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THE SCIENCES WHICH STUDY OUR NATIONAL HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE MUST BE RAISED TO A HIGHER LEVEL

*Article from the contribution at the meeting of the Secretariat
of the CC of the PLA . The meeting discussed the report
presented by the Academy of Sciences of the PSRA,
«On the situation of our Albanological sciences and the tasks to
strengthen their role»*

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Allow me to discuss some problems which the comrades of the Academy of Sciences presented. I agree in general with the report which was given to us, but, on this occasion, I will express some opinions and will give some answers to the demands which are made in it.

We must admit that in the field of studies on the history of linguistics, people's history and culture, etc., good results have been achieved. Studies of the main problems and of the more

important stages of the historical development of our people, and their culture and language have been carried out. Conclusions of scientific and political value have also been reached and the Albanian Marxist–Leninist school of our historical, linguistic, cultural and other sciences has been created and is being consolidated.

Like all the comrades of the leadership, I, too, have attentively followed the national scientific activities organized by the Academy of Sciences and its institutes.

Our opinion is that they have been prepared at a good level. I have read some of the materials of the conferences and have noticed that they make a dignified exposition of our achievements in the field of historical, linguistic and archaeological sciences, and in that of popular culture. I have also seen that valuable publications are being made in these fields. I cannot say that I have read all your publications, but I have glanced through them and have seen that they deal with serious problems which throw light on important stages of our development.

They inform the younger generation and the working people with the historical past and the rich culture of our people and, of course, they serve the young scholars in their studies.

An action of great importance was the setting up of the Museum of National History, (2) to which you made a valuable contribution with your research in the field of history, archaeology and popular culture. Another valuable achievement is the publication of the Dictionary of Modern Albanian Language, as well as specific studies in the field of linguistics and spelling of the Albanian language. With these publications, with the articles published in the press organs and with the programs prepared and broadcast by the Radio–television, you comrades have made a valuable contribution to the unification of the literary Albanian language, which has an extremely great importance. Thanks to this work the Albanians of Kosova, too, accepted this unification.

(2) One of the major socio–cultural objects of the

country. It was inaugurated on 28 October 1981, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Party and its 8th Congress. Comrade Enver Hoxha participated in the ceremony organized on that occasion.

A rich and valuable archaeological material has been discovered, which testifies to the Illyrian origin of our people.

The encyclopaedic dictionary which is being prepared under the guidance of the Academy of Sciences should be considered a very serious undertaking and a work of great scientific value. My opinion is that, in the course of the preparatory work, the entries or articles, whether on history of other sciences, should be dealt with and considered objectively. They must be concise and based on documents. With this I mean that each single entry or article should be easily comprehensive, so as to help and guide all those who want to know and study the problems in greater depth. I often consult different French

encyclopaedias and notice that, in general, their entries and articles, even those which are relatively brief, are not the work of one individual, but usually the collective work of two or more authors.

Our history with its stages constitutes one whole. Its study requires assessment of each stage and the establishment of correct relations between them. Greater attention must be attached to the study of the modern history, the period of the anti-popular regime of Zog and, especially, the period of the revolution and the socialist construction in our country. We must not wait for the problems of the revolution and socialist construction to be transferred to «history» and then make them the object of our studies.

With this I do not mean that no studies are made in this field, but that little is done and progress is somewhat slow. I am not implying that no studies of the history of the more remote past should be made. The sectors studying Antiquity and Middle Ages will and must go on with their activity on the basis of approved plans. The

studies which have been and those that will be carried out about the genesis and the formation of our people, and about the more important stages of their development are a constituent part of our history and our popular culture.

The study of our historical past has been conditioned by other factors, too. We have had to deal with the elucidation of some basic problems of the formation of our nation and of our popular resistance, because in the past the information of our scientific forces was fragmentary and sporadic, whereas the achievements of foreign scientists, even the more distinguished Albanologists, have not been based on Marxist-Leninist methodology. Their studies have consisted mainly in recording of historical facts; they have reached some conclusions, too, but these could not go beyond certain limits. Some foreign scholars have conducted their studies on Albania in such a manner and according to such plans as suited the predatory ambitions of the imperialist states, bent on the partitioning and occupation of our country, or in order to throw

mud at the history of our people. With the triumph of the popular revolution and the establishment of the people's state power, under the leadership of the Party, possibilities were created for the centre of Albanian studies to be transferred to our country, and thus, historical studies were taken in the hands of our study institutions.

Important tasks faced our scientific workers. On the one hand, they had to elucidate the key problems of the history and culture of our people in the past, and this had to be done competently and relying powerfully on the requirements of our Marxist–Leninist science, while, on the other hand, as sons of this people and of this land, they had to base their studies on our national soil and reality. Our scientists have undertaken this mission in the service of our people and our socialist Homeland and are accomplishing it.

The main factors for the study of Albanian problems have been and remain the internal factor and the ideological factor. That is why the studies made by our people are without doubt of

a higher level and more thorough than those made by any foreign Albanologist, however great his scientific authority may have been or may still be in our days.

We have been obliged to undertake studies of the genesis of our people, etc., because these have been and are not only scientific problems, but also major political problems. The conclusions from these studies have served us to oppose the foreign reactionary and aggressive forces.

Albania has always attracted the attention of many foreign scholars, historians and politicians. In our days there are scientific and educational centres abroad which deal with Albania, beginning from its language, literature, and culture to its socio-economic and political system.

The aims and motives of these scholars have been different. Some of them have proceeded and proceed from purely scientific motives, because in the Albanian world, in the history, language and culture of our people, there is the

explanation to many Balkan and European phenomena.

Some other Albanologists have been prompted to their studies on Albania by the lofty political and moral virtues of our people. We appreciate these studies.

All the studies of the foreign Albanologists may have scientific value if they are based on our reality, if they study it objectively and benevolently and take account of our studies.

But there are, however, some pseudo-scientists who see our reality through the glasses of those who have trained them as contingents against our country. Their analysis of facts and their conclusions stem from hostile political and ideological positions, and they proceed from denigrating aims and motives, in order to misinform the progressive opinion abroad.

The Academy of Sciences and its institutes must be much more active in opposing the anti-scientific, anti-Albanian and chauvinist concepts and views of the bourgeois and revisionist

pseudo-scientists. We must always be on the offensive, just as we are in the field of ideology, in the Marxist-Leninist theoretical thinking. Our sciences, relying on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary world outlook and on the high scientific level they have reached, have every possibility to delve ever more deeply into the struggle for the exposure of the anti-scientific concepts and views of the bourgeois and revisionist scholars and to affirm the historical truth about the epoch-making achievements of socialist Albania.

For the further deepening of the achievements in our studies and our confrontation with foreign scholars, I am not opposed to the Academy of Sciences' having a program for the training of the necessary cadres, who should engage themselves in achieving a more comprehensive knowledge of our problems through the study of the history, language and popular culture of the neighbouring countries, or to our having Balkanologists, Slavists, Hellenists, Turkologists, Germanists, etc. But here I want to add that in

this direction we must be realists, for this program should be a long-term one and we must bear in mind that before we can meet the demands you raise, there are many other needs which call for immediate fulfilment.

In the material which has been presented to us, and from the information I have, or in the plans of the institutes of the Academy of Sciences, there is no comprehensive program, for example, of the study of the Albanian peasantry in various stages of our history, although it can be said that until a few decades ago, the history of the Albanian peasantry was virtually the history of the Albanian people.

We all know that during the development of society in the Middle Ages and later, the fate of the Homeland was connected closely with the peasantry, because it constituted the overwhelming majority of the population, and it fought for the land and the defence of the country.

Our peasantry has a sameness of character, in general, but in the course of development it

showed many specific elements, which no one has taken pains to study in detail and to point out. We know that the highlanders in Northern Albania have a specific development and characteristics which are different from those of the peasants of Central Albania, or from those of Southern Albania. To ignore or to overlook these peculiarities in a study on the peasantry is a mistake. Through the centuries our peasant not only has fought, but has also lived on this land. Therefore, we must study the life and struggle of the peasant on this land, both at home and outside it.

Nor can we study the class struggle as something separated from the study of the peasantry. On the contrary, every truly scientific study must reflect this struggle thoroughly.

In various stages of their development the Albanian people and the peasantry have waged two kinds of struggle.

They have fought against the occupiers, against the Ottoman Empire, and against the neighbours that sought to partition it, and against others.

But the Albanian people have fought not only this war, they have waged internal wars, too, against the feudal class, against the clan chiefs, against the beys, and later against the capitalist bourgeoisie, too. But do we have a full study or specific studies of these question of our peasantry? No, we don't.

First of all, we must not overlook the economic aspect of the development of our peasantry in such fields as property, work, taxes and other dues. We talk about Tanzimat, for example, but the taxes of that system were not the only ones the Albanians had to pay and which they refused to pay, often resisting with arms. There were other taxes and dues through which the people were robbed. Who robbed them? The beys, the aghas, the clan chiefs, the usurers, and others.

All this constitutes the field in which the middle and poor peasantry clashed with the rulers of our country, the clan chiefs, the beys, the landed proprietors. This is class struggle. During this struggle the differentiation of the peasantry took place, permanent or temporary alliances were

made. But these things cannot be explained away with one word, or with a single paragraph, therefore our students must delve deep into these problems, write scientific monographs, and not continuously repeat some general considerations, beating about the bush without giving a clear reflection of this part of the history of our people, without discovering anything new and without drawing their conclusions.

In order to put down the class struggle of the peasantry against the wealthy, against the clan chiefs and others, the ruling classes issued their laws and canons.

But do we know them well and have we analysed them thoroughly? We have remained at the study of Shtjefën Gjeçov's Canon, which has its importance, though it is incomplete. Shtjefën Gjeçov has great merits for its publication, but, as far as I know, and here I may be mistaken, no scientist has ever delved deep into it, not only to comment Gjeçov's work, but also to fathom the history of the laws, customs and canons which have been in force for our people through the

centuries.

There are some who complain about the supposed lack of documents. I think that documents exist. We have, among other things, Marin Barleti's work which is valuable as an important source of studies, too. When our scientists read Barleti's work they learn of the events of the 15th century in our country and see the development of the Albanian society, the peasantry, in particular, in that time, not only from the historical aspect, but also from the cultural, economic and other aspects. All the struggles that were waged later, after Skanderbeg's death, had certain causes. These causes must be studied, the character of this or that struggle must be defined correctly, not trying to squeeze things into such formulas as: this struggle must be described as sporadic because supposedly it lacked ideological leadership, or the other must be regarded as an uprising, not a revolution, and vice versa. We must write the history of our people, especially our peasantry, objectively, according

to a rigorously consistent scientific system based on Marxist–Leninist methodology, which is the most scientific, otherwise, we cannot properly explain either the profound transformations which have been made or the leftovers lingering in the psychology of peasants, which we take up for discussion from time to time. For the struggle against petty–bourgeois leftovers to be waged correctly and for the correct orientations of the Party to be properly applied, the people engaging in scientific work must study all these problems, size them up in their extension and evolution up to the present stage. In this manner we shall wage a still more effective struggle against the leftovers I mentioned.

Another problem bearing on our historical development is that of the peasant family and its evolution. We speak about the patriarchal family. But what has it been like ? How did this family evolve and when did it break up? What is the clan? What is the bayrak? What are the warrior knights? What does the Cycle of the Warrior Knights represent? They were born here and lived

here, they acted on this soil and that is why the people have sung to their deeds. The warrior knights have fought for the defence of the Albanian peasantry, for the solution of its social and economic problems, they have been at one with the feelings of the peasantry and have been chivalrous. So, if we do not study the base from which they have emerged, but dwell only on the songs the people have sung to them, or just read a few lectures and make some literary comments without studying and explaining their deep roots (because they were the product of a definite society, were created in definite situations and circumstances), then whatever we write about them will hang in the air, without a basis.

The peasant family has various features. Its study has to consider many aspects. The peasant family in the Highlands is not the same as in the central zones or in the lowlands; in Shkodra it is not the same as in Gjirokastra, in Myzeqe it is not the same as in Dibra, or elsewhere.

Nevertheless, as far as I can see, no studies are made in this direction. Besides this, within the

family there are customs, feelings and tastes which must be known. That is all I can say about the peasantry, but, comrades, there are other questions, too.

Let us take, for example, the period of Zog's regime.

No study is envisaged to be made either of the economic and social situation, or the political oppression and the cultural backwardness of our people in the period before and after 1924.

Without an extensive and thorough study of this grave period in the history of Albania, the efforts our Party had to make during the National Liberation War and after Liberation for the great socialist changes which have been made cannot come out in their full clarity and force. When we deal with the Bourgeois–Democratic Revolution, we speak only about its history, about Fan Noli (3) and Avni Rustemi, (4) but a thorough study of the political, economic and social conditions of our country and people, in which this revolution was prepared, and which could not have been the work of outstanding men only, even if they

were Fan Noli and Avni Rustemi, has not been made as yet. They were the protagonists, those who felt the sufferings of our people who had risen to their feet and were fighting as Bajram Curri (5) did , but it was the concrete political and social situations which placed h im and the other revolutionaries at the head of the people.

(3) Fan Stilian Noli (1882–1965). Albanian patriot and democrat, statesman, scholar, poet, translator and historian.

(4) Avni Rustemi (1895–1924). Albanian revolutionary patriot and democrat, People's Hero.

(5) Bajram Curri (1862–1925). Outstanding Albanian revolutionary patriot and democrat, leader of the movement for the liberation and national union of Albania, People's Hero.

This is what all these revolutionary democrats did. They have played an important historic role, but we must not reduce the Bourgeois–

Democratic Revolution only to some figures, and in passing say the odd word about the political, economic and social condition of our country. First, we must speak about this condition (and not only its political aspect), and then, come to the outstanding figures. First we must study and then write the biography of our people and from this biography draw the biographies of individuals. The masses make history.

Naim Frashëri, Abdyl Frashëri, Sami Frashëri, Ismail Qemali, Çerçiz Topulli, Luigj Gurakuqi and many other distinguished figures of our people emerged in definite periods of the socio-economic development of our country.

We have not yet set about a thorough study of these periods and this background. This is a shortcoming which we must overcome at all costs.

We must not forget that those who have not lived in the past and the foreigners who visit our country cannot realize that in our country, too, there has been strong reaction, which was represented somewhere by the power of the clan

chiefs, somewhere by the power of the beys, aghas, or others. We know the reactionary power of religion and its institutions, of the canon and the old customary law, such as the vendetta, etc., on our people. And our country had not only one canon, that of Lekë Dukagjini. It was in force, we may say, in Northern Albania, and more precisely in some part of the North, but there were other similar canons all over the country, for each region, indeed, for each village.

Until today we have remained with an old study and just keep talking about the canon laws. The canon laws were not the same for the North and Central Albania, or for the South. There were marked differences in these laws, depending on the economic, social and cultural development of each region. These differences surfaced in the evolution of the class struggle and in the progress of the peasantry. The peasantry did not join as a whole the progressive development and evolution at once, at one blow of the whistle. The fruit ripened when the time came. So, we have the duty to study all these phenomena of our

society.

We cannot overlook the question of religious beliefs, either. This theme, too, must be dealt with because we cannot say that the people have not been believers. To pass this question over with a single word, saying that they were not believers, that they have been irreligious, is not scientific. We must study this problem in such a way as to really show that our peasants were both believers and deceived, but that they have also made changes in this respect.

What I am driving at here is that religious reaction has been strong and that it continues to exist, though, of course, in other forms and with weaker intensity. Right from the first days of its founding the Party has come up against this problem and is still confronted with it today.

One of the main centres of the collection and study of documents of the history of our people is the Institute of Popular Culture. (6) The question is not only about collecting and

arranging these materials and objects, but also about keeping written records of each of them. In all the popular culture, in the village museums, in the ethnographic museum we are now building, the collection of objects is not the only important thing. The collecting of objects is necessary, because collected objects serve as means to illustrate and study the stages of the development of society, the stages of its economic and spiritual development and the socio-economic transformations of our people.

(6) This institute was created in 1979, on the basis of the Institute of Folklore and the ethnographic sector of the Institute of History.

This study must be carried out in every direction and in every detail, until we find the reasons why embroideries on men's or women's costumes are different for different regions, why one costume has them in gold and another in black plaits. Why the inhabitants of one region wear tirq and those

of another brekushe, those of the other fustanella, and so on for other garments, customs, the way of life, housing, relations, etc. There were some concrete economic, religious, spiritual situations which brought about these phenomena.

Another great wealth is our folklore. Folklore is one of the means we must use to carry out valuable scientific studies. However, those who engage in these studies should have talent and seriousness and we must arouse their interest in them and make them conscious that they face a great patriotic duty, which does not consist merely in reciting folk creations, or making the literary comment of some poem. They must carry out comprehensive studies in the various genres of folklore, considered not only as literature, but also as history. Studies do not presuppose just commenting this or that verse, this or that word, this or that nuance. First of all, the student must find out when and why this or that song has emerged, what are the reasons for its emergence, to what extent it is spread in

different regions. In this manner it is possible to draw valuable conclusions about the history of our people, and this work, I believe, opens up a broad horizon to our students.

Then, we may go a step further, from the study of the documents in our possession to the study of the documents abroad, because, as Comrade Aleks Buda (7) or some other comrade said here, our people, beginning from the Illyrians, have not lived in isolation. We have not been and are not an isolated people.

(7) Chairman of the Academy of Sciences of the PSRA.

During the centuries, in our relations with other neighbouring peoples, we have borrowed from their material and spiritual culture and they have borrowed from ours. This means that we, too, have influenced the others through our struggle and culture, but the others have also left their imprints on the life and culture of our people. We

should not obscure and deal with these problems in a one-sided manner, but in an objective and scientific manner.

The question here is that in these studies which we plan to make we must not lose sight of our red thread in order to find out the origin of this legacy which is not ours alone, whether it is here in our country, or in another country, because it may be in another country, but it may also be in our country. If the origin turns out to be in another country, we must see how we have adopted it and in what conditions it has become ours. The same thing is happening today in the relations among peoples.

There are documents also for the period of Zog, and not less than for the period of the National Renaissance and national independence, indeed, I may say that, if we persist, we shall find historical, cultural and scientific materials even for the period further back than the National Renaissance, for the Middle Ages, or even more remote times. No one can say that such materials do not exist. There are not only official

agreements and acts of the Zog government with the foreigners, but also a wealth of documents on the internal socio-economic and cultural situation of our people in that period. If only court proceedings were taken up and studied, they would be vivid evidence of a fierce class struggle, a testimony to the miserable plight of our country in that time, showing how the peasants were exploited and robbed, how women were oppressed, how the progressive intelligentsia was persecuted, how any movement and revolt of the workers was put down when they rose to fight in various forms against the Zogite feudal-bourgeois order. Only to think that the courts of justice existed as they did, that elders' assemblies existed as they did, we can see that there was at the same time resistance to those who oppressed, massacred and robbed the people. I don't know what is being done with these documents, whether they are preserved in good order, or lie covered with the dust of oblivion and neglected.

I am informed that the four volumes of the

History of Albania are being prepared for publication. This is a good, commendable and valuable work for our school, and will acquaint our working people with the history of our country. I am also informed that some monographs, on the history of our school, our health service and others which you may still have in hand are being written, but this is not enough. I have the impression that progress is very slow. Programs must be more mobilizing and the commitment of the scientific workers more active.

All the questions, problems and requirements raised in the material presented by Comrade Aleks Buda are correct, in general. But on what shall we concentrate our forces mostly? In what directions shall we engage ourselves for the preparation of cadres so as to be able to go over to the stage of undertaking the studies which are proposed here and which must be undertaken? Here I have some suggestions.

Studies of the history of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, of archaeology, folklore and language may

very well continue to be carried out in depth in the directions mentioned in your report. But what attracts my attention in your report is the fact that, when speaking about the National Liberation War, the whole thing is put in a few lines about the lack of cadres, the poor quality of studies and difficulties in the study of the contemporary records in our archives. In all this I do not see what your objectives are, what problems of this glorious period of our people you will study. Both we and you must be intrigued by the fact that whereas scientific authorities have affirmed themselves in the study of the past periods, the situation is still weak as regards the study of the period of the revolution and the socialist construction. The cadres engaged in the study of the latter period are mostly young and inexperienced.

The time has come for the affirmed authorities in the field of history, certainly the relatively younger ones, to engage in the history of the modern time, as Comrade Ramiz [Alia] said, and draw the talented younger scientific workers

round themselves. About these problems there should be concern from above, too, so that we do not allow things to take their spontaneous course and leave promising young scientific people involve themselves only with problems of the past.

As in the field of history, in the field of studies of our popular culture, too, we must turn ourselves more and more to the problems of current development. In the field of our popular culture, a rich material has been collected and recorded. Efforts are being made also to sum it up, but in this direction it is necessary to proceed more boldly and rapidly. I have read Comrade Alfred Uçi's report on popular culture published in the review *Kultura Popullore*, and I liked it very much. In the field of popular culture, too, more thorough studies must be carried out about the development of the material and spiritual culture of the period of socialist construction. We value our popular culture and have done much for its preservation and development. But the student should not be a mere recorder and preserver of

the cultural legacy, as I stressed above.

Therefore, the problems of the development of our popular culture should be made the object of bolder studies. The remnants of the old concepts on ethnography should be completely overcome.

Ethnographical studies should be combined better with sociological studies, and changes in the spiritual condition and the social psychology of various categories of working people in town and countryside be observed and summed up.

It is right that we devote special care to the study of the course of development of our people in the past, discovering, recording and preserving any document or any other material and spiritual evidence. But we must be just as attentive in assessing any evidence of our development after the triumph of the socialist revolution.

How are records in enterprises, agricultural cooperatives, cultural and educational institutions preserved, arranged and utilized? To what extent and in what manner do we preserve work tools and implements which keep constantly changing and improving? How do we

record and study their evolution and development, changes in the level of culture, education and qualification of the working people in each cell of our people's economy?

I have heard that when the Museum of National History was created there was much difficulty in finding exhibits to show the level of development of the productive forces in the first years after Liberation. If it was difficult to equip a museum with some symbolic means, imagine what difficulties the lack of them would create for studies. We all know Marx' assessment of the role of implements of production in defining the epochs of history.

Scientists must devote greater attention to the understanding and the study of our current development.

Therefore, realization of the great objectives which the Party has set for our sciences requires systematic and well-studied work for the further qualification of the existing cadres and for the training of new specialists, especially in those fields and sectors in which we plan to further

expand our studies in the future. Work for the training of cadres must be done with a clearer perspective, in complete conformity with the objectives of studies and with scientific plans. We have now every possibility to train our cadres in the educational and scientific institutes of our country.

Our University and institutes train hundreds of cadres of higher training for various specialties and profiles, among which, I have no doubt, there are many young talents. It is our duty to discover and know their inclinations and work with them systematically, according to well-considered programs. The activity of these cadres must be followed up more attentively, especially after they finish the higher school, by giving them some tasks now and then and preparing them for independent studies.

We will send abroad some of our talented students, but we must guide them. Our more renowned scientists must know that it is their duty, and this is an absolute necessity, to assist the new scientific workers, to encourage and

inspire them, to open up horizons for them and to program their perspective.

I am not of the opinion that we have no specialists on ethnography, archaeology or folklore, on the contrary, our cadres and specialists in these fields have honoured our country and our sciences abroad, too. You have even won prizes for your studies and publications.

Here I would also like to explain another aspect of your demand to train cadres in these fields abroad. In this direction we have to do with social sciences and, as regards these sciences, we cannot learn anything from foreigners, either about the analysis of facts or about their interpretation and summing up. Of course we must be informed of their modern methods and the world's advanced experience, study them in a critical manner and take from them whatever is more rational and responds to our needs.

But, in the first place, the legacy of the classics of Marxism–Leninism, the experience of our Party and the methods they have used in their

major studies must be studied carefully and persistently. Modern methods of study, certainly, have their value and help in the quantitative analysis of phenomena, speed up processes and cut down on the time for the processing of factual material, but they have their limitations, too. Therefore, they should not be taken up and applied in a mechanical manner.

Concrete methods of study always remain auxiliary means, whereas comprehensive analyses, syntheses and theoretical generalizations can be made only by relying on the Marxist–Leninist world outlook and methodology.

That is why our scientists must continuously widen their knowledge and perfect their mastery of the Marxist–Leninist methodology and the methods applied by the classics of Marxism–Leninism and by our Party. These have been an inexhaustible source of and a decisive condition for effective studies and they remain so today.

«About Science», vol. 2

