11. «THE CARROT» AND «THE STICK»

Our Party and Government delegation goes to the Soviet Union. Khrushchev’s manoeuvres: the «carrot» in evidence — the Soviet government converts the credits into grants. Leningrad: Pospyelov and Kozlov censor our speeches. «We should not mention the Yugoslavs.» Our official talk with Khrushchev and others. Khrushchev gets angry: «You want to take us back to Stalin’s course», «Tito and Rankovic are better than Kardelj and Popovic. Tempo is an ass..., is unstable.» A chance meeting with the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow, Micunovic. Khrushchev’s visit to Albania, May 1959. Khrushchev and Malinovsky ask us for military bases: «We shall control the whole Mediterranean from the Bosporus to Gibraltar.» The adviser on the extermination of dogs. The Soviet Embassy in Tirana, a centre of the KGB.

Our Party and its Central Committee saw the tragic course on which the Khrushchevites were leading the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, as well as the directions which events were taking, and therefore they were in a great
dilemma. The steps that we took had to be carefully measured: we should not be hasty, but neither must we go to sleep. Foreseeing difficult moments, we were greatly interested in strengthening the situation within the country and building up and further developing the economy and strengthening the army. In the first place and above all, we had to keep the Party on the rails of Marxism–Leninism, to fight the penetration of revisionism, and wage this fight by persistently defending the Leninist norms and protecting the unity in the leadership and in the Party. This was the main guarantee to keep us immune from Titoism and Khrushchevism. The Khrushchevites were keeping up their disguise and had no way to attack us openly in this field. Quite correctly, we defended the Soviet Union when all were attacking it. As I have written above, this was another important question of principle and, at the same time, our tactic against the Khrushchevites, who did not find weak spots in our stands.

They could not or did not want to exacerbate the contradictions with us. Perhaps, underrating the strength of our Party and the vitality of the Albanian people, they thought that they would strangle us because we were small, or that they would take the fortress from within by preparing their agency (as time showed, they had acted in this direction with Liri Belishova, Maqo
Como, Panajot Plaku, Beqir Balluku, Petrit Dume, Hito Çako, and other collaborators and conspirators, whom we uncovered later). But irrespective of their efforts to «be on good terms» with us and to avoid hot-tempered actions, both they and we saw that the gulf was widening.

As before, the Yugoslav question was one of the main issues that divided us from the Khrushchevites, who did everything in their power to have us reconcile ourselves to the Yugoslav revisionists. Khrushchev wanted our reconciliation with them, because by means of this reconciliation he wanted us to relinquish our resolute Marxist-Leninist course, to relinquish any correct and principled stand on the internal and international planes, that is, to submit to the Khrushchevite line.

We had long understood this and did not give any ground in the face of the demagogy, the blackmail and the threats of Khrushchev. Apart from the instances which I related above, our meeting with the Soviet leadership in Moscow in April 1957 is typical in this direction. It was the period after the events in Hungary and Poland and after the plenum of the Central Committee of our Party, held in February 1957. At this plenum, we once again made a profound analysis of the bitter events in Hungary and in Poland. We openly expressed our views about the tense international situation at this
period, spoke about the true causes of the disturbances which were occurring in the socialist camp, hit hard at the manoeuvres of imperialism, headed by American imperialism, exposed modern revisionism, and expressed and defended the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. The whole report, which I delivered at this plenum on behalf of the Political Bureau, opposed many of the theses of the 20th Congress, without mentioning it by name. Immediately after the plenum we made this report public, printed it in «Zëri i popullit» and broadcast it over the radio. Without doubt this infuriated the Khrushchevites. They were unable to oppose our principled theses and stands openly, because they were trying to preserve their disguise. Inwardly, however, they were seething. It was necessary to «settle matters» with us, to clamp down on us. They asked us to send a top level delegation to Moscow in the context of «strengthening our friendship».

We left for the Soviet Union in April 1957. The delegation consisted of Mehmet Shehu, Gogo Nushi, Rita Marko, Ramiz Alia, Spiro Koleka, Xhafer Spahiu, Behar Shtylla, me and others. Great astonishment: as soon as the ship on which we were travelling entered the territorial waters of the Soviet Union, a group of Soviet warships appeared, surrounded us, greeted us with flags, and escorted us to Odessa. The deputy prime mi-
nister of the Ukraine, the deputy foreign minister of the Soviet Union, Patolichev, leaders of the party and the state of Odessa, and hundreds of people with flags and flowers had come to the port to welcome us. We stayed one day in Odessa, looked around the city, they took us to the ballet and that night we left by train for Moscow. At the Kiev station Kirichenko, Kalchenko (the prime minister of the Ukraine) and others were awaiting us. We had a cordial talk with them, they wished us a good trip and we went on our way. The atmosphere at the «Kievsky» railway station in Moscow was even warmer. Thousands and thousands of Moscovites, carrying flowers and flags, had turned out to welcome the arrival of the top level Albanian delegation and to express their sincere love and respect for our people, our Party and our country. I have felt this special love and respect of the Soviet people for us, built up in the years when Stalin was alive, whenever I have had the opportunity to come into contact with the rank-and-file Soviet people in industrial enterprises, collective farms, and the cultural, artistic and scientific centres, which I have visited. In our Party and people the ordinary Soviet people saw their true and sincere friends, saw a party and a people which whole-heartedly loved the Soviet Union and defended it with all their might, and which loved and honoured the names of Lenin and Stalin.
«Comrade Enver,» said Patolichev, «at this station we have welcomed other top level representatives of people's democracies, but a welcome like this, which the Soviet people are putting on for you, I have never seen before.»

Khrushchev, Bulganin, members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the party, members of the government of the USSR, etc., were on the platform to welcome us. We shook hands and embraced them, and although their expressions of joy came nowhere near and could not be compared with those of the people, who continued to cheer round about us, still we noticed that this time the welcome of the Soviet leaders was several degrees warmer than on other occasions. Both at the station and at the reception to welcome us, they were unsparing with their flattering words.

«We are proud of the friendship we have with you; your Party is a young party but it has shown itself to be very mature; you are playing a very great role...» Khrushchev, Bulganin, Pospyelov and the others hastened to declare.

Very quickly we realized that this was the «carrot». They would bring out the stick a little later.

«We must assist you in a more organized way. We have given you something, but we have not thought well enough about what we have
done," said Khrushchev, trying to sweeten us up at the first priyom, and here, too, he did not forget to repeat his great «desire» that Albania should become an «example for the countries of Asia and Africa, for Greece and Italy.»

After stressing several times «we shall assist you more» and «better», Khrushchev considered it appropriate to test the effect of his promises there and then.

«We roared with laughter in the Presidium,» he said, «when we read Tito's speech at Pula. He abused Comrade Enver there, but Tito's eyes have been blinded.»

«We immediately gave him the reply he deserved,» I said.

«Of course, of course,» said Khrushchev and his smile faded, «but we must restrain our legitimate anger and show ourselves generous towards them, for the sake of the peoples of Yugoslavia and the unity of the camp.

«We shall go among the people and speak to them,» he continued, «we must show ourselves to be reasonable. We should not mention the Yugoslavs by name, but should speak about revisionism, in general, as a phenomenon...»

It was the welcoming reception and I did not oppose him. However, the Yugoslav problem was to pursue us everywhere.

Two days later we went to Leningrad. Kozlov welcomed us with the friendliest words:
"I am crazy about Albania," he told us. "I have become a great admirer of your country!" (It was this same Kozlov who, two or three years later, in the unforgettable events of Bucharest and Moscow, was to prove that he was such a great «admirer» of our country, that, apart from anything else, he threatened us with the loss of the freedom and independence of the Homeland, saying to us: «One atomic bomb dropped by the Americans would be enough to snuff out Albania and its population.»)

Amongst others we visited the «Lenin» machine-building plant, a big plant of historic importance. There, in the grave conditions of Czarism, Lenin had set up the first communist groups and had many times delivered speeches to the workers.

"No other foreign delegation has visited this plant," said Pospyelov, who accompanied us on this visit.

The workers had not been prepared, because our visit was a spontaneous one, but they gave us a really warm welcome. One worker, who worked on a turbine for our hydro-power station on the Mat River, gave us some tools which we were to give as a souvenir to an Albanian worker. The workers of the plant to whom we talked, told us that they knew Albania, that they nurtured a special love for the Albanian people and considered them an heroic people, etc.
They immediately organized a rally at the plant, in which 4,000-5,000 people took part, and asked me to speak. I spoke and expressed the profound love and gratitude which the Albanian people and the Party of Labour of Albania nurtured for them and the whole Soviet people. I told them about the struggle of our people and Party against imperialist and revisionist enemies. These enemies were real, had names, had engaged in concrete activities against us. I had to speak openly to the workers, although this was not going to please Khrushchev. At the first reception he had given us his «orientation» on the question of Yugoslavia. But neither I nor my comrades would have had a clear conscience if we had not spoken out, therefore in my speech I told the workers that the Yugoslav leaders were anti-Marxists and chauvinists, that they had done hostile work, etc.

The workers listened to me attentively and cheered with great enthusiasm. However, after the meeting, Pospyelov said to me:

«I think we should tidy up the part about Yugoslavia a little, because it seems to me a bit too hard-hitting.»

«There is nothing exaggerated,» I said.

«Tomorrow your speech will be published in the press.» said Pospyelov. «The Yugoslavs will be very angry with us.»
«It’s my speech. You are in order,» I said to him.

«Comrade Enver, you must understand us,» insisted Pospyelov. «Tito says that it is we who incite you to speak openly against them like this. We must soften that bit.»

This dialogue took place in one of the rooms of the «Kirov» Opera Theatre in Leningrad. It was time for the performance to begin, the people were waiting for us to enter the hall.

«Let us postpone this discussion till after the performance,» I said. «Time is getting on.»

«We’ll postpone the beginning of the performance,» he insisted, «I’ll tell the comrades.»

We argued a bit and in the end we reached a «compromise»: the word «enemy» would be replaced with «anti-Marxist».

The revisionists were jumping for joy as if they had gained the heavens. After a little reflection, Kozlov wanted another «concession»: «'Anti-Marxist' does not sound too good either,» he said, «how about if we alter it to 'non-Marxist'?»

«All right, then,» I said in an ironical tone. «Do as you wish!»

«Let us go out to the foyer of the theatre,» Kozlov then proposed, and we circled once or twice among the people, so that Kozlov could greet them. Meanwhile the others went to make the «correction» and Ramiz accompanied them.
However, when Ramiz returned, he told me that they had removed all I had said about the Yugoslavs. I instructed him to tell them that we insisted on our opinions, but Khrushchev’s men replied:

"It is impossible to make any change now, because we would have to inform the comrades at the top again in order to do such a thing!"

In one of the intervals of the performance I expressed our dissatisfaction to Pospyelov.

"The truth is that they are what you say," he told me, "but we must not be hasty, because the time will come..."

Thus, what I said at the meeting in connection with Yugoslavia, came out differently in "Pravda". Mehmet, too, who had gone to Tashkent with a part of the delegation, was subjected to the same pressures and "operations" on his speeches.

Although the Soviet leaders were very well aware of our stand towards the Yugoslav revisionists, we had decided in advance to raise this problem in Moscow again and to tell Khrushchev and company why we disagreed with them. We met on April 15. Mehmet, Gogo, Ramiz, Spiro, Rita and I were at the talks from our side; from the Soviet side there were Khrushchev, Bulganin, Suslov, Ponomaryov, as well as Andropov. The latter, following the disturbances which occurred in Hungary, was now no longer an am-
bassador, but a top functionary in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the party, I think a director or vice-director in the sector for relations with the parties of socialist countries.

Right from the outset, I told Khrushchev and his associates that I would speak mainly about the Yugoslav problem.

«We have discussed these matters continually in our Party,» I said amongst other things, «and have done our utmost to be as patient, cool-headed and prudent as possible in our opinions and actions towards the Yugoslav leadership.

«For their part, the Yugoslav leaders have gone on in the same old way. I do not intend to go over all the bitter history of our relations with them over 14 years, because you know about it, but I want to stress that, even to this day, the Yugoslav leadership is continuing its hostile secret activities against us and permanently maintains a provocative stand.

«We believe that these persistent stands on the part of the Yugoslav leadership, and especially on the part of their legation in Tirana,» I continued, «are intended to completely destroy relations with us in order to put us in a difficult position in regard to our friends, on the pretext that 'we have achieved good relations with all the other parties, while it is not possible to reach agreement with the Albanians'.»

I went on to tell them of new facts in con-
nection with a number of activities of the mi-

nister and the secretary of the Yugoslav legation

in Tirana, spoke about the underhand work they

were doing to organize anti-party elements and

activate them against our Party and people and
told them of our efforts to make them stop their

anti-Albanian activity.

<These activities cannot be done on their

personal initiative,» I told Khrushchev, «but are
done on the orders of the top Yugoslav leader-

ship. This is the conclusion we have drawn from

their actions.»

Further on, I raised the problem of the

harmful activity which the Yugoslav leaders con-
tinued to carry out in Kosova.

<This is a delicate and important question

for us,» I said, «because they are not only organ-

izing intense activity against our country from

Kosova, but are also trying to liquidate the Alba-
nian population of Kosova, by displacing them

en masse to Turkey and other countries.»

After speaking in detail about the efforts of

the staff of the Yugoslav legation in Tirana to or-

ganize the internal enemies of our Party and peo-

dle, about the plot they had tried to organize in

the Tirana Conference in April 1956, and about

the subsequent hostile activity with Tuk Jakova,

Dali Ndreu, Liri Gega, etc., I pointed out:

«All these facts and others, of which we have

ample, have convinced us that, to this very day,
the Yugoslav leadership has never given up its aim of overthrowing the people's power in Albania. Thus, the Yugoslav revisionists are a danger, not only to our country but also to all the other socialist countries because, as they themselves have declared and as their activity towards us confirms, they are not reconciled to our socialist system, are opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat and have totally abandoned Marxism-Leninism.

«We have always wanted to have good relations with Yugoslavia,» I continued, «but to put it bluntly, we do not trust the Yugoslav leaders, because they speak against the social system in our countries and are opposed to the foundations of Marxism-Leninism. In all their propaganda, they do not say one word against imperialism, on the contrary, have joined the chorus of the Western powers against us. In 14 years, we have not seen the Yugoslav leadership make the slightest change that would make us think it has understood any of its grave mistakes and deviations, which have long been under attack. Therefore, we cannot put any trust in this leadership.

«But what stand are we to maintain towards it?» I continued. «We shall keep our temper, we shall be patient and vigilant. But there is a limit to patience. We are not going to take any step which would damage the interests of socialism and Marxism-Leninism, we are not going to wage
war on them and neither will we interfere in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia. We are not and never have been for such actions, but we consider it our permanent duty to defend our correct ideological and political line and to unceasingly expose opportunism and revisionism.

«These were the things I had to tell you,» I said in conclusion. «In regard to our political situation, it is very good. The people stand firmly united around the Party and have mobilized themselves in the work to implement its line. That is all I have to say.»

Khrushchev, who up till now had listened in silence to what I presented, his face flushing red and turning pale alternately, although he managed to maintain his «aplomb», began to speak. Apparently he wanted to show us that «one can remain silent» even when one does not agree with what one’s counter-part is saying.

«I wanted to stress our opinion,» he began. «We are in complete agreement with you and support you.»

Immediately after this phrase, however, Khrushchev showed us how they «supported» us:

«We thought that this party meeting would end more quickly and had no idea that you would present matters in this way.

«You are somewhat touchy in your view of relations with Yugoslavia,» he continued. «When you speak, you present the question of relations..."
with Yugoslavia as hopeless. The way you speak about the Yugoslav leadership implies that this leadership has betrayed, that it is completely off the rails, that nothing can be done with it, and therefore we should break off relations. I do not think that it has betrayed, but it is true that it has slipped seriously from the course of Marxism-Leninism. According to you, we ought to return to what Stalin did, which caused all these things we know about. If we take things as you present them, it turns out that Yugoslavia is against the Soviet Union, in the first place, and also against you and the others. When I listen to you speaking I see that you are seething with anger against them! The Italians, Greeks and Turks are no better than the Yugoslavs. I would like to ask you: With whom have you the best relations?»

«We have no relations with the Greeks and the Turks,» I replied.

«Let us examine how the Yugoslavs behave towards us,» he continued. «They attack us more than the Greeks, the Turks and the Italians! But there is something specific, proletarian, about Yugoslavia. Hence, can we break off relations with Yugoslavia?»

«We do not say this,» I replied.

«You did not say it but from your words it is obvious that you think it. Certainly Yugoslavia will not become the cause of a war against our camp, like Germany, Italy or any other country.
Do you consider Yugoslavia as the enemy number one?!” he asked me.

"We are not speaking about Yugoslavia. We are speaking about the revisionist activity of the Yugoslav leaders," I said. "What are we to do after those things which they hatch up against us?"

"Try to neutralize their work. What else can you do? Are you going to war with them?" he asked me again.

"No, we have not made war on them and we are not going to do so. But if the Yugoslav minister goes tomorrow to photograph military objects, then what are we to do?"

"Take the film!" answered Khrushchev.

"They will use such a measure as a pretext to break off relations and put the blame on us," I said.

"Then what do you want from us, Comrade Enver?" he said angrily. "Our views differ from yours and we are unable to advise you! I do not understand you, Comrade Hoxha! Adenauer and Kishi are no better than Tito, but nevertheless, we are doing everything in our power for rapprochement with them. Do you think we are wrong?"

"This is not the same issue," I replied. "When there is talk about Tito, the improvement of relations on the party road is implied, while he is an
anti-Marxist. However, the Yugoslav leadership is not correct even in state relations. What stand are we to adopt, if the Yugoslavs continue to hatch up plots against us?»

«Comrade Hoxha,» shouted Khrushchev angrily, «you are constantly interrupting me. I listened to you for an hour without interrupting you once, while you do not allow me to speak even for a few minutes, but interrupt me continually! I have nothing more to say!» he declared and stood up.

«We have come to exchange opinions,» I said. «Then, as soon as you express an idea, you ask my opinion. Are you annoyed that I reply to you?!»

«I have told you and I am telling you again: I listened to you for an hour, Comrade Hoxha, while you did not listen to me even for a quarter of an hour but interrupted me again and again! You want to build your policy on sentiments. You say there is no difference between Tito, Kardelj, Rankovic, Popovic, and so on! As we have told you previously, they are people and differ from one another. The Yugoslavs say that they are all of the same opinion, but we say otherwise: Tito and Rankovic maintain a different, more reasonable, more approachable stand towards us, while Kardelj and Popovic are totally hostile towards us. Tempo is an ass..., is unstable. Let us take Eisenhower and Dulles. They are both reactionaries, but we must not lump the two of them together. Dulles
is a savage war-monger, while Eisenhower is more human.

«We told you at the first meeting: we are not going to attack anyone and not going to provoke any attack. Our attacks and counter-attacks must be made in such a way as to ensure that they are in favour of rapprochement and not alienation.

«We have asked Zhou Enlai to become the intermediary to arrange a meeting between our parties in which the Yugoslavs will take part.¹ He was pleased to undertake this task. Such a meeting can be held. The Yugoslavs have agreed to it. But it should not be thought that everything will be achieved at such a meeting. However, with opinions like yours, why should we go to such a meeting?! I do not understand what you are aiming at, Comrade Enver! Are you trying to convince us that we are not right?! Have you come here to convince us that we, too, should adopt the same stand as you towards Yugoslavia? No, we know what we are doing! Do you want to convince us that your line is right?! This does not lead to any good solution and is not in the

¹ The reference is to Khrushchev's efforts, in collaboration with the Chinese leadership, to organize a meeting of all the communist parties of socialist countries in which Tito was to take part, too. This meeting was organized in Moscow in November 1957, but despite the efforts of Khrushchev and Mao Zedong, the Yugoslavs did not take part in it. For more details see this volume pp. 326-329.
interest of our camp. In connection with the counter-revolution in Hungary we have considered the stand of the Party of Labour of Albania correct, but your tactic in connection with Yugoslavia is wrong. I had thought that you should meet Micunovic (the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow), not to exacerbate relations but to improve them. However, seeing the way you treat the problem, I doubt that anything will emerge from it. You talk about the provocations of the Yugoslav minister in Tirana. In our country, too, the Yugoslav minister has gone in a demonstrative way to photograph military objects. Our militiaman took his camera and bid him good day!

«Let me repeat: we shall follow the line of improving both state relations and party relations with Yugoslavia. Whether or not we achieve it, that is another matter, but the fact is that we shall have a clear conscience and will serve our party and all the other parties well. We must not make matters worse. The Rumanian comrades are right in describing you in 'Scînteia' as 'quarrelsome'.»

«We are opposed not only to this grave insult, but also to the spirit in which a sister party, such as that of Rumania, deals with this problem in its central organ.» I told Khrushchev. «To be quarrelsome means that you make unprincipled attacks. We have never acted with anyone in this way. 'Scînteia' itself and those who wrote that
article are inciting unjust and unprincipled actions. We have our criticisms and reservations about many stands of the Polish comrades, too, but we have not criticized them in the press, because we do not want to become inciters of quarrels and splits. We have had and still have criticisms of the Italians, and certain stands of the Rumanian comrades themselves. But we have displayed prudence, have not criticized them in the press, because we do not want to settle the problems outside the norms and rules governing relations between sister parties.»

Having received his answer for his «agreement» with «Scînteia», Khrushchev continued, but in a somewhat lower tone:

«Take things quietly, comrades, always quietly, and we shall triumph. Do you know what Stalin used to tell us?» he continued. «'Before we take decisions we should take a cold shower, as the Romans did.' This is what Stalin advised us to do, but he never took a shower himself. Let us do what Stalin did not do!»

Having said these things, he was silent for a moment and then launched off into his accusations again:

«You do not take a shower before taking decisions, either,» he said. «You condemned Dali Ndreu and Liri Gega. We consider this action of yours a grave mistake, very grave.»

«We have discussed the question of these
agents on another occasion.» I said. «Nevertheless, if you wish, I can give you endless details about their anti-party and anti-Albanian activity. They have acted continually to the detriment of our country.»

«Nevertheless, nevertheless!» shouted Khrushchev. «They should not have been condemned so severely. The Yugoslavs are furious.»

«Of course! They were their loyal agents,» I said, and I could see that Khrushchev had been just as infuriated by the verdict of our court as the Yugoslavs were.

«When we heard what you intended to do we sent an urgent radiogram to our ambassador in Tirana, Krylov. We told him that the decision of your court must be annulled without fail. Apparently, you did not listen to him. That order was ours.»

«I am hearing this for the first time and I am astonished that you could have given such an order,» I said, trying to control my anger. «However, you ought to know that during the trial the criminal activity of these dangerous agents was proved to the full. Our people would not pardon a soft stand towards them. We do not pat enemies on the head, but give them what they deserve, according to the laws for which the people have voted.»

Khrushchev was squirming in his seat.

«After Tito's speech at Pula,» put in Pono-
maryov, «we sent a radiogram to Krylov, that he should tell you to keep cool in your reply, that we would publish an article and it should not appear as an organized action. We also told him what you should do about Dali Ndreu and Liri Gega.»

«He told us about the article,» I replied, «but we could not leave matters without replying to Tito, and therefore we wrote it. As for Dali Ndreu and Liri Gega, I know that your ambassador asked us after we arrested them and we told Krylov about the activity of those agents. He did not mention any kind of order, and it was just as well he did not. However, even if he had told us about it, we could never come out against the decision of the people’s court.»

Turning to his comrades, Khrushchev said: «Our ambassador has not carried out his task. That action should have been stopped.»

This individual always openly took our enemies under his protection, imagining Albania as a country in which his orders, and not the laws of our state, had to be applied. I remember that another time he said to me:

«I have received a letter from a person called Panajot Plaku, in which he asked me to help him.»

«Do you know this man?» I asked him. (I knew that he was well acquainted with the traitor and agent of the Yugoslavs, Panajot Plaku,
a fugitive in Yugoslavia, who wanted to go to the Soviet Union.)

«No,» replied Khrushchev, «no, I do not know him.»

He was lying.

«He is a traitor,» I said. «and if you accept him in your country we shall break off our friendship with you. If you admit him you must hand him over to us to hang him publicly.»

«You are like Stalin who killed people,» said Khrushchev.

«Stalin killed traitors, and we kill them, too,» I added.

Since there was nothing else he could do, he retreated. He still hoped to make us submit by using other ways and means. After pouring out all he had to say, he fell silent, laid his hands on the table, softened his stern tone and began his «advice» again.

The tactic of the «stick» was finished. At the discussion table Khrushchev again resorted to the «carrot».

«You must understand us, comrades,» he said, «we speak in this way only with you, because we love you greatly, you are close to our hearts,» etc., etc. And after all this he made a gesture of «generosity»: he excused us from repaying the credits, which the Soviet Union had provided for our country up to the end of 1955 for its economic and cultural development. Of
course, we thanked them, thanked the Soviet working class and the fraternal Soviet people, in the first place, for this aid which they gave a small, but valiant, industrious and indomitable country. However, we all clearly understood what «motives» lay behind this «generosity» of Khrushchev. He wanted to «smooth us over», to relieve the tense atmosphere which had been created during the talk, to some extent, wanted to bribe us with this «aid,» which to Khrushchev was not aid but charity, a bait which he threw us to deceive us and make us submit to him. However, he was soon to be convinced that we were the sort of people who would even accept to eat grass but would never bend the knee to him or any other traitor.

A few days after this «generous» gesture, Khrushchev also invited Micunovic to a big dinner for our delegation. He saw him standing somewhat apart and called to him:

«Come over here! Why do you stand so far off?!»

He introduced us and laughing said to us:

«Try to understand each other!» And off he went, glass in hand, leaving us «to understand each other». We quarrelled.

I reeled off to Micunovic all the things I had told Khrushchev at the meeting and said to him:

«We have been and are ready to improve our state relations and, for our part, have made
every effort, but you must give up your anti-Albanian activity once and for all.»

«You call us revisionists,» said Micunovic. «How can you have relations with revisionists?»

«No,» I said, «we shall never have relations with revisionists, but I am speaking about state relations. We can and should have such relations. In regard to the ideological contradictions which exist between us, you must understand clearly that we will never give up the struggle against opportunism and the revision of Marxism-Leninism.»

«When you speak of revisionism you have us in mind,» said Micunovic.

«That is true,» I said, «whether or not we mention Yugoslavia, the reality is that we are referring to you, too.»

Micunovic stuck to his point of view. The debate was becoming heated. Watching us from a distance, Khrushchev sensed the mounting tension and rejoined us.

Micunovic began to repeat to him what he had said to me previously, and continued to make accusations against us. However, at that dinner we had Khrushchev «on our side».

«When Tito was in Corfû,» he said to Micunovic, «the King of Greece said to him: 'Well, shall we divide up Albania?' Tito did not reply, while the Queen pointed out that they should not talk about such things.»
Micunovic lost his head and said:
«That was only a joke.»
«Such jokes should never be made, especially with the monarcho-fascists, who have been claiming Southern Albania throughout their existence. And you have made similar 'jokes' before this too,» I told him. «We have a document of Boris Kidric in which he has included Albania as the 7th republic of Yugoslavia.»
«This was something done by one individual,» replied Micunovic.
«One individual, true, but he was a member of the Political Bureau of your party and chairman of the State Planning Commission,» said Mehmet.
This was too much for Micunovic and he walked away. Khrushchev took me by the arm and asked me:
«How did this come about? Did you quarrel again?»
«How else could it go? Only badly, as with the revisionists.»
«You Albanians astound me,» he said. «You are stubborn.»
«No,» I said, «we are Marxists.»
We parted displeased with each other. But Khrushchev was versatile in his scheming. As I have said, sometimes he softened the situation with Tito, sometimes he exacerbated it. When things were tense with Tito he was gentle with
us. I remember when Khrushchev spoke at the 7th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party, he attacked Tito in strong terms and everyone applauded him. When we came out at the interval, all the heads of the delegations went to a room to drink coffee. There Khrushchev said:

«And for all I said about Tito, Comrade Enver Hoxha is still not satisfied.»

«You are right,» I said, «Tito must be exposed more vigorously and ceaselessly.»

However, it was not always like this. Before Khrushchev came to visit Albania in May 1959, the Soviet leadership sent us a radiogram in which it informed us that «for understandable reasons he will not touch on the Yugoslav question in his speeches and hopes that in their speeches the Albanian friends will bear this properly in mind.»

This was a condition which they imposed on us and they were awaiting our reply. We discussed this problem at length in the Political Bureau, where all of us expressed our regret and anger over such a visit with conditions and made a balance of the benefits and evils which would result from our acceptance or non-acceptance of Khrushchev’s condition. We knew that the Yugoslavs and all reaction would rub their hands and declare:

«See, Khrushchev went to Albania and shut the Albanians’ mouths. And where? In their own home!»
However, the visit to Albania of the chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was of special importance for strengthening the international position of our country.

Therefore we decided unanimously to agree to Khrushchev’s condition just for the days that he would stay in Albania and as soon as he left Albania we would continue our unwavering fight as before against the Yugoslav revisionists. Fearing that something might occur as in Leningrad in April 1957, as soon as he arrived in our country on his visit at the end of May 1959, Khrushchev spoke first, without waiting for me to welcome him, saying:

«You must know that I am not going to speak against Tito.»

«We consider a guest a guest and impose nothing on him,» I replied.

I spoke, said what we had to say, naturally in a friendly manner, but he did not fail to grasp the allusions.

Nevertheless we behaved in a friendly way with him and tried to create the best possible impressions about our country and our people. On every occasion he behaved as was his habit: sometimes with jokes and sometimes in a grave tone he poured out all he had in mind.

We talked about our economic problems.
Besides information about the achievements up to date, I was speaking about our prospects for the future. Among the main branches I mentioned oil, and informed him that in recent days we had struck a new gusher of oil.

«Is that so?» he said. «But what quality is it? I know you have bad, heavy oil. Have you calculated how much it will cost to process it? Then, where will you sell it? Who needs your oil?»

I went on to speak about our mining industry and its very good prospects, mentioning our iron-nickel, chromium and copper ores.

«We have ample amounts of these minerals and we think that we should follow the course of processing them at home. We have raised the necessity for building the metallurgical industry in Albania with you last year and several times in the meetings of Comecon,» I said. «Up till now we have received no positive reply, but we are persisting.»

«Metallurgical plants?» he interrupted me. «I agree, but have you considered the matter well? Have you calculated what a ton of smelted metal will cost you? If it is going to cost you dear it is no good to you. I repeat: one day's production in our country will fulfil all your needs for several years.»

This is how he replied to all our requests and problems.

When I finished, Khrushchev began to speak:
«Comrade Enver’s exposé made the situation in your country clearer to us,» he said. «However, in regard to your needs, I want to tell you that we have not come to examine them. We have not been authorized by our government to discuss such matters. We have come to get to know you, to exchange opinions.»

Then laughing, he cracked a joke which was not simply a joke:

«We think that things are going well with you. Albania has advanced, and if you offered us a loan we would accept it with the greatest of pleasure.»

«We have ample stones, sea and air,» put in Mehmet in the same tone.

«We have much more of those than you. Have you any dollars?» asked Khrushchev, and then, in a different tone:

«Enough of this,» he said. «The truth is that you have made progress, but you are not satisfied. We gave you a credit last year and now you want another one. But we have a popular saying: 'Cut your coat according to your cloth'.»

«We have the same saying,» I said, «and we know it and implement it well.»

«But,» he said, «you are asking for credits again.» He shrugged his shoulders, was silent for a moment and resumed his jocular tone:

«Or is it that you gave us a good lunch and thought it a fine opportunity to ask us for another
credit? If we had known this we would have brought our own lunch.»

«The Albanians have a special respect for a guest,» I said. «Whether they have plenty and whether they have nothing, they always provide for their guest. They treat him with every respect when he comes to their home and even swallow something that they do not like.»

«I was joking,» he said and burst into a laugh. But it was more a snarl than a laugh. Wherever he went he criticized us. About the big vineyards at Shtoi he said:

«Why do you throw your money away? You will get nothing from this land.»

Regardless of the opinions of this «agricultural expert», however, we continued the work and now the vineyards at Shtoi are marvellous.

He criticized the work to drain the Tërbuf swamp. In Vlora he summoned the main Soviet oil expert in our country and he, no doubt «well prepared» by the Soviet Embassy in Tirana, delivered a report in our presence which was extremely pessimistic, saying that Albania had no oil. However, a group of Albanian oil experts also came there and refuted what the Soviets said with many facts and arguments. They spoke in detail about the history of the oil industry in our country, about the great interest of the foreign imperialist companies in Albanian oil in the past and about the great and encouraging results which had been
achieved in the 15 years of the people's power. Mehmet, for his part, spoke in detail about the great prospects for oil extraction in Albania and also mentioned to Khrushchev the recent discoveries in this field.

«Fine, fine,» repeated Khrushchev, «but yours is a heavy oil and contains sulphur. Have you calculated things properly? You will process it, but a litre of benzine will cost you more than a kilogram of caviar. You must look closely at the commercial aspect. It has not been decreed that you must have everything yourselves. What are your friends for?!»

In Saranda he advised us to plant only oranges and lemons for which the Soviet Union had great need.

«We shall supply you with wheat. The mice in our country eat as much wheat as you need,» he said, repeating what he had said in Moscow in 1957. He also gave us a lot of «advice».

«Don't waste your land and marvellous climate on maize and wheat. They bring you no income. The bay-tree grows here. But do you know what it is? Bay is gold. Plant thousands of hectares of bay because we shall buy it from you.»

He went on with peanuts, tea and citrus fruit.

«These are what you should plant,» he said. «In this way Albania will become a flourishing garden!»
In other words, he wanted Albania to be turned into a fruit-growing colony which would serve the revisionist Soviet Union, just as the banana republics in Latin America serve the United States of America.

But we could never allow ourselves to take this suicidal course which Khrushchev advised. He even criticized our archaeological work as «dead things». When he visited Butrint he said: «Why do you employ all these forces and funds on such dead things! Leave the Hellenes and the Romans to their antiquity!»

«Apart from the Hellenic and Roman culture,» I told him, «another ancient culture, the Illyrian culture, developed and flourished in these zones. The Albanians stem from the Illyrian trunk and our archaeological studies are confirming and providing evidence of our centuries-long history and of the rich and ancient culture of a valiant, industrious and indomitable people.»

However, Khrushchev was truly an ignoramus in these fields. He could see only the «profitability»:

«Why are these things of value to you? Do they increase the well-being of the people?» he asked me. He called Malinovsky, at that time minister of defence, who was always at hand:

«Look, how marvellous this is!» I heard them whisper. «An ideal base for our submarines could be built here. These old things should be
dug up and thrown into the sea (they were referring to the archaeological finds at Butrint). We can tunnel through this mountain to the other side,» and he pointed to Ksamil. «We shall have the most ideal and most secure base in the Mediterranean. From here we can paralyze and attack everything.»

They were to repeat the same thing in Vlora a day or two later. We had come out on the verandah of the villa at Uji i Ftohtë.

«Marvellous, marvellous!» Khrushchev cried and turned to Malinovsky. I thought he was referring to the truly breath-taking landscape of our Riviera. But their mind was working in another direction:

«What a secure bay at the foot of these mountains!» they said. «With a powerful fleet, from here we can have the whole of the Mediterranean, from Bosporus to Gibraltar, in our hands! We can control everyone.»

It made my flesh creep to hear them talk like this, as if they were the masters of the seas, countries and peoples. «No, Nikita Khrushchev,» I said to myself, «we shall never allow you to set out to enslave other countries and shed their peoples' blood from our territory. You will never have Butrint, Vlora, or any inch of the Albanian territory, to use for those evil purposes.»
The fictitious «peace» was being more and more thoroughly rocked to its foundations. Khrushchev and his followers were seeing our resistance ever more clearly and tried to make us yield by exerting economic pressure, while secretly orchestrating a discrimination against our leadership by means of their specialists who were working in all sectors in our country, such as in oil and the economic enterprises in which we lacked sufficient experience, in the army, where we had advisers, etc. The Soviet Embassy, with its innumerable «councillors», who were diplomats only in name, because in reality they were security officers, maintained contact with all these «experts», and gave them the necessary instructions. The first thing they did was to issue instructions to the Soviet experts in the economy to neglect their work in Albania. To a greater or lesser degree, these experts began to become more interested in buying suit lengths and other things, which they sent to the Soviet Union to sell on the black market, than in working with our comrades.

Those experts who remained sincere with us were removed by the embassy, one after the other, on fabricated pretexts and against their will. When they parted from our people, these specialists expressed their dissatisfaction. Those who remained in Albania, of course, had received orders to sabotage the key sectors of our economy, especially the oil industry and geological prospect-
ing. As was proved later, the Soviet oil «experts» had recruited some agents from the ranks of our geologists and, as they themselves eventually admitted, had charged them with the mission of keeping from our Party and Government accurate data about the discoveries which they made, of hiding the results of these discoveries, of using all the means of sabotage, so as to make us start drilling in the wrong places, of violating the rules of prospecting and extracting technique and wasting hundreds of millions of leks, etc. The Khrushchevite revisionists taught the agents they had recruited in our country various methods of sabotage. And the agents carried out the instructions of their patrons. These oil «experts» and «geologists» made two reports: an accurate one, with exact and positive data on discoveries of different minerals, and a false one, which said that the prospecting had allegedly yielded negative results, i.e., the minerals sought were not discovered. The first report was sent to Moscow and Leningrad through the KGB centre, which was called the Soviet Embassy in Tirana, and the second report was sent to our Ministry of Industry and Mines. This whole vile business was discovered and proved after the Soviets cleared out of Albania. Convinced that there had been sabotage, our Central Committee gave orders that the reports must be studied, that our geological teams must go to all those places where the Soviet saboteurs had said the results
were negative, and begin prospecting. This was done. Precisely in those places where they had declared «there was nothing», we found oil, chromium, copper, iron-nickel, coal, etc. This was an economic pressure which they exerted on us in order to force us to accept their views. But they broke their heads. Our Party's resistance steadily increased, but still without burning the bridges. The Soviet revisionists also operated prudently to avoid burning the bridges with us. The Soviet ambassador came frequently to sound us out on some international problems on which I would give my opinion frankly, or to learn about some internal matter and I filled him up with reports about the weather, about the planting, about the harvests, and about some general decision of the Party about economic and cultural matters.

Such were the Soviet ambassadors after Khrushchev mounted the throne. They thought we were blind. They never expressed any opinion on the questions we asked them. On these occasions their stand was: «I shall inform you,» or «I shall ask Moscow». Their task was that of the informer. They rarely had any understanding of the problems of our industry and agriculture.

The Soviet ambassador Krylov, who preceded Ivanov in Albania, visited some regions of Southern Albania. When he returned he paid me a visit.
«Are you satisfied with what you saw?» I asked him.

He said nothing concrete, because it was dangerous to tell me about the things he had gone to see there. All he said was something... «colossal».

«I have noticed that you keep many dogs in the villages and in the towns and I have made a calculation that there could be such and such a number of dogs in Albania, which must eat such and such quantity of food..., and if this food is reckoned in grain it comes to such and such a number of quintals.»

«Well, well,» I said to myself. «Look what an ambassador they have sent us!» And I said to him:

«You may be right, but in our country you don’t find barber’s shops and restaurants for dogs as in Paris. But what measures do you advise, Comrade Ambassador?»

«You should kill them!» he said.

«The ’Society for the Protection of Animals’ will protest, as they are accusing us enough already about killing traitors and agents of reaction.» I said.

This same ambassador once told me not to speak in harsh terms about Tito in a meeting of the People’s Assembly. I replied:

«Comrade ambassador, I do not take orders from anyone except from my Party.»

«We understand this, but if Tito is going to
be attacked I shall not attend the meeting of the Assembly,» he protested.

«Tito will be exposed even more than from what I have written and the session of the People’s Assembly will open even if you do not come,» I said.

And the «famous» Soviet ambassador came to the Assembly and tucked himself away in a corner of the box, behind other ambassadors, which was not his place.

It was clear that this threatening gesture of the ambassador, which we slapped back, came from Moscow.

After a short time the «adviser» on the extermination of dogs in Albania was recalled from Tirana and became a director in the Central Committee of Khrushchev’s communist party!

Day by day, Khrushchev and his gang were increasing their pressure on us in the direction of the economy. Not only did they not provide us with all the aid we sought, but even what they did provide was quite insufficient. They supplied only a few cases of tractor spare parts, which they sent by aircraft. In this way they sought to force us to our knees, but in vain, because they had no success. To put pressure on us to accept their conditions, Khrushchev said to us once (while we were talking about our economic problems): «In our relations with the Yugoslavs it has always been our principle to give them half of what they
ask for. When they behave well we act more generously. This is how we act with all those who behave badly towards us.» The implication was quite clear, they were openly putting pressure on us. We quarrelled so fiercely that time that the talks were almost broken off.

All over the country the Soviets began to commit many provocations against our people everyday. Once, a person complained to the head of his office that a Soviet «expert» had made a proposition to recruit him as an agent. Our comrade refused indignantly. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs protested to the Soviet Embassy about this. Naturally, the embassy denied that there were such people among the Soviet experts, but a few weeks later it removed its exposed agent from the country. This was the first time we had to do with such a denunciation and therefore our Party and Government recommended vigilance, prudence and the greatest cool-headedness. It was quite obvious that with the passage of time the situation was getting worse, although the leadership in Moscow preserved the external forms of «friendship».

For us, the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was finished. Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites were revisionists, traitors. War would be declared. The time of the declaration of war was only a matter of months, while our relations continued to hang on a thread.