

Speech Delivered to the People's Assembly on the Opening of the 3rd Regular Session of the 1st Legislature, July 12, 1947

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Comrade Deputies,

In the name of the government and on my own behalf I convey our greetings and heartily wish you success in the proceedings of this important parliamentary session.

As you know, in the present session of the People's Assembly, the government is presenting you with a number of important draft-laws dealing with all the economic, social and cultural activity of our country; in the first place, the draft-law on the financial budget for the current year 1947, the general state plan for 1947, and many others. Of course, these draft-laws call for the greatest attention and speedy approval by the People's Assembly.

Before the proceedings of the session begin, I wish, on my behalf and in the name of the government I have the honour to head, to explain to the representatives of the people in the Assembly our government's policy on the work of building our country in all fields of economic, social, cultural and other activity, on the achievement of this important work in the past and in the immediate future, on the clear perspective our people should have, and on the important tasks facing the organs of state power and all our people, which should be carried out as well and quickly as possible, for on this depends our advance towards building socialism in our country, which means building a prosperous, happy life full of freedom and dignity for the working people of Albania.

Power lies firmly in the hands of the people, as a result of the heroic struggle for liberation and our great people's revolution; this is the guarantee for the building of a happy future for our people. It was for this that the broad masses of the Albanian people fought, it was for this that the workers, peasants and patriotic intellectuals of Albania fought, united as one. This firm alliance was formed in the National Liberation War, and its primary result, the seizure of power by the people, was also achieved through the National Liberation War. Preserving and consolidating daily these two results of the war, our people and their government forged ahead to realize and further develop their program, the basic principles of which were fixed by the people from the time when they took to the mountains and fought rifle in hand against fascism and the traitors to the country. The question of the transition of power into the hands of the people is the most important question, and this will solve correctly and well all the problems of our country. The people and all our cadres should understand this well.

Here too lies the reason that the fascist aggressors provoked this great holocaust. Their aim was to establish everywhere the fascist dictatorship, the most ruthless dictatorship of capital, in order to suppress all freedom, to oppress the peoples and enslave them forever, so that the monopoly trusts would be victorious. The question of state power is also an object of concern to imperialism and world reaction. They are seeking to seize power from the hands of the people who have already succeeded in assuming power, and to replace it with a formal democratic power which would not be in the hands of the people but in the hands of a minority of individual allegedly better qualified, and able to protect and control the interests of the people better than the people themselves. This was the objective of the Albanian traitors of the final hour, to whom I will refer later on. All their efforts were directed towards overthrowing the people's state power and, using the terms of a false and formal democracy, they sought to replace the will of the people with the hateful arbitrary power of the beys, big landowners and rich merchants, all in the service of foreign reaction. The people should never forget for a moment the question of state power, they should be on their guard and hold it firmly in their hands, improving and consolidating it.

With the establishment of our people's state power, we began immediately after the liberation of Albania to take all the necessary measures to build the country devastated by the war, to nationalize all the property that had been plundered from the people, to nationalize all the factories and mines, which served the rich in order to work the working people to death, and to compel all the speculators to give back to the people everything they had extorted from them, and we began to set up a new economy on a new basis. There is no need for me to repeat here what you all have seen and experienced yourselves, to speak of the great enthusiasm of the people for the adoption of these initial measures, their great drive, self-denial and heroism, and their all-out mobilization for the reconstruction of the country. Roads and bridges were repaired, and factories destroyed during the war were rebuilt. The Kuçova and Patos oilfields, the copper and chromium mines were reconstructed, the houses burnt down during the war were rebuilt, and life began to take its normal course. Through these important measures we set up the state sector of the economy which became stronger all the time, and today we may say that we have a large state sector, which is the sector of socialist production. At the same time, along with the state sector, we created a network of various cooperatives which are continually developing and exercising control and discipline over the private sector. This control and discipline do not limit production and the development of economy in general, but check speculation, anarchy and all those things that impede the general development of the economy of our country.

It is clear, and we could say that we have been able to solve the economic problems and to strengthen our economy much better than the former regimes. We have accomplished this within a relatively short time and under very difficult situations, caused by the war. We have achieved important successes in all fields of the activity of our state.

The sectors of industry which had been destroyed have been all re-established and are operating at full capacity, producing more than before. For instance, the production of crude oil is 161.1% over 1938 production, 463.2% over 1945 production, and 217.3% over that of 1946; the production of refined bitumen is 162.8% over 1938 production, 1,097% over 1945, and 155.6% over 1946; the production of leather is 900% over 1938 production, 2,600% over 1945, and 400% over 1946, that of cement is 115.5% above 1938 production, 588% over 1945, 231% over 1946; that of timber is 833%, 257%, 261%. The handicraft industry has been re-established and encouraged. All the bridges destroyed during the war, totalling a length of 5,547 meters, have been rebuilt, new bridges totalling 240 meters have been constructed, all the wharves of our seaports destroyed during the war have been rebuilt, 2,000 kilometres of the road network have been improved and 202 kilometres of new roads have been built, including the Kukës-Peshkopia road built by the youth, 7,852 houses burnt down during the war have been rebuilt, and the State has built 530 new school buildings. Telecommunication lines have been repaired and new lines set up. All the telegraph and telephone stations have been rebuilt.

Education and culture have made great progress in our country. Suffice it for me to draw some comparisons with the pre-war state of education.

During the 1938-39 school year our country had 643 primary schools attended by 52,024 pupils, whereas today, during the 1946-47 school year, we have 1,609 primary schools attended by 134,524 pupils.

Compulsory school attendance (1) throughout Albania has been achieved 87%. Today we have 34 upper elementary and 10 secondary schools which are attended by thousands and thousands of our boys and girls. I don't intend to speak here about the number of pre-school institutions, or schools for adult education, where more than 26,000 people are taught in over a thousand classes. The campaign against illiteracy is making rapid progress. In order to wipe out illiteracy in Albania, the

government, with the aid of the entire Democratic Front, will try its utmost to have about 60,000 people learn to read and write every year. Thus, within a few years illiteracy in Albania will have been wiped out.

Hundreds of students attend courses in various branches of the Teacher Training Institute which has been opened this year in Tirana, hundreds of students are attending university in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and elsewhere, and hundreds of others will be sent abroad on state scholarships to study science in various universities. The number of public libraries in our country is increasing, as well as the number of books they contain; the cinema, theatre, music and sports are developing rapidly in a correct way.

One of the principal problems which our people's state power had to solve was that of land, of land reform. The peasants had to be given the land, because it belonged to them, it was their own, for they tilled it. And the land reform has been completed. The implementation of the land reform laws totally changed the ratio of ownership of land, which now appears as follows:

Land owned by the state has been reduced from 18.71% to 5.03%; land owned by religious communities has been reduced from 1.26% to 0.20%; large and medium estates have been reduced from 52.43% to 16.38%; land belonging to small owners has increased from 28.07% to 43.17%; land belonging to the rural proletariat has increased from 0% to 34.63%.

The land reform laws benefited 29,400 semi-proletarian families, 18,219 established local proletarian families, 1,902 newly settled proletarian families, and 19,218 peasant families who already possessed some land. The peasants of Albania were liberated once and for all from the yoke of the beys, the agas and their administrators. The blood they shed in the struggle for liberation was not shed in vain: the people's state power turned their age-long dream into reality. Our peasant, bowed down by centuries of suffering, stood up, and with a song on his lips and faith in his state power, is working on his own land for his own benefit. Just what immediate effect the land reform laws had, you will understand from two figures, which I shall quote: in 1938, the area of land under cultivation in Albania was 221,030 hectares, while this year the area under cultivation is 305,000 hectares. These are the initial effects of the implementation of the land reform laws. You can see for yourselves how profound are the consequences of the people's great revolution, how grand and immortal are the reforms of our people's state power.

In addition to carrying out its land reform, our state power, immediately after liberation, attached primary importance to the sector of land improvement. During these two years, excluding the Maliq lands, we have improved various lands covering an area of 6,764 hectares, by opening a total of 125 kilometres of drainage canals. During the same period, an additional 22 kilometres of irrigation canals have been opened, to irrigate 8,316 hectares of land. The completion of these projects will help to increase agricultural production.

A further success of our people's state power in the economic field is the question of cooperatives. Cooperatives did not exist in our country in the past. They came into being as a consequence of the major economic, social and political transformations that have occurred in our country thanks to the National Liberation War. Within a short period of nearly one year more than 317 cooperatives of various kinds have been set up; consumer and peasants' cooperatives, buying and selling cooperatives, handicraft cooperatives, cooperatives of working peasants and fishermen, etc. The consumer cooperatives which are functioning in our country today include 40,100 members with 180,000 dependants, representing 75% of the population of the towns where they function. Looking at these and many other tangible achievements, many may ask how these achievements and successes have been realized with such meagre financial means, with insufficient technical equipment and in a country in which the war had wrought such havoc. They have been attained

thanks to the great vigour of our people, the creative efforts of the broad masses, the correct and consistent policy of our people's power, the mobilization of the entire people in building the country, the heroic selfless struggle for reconstruction and the courage and tireless efforts of our cadres, which all made it possible to overcome obstacles and hardships and achieve these results. Is there any bastion that can resist the force of a united and heroic people such as ours? No, there is none. Only those who were opposed to the good of the people sneered from the start, vent their spleen and preached and worked to try to bring about the speedy downfall of our people's power. They posed as proficient financiers and economists and capable scientists and scholars, they claimed that they were predestined to buy hides, and engage in other trades and to make millions at the expense of our people, to speculate on the blood of the people, become spies and sell off their country to the foreigners. We do not deny them this proficiency, but under our regime the people do not allow them to take the reins of power in their hands but send them to the rope or to prison to bring them to their senses.

All these successes achieved so far will be the basis for us to advance continually forward. New forms of organization are now being applied to meet the substantial changes in our economy. From now on, we will have a planned economy, and this road will lead us to socialism. Our whole life should be devoted to the building of socialism in our country, because this is the only way for the face of Albania to be completely transformed, for its people to see better days, and for their life to be a life of happiness and freedom. This is the only way to wipe out misery, misfortune and ignorance, to strengthen love for our families and for one another, and to raise up a new man with new concepts, who will cherish his homeland as the apple of his eye, who will be devoted to his land. His factory and the work where he sheds his sweat, who will love other nations and respect and defend their freedom like that of his own country. This is the road our people are fully determined to build, a road at variance with that of the capitalist system where anarchy and chaos rule, where the iron heel of the trusts and monopolies dominates, hunger, misery and misfortune abound, unemployment and the exploitation of the working class and of all the working people are the law, ignorance and corruption are rife, all human freedoms are mercilessly trampled underfoot, and men prey on their fellow men, a system which spawns war.

We have all the conditions to proceed along our road; we should mobilize all the people's energies and set to work with ten times greater efforts.

The 1947 financial budget and the general state plan for 1947 will enable us to build a planned economy. We will be helped by the standardization of prices which allows us to plan state accumulation and does not leave the law of value to spontaneity, but guides the new structure and method of fixing and applying prices, and by the placing of wages and salaries on a correct basis, i.e., he who works more and better gets higher pay when everything is taken into account: ability, work productivity, difficulties of the place of work, etc. All these will enable us to build our economy according to plan.

Now we are presenting our 1947 budget and plan for nine months. As you will notice in the budget, the total sum of expenditure is 3,758,756,900 leks. This also includes the local budget in which expenditure is 550,263,085 leks. Expenditure is wholly balanced by income.

In conformity with the state budget, considerable investments are envisaged in the state plan, especially in the financing of the economy. The total sum of investments in the economic sector is over 1.5 billion leks, more than 40% of the budget. The principal investments will go to our mines, to our new and old industry, to agriculture which takes up 12.55%, to public works (12.04%), and railways (23.6%). More than 8% of the budget will go to education and culture, and 3% to health.

As you can see for yourselves, our economy is advancing and growing stronger from year to year.

With the application of the five-year plan, which the government is drawing up and will submit to the People's Assembly in the very near future, (2) our economy will be further strengthened in a progressive way. Our industry will be improved and expanded, the development of our mines will be a source of enrichment for our country, and all its resources will be used on an ever-wider scale to improve the life of our people. This year we will build the Durrës-Elbasan railway. This network will be extended during the coming years.

Significant measures will be taken to improve and develop our agriculture, and investments will be made for important land improvement schemes.

All this will raise the living standard of our people, and we are already having good results. Only a few days ago, the government decided to raise and systematize wages and salaries, as I mentioned previously. At the same time it decided to raise the bread ration for all categories of working people.

These are achievements which have their basis in our people's power, in the people's correct understanding of the policy of our state power and of the Democratic Front, and in the broad participation and heroism of our people in the construction of our new economy and a better life.

The realization of our plans, and the creation of a happy and prosperous life depend on our efforts, on everyone understanding well and carrying out scrupulously all the tasks which confront us. First of all, such a huge task cannot be accomplished without the participation of all the people, both young and old, without the total mobilization of all the energies of the broad masses of the people. This should be our first concern, and the concern of the entire Democratic Front. But the people as a whole will be mobilized when they are clear about the tasks confronting them, when they are correctly led, and correctly taught how to carry out the tasks, which will have the immediate result of improving their life. They must see these improvements in practice, they must experience them and be convinced. The people will be wholly mobilized and put all their efforts into carrying out these important tasks, when they become the primary factor in realizing these achievements, when they exercise control over them and implement their great law and justice in everything. If these things are not clear, no progress can be made. All these things are done for the people and carried out with the people. Anyone who thinks and acts otherwise is wrong and is not on the consistent road of our progressive democracy.

In order to accomplish these projects properly and carry out our plan it is necessary to put all our efforts into consolidating and modernizing our people's power, and to do away with any shortcomings that may have occurred up to now. The state power should shake off any inertia, and any excessive or restrictive bureaucracy. It should assert itself in the village and in the locality, and not have merely administrative functions. The broad masses of people should take part in it on a large scale. The countryside plays an important role in the development of our economy, and the state power there should be stronger and have a more popular character. Our people's power should be improved all the time, so that it can carry out the great task assigned to it under the different circumstances and conditions created by the development of our country. In this, a major task falls upon our state employees, whose ability will be shown when they are able to adopt new forms, compatible with the spirit of the Constitution of the State and the rules and regulations in power, so as to carry out better the tasks that lie before them.

The exact implementation of our plan depends on a good grasp of the tasks by all the state functionaries charged with carrying out our plan, and by all the workers, peasants and intellectuals of our country. All the tasks laid down in our plan are closely linked with one another, coordinated by, and conditional on, one another. Procrastination in one work sector, or failure to carry out the plan in that sector, has repercussions in all the other work sectors. Many things are new and important, but our cadres should concentrate all their efforts on learning and understanding them

well, so that they may hold the reins of our economy firmly in their hands. Our greatest concern should be to improve our cadres and increase the number of specialized cadres. Cadres will solve all our problems. In this we should proceed with the greatest courage, promoting young people, as many young people as possible, sons and daughters of the working people; we should not be afraid to place them at the head of the work, to teach and guide them untiringly and with the greatest patience, and we will certainly see the work forge ahead; only in this way will we progress. The strength of our people is inexhaustible and our people have given ample proof that they are capable and intelligent, possess energy and vitality, and can certainly carry out the tasks assigned to them. The sons of our workers, the sons of our peasants, most of whom could neither read nor write, (3) led the great struggle for liberation, and led our heroic army to victory, defeating the educated generals and high-ranking officers of fascism; today they lead the detachments of our army with great proficiency, they have mastered the modern art of warfare, and are making continual progress. The sons of our workers and peasants are now in the most important leading posts in our state, and in the enterprises. Here are the cadres, and what fine cadres they are.

Today, iron discipline is required of all state cadres in carrying out their tasks. Without this discipline our work is bound to proceed slowly, and no honest man, no Albanian patriot, wants this to happen; only the enemies of the people. We need selflessness and honesty in work. Work should never tire us, but should become a matter of honour, and we should be encouraged to work even harder.

In order to accomplish these major tasks we need good organization of work from every point of view. Good organization of the work is essential in order to accomplish our tasks precisely, to achieve sound results from our work and the sound education of our cadres, and to fulfil the entire plan.

I think that all state functionaries, from the lowest to the highest rank, must face their responsibility to accomplish the tasks assigned to them by the people and the homeland. They should perform their tasks scrupulously, with honesty and self-denial. He who works, and discharges his task properly, is the most highly considered, the most respected and honoured person in new Albania, he is the finest patriot who feels for his people. The government will take the severest measures against those who do not work, whether simple employees or ministers, and will never allow their presence in these posts to become a canker to contaminate our constructive work.

In fully implementing the plan, we will rely on the broad mobilization of the people, we therefore appeal from this high rostrum of the People's Assembly, first and foremost, to the great patriotism of the working class of our country and say: Workers of Albania! Stand in the front ranks as you have always done, because the happy future and security of our people rely on your physical and mental force, on your great determination and energy, on your boundless loyalty to the sacred cause of our people! You are the greatest guarantee of our people's power. Exert all your efforts in carrying out the various tasks which face you in the factories and worksites, in the state apparatus, or wherever you are employed. You should always be on the battle front, setting an example to all, showing how to work better, how to fulfil and overfulfil work norms, master technique, and train people in work, how to protect the property of the state and the people, and protect the country. You are working for your state power, for your people, for yourselves, so do your duty better than ever!

We appeal to the great patriotism of our peasants and say to them: Peasants of all Albania! You are seeing concretely how your living conditions are improving all the time! You now have your own land given to you by the land reform, by the people's power. The shackles of the beys and agas have been smashed for all time. But for this state power, which is your state power, you would never have emerged from the darkness; therefore, your lives and the lives of your children, generation after generation, are linked like flesh to bone with this state power. You should exert all your efforts

to consolidate this state power. Your task is to work your lands as well as you can and produce as much as possible in order to have abundance for yourselves and to supply all Albania with your produce. Your alliance with the working class and working people of the cities should be continually strengthened, and you should understand it well. Our people's power grants you every favour and will give you ever greater aid. All these measures have one objective: that your life may become better all the time, and that you, through your work, may contribute with all your forces to the general good. It would be a mistake, and to the detriment of all, including you, if the favours and aid granted to you by the state power, in order to improve your work and boost production, were to be used for egoistic purposes and degenerate into exploitation. If such tendencies appear, you should fight them mercilessly, for these are tendencies and views of the agas and rich peasants who have exploitation in their blood. Nothing will be done which will adversely affect you. On the contrary, all the measures taken and ordinances issued by the government on the question of grain are in your favour. The reduction of prices of necessary goods is in your favour. The setting up of buying and selling cooperatives in the countryside is for your benefit and will make your work lighter, and the creation of work cooperatives is in your favour. Your task therefore is to improve your work as much as possible, and supply grain and other agricultural products to the other working masses of our country, to help in accumulating grain and other articles and to apply strictly the prices set by the government. Your private economy should also proceed along the road of our planned economy. You should struggle fiercely against any tendency which tries to divert you from this course, which is the only way to ensure your prosperity.

We call on our patriotic intellectuals to muster all their energies to fulfil their tasks wherever they work. People who are truly educated and endowed with sound culture cannot stand aloof from the great cause of the people. They should place their knowledge unreservedly at the service of the country and the people.

We appeal to the profound patriotism of the women of Albania. Today we are engaged in building new Albania, and the bitter past should no longer weigh on your shoulders. You must without fail march ahead, for you are a great force, a progressive force, from which our country expects a great deal. You should take part on a wide scale in production work, and many state functions should be in your hands. You should be in the factories and cooperatives, in the fields and schools. Our plan cannot be realized without your broad participation. Our state power will help you as much as possible to forge ahead and accomplish your tasks, and I am certain that you will accomplish them with the greatest heroism.

We call on our heroic youth, the pride of the Albanian people. Our youth have always been ready and the first to go where the duty of the country and the people has called them. Their drive, their enthusiasm, their heroism and selflessness should be an example to all. Their achievements are countless, and each one is as important as the next. Everywhere, they are continually at work, and where youth work, where they learn and inspire, immortal works appear. The new life is for our youth, and they fully deserve it, for they are building it by their sweat and their brainwork, putting their heart into the job. I advise anyone who wants to be reinvigorated and gain new strength, and to shake off any doubts and suspicions in his mind, to go to the railway the youth are building, to see for himself how the builders of new Albania work, learn, grow and enjoy themselves. We tell our youth that the Albanian people are very grateful to them for what they are doing for the country, and for what they will always continue to do. Our youth are a great factor in successfully fulfilling our state plan and will most certainly accomplish their tasks both in study and at work.

The achievements of our struggle had not only to be safeguarded, but also to be consolidated. They must serve as a sound basis on which to advance and fulfil completely the wishes and aspirations of our people. Here, of course, we were to have our first clashes with those who tried to bring to nothing the victories scored by the people during the war for liberation so that in this way these

enemies of the people might better manoeuvre and conspire to re-establish their hated capitalist domination.

The great undertaking which awaited us after liberation therefore had to be, as always, the immortal work of the people, and had to reflect their continuous struggle. The people had to be mobilized to a man to carry out this task, inspired by the same ideal which guided them in their victorious war and endowed with the same courage and heroism which gave them victory over the Italian and German fascists and their lackeys. The struggle of our people had to be continued in other forms, but with the same tempo and the same determination as the first struggle. The struggle had to be waged on two fronts, for the reconstruction of the country and the building of a better and happier life, and against those who, in a thousand treacherous ways, would hinder and fight against the correct course of our people.

This was the question which faced us, to win the battle to build the new life. We had to exert all our physical and mental energies, we had to shed sweat in order to build a happy and free life, and to strike relentlessly at the enemies of every hue who would try to hamper us in our course. Whoever thinks that a livelihood can be earned without struggle, without toil and sacrifice, whoever thinks that the enemy of the people can be fought by making concessions or by patting him on the back and smiling, is linked with the enemies of the people and is an enemy of new Albania. There are and will continue to be such people, but this does not intimidate our people, and they will not be caught unawares; on the contrary, they are all the time heightening their vigilance to defend the country and their work, while the treachery of a few is doomed to failure, and will be nipped in the bud.

The situation which arose in our country during the National Liberation War had bitter consequences for the beys with large estates, the landowners, the rich agas and the wealthy bourgeoisie who had accumulated millions by bleeding the people white. These classes launched an open struggle, rifle in hand, side by side with the occupiers, against the people, but the people were victorious. Bloody battles were fought and won with great sacrifice by the people, and that is why the revolution of our people was a total one, on a sound foundation. The myth of the nationalists who gave allegiance to a hundred flags was shattered, the bloody mask of the pseudo-democrat beys and agas was torn to shreds; they were on the other side of the barricade, in order to safeguard their privileges and the regime that allowed them to oppress the people. The Albanian quislings who crossed the sea changed their boss and became spies for the Anglo-American reaction. Nor could they have done otherwise, for this trade is in their blood. They are ready at every moment to sell out their country to the foreigners. What can link these individuals and their class with the Albanian people? Nothing but the aim to safeguard their privileges, to the detriment of the people. But the people told them to forget the old days, and this enrages them.

However, not all those to whom the people and their state power are a thorn in the flesh, not all the class of capitalists and privileged people fled to Italy or to the Greece of the monarcho-fascists. Some stayed here and were compelled to submit to the just laws of the people, and their clear-cut decisions, and this infuriates them.

This exploiting class lost everything it had plundered from the people, its privileges were abolished, and its lands, factories, concessions and colossal wealth were taken out of its hands and became the property of the majority, the property of the working people.

But we should not fool ourselves and think that all these things were done without struggle, and that these people became magnanimous and generous. The wolf may put on sheep's clothing, but it never becomes a lamb. It is another matter if the wolf has its fangs drawn, but if we had left it alone, it would have devoured people's revolution. This did not happen, and will never happen, because

the people have the proper instrument in their hands and know how to use it.

Nevertheless, the struggle between the capitalist and privileged class, on the one hand, and the working people and their state power, on the other, continued without interruption, passing through a number of different stages from the time of the liberation of Albania until now. This was class struggle with all its characteristics and in all its severity. Fascism, the most ruthless dictatorship of capital, was unable to suppress the freedom-loving nations or establish its law of terror and darkness, it was unable to suppress the working class of the people's democracies, but its remnants did not lay down their arms. Protected and encouraged by international reaction, especially Anglo-American reaction, they keep striving to regain ground and bring about the downfall of people's regimes, to pave the way for a third war, more ruthless than the Second World War. This process is also taking place in our country. To deny this process and underestimate this struggle means, to put it plainly, to hand the keys over to those who have tormented and sucked the blood of the people for generations, to set fascism back on its feet and dig our own graves. Our people are in no hurry to dig their own graves, on the contrary, they are working to make Albania flourish and to improve their life and have no hesitation about settling accounts with those who try to bring back the old days.

The important economic and social measures taken by our people's power in the early days following the liberation of Albania were only natural and correct. They transformed the face of Albania, devastated by a long and bloody war. These measures, of course, strengthened the position of our state power. However, this was not to the liking of external or internal reaction. This was where their interests coincided, and the beys, the agas, the wealthy reactionary bourgeoisie, the reactionary pseudo-patriotic intellectuals, and the beys' overseers and henchmen combined their struggle against the Albanian people, making common cause. They were joined by some of the liberal bourgeoisie whom the broad masses of the people had drawn into the war because they agreed to a certain point with the resistance against fascism; but they fought with many reservations and joined the Front for the purpose of gaining positions in the state power and, eventually, of seizing all power themselves.

Many such people who were in the Front, seeing that they could not attain their predetermined objectives, were greatly disillusioned, severed their connections with the Front, and went over to the camp of the enemies of the people.

The former ruling classes, realizing that they had lost their economic and political dominance, had to look elsewhere for support to regain their lost positions, to the detriment of the people. It goes without saying that, far from having any support among the Albanian people, they were at war with them, their only support being the foreigners, international reaction, headed by the Anglo-American reaction, which in fact supported their attempts; but they failed one after the other.

The hostile attitude maintained towards the Albanian people by the US and British governments, as well as the denial of our legitimate rights won through bloodshed and sacrifice, had one objective — to support and strengthen their official representatives in Albania, who openly and contrary to every international law, violating the sovereignty of a people and interfering in their internal affairs, tried to the last day of their stay in Albania to rally and organize the Albanian reactionaries, instigating them to sabotage actions and armed struggle against the Albanian people. The activity of these Anglo-American representatives is widely documented with facts.

Under the guidance of foreign agents, the reactionaries of our country attempted to revive the "Balli Kombëtar," "Legaliteti" and a number of other groups whose running dogs you can now find in monarcho-fascist Greece. Their common aim was to overthrow the state power by force, hoping for an Anglo-American landing in order to turn our country into a second Greece and to place it under

the heel of US imperialism. This was the course followed by the remnants of the "Balli Kombëtar," "Legaliteti" and other reactionary groups, this was the course followed by the traitorous deputies (4) who betrayed the confidence of the people, and this was the course that led them straight to prison. These treacherous elements did their utmost to discredit the just measures taken by the state power, sabotaged its work, and launched the most venomous and low slogans; I don't intend to list here their innumerable acts of treason, for what they do is so rotten that it makes you want to throw up. The Albanian people will soon hear these base elements testify before the court to their unparalleled crimes, baseness and treason; let the justice of the people decide what they deserve.

These elements carried out their treacherous activity at a time when all the Albanian people were hard at work rebuilding the country, when old and young were working under difficult economic conditions to build a new life. These people could not reconcile themselves with this situation. Take these individuals one by one, analyse their past, their work, their life, and you will see that they are the scum of society, speculators involved in all kinds of dishonest dealings. These people have infiltrated into the great undertaking of our people for the sole purpose of sabotaging it; we found them in the implementation of the land reform, we found them where bridges and roads were being built and land improvement schemes carried out, we found them in the state apparatus, and even in our parliament. These people complain that there is no democracy here, but terror. If by the word democracy they mean freedom for criminals, thieves, speculators, moneylenders and other such people, freedom for those who make an attack on the rights and freedom of the people, then it is true that there is not and will never be such democracy in Albania. Who are those who resort to terror — our people and their state power, or the criminals and traitors who organize sabotage activities and support the war criminals, who make attempts on the life of honest people, who seek to wreck and exploit what has been achieved by the hard work of the people? Do these individuals imagine that the justice of the people will allow them to act at their ease, to shelter the war criminals and eat and drink with them, to sell the secrets of the state and of the people for sterling and dollars, or will leave them free to sabotage and murder the sons of the people and upholders of their state power? Why do these criminals try to commit suicide in jail, to hang themselves in prison cells with their belts, and why do they jump out of windows to put an end to their lives? Those who are not guilty do not do such things.

The correct policy of our state power has always been characterized by the greatest determination to protect the people and their achievements, and to guard the country from any external and internal threats. It is marked by its determination to forge steadily and speedily ahead to build a happy life for our people. The correct policy of our state power has always been characterized by great wisdom and level-headedness in passing judgement, in pardoning minor offences which can be corrected and are committed with no ulterior motives, but it is severe against the enemies of the people; our state power will carry out this correct policy consistently. It has always been our concern and the duty of the Democratic Front to do as much as possible to rescue from the clutches of reaction ordinary people who have gone wrong; we should educate them, make them useful citizens of the country, and set them on the right course, the course of honour. There may be people who consider this correct and humane policy of our state power and our Democratic Front to be a sign of weakness, but we assure them that they are greatly mistaken. And if these individuals, on the basis of this erroneous judgement, try to harm the interests of the people, thinking that they will not be seen, we repeat that they are greatly mistaken. The Albanian people work and are on their guard in order to safeguard their freedom and their achievements. Our people know very well that their enemies cannot be eliminated in one day or in one year. In all our victories, some of these individuals will come to the surface, because the efforts and ceaseless work of the people will tear off the masks of these enemies. In their great and sacred undertaking our people should always be on their guard and correctly assess every situation that is created by their progressive work. Just as we mobilized to build the country, we must also mobilize to fight a relentless campaign against our enemies, be they internal enemies or agents of foreign imperialism. There can be no compromise

with our enemies, and no mercy towards them; this is the only way to consolidate the work of the people, the only way for our country to be strengthened and make progress, and for our people's democracy to be consolidated. This should be the course followed by new Albania.

It is true that Albania is a small country, but in the international arena it has its deserved place and importance. The fact that the Albanian people and their people's democracy are being unjustly and dishonestly fought by the Anglo-Americans and their lackeys, justifies the role of our democracy in safeguarding peace and world security, and at the same time justifies the correct and well-thought-out policy of the government of our Republic. All our people and all the progressive peoples of the world, including the people of the United States and Britain, are well aware that the hostile stand of the British and American governments towards our country cannot be justified by purely technical considerations, or by unreasonable arguments such as the question of the treaties, or by the absurd excuses these governments invented in order to maintain a tense situation between our state and the United States of America and Great Britain.

All the pretexts, accusations and slanders brought against our country and kept on the agenda by these governments have a premeditated aim. Their real aim is quite different from their stated purpose, namely, that they wanted to size up the situation and, in order to speed up the recognition of our government, sent the political and military representatives of the United States of America and Britain to Albania. The British and US governments are not favourably inclined towards the Albanian people, and they have given daily proof of this. The Albanian people have become masters of their own destiny, they are building their country and their free life by their own efforts and in the way they choose, and democracy in our country is growing stronger every day and becoming a factor for the strengthening of peace and world security; these facts are not to the liking of international reaction and the British and US governments. If they do not like this, and do not like the great progressive work that is being done in Albania, that is their business; but if they interfere in the internal affairs of our country, organize the remnants of Albanian reaction within and outside Albania, and openly help them to sabotage the great undertaking of the people which is costing Albania so much blood and sweat, we are strongly opposed to this, and will not tolerate such a thing. And in this we are wholly within our rights.

Ours is almost the only government not recognized by the British and US governments, at a time when these governments have their diplomatic representatives even in the satellite countries. (5) Such a situation, however, in no way affects our constant advance and the consolidation and progress of our people's democracy. The Albanian people and their People's Republic have won the sympathy and great respect of all the progressive people of the world. But such a situation dishonours the British and American people. Let the people of these two countries and the whole of world public opinion judge for themselves this stand of the British and US governments towards the heroic people of a small country who shed much blood fighting against fascism, who set up their own democratic people's power, and who are determined to use their small forces to defend world peace and security as best they can. Is it because of this that our country is not recognized? Is this why our people are denied their rights in the international arena? The Albanian people are fully convinced that these are the only reasons that their rights are not recognized by the British and US governments; any other reason is groundless and does not stand up to scrutiny. If the people were not in power in Albania, if our country were ruled by the quislings and spies of fascism who, contrary to international law, are today being supported in a thousand ways by the British and US governments, then things would have been different. Albania would of course have been recognized by those governments, but our country would have become a second Greece where Zog and the terror of the beys and war criminals would reign supreme, and the people would have been subjected to the greatest misery, unparalleled in their history. It is precisely in order to establish this rule of terror in our country, and to establish the class of speculators and war criminals in Albania, that the British and US governments maintained and continue to maintain this unjust attitude

towards our country. The practical activity of the official representatives of the British and US governments in Albania pursued such a political objective. Our government is in possession of astounding proofs and facts which indicate that the political and military missions of the British and US governments in Albania did not represent the two peoples of these countries, whom our people hold in high esteem, but were an espionage agency of Anglo-American reaction which worked out plans to overthrow our people's power, and planned sabotage actions and the most shameful crimes against the sovereignty of the peace-loving and heroic people of a small country. This is not how the Albanian people interpret their friendship with the people of Britain and the United States, and they will never reconcile themselves with the "friendship" which their official representatives cultivated in Albania. But the activity of the British and US governments is not confined to the activities I have mentioned; it has a broader scope, using every means and going as far as creating international complications. In addition to the activities I have spoken of, the British and US governments have endeavoured to present Albania as a dangerous country threatening world peace and international security. "Albania is a threat to peace!" This resembles the "argument" which fascist Italy used in order to attack the Greek people, the "argument" of Daut Hoxha's murder. (6)

You have no doubt followed attentively the sequence of events related to the incident purposely provoked by the British in Saranda which they raised a hue and cry about in the Security Council and at the International Court at the Hague, with a view to convincing the world by their false and shaky arguments that Albania was endangering peace. Albania has never laid mines along its coasts; it has possessed neither mines nor the means to lay them. Official British documents prove that the British acknowledge the existence of mines which have remained in those waters from the time of the war; they admit that there is no certainty that the removal of the mines, which they themselves carried out, was completely effective. And that the navigation route appears unsafe. The mines could also easily have been laid by British ships or by those of their lackeys in Athens. And this raises the question: What were the English ships after in repeatedly violating the sovereignty of our territorial waters? They must surely have had some purpose. The British claim the right of passage for their "peaceful" ships through the Corfu Channel, but the route through this channel is not five hundred metres away from the seaport of Saranda, on the Himara coast, and peaceful navigation does not mean having all guns at the ready and aimed towards our ports. What about the provocations of the ships of their Athenian lackeys eight times in succession, not to mention those that happen every day — what were they after in our territorial waters, up to the very vicinity of our ports? Or did they too have "peaceful purposes" in seizing our boats with people on board and taking them to Corfu or in shelling our coastal regions and bombarding the villages of Konispol? It is not hard to understand why they did these things. Despite the votes the Anglo-Americans always rally in the Security Council to gain approval for such trumped up and aggressive acts, right is on our side and no threat or blackmail can force us to our knees in our struggle to regain our rights. And justice will always be on the side of the just. What the British and Americans brought up as an allegedly persuasive and final argument at the eleventh hour about the incident at Saranda was: "The Albanian government either laid the mines itself or knows who has laid them, because it guards its borders and coastline with the greatest jealousy." But this final argument proves nothing, or rather, it proves one thing which we fully admit, because it is quite true that we guard our coastline and our southern borders with the greatest jealousy and determination, for they are sacred for us and fascist wolves are roaming about them.

With the all-round aid of the British and Americans, the monarcho-fascist government in Athens has become a chronic and very perilous danger not only to peace in the Balkans, but to world peace. The misfortune of the heroic Greek people cannot be described. Remember February 4 in Tirana. (7) It is always like that day in all the towns and villages of Greece. Monarcho-fascist terror has reached its peak. But Greece has become, at the same time, the centre of armed attacks and numerous provocations against our country and against all the other democratic countries of the Balkans. For years now, provocations by the Greek fascists along our borders, far from subsiding,

have increased and are being carried out with greater fascist fury. The Greek fascists attack our border posts, penetrate into our territory, kill and injure peaceful citizens working in their fields, carry out air raids and kill people and livestock, rally and organize Albanian war criminals, and try to infiltrate them into our territory in order to organize murders and theft. All these crimes are part and parcel of the general plan of the Anglo-American reactionaries.

In the face of these bloody, bandit-like provocations which are aimed solely at disturbing peace in the Balkans and in the world and launching a new war, as the Truman (8) doctrine proclaimed, the Albanian government has repeatedly appealed to the United Nations to take steps to put an end to these numerous provocations by the Greek monarcho-fascists. The UN Inquiry Commission which came to Greece was faced with many undeniable facts which proved the culpability of the monarcho-fascist government in Athens which, in collusion with the Anglo-Americans, bears sole responsibility for the civil war in Greece.

Numerous incontestable facts were brought before the Inquiry Commission by the representative of the Albanian government, facts which proved convincingly the criminal actions of the monarcho-fascist government in Athens, its responsibility for the countless incidents it has caused along our border, the provocative piratical incursions of Greek ships into our territorial waters, the violation of the sovereignty of our country by its bands, the massacre of the Albanian population of Çamëria, of which there is incontestable documented proof, and finally, the responsibility of the monarcho-fascist government in Athens and its British supporters for the internal civil war. But in spite of that, attempts are being made to hush up the truth, to cover the sun with a sieve, as our people say, and the British, the Americans and those who usually cast their votes for them are trying to shift the responsibility for the bloody civil war which is raging furiously in Greece onto the Albanian, Yugoslav and Bulgarian governments. But this argument can fool nobody, nobody accepts it. It was not the Albanian, Yugoslav or Bulgarian governments which stirred up or armed the heroic Greek people to rise with arms in hand to gain their freedom, and the ten thousand partisans who are fighting heroically in the mountains. They were prompted to take up arms by the misery of their homeland, the wretched condition of their people, the ideal of freedom and democracy, which is being trampled underfoot by the monarcho-fascists in Athens and their supporters, they were driven to fight by the great terror of the Greek fascists. The Albanian people and their government have never interfered in Greece's internal affairs, because these are not their affairs, and they reject any such slanders from whatever quarter they may come. The Albanian government and the Albanian people do, however, accept and will continue to accept on their territory and to show hospitality to people and democrats persecuted by the Greek fascists. This is in accordance with our Constitution and prevailing international law. The Albanian people and their government want to be left in peace to build their new life, and they want to see an end to the Greek fascist provocations. The Albanian government and the Albanian people will in no way permit the Greek monarcho-fascist bands to encroach upon their borders, and will protect their homeland, their lives and their democracy to the death. Our heroic army, which you saw parade on July 10, (9) is the most reliable defender of our achievements, of the life we are building, and of the integrity of our country.

But the tragedy of the Greek people is but one of the many features of the doctrine of Truman and Churchill. At the head of entire international reaction, US imperialism tries to engulf the whole world and to suppress the freedom of the peoples by threats, the atomic bomb, and its policy of force and the dollar. The imperialists launched a broad campaign of slanders against the Soviet Union, against that country and people who saved the world from fascism and to which mankind is forever grateful, against the Soviet Union which stands like an unconquerable fortress in defence of peace and mankind and frustrates all the schemes of the warmongers and enslavers of the peoples of the world. But the freedom-loving people of all countries have rallied all their energies to defend the peace which cost them so dearly, and to frustrate all the manoeuvres of the warmongers.

The Marshall Plan (10) is another aspect of the Truman doctrine, of the policy of the dollar and of enslavement. The Albanian government and the Albanian people have attentively followed the proceedings of the Paris Conference of the three foreign ministers, (11) for our country stands in need of aid. The Paris Conference ended inconclusively. The views of the Soviet Union were at variance with those of the governments of Britain and France as expressed in the official press of the three countries. Some days ago our government received an official invitation from the French and British governments to attend a conference organized by them in connection with the Marshall Plan.

After studying this question, our government unanimously turned down the invitation of the British and France governments to attend this conference, which will be held on July 12, because, in our government's opinion, there exists no concrete plan for US aid to Europe, and the Marshall Plan itself is very vague and imprecise. As far as the organization drafted by the French and British governments is concerned, the opinion of our government is that, far from facilitating the distribution of any US aid among the European people, it aims at working out a general economic plan for Europe under the direction of Britain and France, with the definitive approval of the United States. Such a plan would cause economic chaos in Europe, and by interfering in the internal affairs of the European states, by violating their will and sovereignty, would place the economy of these states under the direction and at the mercy of bigger European states and the United States of America. This plan would cause the creation of a bloc and a split in Europe. In extending an invitation to our government, the British and French governments intended to present us with an accomplished fact which we could in no way accept, because our government is convinced that only respect for the principle of sovereignty and national independence can be the basis of sincere and fruitful collaboration among nations. The Albanian government can never allow or accept the violation of the sovereignty and independence of our country. All these considerations compelled our government to turn down the invitation of the French and British governments. But there is still another great reason which heightens the suspicion and distrust of the Albanian government towards US aid and its objectives, and this is connected with the consistently hostile attitude maintained by the British and US governments towards the undeniable rights of our people. Taking into account this incorrect and quite unjustifiable stand, it is quite natural for the Albanian people and their government to suspect the sincerity of American aid and the real objective of this aid.

In these post-war times, the people of Europe, who suffered the most horrible devastations in the war and who witnessed with their own eyes and paid dearly for the barbarous attacks of the Hitlerites and their satellites, instigated by the activity and policy of the reactionary and imperialist cliques, have together with the progressive peoples of the whole world exerted all their efforts to prevent the repetition of such a catastrophe. They will all frustrate the manoeuvres of such warmongers as Churchill and company. The question is to protect genuine democratic peace by every means, to protect our lives and the lives of our children, and to protect our victories which have cost us bloodshed and devastation. The people of little Albania will continue to exert all their energies to defend and consolidate such a peace in favour of the progressive peoples of the world, who are striving for the same end. To defend such a peace is just as essential as was the victory over the German Nazis. Such a peace will be achieved despite the attempts of the warmongers to launch another war, it will be achieved just as the victory over Hitlerite Germany was achieved. The people of the world, and the Soviet Union under the leadership of the great Stalin, will fight for the consolidation of a just peace, of real peace. On the side of the Soviet Union, which rescued mankind from fascism, are all the progressive and freedom-loving peoples of the world, and also the people of our small country, because the Soviet Union protects our people. Young and old in our country have understood, and feel deeply in their hearts, that without the heroic war of the people of the Soviet Union, there would be no free and democratic Albania, and the Albanian people would have been massacred and oppressed without mercy. Old and young in Albania have seen with what determination the Soviet Union has championed our rights and defended our country, our

independence, and the blood shed by our sons and daughters, who fell on the field of honour fighting heroically against fascism. Therefore, it is natural for the Albanian people to love the Soviet Union greatly. At a time when warmongers threaten the world with force, the atomic bomb, and the dollar, when international reaction is doing all in its power to suppress progressive democracy and revive the dark forces of fascism, the powerful voice of the Soviet Union is firmly defending peace and security, defending the people and their progressive democracy. Our people enthusiastically hail the correct and peaceful policy of the Soviet Union, because it is a living expression of the lofty and noble sentiments of the people of the entire USSR and their regime which abides by the principle of defending freedom and genuine democracy, of defending the big and small nations and genuine peace.

The relations of our people with the friendly Bulgarian people are becoming more and more cordial and friendly, and our people heartily wish Dimitrov's new Bulgaria a prosperous future. Albania will soon establish diplomatic relations with the Rumanian people, and our people wish and hope to establish such relations with other democratic nations, which is in the general interest of peace.

Comrade Deputies!

I wish to assure you that the government I have the honour to lead will exert all its efforts to implement this correct policy, which expresses the aspirations and wishes of our people, it will exert all its efforts to carry out this constructive and progressive policy, and to apply correctly and promptly the laws which the People's Assembly of the People's Republic of Albania approves, and will defend with the greatest determination the interests of the people, the life of the people, and our People's Republic. Everything at all times in the service of our country and our people!

Long live the Albanian people!

Notes

1. According to the Law on Compulsory Primary Education, which came into effect in August 1946, primary education became compulsory for all children over 7 years of age.
2. Upon orders of the CC of the CPA, the government of the PRA started to draw up a five-year plan aimed to create and develop a national economy, the electric reticulation of the country, and develop agriculture along socialist lines. It relied mainly on our own resources, and on the aid of the Soviet Union and other people's democracies. This plan did not find application due to the brutal intervention of the Yugoslav revisionists in the internal affairs of our Party and country.
3. Before liberation over 80 per cent of the population was illiterate.
4. This refers to the group of traitorous deputies who placed themselves in the service of the American and British imperialists to overthrow the people's power by force.
5. The countries collaborating with Hitlerite Germany during the Second World War.
6. Summer 1940, this man was found killed on the border with Greece. Italy used this as a pretext to attack Greece on October 1940 and to ensure the support of Albania, too.
7. On February 4, 1944 the forces of the "Balli Kombëtar" and quisling gendarmerie, in collaboration with the German occupier, organized a big massacre in Tirana to frighten the people away from the National Liberation War.
8. Harry Truman, president of the USA (1945-1953).
9. July 10, 1943. the day when the General Staff of the National Liberation Army of Albania was created, entered history as the day of the founding of the People's Army of Albania.
10. The plan of economic and political subjugation of the countries of Europe to the USA through economic aid, presented in 1947 by the Secretary of US State Department George Marshall, and approved by the Congress of the USA in 1948.
11. This refers to the Conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Great Britain and

France, which was convened in Paris in June 1947 to discuss the economic aid the US government offered to the countries of Europe.