In Albania, the agrarian question has been and remains a very important component part of the general line of the Party in every stage of our revolution and socialist construction. This is due not only to the demands of the practical application of Marxism-Leninism but also to special national reasons.

**FIRST REVOLUTION IN AGRARIAN RELATIONS**

On the eve of the second world war Albania was a backward agricultural country. The overwhelming majority of the population, or 87 per cent of it, was made up of peasants. Farming was the main branch of the national economy. It was characterized by one-sided extensive development, on a monocultural basis. The level of the productive forces and productivity of labour was exceptionally low. Small scale production based on manual, rudimentary means and equipment prevailed, along with feudal relations of production. Large lambed estates were quite widespread, particularly in the country's most fertile lowland areas, whereas in the social life of the highlands specially in the North, patriarchal hangovers were still present. Capitalist relations of production were, in general, in their initial stage. The national income which was created in the countryside could barely meet the needs of simple reproduction of a poor economy.

The Italian-German foreign occupation brought the country further great devastation. Per head of population, the damage inflicted on the economy of our country in the years of the second world war was the greatest in Europe.

Thus, before the establishment of the people's power, ours was a backward country, with a very backward level of politi-
cal, social and economic development, a country where national-colonial oppression existed, a country which had not gone through the complete cycle of the capitalist mode of production.

The establishment of the state power of the workers and peasants on the 29th of November 1944, as a result of the triumph of the people's revolution, marked the country's liberation from the national-colonial yoke and social oppression. Albania's liberation marked the great day of the true rebirth of our people, the demarcation line where the old world ended and the new world, the brilliant era of socialism began. Since this time our revolution has passed through three main stages: the anti-imperialist, democratic stage, for the winning of national independence and the establishment of the people's state power, the stage of the establishment of new socialist relations, which was crowned with the victory of the economic base of socialism in both town and country; the stage of the complete building of socialist society, which our country has entered and is developing.

In the field of economic-social changes the transformations of socialist character in the town and especially in the countryside were the most important tasks. While state socialist ownership was established in industry, building-trade, communication, foreign trade, internal wholesale trade, in the banking and credit system, etc., two roads were pursued in the countryside: the nationalisation of the principal means of production, of the lands of the big landowners, state and monastery property, and the creation on this basis of state farms, as well as the socialist transformation of small producers, the socialist cooperation of the peasantry. Before the cooperation of agriculture was carried out the land reform was implemented in the countryside on the principle -the land belongs to him that cultivates it-, and, at a second stage, the collectivisation of agriculture was started and concluded successfully, on the basis of the Leninist principles of conviction and free will.

The land reform marked the first revolution in the social-economic relations of the countryside. A main feature of this revolution was the democratic transformation of the relations of ownership over the land, the liquidation of the class of big landowners, of feudalism and the beginning of capitalism. The thing that was to provide the complete solution to the antagonistic contradiction between the advanced political power and its backward economic base in the countryside, as well as the contrast between town and country, was the socialist transformation of agriculture. The collectivisation of agriculture constitutes the second revolution; it marked the most radical turning-point in the social-economic relations of the countryside. With the complete establish-
ment of socialist relations in the countryside, its rapid development on the road of socialism became possible. The many-years experience of the revolutionary road pursued by our Party in building socialism in the countryside has proved that this is a long and difficult process which includes a series of revolutionary transformations of a deep ideological, social, economic and technical character, etc. The great correctness of the Leninist ideas has been fully verified in our reality. With us the collectivization of agriculture was carried out without having previously carried out the nationalization of the land, under the conditions of private property, without waiting for the industrialization of the country, under the circumstances of uninterrupted class struggle. Speaking about this fundamental question at the 5th Congress of the PLA, comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out: «The development of agriculture and the experience of socialist construction in our countryside confirm the importance and universal validity of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, that the only road for the building of socialism in the countryside, in countries with a fragmented peasant economy, is the collectivization of agriculture. Any road other than collectivization leads only to the development or restoration of capitalism in the countryside.» Thus, in the solution of the agrarian question, our Party has been guided by the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and has implemented them in conformity with our specific historical conditions. This is a policy diametrically opposed to all the anti-Marxist, bourgeois and revisionist «theories» and practices. The chiefs of the 2nd International – Kautsky, Bauer and company, made the agrarian question conditional on, and tied it to, the development of the productive forces, and the carrying out of the industrialization of the country. In capitalist countries, due to the fact that the political power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and capitalist private ownership over the means of production is in force, there is a profound contrast between town and countryside. This constitutes the deep antagonistic political and socio-economic contradiction in the relations in the countryside, which curbs the development of the countryside, causes class differentiation and economic polarization, the abandonment of the countryside and its subjugation by the capitalist town. On this basis various «theories» of the subjugation of the countryside by the town and its blind tailing after the latter have come into existence. The modern revisionists who have discarded Marxism-Leninism, have given up the positions of socialism in the countryside, advocating spontaneity. This has led to the slackening of the rates of development of the productive forces and, in general, to the backwardness of agriculture, to the birth and enlivenment of capitalism with all its social-economic consequences.

SUPERIORITY OF THE COOPERATIVE ORDER

During the years of the people's power, under the correct Marxist-Leninist leadership of the PLA, socialist agriculture has achieved a series of successes. This is clearly shown by figures. In 1970, the country's total agricultural production, as compared with 1965, was 33 per cent greater, with an average annual rate of increase of 5.4 per cent. During the last decade (1961-1970) total agricultural production was 61 per cent higher than during the previous decade (1951-1960). During the fifth five-year plan (1971-1975) in accordance with the directives of the 6th Congress of the PLA, total agricultural production will increase by 63-69 per cent, at an average annual rate of 10.6 per cent. Production of field crops, livestock, forming and fruit-growing will all increase. The 6th Congress of the PLA pointed out that, despite the progress made on the road of socialism, our country is still an agrarian-industrial one. Agriculture has been and remains the basic sector of our people's economy. It constitutes the principal source of income for the major part of the country's population, provides the overwhelming part of the basic food products for consumption by the population, fulfills the needs of the light manufacturing industry for raw materials and is an important source of our exports. The directives of the 6th Congress of the PLA envisage a great increase in agricultural production. The realization of all the tasks of the fifth five-year plan (1971-1975), the successful functioning of the extended socialist reproduction, as well as the maintenance of the high rates and the proportions decided in the plan for the increase of social production and national income depend directly on the realization of the targets on the front of agricultural production.

Agriculture, like the whole of economy, is characterized by its increasing level of intensification. It is envisaged that 4/5 of the increase in agricultural production under the fifth five-year plan, will result from the rise of per hectare yields of agricultural crops and of the productivity of livestock farming. This means that during the fifth five-year plan, for the five years taken together, about 50 per cent more food grain and 2.2 times more cotton and potatoes, will be raised from the same area of land whereas with an increase of only 22 per cent in the area sown to fodder crops 64 per cent more livestock products will be produced. As pointed out by the Party, this rapid development of the productive forces in the countryside and the intensification of agricultural production are not a simple quantitative growth and do not constitute merely a technical production process. On the contrary, this development is a many-sided process, of an ideological, political and socio-economic character, which includes both the material aspects of the productive forces and their social aspects.

At the present stage of the socialist revolution, the improvement of the social aspects of the relations of production in the countryside, affects a broad circle of problems. As has been said, the socialist revolution has correctly and successfully solved many fundamental problems in this field. Through a motive force in the people's revolution, the peasant gained his freedom and became master of the land. The exploitation of man by man, as well as the contrast between town and countryside have been eliminated. All the ties and relations between town and countryside, between industry and agriculture, between the working class and cooperativist peasantry have been established on a just socialist economic-social basis. From the political viewpoint the cooperativist order strengthened the socialist state, the militant alliance between the workers and peasants, as the social basis of the people's power, enhanced the role and responsibility of the peasantry and
its active participation in the management of social affairs.
From the economic viewpoint, the cooperative order placed agriculture on the rails of a modern economy of large-scale socialist production, and greatly developed the productive forces.
From the social viewpoint, the cooperative order not only liberated the peasantry from social oppression, but also excluded any possibility of a return to the old feudal-bourgeois relations in the fields of ownership, exchange, distribution and consumption.

IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIALIST RELATIONS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Now we are faced with the task of the continued, revolutionary improvement of the new socialist relations in the countryside. The liquidation of the antagonistic contradictions between the countryside and the town gives way to the strategic task of reducing and later, in the future, eliminating the essential differences between town and countryside.
Speaking at the 6th Congress of the PLA about this strategic and tactical task of the Party in the countryside in the present stage of the complete construction of socialist society, comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out among other things: "In the present stage of the complete construction of socialism we must step up our work still more to reduce the essential differences between town and countryside. The results achieved in this respect are great, but they must be carried forward relying firmly on the actual situation of our countryside, on the special national characteristics and the possibilities of our economy." 1
Here it is a question of social-economic differences which stem from the character of the socialist relations of production. As is known, between industry and agriculture there are also differences of a material and technical nature, such as natural conditions, biological features, and the seasonal character of production. While the essential differences are being reduced, the material and technical ones remain.
In our country the process of reducing the essential differences between town and country started long ago. Among the most important measures adopted and implemented by the Party and the socialist State in this direction are those for the rapid development of the productive forces, for the strengthening of the material-technical base, for the intensification of agriculture. Parallel with this, compulsory free education, and free of charge health services have been implemented throughout the countryside, the provision of electric power in all the villages has been concluded, and Albania is one of the few countries in the world with all its cities, inhabited centers and villages supplied with electric power. Taxes on the incomes of working people, including those employed in agriculture, have been completely abolished. A big job has been done likewise in extending the motor road and telephone networks, and a large number of social and cultural establishments have been set up. At the end of 1970 there were more than 3000 production units and workshops, over 2,600 service units, over 1,900 creches, 1,400 kindergartens functioning in the villages of our country. Under the fourth five-year plan alone some 10,000 social and cultural establishments and more than 40,000 dwelling houses were built in the villages.
On this basis, the standard of living in the countryside has steadily risen. Incomes have increased, prices of a series of consumer goods have been reduced, and a series of measures favourable to the agricultural cooperatives have been carried out.
The revolutionary improvement of the new socialist relations in the countryside is of great importance to the full construction of socialist society, for they open a broad road to the development of the productive forces, improve the property relations as well as those of distribution, exchange, and consumption.
A characteristic feature of the socialist relations in the countryside, too, is their conformity with the character of the productive forces which, as a general rule, are always advancing. Therefore, the building of socialism in the countryside has been and is being carried out in our country on the basis of the conscious, coordinated and uninterrupted development of the productive forces as well as of the relations of production. This is a revolutionary process which is carried out in conformity with the Marxist-Leninist general line of the Party and with the requirements of the objective laws of the revolution and socialist construction.
The strengthening of property relations constitutes the basis or the perfection of socialist relations in the countryside, too. As a result of the rapid development of the productive forces, socialist property in the countryside, in its two forms — state and cooperative, has greatly extended. During the years of the people's power the area of arable land has been increased. In 1970 the irrigation capacity was 38 per cent greater than in 1960, covering 54 per cent of the area of arable land. Likewise in 1970, the volume of mechanized work increased 60 per cent as compared with that of 1960, whereas the chemical fertilizer supplied to agriculture increased 5 times. 25 kg. of active substance were used per hectare of cultivated land, in 1970, thus taking a big stride ahead and surpassing the neighbouring countries.
This rapid development of the productive forces has been associated with a further extension of the scale of socialization of property and labour. A characteristic of these recent years is the extension of the group property through the enlargement of cooperatives. At the end of 1970 the number of agricultural cooperatives was 643, compared with the 1,484 that existed in 1960. Each cooperative owned on the average, 2.66 hectares of land. They accounted for the 77 per cent of the total agricultural production realised.

WAYS TO PERFECTION. CREATION OF COOPERATIVES OF A HIGHER TYPE

In accordance with the directives of the 6th Congress of the PLA the property relations in the countryside are to be perfected in three principal ways: First, by further strengthening the existing group property, on the basis of the increase and intensification of production; second, by extending the scale of socialization of the group property through further mergers between cooperatives, and, third, through the creation of a number of agricultural cooperatives of a higher type with the participation of the State in them.
The agricultural cooperatives with state
participation are a higher form of organization of property in the countryside. In our country they are being organized for the first time, according to the directions of the 6th Congress of the Party. As big socialist economies, these cooperatives coordinate better the interests of the group with the interests of society; they represent an important step forward towards the raising of the group property to the level of the property of the whole people; they make possible the further narrowing of differences between town and countryside. These cooperatives represent a new and more advanced stage of the development of the cooperative order in the countryside, in which the socialist state contributes to the development of the economy by financing investments, so as to ensure higher rates and a more rapid development of agriculture through the intensification and modernization of production, placing it on a scientific basis and raising organization and management to a higher level. According to the criteria laid down by the Party, the participation of the socialist state in the cooperatives of a higher type takes place under the conditions of the preservation of the principle of the property of the group and of the relations of distribution and exchange stemming from it. In proportion with the non-repayable financial means, the state contributes to these agricultural cooperatives, mainly with supplementary investments for clearing levelling and protecting land, construction of drainage and irrigation works, for establishing of fruit tree plantations, for construction of a productive character, for increasing the number of pedigree animals, etc. In these cooperatives the peasant's individual plot of land is preserved. Work will be carried out on the basis of norms and valued in money and not in work days. That will be guaranteed pay. In these cooperatives, the cooperativist democracy will be preserved and integrated with the principle of unified management. In the field of planning, finance, record keeping and the organisation of work and production, in general the same or similar forms to those of the state agricultural enterprises will be implemented. The transition to this new form of organisation and management of the agricultural cooperative economy is a result of their increasing strength and of the growth of the financial and material-technical possibilities which the state has to assist the cooperatives. These cooperatives of a higher type are more advanced than the other agricultural cooperatives, but they are not yet state agricultural enterprises. Differences still exist between them in the fields of ownership, exchange, and distribution. The cooperatives of a higher type are an intermediary and transitional form. In many directions of their organisation, economy and equipment they are very close to state enterprises. As the conditions mature, in the future, they will pass gradually to the property of the whole people.

The organisation of the agricultural cooperatives of a higher type is a new theoretical and practical experience in the socialist construction of the countryside and in the narrowing of the differences between it and the town, a new road for the present and the future. Proceeding on this road, the most powerful agricultural cooperatives which have been established on the most fertile plains of our country will increase production at more rapid rates and will guarantee stable supplies of those products which our people's economy needs most. Parallel with the experience gained and with the conditions and possibilities created, this form of organisation will be gradually extended to the other agricultural cooperatives, too, and measures will be worked out to liquidate, little by little, those differences existing today between the forms of socialist property in the countryside.

While perfecting the socialist relations in the countryside, special attention is devoted also to the other aspects such as the further deepening of the social division of labour between the branches and sub-branches of production, exchange relations, those of distribution and consumption. Marx described the relations of exchange and distribution as the other important aspect of the relations of production.

In this direction importance is attached to deciding a correct ratio in the division of the incomes of the cooperatives into the fund of accumulation and the funds of social and individual consumption, bearing in mind that the individual distribution must always be done in accordance with the demands of the socialist law of distribution according to work.

Of very great importance to the development and perfection of socialist relations in the countryside is the directive of the 6th Congress of the PLA for the further strengthening of the economic links and improvement of the exchange of productive activity between the countryside and the town. Among the most important measures being implemented in this field are the following: the abolition of the obligatory grain delivery system and the passage to voluntary selling at prices differentiated for the highland and lowland areas; the unification of selling prices so that the agricultural cooperatives can buy industrial commodities used for reproduction on the same terms as the state agricultural enterprises, improvements in supplying the peasantry with industrial goods and food stuffs so that the living conditions on the countryside become closer to those of the town.

The implementation of these measures from the beginning of the fifth five-year plan period is a consequence of the increase of production and of the incomes of the peasantry. Now the agricultural units in the countryside are big socialist economies which are increasing the quantity of production for the market for year to year. Previously many agricultural units in various areas of our country were not self-sufficient in grain, for they were still undeveloped and poor from the economic-productive viewpoint, but now the situation is very different. Not only have they become self-sufficient in grain, but they also deliver large quantities of surplus grain to the state.

**PENSIONS FOR THE WORKING PEASANTRY**

Another measure of very great importance to the strengthening of the cooperativist order and the raising of the material well being and cultural standard of the peasantry, is the establishment of the pension system covering all the cooperativist peasants. Recently there has been a considerable increase in the number of agricultural cooperatives which have begun to give their members old age pensions, as well as social insurance aid, etc., from their own funds. The 6th Congress of the PLA laid down the task of establishing a full system of old age, disablement and family pensions during the year 1971. This system is established according to unified criteria, the funds will be centralized and administered by the state.
Benefits for temporary incapacity emergency benefit and benefits for expectant mothers will continue to be provided by each agricultural cooperative according to its economic possibilities, but always on the basis of unified criteria. Unified criteria will be applied also to the pensions of the three kinds as to age, length of service and the rate of pension paid.

The application of these measures in the field of social insurance in the countryside will increase the weight and influence of the social consumption funds. Together with the incomes received by the cooperated peasants from the distribution of funds for individual consumption through their participation in the common work, on the basis of the work days carried out and the production achieved from the distribution of the funds for individual consumption, the social consumption funds will increase the real per capita income of the population and will improve the material and cultural standards of peasantry.

Important financial means from the centralized funds of the society and of the agricultural cooperatives themselves, will be invested in the countryside during the fifth five-year period for social-cultural establishments. The extension of the telephone network to all the villages will be completed, the automobile road network will be extended, supplies of drinking water will be improved, etc.

The application of these measures in the countryside on a national scale is of great social, political and economic importance. They have to do with the speedy development of the productive forces, with achieving a greater and more rapid increase of agricultural production, with the guaranteeing of its stability and with the harmonization of the development of agricultural production with the other branches of the people's economy. These measures will have a great influence on raising the scientific management of the agricultural economy to a higher level and on narrowing the differences between the town and the country.

The working class plays the leading role in this whole revolutionary process of transformation of the mode of production and way of life in the countryside. As the leading class, it stands in the forefront of the all-round revolutionisation of the whole of our national life, illuminated in its work by the light-giving teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

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1) E. Hoxha, Report to 6th Congress of the PLA, page 80.