

Political Developments in Albania Since the Death of Enver Hoxha

Unified Communist Party of Albania

The death of Enver Hoxha in April 1985 marked the beginning of a process of liberal-bureaucratisation of the Party and the state, which eventually led to the overthrow of people's power (the dictatorship of the proletariat). The first step was the promotion of endless discussion, eulogies and boasting. On 16 September 1982, at a meeting to commemorate the Conference of Peza (the 60th anniversary of the organisation of the people without distinction of religion, district or outlook, to fight the Italian fascist occupiers), Comrade Enver Hoxha effectively handed over to his 'comrade-in-arms' Ramiz Alia. From this moment Ramiz Alia began a tour of all the regions of the country to familiarise himself with the concerns and demands of the people, to assess the links of the Party with the people and to evaluate the cadres.

The most obvious phenomenon was the great interest of the workers and peasants in Enver Hoxha. The lesson was clear, and Alia toured Albania singing the praises of Enver, seeking to demonstrate that he was a loyal disciple of Enver, and so a worthy replacement. The years ahead would show that in this way Alia was seeking to gain the people's confidence as a faithful son of the Party, who would lead the Party along Enver's road.

The interminable meetings on the cooperative farms, in the enterprises, and in the state institutions, together with the mass actions organised during the working week, could not but have an adverse effect on production. The resulting chaos and significant fall in production gradually created an unfavourable climate for any progress.

Devoted communists, veterans used to sacrifices, vanguard workers and peasants and revolutionary intellectuals concerned with the destiny of socialism, these opposed the notorious programme of 'Self-financing' (in fact, Self-administration) which was presented as a programme 'to break out of the shell' and give the economy 'a great leap forward.' But their voices of protest were not heard. Instead of taking the measures necessary to continue the revolutionisation of the Party and the state, Alia released another trial balloon in the shape of 'the campaign against mediocrity', by means of which he aimed to unite discontented careerists around himself.

In 1989 Alia proclaimed an amnesty for saboteurs, diversionists and agents of foreign intelligence services, despite their conviction by the courts. This encouraged the counter-revolutionary forces to initiate other campaigns, even though they did not yet feel able to come out openly with demands to take power from the workers and peasants. At their head were careerists, charlatans, hypocrites, the most privileged social strata (who aimed to increase their privileges under the new system they were preparing), bureaucrats and liberals who had been dismissed from their posts for defects of character, and people who had been expelled from the Party.

Through 'political and economic reforms' Alia caused work to be disrupted, worsening from day to day the provision to the people of basic products such as milk, eggs, meat, butter, cheese, vegetables, and even bread. Housing, transport, social services and even sanitation underwent a significant decline as a result of the degeneration of labour discipline. Instead of utilising the revolutionary experience of the broad strata of the population, the renegade Alia blamed the 'prolonged drought', and under the slogan of 'democratisation' brought the Party and the People's Power to the verge of total destruction.

The leaders of the Party were tied up with endless and useless meetings, in this way losing their links with the masses, not to mention their confidence. For its part, the press became a hotbed of misinformation and opportunism, which glorified European, Japanese, American, Nordic, etc., 'socialism'.

All this greatly revolted honest communists, workers and peasants, who expressed their opposition to this openly revisionist path. With them stood even part of the intelligence service, but in vain. The descent into passivity of broad strata of the population, who became more and more discontented, gave the counter-revolutionary forces the opportunity to come out on the streets of the towns where injustice and negligence were greatest.

The embassies' affair was the most serious event, since it followed a detailed Western plan directed against Socialist Albania and against Albanians throughout the world. On 2 July international attention was drawn to the Meeting of Kacanik, which (because of the national oppression exercised by the chauvinist Serbian regime) formed an event of major importance for Kosovars on the road of separation from the Federation. More than 5,000 people were encouraged to leave the country, stimulating new exoduses. Kadare demanded political exile in France, after damning the embassy emigrants with banal words. The Tirana meeting gave the correct signal to the counter-revolutionary forces, and it was precisely because these failed to take advantage of this that the Party began to revolutionise itself. But it was too late; degeneration had gone too far. Alia's actions bear witness to what he later admitted in his memoirs — that his actions were consciously aimed at the liquidation of socialism and the restoration of a capitalist system.

The real balance of forces was demonstrated in February 1991, when the statue of Enver Hoxha in the central square of Tirana was pulled down. The anger of the people at this act of scandalous vandalism was expressed in mass demonstrations throughout Albania, at which Alia was openly denounced as a traitor. The demonstrators chanted in unison: 'The president is a traitor!' 'The president to the gallows!' 'Long live Enver Hoxha!' In fact, more than two-thirds of the people wished to continue to march along the road of socialism — a figure confirmed in the elections of 31 March of the same year. The counter-revolution was compelled to retreat temporarily, but at its 10th Congress Alia gave the signal to destroy the Party of Labour of Albania completely.

This moment marked a mobilisation of the counter-revolutionary forces to take power. On the other hand, the revolutionary members and supporters of the PLA, denounced Alia as a renegade from Marxism-Leninism.

On 23 November 1991 (14 days after the approval of the Ministry of Justice) Milloshi violated the principles of the Party by declaring himself its leader. The representative of the Gjirokastra district immediately denounced this action as 'A dangerous putsch against the Party' and demanded the formation of a Commission of Initiative (now called, after its formation, the Organising Commission) to decide the matter. The compromise motion 'a unified party' was the pretext for this adventurer to sabotage systematically the publication of the Party's press, its participation in the (proportional representation) elections of March 1992 and all the affairs of the Party.

On 2 May he went to Korea to sign an opportunist declaration that he accepted the existence of world socialism (meaning Korea, China, Cuba, etc.), in return for which he received some cars, funds and foodstuffs as the price of intervening in the affairs of the communists. This was denounced at the first meeting of the Central Organising Committee of the Communist Party of Albania after his arrival in Korea, together with statements such as 'Kim II Sung is a notable Marxist-Leninist', and 'Korea is constructing genuine socialism'. The delegates from Gjirokastra voted with the majority. For his deviationist and sabotaging activity, Milloshi was summoned to Gjirokastra to clarify his position. From this moment he broke off all relations with the communists of this district, and took the same attitude towards the majority COC of the CPA.

On 16 July 1992, on the advice of William Ryerson, the US Ambassador in Tirana, several decisions of a fascist character were taken by Parliament, such as:

- the banning of the CPA;
- the dismissal of all communists from their jobs;
- the disarming of all ex-servicemen;
- the cancellation of Liberation Day as a national holiday,
- the disinterment of the Heroes of the People – Enver Hoxha, Hysni Kapo and Myslim Peza from the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation;
- the arrest of the widow of Enver Hoxha, Nexhmije Hoxha, and later of her son Ilir Hoxha;
- the arrest of the leader of the Socialist Party, Fatos Nano, on charges of having embezzled food aid (a charge unproved to the present day);
- the adoption of a policy of subservience to imperialism along the path initiated by Alia; etc.

The trials of political opponents on repugnant fabricated charges took place at all levels. All progressive intellectuals, particularly journalists, came under fire. Many communists were imprisoned and tortured under conditions as bad as those under the Italian and Hitlerite occupations. Many of them died in solitary confinement. The white terror imposed by Berisha's police was every bit as vicious as that of the Serbian police in Kosova.

The destruction of the national economy was one of the gravest national crimes, making the country entirely dependent upon the Western imperialist powers. This increased unemployment to scandalous levels, while more than 5,000 Albanians were compelled to wander the roads of the world to seek their bread. Even more tragic was the fate of the youth, especially that of the 30,000 girls deported by the Mafia to work as prostitutes in Western Europe.

By the dirtiest means Berisha created a class of rich bourgeois just as Alia and Nano had created a class of petty and middle bourgeoisie through the privatisation of small shops and workshops at nominal prices.

Under the programme of the Democratic Party the justice system has suffered grave blows. Over the course of three to six months, new Democratic Party magistrates were 'trained', but proved incapable of resolving even the simplest of cases. Corruption, contraband and all other kinds of illegal trafficking quickly flowered and aroused the envy even of Western businessmen. Berisha's appeal to 'sow the most profitable plants' encouraged people to sow *Cannabis sativa* an extremely profitable narcotic. Life became extremely difficult for those who had worked and struggled wholeheartedly for the freedom and construction of Albania for more than fifty years. The ridiculous pensions were insufficient even for bread and coffee, and the absurd salaries of doctors and teachers created massive discontent. The secret police became an instrument of terrorism by which Berisha sought to intimidate his opponents by assassinations and the kidnapping of children.

Particularly damnable acts of Berisha were the neglect of the national language, the widening of the gap between North and South, the humiliation of heroes and martyrs, the weakening of the army and the state, the creation of pyramidal companies, the destruction of cultural, educational and scientific institutions, and the corruption of the youth.

Out of all this developed the risings of 1997, which struck a severe blow at the fascist dictatorship. The new bourgeoisie, in collaboration with the Western powers sought to manipulate these without entirely achieving their objectives. The communists, in spite of their undeniable role in the raising of the anti-fascist consciousness of the people, were unable to play the leading role in this movement of the people since they were divided and confused. Thus the risings quickly degenerated into anarchy with unfortunate consequences for the destiny of the country. Berisha aimed to provoke a dangerous civil war, but was unable to do so since 'the army was as soft as a water melon' (words attributed to Zhulali, Minister of Defence at this time). In fact, the army consisted of men with green uniforms and a red heart, since it was impossible to replace at once all the soldiers trained in love of the people and the motherland.

The elections of June 1997 struck a great blow at the Democratic Party, in spite of the help given to Berisha by his new ally Milloshi. Berisha tried by every means in his power up to the coup of 14 September 1998 to destabilise Albania. Milloshi's declaration of March 1998 calling for 'agreement between the Serbs and the Kosovars' at the same time as the Drenica district was being reduced to ashes by genocide, demonstrates that Milloshi had embarked on the road of revisionism, a road which aims at the extinction of wars of liberation and the submission of the peoples to imperialist powers.

The events of 1997 showed that on 26 May 1997 Berisha had stolen the votes of the people in collaboration with bandits and criminals. His European supporters aimed at the complete subjection of Albania to a neo-Nazi policy (such was the policy of the Democratic Party headed by Berisha). This behaviour of Europe and the United States – sometimes in confrontation and at other times in agreement – showed that they had a great interest in Albania and were struggling hard to decide which of them should dominate. The Western governments during the darkest

years of Berisha's fascist terror never ceased from glorifying this type of government, a policy which reached its climax at the beginning of 1997 (the first moments of revolt) when they said 'we support Albania, which must continue its reforms'.

The coming to office of the Socialist Party changed the situation materially — above all in the defascisation of internal life. The law banning the Communist Party from political life was annulled, some concessions were made as regards the press and journalists, and the activities of the secret police were curtailed. However, the Nano government left the Berisha regime untouched at the highest level and with it the possibility of a rapid fall of the government — not as yet realised owing to the fact that the Berisha-Rugova-Bukoshi coup d'etat did not have the support of the people.

Over more than two years young criminals have formed dangerous gangs who have terrified the towns and travelers, and created great insecurity. The economy destroyed by the anti-national police of Berisha has not been able to recover, but has continued to decline, while the hatred of the people for the new class of bourgeois politicians has grown. Each day it cannot but recall the glorious period of socialism, and particularly the enormous transformations in agriculture, industry, education and science under Enver Hoxha. This cannot now be denied by anyone with the slightest sense of realism. According to a poll on the ten most celebrated figures of the nation carried out by the independent journal 'Our Time', Hoxha was second only to Ismail Qemali (who proclaimed independence in 1912).

Education, health, the environment, have suffered enormous losses during the last decade. Illiteracy, infectious diseases, mass burning of fruit trees and vines, are appalling phenomena. AIDS, malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, epidemics caused by polluted water, car accidents, random shootings — all these form a new page in Albanian statistics. Hundreds of people cannot obtain the minimum nourishment necessary for life, without mentioning those who have died in poverty abroad. In this polluted atmosphere, in an environment without trees or flowers, crime, poverty and prostitution flourish alongside a ruling class with astronomical incomes, a class which includes deputies, diplomats, ministers and chiefs of police. Simple people, revolted by this reality, ask: 'When will we and you take back the power we have lost ?'

But the communist movement remains below the level needed for this, and the Fifth Column has played its part in this. Greedy careerist elements often obstruct the purging of spurious communists from our ranks. Nevertheless, time is on our side. Capitalism is destined for destruction, taking with it its revisionist servitors. This will be realised when our party becomes truly Marxist-Leninist, when its members become leaders of the masses in word and deed, when they are ready to give even their life for their class, the proletariat.

We aim to construct such a party and we shall certainly succeed since we are able to build on the experience of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Enver.

Courtesy: 'ISML', No. 7, 2000, pp. 5-11.

[From the Indian magazine *Revolutionary Democracy*, which promotes a pro-Hoxha (anti-Maoist) political line, April 2001. Online at: <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv7n1/index.htm>]