Although socialist Albania aims to become an industrial country, agriculture still remains the basic branch of our economy. The strong reliance of the national economy on both industry and agriculture is a permanent principle, an indispensable condition to ensure rapid harmonious economic development, and increase the degree of economic independence. Therefore, the Party's policy for the development of agriculture has always aimed at ensuring that the deepening of the socialist revolution in the countryside should also lead, without fail, to the development of the productive forces of agriculture.

ENVER HOXHA

MODERN AGRICULTURE,
EXTENDED SOCIALIST

by KOZMA SKARÇO

Socialist Albania has begun the jubilee year of the 30th anniversary of its liberation. These three decades have completely removed it from its situation in the past. Yesterday: an enslaved, semi-colonial country, fought over by the imperialist wolves. Today: a free, socialist, independent, sovereign and inviolable country.

KOZMA SKARÇO – Journalist, secretary of the editorial board of the newspaper "Bashkimi".

In this land of the eagles on the Adriatic, lives a people who are masters of their own land, and are building a new life for themselves with their own hands.

The spirit and energy of the socialist revolution have entered into everything. Deep-going revolutionary transformations have also been made in the socialist
The establishment of socialist relations of production, and their constant improvement, has been accompanied by steady growth of the productive forces. The once primitive farming has been transformed into modern agriculture, which is characterized by extended socialist reproduction.

I

... November 25, 1945. It was less than a year since Albania had liberated its territory by itself, with the lives of its sons. Comrade Enver Hoxha was in the village of Gore, in the Lushnja district, where he was distributing the title-deeds given to the peasants by the Land Reform. The Party was thus keeping the promise it made to the peasantry in the years of the National Liberation Struggle. The first revolution was beginning in the socio-economic relations of the countryside. Over these last three decades, the banner of the party led the peasantry, just as it
did our entire people, from victory to victory.

At the end of every year, and every five-year period, the coopertivist peasantry, and all the agricultural workers, draw up the balance-sheet of their work. They look back over the road they have travelled and sum up the victories achieved. In 1970, when the fourth five-year plan ended and the fifth began, total agricultural production was three times greater than in 1938.

By 1970, total agricultural production, in comparison with 1965, was 33 per cent larger. This is a great advance, and constitutes a record for agriculture. To their surprise, this leap was made precisely in those years when the Soviet revisionists and their followers were piling us because, they said, our agriculture was "marking time."

Our agriculture is making big strides under the fifth 5-year plan. It is no longer a question of overcoming the backward situation inherited from the past; now we are striving to make the second, qualitative advance. We have already achieved results which surpass those of many other countries of the Balkans, and in Europe as a whole. We have placed over 56 per cent of the arable area under irrigation. This is a fine result for a country like Albania, where the terrain is so uneven. In 1972 we used 86.4 kg. of chemical fertilizers for every hectare of land. In 1972 agriculture obtained 92 per cent of the energy used from motor power, and only 8 per cent from beasts of burden. In 1938, this ratio was reversed. Albania began the fifth five-year plan with the following scale of mechanization: for every 100 hectares of arable land, the state farms had 3.1 tractors of 15 HP, and the agricultural cooperatives had 2 tractors of 15 HP.

By 1970, the volume of mechanized work, compared with 1965, was 80 per cent larger. Further progress in mechanization is being made under the present five-year plan. By 1975, in comparison with 1970, the number of tractors will have increased by 40 per cent, and combines by 50 per cent.

In the capitalist and revisionist countries agriculture is seen as an appendage of industry, and the agrarian countries are satellites of the metropoles, but here in Albania agriculture is considered to be a healthy branch of the people's economy, with as great a potential and importance as industry. In the capitalist countries agriculture is doomed to lag behind industry. Here the party and the people's power strive to develop it parallel with industry. From the very beginning, our party, has upheld the principle that we must have not only developed industry, but also advanced agriculture. We will achieve this by continuing to mechanize and intensify agricultural production. Agriculture reflects, follows and deepens the general economic crisis which has engulfed the capitalist world; in particular, it deepens the powerful crisis of manpower in industrial cities, and in industrial countries. From the backward agrarian south of Italy, the labour force, especially that of peasant origin, flocks to the industrial north. Thousands of able-bodied people, mainly of peasant origin, in Yugoslavia, Greece, or Turkey, abandon their families, their villages, and their homeland, and stream into the developed industrial countries to find happiness; they provide their unskilled labour very cheaply, and can often afford only a bare living. However, the industrial countries are also affected by the general crisis, and now need no extra labour.

For years in succession Western Germany, because of certain conditions, had comparatively high rates of industrialization, and gobbled up manpower without examining passports too closely. After 1970, when the rate of economic development began to slacken there too, and, the metallurgical, automobile and other industries stagnated, West Germany, (like many other industrial countries) began to close its gates. Those affected by weakened capitalist agriculture are now knocking in vain at the doors of industrial cities. The disintegration of the peasantry, which is inevitable under current capitalist development, is raising new problems, and is making the situation of all the working people in these countries even more difficult.

The Yugoslav press too is compelled to admit that a large number of Yugoslav citizens have left for the capitalist countries particularly the people from the less developed regions. The Croatian newspaper "Vjesnik" reported recently that during 1973 about 1700 Croatian workers, 20 per cent more than the previous year, went abroad. The rapid drain of manpower from Yugoslavia is particularly obvious in the countryside. The magazine "Nin" admitted that the "villages are emptying" while "Borba", substantiating this sour fact, adds: "According to our calculation, in the 23 years 1948-1971, it appears that the countryside has been abandoned by about 5 million peasants, and that about 250,000 people leave the countryside every year."

Our socialist economy knows no such problems. The aims and objectives of our party, for the development of the economy in general and of agriculture in particular, are quite different.

The struggle to eliminate discrepancies between industry and agriculture is here seen as part of the struggle to eliminate the essential differences between the socialist town and the socialist countryside. Comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out, at the 6th Congress of the Party: "Although socialist Albania aims to become an industrial country, agriculture still remains the basic branch of our economy. The strong reliance of the national economy on both industry and agriculture is a permanent principle, an indispensable condition to ensure rapid, harmonious economic development, and to increase the degree of economic independence. Therefore, the Party's policy for the development of agriculture has always aimed at ensuring that the deepening of the socialist revolution in the countryside should also lead, without fail, to the development of the productive forces of agriculture."

This policy, which expresses the vital interests of the peasantry, is being fully applied. Under the current five-year plan the rates of development for agriculture are high. By 1975, as compared with 1970, the production of grain is planned to grow by 50-55 per cent, industrial crops by 80-85 per cent, and milk production by 68-72 per cent.

The year 1974 - the year of the 30th anniversary of the liberation of the country - will be also a great year of work. After the fulfilment and the overfulfilment of the production of wheat, and the attainment of many other targets of the 1973 plan, our agricultural workers, convinced of the great potential of the modern agriculture with extended reproduction that the party has set up have decided that in 1974, they will increase total agricultural production by 27 per cent over 1973. In some special branches and sectors this increase will be 50-100 per cent. Our socialist countryside, powerfully aided by the socialist town, has everything it needs to plan and realize such bold, revolutionary rates.
These rates, which reflect the correct policy of the party in the domain of agriculture, did not come about by accident. At its 6th Congress, the party gave a reasoned answer as to why we devote so much attention to the development of agriculture. Agriculture in our country is the basis of the people's economy and of consumption. Agricultural and livestock products, together with the industrial products which use agricultural products as raw material, account for 75 per cent of the consumption fund. Agriculture provides a good part of the national income. The development of this branch promotes the alliance of the working class and cooperativist peasantry, which constitutes the political basis of our dictatorship of the proletariat. The major part of the population is involved in agriculture, and so it is one of the most powerful branches which helps to increase the independence and self-reliance of the economy, strengthen the economic potential of the socialist homeland, and more successfully combat the savage imperialist-revisionist encirclement.

Agriculture, as the basic sector of the economy, helps us to cope even better with the economic pressure being exerted on our country, and its price policy, by the capitalist and revisionist world, which is engulfed by general economic crisis and, recently, by the energy crisis too.

II

In November 1944, when Albania started work on the construction of socialist society, agriculture was weak. It bore the scars of the feudal bourgeois society from which we had come. At that time in the countryside, just as in the town, there was sound revolutionary optimism, and the belief that the party would keep the promise it had made to the peasantry, during the years of the struggle, to give them land and make them happy. Comrade Enver Hoxha, addressing the Myzeqe farmers and, through them, our entire peasantry, in November 25, 1945, said: «The Government does not promise you the moon, but you can be quite certain that it is doing its utmost to improve your situation. What we say, we do».

Over the years, as the five-year periods passed, they bore witness to the efforts of the party and of the people's power to keep the promise to the peasantry. Those years, with the directives of the party, the powerful material aid of the people's power, and the sweat shed by the peasantry themselves, became years of great revolutionary transformations in the character of our agriculture. Agriculture became, according to the directives of the party, the concern of the entire people.

During these thirty years of people's power, our once primitive agriculture, based on private ownership, became a collectivized economy, and is now deepening the process of its intensification and modernization. Albania, once a backward agrarian country, has become an agrarian industrial country. Now it is striving to become an industrial country with an advanced economy.

These transformations have not been made easily, nor all at once. The revolutionisation of agricultural production here, as a part of the socialist revolution in the countryside, has passed through several stages. The land reform, which toppled the old relations of land ownership, constitutes the first revolution in the socioeconomic relations of the countryside. Within a short period of time (November 25, 1945-November 17, 1946) revolutionary transformations of an historic character occurred in our countryside: the land was given to those who till it. The feudal class was overthrown economically. The exploitation of man by man was eliminated.

The land reform made the peasant master of the land, it realized his dream of centuries. As a result of the expropriation of the rich land owners, the estates of the former feudal state of king Zog, and the big estates of religious institutions, there were accumulated 172,659 hectares of farm land, 474,227 olive trees and 5,923 draft animals. These were distributed to 60,211 poor peasant families which were landless or had very little land, and served also to found the state socialist sector in agriculture.

One of the most valuable results of the Land Reform was the creation of conditions for the collectivization of agriculture. Our party clearly realized that even after the successful implementation of the Land Reform, the happiness the peasantry hoped for could not be said to be guaranteed. Lenin in his time had made it clear that «... with small-scale economies, they could not get free of poverty». He had recommended the «commune» as the only way to rid the peasant of his sufferings and misery. It was necessary to set up agricultural cooperatives, these «levers of economic progress, levers of the socialist development of agriculture», as Stalin called them, so that our agriculture could engage in intensive, modern development.

The collectivization of agriculture constitutes the second revolution, the most radical revolutionary turning-point in the socio-economic relations of the countryside. This revolutionary process, which started with the creation, in November 11, 1946 of the first agricultural cooperative at Krutje, in Lushnja, was one of the great victories of the party and the peasantry, achieved through selfless work in the field of the socialist transformation of our agriculture and of our countryside in general. The collectivization began and ended faithfully upholding the Leninist principle of voluntarism. According to the concrete circumstances, and the ever increasing ability of the socialist state to make capital investments in the countryside, and to help agriculture with cadres and specialists, collectivization was carried out in our country, sometimes quickly and sometimes more slowly, at first in the lowland areas, then in the highland areas. First they were in the form of cooperatives on a village basis, later on villages were united. They began with the usual type. Now they are moving on to agricultural cooperatives of a higher type.

The creation of higher type agricultural cooperatives represents a creative application by the Party of Labour of Albania of the Leninist policy on the collectivization of agriculture. The new type of cooperatives now being set up in our country represents a higher degree of the socialization of group property, in the course of its moving nearer to becoming the property of the entire people. The socialist state, by its direct participation with non-repayable funds, makes larger capital investments in agricultural production, thus contributing to the modernization and intensification of production in these economies at still higher rates. «The creation of the cooperatives of a higher type», comrade Enver Hoxha said at the 6th Congress of the Party, «is of great theoretical and practical importance, for the present and the future of our socialist agriculture, and the complete construction of socialism in the countryside.»
A regressive anti-Leninist road is pursued by the Soviet revisionists and their followers in the field of collectivization. The bitter fruit of the degeneration of the Soviet collective farms, which in Stalin's time raised Soviet agriculture high, is being gathered by the present Kremlin czars. The Soviet Union, until recently an exporter of grain, is now compelled to purchase very large quantities of grain from the capitalist world, as admitted by the Soviet press itself, «to fulfil the need for bread».

This is not accidental. The Soviet countryside has landed in a crisis. The collective farms have taken the road of capitalist organisation and development. In his time, Khrushchev began to apply to the agriculture of the Soviet Union the same methods applied in the United States of America by the 20th century slave-owner, Hearst. Khrushchev's successors, Brezhnev and Kosygin, do not want to lag behind their teacher. As a result of the breaking up of the Soviet collective farms, the number of private land owners is continually increasing. With their products they now decide the prices on the Soviet agricultural market. These owners produce 40 per cent of the meat on sale, as well as large quantities of fruit and vegetables.

However hard the Soviet revisionists may try to «pretify» this kind of private property, it is becoming an increasingly capitalist type of private property, which, as Lenin says, gives birth to capitalism and to the bourgeoisie continually, every day, every hour, spontaneously and on a large scale. This phenomenon is also being noticed in the other revisionist countries. The private sector in Poland controls 80 per cent of the arable area. Polish capitalist private farms account for 87 per cent of the agricultural produce. In Hungary, too, the private sector owns over 550,000 hectares of arable land. In these countries, just as in the capitalist states, the process of the degeneration of the countryside continues.

The landlords and kulaks get rich by destroying the poor and middle peasants who, just as in the capitalist world, abandon the countryside and go to the town in search of work.

Our five-year plans changed the aspect of our countryside and agriculture. They made it more beautiful, more prosperous. Our collectivized countryside has now been fully electrified and every village has the telephone. It has got rid of illiteracy and disease. The Party has ensured to the cooperativists, like the rest of our people, a free medical service and old age pension. The average life expectancy of our people has increased from 38 years before the war to 69 years at present. Numerous social and cultural projects are going up in every village. The standard of living rises from year to year.

The prospects for our agriculture and countryside are brilliant. The 4th Congress of the Party proclaimed the construction of the economic base of socialism to be concluded. It gave the directive for the transition to the stage of the complete construction of the socialist society. The intensification and modernization of agriculture constitutes one of the most important elements in this stage. The October 1962 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party is known as the plenum of the intensification of agriculture. It set out the main tasks in this new stage of agricultural development. The 5th and 6th Congresses of the Party defined these tasks more thoroughly. The January 1971 letter of the Party Central Committee on agriculture lays down a series of tasks to make all the agricultural cooperatives large modern units of extended socialist reproduction. This means that every unit should steadily increase total agricultural production and commodity production per hectare of land.

III

... November 1945. Comrade Enver Hoxha wholeheartedly congratulated the peasants on the land they received. «Your task is to cultivate the land you received in the best way, cultivate it thoroughly for your good, for the prosperity of your families, for the good of the entire Albanian people».

The land constitutes the fundamental and irreplaceable means of production in agriculture. But, as Marx teaches us, without man the land is neither a means nor an object of work. In our country, it is being turned into a great granary, thanks solely to the conscious and selfless work of our patriotic peasantry with the all-round aid given to it by our working class, and the colossal funds the state spends on agriculture.

Before liberation, agriculture was characterized by small plots of land, worked
with a wooden plough, plots suffered from the winter rains and the summer droughts, and chemical fertilizers and insecticides were unknown.

This «sick» land had to be «cured». The party and the people's power, as they had promised the peasantry, did their utmost in this direction. Colossal investments have been made in our agriculture. Over 220,000 hectares of land have been reclaimed, and over 300,000 hectares have been placed under irrigation, as against 29,000 in 1938. 800,000 tons of organic fertilizers were used in 1960, but by 1970 the figure had reached 3.3 million tons, whereas by 1975 about 5 million tons of organic fertilizers are expected to be used. About half of the lowland area has been reclaimed, in the full meaning of the word. This is one of the finest examples in Europe. There are few hydrotechnical works like that of Hoxhara in Europe, either. Through it, 22,000 hectares of farmland have been drained.

A great deal of work has also been done to systematize hilly and mountainous areas. The traditional terraces of Dibra, Puka, Himara and Kukesi have now been joined by those of Lukova, Vrithi, Jonufet.... Our hills and mountains have been made beautiful, rising tier upon tier. Both young and old trees grow there, and the work continues. The objective of the agricultural workers is: Every plot of land will be systematized and prepared in such a way as to be fully utilized, drained, irrigated by the most rational methods, unable to be eroded by flooding, and allowing the fullest mechanization.

Our agriculture today fills us with pride, especially at its future. According to the instructions of the party, work is going on to place farming on a scientific basis. The objective: to arrive at the point of working out technological maps for every crop according to the climate and soil conditions of the plot of land, the properties and requirements of the crop, and the planned yields.

The increase of yields at the planned level requires a deep knowledge of the natural environment, the climate and the soil. Only with such knowledge can one do a proper job. During the early years of the current five-year plan, according to the party directives that every agro-nomist should work with the map of the land like an army officer with his topographic map, we began and successfully concluded the great national undertaking to study the land, and to draw up on this basis, the cadastral, pedologic and agronomic maps for every agricultural economy. The study of the land constitutes another powerful scientific tool in the hands of the agricultural workers, to raise the level of production, and the effectiveness of the big capital investments which have been made in Albanian agriculture.

IV

Our patriotic peasantry, after having made their great contribution to the liberation of the country, started work on the land given to it by the people's power. But at that time there were small private economies, and simple reproduction. In this year of the 30th anniversary of liberation, agriculture displays a different, transformed, socialist face. The production processes are now carried out on an increasingly larger scale. During the 1961-1970 decade alone, in comparison with the 1951-1960 decade, total agricultural production increased by 62 per cent. The total agricultural production from the whole country in 1938 was obtained from the Fier, Lushnje, Durrës and Vlora districts alone in 1970.

Extended socialist reproduction is ensured both through an increased arable area and through constantly increasing yields.

In Albania, with its small area and a rapid population growth – it has doubled in 30 years – the reclamation of lands has been considered just as important a task as increasing yields from the existing land. Thanks to the people's high sense of responsibility, during the first four five-year plans, 350,000 hectares of land or 60,000 hectares more arable land than Albania had in 1938. Under the fourth five-year plan alone, about 100,000 hectares of land was reclaimed, or as much as one-third of the arable land Albania had in 1938. During the current five-year plan, too, our cooperativist peasantry will reclaim 92,000 hectares of land.

The slogan launched by the Party at its 5th Congress «Go to the hills and mountains, and make them as fertile and beautiful as the plains» gave a new and powerful impetus also to land reclamation. The work begun to implement this great directive is opening up new horizons in the remote mountain areas.

By means of this directive, with its profoundly Marxist-Leninist content, the party aims at still further transforming nature and the economic life of these areas, ensuring a great increase in production on a national scale, establishing a more correct distribution of the population, and providing more help for the rapid advance of these areas, so as to prove, in the specific conditions of our country, the false, reactionary character of bourgeois revisionist claims that «the highlands have no prospects of development».

Livestock and crop yields have increased rapidly. This has been the main way of ensuring extended socialist reproduction. During the fourth five-year plan, 93 per cent of the increase in grain production was due to increased yields. 70 per cent of total agricultural production growth was achieved in the same way. In 1970, as compared with 1938, the wheat yield was 2.2 times larger, maize 1.8 times, and rice 1.9 times.

The enlarged agricultural cooperatives, the deepened process of concentration, specialization and cooperation, and the establishment everywhere of a strict regime of economization, are creating the conditions for the extension and deepening of the process of extended socialist reproduction.

Agriculture in Albania has entered a new stage; it now has all the objective and subjective requirements to make another big leap forward.

The intensification and modernization of agriculture in our country is a result of the correct policy of the party, and an expression of its consistent but also creative application of the precepts of Marxism-Leninism on agriculture. Extended socialist reproduction comes from our vital society, the great work of the entire people, and the application, on this important front of socialist construction, of the principle of self-reliance.

The intensification and modernization of agriculture, and hence extended socialist reproduction, is being achieved in our country through a revolutionary road, on a scientific basis. We now possess a strong material and technical base. We have amassed a wealth of experience in all branches of production. Above all, we have the correct line of our party. All these factors encourage and inspire us to achieve even more victories in the domain of agriculture during future five-year plans.
Pandi Mele
«The City of Sirens»
black and white.