the Country

At the time when the people were going all out to fulfil the 1st Five-year Plan and were scoring important successes in the construction of socialism, the class struggle within the country and on the international arena was becoming more and more severe.

In those years the capitalist encirclement of the country was tightened due to the intensified activity of imperialist states and neighbouring countries against the PR of Albania.

Yugoslavia, Greece and Italy were important bases for the organization of plots against Albania. The anti-Albanian activity of these states was carried out in the framework of the newly created Balkan Pact as well as of NATO.

The border provocations continued. In 1951 there were 415 of them with a further 171 in 1952.

The combined strength of the Party, the state and the people was directed against all this intensive, dangerous activity, which created a difficult situation for the country. In this situation the Party strengthened

the revolutionary and patriotic education of the people and armed them all, from the soldier to the worker and peasant. An instance such as this in which a whole people was armed to defend the socialist victories, is rare in history. The slogan «The pick in one hand and the rifle in the other» became a reality throughout the country.

During the years 1951-1955 a fierce struggle went on in the territory of the PRA from the north to the south, and especially in Central and Northern Albania, against the reactionary bands and groups of saboteurs sent in from abroad. The hostile forces abroad especially the American imperialists, made open calls for the overthrow of the people's power in Albania. In an attempt to incite Albanian reaction and its bands, the American Secretary of State Acheson, declared early in 1951 that the USA would assist in «the liberation» of Albania and the winning of its «independence».

In the ever fiercer class struggle, the reactionary elements within the country revived and joined forces with the bands of fugitive criminals whose activity reached its climax in the year 1951. Operating in Albania that year were 475 bandits of whom some were saboteurs sent in from abroad, and the majority local bandits. During that year, these bands, in collusion with other enemies, organized 135 actions against the people, killing, plundering, burning houses, carrying out propaganda against socialism and the state power and gathering information.

In 1951, the state security detachments, in collaboration with the people, carried out mopping up operations all over the country. Their task was made easier by the fact that the organs of state security had managed to penetrate the ranks of the reactionary «Resistance Front» organization and take over its leadership. Through this organization, they also managed to place their men in several reactionary bands.

As a result of these operations, about 144 bandits were liquidated. Sons of the people, from the ranks of the state security service, the police and the working masses, gave their lives in the fighting against these bands.

The stern fight against the bands continued in 1952, too, when the Yugoslav, Greek, Italian and British organs continued to send in mercenaries to revive the bands damaged by the blows they were dealt in 1951 and to achieve the objectives they had been set for by the imperialist and chauvinist states.

Although there were fewer bandits in 1952 than in 1951, their activity was still intensive. They committed a series of crimes and engaged in subversive activity in the economic field, gathering secret information, committing sabotage, thefts, etc.

In 1952, however, the bands were dealt crushing blows and in 1953 they were almost totally wiped out. As a result of the armed clashes with reaction, during the years 1949-1954, 961 foreign saboteurs and local enemies were wiped out and the secret counter-revolutionary organizations were completely smashed.

In the political situation which the country was going through and in the conditions of the increase in the rates of socialist construction, the further strengthening and democratization of the people's power constituted an essential task which was linked with the strengthening and defence of the independence of the country and the successful continuation of socialist transformations.

In July 1953, the CC of the PLA, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the People's Assembly issued the joint decision on the reorganization of the state apparatus. On this occasion Omer Nishani's request for his release from the post of Chairman of the Presidium of the People's Assembly was accepted and Haxhi Lleshi was elected in his place.

Meanwhile, the improvement of the juridical superstructure continued. An important success was the endorsement by the People's Assembly in 1952, of the first Penal Code of a socialist content, which defined the norms for the struggle against all kinds of crimes, especially those against the state, for the protection of socialist property, the rights of citizens, and the socialist juridical order in general. At this time, the labour legislation and social security legislation were improved, too.

After the elections to the People's Assembly in 1954, the latter approved the new government headed by Mehmet Shehu.¹

In those years great attention was paid to increasing the defence capacity of the country. This was expressed both in the budget expenditure for measures of a defence character, and in the re-equipment and modernization of the People's Army, the State Security Force and the Police Force.

The major achievements in all fields and the failure of the plots of reaction made possible a reduction in the armed forces, releasing 9000 officers, NCO's and other ranks. Most of those released from the armed forces went to work in production.

All the above measures greatly strengthened the positions of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Albania and consolidated the independence of the country. The victories on the political front were a guarantee for

¹ For a long time Mehmet Shehu managed to conceal his activity as an agent, which was uncovered only after his suicide in December 1981. In fact, he had been recruited by foreign intelligence agencies before the Second World War. He engaged in subversive activity both during the years of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War and after the liberation of the country.

the successful continuation of the peaceful work for the realization of the great objectives of the 1st Five-year Plan.

4. The Raising of the Material and Cultural Level of the People

The achievements of the 1st Five-year Plan had a direct influence on raising the material and cultural level of the working people. As a result of the growth of industrial and agricultural production, in 1955 the national income increased 70 per cent in comparison with 1950, the real wages of workers and employees increased 20 per cent and the incomes of the peasantry 35 per cent.

In 1955 expenditure on socio-cultural measures rose to 193 per cent and on social security to 215 per cent of the 1950 figures. In the field of social security, it was envisaged that those who were employed by the state would receive free medical service, cash benefits for temporary incapacity to work, supplementary allowance for children, various pensions, etc.

Special care was shown for mothers with many children, who were granted fixed monthly payments depending on the number of children.

In those years the housing conditions of the workers were greatly improved; the state spent nearly 2 billion leks to build new housing all over the country.

In order to meet the needs of the people better in the conditions when the state trade was unable to cope with them completely, the state encouraged the development of small private shop-keepers by supplying them with mass consumer goods and according them bank credits. At the same time, measures were taken to restrict the speculative tendencies on the

private market, which became especially active when there were shortages of essential goods.

As a result of the improvement of supplies for the people, in 1955 56.8 per cent more sugar, 92.3 per cent more fats, 37.1 per cent more macaroni, 9.5 per cent more meat and fish, 81.8 per cent more cotton textiles and 72.21 per cent more woollen textiles, than in 1950, were sold per head of population.

Notable advances were made also in the field of medical services. The number of health institutions increased and the incidence of a number of grave diseases was reduced appreciably. Thus, malaria, which was a major scourge in the past, affected only 2 per cent of the population and was totally eliminated in subsequent years. The creation of anti-epidemic and vaccination centres all over the country and the commencement of the production of vaccines within the country played an important role in the struggle against epidemic diseases. The infant mortality rate was greatly reduced. The population grew with an annual increase of 2.71 per cent, and reached 1,391,499 in 1955.

At the end of the 1st Five-year Plan, the urban population made up 27.5 per cent and the rural population 72.5 per cent of the total population.

Major successes were achieved, also, in the field of the cultural revolution, especially in the field of education.

The most important success in the field of education was the liquidation of illiteracy among people up to 40 years of age. During that five-year plan, 190,000 illiterates learned to read and write, thus this great wound was wiped out in our country forever. Besides this the network of schools of all categories was expanded. Characteristic of that period was the extension of technical-professional education, the creation of higher schools and the extension of evening and correspon-

dence schooling. A notable victory in this field was the establishment of compulsory 7-year schooling.

For the first time in Albania during this five-year period, 6 higher institutes were set up. The Teacher Training Institute, the Polytechnical Institute, the Agricultural Institute, the Medical Institute, the Economic and Law Institutes. Besides these the «V.I. Lenin» Higher Party School and the University of Marxism-Leninism (evening courses) were opened for the theoretical and political training of cadres, especially those who worked in the organs of the Party and the state.

Along with education, Albanian science, which was taking its first steps, assumed further development.

The Institute of Sciences was the main scientific institute of the country. Three other institutes were established for the extension and deepening of scientific work: The Institute of Agriculture, the Institute of Zootechny and the Institute of History and Linguistics. A series of other measures such as the improvement of the organizational structure of the Institute of Sciences, the increase in the number of scientific cadres and their further qualification, the enrichment of the fund of libraries, archives and laboratories, the reorganization of the existing state archives, etc., were taken for this purpose.

In the field of literature and the arts, an important change took place. The new Albanian literature of the post-Liberation years took the course of its formation as a literature of socialist realism. The biggest success was the publication of the first novels of socialist realism, such as «The Liberators», by Dh. S. Shuteriqi, «Overthrow» by F. Gjata, «They Were Not Alone» and «Afërdita Back in the Village» by S. Spasse.

In the field of drama outstanding works such as the plays, «It's the Wounds That Speak» by B. Levonja, «The Fisherman's Family» by S. Pitarka, and in particular, «Our Land» by K. Jakova were produced.

The most outstanding musical works of that period were the first Albanian operetta «The Dawn» by K. Kono, and the musical tableau «Light on Albania» by P. Jakova, while in the field of figurative arts the paintings, «First Harvest to the State» by F. Stamo, «Yesterday and Today» by V. Mio, «Stories from the National Liberation War» by N. Zajmi, the busts of Comrade Enver Hoxha and Skanderbeg by Ll. Nikolla, etc.

Our national art was enriched with a new genre, cinematographic art. As a result of the establishment of the Albanian Film-Studio the life and history of the people was reflected in films, too. In those years the country's newly created film industry produced mainly short documentaries on the socialist reality. In collaboration with the Soviet cinematography, however, it managed to produce the feature film «Skanderbeg», which served as a touchstone for our cinematographic art.

Socialist culture began to spread widely among the working masses. The number of books published was almost doubled and the size of editions was greatly increased. The circulation of newspapers and magazines increased considerably. The popular libraries, which enriched their fund with 153,000 new books and increased the number of readers to a quarter of a million, played an important role in disseminating books and different publications.

Along with the increase in the number of professional artistic institutions, performances and audience numbers a major success for the country was the creation for the first time of the State Philharmonia which rapidly developed musical and choreographic culture, and the state variety theatre. The setting up of these institutions was accompanied with the creation of a very extensive network of amateur groups in the enterprises, schools and villages. In 1955 this broad artistic

movement included 5,400 groups with 60,500 members. Another indication of the cultural advance in the new Albania was the mass development of sports and physical culture.

The cultural progress of the country, together with the economic progress, showed that Albania was putting an end to its age-old backwardness.

5. The PLA for the Defence of Socialism and Peace in the International Arena

At the beginning of the 50's, the socialist camp had become a reality with a great economic and defence potential and considerable influence in the international arena. It was characterized by its Marxist-Leninist ideological and political unity and solidarity.

Confronted by the socialist camp, the imperialist powers could no longer operate according to their desire and dictate their will in the international arena. Nevertheless, those powers and world reaction, which never reconciled themselves to the increase of the forces of socialism, continued to wage a stern struggle against them. In order to save the old capitalist order, which was riddled with crises and all-round contradictions, and to restore the capitalist regime in the socialist countries the imperialists, headed by the USA, made use of hostile and anti-Party elements wherever they were. When the Khrushchev group came to the head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet state, conditions especially favourable to them were created.

From that time on, a situation fraught with grave consequences gradually began to develop in the socialist camp. The revisionist elements in the communist and workers' parties, including the CPSU, began to

become active, to operate, to denigrate their parties and to destroy the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism from within. At the same time they directed their attack on the unity of the international communist and workers' movement.

As a result of this activity, under the influence of Nikita Khrushchev, anti-party enemy elements were encouraged and set in motion in Hungary, Poland and some other countries of people's democracy. Matters went so far that Khrushchev, quite arbitrarily and totally disregarding the decisions of the Information Bureau, went to Belgrade at the head of a Soviet Party and government delegation in May 1955 to rehabilitate the Yugoslav revisionist leadership headed by Tito.

The modern revisionists tried to paralyse the active struggle of the masses for peace against imperialism. According to N. Khrushchev, both the socialist and the imperialist states were interested in ensuring peace. Thus, in fact, he refuted Lenin's ever valid thesis that imperialism is the source of wars.

Meanwhile, the imperialist states increased their hostile activity against the socialist countries and the freedom-loving states, continued their policy of the «cold war» from the «positions of strength», with the aim of launching aggressive wars.

In these conditions, the People's Republic of Albania considered the active struggle for the preservation of peace as a very important task of its revolutionary foreign policy.

In order to safeguard and strengthen peace it was necessary to wage a resolute struggle on all fronts to smash the aggressive plans of imperialism, especially American imperialism, by opposing to it the united strength of the socialist camp, the international proletariat, and all the peace and freedom-loving peoples and countries. In conformity with the clear-cut stand of the Albanian people against predatory wars and

war-mongers, in January 1951 the People's Assembly passed a law which condemned the incitement of war and war propaganda as «grave crimes against humanity, peace among the peoples, and the Homeland».

Ceaseless strengthening of the fraternal friendship and collaboration with the socialist countries was the foundation stone of the foreign policy of the Government of the People's Republic of Albania. Albania's relations with those states were all-sided, political, economic, commercial, military, cultural and in the interests of the great cause of socialism and the proletarian revolution.

The main partner in these relations was the Soviet Union. The Albanian communists and people had a high appreciation of the role and merits of the Bolshevik Party in strengthening the unity of the socialist camp, the international communist and workers' movement and the anti-imperialist front.

For the close friendly relations between Albania and the Soviet Union, a special merit belonged to J. V. Stalin, who considered the People's Republic of Albania a free, sovereign state, politically and economically independent, and a true ally of the USSR. Stalin felt it his internationalist duty to provide aid for socialist Albania and spared nothing to fulfil its requirements according to the possibilities he had.

But this healthy situation in Albanian-Soviet relations began to be undermined by the Khrushchevites.

Although at that time the Albanian leadership was still not clear about the treachery of the Khrushchev group, certain actions aroused suspicions right from the outset. This led to friction between the two sides, indeed to very severe friction. The Khrushchev group's approaches to the Yugoslav revisionists and its open denigration of Joseph Stalin were the first open distor-

tions of an ideological and political character, which were opposed by the PLA.

As a consequence of the anti-Marxist policy of Khrushchev the relations between Albania and the Soviet Union took an «uncertain course from that time on, although in appearance they proceeded normally.

During the years 1950-1955 the government of the PR of Albania concluded a series of one and several-year economic agreements, conventions and plans for exchange of experience in the fields of culture, art, radio-diffusion, science and technology, with the European states of people's democracy.

Now Albania had greater export-import possibilities. It exported minerals, fuels, agricultural and livestock products, etc., to those states and imported industrial equipment and machinery, spare parts, etc.

From January 1949, the Council of Mutual Economic Aid (Comecon) functioned as a means for the organization of planned economic cooperation and mutual economic aid between the socialist states of Europe. The government of the People's Republic of Albania took part regularly in the activities of this economic organization. To the extent of its possibilities, it contributed to the accomplishment of the aims of this organization on the basis of the principles of respect for national sovereignty and national interests, mutual benefit and fraternal aid. However, experience had shown that many of the decisions which were taken in the Council of Mutual Economic Aid were not applied in the proper manner and to the proper extent by certain member countries, that weaknesses and formalism were apparent in its organs.

In February 1950, the Albanian government established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In 1954 the first agreements on cooperation in various fields were signed with the People's Republic of China, and one year later with the People's Democratic Republic of Korea.

Late in 1954 and early in 1955, under the pressure of the USA the revival of German militarism became a fait accompli.

In the face of this threatening situation, the countries which took part in the Moscow Meeting held in November 1954 called the Conference on Guaranteeing the Peace and Security of Europe, in Warsaw. Its proceedings lasted from 11th to 14th May 1955. Each participating state was represented by a delegation headed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

After discussing the situation created in Europe and the necessary measures which had to be taken to guarantee security of the participating countries and preserve peace in Europe, the Conference decided that a treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual aid should be concluded between Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Rumania, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. This treaty was signed on May 14, 1955, and is known as the «Warsaw Treaty».

The Warsaw Treaty was set up as a political and military organization, based on the principles of equality, mutual respect for state sovereignty and independence, and non-interference in one another's internal affairs.

It was formed when the anti-Marxist chauvinist aims of the Khrushchev group had not yet been made clear.

In those circumstances, the government of the PR of Albania, in the belief that the Warsaw Treaty would serve as an instrument in the interests of peace and socialism, signed the treaty and the People's Assembly of the PR of Albania ratified it on May 28, 1955.

The government of the PR of Albania consistently adhered to the policy of good neighbourliness. It sought to have normal state relations with Yugoslavia, Greece and Italy. However, the initiatives of the Albanian

government the aim of which was the lowering of the tension, the creation of mutual understanding, the improvement of inter-state relations and the stabilization of the situation in the Balkan and Adriatic zones, did not find the same goodwill from the neighbouring states.

Despite the grave situation created by the Yugoslav revisionists in Albanian-Yugoslav relations the government of the PR of Albania strove to ensure that these relations, from which any anti-Albanian aim had to be eliminated, were normalized and developed through state channels and that the friendship between the two neighbouring peoples was not jeopardized. However, the Yugoslav government circles continued their course of worsening relations with Albania.

The Belgrade government stepped up its slanderous propaganda, and its many-sided organized, hostile anti-Albanian activity in an attempt to overthrow the people's state power in Albania and isolate it from the socialist countries.

During the years 1950-1953 the Yugoslav armed forces carried out 250 large-scale provocations by land, air and sea. Meanwhile, the Yugoslav Secret Service (UDB) mobilized the Albanian war criminals who had found asylum there and organized them in bands of saboteurs. In 1951 it set up the so-called «Committee of Albanian Political Emigrants» in Prizren.

Pinning its hopes on the remnants of internal reaction in Albania, the Yugoslav government tried, through its legation in Tirana, to set them in motion with the aim of creating disturbances and altering the situation in favour of the enemies of the people.

But the Government of the PR of Albania liquidated all this hostile activity and resolutely defended the freedom, independence and territorial integrity of the Albanian state.

Part and parcel of this hostile activity of Belgrade

was the chauvinist policy of denationalization towards the population of the Albanian regions in Yugoslavia, which resolutely resisted this policy and struggled to win its rights.

On various pretexts for years on end the Belgrade chauvinists imposed mass terror, and committed acts of genocide against the Albanian population of Kosova, Montenegro and Macedonia. To this end, they carried out savage military operations in the period June-August 1950 and in the winter of 1955. The Albanian population in Yugoslavia was brutally exploited and left in profound, all-round economic, political, social and cultural backwardness. Tens of thousands of Kosovars were driven from their ancestral lands to Turkey, or forced to move to other regions of Yugoslavia or abroad, because of the national discrimination and the unbearable socio-economic conditions.

Socialist Albania maintained a consistent, principled stand on the question of Kosova and the other Albanian regions in Yugoslavia. In raising its voice of protest and publicly condemning this chauvinist policy, it performed its legitimate duty in conformity with the international norms, without in any way interfering in the internal affairs of the Yugoslav state, or making any territorial claims.

From the second half of 1953, there were signs of an easing of tension in the state relations between the two countries, and certain problems took the course of solution. After the formation of the joint Albanian-Yugoslav commission in the summer of 1953, and on the basis of the agreements approved by it in December of the same year, the construction of pyramids and other markers along the state frontier between the two countries was completed in 1955. In December 1953 the Yugoslav government accepted the Albanian proposal for the resumption of normal diplomatic relations and the reopening of diplomatic representations in the

respective capital cities. In 1955 air traffic recommenced between Albania and the outside world via Belgrade, a trade agreement was signed, etc.

However, Tito had not renounced his anti-Albanian ambitions and exploited every international circumstance to work against the PR of Albania. After the counter-revolutionary turn of the Soviet Union towards Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav leaders nurtured hopes and illusions that the PR of Albania, in the spirit of the Belgrade Declaration,¹ would march in step with the Soviet government on the «new course» for «all-round collaboration» with the PFR of Yugoslavia.

Regardless of the approval this «new» course found in some countries of people's democracy and the Soviet pressure not to view the «Yugoslav problem rigidly» at those highly complicated moments, the government of the PR of Albania adhered faithfully to the general line of the Party endorsed by the 1st Congress of the CP of Albania in regard to its relations with Yugoslavia, and did not rehabilitate the putschist group of Koçi Xoxe and company as the Yugoslav and the Soviet revisionists wanted.

During that period, too, the Yugoslav revisionists never ceased their anti-Albanian activity. During the year 1953 alone, about 120 armed bands of saboteurs were trained in Yugoslavia and sent into Albania.

During this period normal state relations could not be established between Albania and Greece and this for the fault of the reactionary ruling circles of Athens, with their pretensions towards Albanian territories, and their interference in the internal affairs of the Albanian state.

¹ On the occasion of the visit to Yugoslavia in May 1955 of the delegation of the Soviet Party and government headed by Khrushchev, a Soviet-Yugoslav joint declaration was signed in Belgrade.

The main «reasons» on which the government of the Kingdom of Greece based itself in its refusal to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of Albania were the so-called «state of war» and the question of «Northern Epirus». To the Albanian policy of good neighbourliness it counterposed its chauvinist anti-Albanian policy. In this it was encouraged by the western powers, the USA and Britain, which for their own political interests, wanted to keep the situation between our two countries tense.

Following this course, Greece systematically violated the territorial integrity of the PR of Albania, encouraged internal reaction to stir up trouble, and hatched up plots to overthrow the people's state power and to partition Albania. During the years 1950-1953 the Greek armed forces committed 544 air, land and sea provocations, in which a number of soldiers and citizens of the PR of Albania were killed while spies and numerous bands of armed saboteurs were sent into Albanian territory. Meanwhile, the territory of Greece served as a base for the espionage centres from which the American and British secret services operated against Albania.

Impelled by the desire for the normalization of relations the Albanian government several times raised the issue at UNO, demanding that the Greek government put an end to its hostile stand, because this did not serve the interests of the two peoples, who were sympathetic to each other and had fought together against enslavement by the Italian and German invaders.

The Albanian people were interested in having good, friendly, cultural and commercial relations with Italy, and their government did not fail to display proofs of its goodwill and initiatives to improve the good neighbourly relations and economic relations with that country. But the Italian government, on various

pretexts, did not respect the Peace Treaty and its clauses related to political and military obligations towards Albania. Refusing to accept the existence of the people's state power in Albania and in order to damage it, the Italian government impeded the normalization of state relations between the two countries. From July 1949, till January 1952, it carried out 136 air and sea provocations, and sent bands of saboteurs and spies and propaganda material of the traitor organizations formed by Albanian reactionary elements, into Albania.

Continuing this hostile policy, after refusing in the spring of 1950 the request of the government of the PR of Albania to discuss and decide all the questions existing between the two countries on the basis of the Peace Treaty, in January 1952 the Italian government raised the issue of reviewing the Peace Treaty, in particular the foreword to this Treaty, and the political and military decisions.

On February 16, 1952, the government of the PR of Albania rejected the claims of Italy about the revision of the Peace Treaty. Meanwhile it declared that it would agree to the revision of the Treaty only provided the Italian government withdrew from NATO and allowed neither foreign military bases nor foreign troops on its territory, provided it gave proofs that it had changed the anti-Albanian policy it had pursued hitherto, and provided that the new treaty would still contain all the clauses of the existing treaty in connection with the obligations and pledges of Italy to the PR of Albania, and these were carried out precisely.

From that time, it took the Italian government nearly three years, before at last, it accepted the Albanian request to commence talks on the implementation of the Peace Treaty with Italy, in regard to issues involving Albania (such as war reparations, etc.).

The PRA as an independent and sovereign state which had made its contribution to the war against

fascism and was a factor for peace in the Balkans and in Europe, considered it its legitimate right to be a member of the United Nations Organization.

But the question of the admission of Albania to UNO went through a long procedure of discussions and debates in the different organs of this international forum, and was dragged out until the end of 1955.

Major obstacles were raised in this direction primarily by the United States of America and Great Britain.

The American and other diplomats, while displaying willingness to admit to UNO those states which suited them, raised artificial obstacles over Albania's membership and made slanderous statements alleging that Albania was not an «independent state», not «qualified», neither «capable of fulfilling the obligations of the Charter, nor disposed to apply them», because it pursued an «aggressive», «hostile» policy towards Greece and Yugoslavia.

The Albanian application had had its supporters among the member countries of the United Nations Organization all along, but because of known obstacles, it secured the majority only in the mid-fifties. By this time the number of delegations in favour of new admissions, including that of Albania, had gradually reached that level at which the United States of America found itself virtually isolated and in a very unfavourable position in the 10th Session of the General Assembly which opened on 20 September 1955. On December 14 the General Assembly finally decided to admit Albania and 15 other countries as members of UNO.

This event had repercussions inside and outside Albania. The Albanian people welcomed it as an important victory for the principled policy of their government over the reactionary circles which speculated

with the absence of Albania's from the United Nations Organization.

The admission of new members, which had been impeded for years on end by the United States of America and Great Britain, was a success for the UNO itself, at a time when its prestige had been compromised in the eyes of the peoples because of its manipulation by the western powers. Therefore, progressive opinion considered this as a step towards making UNO more universal.

CHAPTER SIX

THE COMPLETION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ECONOMIC BASE OF SOCIALISM

1. The Fundamental Tasks of the 2nd Five-year Plan (1956-1960)

A few weeks before the opening of the proceedings of the 3rd Congress of the PLA, the Plenum of the Central Committee approved the draft plan for the development of the economy and culture in the PRA for the period 1956-1960. At the same time it decided that this draft should be discussed by the working collectives all over the country, before being presented to the Congress.

While this work was going on in Albania and preparations were being made for the 3rd Party Congress, imperialist reaction, headed by American imperialism, and all the anti-Marxist currents in the world launched a furious campaign against Marxism-Leninism and the socialist camp. This campaign, the banner-bearers of which were the Yugoslav leaders, had been developed by exploiting the revisionist course endorsed by the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

The repercussions of this course were felt in Al-

bania, too. Anti-party elements and agents of foreign powers were activated and began to organize a secret counter-revolutionary movement. They were assisted by the revisionists of Belgrade, who through the Yugoslav legation in Tirana carried out intensive subversive activity. This movement had two main objectives: to alter the Marxist-Leninist general line of the PLA and bring it into conformity with the course of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and to overthrow the sound leadership of the Party so that its enemies could take over the leadership of the country. At the head of this secret hostile activity stood Mehmet Shehu, assisted by Beqir Balluku, Kadri Hazbiu and others who occupied important posts in the leadership of the Party and the state.

The representatives of these elements put forward their platform in April 1956 at the Party Conference of the city of Tirana and on the pretext that more time was needed to work out the new line of the Party in conformity with the «new theses» of the 20th Congress, they demanded the postponement of the 3rd Congress. Their aim in this was to gain time to create an atmosphere in the Party more favourable to their intentions. However, the overwhelming majority of the participants in the Conference were neither won to nor even swayed by the demagogy of their platform.

Comrade Enver Hoxha went to the Conference personally in order to uncover the sinister aims of hostile elements and to defend the general political line followed by the Central Committee since the founding of the PLA, and once again made it clear that this line was not only correct but it was essential to apply it in the future, too.

Comrade Enver Hoxha's exposition opened the eyes even of some participants who had been swayed by the demagogy of the hostile elements. The Conference unanimously endorsed the general political line

followed by the Central Committee, condemned the anti-party attempts to revise this line, and forced the hostile elements to admit the counter-revolutionary aims of their platform with their own mouths.

At that time, however, the Party did not manage to discover the prime movers in this hostile activity.

«The Tirana Conference was... a part of the Tito-Khrushchev plot to overturn the situation in our country... At the Tirana Conference only the first step was to be taken, the feeling of the pulse, the preparation of the terrain...»*

This was not the only attempt to force the PLA to revise its Marxist-Leninist course. In conformity with the proclamation of the revisionist course of the 20th Congress as the general line of the international communist movement and with the aim of the Soviet leadership to make it obligatory for all the communist and workers' parties, pressure had begun to be exerted on the Central Committee of the PLA as soon as the proceedings of the 20th Congress were over. The secretary of the CC of the CPSU, M. A. Suslov, demanded, through the delegation of the PLA which had been invited to the Congress, that the PLA revise its general political line. He also demanded, on the pretext that «errors might have been made under the influence of Stalin's cult of the individual», that the PLA re-examine its stand toward the Yugoslav revisionists as well as toward Koci Xoxe and the other enemies of the Party. The head of the CPSU delegation that came to Tirana to take part in the 3rd Congress of the PLA also repeated these demands. However, all their pressures failed to produce the desired effect.

These were the circumstances in which the 3rd Congress of the PLA began its proceedings on May 25,

* Enver Hoxha, *The Titoites (Historical notes)*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1982, p. 589, Eng. ed.

1956, precisely as the Plenum of the CC of December 1955 had decided.

The most important problem dealt with in the report of the First Secretary of the CC of the Party, Comrade Enver Hoxha, a problem which was directly linked with the future of the country and which had to be solved by this supreme forum of the Party, was that of the course to be followed. Rejecting the revisionist course which the CPSU and other communist and workers' parties had begun to follow, the Congress proclaimed that «...the general political, economic and organizational line which the Party has followed up to now has been correct.»*

With this, as well as with the other decisions it took, the Congress let it to be understood that it did not agree with the spirit of the «new theses» of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and that it did not submit to pressure from abroad. However, in order to protect the authority of the Soviet Union, to preserve the unity of the socialist camp and to avoid exacerbating relations with the leadership of the CPSU, the real aims of which were still not fully recognized, the 3rd Congress did not express itself openly, by name, against the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

After endorsing the activity of the leading forums of the Party, the results of the 1st Five-year Plan, and the directives of the 2nd Five-year Plan, the Congress wound up its proceedings with the approval of the amendments to the Constitution of the Party which had been discussed by all party members and candidates, and with the election of the new leading organs of the PLA. Enver Hoxha was elected First Secretary of the Central Committee.¹

* *Principal Documents of the PLA*, vol. 2, Tirana 1972, p. 593, Alb. ed.

¹ By decision of the Plenum of the CC of the PLA held

In adopting the draft plan for economic and cultural development for the years 1956-1960, supplemented by the proposals and criticisms of the working people, the 3rd Congress defined as the main task: the further development of industry, especially of the mining industry, mainly on the basis of the full utilization of the existing productive capacities and the exploitation of internal reserves, the rapid development of agriculture, mainly through the socialist reorganization of agricultural production, and on this basis, the further improvement of the material situation and the raising of the cultural level of the people.*

In line with the further development of industry, it was envisaged that the total volume of industrial production in the last year of the five-year plan would be 92 per cent higher than that of 1955. The 3rd Congress also decided that the rate of growth of the production of heavy industry, and that of the mining industry in particular, should be higher than that of light industry; while at the same time, the latter would be higher than in the first five-year plan.

In regard to the speedier development of agriculture, the 3rd Congress approved a marked increase in agricultural production, in order to fulfil the needs of the people for bread and other food-stuffs and also the requirements of industry for raw materials.

This increase could not be achieved without completing the construction of the economic base of socialism in the countryside and without rapid, all-round development of the productive forces in agriculture. The Congress considered the acceleration of the collectivization

on July 12, 1954, instead of the post of the General Secretary of the Party that of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party was created.

* *Principal Documents of the PLA*, vol. 2, Tirana 1972, p. 597, Alb. ed.

of agriculture the main economic and organizational task in the field of agriculture and stressed that «the 2nd Five-year Plan must be the plan of the collectivization of agriculture, passing from small-scale individual production of the peasantry to large-scale socialist agricultural production...»*

This target was fully attainable if we bear in mind that as many agricultural cooperatives were set up in 1955 alone as had been set up in the nine previous years and that within the first 5 months of 1956 the number of agricultural cooperatives established at the end of 1955 had been doubled. Therefore, the 3rd Congress of the Party issued the directive that the collectivization of agriculture should be completed, in general, by the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan (1960).

The other tasks had to do with the further improvement of the material situation and the educational and cultural level.

In order to bring into production the industrial projects which had not been completed in the previous five-year plan and those which were to be built in the period 1956-1960, as well as to carry out major projects in the other fields of the economy, new labour forces were necessary. In the years of the 2nd Five-year Plan, ensuring this labour power became one of the most urgent problems.

While the rapid development of industry in the 1st Five-year Plan had created serious difficulties in several cities, not only in regard to ensuring regular supplies of food and necessities, but also in regard to housing, despite all the many buildings erected or under construction, in some districts the danger of the depopulation of the mountainous zones had appeared. The way to overcome these difficulties was to secure the labour power mainly from the cities, where there were big

* *Ibidem* p. 614.

reserves. In order to secure the necessary labour power from the cities, a great deal of educational work had to be done and a struggle had to be waged against the backward concepts of being satisfied with little and against private economic activity which hindered a good number of city dwellers from entering employment with the state. The factors which assisted the solution of this problem were the abolition of the rationing system in 1957, which led to increased quantities of consumer goods on the market and speeding up the formation of cooperatives of craftsmen and small shopkeepers, which restricted income gained from speculation. As a result, the city became the most important source from which the work force was secured. Women made up a good part of this work force. Measures were taken not only to place them in suitable jobs, but also to provide creches and kindergartens to care for their young children.

Another measure which reduced the shifting of workers, who had not brought their families with them because of lack of housing, was that of the priority construction of housing in the new industrial zones, especially those in which new towns had been built.

Mainly as a result of these measures, the participation of women in production increased beyond any comparison with the past and new towns such as Memaliaj, Kurbnesh, etc., sprang up. The greatest success, however, was that of the creation of the new industrial working class, something which further strengthened its role as leader and organizer of the construction of socialism in Albania.

2. The Struggle for the Fulfilment of the 2nd Five-year Plan

Heavy industry was developed more rapidly than light industry. This course was followed with the aim that in the future the production of means of production would gain absolute superiority over the production of consumer goods.

The mines were allocated 33 per cent of all the investments in industry and provided with more qualified cadres and modern machinery than any other sector. This resulted, among other things, in the discovery of the Marinëza oil-field (Fier), the new reserves of chromium at Bulqiza (Dibra), the new deposit of copper ore at Kurbnesh and those at Spaç (Mirdita) and Qafëbardha (Puka), the deposits of iron-nickel ore at Pishkash and Çervenaka, and the coal at Alarup (Pogradec), etc.

The production of the oil industry had increased nearly 3.5 times over in 1960 as against 1955. Two other important successes were achieved in this industry: the oil-processing capacity increased 4.4 fold, as against 1955 and for the first time natural gas was used as fuel for the production of steam for the generation of electric power.

The increase of the oil processing capacity was achieved as a result of the commissioning of the new oil refinery in Cërrik (Elbasan), the reconstruction of the no.2 distillery in Stalin City, the production of which was doubled, and the construction of the Patos-Cërrik pipeline. Thus the bulk of the country's needs for liquid fuel and lubricants were ensured.

With the opening of the new mine at Kurbnesh the production of copper ore increased more than 3.3 fold in 1960, as against 1955. The construction of a factory for the enrichment of the copper ore with a capacity of 150,000 tons a year began there, too.

The chromium mining industry was strengthened through the expansion of production at the new mines at Kam (Bajram Curri), Kalimash (Kukës) and Martanesh (Elbasan). These mines and especially the new reserves discovered at the Bulqiza mine made possible a 2.3 fold increase in the production of chromium ore in 1960, as against 1955.

With the commissioning of the new mine at Alarup, the annual production of the coal industry increased by 100,000 tons, while the production of bitumen increased 2.5 times, as against 1955.

The exploitation of the iron-nickel ore began in the last years of the five-year plan, thus opening prospects for the setting up of the metallurgical industry.

By making such great strides forward, the mining industry emerged as the vanguard of Albanian heavy industry.

During the 1st Five-year Plan the foundations of the electric power industry had been laid and the construction of the first hydro-power station on the Mat River had begun. This project became one of the most important of the 2nd Five-year Plan. With the construction of this hydro-power station, which was inaugurated on January 11, 1958 and was named after Karl Marx, the production of electric power by hydro-power stations exceeded that by thermal-power stations. Some other hydro-power stations were built and the foundations of the unified electric power system in Albania were laid at this time.

Light industry, also, developed during the 2nd Five-year Plan as a result of the construction of new industrial projects, the most important of which were «The Ernest Thaelman» fish and vegetable preserving combine in Vlora, the «George Dimitrov» tobacco curing plant in Elbasan, the «Ali Kelmendi» food-stuffs combine in Tirana, the vegetable oil factory in Rrogozhina, etc. At the beginning of 1957 the most important

handicraft cooperatives, such as those producing clothing, metal products, pottery and chinaware, furniture, footwear, etc., were all included in the light industry.

As a result of this development and the measures which were taken for the increase and more complete utilization of productive capacities, in 1960 the output of light industry was more than double that of the year 1955. This increase would have been even greater had agriculture supplied this industry with the full amounts of raw materials envisaged in the plan.

The program for the acceleration of the collectivization of agriculture, approved by the 3rd Congress of the PLA, envisaged that the collectivization should be completed in the lowland zones and in those hilly zones to which the activity of the machine and tractor stations extended. The collectivized land in these zones would include 70 per cent of the planted area of the Republic. In this way the old system of organization of agriculture and the respective class structure in the countryside would be abolished once and for all. Proceeding from the fact that some violations of the principles of persuasion and the free will of the peasant had occurred in the practice of collectivization up till that time, the 3rd Congress of the Party instructed that in the work for the extension of the collectivization of agriculture, the Leninist principles of persuasion and the free will of the peasant to embark on the road of collectivization must be strictly observed.

After the 3rd Congress, a general propaganda campaign was launched and gradually intensified, in order to explain to and convince the peasant masses that they should set up new cooperatives and join them or the existing ones voluntarily.

The explanatory work of the Party began, first of all, with the communists of the countryside and was carried out by teams of capable and experienced Party

cadres that were sent to the basic organizations of the Party in the villages which were to be collectivized.

After the hesitation of wavering members was overcome, the overwhelming majority of the basic organizations of the Party decided unanimously or by a majority of votes in favour of setting up the agricultural cooperatives.

This was how the frontline fighters for the construction of the economic base of socialism in the countryside were ensured and the first battle was won.

In almost every village the communists succeeded in setting up a group of progressive peasant activists who more readily accepted the political line of the Party in countryside and who placed themselves under the leadership of the basic organization to extend its explanatory work with their fellow-villagers. Nevertheless, most of the peasants were in no hurry to give their word that they would join the agricultural cooperative, and used various pretexts to gain time, wanting above all to see what results the cooperative would have when it was set up in their village.

In such circumstances the communists and the more advanced peasant activists, who in most cases were the minority, decided to set up the cooperative and sought the approval of the district Executive Committee for founding it. Thus, most of the agricultural cooperatives in Albania were set up without securing the participation of the majority of the peasant economies. The combining of the soundest forces of each village in cooperatives was a decisive step to ensure the complete success of collectivization.

Besides their activity to set up agricultural cooperatives and run them successfully, the foundation members also worked persistently to add new members to their ranks. In those villages where the explanatory work was continued even after the setting up of the cooperative, the peasant households that had remained

outside the cooperative joined it one by one or all together, but in those villages where the explanatory work was superficial or carried out spasmodically, all kinds of difficulties were encountered. The peasants who were burdened with the sense of private property, religious prejudices and backward customs, who had no confidence in the collective work or were influenced by the hostile slogans of kulaks and secret enemies of socialism, remained undecided, isolated on their small economies. On the other hand, the cooperativists frequently adopted incorrect attitudes towards them, preventing them from irrigating their plots, pasturing their animals or grinding their grain. There were even cases when they were not admitted to the various meetings of the village. Lacking a sound understanding of collectivization, the leading bodies of some cooperatives did not allow poor peasants to join the cooperative because, according to them, the value of the workday would be diminished. Such actions caused splits and threatened the political unity of the peasantry around the Party of Labour of Albania.

However, these shortcomings were quickly tackled, not only by the organs of the Party and the state at the base, but also by the top central organs. They were examined, also, at meetings of a national character, such as the 3rd Congress of Agricultural Cooperatives in September 1956, and at the broad Meeting of Activists of Agriculture on February 21, 1957. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the PLA, which met in February 1957, also dealt with these questions in detail.

In conformity with the instructions of the Plenum, the basic organizations of the Party received continual concrete assistance from capable instructors who were assigned to work in the countryside, and from groups of specialists in agriculture and finance. Political, cultural and press teams also helped to enliven the propaganda for collectivization and improve the internal organization of the cooperatives.

During 1957 the greater aid of the state for agriculture and especially for the agricultural cooperatives also exerted an influence in favour of this work. Agricultural credits increased from 243 to 547 million leks for the agricultural cooperatives and fell from 95 to 11 million leks in the individual peasant economies.

The middle of 1957 marked a major turning-point in the collectivization of agriculture. The number of cooperatives increased from 318 with 15,313 families and 51,118 hectares of cultivated land in 1955, to 1,698 with 74,764 families and 216,183 hectares of cultivated land in 1957. One year later, in 1958, there were 1,935 agricultural cooperatives. However, many of them eventually amalgamated, so that at the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan there were 1484 agricultural cooperatives, which included 71.3 per cent of the peasant economies of the republic and 87.5 per cent of the area of agricultural land held by the peasantry. Thus, in general the collectivization of agriculture in Albania had been completed, the economic base of socialism in the countryside had been built, and the fundamental condition for agriculture to emerge from backwardness with rapid strides and enter the stage of advanced agriculture, had been achieved.

The collectivization of agriculture was carried out on the basis of the Leninist principles, while taking into account the special conditions of the historical development of Albania and especially of the Albanian village. Precisely for this reason it had some distinctive special features. The collectivization was applied in the conditions of the existence of small-scale private ownership on which various restrictions were imposed by law, and it developed in the form of agricultural artels only, because the other more elementary forms, such as agricultural collectives, neither became widespread nor achieved stability. It began and developed along with the

industrialization of the country and not after the latter had been completed. Since there was no pronounced economic differentiation in the Albanian countryside after the Land Reform, the collectivization of agriculture did not encounter very severe class conflicts, so the economic restriction and the political isolation of kulaks remained the main forms of the class struggle.

Because of the specific provisions of the Land Reform, which prohibited the sale and purchase of land and the hiring of labour to work it, and the policy of the isolation and economic restriction of kulaks, that class was unable to increase its economic or numerical strength. On the contrary, it grew steadily weaker, despite the addition to its ranks of that small number of peasants who by engaging in speculation and deviating from the general line of the construction of socialism, turned into kulaks.

Nevertheless, at the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan there were still 1,500 kulak economies in Albania but now, this class which had been the most important social support of capitalism in the countryside, was heading towards total liquidation.

In order to achieve a marked increase in agricultural production, it had been envisaged that, along with speeding up the rate of collectivization, the productive forces in agriculture must be increased, too. This would be accomplished successfully first of all by increasing the number of and strengthening the machine and tractor stations (MTS) and the state agricultural enterprises (SAE). In 1960 the amount of work carried out by the MTS was five times that of 1955.

Although the SAE included only 12.6 per cent of the total arable land of the Republic, during the 2nd Five-year Plan they produced 35.5 per cent of the total quantity of grain collected by the state, 25.5 per cent of the milk and 42.2 per cent of the vegetables.

Another major reserve for the development of

agriculture and the increase of agricultural production was the new land which would be cultivated. During the 2nd Five-year Plan about 43,000 hectares of new land were planted to crops and another 17,000 hectares were gained from draining swamps.

The increase in the area of arable land from 10.1 per cent in 1938 to 16.2 per cent at the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan, was another great victory in a mountainous country like Albania.

Another important success was the increase of the irrigated area by 42,700 hectares and the additional 43,000 hectares which were improved as a result of water-control projects.

Although the losses in livestock suffered during the National Liberation War had been replaced and a small increase in numbers had been achieved by the beginning of 1954, that same year a disturbing decline, especially in the flocks of sheep, was noticed.

This phenomenon was mainly the result of the changes which were taking place in the countryside with the collectivization of agriculture. Most of the new agricultural cooperatives, occupied mainly with raising field crops, paid little attention to creating the conditions necessary for the development of animal husbandry to make it an important branch of their economy. Therefore, the overwhelming bulk of the livestock were kept on the cooperativists' personal plots and the individual peasant farms. But the cooperativist peasant could not keep livestock in excess of the numbers allowed by the statute. Consequently he sold the surplus, mainly on the market. Before becoming a member of the cooperative, the individual peasant did the same thing. It was the herds of goats and sheep, especially the latter, which were most affected by the decline in numbers.

The Plenum of the CC of the PLA, which met in February 1957, decided that the flocks of sheep should

be increased most rapidly by the socialist sector, and first of all by the agricultural cooperatives, which must establish sheep farms as quickly as possible, while the state should take urgent measures for the improvement of the breeds of local sheep. With the setting up of sheep farms within the agricultural cooperatives in addition to large flocks on the state agricultural enterprises, especially those specialized in livestock raising, and with the rapid extension of the collectivization of agriculture, the process of the passing of sheep and goats from the private peasant economies to the socialist sector began.

Consequently, the numbers of sheep in the state agricultural sector and the cooperativist sector, including the plots of the cooperative members, increased year by year, but this did not completely make up for the losses.

These results were insufficient to solve the major problem of supplying the working people with animal products, and with milk and meat in particular. The slow rate of increase of these products was due to the fact that their production was based mainly on sheep and goats while the numbers of cows and pigs remained very limited. This situation, also, had to be overcome within the shortest possible time relying mainly on our own forces. Special consultative meetings were held in the districts. The 11th Plenum of the CC of the PLA, which examined the problems of livestock, approved an 8-year perspective plan for the increase of all kinds of livestock, especially cows and pigs. Every agricultural cooperative or state farm would raise a given number of livestock per each 100 hectares of land, while bearing in mind that the breeds of cows and pigs must be improved and the fodder base must be ensured mainly through planting forage crops.

As a result of these measures the situation was improved but not to the extent envisaged by the 11th

Plenum. The great droughts of 1959 and 1960 prevented the necessary increase in milk and meat production. At the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan, the targets for meat and milk production were not fulfilled also because of the fact that the agricultural cooperatives still did not raise sufficient livestock in proportion to the area of land they cultivated. Most of the livestock was raised on the personal plots of the cooperative members.

6. The Improvement of Material Conditions and the Development of the Ideological and Cultural Revolution

After the satisfactory results achieved in the 1st Five-year Plan, the Plenum of the CC held in December 1955, decided to abolish the rationing of clothing. This decision came into force on January 31, 1956. So that the incomes of working people employed by the state were not diminished because of the unified state prices of these articles, the respective compensation was allocated. At the same time, the reciprocal market for agricultural and livestock products was abolished and replaced with the system of wholesale purchase by contract between the state and cooperative trade organizations and the peasants.

These measures were accompanied with two important reductions in prices: the first in April 1956 involving an amount of 1.5 billion leks and the second in November of the same year involving 750 million leks. These reductions applied mainly to clothing, agricultural tools, etc., as well as a few food-stuffs. Besides these price reductions, hospital treatment for people employed by the state and members of their families was made free of charge. The increases applied to low wages and

pensions amounted to a sum of 350 million leks per year.

The 3rd Congress of the PLA issued the directive that the rationing system should be totally abolished and further price reductions made. The satisfactory results of the first two years of the 2nd Five-year Plan created the conditions for this directive to be implemented before the date set by the Congress.

On the joint decision of the Central Committee of the PLA and the Council of Ministers of the PRA, the system of rationing in Albania was abolished on November 1, 1957. It had become a hindrance to the further development of the people's economy, because, by allowing elements of egalitarianism in the distribution of the national income, it inhibited further increases in the productivity of labour and violated the principle of distribution according to the quantity and quality of work done.

Besides the rise in wages, pensions and bursaries in order to compensate for the differences between the former and new prices, another reduction of prices, involving 425 million leks was made. Likewise the prices paid by the state for compulsory quotas and surpluses of agricultural products were raised, too. From this the peasantry gained 800 million leks per year.

The radical measure, which led to free marketing in the distribution of food products, was accompanied with three more reductions of prices in the last three years of the five-year plan. Besides this the peasantry had other gains as a result of the doubling of the prices paid for surplus products purchased by the state, the cancelling of obligatory deliveries of beans, rice and eggs, and any obligation to the state in products from their personal plots, including arrears of these products. From the six reductions in prices the people gained more than 7 billion 200 million leks.

Through these important measures for the improve-

ment of material well-being the supply of industrial goods and food-stuffs for the working people was increased. The state built about 12,000 apartments while the peasants built more than 32,000 new houses. In 1960 the sums deposited in savings accounts had increased more than 5 fold over 1955. In 1959, the real wages of the workers had increased by 29 per cent, as against the 25 per cent envisaged by the Congress, but because of bad weather conditions the incomes of the peasantry did not achieve the 35 per cent increase envisaged.

The new economic possibilities created the conditions in which greater attention had to be paid to improvements in favour of the working people, in both working conditions and the health service.

The new Labour Code, replacing that of 1947, came into force on May 1, 1956. This code marked a new step forward in regard to the protection of workers' jobs and health. It laid down a more correct basis on the question of the remuneration for work, safeguarding the principle of «equal pay for equal work regardless of sex or age». At the same time, the conditions for the support and encouragement of women and young people under 18 years of age were sanctioned more specifically. The employment of women and juveniles in those jobs, which government provisions described as heavy or harmful to their health, was prohibited.

Supplementary paid leave was introduced for pregnant women and workers under 16 years of age, along with special conditions to enable the latter to attend school.

The new law on social security came into force on January 1, 1959. Under this law the sphere covered by social security was extended and one of the most advanced systems of pensions introduced.

Besides workers, employees and handicraftsmen,

the pupils of technical-professional schools and the students of higher schools and their families were also ensured. All those citizens of the PRA who were accidentally injured in the course of work for the state also benefited from this new law.

The system of pensions was characterized by the implementation of the principle of «the lower the wage, the higher the percentage paid». Besides this, the granting of partial pensions and old age pensions was sanctioned, with more favourable conditions for mothers with many children.

As a result, total social security payments in 1960 were 289 per cent greater than that of 1955.

For the protection of the people's health, the number of health institutions was increased and the medical personnel was doubled.

As a result of all the measures that were taken for the improvement of the living conditions and health of the people, the natural increase of the population rose from 29 per thousand in 1955 to 32.9 per thousand in 1960. This was one of highest rates of increase in the world and came about not only because the birth rate was one of the highest, but also because the death rate had been almost halved as compared to 1958.

The elimination of illiteracy was one of the factors which made possible the extension of the school network, not only for the pupils of day schools but also for the adults who attended evening schools. This was linked, also, with the change in the existing educational system, which did not respond properly to the ever increasing needs of the economy and culture for cadres and to the ever growing demands of the working masses for education.

In particular the education system was incapable of responding to the needs of the country during the next five-year period, when it was to embark on the

course of transformation from an agricultural-industrial country into an industrial-agricultural country. Therefore, it was deemed necessary that the educational system should be reorganized. In June 1960 the CC of the PLA and the Council of Ministers of the PRA announced the fundamental theses on the new organization of the school, so that they could be discussed by the masses of the people.

These theses defined the various categories of general and vocational schools, from elementary to higher schools, and of the part-time schools for adults. Eight years of elementary schooling was made compulsory for all instead of seven years as previously.

At the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan there were 450 more schools than in 1955, the number of teachers had increased by 3,600, that of the day school pupils and students by 52,000, while the number of pupils and students of part-time schools had reached 30,000.

A great success in the field of education was the establishment of the state University of Tirana in September 1957. This was done by uniting the existing higher educational institutes (with the exception of the Higher Agricultural Institute) and the Institute of Sciences.

In the literature of those years there was a great expansion in the range of subjects, the development of new genres and an increase in the number of new talents who began to make a name for themselves, while music and the figurative arts saw the birth and development of major genres. The first artistic films were produced at this period, too.

The 1st Congress of the Writers and Artists' League of Albania, held in 1957, was an important event for the further development of literature and arts. The ways which the Congress recommended for the further improvement of literature and arts in conformity with the demands of the time, were the raising

of the ideological level on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, more profound knowledge of the socialist reality, the improvement of artistic skills and merging with the masses.

Consequently, contemporary themes occupied a more extensive place in works of literature and art. Along with the subject of the National Liberation War, most of the works were dedicated to the socialist transformation of the country and especially to the profound changes which had taken place in life in the countryside. Besides these themes, however, the figurative arts especially, also began to deal with historical themes, to perpetuate the outstanding figures and events of the past history of the Albanian people.

By the end of the 1950's the method of socialist realism had been mastered and was being fully applied in the new Albanian literature and art. Realism, revolutionary romanticism, socialist partisanship and patriotism, were the characteristic features of these works, greatly enhancing their importance as means in the service of the construction of the foundations of socialism. In those years, both the generation of recognized artists and the younger generation produced works which were welcomed by the working people. Such were the novels «The Starveling», by S. Spasse which won first prize on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Liberation, «The Swamp» by F. Gjata and «A Stormy Autumn» by A. Abdihojha, the poems «Revival» by Ll. Siliqi, «The Poem of the Road» by D. Agolli and «An Industrial Dream» by I. Kadare, the first Albanian opera «Mrika» by P. Jakova, the first artistic film «Tana» and many other works, especially in the figurative arts. In 1960 the number of books published reached one per day, or twice as many as in 1955.

The troupes of the professional theatres and those of the opera, the ballet and philharmonia also achie-

ved important results. The improvement of their artistic level was reflected in such dramas as «The Task», «The Flower of Remembrance», «Wedding in the War» and the operas «Mrika», «Spring» etc., which the Albanian public liked and which were the finest Albanian works up till then.

In 1958 the new «Migjeni» drama theatre was set up in Shkodra and the «Andon Zako Çajupi» theatre in Korça in 1959. The higher school for training actors, painters and sculptors was opened the same years.

In order to boost the spread of culture the number of houses of culture, professional variety theatre troupes and of sports fields and gymnasiums was doubled, especially in the small towns.

In the countryside the need for the spread of culture among the masses was greater. The backwardness there was great in all directions. In 1958, 45 per cent of the peasantry had no schooling at all, a whole world of prejudices and harmful customs inhibited the peasants and hindered the rapid introduction of new ideas to the countryside. Consequently the level of agricultural production and the standard of living were low. Another great hindrance to progress was the extensive network of religious institutions and the clergy.

Throughout this five-year period, measures of special importance were taken with the aim of overcoming this situation and raising the cultural level of the cooperativist countryside. One hundred and thirty-five houses of culture were built. Three films and variety shows were put on, agro-technical, sewing, and embroidery and hygiene courses were organized, and amateur groups of singers, musicians and dancers were formed. They became mainly centres of the struggle against prejudices and backward customs. The scientific-atheist theory advanced with giant strides.

The cultural activities in the countryside were further enlivened by the thousands of working people of

art and culture, of the health services, students and teachers who went to the countryside in response to the call which the National Conference on the development of culture in the countryside addressed to the people's intelligentsia.

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With the completion ahead of schedule of the task set by the 3rd Congress of the CPA for the collectivization of agriculture, socialist relations were established in the majority of the villages which had most importance from the stand-point of the agricultural economy of the country. Thus, not counting the 16,2 per cent of the cultivated land which belonged to the state sector of agriculture, in 1960 the economic base of socialism had been laid in the Albanian countryside and «the most radical revolutionary change in the economic and social relations in the countryside»* had been made.

The establishment of the economic base of socialism in the countryside was not only an historic victory of a social and economic character, but also a great victory of a political character.

It was a victory of a social character, because the previously existing class structure, made up of poor, middle and rich peasants, was wiped out and a single class, the cooperativist peasantry, was created. At the same time, the rapid liquidation of the kulaks as a class put an end to the exploitation of man by man in the countryside.

It was a victory of an economic character because it not only resulted in increased agricultural produc-

* *History of the Party of Labour of Albania*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1981, p. 313, 2nd Eng. ed.

tion, but it also opened the way to rapid development of the productive forces in agriculture.

It was a political victory because the fundamental contradiction between the backward base and the very advanced state superstructure was eliminated. In this way, the people's state power began to be based on the two friendly classes of the new socialist society, the working class and the cooperativist peasantry, the alliance of which, under the leadership of the working class and its Party, was greatly strengthened and became the main social force for the construction of socialism. On this basis the moral-political unity of all the working people was steered. Becoming the main social force for the construction of socialism, this alliance greatly strengthened the dictatorship of the proletariat.

With the establishment of the economic base of socialism in the countryside, the complete transformation of the main means of production and circulation into the common property of the whole society or the group was carried out in Albania. Thus the multiform economy was liquidated and a single socialist system of the economy, which included heavy and light industry, agriculture, transport, banks and trade, was set up. At the end of the 2nd Five-year Plan this system ensured 99 per cent of the country's total industrial production, 80 per cent of the agricultural production, 100 per cent of the turnover of wholesale trade and 90 per cent of that of retail trade. This system contributed 90 per cent of the national income. These very important indices proved that the economic base of socialism had been built, both in the city and in the countryside.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE PRA IN THE YEARS 1956-1960

1. The PRA in the Struggle for the Defence of Peace and the Strengthening of the Unity of the Socialist Camp. Extension of the International Relations of the PRA

After the 20th Congress of the CPSU the forces of imperialism undertook open aggressive actions in three directions: against the socialist camp, against the communist and workers' parties of the capitalist countries, against the peoples of the Near and Middle East.

The socialist camp was attacked from all sides. The subversive and disruptive activity against the socialist countries was extremely intensified. The bourgeois propaganda all over the world loudly publicized the «crisis of communism». The situation in Poland became critical, internal and external reaction jointly organized the counter-revolutionary revolt in Poznan in June 1956.

The victories of the Hungarian people were also

seriously threatened. By launching the counter-revolution of October-November 1956 in Hungary the imperialists and revisionists aimed at creating a hotbed of war inside the socialist camp so that they could split and liquidate it. The counter-revolution in Hungary fanned up the anti-communist hysteria all over the world. The socialist system was put to a very grave test. All the forces hostile to socialism placed themselves in the service of imperialism.

The international situation was aggravated further with the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression launched against Egypt in October 1956. It was a component part of the general onslaught of imperialism against the freedom-loving forces and peoples.

The PRA took an active interest in the main problems and disturbing events of this period and maintained an internationalist stand towards them.

It expressed its complete solidarity with the Hungarian people and its readiness to help with any means in the suppression of the counter-revolution and in healing the wounds it had caused. «In the present circumstances,» the Albanian government declared on November 3, 1956, «the socialist victories the Hungarian people have achieved during these years must be resolutely defended...»*

In those grave moments when the enemies of socialism, the imperialists and the revisionists, had directed their blows against the Soviet Union, against the socialist camp, the Albanian leadership thought that the struggle for the defence of the Soviet Union meant the struggle in defence of Marxism-Leninism, socialism and the Albanian people.

The Declaration of November 3 also said that if mistakes and violations of the principle of equality

* Declaration of the Government of the PRA, November 3, 1956, *Zëri i popullit*, November 4, 1956.

had been made in the mutual relations between some socialist states, as the Soviet government admitted in its Declaration of October 30, 1956, these must be corrected «on a Marxist-Leninist basis, so that friendship, solidarity and collaboration between these socialist countries are further strengthened and developed.»*

However, the assessment of these relations was different from that of the Declaration of the Soviet government of October 30, 1956, which was based on the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The Soviet leadership was displeased with this and resorted to pressure and tried to interfere in the internal affairs of the Albanian state.

As a detachment of the international communist and workers' movement, the PLA felt it was its duty to make its contribution to the struggle for the exposure of revisionism and checking its spread.

At the Plenum of the CC of the Party of February 1957, Comrade Enver Hoxha made a deep-going analysis of the situation in the international communist movement and once again stressed the tasks of the Party in the struggle against imperialism and revisionism. «The intensification of the ideological struggle against the revisionist and anti-Marxist views, the intensification of the struggle in the defence of Marxism-Leninism,» said he, «assume first-rate importance.»**

At this time the PLA spearheaded its struggle against Yugoslav revisionism, which was the main organizer of the campaign against «Stalinism» to discredit Marxism-Leninism. At the same time, this struggle was directed against the revisionist spirit existing in any party and in any country, against the revisionist theses of the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

* Declaration of the Government of the PRA, November 3, 1956, *Zëri i popullit*, November 4, 1956.

** Enver Hoxha, *Works*, vol. 14, p. 291, Alb. ed.

This stand of the PLA was reflected in the Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties which was held in Moscow in November 1957. Supported by revisionist elements in the different delegations, at the Meeting Khrushchev tried to have the revisionist course of the 20th Congress sanctioned as the general line of the international communist movement.

The delegation of the PLA, headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha, made an important contribution to the failure of these attempts by exposing the views of the Khrushchevites and by joining its efforts with those of some other delegations which defended Marxism-Leninism.

The Khrushchevites, who were interested in preserving at least a semblance of unity among the participants of the Meeting, were forced to back down. Thus, the Declaration approved by the Meeting was based on Marxist-Leninist principles. In general, it was opposed to the revisionist course of the 20th Congress. That is why the delegation of the PLA signed it.

The counter-revolutionary turning marked by the 20th Congress of the CPSU was reflected, as in all other fields, also in the activity of the Warsaw Treaty, in which the secret aims of the Soviet government began to appear. Irregularities were noticed in the activity of the Warsaw Treaty from 1955 to June 1960. The Soviet leadership tried in various ways to dictate its will to the member states, by taking advantage of the fact that only Soviet militarymen were at the head of all the organs of the Treaty and especially of the joint command of the armed forces.

On many occasions the revisionist leadership of the Soviet Union tried to use the Warsaw Treaty to the detriment of the armed forces of the People's Republic of Albania. The Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee which was held in Moscow immediately after the 20th Congress of the CPSU was among

Khrushchev's first attempts against socialist Albania. At this meeting, under the pretext that as a member of the Warsaw Treaty Albania had its defence guaranteed, he called for the organizational structure of the Albanian army to be simplified so as to turn it from an effective army into a token army. A situation of isolation was created for the Albanian side in the Warsaw Treaty. It was not informed regularly about all issues and activity. In the existing situation, in various forms and ways, though not publicly, the Albanian government expressed its objection against these stands of the Soviet leadership.

Even though it expressed its reservations and objections on some questions of principle to the Soviet leadership, the government of the PRA was for the development of normal state relations with the socialist countries, not allowing ideological and political contradictions, which it wanted to be solved in a Marxist-Leninist way, to become a hindrance to the Albanian-Soviet state relations and to Albania's relations with the other socialist countries.

However, Khrushchev proceeded towards the exacerbation of these relations. Following his great-state chauvinist policy, from 1955 on he constantly tried to interfere in the internal affairs of the PLA and the Albanian state, but met with resolute resistance.

Khrushchev exerted pressure on the Albanian leadership so as to force it to revise its stand towards the Yugoslav revisionists and reconsider the sentences passed on anti-Party elements and their agents such as Kogi Xoxe and company.

Along with open pressure, the Khrushchev group used all manner of means to divert the PLA from its Marxist-Leninist course. In order to create the impression among the world opinion that the Soviet Union was a «generous friend» which spared nothing to turn Albania into a «flourishing garden» and in the hope

that the PLA would back down in face of its dictate, the Soviet leadership wrote off the credits amounting to 422 million old rubles it had accorded Albania from Liberation to 1955 and in July 1959 signed an economic agreement under which another credit of 300 million old rubles was envisaged for the period 1959-1965.

In May 1959 Nikita Khrushchev came to Albania on an official visit at the head of a Soviet party and state delegation. During his visit, with the intention of turning Albania into a country economically dependent on the Soviet Union, Khrushchev recommended that it should develop only its agriculture, especially grow citrus-trees as it had favourable conditions for this purpose.

The unpublicized ideological differences between the PLA and the Soviet leadership still had not become a serious hindrance to the development of inter-state relations. However, it was not difficult to see that these relations were deteriorating and that, as Khrushchev himself put it after his visit to Albania, these relations were under a «layer of dust» which he allegedly had wanted to wipe off on time during his visit to our country.

The Albanian government considered it necessary that the socialist and non-socialist countries of the Balkans should co-ordinate their efforts for the preservation of peace in this region.

However, its initiatives in this direction found no response because of the negative stand of the imperialist powers and some circles in the Balkans which echoed their policy. The Soviet government, too, pursued sinister aims behind its declared intention of «making the Balkans flourish». As early as December 1956, Khrushchev and later, the Soviet Minister of Defence, R. I. Malinovsky who accompanied Khrushchev on his visit to Albania in 1959, saw Albania only as a military base, a stronghold of «major strategic

importance» «for the control of the whole Mediterranean»* and the eventual annexation of Greece, too. But they were wrong in their calculations in which they, like the imperialist powers, saw the Balkans as only a «powder keg». Acceptance of these political ambitions was fraught with grave consequences for the freedom and national independence, for the fate of the peoples of the Balkans. It was not only an act of historical considerations that in its Declaration of June 1959 the Albanian government recalled the bitter past of these peoples, the intervention and aggressive policy of the imperialist powers in the Balkans. «The peoples of the Balkans», it pointed out, «have drawn lessons from their past history and will no longer allow the imperialist powers to turn the Balkans into a hotbed of nuclear war. They will fight against the setting up of missile-launching sites in the Balkans and in the Mediterranean basin and the deployment of nuclear weapons as well as for the establishment of stable peace in this region.»**

The Albanian government continued its efforts to develop normal state relations with the neighbouring countries, to further improve its relations with Yugoslavia and Italy and to establish diplomatic relations with Greece. But its many initiatives in this direction found no response on the part of the governments of these countries. Only gradually and with difficulty did they accept to cooperate with the People's Republic of Albania on some questions of mutual benefit.

The government of Belgrade was not for fair neighbourly relations with socialist Albania. It was simply indulging in demagoguery when after the Soviet-

* Enver Hoxha, *The Khrushchevites (Memoirs)*, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1980, p. 377, 2nd Eng. ed.

** Declaration of the Government of the PRA, June 15, 1959, *Zëri i popullit*, June 16, 1959.

Yugoslav Declaration of 1955 it posed as if it was for «friendship» and the «improvement of relations» with the People's Republic of Albania. The facts, however, proved the contrary.

On a joint front with world reaction, the Yugoslav revisionists carried out an intensive hostile activity against Albania in the favourable international situation which the 20th Congress of the CPSU had created for them.

Even after the failure of their agents at the Party Conference of Tirana of April 1956 the Yugoslav revisionists still continued to send many spies and hundreds of saboteurs and to make provocations along their state borders with the PRA. They carried out 63 land, air and sea provocations, in the period from 1955 to the middle of 1958, and 27 such provocations only in 1960.

The Yugoslav government carried out this activity mainly from Kosova which it wanted to turn into «a base against Albania, into a base for the unification of Albania with Yugoslavia.»* Albanian reactionaries and fascists¹ continued to assemble in Kosova where they were trained in all kinds of espionage and sabotage activities against Albania.

On the other hand, the government of Belgrade with ever growing savagery continued its policy of genocide towards the long-suffering Albanian population in Yugoslavia. In the years 1956-1960 thousands of Albanians were forced to emigrate to Turkey. In the winter of 1955-1956 a bloody military operation was carried out all over Kosova. Innumerable blood-curdling crimes were committed during the so-called action for the gathering of weapons.

* Enver Hoxha, *Works*, vol. 14, p. 283, Alb. ed.

¹ At that time there were over 3,000 Albanian fugitives, among whom many war criminals, in Yugoslavia.

Whenever the PLA demanded that these barbarous actions be stopped and that the Albanians in Yugoslavia be given the rights they were constantly denied, the government of the SFR of Yugoslavia accused the Albanian leadership of «Great-Albanian chauvinism» and «irredentism». It went so far as to present the PLA and the Albanian state as «enemies of the peoples of Yugoslavia», «trouble-markers and disturbers of peace in the Balkans». Replying to these accusations, Comrade Enver Hoxha declared in June 1960: «We tell the Yugoslav revisionists to cease their shameful slanders against the Marxist-Leninist policy of our Party towards Kosova. They must keep quiet and not touch the ulcer in their body if they do not want it to become gangrenous.»*

In those years the chiefs of Belgrade made deals with Greek reaction against Albania. In 1956 Tito and the ex-king of Greece, Paul, talked in Corfu about the possibility of the partitioning of Albania between Greece and Yugoslavia. This was not a «joke» of Tito's, as the Yugoslav ambassador to Moscow, Mićunović,** tried to present it in 1957, but an expression of chauvinism which had been manifest long ago and which the government of the PRA was well aware of.

In these conditions, despite some partial achievements, mainly in trade exchanges, state relations between the two countries remained limited. The Yugoslav side rejected many Albanian proposals, observed only to a certain extent the agreements signed by both governments and violated the agreement of December 1956 on the question of the utilization of the waters of the border zones.

In the years 1956-1960, the government of the PRA resolutely continued its policy for the normal-

* Enver Hoxha, *Works*, vol. 18, pp. 291-292, Alb. ed.

** *Ibidem*, vol. 14, p. 365.

ization of relations with Greece and the development of these relations in the spirit of good neighbourliness, with the conviction that such a policy responds to the mutual interests of the two countries. It was of the opinion that there was no reason why normal state relations should not exist between the two countries and that the time had come for the ruling circles of Athens to renounce their claims which barred the way to rapprochement and good understanding between the two countries. Procrastination of the solution of this important problem served only the interests of the imperialists who did not wish either the Albanian or the Greek people well and, for their own strategic and hegemonic interests, wanted to keep the Balkans in a state of permanent tension.

Struggling for the achievement of these aims, despite the obstacles created by the government of the kingdom of Greece the government of the PRA took a number of concrete measures and initiatives. One of these was the question of the repatriation of those few Greek democrats who had taken refuge in Albania during the years 1947-1949.¹ Both at the UNO and through diplomatic channels the Albanian government had long ago proposed to the Greek side to jointly solve this problem. Despite the willingness shown by our government this problem was solved only in 1956 when the respective agreement was signed and their repatriation began in August of the same year.

The protocol on practical measures for sweeping the Corfu Channel from mines that might eventually

¹ In the years 1947-1949, when the civil war was going on in Greece, soldiers of the Democratic Army and Greek citizens of different ages came over to Albania as refugees. In conformity with international law, the government of the PRA gave them asylum on Albanian territory, thereby accomplishing a lofty humanitarian duty.

have remained there since the Second World War was signed in February 1958 in the city of Corfu. Under this protocol the two sides completed the necessary operations in their respective territorial waters and on August 2 of the same year they declared that from then on the said channel was clear for all surface vessels.

In the meantime the Albanian government was of the opinion that trade relations of mutual benefit could and must be established with Greece just as they existed with other countries which did not have diplomatic relations with Albania. The Albanian organs of foreign trade gave a positive reply to the Greek firms which wanted to carry out trade with them and contracts were signed for this purpose in 1959 and 1960. However, the first initiatives in this field were limited only to contacts between the trade firms with no prospects for broader economic relations between the two countries because the then government circles of Athens showed no readiness to do so.

The Greek armed forces continued with border provocations and violations of the territorial integrity of the PRA. Only in the year 1957 they made 252 such provocations. Despite the serious warnings of the Albanian government and the measures it proposed in October 1959 for the prevention of border incidents, the Greek government not only did not give up its hostile activity, but on the contrary further intensified it by the end of the 50's.

Relations with Italy did not properly respond to the mutual interests of the two neighbouring peoples. The actions and stands of the Italian ruling circles hindered and limited the utilization of the existing possibilities for a fruitful collaboration in the economic and cultural fields and in sea transport. It was not without purpose that these circles did not fully observe the trade agreements and dragged out indefinitely the

talks which had begun in December 1954. Despite the concessions the Albanian government had made to the Italian government in the question of war reparations Italy owed to the Albanian people, the agreement on some questions of the Peace Treaty with Italy was reached only after two and a half years of talks.

This agreement was signed in Rome on June 22, 1957, 10 years after the signing of the Peace Treaty with Italy in September 1947. Among other things, this agreement stipulated that the government of the Italian Republic must pay a sum of 2,600,000 dollars in war reparations to Albania instead of the 5 million dollars envisaged by the Treaty. The payment would be made in goods and various equipment over a period of 2 years.

The June agreement marked a step forward in the development of Albanian-Italian relations. It was followed by some amendments which created more favourable conditions for the more normal development of these relations, especially in the field of trade. In implementation of this agreement, in December 1957 the Italian government returned to the government of the PRA some objects of archeological, artistic, historical value which had been stolen by the fascist occupiers and then began the payment of war reparations. In the field of trade, there was an increase, although a slow one, in the volume of the goods exchanged as against 1955. On this basis a regular sea line with ships of both sides was established between the two countries. On its part, the Albanian government created all the facilities for the transfer of the remains of the Italian soldiers killed in Albania during the Second World War.

In the 50ies the PRA extended its relations to other countries. Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Guinea were the first African countries with which it established diplomatic relations. At the same time the Albanian government recognized Morocco and Tunisia

as independent and sovereign states and expressed its desire to establish diplomatic relations with them.

The relations of the PRA with the Arab countries began to develop well. Various contacts were established with most of these countries. The governments of the PRA and these countries assumed a common stand on questions which had to do with the liberation of the peoples and the preservation of peace, especially at the UNO. In 1956 and 1959 the first trade and cultural agreements were signed with Syria and Iraq with which we had diplomatic relations at that time.

The Albanian people supported the Arab peoples in the most critical moments of their existence. They condemned the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt and the American-British military intervention in Lebanon and Jordan in the summer of 1958.

In the years 1956-1958 diplomatic relations were established also with other states of Europe and Asia: Austria, Finland, Turkey and India.

The American and British imperialists continued to maintain a hostile stand towards socialist Albania. Taking advantage of its membership in the Tripartite Commission for monetary gold as well as of the fact that the Albanian gold reserve (over 2 454 kg), which had been stolen by the German nazis in September 1943, was deposited in the banks of London, the British government continued to keep it frozen.

The Albanian government resolutely protested against this unlawful act. It did not admit any discussion of this question in any international organ, rejecting any claim of the Italian government or any one else on this gold reserve. The Albanian government demanded that the Tripartite Commission should return this gold reserve in conformity with the decisions it had taken as early as 1948, recognizing it as the indisputable property of the Albanian people.

However, becoming a tool of Great Britain, the

Tripartite Commission allowed the British to keep the Albanian gold reserve frozen in their banks allegedly as «compensation» for the losses suffered by Britain in the so-called Corfu Channel incident.

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Despite all the difficulties and obstacles, the foreign policy of the People's Republic of Albania achieved new successes in this period.

In 1960 the People's Republic of Albania maintained diplomatic relations with 24 states as against 14 in 1950, and it was a member of 15 international organizations and 42 international conventions.

It had economic relations with a still greater number of countries. In 1957 the PRA conducted trade with 21 states as compared with 10 in 1955 and with more than 300 trade firms on different continents.

An important indication of the expansion of Albania's relations with the foreign world was its cooperation with other countries in the cultural field. Exchanges of visits between Albanian and foreign delegations or individual representatives of science, education, art, the press, cinematography etc., greatly increased.

Progressive individuals set up groups of friends and associations of friendship with Albania in different countries. They organized various activities about socialist Albania, which contributed to the strengthening of the friendship between their peoples and the Albanian people.

2. The Struggle of the PLA Against the Revisionist Views and the Divisive Activity of the Soviet Leadership

On the initiative of the CC of the CPSU a meeting was held in Bucharest on June 24, 1960, with the participation of the communist and workers' parties which had attended the 3rd Congress of the Rumanian Workers' Party.

According to a previous agreement, this meeting ought to have had the character of a preliminary meeting of the representatives of the communist and workers' parties, mainly for the purpose of «exchanging opinions» and taking a joint decision on the date and place of a future meeting of the communist and workers' parties of the world.

However, contrary to what had been previously decided, N. Khrushchev suddenly tried to give the meeting the character of an «international conference of communism» and to use it for his direct and all-round attacks against Marxism-Leninism and the Communist Party of China. The delegation of the PLA headed by the secretary of the CC, Hysni Kapo, found itself faced with an unexpected backstage move directed against the socialist camp and the international communist movement.

Although it took part in the Bucharest Meeting, the PLA considered it untimely and irregular because all organizational rules and Leninist norms regulating relations between the communist and workers' parties had been violated. The delegation of the PLA did not express itself on the disagreements which had emerged between the CPSU and the CP of China. It reserved for the PLA the right to express its opinion about them at a broad meeting of the communist and workers' parties like that of Moscow of 1957 after it had carefully and

impartially studied the documents of the two sides and only in case the two sides had not reached an agreement by themselves.

Khrushchev found the principled stand of the PLA at this meeting «strange», called it an act of «rebellion» and spoke in sharp terms against it. Some revisionist leaders of the other parties called the Party of Labour of Albania «neutralist» and accused it of allegedly having «broken with the correct Marxist-Leninist line».

The Bucharest meeting marked the beginning of the open conflict between the PLA and the Soviet leadership. Immediately after the meeting this leadership retaliated with anti-Albanian actions with grave consequences for the relations between the two parties and states. Now ideological and political disagreements had extended to inter-state relations, too. In the hope that it would bring the PRA to its knees, the Soviet government radically changed its stand and began to exercise an all-round pressure on the PRA. It resorted to interference, subversion, military and economic blackmail, provocations in the military base of Vlora, political and military plots, etc., on a large scale. As a result of this hostile activity, Liri Belishova, at that time member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the PLA, and Koço Tashko, then chairman of the Audit and Control Commission of the PLA, capitulated to Soviet pressure and openly opposed the line of the Party.

The Soviet embassy in Tirana and the Soviet specialists in Albania carried out an intensive diversionist activity in order to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and ideological confusion about the correct line of the PLA.

However, they did not succeed in their subversive activity and there was no split in the ranks of the Party.

In order that state relations between the two countries should not deteriorate further, on August 6,

1960 the CC of the PLA sent a letter to the CC of the CPSU which was requested to «take the necessary measures so that such cases in the activity of the functionaries of the Soviet embassy in Tirana will not be repeated.»* Differences in the «stands taken by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Party of Labour of Albania at the Bucharest Meeting,» the letter said, «must be exploited by nobody as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of one another, because this would be of no benefit to the cause and would damage the common interests of our two parties.»**

Far from acceding to these just demands, from June 1960 onwards the Soviet government began in silence to cut systematically all economic aid to Albania. It delayed and in some cases ceased altogether the delivery of goods and industrial equipment to Albania, refused to ship the grain our people were in urgent need of as a result of the exceptional drought of 1960. Only after 45 days of repeated requests it agreed to send 10 thousand tons of cereals, i.e. 15 days of bread, instead of the 50 thousand tons requested. Even this amount it would deliver with delay, in September-October, and sell not through clearing but in free currency.

In flagrant opposition to all existing bilateral agreements, in a one-sided manner and without previous notice, apart from this economic pressure, the Soviet government stopped all supplies for the Albanian People's Army, from food and clothing to weapons and technical equipment whose delivery had been approved by the Joint Command of the Warsaw Treaty.

* *Principal Documents of the PLA*, vol. 3, Tirana 1970, p. 347, Alb. ed.

** *Ibidem*.

The countries of Eastern Europe, too, set out on the course of aggravating relations with the PRA and created a difficult situation by setting up a blockade on Albania jointly with the Soviet government.

These acts which were being stepped up with each passing day assumed even larger proportions after the Moscow Meeting of 81 communist and workers' parties which was held in November-December 1960.

The PLA sent its delegation to this meeting headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha. The situation in the international communist movement and the opposing views expressed in October 1960 at the preparatory commission for the drafting of the declaration showed that the Moscow Meeting would be an arena of stern struggle between the Marxist-Leninists and the Khrushchevite revisionists.

The delegation of the PLA took an active part in the proceedings of this meeting. On November 16, Comrade Enver Hoxha held an important speech in which he presented the views of the PLA on the questions under discussion, such as the nature of imperialism, peaceful coexistence, the roads of the transition to socialism, the threat of modern revisionism to the international communist movement, of the unity of the socialist camp and the communist movement.

The stand of the PLA on all these questions was based wholly on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and opposed to the views of the modern revisionists.

Enver Hoxha pointed out that imperialism had not changed its nature, that it was aggressive and that it was the duty of the peoples to fight to foil its aggressive plans, that the policy of peaceful coexistence between states of different systems constituted only one of the aspects of the foreign policy of the socialist countries and that the two other and more important aspects of this policy were fraternal collaboration and mutual aid among socialist countries, and unreserved

support to the revolutionary liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples against imperialism and reaction, that peaceful coexistence did not mean giving up the class struggle, that for the transition from capitalism to socialism the party of the working class must rouse the masses to destroy the oppressive political state power of the bourgeoisie and establish a new people's state power, the preparation for the seizure of power by violence ensured more chances of success for the peaceful transition to socialism, that modern revisionism remained the main threat to the communist movement and that a ceaseless struggle must be waged against it; that the unity of the international communist movement and the socialist camp was preserved by bringing out mistakes and negative manifestations, by sternly condemning and correcting them on a Marxist-Leninist basis.

Besides the questions which had to do with the existing international situation and the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement, the delegation of the PLA also informed the meeting of the savage attacks the Khrushchev group had launched on the Albanian Party and government in order to impose its anti-Marxist course on them. As the imperialist powers in the past, Khrushchev treated Albania as a trading token, a medium of exchange which could be lost or won by one or the other state, in this case by the Soviet Union or China.

«What are these monstrous accusations,» Comrade Enver Hoxha addressed Khrushchev, «this behaving like a 'dealer' towards our Party, our people and a socialist country, which is allegedly lost and won as in gamble? ... There was a time when Albania was considered a medium of exchange, when others thought it depended on them whether Albania should or should not exist,

but that time came to an end with the triumph of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism in our country.»*

The delegation of the PLA to the Moscow Meeting made a valuable contribution to the exposure of Khrushchevite revisionism. Its principled stand was of special importance not only for the Albanian people and communists but also for the entire world communist movement. The courageous speech of Comrade Enver Hoxha and all the activity of the delegation of the PLA at the Second Moscow Meeting further enhanced the prestige of the PLA, the respect, the faith and support of the Marxist-Leninist forces of the world for it.

PART TWO

THE COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY

* Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1975, pp. 832-833, Eng. ed.