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REVIEW OF COMMUNIST GAINS IN ALBANIA

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The sixth anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of Albania was 11 January 1952. In 1944, the Albanian people, led by the Communist Party with the help of the Soviet Army, were freed from fascist enslavement. In 1946, the Albanian people abolished the monarchy and became masters of their own country. In 1945, the first democratic general elections to the Constituent Assembly, in which the entire nation took part, were instituted. These elections brought complete victory for the unity ticket of the National Liberation Front. In January 1946, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed Albania a people's republic. In March 1946, the first democratic constitution of the People's Republic of Albania was adopted.

The war and occupation had dealt a heavy blow to Albania. Losses in the Albania economy amounted to 100 billion leks. The first months following liberation were particularly grave. War devastation, lack of fuel, insufficient food, unemployment -- all these created serious difficulties in the reconstruction of the country. But after overcoming the initial difficulties, the government introduced a program of reform.

First of all, with the active participation of the peasants themselves, the agrarian reform was accomplished in November 1946. The land was transferred to the peasants. In all, 70,211 peasant households shared the land, cattle, and personal property. Formerly, 14 percent of the peasants were without land and 83 percent had little land. The result of these reforms was an increase in the amount and yield of arable land. In 1951, the sown area in Albania was one and one half times larger than in 1938.

Simultaneously with the increased yield of wheat, maize, and other grain crops, the party and government tried to develop various industrial crops which formerly were scarcely produced in Albania. Future emphasis will be on cotton, sugar beets, flax, hemp, and vegetable-oil crops. Much has to be created

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out of nothing. Cotton production, for instance, formerly insignificant, is 54 times greater than it was, but even this amount is insufficient for the growing textile industry. Production is also being expanded for vineyards, citrus groves, olive groves, and various fruits which are increasingly exported each year.

The government is giving great assistance to agriculture. It is doing reclamation work, draining swamps, developing new plantations, and building canals and dams. The state extends credit to peasants, and supplies them with seeds, fertilizers, and machinery. It also exempts small economic enterprises from taxation. Machine-tractor stations have been set up, as well as state-operated model farms.

The party lays great stress on the promotion of collective farms, not by force but by convincing the peasant of the superiority of collective work. The Albanian Workers Party follows this Soviet plan.

Soon after Albania was liberated, the government liquidated foreign concessions and nationalized all industrial enterprises, mines, means of transportation, and banks. Wholesale trade and foreign trade were made state monopolies. A special law annulled all the old debts, including mortgages, of the peasant and urban population. Planned economy was introduced.

The first Two-Year Plan (1949-1950) and the 1951 Plan have been successfully completed. Old plants have been restored or enlarged and new enterprises built. The recently built Stalin Textile Combine has a capacity of 20 million meters of cloth a year; this will meet the needs of the Albanian people. Near this combine a large settlement is being built to accommodate 9,000 workers. A sugar combine with a capacity of 10,000 tons of sugar a year has been built. The new Lenin Hydroelectric Power Plant has increased Tirana's electric power supply ten times and its water supply four times as compared with 1949. In Fier a cotton-ginning plant has been put into operation. All these enterprises are equipped with machines supplied by the USSR. Construction of a large hydroelectric plant on the Mat River is also in progress.

The mining industry, including the extraction of coal, bitumen, chrome, copper, and petroleum, has been completely nationalized. Four times more ore is being mined than in 1938. New workers' communities, such as Patos and Selenice, are springing up near the new mines and oil fields.

Automotive transport, once a bottleneck in Albanian economy, is being improved. In the old Albania, there were no railroads. Thousands of volunteers, mostly young people, built the first railroads in the country. The first short railroad line was built in 1947. Later it was lengthened to connect the agricultural centers: Tirana with Durres, Peqin, and Elbasan. Freight traffic by land reached 675 percent compared with the prewar level. All seaports, which had been damaged by the retiring German occupation forces, have been restored to meet the demands of growing trade with other countries. Roads have also been built or improved.

Construction work is in progress throughout Albania. Since the liberation, 105,000 square meters of industrial buildings, 102,000 square meters of housing, and a considerable number of clubs, schools, and hospitals have been built.

Besides improving the workers' living standards, the party and the government are developing state and cooperative trade, eliminating speculation, and limiting the activities of private traders. The result of this policy is that foreign and wholesale trade is completely controlled by the government. In retail trade the share of the state is 33 percent, the share of the cooperatives 45 percent, and that of private enterprises 22 percent.

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Great changes have taken place in Albania in this short period of 7 years since the liberation. Unemployment, poverty, and the continuous emigration of starving people have disappeared. There are not enough workers for the new construction work and the expansion of the national economy. Evidence of the changes in the national economy is found in the income section of the 1950 state budget. Formerly, the basic sources of income were taxes collected from the peasants; now, the major part of the budget revenue comes from industry and cooperatives. In 1950, the share of state industrial enterprises in the budget amounted to 48 percent, while the share of the cooperatives was 35 percent.

Corresponding changes have taken place in the social composition of the population of Albania. The working class is growing rapidly. Taking 1945 as 100 percent, in 1946 the number of workers was 120 percent; in 1947, 180 percent; in 1949, 220 percent, and in 1950, 360 percent. Nearly 90 percent of all workers are taking part in socialist competition. The names of the outstanding workers are publicized throughout the country.

A further improvement in the living conditions of the people is shown by the development of public health services. In the old Albania there was practically no public health system. By 1950 the number of public health institutions had increased 26 times, and their capacity 63 times, compared with 1938.

Assistance from the USSR and the People's Democracies in the form of long-term credits, deliveries of equipment, and technical assistance, have made long-range planning possible. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the Albanian Workers' Party, which met in September 1951, approved directives for drawing up the first State Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy (1951-1955). These directives were widely discussed at mass meetings where the people themselves introduced thousands of corrections and additions. The plan set up as objectives the further development of manufacturing and mining, transport, and agriculture, and improvement in the living standard of the masses. The principal investments will be made in mining, which is to be more highly mechanized. Prospecting work is to be expanded. Provision is made for a new oil refinery and pipe line. Light and heavy industry are to be developed. Electric production will be increased several times. The Mat River Hydroelectric Station alone will produce 100 million kilowatt-hours of electric power per year.

The Five-Year Plan pays particular attention to agricultural economy, which has been unable to keep up with industrial development. Albanian agriculture must not only supply the towns with food, primarily bread, but it must also considerably increase the production of industrial crops and products for export. Hence the number of MFS must be increased, and their work improved. The supply of agricultural machines, fertilizers, and selected seeds is to be augmented. More irrigation canals are also planned.

The party and the government have issued special directives on the development of animal husbandry, which had suffered greatly during the occupation. The principal task for the immediate future is to build up a feed supply, without which any increase in the number of head of cattle would be impossible.

The Five-Year Plan for forestation has also been worked out and discussed at mass meetings. The peasants accepted this plan with great enthusiasm, and thousands of them are voluntarily engaged in planting trees. They have undertaken to fulfill this plan in 4 years.

The former rulers and exploiters of Albania established few schools. About 85 percent of the population was illiterate. Children of the workers and poor peasants were without education. Altogether, only 2,000 students attended intermediate schools. There were no higher educational institutions, and only a few children of the privileged classes studied abroad. Now a special law requires

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all citizens of Albania up to 40 years of age to learn to read and write. It is expected that illiteracy will be completely liquidated by the end of the Five-Year Plan. Compulsory elementary schooling for children has been instituted. A great increase in the number of schools and trained teachers has made it possible to enroll all children of school age in the system of elementary education. In 1950, in comparison with 1938, the number of schools had increased 341 percent, while the number of students had reached 316 percent. All schooling is free. The party and the government are also trying to have all urban children finish the 7 year (intermediate) school.

The first higher educational institutions have appeared in Albania. In 1946, a 2-year pedagogical institute was founded. The Five-Year Plan provides for the opening of two more higher educational institutions: a school of medicine and a training school of planned economy. The quality of teaching is considerably improved. New programs based on Marxist-Leninist science and Soviet experience have been initiated in schools and higher educational institutions. The rapid growth of the Albanian economy requires a large number of qualified workers. With the help of the Soviet Union, thousands of qualified employees have been trained.

The developments in the national economy and in education have been accompanied by a development in national art. For the first time Albania possesses three permanent theatres, a philharmonic orchestra, a palace of culture, and clubs. Folk dancing and singing are encouraged. An independent talent for art is developing among the workers. More books are being published, including translations of Soviet publications, which are very popular among Albanians. The circulation of magazines and newspapers has increased more than tenfold.

The Communist Party, established in 1941, has been strong enough to overcome sabotage by the Tito clique, whose agents, Koci Xoxe, Pandi Kristo, and others, had penetrated into leading party positions, and were trying to transform Albania into an appendage of fascist Yugoslavia.

The first Party Congress, which took place in November 1948, exposed certain serious shortcomings in party organizational work. The party had not drawn up its statutes. It had violated intraparty democracy, and did not encourage criticism and self-criticism. The congress approved the first party statutes of the Marxist-Leninist type, which helped put an end to organizational confusion. After the congress, the party was renamed the Albanian Workers' Party. In accordance with the decisions of the congress, the party eliminated the influence of the Titoists, rearranged its ranks, and strengthened its organizational structure. Still later, the party was able to rout attacks of Abedin Shehu's counterrevolutionary group and carry on a successful struggle against various other opportunists.

The hostile policy of the Titoist agents in the party resulted in the presence of foreign imperialistic agents in the party apparatus. The Central Committee decided in 1950 - 1951 to carry out a check of party documents to get rid of foreign and hostile elements. A serious effort is now being made to regulate the social composition of the party, and attract the foremost workers into its ranks. The network of party education has been extended to train young Communists. In the 5-year period from 1944 through 1948 there were 4,684 party members studying in party education schools. During the school year 1949 - 1950, the number rose to 6,246, and in 1950 - 1951 to 12,264. The Central Committee of the party has established a central party school as well as numerous courses to train party personnel and propagandists. There has also been an increase in editions of Marxist-Leninist classics. In November 1951, the first volume of I. V. Stalin's Collected Works was published in the Albanian language.

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The party is strengthening its bond with the people, acting through mass organizations, creating active nonparty groups, and developing mass political work. The results of this policy were revealed in the elections for the People's Assembly in 1950, when 98.18 percent of all the voters voted for the candidates of the unified democratic front, headed by the Albanian Workers' Party.

The party is united against English and American imperialists, who relied in World War II on organizations connected with the German occupation forces, such as the Balli Kombetar and the Legaliteti.

On the eve of the liberation of Albania, English ships tried to force a landing on Albanian shores, but were forced to retreat by the Albanian people, supported by the Soviet Union. Now the warmongers are sending saboteurs by dropping them by parachutes from airplanes, landing them from submarines, or sending them across the borders.

In October 1951 a trial of 14 spies took place. They were American, English, Italian, Yugoslav, and Greek. At this trial it was made clear that all these agents were acting in orders from one and the same center. After this trial the Ministry of the Interior announced the arrest of several parachutist saboteurs from America, seven from England, 14 from Greece, and 33 from Yugoslavia. They admitted that they had been dropped to carry out subversive activity in Albania.

This influx of spies shows the purpose of the new law signed by Truman, allocating 100 million dollars for subversive activity against the USSR and the People's Democracies. With these funds, the Americans are converting bandits from the concentration camps in Western Germany, Italy, and Greece into saboteurs and sending them into Albania. Several espionage centers are now active in Yugoslavia. The armed provocations against our borders by Greek and Yugoslav fascists have not stopped. During only 10 months in 1951 the integrity of Albanian territory was violated 388 times. But despite all such actions, the people of Albania have shown that they know how to guard their independence.

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