

The Revisionist Alia & Co. - Enemies of the Albanian people

Roter Morgen
May-July 1991

Translated and Published by:
The November 8th Publishing House
2021

Series of articles in Roter Morgen (May, June, July 1991). The articles dealt with what was happening in Albania at the time and raised some fundamental questions about socialism in this context.

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Critical Comments

In pro-Albania Marxist-Leninist Circles, the question of how exactly the revisionist degeneration occurred in Albania is a little-discussed topic. Possibly because it is a painful reminder of what the Albanian proletariat lost at the hands of the revisionist Ramiz Alia and the bourgeois criminal Sali Berisha.

But in order to establish a framework for future Marxist-Leninist development, this is a vital question. A concrete analysis of how socialism was torn down in Albania, step by step, is required to prevent such a degeneration whenever proletarian power is achieved again. These articles are not sufficient to fulfil that role. However, it is critical to see how a living, breathing Marxist-Leninist party addressed the murky revisionist course set out by Ramiz Alia and Adil Carcani, among others.

Admittedly, they did not spot this revisionism immediately and even supported some of Alia's reforms. This is not correct for any Marxist-Leninist party, big or small, and shows a vacillation towards critical questions of the development of socialist society. In addition, these articles contain a number of errors.

In some articles, they tend to stress the objective factor more than the subjective factor in regards to the situation in Albania. They do warn against stressing objectivism, as in the "Against Subjectivism and Objectivism!" section and even call the latter Trotskyist, but then continue to similar narratives.

They even go as far as to suggest that if genuine Marxist-Leninist forces took control of the PLA, that they continue with bourgeois elections and still support reforms:

“We are prepared to take certain steps backwards because the conditions for socialism are currently unfavourable: e.g. concessions to foreign capital, but limited. e.g. free markets for certain consumer goods and services, but limited. We are prepared to limit actual ‘socialism’ temporarily to a certain sector of the economy, but we consider this to be the leading sector because we adhere in principle to conscious planning of the economy based on social interests...”

So! The writers stress the objective factor that the “conditions for socialism” are “unfavourable”, that concessions to foreign capital must be made, free markets for light industry must be opened up, the limitation of “socialism” to a certain sector of the economy (???) is necessary, and think that this still constitutes the “planning of the economy based on social interests”? Incredible! Hardly anything is learned from the situation of the revisionist degeneration in the USSR because these things constituted the full restoration of capitalism! There are many quotes from the Classics and from Comrade Enver Hoxha specifically to disprove these absurd theses. If the Marxist-Leninist grouping (Nexhmije Hoxha, Prokop Murra, etc.) had gained control, they would have had a great task in front of them, re-establishing complete proletarian control over the Party and strengthening their links. In no way could concessions to the bourgeoisie strengthen their position, in fact it would weaken their positions significantly as did Alia’s reforms.

In any case, Roter Morgen did the internationalist Marxist-Leninists a great service in writing and releasing these articles. This is likely the largest assembled criticism of Alia and Co., even amidst very little information about the developing situation at that time. It contains hard to find materials, quotes, and analysis of the situation that will be invaluable in a future study.

The Revisionist Alia & Co. - Enemies of the Albanian people

On the surface, the elections in Albania may look like a success for the PLA: It won 2/3 of the seats in parliament. Even though this distribution of seats, which was favourable to the PLA, came about due to the majority voting system: After all, the PLA received 56% of the votes cast. However, it received these votes mainly in the countryside, while in urban areas it was mostly defeated by the "Democratic Party". Ramiz Alia, for example, failed in Tirana with a bang. There were very few workers left who voted for the PLA candidates. This did not come as a surprise to us: already last year, the KPD travel group had found out in the Albanian factories they visited that the mass of workers rejected the PLA - sometimes very harshly. And from the news, we had to learn that undignified scenes took place as soon as, for example, there was even a rumour in Durres that a ship was going to drop anchor with which one could leave Albania: Let's get away from here, that was the motto for tens of thousands. And these were not tens of thousands of lumpen proletarians and criminals, nor were they mainly peasants or intellectuals, they were mainly workers. The mass of Albanian workers do not have the consciousness of being the ruling class. If one were to tell Albanian workers that the dictatorship exercised in Albania is their dictatorship, a dictatorship of the working class, one would as a rule - depending on one's temperament - either be mocked or beaten up. But can one assume that the working class is the ruling class, that it has just not noticed it? Such an assumption would be absurd. If the mass of workers have the consciousness that they have nothing to lose, that they are dispossessed, without rights,

oppressed, then this can only be because this is the case! And this, in turn, is in no way because the revisionists Alia and Co. are now also officially burying the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Khrushchev once did. This official burial is merely the conclusion of a development which has transformed the Albanian working class from the leading class of the country into an exploited and oppressed class.

The Working Class has Lost its Vanguard Party

If the Albanian workers think nothing of the PLA, this is obviously mutual. The discontent and growing resistance of the workers were apparently swept under the carpet by the state and the party until the very end with phrases such as that they were all just criminals, instead of asking what the circumstances were that distanced the class from their party. One remembers the statement of the SED leaders after 17 June 1953 that the people had lost the confidence of the government and Brecht's ironic remark that then it would probably be better for the government to dissolve the people and elect a better one.

The PLA today has radically abandoned any thought of empowering the working class to take a leading position in society; not even phrases are left of it. In the election programme, the PLA declared that "its basic aim is to take care of the people, their prosperity, the creation of necessary conditions to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of the people".

In other words: the party "takes care of the people" instead of aiming at the self-activity of the members of society, instead of fighting for every cook to be able to govern the state, as Lenin demanded. Just like Ulbricht and Honecker, Alia and co. could not imagine and did not want a future in

which all social decisions were not monopolised in their hands. This is diametrically opposed to Lenin's demand: "Communism says: The vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party, leads the non-party mass of the working people by enlightening, training, educating this mass, first the workers and then also the peasants ('school of communism') so that they can reach and really reach the point of concentrating the management of the entire national economy in their hands." (Lenin, Works vol. 32, p.34)

The idea of the party "taking care of the masses" is instead reminiscent of the Polish revisionist Gierk's saying: "We will govern well and you will work well."

And since the revisionists Alia and Co. have abandoned any thought of mobilising the working class for the social planning, management and control of production, they consequently regard socialism as an "outdated model". The PLA is fighting for power, but the preservation of power is an end in itself, is only meant to defend the sinecures of a privileged class, and no longer has the slightest thing to do with the interests of the working class, with the defence of socialism. According to its election manifesto, the PLA "aimed and aims" to "build a just and democratic society where everyone is valued and paid according to their work and contribution to the progress of society. It has promised to preserve these values and enrich them with the achievements of the civilisation of modern times."

Whereas the party leaders naturally find it "just and democratic" if they secure their position of power and are paid well accordingly. And if it serves this cause, then open anti-communists may also be involved in power; why should that bother you if you yourself have finally said goodbye to the aims and ideals of communism? After all, these open anti-communists will also help to bring the "achievements of the

civilisation of the modern world”, i.e.: the blessings of imperialism, into the country. Based on these blessings, the ruling class hopes to be able to defend its power against the working class. The fact that Albania will be shot to pieces industrially by the concentrated batteries of Western economic power, that any independent development of the economy will be made impossible, that Albania will once again become the poorhouse of Europe, does not bother these rulers. They are not only traitors to the working class, but also to the Albanian nation. Not only have they eliminated the state’s monopoly on foreign trade, but the free convertibility of the lek is also provided for in the electoral programme. But all this has its logic: if Alia and co. have abandoned any thought of leaning on the working class, they have no other option but to lean on imperialism and pact with reaction.

The deep rift between the PLA and the Albanian working class cannot have been caused by the sudden deterioration of the economic situation due to the change in the international situation: Certainly: such a change has taken place. The collapse of the revisionist countries and the abolition of the state trade that Albania had maintained with these countries gave Western imperialism the opportunity to massively increase the economic pressure on Albania. However, Albania had also experienced very difficult situations earlier. For example, when Khrushchev tried to blackmail Albania, together with Western imperialism in its heels. Enver Hoxha had said at the time that the Albanians would rather eat grass than bow down. And this was not a phrase at the time: it corresponded to the attitude of the majority of the people, and the leading force of these people at the time was the working class.

The external factor, the increased pressure of imperialism, cannot be the ultimately decisive cause of the downfall of socialism. It is true that this external factor could have led

to the necessity of certain compromises, above all in the economic field. It is not wrong in principle to also use foreign capital to develop the productive forces when the situation demands it: Lenin had already resorted to this means during the so-called New Economic Policy (NEP). (Of course, he held firm to the foreign trade monopoly of the proletarian state under all conditions).

But Alia and Co. are not about compromising to defend a core area of socialism. They are concerned solely with securing their power and position. The sudden massive deterioration of Albania's external situation and the resulting economic problems have merely made the deep rift between the PLA and the Albanian working class appear suddenly and abruptly, but this must have been preceded by a longer development which has led to the Albanian workers no longer having a party and therefore being subject to the influences of imperialism. Certainly, it is unworthy of broad masses of Albanian workers to expect salvation from imperialism, but one must not forget that this attitude was bred for a long time by the PLA, which obviously trusted imperialism more than the class of which it was supposedly a party.

First, the information about imperialism, its interests and aggressive intentions was weakened more and more, then it was stopped, and today the PLA praises imperialism in such tones that it would be embarrassing for some social democrats in our country. In its election programme, for example, the PLA declared that it would "make efforts for Albania to participate in all the progressive processes in the world which would contribute to the strengthening of peace and security, equal cooperation among peoples and the emancipation of people", citing as an example the processes of European security and cooperation (the CSCE is meant here). Imperialism as a guarantor of the emancipation of humanity! Further,

according to its electoral programme, the PLA "starts from the point of view that European security should be a general security, for the big and small countries, that they should make faster progress in overcoming the divisions and cleavages arising from the time of the blocs and the harmful mentality created by the cold war. This should be accompanied by all-round economic cooperation which will help to reduce the differences of development, to create the possibilities for all the peoples of our continent to enjoy the blessings of the present progress."

So when the supposed party of the workers proclaims that imperialism will ensure peace and prosperity for little Albania, think twice before throwing stones at Albanian workers who rise up against the PLA because they have the illusion that under any other rule - including that of imperialism - things can only get better.

How did the Revisionist Degeneration Come About?

But what was the nature of this prolonged development that deprived the Albanian working class of its vanguard party and thus rendered it politically and ideologically defenceless? At present we are not in a position to trace this development precisely on the basis of empirical material: Partly we lack material, partly we have not yet sufficiently evaluated the existing material. However, we have drawn some conclusions from the degeneration of former socialist countries and we know quite a bit about this development in the GDR in particular, whereby many phenomena in the GDR correspond quite closely with phenomena in Albania today. On this basis, some conclusions can be drawn about the general causes of revisionist degeneration in Albania and some assumptions can be made about concrete causes,

although it is necessary to investigate these matters further and to verify and concretise the conclusions.

Above all, it is necessary to understand socialism as a transitional society which contains birthmarks of the old, capitalist society alongside germs of future communism. This society by no means automatically leads to communism; if progress towards communism stagnates, this means in the long run that the birthmarks of the old society will be extended. But orientation towards communism also means that the self-activity of the members of society is strengthened more and more. The socialist state and the leading role of the communist party must therefore be directed towards promoting this self-activity instead of stifling it. But this transition is always very difficult because it means that the differences between head work and manual work, especially between managerial and executive work, are gradually narrowed with the aim of ultimately overcoming them. This path is particularly difficult in a country with weakly developed productive forces, and Albania has had to work its way out of the Middle Ages in this respect. In addition, in a country with a predominantly peasantry, the working class has to make considerable compromises in order not to jeopardise the alliance with the peasants. All these factors impede the advance towards communism.

Despite these enormous difficulties, the PLA under the leadership of Enver Hoxha has long been able to maintain a close link with the working class and the people and to inhibit the emergence of a mawkish, bureaucratic, privileged functional class which is the basis for revisionism.

There are always tendencies towards the emergence of such a stratum in the transitional society, and this is because there must still be specialists for managerial activities. After all, not all labourers without exception can yet be called upon

to manage production and society. At the same time, there is not yet the possibility of distribution according to need, as there will be in communism, but the necessity of remuneration according to performance. It cannot be avoided at all that the specialists for head work and especially for managerial work are better paid, and this consolidates the existing class structures instead of abolishing them. In the socialist Soviet Union, this had led to enormous wage differentials, to very high salaries for the leading cadres of the nomenklatura. After the bitter experience of the revisionist degeneration of the Soviet Union, the PLA, led by Enver Hoxha, took care that wage differentials in Albania did not become too high.

But the formation of a privileged class is difficult to prevent if one cannot make rapid progress in the abolition of the division of labour, which was again very difficult in Albania because of the poorly developed state of the productive forces. It is not only the official wages or salaries that play a role here. There is also the danger of the formation of rope networks; people gain advantages for each other. This is not necessarily done with subjectively hostile intentions: when filling important positions, one naturally prefers reliable people, but later one may prefer someone because he "comes from a good family", because his parents are party members, etc. In this case, one's own merits no longer count. So it is no longer one's own merits that count, but whether one is born into a certain class. In Albania, many measures have been taken to fight against such things. Bureaucratism cannot be eradicated as long as there are class differences, but it can be fought. As long as there are mainly people in the party who not only speak Marxist-Leninist concepts but mobilise the workers and other labourers, as long as the communists really fight for as many workers as possible - also those without a party affiliation - to take on a leading role in the company

and the state, the workers will understand that there must inevitably also be grievances, bureaucratism, command economy and that these things cannot be eliminated overnight.

But if more and more communists become more and more complacent, talk more about the dictatorship of the proletariat than really fighting for a leading role of workers in all areas of society, talk more about communism than really fighting for the elimination of privileges, cronieships and the like, then there will be less and less willingness among the mass of workers to care about social affairs.

All this does not lead overnight to a loss of the party's authority, to people rejecting socialism. As long as the economic situation is bearable, many will accept things, be satisfied with the state, but not regard it as their state, but rather say "the communists are doing quite well".

But if things develop in such a direction, the orientation towards the self-activity of the members of society, towards communism, is gradually lost. And so a cycle develops, because the weaker the initiative from below becomes, the more the view seems to be confirmed that things only run when the party interferes directly in everything and anything, when the state apparatuses and institutions regulate things, and so on. The more important and "indispensable" then the leading personalities appear, and the more "justified" it seems that they enjoy considerable material advantages as a reward for their "responsible activity". Society then moves not towards the elimination but towards the consolidation of classes. The democratic rights guaranteed to the labourers by the socialist power of the communist party remain more and more on paper. Of course, one has the formal right to criticise the party's personnel proposals in elections, appointments, etc. But those who do so increasingly get caught in the middle. But anyone who does so increasingly gets the reputation

of being a troublemaker or even an enemy. Such conditions can gradually develop within the socialist order, when the vigilance of the revolutionaries decreases, when a certain self-sufficiency sets in, but such developments - when they have exceeded a certain level - inevitably lead to revisionism. Such developments must have taken place in Albania.

It is true that Enver Hoxha, with the negative example of the Soviet Union in mind, had seen this danger, warned against it and taken measures against it; he had aptly explained about the development in the Soviet Union: "The party was afflicted with heavy rust, with political apathy; the erroneous opinion spread that only the head, the leadership, had to work and solve everything. This view led to the fact that everywhere and in everything it was said: 'The leadership already knows', 'The Central Committee is not mistaken', 'That's what Stalin said, and that's it', and so on. Stalin may not have said much of this, but they hid behind his name. The apparatuses and the party and state officials became 'omnipotent', 'infallible', they acted bureaucratically, invoking democratic centralism, Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism, which in reality was no longer Bolshevik. Undoubtedly, the Bolshevik Party thus lost its former vitality. It preserved correct formulas, but they were only formulas; it carried out, but was not independently active; the working methods and forms in the leadership of the party led exactly to the opposite. Under these conditions, the bureaucratic-administrative measures began to prevail over the revolutionary ones. The vigilance was no longer operative, because it was no longer revolutionary, even if it was called revolutionary. It went from being a vigilance of the party and the masses to a vigilance of the bureaucratic apparatuses and turned - if not entirely in form, then in fact - into a vigilance of the state

security service and the courts.” (Enver Hoxha, *The Khrushchevians*, Tirana 1980, p.48)

And yet the PLA did not have a complete theoretical conception of these processes, especially of their socio-economic, class roots. It was assumed, for example, that the antagonistic contradictions “are not due (to) socialist relations of production, but are a product of the existing birthmarks from the old bourgeois society inside and the pressure of capitalist-revisionist encirclement from outside”. (Scientific Conference, Tirana 1984)

They are, of course, the product of the birthmarks of the old society, but these birthmarks are rooted precisely within socialist relations of production since these relations of production involve the division of labour between manual and manual labour. From the false idea that these birthmarks had no basis in the socialist relations of production, the voluntarist illusion (voluntarism: the idea that one can achieve almost anything, regardless of objective circumstances, if one only wants to) arose that the problems arising from this could be solved mainly with directives, orders, state measures and with a very formally understood “leading role of the party”, which in turn reinforced methods of bureaucratism and the command regime. As already said, the PLA took many measures to fight against such tendencies that could affect the unity of the party and the class. But this struggle, in turn, came up against limits which, in theoretical terms, were rooted, among other things, in the incomplete recognition of the source of antagonistic contradictions, in an incomplete analysis of the socialist relations of production.

Since the inner class basis of antagonistic contradictions was not properly understood, a certain tendency arose to fight false ideas with prohibitions; if such a tendency becomes

overpowering, the orientation towards the self-activity of the members of society is permanently impaired.

The initiative that came from revolutionary youth in the sixties to close down churches and mosques was a good thing, a powerful blow against the reactionary influence that the clergy exerted in society. But the ban on the practice of religion cannot have been a proper policy in the long run. Once there is no material basis for religion, it dies out of its own accord, so there is no need to ban it. In Albania, however, with its relatively backwards productive forces and its large peasantry, there had to be a certain material basis for religion; but then a ban on the practice of religion is likely to strengthen religion, to turn believers against socialism.

But books by Sartre or Kafka, for example, were also banned. Of course, this is what makes such books interesting in the first place. As a rule, a ban is unnecessary and harmful, because Marxism has enough vitality, at least among the working class, to oppose bourgeois ideas, if one only knows how to handle them correctly. And parts of the intelligentsia and the peasantry, because of their situation in life, will not be "convinced" even with the best arguments as well as with the most severe bans. By banning them, one gives the impression that Marxists are not in a position to defend themselves against the ideas spread in such books. It is very bad when party functionaries and family members of party functionaries are allowed to own such books, but others are not, as was the case at least after a certain point. If bourgeois ideas are combated mainly through bans instead of through the scientific ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the orientation towards the self-activity of the members of society is increasingly lost from this point of view as well. The functionaries of the state and the party appear more and more as the guardians of eternal truths who have to determine what is

right and what is wrong. Marxism is the most revolutionary theory, the most real-life oriented method of knowledge that humanity has produced, but it is thus robbed of its essence, transformed into a dead dogma system, a religion.

Ismail Kadare's comment that there had been a campaign against his novel "The Great Winter" is significant, and that he had often been asked in astonishment whether he was not in prison. This campaign only ended abruptly when Enver Hoxha declared that the book was not bad after all. The forces of the apparatus obviously did not like the fact that this novel portrayed concrete people who had been shaped by the contradictory class reality of the transitional society, instead of abstract "socialist" heroes.

But what conditions must have prevailed there that only the intervention of Enver Hoxha could end such a campaign! The conditions must have been very similar to those in Stalin's Soviet Union, where often only Stalin's personal intervention could prevent the worst. (This is clear from numerous passages in Stalin's works, which show that people had been unjustly attacked or coldcocked by bureaucratic forces, had turned in vain to countless offices of the party or the state and were only rehabilitated when they turned to Stalin).

Such conditions ultimately drive wavering intellectuals like Kadare to the side of the counterrevolution, after they have previously been "kept in line" for a long time mainly with material privileges. (Which, by the way, is not very healthy either.) The working class can only exercise its hegemony over the intellectuals and its hegemony (supremacy; leading role) in the intellectual and cultural sphere if the communists know how to creatively apply Marxism-Leninism and to vividly prove its superiority over bourgeois ideas, to show that only Marxism-Leninism is able to explain reality, life,

and to change it in the sense of the working class and all progressive humanity.

Alliance with the Peasants and Hegemony of the Proletariat

The hegemony of the proletariat is a pivotal point in the question of the defence of socialism. This is also and especially true in a country like Albania with a predominantly peasant population, a country in which the proletariat can consequently only exercise its class rule in alliance with the peasants. The communist party, with all the necessary policy of alliance, must not forget that socialism cannot be asserted if communist elements do not gradually develop, however slowly, in the whole way of life of the people. It is the working class whose objective class interest is directed towards communism. It is the working class youth who are most ready to pave the way for such developments.

But according to our observations, the PLA has apparently understood less and less in recent years how to enthuse and mobilise the youth for communist goals and initiatives. It did it best as long as it was a matter of banishing the greatest need, the greatest misery: Creating bread for the people, defeating malaria by draining the swamps, defeating illiteracy, liberating women from the veil and other extreme forms of domination by patriarchy, etc. But at some point, there comes a point when the elementary needs are satisfied, at which point the question arises: Will the revolution continue, will man overturn his own activity, himself, with the circumstances? (Marx: "The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and human activity or self-transformation can only be grasped and rationally understood as revolutionary practice." MEW 3, P.6)

Or are the relations of production, and on this basis, the whole way of life of the old society, ultimately reproduced? Socialism must inevitably change, be it in one direction or the other. It is a transitional society and cannot simply constantly reproduce its own conditions, for these conditions contain elements of the old alongside germs of the new.

In a society with relatively weakly developed productive forces, it is admittedly difficult to always keep the initiative, to always develop new germs of communism (however modestly), but if you lose the initiative, you lose the proletariat and the youth, you cannot assert socialism. It is very important, especially for us, to study how the PLA has gradually lost the initiative in this respect, because with us, with developed productive forces, after the victory of the proletarian revolution, the question will arise much more sharply from the beginning: Will germs of the communist mode of production and life be developed, or will capitalism reassert itself? The phase in which revolutionary enthusiasm unfolds and asserts itself on the aims of struggle, which relate to the satisfaction of the most elementary needs of the people, will be much shorter. Even more: already today, the task arises for us in daily politics to develop elements of communism as aims of struggle, which are objectively put on the agenda by the highly developed state of the productive forces, but cannot be realised because of the capitalist character of the relations of production. This is a question of the revolutionary leadership of the daily struggle, the question of leading the struggle for immediate interests in such a way that the capitalist relations of production are attacked by this struggle. And the struggle for these immediate interests is not always first and foremost a struggle against hunger. Even if 10% of the people vegetate below the official subsistence level, hunger,

homelessness etc. are certainly not the main problem for the masses here today.

This can change, a revolutionary situation can (but does not have to) arise on the basis that these problems again become the main problem, but our task today is to make revolutionary politics in today's conditions. (These connections are only to be hinted at here, but they must be pursued, these things must be investigated further, in order to be able gradually to develop a communist daily policy capable of appealing to broad masses. Such a policy must be developed on the basis of today's conditions, and not on the basis of the conditions of the Weimar period or of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary Russia; which we have certainly not done sufficiently, and here may lie a source of our lack of influence.)

The PLA has always emphasised very strongly the national factor in its politics. This was undoubtedly correct, but it must be seen that the strong emphasis on the national question was, by its very nature, alliance politics towards the peasants. For the class-conscious proletariat, there is no need for national politics to defend socialism. It defends socialism because it defends its class interests. On the other hand, this means that if the working masses have lost their class standpoint, then no national politics will help. And this is exactly what the PLA is experiencing today. The peasants even today vote for the PLA because they are rightly afraid that the penetration of imperialism into Albania will destroy their existence (and are the deceived ones because the PLA in fact promotes the penetration of imperialism). They have something to lose, while the workers assume that they have nothing to lose. However, they are also mistaken in this. Because capital will not improve the living conditions of the Albanian workers, but drastically worsen them. The proletariat is the revolutionary class precisely because it does not need any

detours to put the proletariat at the service of an emancipatory movement, because the proletarians are so depressed by capitalism that they are forced to rise to become the ruling class in order to free themselves and thus humanity from subordination to the necessities of capital utilisation. If the Albanian proletarians assume that they have nothing to lose, this shows very clearly that they have forfeited their role as the ruling class.

In our experience, the struggle for the complete liberation of women also seems to have gradually stagnated. This struggle is also a specific concern of the class-conscious proletariat, which has no interest in any social differences between the sexes, while patriarchy has powerful historical roots in the peasant extended family, which are already rooted in the outgrowths of primitive society. In a peasant country, workers' power must take account of such peasant traditions, must not exaggerate the development, so as not to endanger the unity of the toilers, which is necessary for the defence of socialism.

Phenomena such as the ban on abortion, the impossibility of women being in cafes, etc. - reactionary as they are - may therefore have a temporary, relative justification. But as far as we can judge, such phenomena have been a taboo subject in the public discussion in Albania until recently. This, however, is already the seed of abandoning the initiative, because if the proletariat makes concessions to its ally, it must not abandon its own class line, its ideology, it must clearly mark compromises as compromises instead of transfiguring them as the "will of the people".

But if this happens at one point or another, the proletariat becomes infected by the backward mentality of other strata and is ultimately deprived of its role of hegemony in the struggle for the emancipation of humanity. The policy of the moral-political unity of the people, if unity is made absolute,

becomes from a means of exercising the hegemony of the proletariat to a means of eliminating this hegemony. This is true in the relation proletariat - intelligentsia as well as in the relation proletariat - peasants.

These few examples should be representative here of the general question: Has it possibly come over time to a certain absolutisation of the concept of the people, and that means above all to a certain absolutisation of the alliance with the peasants? The enormous importance that Leninism attaches to the question of the alliance with the peasants, especially in backward countries, is undoubtedly justified. But it becomes absolute if one loses sight of the fact that this alliance must be an alliance in which the working class plays a leading role; errors in this direction would run counter to the very core, the very essence of Leninism! At first sight, it might seem that the fact of "left" experiments in the field of agriculture, which, as is well known, led to the arbitrary mass slaughter of livestock and meat shortages, militates against the assumption that the proletarian party has shown too much consideration for the peasants as allies and that this is a line of development which has led to its finally forfeiting its character as a proletarian party.

But this assumption can nevertheless be true. Both right and "left" mistakes on the question of the alliance with the peasants can have a common theoretical basis in the underestimation of the existing class antagonisms and the increasing absolutisation of the conceptual abstraction of the "people". At the same time, this can lead to economic policy taking too little account of the interests of the peasants, while in ideological and political questions too little attention is paid to formulating the specific class standpoint of the proletariat (if necessary also in distinction to the peasants and of course also to the intelligentsia) and - in accordance with the objective

possibilities and relations of forces - gradually asserting it, which, however, is absolutely necessary in order to maintain the strategic orientation towards communism and thus to assert socialism.

For socialism is, by its very nature, strategic orientation towards communism, the class character of this orientation being proletarian. Any inadmissible weakening of the hegemony of the proletariat is thus a weakening of the orientation towards communism and undermines socialism.

Necessary compromises in the field of economics and, if necessary, also in the field of politics must in no way lead to concessions in the field of ideology, i.e. to the weakening of the proletarian class standpoint. This implies, among other things, that compromises must be marked as such at all times.

Against Subjectivism and Objectivism!

In the analysis of socialism on the one hand and revisionism on the other hand on the part of Marxist-Leninists, subjectivism was predominant for a long time, i.e. subjective factors were seen predominantly (sometimes even almost exclusively) as having enabled or favoured the transition to revisionism: Mistakes of Marxist-Leninists, the need of bureaucrats for privileges, the deviation from Marxist-Leninist theory, the betrayal of revisionist leaders. In such a view, revisionism appears as a subjectively caused operational accident of history. Such an approach is idealistic because it makes subjective considerations, ideas, aspirations, etc., which are removed from the context of the objective development of a socialist society and are thus absolutised, in this absolutised form the motor of history. Such a method is un-Marxist. Objectivism can be a reaction to subjectivist errors. This recognises only, or almost only, objective factors in the degeneration of a socialist country, whether internal or external. The

method of objectivism is no less un-Marxist than that of subjectivism, for Marxism certainly recognises that the subjective action of people is in a certain sense the motor of history: people are the product of social circumstances, but in the transition to communism they change - on the basis of objectively acting laws - these circumstances and thus themselves. Marx: "The materialist doctrine of the change of circumstances. ... forgets that circumstances are changed... by people..." (MEW 3, p. 5; by "materialist doctrine" is meant here the pre-Marxian, non-dialectical materialism into which present-day objectivism falls back).

Precisely because communism is a society in which people are not subject to blind laws but consciously shape social conditions, the subjective factor plays an enormous role in the transition to communism. But since the mass of the population is not yet shaping social conditions (even though it must increasingly come to that!), the subjective behaviour of the proletarian vanguard party and its leaders plays an important role.

The necessary criticism of subjectivism must not lead to a denial of this fact. What is wrong with subjectivism is not that it gives a significant role to subjective considerations, ideas, aspirations, etc. within the transitional society, but that it considers them detached from the social conditions, from the economic basis. On the basis of the economic basis of the transitional society, however, both tendencies that are directed towards communism and tendencies that give rise to revisionism and are directed towards the restoration of capitalism arise. The subjective factor, the action of the people, the class struggle decides which tendencies will ultimately prevail. However, communism can only prevail if people learn to master the production process better and better. In other words, in the transition to communism, the subjective

factor becomes more and more part of the economic basis. This fact is "overlooked" by both subjectivism and objectivism since both are mechanical, not dialectical. By downplaying the importance of the subjective factor, Objectivism belittles the revisionists and removes them from responsibility for the overthrow of socialism and the restoration of capitalism. Through the objectivist approach, the subjective mistakes of Marxist-Leninists also seem to gain the same importance as the betrayal of the revisionists, since allegedly almost only objective factors are responsible for the course of events anyway; the dividing line between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries is thus blurred. It also softens the irreconcilable dividing line with the Trotskyists, who have always preached that socialism cannot be realised with poorly developed productive forces or in a single country. Objectivism is therefore politically extremely dangerous and can even become a gateway for revisionism and Trotskyism.

On the question of productive forces

So far, socialism has triumphed almost only in backward countries (the CSSR and the GDR are a certain exception), and in all these countries revisionism eventually prevailed. This naturally raises the question: is the victory of revisionism the (perhaps even necessary?) consequence of the relatively underdeveloped productive forces? Can socialism assert itself at all under such circumstances?

Marx/Engels: "This 'alienation', to remain intelligible to philosophers, can of course only be abolished under two practical conditions. In order for it to become an 'intolerable' power, i.e., a power against which one revolutionises. On the other hand, this development of the productive forces (which at the same time already gives the empirical existence of human beings in world-historical rather than local existence) is

also an absolutely necessary practical precondition (of communism, d. Verf.), because without it there can be no more than an empirical existence in the world of wealth and education, both of which presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development. Without it, lack would only become generalised, and thus, with need, the quarrel about what is necessary would have to begin again, and all the old shit would have to be produced, because, furthermore, only with this universal development of the productive forces is a universal intercourse of men set up..." (German Ideology, MEW 3, p. 34)

Under the conditions of pre-monopolist capitalism, it followed from this that the victory of socialism in less developed countries was impossible: capitalism was indeed quite capable of further developing the productive forces and thus further promoting the process by which, on the one hand, the mass of the population became propertyless and, on the other hand, the conditions were created for the transition to communism not only to generalise scarcity. But this has changed fundamentally with the transition of capitalism into its imperialist stage: Today, a poorly developed country hardly has the chance to develop the productive forces on the basis of "normal" capitalist development, but inevitably comes under the domination of imperialism, which guts it like a Christmas goose, but at the same time prevents the independent national development of the productive forces.

Albania would have remained what it was, namely the poorhouse of Europe if the working class had not seized power there in alliance with the peasants; only on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which consciously set itself the goal of socialism from the beginning, was the tremendous development of the productive forces that Albania experienced possible. And vice versa: the restoration of capitalism will

lead to the rule of imperialism, which will destroy existing productive forces, but in any case prevent their further national development and turn Albania back into the poorhouse of Europe. In other words, under the present imperialist conditions on a world scale, in a backward country, capitalist development does not first have to produce the mass of the population as propertyless and thus create a power against which to revolutionise, as Marx said, but a proletarian revolution can come about without this precondition being given. The result is a proletarian power which finds backwards productive forces, which therefore does not find the conditions to advance to communism. It must create these conditions, these productive forces, itself. (By the way: Marx's reference to the development of the productive forces, which as a world-historical process creates the conditions for communism, is brilliantly confirmed here: world-historically, it was indeed the development of the productive forces, namely in the imperialist metropolises, which led to conditions under which a proletarian power can and must win in an underdeveloped country, in order to make possible the further development of the productive forces in this country). So: the proletarian power in such a country must itself create the productive forces which make the advance to communism possible in the first place. And this means: apart from the general problems of transitional society, which will always arise and which are connected with the fact that "only in a revolution can the overthrowing class get rid of all the old filth and become capable of a new foundation of society". (MEW 3, p. 70), a special problem is added here: precisely this problem, that one must constantly fight against the danger that "with the necessity, the dispute about the necessary would also have to begin again and the whole old shit would have to be produced".

And further, the danger that revolutionaries will be forced to put all their strength into the struggle to create better material conditions, more developed productive forces, "forgetting" that this is merely a condition already created by capitalism under "normal" circumstances, a condition, in fact, for overturning the whole mode of production and life. That the functionaries become more and more caught up in the idea that the content of the proletarian revolution is that the people receive bread, housing, health care, etc., that the functionaries here become philistines and finally revisionists and in the end are surprised that the people, blinded by the glitter of capitalism, revolt against them, whereupon these philistines and revisionists think of nothing better than the expansion of their state power to oppress the working people.

The backwardness of the productive forces was thus an essential objective condition in almost all countries of socialism so far, which favoured the victory of revisionism. But mind you: favoured! The victory of revisionism and the restoration of capitalism did not represent a liberation of the productive forces anywhere but hindered their further development, thus was by no means "objectively unavoidable" or "progressive", which would be identical. (For an objectively inevitable development is progressive from the point of view of Marxism).

What is the Revisionism of the PLA?

Of course, there can be no doubt that a situation has arisen in Albania in which the broad majority of the population either welcomes the liquidation of socialism or is at least passively opposed to it. And this raises the question: would there still be a basis for a policy of defence of socialism today, even if Marxist-Leninist forces had prevailed in the PLA who wanted such a policy? For it goes without saying that

socialism cannot be maintained in the long term by force against the majority of the population; that would not be socialism, not a strategic orientation towards communism, i.e. towards the self-activity of the members of society.

It is objectively possible, given the low level of the productive forces and the unfavourable international situation, to nevertheless maintain a socialist sector of industry. Such a socialist sector of industry would not only be possible, but it is necessary from the point of view of the further development of the productive forces in Albania. A subjective condition for the defence of a socialist sector (even if it is alongside capitalist sectors of the national economy) is that the people are satisfied with a modest level of living which is improving only slowly. (Capitalism and the rule of imperialism will thoroughly ruin the living standards of broad masses in the long run, but they do not seem to realise this). Similarly, they would have to accept that the political situation, democracy, intellectual life, which have been distorted by bureaucrats, will improve only gradually: For with optimal analysis and policy by the Party - starting from the present state - no great leaps could be made here either. It seems that the masses no longer have such patience, the party no longer has the necessary credit, such long-term, tenacious work does not find the necessary support. Admittedly, the party leadership wants anything but such work, such politics. But we have asked ourselves the question of what the politics of the PLA could look like under the present conditions if side Marxist-Leninist forces had prevailed. And under these conditions, the PLA could have said something like the following, for example, in the elections:

"We are prepared to take certain steps backwards because the conditions for socialism are currently unfavourable: e.g. concessions to foreign capital, but limited. e.g. free

markets for certain consumer goods and services, but limited. We are prepared to limit actual 'socialism' temporarily to a certain sector of the economy, but we consider this to be the leading sector because we adhere in principle to conscious planning of the economy based on social interests. In agriculture, significant reductions in the degree of socialisation may well be necessary. In political life, there has been too much nepotism, bureaucratism, etc., and our party takes responsibility for this, although there are also objective factors. From now on we will fight this to the best of our ability, but we will say openly that we cannot put an end to it immediately and certainly not completely. And we can only achieve success here if you support us. On the other hand, we are prepared to severely punish anyone who takes advantage at the expense of the people, especially members of our party. Furthermore, you must understand that the bad economic situation demands special measures. Therefore, workers who cheat society must also be severely punished. Factory managers must be given far-reaching powers, which is not our ideal, but at present there is no other way; election of factory managers is not possible at present. But all political means to fight against bureaucratic leanings must be given to the workers; our party will support the workers in this struggle and remove any party member who does not do so. This is our programme, and this programme will only gradually improve the situation, and only if a sufficient number of working people actively support this programme. The alternative is the establishment of capitalism, and under the given circumstances this means the rule of imperialism, which will plunge Albania into misery and poverty: Materially, you will be much worse off in the long run, and you will also have freedoms much less, not more, while our programme provides for the gradual extension of real rights and freedoms for the

labourers. We communists, therefore, consider the path proposed by the opposition parties to be pernicious, but we cannot and will not impose our programme on you, for socialism can only exist if it has the sympathy of the overwhelming part of the working masses. If you do not trust us, then you will have to make your own painful experiences with capitalism and imperialism. So decide for yourselves.”

Of course, such bourgeois parties would not be allowed as long as there was a reasonably firm bond between the working class and the communist party; the party would then rather mobilise the class against the counterrevolution. But if the working masses no longer have confidence in the communist party, the violent defence of power would become an end in itself, which would make it even more difficult to regain the confidence of the class. But if elections are held to which bourgeois parties are admitted, a communist party worthy of the name would have to declare openly: “These parties are parties of counterrevolution, of imperialism’s domination of Albania, are parties of a road that will lead to misery and hardship. Our party will not go this way. If you do not want the capitalist-imperialist road, then vote for our party. If you do, we will work on our programme and we expect your support! But if you want capitalism and imperialist rule over Albania, then our party is not available for such a policy.”

If the PLA had taken such a principled stand, then it would not have betrayed Marxism, then, even if it had lost the elections and lost power, it would have had the chance to regain the confidence of the labouring masses later, when they had first had their painful experiences. The PLA would have remained a Marxist-Leninist party and would not have had bad conditions to fight for power again later. Instead, the PLA has, firstly, adopted a programme of the restoration

of capitalism, and secondly, it passes this off as a "socialist" programme. The second is in any case fraud and a radical departure from Marxism. The first (if one openly states what one is doing) would then be correct from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism if capitalism were objectively necessary and progressive because of the state of the productive forces. But this is not the case. Firstly, practice has proved that socialism is possible in Albania and has brought huge progress. Secondly, it is certain that imperialism - also economically - will bring a huge setback. The fact that the mass of the population does not see it this way does not change these facts. Marxists, however, must orient themselves first and foremost to the facts, and not to public opinion. Above all, however, the question arises why no forces were able to assert themselves in the PLA which adopted a Marxist-Leninist policy. Why revisionists like Alia determine the course of the party, whose only endeavour is recognisably to secure the power and privileges of a certain stratum. Obviously, the majority of the leading functionaries of this party have gradually gone down the road of mawkishness and finally revisionist degeneration, they have increasingly only mouthing the class standpoint of the proletariat and Marxism-Leninism, treating it as a religion, not caring whether and for how long they still believed in this religion. Their actions were increasingly shaped by their own class interest, that of a petty-minded, bureaucratising stratum that secured more and more privileges for itself. Corresponding to this, on the changing pole of society, the proletariat increasingly lost its class consciousness, because the PLA increasingly lost its character as a proletarian vanguard party, leaving the workers without leadership.

According to all our experience, the process can only have taken place in this way, and it is important to trace this as accurately as possible, even if we lack many facts. But our

knowledge of the development of the GDR comes in handy here: as already said, we can find considerable parallels here. And our knowledge of developments in Albania could be systematised. It speaks volumes, for example, when two years ago functionaries of the youth federation, when asked by comrades of our travel group how they would fight the bourgeois influence in the youth, answered that there was no such influence, that the youth stood united behind the party. How could the party produce such functionaries? How could the party allow conditions in which it was obviously advantageous for functionaries to behave in this way? (It doesn't matter whether these functionaries believed this!) There must have been a climate in which it was more or less consciously assumed that the advance of bourgeois ideology was unstoppable anyway, so at least the facade had to be maintained so that there would be no landslide. But this means that a large part of the party cadres were no longer objectively guided by proletarian class interests. And here already lies the germ of revisionism in the party.

Our Attitude Towards Albania in the Past

In Roter Morgen 7 and 8/1990 we welcomed the so-called reforms in Albania. Already at the end of 1989, we reprinted Ramiz Alia's speech at the 8th Plenum of the CC of the PLA and expressed that we considered this speech positive. Today we know that the "reforms" meant the transition to revisionism and capitalism. Thus, the question arises as to how it came about that we welcomed these "reforms".

In particular, we positively assessed various measures of decentralisation of planning and leadership competences. We assumed that these were means to increase the initiative of the working people, to improve socialist democracy and to fill it more with life.

The Albanian statements, especially those of Ramiz Alia, tried to put these measures in such a light. The economic measures were combined with various political measures: For example, more heads of enterprises and institutions of the state apparatus were to be elected, it was to be possible to choose between several candidates, there was to be (according to Alia's account) more open discussion, eliminating the misconception that all decisions had to be unanimous. Alia demagogically declared that unity in principles would not be affected but, on the contrary, would be better realised by discussing and voting controversially on individual issues that would not affect the principles.

All this sounded good, sounded as if this was a struggle against bureaucratism, against the spirit of command which subjects the masses to formal regulations and inhibits their initiative, a struggle for raising the activity of the masses in building socialism. And we are still of the opinion that socialism must follow such a path if it wants to assert itself.

There are certainly situations in which the leading role of the party must be expressed in a very abrupt form, in which only a relatively small section of the class can be directly relied upon to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat, in which the initiative of the broad masses is relatively undeveloped and the apparatuses of the state must consequently play a very large role. But it must be understood that this is anything but a desirable state of affairs, that it is rather a question of crutches.

Thus, in 1920/21, in the struggle against the so-called workers' opposition around Bukharin, Shlyapnikov and Kollontai, Lenin very sharply criticised the slogan of this faction that the working masses must immediately take the management of the entire national economy into their own hands. He proved that this was illusory, that the conditions

for this did not exist, but had to be created first. At the same time, however, he resolutely upheld the idea that the working masses should take the management of the entire national economy into their own hands. He criticised the "workers' opposition" precisely because it spoke of the "management of the national economy by the labouring masses themselves" merely as a phrase, but did not want to carry out the necessary protracted work to realise this goal: "Syndicalism transfers the management of the branches of industry (central and main administrations) to the mass of non-party workers divided according to branches of production; it thereby abolishes the necessity of the party and does not carry out any protracted work to educate the masses and actually concentrate the management of the entire national economy in their hands." (Lenin, *The Crisis of the Party*, Works Volume 32, page 34)

In other words, Lenin criticised the syndicalist deviation precisely because its policy was not geared to realising the goal it loudly spouted, namely, to concentrate the management of the entire national economy in the hands of the labouring masses.

The liberal, anarcho-syndicalist deviation is only one variant of revisionism that can bring down the dictatorship of the proletariat. The other variant consists in more or less openly abandoning the goal of leadership by the toiling masses and perpetuating leadership by apparatuses, by special specialists, by party and state!

This is revisionist because it eliminates the orientation of socialist society towards communism. Such a conception may talk a great deal about the leading role of the party, but this is demagogic, because if the aim of the party's work is no longer to empower the mass of workers for direct leadership, then the party is no longer a vanguard party of the working

class. Such a revisionist orientation is openly elevated to a programme when the PLA declares in its electoral programme that its fundamental aim is "the care of the people, their prosperity, the creation of necessary conditions to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of the people".

In other words, the party "takes care of the people" instead of aiming at the self-activity of the members of society, instead of aiming at the workers, including the non-party workers, gradually assuming their role as the ruling class in real terms. This is diametrically opposed to Lenin's demand:

Communism says: "The vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party, leads the non-party mass of the working people by enlightening this mass, first of all, the workers and then also the peasants, training, educating and training them (school of communism) so that they can reach and really reach the point of concentrating the management of the entire national economy in their hands. "(ibid.)

The idea of the party "taking care of the masses" is instead reminiscent of the Polish revisionist Gierek's saying: "We will govern well, and you will work well".

Such an open concession of a complete renunciation of communism is, of course, only the end point of a longer revisionist and thus counter-revolutionary development. And we hoped, as I said, that the reforms announced by Alia could counteract precisely such a development by demanding the self-activity of the labourers. We also hoped that the extension of material incentives was not primarily intended to promote individualism and a narrow "private horizon", but was calculated to make the toilers feel, through their practical experience, that they themselves were in control of their destiny and well-being, that these measures were thus an organic part of an overall conception which was intended to promote the initiative of the masses and thus the germ of

communism in socialist society. These hopes of ours had nothing to do with reality, but because of our very limited knowledge of the situation in Albania, we did not know that at the time. We had not the slightest idea of the extent to which the gulf between party and class had already assumed, the extent to which a privileged stratum had grown up whose aim was above all the defence of its power and privileges, and that, as a logical consequence, the communist initiative of the masses had been almost completely eliminated. Under these circumstances, however, the reforms, as we know today, could not amount to the consolidation of socialism, but only to open counter-revolution. They were an expression of the fact that the economic disintegration had reached such a degree that the ruling functionary class could no longer rule by the old methods, that the system of a highly developed, increasingly bureaucratic centralism had become obsolete with the rapidly decreasing initiative of the masses. Decentralisation was thus not intended to demand the local initiative of the masses as a social initiative, but only to strengthen individual thought for itself and to bring about fragmentation into competing commodity producers. This could not be seen in these measures themselves, but one had to know the concrete class relations in order to know that the measures had this reactionary content and not the positive one we hoped for. It is precisely the case that the same measure can promote socialist democracy, the initiative of the masses, under certain conditions, but counterrevolution under other conditions.

Incidentally, we were well aware that the reforms in Albania could also contain dangers, and we discussed this internally. An avoidable mistake at that time was merely that we did not say so publicly, that we instead presented a possible interpretation of the reforms as reality, as objective reality, in *Roter Morgen*.

Far more serious, however, is another mistake, which concerns not only our attitude in the last year or two but our attitude since the foundation of our party. This mistake is that we tended not to consider the development of a socialist country, and precisely of socialist Albania, as a difficult, complex, contradictory process, that consequently there was a tendency to idealise, to glorify, to glorify concrete phenomena in Albania. Of course, we have always spoken in general terms about the fact that there are contradictions in socialism, even antagonistic contradictions. But in concrete terms we have often not behaved in this way, we have defended phenomena in Albania without understanding them, without understanding them from the circumstances, the objective and subjective conditions, from the balance of power of the classes. Partly, this was due to our lack of theoretical understanding of the laws of socialism, the transitional society between capitalism and communism, and we are now making efforts to gradually close the theoretical gaps. But this alone is not a complete explanation of our mistakes on this question, as on other questions concerning class reality in our own country. Because the question immediately arises why we did not make efforts to close these theoretical gaps earlier, why we did not even recognise these theoretical gaps as such earlier? In our opinion, this is due to a lack of understanding of Marxism-Leninism as the revolutionary world outlook and method for understanding and transforming the world. Lenin emphasised that "Marxism is not a dead dogma, not some completed, finished, unchanging doctrine, but a living guide to action." (Lenin, Works Volume 17, page 27)

But we had a tendency to regard and treat it as a finished, completed doctrine that only needed to be "applied". For example, we arbitrarily separated the concepts of "application"

and "further development" of Marxism-Leninism and thought we could be content with "applying" it.

But life constantly poses new problems, and Marxist-Leninists have the duty to develop Marxism-Leninism in the analysis of these problems. This corresponds exactly to Marx's method; Lenin emphasised "that Marxism contains nothing resembling 'sectarianism' in the sense of some secluded, ossified doctrine which has arisen apart from the army road of the development of world civilisation. On the contrary, the whole genius of Marx consists precisely in the fact that he gave answers to the questions which progressive thought had already posed to humanity."(Lenin, Works Vol. 19, page 3) If new problems arise for humanity, Marxists must give new answers to them, and they must do so on the basis and with the help of the proven world outlook and method of Marxism-Leninism.

For example, Stalin's writing on the economic problems of socialism in the USSR is undoubtedly a significant further development of the Marxist-Leninist theory of transitional society, but by its very nature, it could not conclusively clarify the problems of transitional society. In particular, mankind's experience with revisionism raises a whole series of questions which also relate to socialism, from which revisionism, after all, emerged, questions which Stalin naturally could not answer, but which we are obliged to answer. However, if one does not fulfil this duty, if one remains more or less in the idea that one can "defend and apply" Marxism-Leninism in a "finished" form, this leads to an atrophy, an ossification, a stagnation of Marxist thought. There is then a danger that Marxism-Leninism will be reduced to a system of dogmas into which reality is forcibly squeezed.

Of course, we did not do this exclusively, but there were tendencies in this direction, and precisely in the consideration

of socialist Albania. In the period of sectarianism, these tendencies were very strong and often enough predominant. If, for example, a KPD travel group stayed in Albania, everything and anything that was experienced was usually declared to be trend-setting and revolutionary and defended in absolute terms, and pressure was exerted on those who did not want to share such a metaphysical way of looking at things. Such phenomena were later used by the right-wingers and Trotskyists, who had previously often been the worst sectarians themselves, in the party to slander socialist Albania. On the basis of these experiences, we corrected our attitude on such questions after our open break with the Koch Trotskyists, but we have not done so consistently in every respect. It also happened in recent years that phenomena in Albania were defended at all costs, whether we understood them or not. Of course, the anti-communist ideological pressure that imperialism exerted on us played a role in this, sometimes pushing us into a defender role without us always having thought through and understood the things we were defending. But one must not allow oneself to be pushed into such a role, because then one isolates oneself from progressive people who rightly ask certain questions and feel it very well if we as communists do not take such questions seriously, if we do not want to accept facts that do not fit into our idea of things.

The latter, however, should not happen to a Marxist: If the facts do not fit into the theory one has, one must not deny the facts or bend them into shape, but one must examine one's theory. This does not at all mean to "check" Marxism-Leninism and to put it up for discussion. But our view, our understanding of Marxism-Leninism can very well be incorrect or incomplete in this or that question and must then be corrected or developed further. As far as our attitude towards

Albania is concerned, we will always draw a decisive and fundamental line of separation between the revolutionary, socialist Albania of Enver Hoxha, on the one hand, and today's revisionist Albania, which will pass over into open capitalism, on the other. We will not relativise anything on this dividing line; it is the dividing line between revolution and counterrevolution. At the same time, however, we will examine more closely the complex and contradictory reality of socialist society, including socialist Albania. This is precisely in order to be able to give better and more precise answers to the question of how revisionist degeneration can be prevented, how the advance of society towards communism can be ensured. And finally, we will strive to counteract the ossification, the stagnation of thought in other areas where this has occurred among us. We will strive to make better use of Marxism-Leninism as a creative world outlook and method for cognising and transforming the world.

General Strike of Workers Sweeps away PLA Government

The PLA's sole government under Prime Minister Fatos Nano had to resign after only 26 days in office. This was forced by a general strike of the workers. It was replaced by a government with the participation of the bourgeois parties. All members of the new government had to suspend their party membership for the duration of their office. This masquerade was enforced by the PLA's new coalition partners.

The PLA, which was renamed the Socialist Party at the 10th Party Congress, was thus to be forced to make a symbolic declaration that it had said goodbye once and for all to any idea of the leading role of a party of the working class and thus to any idea of building socialism. However, the PLA had already made this farewell earlier. In a workers' state, a

party of the working class worthy of the name must by no means work to reserve as many positions as possible for itself, but its aim must be to enable as many workers as possible, including those who are not party members, to take up leading positions in the state, in the economy and all areas of society. The PLA under the leadership of Enver Hoxha had this revolutionary orientation, but obviously, this orientation has become weaker and weaker and finally has been lost completely. In the future, we will try to examine this process, its objective and subjective conditions, as closely as possible. But what is already clear, what can be established without complicated analysis, by mere observation, so to speak, is the final stage of this process: the PLA is objectively no longer a party of the working class, objectively no longer represents its interests. This is now obvious, for how else could it be explained that the PLA received 56% of the vote, but hardly any votes from workers?

That the PLA all-party government was swept away by a general strike of the workers? But if we note that the PLA has lost its character as a workers' party, this is not only the result of the capitalist "reforms", but was its starting point. A society that renounces the driving forces and means of control of the market to a relatively high degree can only exist in the long run if it develops driving forces that belong to a higher order, and these driving forces lie in the self-activity of the members of society, lie in the fact that the labourers actively participate in the planning, management and control of production on the basis of their own interest. The development of this self-activity will, of course, always come up against barriers as long as classes still exist, as long as there is still a division of labour between manual and manual work, as long as there are specialists for manual work and especially for managerial work. Therefore, the transitional society of

socialism cannot rely solely on this self-activity, but also needs the guidance of state apparatuses and the Communist Party. If, however, the state and the party predominantly represent the interests of the stratum of specialists, the division of society into classes is consolidated instead of working towards its abolition; the self-activity of the members of society is gradually lost as a driving force of production. If, on the one hand, this happens and, on the other hand, the driving forces and means of control of the market, i.e. ultimately capitalism, are not restored, then in the long run there will be even more devastating economic crises than under capitalism: not crises of overproduction, but a decline in production based on a lack of interest on the part of the producers will push the consumption of the masses to a minimum. The restoration of capitalism, although objectively a step backwards, appears subjectively under these circumstances as a "way out" of the situation.

The Alia and Carcani Economic Reforms

A year ago, Alia, Carcani and other revisionist leaders of the PLA were still striving to follow this path in a measured, moderate form, so to speak. Thus, in May 1990, Adil Carcani presented an economic concept to the 11th legislature of the People's Assembly, the main features of which can be schematised as follows: The competences of the enterprises and thus, in fact, of the factory managers, were to be considerably expanded; in certain cases (enterprises producing mass consumer goods) the enterprises were to "determine the entire production plan completely themselves" (Albania Today 3/1990, p. 10). In these cases central planning had already been completely eliminated, in other cases, it was "merely" considerably restricted, but not completely. Farms that were considered particularly important were still to receive

material allocations in kind (p. 10) instead of having to procure the necessary means of production and raw materials on the market. In the case of the other enterprises, too, the executive organs of the local people's councils, i.e. organs of state power, were to be given a say in the distribution of products, so distribution was not to be left to the market alone. What was the class content of these measures? Since the party leadership had given up any thought of raising the role of the labourers in the management of production and distribution, it consistently placed its bets "on the market" and therefore increasingly gave the factory managers the role of independent commodity producers. However, it tried not to go too far in this, not to curtail the competences of the state organs too much, so as not to make these organs superfluous. Previously, these organs, as organs of power of the proletarian state, had managed the economy in the interests of the labourers; however, with the increasing shift away from the orientation towards calling the labourers to management activity, with the increasing opening of the class divide in society, these state organs had increasingly represented the interests of the privileged stratum.

On the one hand, there were the factory managers, whose freedom to operate as independent commodity producers was restricted by the state organs. On the other hand, there were the bureaucrats in the state organs, whose activities were less and less oriented towards the interests of the working people, but who needed the maintenance of the old socialist forms to defend their sinecures and who were therefore much less interested than the factory managers in economic reforms in the capitalist sense. Admittedly, the contradictions between these two sections of the privileged stratum were relative: they needed each other. In particular, they had to come to terms with each other if they wanted to maintain the rule of

the existing privileged stratum in the old political form: in the form of a one-party government of the PLA, which pretended to be a government of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Alia and Carcani, therefore, precisely as representatives of the party apparatus, were interested in combining the interests of the two sections of the ruling class and not setting in motion any innovations that could endanger the system as a whole.

At the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee of the PLA in April 1990, Alia said in connection with the changes in the field of agriculture: "But whatever is decided, the Party Committees, the Executive Committees (of the state organs of power, RM) and the boards of the agricultural cooperatives should not think that they are now relieved of work, 'freed' from the cross problem of supplying the population with livestock products. No, on the contrary, they now have a huge organisational and educational work to do so that production increases effectively for both the peasantry and the city. A lot of tasks arise for the state organs, especially in terms of setting rules and norms for the farmers' market and obligations to the state."

In retrospect, it is easy to see that Alia wanted to say to the bureaucratic part of the privileged class: "Don't block the reforms! The party will see to it that not all your competences are taken away from you, that you retain your social position on the whole, albeit in a modified form." Of course, this did not only apply to agriculture. Also at the 10th Plenum, Alia said, "Some bureaucrats, who are used to using the rights of others and maintaining their authority with solitary orders and decisions, now ask: 'But then what should we deal with?' These comrades forget that the central organs or the executive committees are not there to divide up funds and the material base but to deal seriously and competently with the

elaboration of a policy of development in the field concerned, with strategies of technical and technological progress, with meaningful general studies based on practice, on contact with their factories and systems, on their control. Under the given conditions, it is possible, on a scientific basis, to redistribute tasks and functions throughout the pyramid of the management apparatus." While this was a clear criticism of the bureaucrats of the central power as well as the local state organs who opposed the reforms, the criticism was combined with the hope that it would be possible to establish a revisionist state and economic system into which these sections of the privileged stratum could be integrated. In his justification of the economic reform programme, Carcani even claimed that despite the increasing competences of the factory managers, the importance of the organs of state central power would also increase at the same time: "In the meantime, the presence, control and role of the state budget, of all financial organs in the ministries and the other central institutions, as well as in the Ministry of Finance itself, gain a qualitatively new content in the expanded reproduction of the factories on their own account. As before, they will not relinquish tracking and control over the effectiveness of expenditure performance; on the contrary, their role and responsibility will increase. Through in-depth studies and analyses, they will help determine the primary order of development of individual industries and sectors of the economy." (Albania Today 3/1990, p.16)

Certainly, from the point of view of Marxism, the idea is absurd that one can, on the one hand, grant the factory managers the position of free commodity producers to a relatively high degree and, on the other hand, guarantee a planned and proportional development of the various branches of the national economy through state regulation. However, once

'communist' party leaders are inseparably linked to a privileged stratum which is preparing to become the new exploiting class, they quickly 'forget' their Marxist knowledge, because their class standpoint, their class interests are then incompatible with Marxism.

The Revisionists Still Oppose Party Pluralism

As I said, the PLA leaders had to try to defend the interests of both sections of the privileged class if they wanted to maintain the PLA's dominant position. And at that time they still hoped that this would be possible. Alia himself declared several times that there was no basis for any other party than the PLA, and he declared it even in his closing words at the 11th Plenum on 6 July 1990: "No one, no other force in our country, no outside interference can guarantee true democracy, the rights of the people, the progress of the country, defend the freedom and independence of the country. Only the Party and the people united around it can do that." Nexhmije Hoxha even declared before the General Council of the Democratic Front in June 1990 that other parties were "artificial parties that represent no one" (Albania Today 3/90, p.7). In this context, she praised "the healthy moral-political situation, the security of internal unity" (ibid.).

This shows very drastically the extent to which the leaders of the PLA were already denying reality at this point and only accepted an illusory world that corresponded to their subjective wishes and interests. However, these desires and interests were not socialism, a real workers' power, but the monopolisation of all decision-making powers in their hands. The typical phrase of the revisionists of the "care for the people", already attacked in the last two Roter Morgens, is even found in the form of a definition of the "core of

socialism” in Nexhmije Hoxha’s speech to the General Council of the Democratic Front:

”Caring for people, for their rights, is at the core of socialism.” (ibid. p.6)

Instead of self-activity, care; that was the pipe dream of being able to continue to rule in the old form forever; power of the party leaders transfigured as ”care” in the interest of a privileged stratum instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat with the aim of abolishing the classes. However, both this revisionist interpretation of the leading role of the party and the economic reforms with partial elimination of the planned economy were passed off as Marxist-Leninist, and Alia in particular never tired of presenting the reforms as a precursor to socialism.

”Perfection of Society”

At the 10th Plenum in April 1990, he spoke of the ”uninterrupted perfection of our society”. ”The labouring masses are demonstrating culture, maturity and a balanced capacity for judgement... The ability of the masses to use democratic means, laws and institutions in the service of socialist progress speaks for the correctness of Party decisions. If abuses had occurred the other way round, we would have cause to rack our brains thoroughly.” So the situation was supposedly so stable that one could give one’s head a rest. Yes, according to Alia, socialism was more stable than ever in Albania at that time, bursting with vitality; the people received the decisions of this plenum (of the 9th RM) positively and were inspired to actions that serve the uninterrupted perfection of our society. ” (10th Plenum) ”In the three months since the 9th Plenum, our country has gone through a new phase of revolutionary awakening.” (ibid.)

"The struggle for the democratisation of life in the country is a historical process that must accompany socialism at every step. The current measures in fact represent a second cycle, a new phase of the historical period that was initiated on the threshold of the seventies, with the well-known speeches of comrade Enver Hoxha and the decisions taken by the party at that time for the general revolutionisation of its own life and of life in the whole country." (ibid.)

"The changes in the field of production relations, which have been suggested by the Party and which are to be legitimised at this meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee, represent a valuable contribution to socialist economic science... It can be confidently said that socialist economic theory is being perfected more and more in parallel with the long process of development of socialism." (ibid.) "Our successes in all fields are inseparable from the role of the Party, from the name of Enver Hoxha... That is why the people esteem the Party and are closely connected with it, that is why the people and the Party respect Enver Hoxha and consistently follow his teachings." (ibid.)

At the 9th Plenum in January 1990, Alia even pretended that it was a matter of making a scientific analysis to study revisionism with the aim of preventing it in Albania: "We must now draw lessons from what happened in the East. We must ask the question and seek the answer as to why revisionism arose, what its objective and subjective causes were, what its failures and over-hastiness, its mistakes and concessions were." (Albania Today 1/90, p.4)

In the same speech, the "anti-revisionist analyst" Alia declared: "The times, the present situation does not tolerate a bureaucratic attitude. An end must be put to them, and the sooner the better. We should do this at some sacrifice if necessary because every stage of revolutionising the life of the

party and the country must have its style and its people.” (ibid., p. 8) We wondered at the time what kind of “sacrifice” was being spoken of here. In the meantime, however, the matter has become clear: the highly centralised management of the economy, with the participation of the masses now almost completely eliminated, had produced considerable bureaucracy; since Alia, as a representative of the ruling class, could not imagine real participation of the masses in management and did not want it, he saw the need to “sacrifice” the central management of the economy itself. His problem is only that this is now happening far more radically than he imagined at the time. Alia’s mode of presentation, which was in stark contrast to the real processes in the country and the party, was largely “orthodox Marxist-Leninist” in phrase until the end of 1990. This was probably still necessary to keep the party base in line; the process of decomposition had probably not yet progressed to the point where the mass of party members would have accepted the orientation towards a relatively open restoration of capitalism. These lies, therefore, served to overthrow socialism, and therefore Alia, Carcani and co. must be regarded as revisionist deceivers.

To what extent they believed their own lies is their own problem alone, is of no importance to the working people; Kohl, too, will certainly feel more comfortable with the idea that he is bringing salvation to the people of East Germany than with the (realistic) idea that his policies are ruining their livelihood in the interests of capital. And as for Alia, Carcani and Co, it suited them to believe at least part of their revisionist lies because an open restoration of capitalism did not suit their interests; they wanted a classic revisionist regime, wanted to perpetuate their power and privileges. Honecker, Mielke and Co. wanted nothing else and apparently found it comfortable to the end to believe that they were pursuing

these "noble goals" "in the interests of the working people" and that such conditions were "socialist". Engels aptly described such a process of consciousness as follows:

"Ideology is a process that is carried out with consciousness by the so-called thinker, but with a false consciousness. The actual driving forces that move it remain unknown to him; otherwise it would not be an ideological process. He imagines (imagines, RM) false or apparent driving forces. Because it is a thinking process, it derives its content as well as its form from pure thinking, either its own or that of its predecessors. He works with mere thought material, which he accepts unquestioningly as produced by thought and otherwise does not examine further for a more distant origin independent of thought, and indeed this is self-evident to him, since all action, because mediated by thought, also appears to him to be founded in the last instance in thought." (MEW Vol. 39, p.97)

Alia, Carcani and Co. must not necessarily have known on the conceptual level which class interests were the driving force of their actions, but this question is irrelevant to their judgement from the class standpoint of the working class. For the rest, one must freely assume that they deliberately lied in their portrayal of the situation in the country, for they undoubtedly had apparatuses at their disposal which gave them a more or less realistic picture.

As we know today, for example, Honecker, Mielke and Co. were well informed by the Stasi about the situation in the GDR, especially about the mood among the population, and without whitewashing, (cf. e.g.: "Orders and Situation Reports of the MfS." Basis-Druck Publishing House, Berlin, 1990)

There is always a justification for the officially spread lies in the ideology of the ruling revisionists: These lies are

"expedient", serve to maintain the system, correspond to "revolutionary expediency". Ideology and cynicism are therefore close together in the psychological mentality of such revisionists, they are mutually dependent. A revisionist regime was no longer possible. As I said, Alia, Carcani and Co. wanted a revisionist state and social system, but the circumstances did not allow it. The conditions were different from those in the various countries of the Eastern Bloc, where socialism had already been finally eliminated by the beginning of the 1960s at the latest and where a revisionist order was able to hold on for about 30 years. These countries were not isolated and they had far more economic power than little Albania, which was mercilessly put in a stranglehold by imperialism. The imperialists did everything to further fuel Albania's economic and political difficulties and to bring the PLA to its knees.

People were not prepared to endure material deprivation when they saw that those who spoke of welfare were securing privileges for themselves and expanding the state repressive apparatus to protect these privileges. The Alia and Carcani did try to take Albania's particularly difficult situation into account by granting factory managers far more rights in mid-1990 than was the case, for example, in the revisionist GDR. But all this was no longer of any help. The conditions are already too disrupted to be able to maintain a revisionist regime of any kind for much longer; an exploitative order is only possible in Albania in an openly capitalist form.

The PLA leaders finally adjusted to this and tried to find a way of transition to open capitalism in which they could secure as much of their sinecures as possible. After the counter-revolutionary events of December 1990, a large number of those party leaders who represented the bureaucratic, state-centralist section of the privileged class, such as the

Minister of the Interior Simon Stefani, were sacrificed in order to dampen the indignation of the masses over arbitrary measures of the state apparatus. Furthermore, Alia sacrificed his economic reformer Carcani who, together with him, had tried to keep the extent and speed of the reforms in check. Further, Alia and co. realised that a one-party regime of the PLA could no longer be sustained; neither the masses nor imperialism would allow this. So they held an election with bourgeois parties. The PLA leadership was apparently quite realistic enough to consider their "electoral victory" as a Pyrrhic victory: Although it won 2/3 of the seats, it offered government seats to the bourgeois parties. The latter refused: They, for their part, were realistic enough to realise that they had a better chance of imposing their will on the PLA once the PLA's sole government had failed. Which is what promptly happened. But what is the tug of war between the PLA and the bourgeois parties all about? Already in the June RM (p. 10), we quoted the then Prime Minister Fatos Nano (now the new leader of the former PLA) on this, who remarked on the differences in the economic programmes of the parties, "that the only difference is the time they allow for the implementation of their programmes and reforms. We as the Party of Labour are not in favour of hasty adventures. We consider that we must offer new jobs to workers at all costs before an unprofitable enterprise closes." (ATA 3-6 April 1991 p. 16)

This is already something fundamentally different from the economic programme of the Carcani government, which had envisaged a classical revisionism (albeit with somewhat weaker centralism and somewhat greater autonomy of the factory managers than in the GDR, for example): this is open capitalism, because this is precisely what the bourgeois parties want, and since the Nano government also the PLA.

According to its election programme, the PLA aims to "replace the system of centralised management and administration with the mechanisms of the market economy". (PLA election programme according to ATA 1. 1. 1991)

And since capitalism cannot be had without imperialist domination of Albania, the PLA, in agreement with the bourgeois parties, also accepts this domination: not only the bourgeois parties but also the PLA strives for "full integration in Europe." (Zeri i Popullit according to ATA 23.1.1991), the abolition of the foreign trade monopoly, the free convertibility of the lek.

As I said, the only difference is the pace. Incidentally, it is pure demagoguery when the PLA and the bourgeois parties plan or demand the abolition of the foreign trade monopoly: This has been abolished since the Carcani reforms in mid-1990! This is because these reforms granted individual enterprises "rights" in the field of "export and import" (Albania Today 3/1990, p. 10). But if such rights exist, the monopoly of the state, i.e. of the central state agency with regard to foreign trade, has already been broken. When the PLA and the bourgeois parties speak of "abolishing the monopoly on foreign trade", they mean much more far-reaching reforms, namely the elimination of any state restriction on the right of enterprises to engage in foreign trade as they see fit. The Carcani programme, with its state restrictions on the free flow of goods, capital and labour, is old news.

The 10th Party Congress

Consequently, Alia and Carcani took a severe beating at the party conference. (We have taken the information about the party congress from the bourgeois press; the news from the Albanian news agency ATA has not been sent to us for several months). In his opening speech, Gjoni, at that time

First Secretary of the PLA, attacked Ramiz Alia, saying that he had started the reform process too late because he had been too soft on an "ageing and incompetent" elite that did not want to give up its privileges. (Frankfurter Rundschau, 11.6.91)

Of course, it is not the factory managers who are meant here, but that part of the privileged stratum which had occupied the state organs and whose continued existence would only have been possible in a revisionist regime. Gjoni then attacked Carcani and the former interior ministers Simon Stefan and Hekuran Hisai. Again, the logic is clear: Carcani is the author of the revisionist economic reforms, which are now already outdated, and the two former interior ministers as exponents of the bureaucratic, statist section of the privileged class. In fact, seven out of eleven Politburo members are said to have been expelled from the party. (FR 12.6.91)

Alia was allowed to keep his seat in the Politburo, "presumably because he openly criticised himself and regretted the mediocrity and incompetence of the party leadership" (FR 12.6.91).

A "self-criticism" of remarkable "analytical power", about which the party congress was apparently most happy!

But what else could Alia have said? Like: "I was nimble enough to try to transition to a classic revisionist regime with orthodox phrases. I have realised that this does not work. Therefore, I agree to introduce open capitalism and transform the PLA, now "Socialist Party", into a social democratic party.

No, he certainly couldn't say that. It would have been the truth, but it would certainly not have got him a politburo chair, because the truth is not always desirable. The PLA, now transformed into the SPA, has to be given credit for honestly admitting its social-democratism; after all, it has applied for membership in the Socialist International. Alia and Co.

are now comrades of Brandt, Lafontaine and Edzard Reuter. We have to revoke what is still written in the headline of this series of articles, namely that Alia and Co. are revisionists. They already are not. They are social democrats. The rottenness of these people has assumed such a dizzying pace that they have even managed to overtake Gorbachev. There was an incident at the Party Congress when a resolution was put forward attacking Enver Hoxha. Some delegates allegedly stormed the podium, there were shouts of "Party, Enver, always ready". (FR 13.6. and 11.6. respectively) We do not know what forces are behind these events. We do know that despite the strong anti-communist climate in the country, Enver Hoxha is still held in high esteem by many working people. At the same time, however, there is a possibility that the bureaucratic section of the privileged class, based mainly on the state apparatus, whose hides are now being swallowed at breakneck speed, will try to use such honest sentiments and feelings for their own ends. After Enver's death, such elements have already conducted a personality cult around him, for example, they have expanded the Enver Hoxha Museum in the style of a cathedral in order to profit themselves from the "glamour", but in fact wall Enver's revolutionary politics in the mausoleum. Whoever wants to continue Enver's work in Albania today must above all openly denounce the disgusting rottenness of the PLA or SPA, must undertake a radical reorientation towards the working class, radically break with old bureaucrats and new capitalists, vigorously fight them and the advance of imperialism. Any "Enver nostalgia" that is not linked to such a policy is virtually opposed to Enver Hoxha's revolutionary policy.

The question remains as to what particular interests the SPA actually represents, which distinguishes it from the openly bourgeois parties. First of all, what Fatos Nano said

is still true: it differs from the other parties in the speed with which it strives for open capitalism. However, this has less to do with caring for the workers, who supposedly should not lose their jobs without replacement, as Nano demagogically said, and the workers have also clearly shown with their general strike what they think of the "caring" of a Fatos Nano. But what is the content of this dispute over speed? Well, the slower the process goes, the more time the members of the old ruling class (more precisely: the part that can be labelled with the catchword "factory managers") have to reserve the posts in capitalism for themselves instead of handing them over to the representatives of the new parties. The whole thing is only a family quarrel which does not affect the working people, because the leading representatives of the new parties are as a rule dissidents of the PLA, i.e. people whose personal rotting process has proceeded somewhat faster than the rotting process of the PLA.

The dispute over the pace of the introduction of open capitalism is by no means something new. There was a corresponding dispute in the Soviet Union, where people like Shatalin pushed the pace and people like Ryzhkov acted as brake-men (cf. RM 1/91 p.13 "Russian aid for the mafia").

Revisionist Degeneracy - Not an Operational Accident of History

As bitter as the defeat of socialism in Albania is, it provides instructive material for studying the laws of motion of socialism. The same things happened in Albania that happened in the other former socialist countries, in fast motion, as it were; the Soviet Union needed almost four decades for this, and the process leading to the open restoration of capitalism is still not completely finished there. This repetition refutes all subjectivist considerations according to which revisionism is a tragic but more or less accidental accident of

history, caused above all by the fact that some revisionists are hatching sinister conspiracies on how to eliminate socialism.

Certainly, we are far from relativising in any way the subjective betrayal of the revisionists; on the contrary, we consider it necessary to brand them ruthlessly as enemies of the communist and workers' movement. At the same time, however, the same applies with regard to the revisionists as Marx wrote with regard to the capitalists and landowners: "I by no means paint the figures of capitalist and landowner in a rosy light. But it is a question here of persons only in so far as they are the personification of economic categories, bearers of certain class relations and interests. My point of view, which regards the development of the economic formation of society as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for conditions of which he remains a social creature, no matter how much he may subjectively rise above them. (MEW, 23,8.16)

Revisionism is the subjective expression of an objective direction of the development of socialist society, which is not directed towards gradual abolition but towards the consolidation and inflation of class differences. Such an erroneous development has objective and subjective causes. The objective factors have to do above all with the fact that there are objective limits to the speed at which the abolition of classes can take place. The differences between workers and peasants, the differences between workers and peasants on the one hand and specialists in head work, especially in managerial work, on the other, cannot be abolished immediately. All this makes necessary, on the one hand, the state, and on the other, the leading role of the party of the working class. But this leading role must be strategically directed precisely to

maintain the orientation towards the abolition of classes and the state and thus also towards the self abolition of the party.

If the orientation towards the self-activity of the members of society is replaced by the orientation towards the "care of the masses" by a party which is "always right", which "gives sun and wind", it cannot fail that such a party will increasingly represent the interests of the specialists for leading activities, that the existence of such specialists will no longer be understood as a temporary necessity, but that they will begin to feel that they are the masters of society, to constitute themselves as a ruling class.

Marx: "The materialist doctrine (meaning mechanical, i.e. pre-Marxian materialism, RM) of the change of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances must be changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated. It must therefore probe society into two parts-one of which is superior to it." (MEW 3, p.5)

The petty-minded functionaries of the rotten socialist societies just believed that they were "above society", that they would change the circumstances and thus educate the people. In reality, the birthmarks of the old society present in socialism had long since caught up with these functionaries and educated them in the bourgeois sense. In all this, however, it must not be overlooked that a very tight centralism, the concentration of all important decisions in very few hands, is inevitable in the initial phase of socialism. This initial phase can last a relatively long time if workers' power has triumphed in a backward country. In Stalin's Soviet Union and Enver Hoxha's Albania, it was certainly the case that all important decisions were ultimately taken in the Politburo of the Communist Party.

Since this concentration of decision-making competences corresponded to the economic and cultural level of

development of society, it was progressive and in no way excluded a broad, creative initiative of the labourers. On the contrary, this initiative was present. This must be held against all those who keep muttering to themselves that these were "one-man dictatorships" which had gagged the rest of society.

How would the industrialisation of the Soviet Union have been possible without the creative initiative of the masses in a period of time for which history knows no example? How would it have been possible that during the Second World War the supply situation was better than today, under Gorbachev? In Albania, at the time of liberation, there were neither factories nor railways nor electricity nor infrastructure nor universities, but instead blood feuds and the veil, huge swamps and malaria. Did a "one-man dictatorship" of Enver Hoxha achieve all that exists in Albania today without the creative initiative of the labourers? Ridiculous!

But the forms of governance and government of a socialist country cannot be unchanging for all time. With the economic and cultural development of society comes the possibility and at the same time the necessity of genuinely involving ever wider sections of society in decision-making processes. And not only in decision-making processes concerning the planning and management of the production of one's own enterprise but concerning all social questions. This in no way means the abolition of the leading role of the party, for the conditions for this will only exist under communism, but it does mean that this leading role will take on qualitatively higher forms. The party's policy must increasingly be directed towards the fact that more and more working people, on the basis of their own experience, recognise what is necessary and put it into practice, in defence of their own interests, which they understand to be social interests.

In the absence of such a development, the same forms of leadership and government that were once necessary and progressive gradually take on a reactionary character. People get used to the idea that the functionaries command and the masses execute. This fosters in the functionaries a sense of command, conceit, a feeling of omnipotence, pleasure-seeking. The masses gradually lose all communist initiative; they wait for orders from "those up there". Stagnation occurs in all areas of society.

The decline in productivity forces the ruling class to look for a way out. Since the communist perspective is obscured, what remains as a "salvation" is the expansion of commodity categories; private initiative aimed at individual profit is supposed to "replace" the lost social initiative. This process leads to the restoration of capitalism: slowly and leisurely, as in the Soviet Union, or landslide-like, as now in Albania. Some time ago, we began to look at all these problems in more detail. We will continue these investigations because it is essential to draw lessons from the victory of revisionism and eventually capitalism on how to avoid such developments in the future. Both the objective and subjective factors are important, among the latter especially the mistakes of Communist Parties which have favoured counter-revolutionary development. We do not do this with a know-it-all pose that "we did everything right". It is about something else: the historical period which began with the October Revolution and which has now finally ended was the first worldwide onslaught against capitalism.

A Second Rush Will Follow

Many one-sidednesses, shortcomings and mistakes, which were perhaps unavoidable in the first onslaught due to a lack of historical experience, can be avoided in the second onslaught if one only evaluates the experience. One mistake was

probably to look at socialism too statically, not to see that it must necessarily develop: if not in a progressive direction, then in a reactionary one. Enver Hoxha, for example, said in his 1978 speech "Proletarian Democracy - True Democracy" about the difference between the capitalist-revisionist states and socialist Albania:

"Where does this difference lie? First and foremost in the economic basis, in the structure of society and in the superstructure which reflects this basis. In the capitalist and revisionist social orders, the base and superstructure are antagonistic to each other, whereas in our socialist society they are without any class antagonism and are continually being perfected in this respect." (Reprinted in "Weg der Partei" 5/78, p.3f.)

"Without any class antagonism": This was an overestimation of the unity and unity of socialist society. As has been shown, there were considerable contradictions both in the economic base and in the superstructure, and contradictions of an antagonistic nature; the deep gulf in society that is opening up today could not have arisen overnight. However, such an orientation, as Enver Hoxha undertook here, obstructed the view of the real contradictions. It is an explanation, for example, for the behaviour of youth functionaries who only two years ago completely denied a bourgeois influence on the youth, (cf. June-RM) And Enver Hoxha said in the same speech: "In our country, complete freedom for the labouring masses exists in the most appropriate and democratic forms... Not only in the state organs but also in the assemblies of the labourers, when a plan or a law is discussed, many discussions take place, characterised by a great popular debate, which take into consideration everything that can be foreseen and everything that cannot be foreseen, in order to find the most suitable solution for it." (ibid, p.6)

As already said: There has been such a creative initiative of the masses, there is no doubt about that for us. But why are such superlatives and exaggerations necessary, which must create a climate that everything is so good that it could not even be improved? "Complete freedom for the working people" - as if that were possible in a class society; the "most suitable" and "most democratic" forms prevail; even the "not to be foreseen" is taken into consideration. All this obscures the view of the necessity for change!

Eleven years later, one Ramiz Alia could stand up and demagogically declare: "The inner life of the party, the militant spirit and the debate are made pale not only by intervention from above but also by mixing the concept of unity with that of unanimity. Not a few comrades mistakenly think that it violates unity if a communist or cadre, a problem or a position is not voted on unanimously." (Reprinted from RM 1989, p.23)

The man may be willing to lie shamelessly, but he is certainly not so stupid as to describe phenomena that everyone knows are different from what they are. On the contrary, revisionists like Alia take up real problems to "solve" them in a counter-revolutionary way. How he "solved" these problems is well known. But they were there and would have required a socialist solution. And if the situation in the party was already such that any non-unanimous behaviour was considered a violation of unity and thus tended to be hostile, then one can imagine what the situation was in society as a whole!

In 1978, at the time of Enver's quotes above, the situation will certainly not have been like that yet, but Enver's presentation that there was a "complete" and thus no longer improvable freedom for the labourers was certainly not suitable to counteract such a negative development. This is only one

aspect that we pick out to illustrate that the development in Albania, as in the other former socialist and later revisionist countries, must be examined as closely as possible. In doing so, we will always draw the class line between mistakes made by Marxist-Leninists and counter-revolutionary actions of the revisionists. Enver Hoxha, being the great Marxist-Leninist that he was, would have either recognised the negative developments in time to prevent the degeneration of party, state and society, or he would have openly opposed the revisionists, appealed directly to the real communists and toilers, even at the cost of losing power and having to fight for power again. This way was not possible for the Alia and Co. because they were and are inseparable from the privileged class whose class interests they represented. Therefore, they had no other way but to oppose the working class, to oppose socialism, to oppose Marxism-Leninism.

Differences Between the Soviet and Albanian Revisionists

There is a certain difference between the revisionist development in the Soviet Union and Albania, not only in speed but in some respects also in content. This difference seems to us to consist, in brief, in the following: "The rise to power of the Soviet revisionists, which took place rapidly after Stalin's death, did not happen directly as a result of pressure acting on society as a whole, at least not in the first place. It was primarily the emancipation of the privileged stratum into the ruling class. The very day after Stalin's death, the CC, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet closed in on the Kremlin and redistributed the posts." (Enver Hoxha, *The Khrushchevians*, Tirana 1980, p. 14) Obviously, many had been waiting for this day, and the corresponding plans were already in place, (cf. *ibid.*, p. 15) The revisionist

leaders certainly had considerable privileges even during Stalin's lifetime, but on the other hand, they were under a pressure that Khrushchev once described thus: if you were called to see Stalin, you never knew whether you were going to lunch or prison. For Stalin was indeed ready to pretend against such enemies of the workers as Khrushchev with all means if he saw their true face behind their hypocritical protestations of "loyalty to the party". The revisionists were thus constantly forced to disguise their true intentions. Such pressure naturally makes privileges stale in a way. Despite all the rot, a dictatorship of the proletariat existed, albeit weakened, prevented the revisionists from doing as they pleased.

So after Stalin's death, they immediately set about changing this state of affairs. In order to remove the pressure that was on them, they began to create a more liberal climate in various respects: Towards open counter-revolutionaries, but above all towards imperialism, which was quite soon certified as capable of peaceful behaviour. The concepts of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the party of the working class were eliminated and replaced by the "state of the whole people" and the "party of the whole people". All these phenomena were, in our opinion, not primarily a reaction to the open outbreak of a crisis, but measures that served to emancipate the new bourgeois elements into the class. The crisis was smouldering but had not yet broken out openly. It consisted in the fact that the active role of the labouring masses was not extended, but was increasingly restricted, and that this circumstance, while maintaining the tightly centralised leadership, led to economic rot.

But this rot was only latent for the time being, and it seems to us that Khrushchev and Co. had no idea of these processes, that they believed in their omnipotence, that they

believed in the near future of a "communism" in which they could live in luxury and enough "goulash" would also fall off for the working people so that the ruling position of the revisionist clique would not be endangered. Of course, these ideas soon proved to be an illusion. Productivity declined, the masses were dissatisfied, the rot was openly revealed. The revisionists began economic reforms that strengthened the commodity elements of the products, slowly but surely moving towards capitalism. From this point on, they were no longer an acting force, but were increasingly driven by circumstances; they raved less and less about "communism" and confined themselves more and more to "realistic" crisis management. But in the first period after Stalin's death, this was not yet the case; the Khrushchevians seemed to have the law of action in their hands and to a certain extent actually did; they pursued the emancipation of their class. It was different in Albania. Here the old forms were maintained until the crisis broke out openly. Certainly, the forms must **already have been hollow** in many respects, otherwise Albania would not have fallen into the lap of capitalism like a ripe fruit, even taking into account the enormous pressure of imperialism on little Albania. But these forms were present; the privileged stratum had abandoned any thought of the self-activity of the members of society limiting their ruling position, but it had not yet emancipated itself into the ruling class. The intensification of the internal rot and the external pressure led to a situation in which the previous unstable position could not be maintained. The labourers felt more and more clearly that they had nothing to say in society, their interest in production decreased, the supply situation worsened: at the same time, the pressure of imperialism increased rapidly. For the revisionists, this led to the necessity of strengthening the elements of commodity production and at the same time

making their peace with imperialism. Since, unlike the Khrushchevians, they were already driven by circumstances at the beginning of this process and do not appear primarily as an acting force, the impression can arise that they are primarily victims of the adverse circumstances or victims of imperialism, and from such a view a certain sympathy for the Albanian revisionists can arise. However, we are convinced that such an attitude is completely misplaced. What is decisive for the betrayal of the Albanian revisionists, who have now even turned into social democrats and overtaken Gorbachev, is their bourgeois class interest, their desire to maintain their privileged position, whatever the circumstances, and to do so as far as possible. Thus they are hostile to the working class and communism. The communists all over the world have every reason to treat these traitors as enemies. If the communists were to act differently, they would soften the principled line of separation from revisionism and the class enemy in general; this would ultimately lead to their ceasing to be communists.