

Program of the First Government of the People's Republic (1) of Albania presented to the People's Assembly of the PRA

March 24, 1946

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Comrade deputies,

With the proclamation of the Founding Constitution of the State (2) the supreme Constituent Assembly accomplished the historic mission the people had assigned to it. The proclamation of the Constitution gave the State a genuinely popular character and gave Albania a republican regime expressing the aspirations of all our people. With the proclamation of the Constitution, a brilliant stage is closed, a stage full of heroic exploits and sacrifices, of relentless struggle and tireless work, achieved under the most difficult internal and external conditions. With their own forces, our people liberated their homeland from heavy bondage, won their independence and sovereignty, established their people's power, and set about the reconstruction of their ruined country. During this post-war stage, the Albanian people scored successes not only in consolidating their state power, but also in reconstructing the country's economy, and in the political and cultural development of the broad masses of the people. The proclamation of the Constitution opens up a new stage for the whole people, and in this stage they will advance steadily towards the objectives laid down by the Constitution.

The mobilization of the whole people has been indispensable to achieve the victories we have won so far, because neither the great liberation war nor the first stage of the country's reconstruction could be carried out without this broad participation. The liberation of the country concerned all the people and was a sacred task, but equally sacred and vital was the task of the country's reconstruction, which required the same sacrifices, the same energies and the same sense of duty that characterized our people during the war. Our task is difficult, for obstacles will bar our path. The first government of the People's Republic of Albania, set up on the basis of the Constitution, is conscious of this, just as it is aware of its great responsibility towards the Albanian people. We must and will carry out the heavy tasks which face us, because the Albanian people have proved conclusively that they are capable of building and creating, because they have great vitality and inexhaustible energy, they do not fear hardships and obstacles, and are conscious that they are building their future, building new Albania. For the accomplishment of these tasks, as well as enthusiasm, drive, and a sense of duty, sound organization and work to a plan are required. Planned work and sound organization must become second nature to the Albanian people and the state functionaries.

If these tasks are to be carried out well, all must understand that they have obligations towards society; they must realize that personal interest is closely linked with the general interest, and that the improvement of everyone's economic lot depends entirely on the economic situation of the whole country. Therefore, in order to perform its mission successfully, the new government requires the support and assistance of the entire people. On the other hand, from the state functionaries, from the lowest to the highest, from the oldest employee to the youngest is required discipline in work, conscientiousness, honesty, and enthusiasm.

Those officials who imagine that in new Albania work can go on in the old spirit of cliquishness, bureaucracy and idleness, are grossly mistaken; those, whether old or young, who fancy that the state administration is a refugium peccatorum,\* where they can draw a salary without tiring themselves or doing anything, will soon be bitterly disillusioned. Work must become an honour to every Albanian.

With the Constitution given to us by the Constituent Assembly, vast prospects of work are opened

for the construction of a happy society which will guarantee us everything we need to march forward successfully. The Government of the Republic, relying on the successes scored on the first stage and, in particular, on the creative efforts of the masses of the people, on the energy and vitality of the Albanian people, will certainly surmount all the difficulties which it may meet in solving our country's vital problems.

The question of the construction of new Albania

This is the most important question which will preoccupy the government and the whole Albanian people, because it is a most delicate and difficult question, although not an insoluble one. We must mobilize all our forces, since the country's happy future depends on this.

To build new Albania means, first and foremost, to reconstruct everything the enemy burned and destroyed, and to march forward with redoubled energies; to rebuild gutted houses, improve and extend communications, which are indispensable to a more rapid economic development, repair and bring into operation the mines, our country's greatest wealth, rebuild light industry, and encourage the growth and improvement of production. To build new Albania means to rehabilitate the national economy, to improve and enrich the people's life, give them a sound culture and education — in fact, to build a new society in a new Albania.

These are the difficult tasks which fall, first and foremost, upon the Government of the Republic and the whole Albanian people, and the solution of them requires the mobilization of all our energies, from the political, technical and organizational viewpoints.

We should be clear about one thing: all the vital projects we are going to carry out cannot be financed by means of the ordinary state budget alone. The gap must be filled by the living energies of the people, by their spirit of initiative and the sacrifices they are ready to make in the service of their country. This is our people's second glorious war, the fight for the construction of our new society, from which heroes of labour will emerge.

The new government is preparing a work plan and a new state budget, this government plan provides, first of all, for:

- a) The restoration and the maximum exploitation of our oil fields, bitumen, copper and chromium mines. The best possible use of these precious resources will form the main basis for setting up and reinforcing the other industrial sectors. The government will devote all its energies to this important sector of work, and it calls on the Albanian workers to give their valuable assistance, strengthen their class feeling, and become conscious of their important role in leadership and reconstruction. With their spirit of sacrifice, our workers should set an example to the entire people, an example of organized and disciplined work.
- b) The achievement of maximum efficiency, in the service of the general interest, in the whole light industry of the country, which up till now has operated without criteria, and has served merely to enrich a few at the expense of the people.
- c) The restoring of damaged houses. Up to now, the government has done its utmost to provide shelter for those left homeless by the war; it has assisted with materials for temporary repairs to most of the houses in villages destroyed during the war. But this was never sufficient. This year we will still not be able to draw up a general plan for the construction of razed villages and towns, but the new government does provide for the reconstruction of the houses in those villages which have suffered most from the war, and first and foremost, the villages of the Kurvelesh, Vlora, Mallakstra, Gjirokastra and Korça regions. This is not only an obligation of the motherland towards those who fought heroically, who were killed or lost their homes, but also an urgent need which must be met next summer and autumn. For this purpose, the government requires the support

of the entire people: saw-mills and brickyards, cement factories and limekilns should rapidly increase production, the broad masses of the people should be mobilized for voluntary work, and technicians, bricklayers, carpenters and all those who can help their brothers, who had their homes burnt during the war, should be mobilized to work conscientiously in the reconstruction of the ruined homeland.

d) Our country needs new roads, both local and national. In its program, the government provides not only for the maintenance of the existing roads but also for the construction of new ones. Projects will be carried out in both North and South. Certainly, it will take a long time to build up a perfect road network, but we should begin this year to build roads in our north mountain regions, in order to assist the mountaineers in those areas and to raise their economic and cultural level. The roads will be an important means in uprooting the surviving medieval and feudal practices in those areas. No longer will the voice of the Jesuits, or of Maliq Bushati and company, go there, but the voice of free Albania, new Albania.

In our country's reconstruction, the war reparations we are to receive from Germany and Italy will also assist us. Those two countries started the Second World War; they burnt our country and laid it waste. They have to pay for this devastation unprecedented in history. The Reparations Conference held in Paris (3) fixed a quota for our country, which consisted of a number of factories. In order to take possession of these, the Albanian Government has sent its own commission to the Reparations Committee in Brussels. The Reparations Conference quite unjustly gave us a quota, very small in comparison with the destruction Germany wrought in our country, but our government will insist that this does not happen in connection with the reparations we demand from Italy. Italy plundered and ransacked our country for years on end, stole our country's riches and mineral wealth, and finally burnt down or destroyed our villages and towns, maiming and murdering hundreds of thousands of Albanians, and must pay for all that damage. The government will insist on this point, and some allies of ours should not forget that our country was the victim of the most villainous aggression, and resisted it, arms in hand, up to the end.

In all these undertakings of the government, powerfully backed by all strata of the people, we should have as our first aim to increase and improve production. The achievement of these objectives will mean the supply of goods to the masses of peasants, Workers and other citizens, to the extent possible and, at the same time, the opportunity to expand industry and factory products. In our poor and war ruined country, frugality, and concern to preserve and defend state property, should be encouraged to the maximum, because economizing, protecting state property and cutting down production costs means to lower the cost of products, to create confidence in the present administration among the people, and to strengthen the unity of the peasants, workers and intellectuals in the People's Republic of Albania.

In the cultural and educational field, the government shoulders a heavy burden. Our people need more bread, but they also need more culture and education. Culture and education should not be useless adornments, but should serve the general interest, helping to increase and improve production, and to raise the living standard in our country. We need the kind of culture which will make our people capable of working better and producing more; we should make this culture and education a weapon of the broad labouring masses. The government will fight everything that hinders advance in this direction. In the new Albania, which we are building with the new Constitution which guides us, the old method of organizing work and the old programs cannot be continued any longer. Everything must be adapted to the time and the existing situation and must be changed not only in form but also in content.

As for schooling, the government will increase the number of primary schools and will temporarily solve the problem of teachers by opening short term teacher training courses. It will be severe towards those teachers who fail to carry out properly the important function assigned to them, as well as towards those parents who do not respect the law (4) and refuse to send their sons and

daughters to school for the whole period required by law.

The doors of secondary schools must be flung wide open to the broad masses of peasant and town youth. The government will strive to create greater facilities for the poor strata, to enable them to continue secondary school; the government will also do its best to have as many girls as possible attend school so that the Albanian woman may be capable of playing her great role in new Albania. Educational reform and changes in school programs will be the first tasks of the government in the educational field. The reform and the changes in the programs will take into account the conditions created in our country, and the needs emerging in the process of the construction of new Albania. The education of cadres will play the principal role in this direction and will be the greatest concern of the government. Capable young people will be sent abroad to continue their studies.

In order to raise the people's cultural level, the government will mobilize all its energies to fight illiteracy. It will organize evening courses, special workers' courses and courses for specialists. It will give the theatre, radio and cinema all the necessary support to turn them into useful media to raise the people's cultural level. The government will encourage sports and physical culture, so that the younger generation is tempered, and becomes capable to work and fight for the new Albania.

### The question of agriculture

This question is one of the most essential and must be correctly and rapidly solved. Our country is an agricultural country, and the first measure adopted, which is of historic importance, was the implementation of the land reform, which gave the land to those who till it, first and foremost, to the poor and middle peasants. Progress has been made in allotting land to the peasants on the basis of the Law on Land Reform, but this work has not yet been completed. The government will endeavour to do this as quickly and as well as possible. For this purpose it will increase the number of personnel to carry out the land reform. Besides this, the government calls on the peasants' committees (5) to give the greatest possible support to do this work quickly and fairly in conformity with the interests of the peasants and of Albania. The Albanian peasants should fight with the greatest severity against any trickery or injustice, or misinterpretations of the law, on the part of any irresponsible official involved in the implementation of the land reform. No one should spread illusions or resort to trickery. The government will not allow any trifling with the land or the future of the peasants. If some clause in the law is open to more than one interpretation, this must always be done in the peasant's favour. The government will not only speed up the land distribution but will also help the peasants with agricultural credits in money and tools; it will increase and improve the farm machine stations to be put at the service of the farmers. This year it will be difficult to carry out a broad plan of land reclamation, but the government program provides for digging numerous canals, and draining swamps, such as that of Maliq, etc. All these measures are aimed at raising our agriculture from its primitive stage to a more advanced level, tilling as much land as possible, increasing and improving agricultural production. Here our motto should be: "We must make our bread ourselves, and not depend on imports." The concern of the government alone is insufficient to accomplish these vital tasks, therefore the whole people should be mobilized to work voluntarily and make sacrifices for a happier future.

In connection with agriculture, we will pay great attention to livestock farming, in which we will increase the numbers and improve the breeds of our animals. Naturally, this will come about when we have not only helped our farmers to plant and ensure food for themselves and their livestock, but when we have taught them how to improve this important sector. Besides agricultural courses and schools, the government will open up special courses for peasants. Many branches of our country's light industry, which will grow and flourish in the near future, depend on the improvement of this sector, and milk, wool, and leather processing factories are closely linked with it.

The question of the conservation of forests and of the afforestation of our country will also be the subject of particular attention of both the government and the people, because forests are not only

beneficial for improving the land and weather conditions, but they also constitute a great asset for the development of the timber and paper industries which are indispensable for the reconstruction of our country. To promote agriculture and eliminate anarchy in agricultural production, it must be under the control of the state organs. Peasants must be supplied with good seed, fertilizers, and farm tools, and at the same time be given instructions on what they should sow and what products the country needs most. We should take advantage of the varying weather and soil conditions and encourage the production of crops whose value and importance our farmer does not yet appreciate. It is only in this way that agriculture will make progress and become more productive, and this in turn will consolidate our economy. The setting up of peasants' cooperatives, provided for in the Constitution, will have energetic support from the government, and these cooperatives will be a primary concern of the state, which will ensure that they remain in the hands of the masses of poor and middle peasants, and are not exploited by speculators.

### The financial problem

We are going to solve this important problem through our own resources. The principal source of income will be ensured by the correct development of the country's economy and industry. The problem of the development of the economy and the financial problem go together, and will be solved together, in harmony. The Albanian State Bank will be an important factor in the correct development of the state sector. It will no longer supply credits to enrich the big merchants, but will help the large state enterprises, the economy and agriculture. Besides this, volunteer work, initiatives of the masses in work, sacrifices, and the people's help for public undertaking will contribute immeasurably. We should never lose sight of the fact that the needs of our war devastated country are great; as I have already mentioned, they cannot be met by our ordinary state budget. We must work hard, and economize, too. Our taxation will be aimed at all those who have grown rich at the expense of the poor people, and taxes will be heavier for those who have most.

### The social question

The government, guided by the provisions of the Constitution, will adopt measures in the social field. It will take proper care of orphans made homeless by the war, and the disabled. It will create special employment for the war invalids, and public works will, first of all, employ people who have no income. The state has given considerable aid to the poor, but some people who had no right to this aid profited from it, including some who were quite able to work. We must put an end to such irregularities, and the State Control Commission, set up within the government, and proceeding on the basis of the Constitution, will adopt measures to make the state apparatus function correctly, eliminating these faults and abuses committed by parasitic, unscrupulous elements, which damage the state and society. The government will be harsh with those who violate or bend the law, or those who do not fulfil their obligations towards the government and the state.

The government will end the exploitation of workers and will assign them to work according to their capabilities, particularly as far as women and young people are concerned. It will also organize state insurance for those disabled by accidents at work (6), set up holiday camps for working people, and see to it that the eight-hour working day and rest days are observed as laid down by law. In particular, the government will try to ensure a dignified life for the war invalids.

### In the domain of Justice

Important changes will be made in the field of justice, in harmony with the basis outlined in the Constitution. In order to have a truly people's system of justice, we must proceed to make reforms. The system of justice must conform to the new social and economic conditions. The principal task of the judges is to ensure that the laws made by the people are scrupulously applied, and every decision they take should reflect the new spirit. In electing their judges, people will take into account not only their professional ability, but chiefly the qualities needed to guarantee the defence

of their interests and the fruits of the war, which cost them so much blood.

### The people's health

The government will show particular interest in the people's health by engaging in extensive propaganda for hygiene and prophylactic care. It will also intensify its concern for hospitals and specialists and supervise them to ensure that they do not trade on their profession but consider it as a great humanitarian mission. The government will also make efforts to build some more hospitals, and to set up as many clinics as possible, especially in the countryside. The government will take severe measures against all those who try to speculate with medicines. Setting up nursing courses is also included in the government's program.

### Foreign policy

The foreign policy of the new government will be a continuation of the previous government's policy. The government will defend the interests of peace and democracy just as it defends the interests of the country, Albania is no longer a country to be trampled on, or an object of barter for the diplomacy responsible for the Second World War. The position of Albania among the anti-fascist nations was not donated; it was won at the price of bloodshed and superhuman sacrifices. Having fought unreservedly in the anti-fascist war for their rights, the rights of mankind, the consolidation and triumph of democracy, and for the people's freedom, our people hold their heads high and insist that their rights be respected. The Albanian people, loyal to the end to the great anti-fascist alliance, are angry and indignant to see the postponement of their legitimate demand to be admitted to the United Nations Organization, and they are even more grieved to see this instigated by their allies, Britain and the United States of America. I cannot even imagine the motives behind these obstacles placed before our country, which is demanding "de jure" its deserved place in the United Nations Organization; neither Mr. Bevin (7) nor Mr. Stettinius (8) were able to formulate or express them openly in response to our request, or in reply to the friendly defence of the heads of the Soviet, Yugoslav, and Polish delegations; our people are very grateful to these delegations, and their countries.

We believe that the United Nations Organization should include those states which made sacrifices for the attainment of the objectives this lofty organization aims at: the consolidation of peace, and sincere international cooperation. Fully convinced of this, we say that we deserve a seat there before those countries which openly or indirectly collaborated with the Italian and German fascists.

The government I have the honour to preside over will not only strive to win these rights, which our country deserves, but will make everyone, particularly those who have Hitler and Mussolini in their blood, respect the freedom, independence and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Albania. The government of our Republic enjoys the support of the whole Albanian people in this resolve.

But small Albania has great friends in the world, sincere friends who love our people, and do all in their power to help them on the road of reconstruction and progress, because they have seen the sacrifices our people made for the great common cause, because they have seen our country burned and devastated, but never yielding to the German and Italian machine of oppression. Today they see our country marching steadily towards restoration, progress and genuine democracy, and becoming an important factor for peace in the Balkans and Europe. In the interests of our people, peace and democracy, the Government of the Republic will do its utmost to consolidate and be worthy of the sincere friendship and confidence that our friends have towards Albania.

One of the most important factors in the victory over fascism, the principal external factor for the liberation of Albania, was the glorious Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Soviet Union is a major factor in the defence of small peoples, in the defence of their sovereignty, freedom and

independence. The Albanian people have understood this well, and for this reason they have a great heartfelt, sincere love for the Soviet Union and its great leader, J.V. Stalin. In the course of their history, our people have never before felt themselves so closely bound by sincere friendship to any other people as they do to those of the Soviet Union. During the terrible war. Our people saw with what legendary heroism the Red Army fought for the liberation of nations, and they observe how, with every passing day, the Soviet Union and the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin defend our legitimate rights in the international arena, and how they help the Albanian people to restore their economy and culture.

The Albanian people, and the Government of the Republic representing their will, cherish these lofty sentiments of friendship and sincere affection on the part of the Soviet Union for our country, and will do their utmost to make the relations, and the political, economic and cultural cooperation between the Soviet Union and our state a sound reality. The Albanian people are grateful to the Soviet Union and to Generalissimo Stalin for their great friendship towards our country and the assistance they have given it.

With regard to the great British and American peoples, the new government will continue, as in the past, to strengthen friendship with them, and fight against the manoeuvres of the neo-fascists and the international reactionary cliques. Our government has diplomatic and friendly relations with many European countries, such as Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and France, and it will strive to consolidate these good relations. We have been bound by an old friendship with the Bulgarian people, ever since the epoch of the Albanian Renaissance during which they supported and helped our patriots. Our government will place this friendship on a new, firm basis with the Bulgaria of the Patriotic Front.

The cordial relations established during the war between our people and the Greek people, in opposing the common occupier, have unfortunately been severed; this is not our fault nor that of the Greek working people; the fault lies with the fascists ruling in Athens, who suppress the aspirations of the Greek people and seek to disturb the peace in the Balkans and in Europe. The fascists of Athens and international reaction are playing the most disgraceful and perfidious game against our country. A vast, systematic press and propaganda campaign of slanders and provocations has been directed against an honest nation which fought so hard against fascism and asks only to be allowed to live in peace and freedom in its own territory. Slanders, armed provocations along our borders, abduction of Greek minority women by the Hitos bands (9) and the shameful, brutal torturing of the mother of the martyr and patriot Thanas Ziko, an elderly Greek minority woman, by the men of Athens, bring great disgrace both on the Greek fascists and on those who help these bandits.

The Albanian people must be well aware what the Greek fascists are demanding. They want nothing less than Gjirokastra and Korça, up to the Shkumbin river, because, they say, this is their land. Moreover, international reaction is helping them in this great farce, since they want Albania to be turned into the private estate of the Albanian war criminals living in the palaces of Rome and Cairo.(10) Every Albanian, young or old, is astonished and enraged to see that, after this terrible war against fascism, there are still people and states who pose as democrats and yet support such a crazy and disgraceful claim as that of the Greek fascists. Can there be a single Albanian who is not revolted against such claims? Can there be a single Albanian who does not want to take up arms and defend his homeland against any aggressors, be they Italian, German, or Greek fascists? No, there can be none; the Greek fascists and those backing them must be clear that if anyone dares to shift the markers of our southern border even an inch, blood will be shed, and a bitter experience will be the lot of those who wish to provoke such a thing. The government of Athens, and Mr. Rendis, its foreign minister, try to make the Albanian people responsible for the Italian-Greek war, putting them on the same plane as fascist Italy and, on this basis, demanding reparations. "Albania declared war on Greece," screams fascist Rendis, with the aim of adding weight to his ridiculous thesis of "Northern Epirus." The Albanian people have never declared war on Greece; on the contrary, better than anyone, they fought the Italians and the Albanian quislings, the perpetrators of this crime. The

Albanian people sympathized with the Greek people. They attacked the Italian forces and supply convoys heading for the southern front; they fought skirmishes with the Italian carabinieri in the streets. Those few Albanian soldiers who were conscripted by the Italians threw away their arms, deserted, and were either shot or interned by the SIM. Our war against fascist Italy is witnessed by our victims, our burnt-out villages, the declarations of the allies, and the testimony of the sons of the Greek people; they saw with their own eyes the firm will of the southern Albanians, who wanted to fight side by side with them against the Italians but were refused by the commanders of Metaxas' army.(11)

Let our people clearly understand the perfidy of this argument: the Greek fascists and international reaction accuse our people of a crime they never committed, but which, instead, they opposed with all their might. Now the real authors of this crime are living it up in big hotels in Rome, where certain people vie with each other to offer them fat salaries. The fascists forget the wolf in order to hunt for his tracks. Why do Mr. Rendis and company protect Italian war criminals and Albanian quislings, the instigators of the war against Greece, such as Victor Emmanuel, Shefqet Vërlaci, Mustafa Kruja, Kolë Bibë Miraka, and others?

They are responsible for that base deed against Greece, not the Albanian people. The Albanian people and their true government have never declared war on Greece; on the contrary, they sympathized with the Greek working people and helped them in their efforts for liberation. Mr. Rendis and company protect the war criminals who were responsible for the Italian-Greek War, perhaps in order to repeat the tragicomedy of Mussolini. But the gentlemen in Athens must be well aware that the Albanian people are not like Mussolini's Italian fascists.

The progressive world must put these people in their place, who are endangering peace and the normal and peaceful development of relations between states. Our country wants to live in peace and maintain good relations with everyone, but it will allow no one to trample on its rights; it knows how to defend them heroically, and to triumph.

The Government of the Republic will show the greatest care and affection for its heroic army, which liberated the motherland through bloody battles, and assured its independence and sovereignty. The government will do its utmost to ensure that our people's army, the reliable shield of the independence and territorial integrity of Albania, becomes a really modern army, the symbol of the great affection of our people, who gave birth to it and raised it, amidst so many tempests.

Comrade deputies,

In setting out briefly the tasks of our new government, I wish to stress once more that the happy future of the People's Republic of Albania depends on accomplishing these tasks. We will solve these vital problems by relying on our own material resources. Therefore, it is necessary that the entire Albanian people mobilize themselves and be conscious of the fact that we must make sacrifices and give up many things, until we have overcome the major difficulties. With such mobilization in work where we shall pour out our sweat and demonstrate our skill and consciousness, we shall succeed in building new Albania, as would have been wished by those who fought and fell on the field of honour, in order that Albania may be proud, prosperous, cultured and happy.

Notes

1. On January 11, 1946 the Constituent Assembly proclaimed Albania a People's Republic.

2. The CPA presented the draft Constitution to the entire people to pass judgment on. After two months of discussions, it was presented to the Assembly, which adopted it on March 14, 1946.

\* "refugium peccatorum" (Lat. in the original)—refuge of sinners.

3. The Reparations Conference was held in Paris in November-December 1945; it was attended also by a delegation of the People's Republic of Albania, headed by Hysni Kapo.



4. In August 1946 the People's Assembly of the People's Republic of Albania approved the Law on Educational Reform, according to which education became general, free of charge, equal and secular, and the school system was given a state unified character. Tuition fees were abolished and elementary education became compulsory.
5. In order to implement the land reform quickly and correctly, the CPA set up the committees of poor peasants which had a great influence in changing the class political consciousness of the poor peasants themselves.
6. This refers to the Social Insurance Branch at the Labour Department.
7. E. Bevin (1881-1951), British politician. From 1945 to 1951 he was foreign secretary; one of the organizers of the NATO in 1949.
8. E. R. Stettinius (1900-1949). During the 1943-1945 period he was under-secretary and later secretary of state of the USA.
9. Members of terrorist bands in the service of the Greek gendarmerie.
10. Ahmet Zog and his suite resided for a while in Cairo as guests of King Farouk of Egypt.
11. Fascist Greek general, head of the fascist dictatorship in Greece, 1936-1941.