4. THE TOUCH-STONE

Khrushchev has his eyes on Yugoslavia.
The first sign of the flirtation: the Soviet letter of June 1954; Khrushchev blames the Information Bureau for the Yugoslav leadership's betrayal. Intense exchange of cordial correspondence between Krushchev and Tito. Khrushchev decides to rehabilitate the renegades. Our clear-cut opposition: the letters of May and June 1955. Talk with Ambassador Levichkin: «How can such decisions be taken so lightly and in a unilateral way?» Insistent invitation to go to the Soviet Union «on holiday»! Meeting with Suslov. Mikoyan telephones at midnight: «Meet Tempo, iron out your disagreements.» The meeting with S. V. Tempo.

All these things which occurred in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin worried our Party and its leadership. Of course, at that period, especially before the 20th Congress, our suspicions were based on isolated facts, which the Soviet
leaders covered up with torrents of demagogy. Nevertheless, the stands they maintained in their meetings with us, their actions at home and abroad made us wary. Khrushchev’s flirtations with Tito were particularly unpleasant for us. We, for our part, continued to fight Titoite Yugoslav revisionism with the greatest severity and defended the correct Marxist-Leninist stands of Stalin and the Information Bureau towards the Yugoslav revisionist leaders. We did this not only while Stalin was alive, but also in the transitional period that the Soviet Union went through after Stalin’s death, when Khrushchev triumphed with his putsch and made the law there, as well as after Khrushchev fell. And this is the stand we shall always maintain towards Yugoslav revisionism, until it is completely destroyed ideologically and politically.

We watched every action of Khrushchev’s with great vigilance and attention. On the one hand, we saw that in general nothing was being said against Stalin, that there was talk of the unity of the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union, that Khrushchev spoke against American imperialism in «strong» terms and made some superficial criticism of Titoism, while on the other hand, he waved the white flag of reconciliation and submission to them. In this situation we followed the course of friendship with the Soviet Union, struggled to safeguard and strengthen this friendship
and this was not a tactic, but a matter of principle for us. Nevertheless, we did not allow wrong actions and deviations in line to go uncriticized when they appeared.

For us, the struggle against American imperialism and Yugoslav Titoism was a touch-stone to assess the stands of Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites with the Marxist eye. In fact Khrushchev prattled against capitalism and American imperialism, but we did not like those half-dozen daily meetings and *priyoms* with all kinds of American senators, multi-millionaires and businessmen. Khrushchev became a clown who performed all day and every day, lowering the dignity of the Soviet Union.

«We have our foot on the neck of the foreign enemy, he daren't move, we can turn him to ashes with atomic bombs,» he boasted in discourses from morning till late into the night. His tactic was to create euphoria within the country, to build up the prestige of his clique in the countries of people's democracy, and irrespective of his bombastic words, to imply to the Americans and world reaction: «We are no longer for the world proletarian revolution, want to collaborate closely with you, we need you and you must understand that we are changing colour, and making a major change of direction. We will have difficulties in making

* receptions (Russian in the original).
this change, therefore, you must help us in one way or another.»

On the Yugoslav question, which was clear to us, and that is why we did not shift from our stand, the Khrushchevites chopped and changed, and ebbed and flowed like the tide. The Khrushchevites sometimes abused and sometimes kissed the Yugoslav leaders. When they were abusing the Titoites, the Soviet revisionists said we were right, when they were kissing them, they tried to make us soften our stand towards the Titoite revisionists.

Khrushchev had his eyes fixed on the leadership of Yugoslavia and wanted at all costs, if not to subjugate it, to line it up on his side. Of course, in Tito he was seeking both an ideological ally and a leader whom he could take under his wings as the «big brother» he was. In other words, Tito was very dear to Khrushchev, because he was the first to attack Stalin and reject Marxism-Leninism. In this direction they were in complete accord, but while the Belgrade chief operated openly, Khrushchev wanted to retain his disguise. In the international arena, Tito had become the «communist» dear to American imperialism and world capitalism, which lavished credits and aid on him, so that he would howl against the Soviet regime and the Soviet state and at the same time sell Yugoslavia to foreign capital.

Khrushchev wanted to manoeuvre Tito in his
favour, so that this American agent in Belgrade would lower his tone a bit against the Soviet regime and reduce the great ardour he was showing to undermine the Soviet influence in the countries of people's democracy, to spread the influence of his Khrushchevite revisionist ideas in Yugoslavia and to restrain the Belgrade leadership in its orientation towards the Western way of life and American capital.

Tito, for his part, had long dreamed of shifting the epicentre of the leadership of this alleged communism from Moscow to Belgrade, and that Belgrade should replace Moscow in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. Tito's scheme had made no progress from the time he fell out with Stalin, who detected and sternly attacked the diabolical work of this renegade. Having the assistance of the Americans, Tito brought out this plan again when he saw that Nikita Khrushchev and his group were smashing the work of Lenin and Stalin.

Between these two chiefs of modern revisionism, Khrushchev and Tito, a long and complex confrontation was to develop, sometimes gentle, sometimes harsh, sometimes with attacks and abuse, and sometimes with flattery and smiles. But, regardless of the allegedly Marxist words and slogans, regardless of Khrushchev's vows that he was fighting to restore Tito to the positions of Marxism-Leninism, both when they were quar-
relling and when they were embracing, neither side acted on the basis or in the interests of Marxism-Leninism. Anti-communism remained the foundation of their relations; each of these two brothers in revisionism was to do his utmost to subjugate the other in his own interests, from the positions of anti-communism.

Our Party was to follow this process, step by step, with the greatest vigilance. As this process developed, our Party was to become even more convinced of what Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites were, and what they represented in the Soviet Union and in the international communist and workers' movement.

We received the first warning signal that the new Soviet leadership was changing the former course in the direction of Yugoslav revisionism in June 1954.

During the days of our stay in Moscow, the Soviet leadership handed us a long letter, signed by Khrushchev, addressed to the central committees of the sister parties, in which they informed us about the conclusions which the Soviet leadership had reached on the Yugoslav question. Although the letter was dated June 4, and we had been in Moscow for several days, and indeed on June 8 had concluded the official talks with the main Soviet leaders, they had not even mentioned to us the very important problem which they
raised in this letter. Apparently, Khrushchev, who was well aware of our resolute and unwavering stand towards the Belgrade traitors, wanted to act cautiously and gradually in regard to us.

Distorting the historical truth, Khrushchev and company had reached the conclusion that Yugoslavia’s breaking away from the socialist camp and the «isolation of the Yugoslav working class from the ranks of the international workers’ movement» were entirely due to the «breaking off of relations between the CPY and the international communist movement» in 1948. According to them, the stand that was taken in 1948 and 1949 towards the Yugoslav party was wrong, because this stand allegedly «forced the leading circles of Yugoslavia to make approaches to the USA and Britain»(!), to conclude the «military-political agreement with Greece and Turkey» (the Balkan Pact), to make a «series of serious concessions to capitalism», to move «towards the restoration of capitalism», etc. In short, according to Khrushchev, since the Information Bureau took a severe stand towards Yugoslavia, the latter, either from resentment or from desire, went and sold itself to imperialism, like the bride who went to sleep with the miller to spite her mother-in-law.

According to this logic of Khrushchev’s, when our Party of Labour came into open confrontation and broke off contact with Khrushchevite revisionism, it would have to sell itself and the country to
imperialism, because otherwise it could not exist! And we heard this later from Khrushchev's own mouth when he accused us of selling ourselves «to imperialism for 30 pieces of silver»!

This was nothing but an anti-Marxist, capitalist logic. Our Party opposed Khrushchevite revisionism heroically, just as it had opposed Yugoslav revisionism earlier, and just as it fought resolutely against any other variant of revisionism, but it did not sell out and never will sell out to imperialism or anyone else, because as long as a party considers itself and respects itself as a genuine Marxist-Leninist party, whatever the conditions and situations it is in, it never allows itself to be bought or sold, but resolutely pursues its course, the course of uncompromising struggle against imperialism, revisionism and reaction.

Therefore, even if the Yugoslav leadership had been unjustly condemned in 1949, as Khrushchev was claiming, nothing could permit or justify its falling into the lap of imperialism. On the contrary, the fact that it further strengthened its contacts with imperialism and world reaction, proved very clearly that Stalin, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Information Bureau, our Party and all the other parties, were right when they exposed and condemned it.

But Nikita Khrushchev, consistent in his decision to rehabilitate the Belgrade revisionists, in his letter made the accusation against the Informa-
tion Bureau, of course without mentioning it by name, that in 1948 and in 1949, «all the possibilities were not exploited to the end..., efforts were not made to settle the unsolved problems and disagreements», a thing which, according to him, «would have avoided Yugoslavia's going over to the enemy camp». In the letter which he handed us, Nikita Khrushchev went so far as to say openly that «many of the problems which served to cause differences between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia..., did not constitute serious reasons for dispute and even the misunderstandings that had arisen could have been settled.» Nothing could have pleased Tito and the Yugoslav leadership more! With one stroke of his pencil, Khrushchev cancelled out major problems of principle which had been the basis of the struggle against Yugoslav revisionism, described them as «not serious reasons» and «misunderstandings», and hence, begged the traitors' pardon because they had allegedly been attacked over trifles!

But who were to blame for these «misunderstandings»? In his letter Khrushchev did not attack the Information Bureau, Stalin, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or the other parties which supported the Information Bureau decisions of 1949, by name. Apparently, he considered it still too early to make these attacks. And those who were to blame were found to be Beria among
the Soviets, who with his actions had caused «justifiable dissatisfaction among the Yugoslav leadership», and Djilas among the Yugoslavs (who had been condemned by Tito in the meantime), who «openly propagated liquidationist views», was «an active partisan for the orientation of Yugoslavia towards the Western countries», etc.!

Thus, according to Khrushchev, the problem turned out to be very simple. The breach with Yugoslavia was based not on real reasons but on fabricated pretexts, so «we wronged you for nothing and the culprits have been found: Beria on our side, and Djilas on yours. Now we both have condemned these enemies, therefore, all we have to do is to kiss and make up and forget the past.»

How lightly this clown juggled with the issues! But we, Albanian communists, who had been fighting the Belgrade traitor clique tooth and nail for more than ten years, who had experienced their evil-doings and courageously resisted them, were not and could never be in agreement with this solution of the Yugoslav problem. However, it was still 1954. The open attack on Stalin had not yet been launched. Nothing bad about him had been said openly, Khrushchev was still using a very cunning and skilfully disguised demagogy, and to our eyes the Soviet Union retained the colours of the time of Stalin, though a little faded. What is more, in this letter, which disturbed us profoundly, Khrushchev vowed that everything
he did was «in favour of Marxism-Leninism and socialism», that in their new view of the Yugoslav problem, the Soviet leadership and the other sister parties had no aim other than «to ruin the plans of the Anglo-American imperialists and to utilize all the possibilities to strengthen their own influence over the people of Yugoslavia», «to exert a positive influence on the Yugoslav working class», etc. He added, also, that the efforts of the Soviet side and other parties and countries of people’s democracy would serve as a new step to test «how ready and determined the Yugoslav leaders are to follow the road of socialism».

All these things made us very wary and cautious in our reply. During those days when we were in Moscow, Comrade Hysni, the other comrades of the delegation and I discussed the problem at length and finally gave the Soviet leadership our reply in writing.

In this reply, without openly opposing Khrushchev, we stressed our permanent stand towards the revisionist leadership in Belgrade, emphasized the importance of the Information Bureau decisions of 1948 and 1949 and did not permit any allusion to the re-examination of the stand adopted previously towards the deviations in line of the Yugoslav leadership.

In our written reply we countered Khrushchev’s idea that the «breaking off of relations drove the Yugoslav leaders into the lap of im-

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perialism», with the thesis that it was the Yugoslav leaders themselves who betrayed Marxism-Leninism and set their people and their homeland on the course of enslavement and under the dictate of Anglo-American imperialists, that it was their anti-Marxist line which was the factor that gravely damaged the vital interests of the peoples of Yugoslavia, that it was they who took Yugoslavia out of the socialist camp, who changed the Yugoslav party into a bourgeois party and isolated it from the world movement of the proletariat.

While clearly pointing out these truths, we went on to stress that we agreed that efforts should be made by the communist parties to help rescue the peoples of Yugoslavia from enslavement and poverty, but we stressed once again that in our opinion the Yugoslav leaders had gone a long way down their anti-Marxist road, the road of submission to American and British imperialists.

With this we told Khrushchev indirectly that we did not agree with the hopes and illusions which he nurtured towards the Yugoslav leaders and especially towards «Comrade Tito», as he began to call him. I expressed these opinions to Khrushchev, also, in the next talk I had with him, on June 23, 1954. However, he pretended not to notice the different stands each of us adopted over the Yugoslav problem. Perhaps he did not want to create conflicts with us in the
first official meetings we had with him. Perhaps he underrated us and did not bother his head about our opposition. I remember that he was all euphoria and spoke with the assurance of someone who has everything running smoothly. He had just returned from a lightning visit to Czechoslovakia (he was a master of every kind of visit: lightning, incognito, official, friendly, much publicized, secret, day, night, announced and unannounced, short, long, with his suite or quite alone, etc.).

«In Prague,» he told me, «I took up the Yugoslav problem again with representatives of several sister parties who were there. They were all fully in agreement with me and considered the efforts of our party very important.»

Then looking me right in the eye, he added: «Recently we, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, Rumanians, and others have taken good steps towards the normalization of relations with Yugoslavia...»

I sensed why he stressed this. He wanted to say to me: «See, we are all agreed, hence you Albanians should join us, too.»

I told him briefly that there is a very long history of our relations with the Yugoslav party and state, that the Yugoslav leadership itself was to blame for ruining our relations, and that if the Albanian-Yugoslav state relations were at a very low ebb, this was no fault of ours but a conse-
quence of the unceasing anti-Marxist and anti-
Albanian stands and actions of the leaders in Bel-
grade.
«Konechno, konechno!»* said Khrushchev
jumping up and I understood that he did not want
me to go any further with the discussion of this
problem.
«We have taken all measures,» he said. «To-
morrow our ambassador in Yugoslavia goes to
meet Tito in Brioni. We think that there are great
possibilities of achieving our objective. If nothing
is achieved,» he said in conclusion, «then we still
have other methods.»
This is how the romance of the Khrushchev-
Tito love affair began. A few days later Khrush-
chev handed his opinions or «conclusions» about
the «new analysis» of the Yugoslav problem in
writing to Tito. The latter, of course, was gloat-
ing over the fact that things were developing with
Khrushchev just as he had envisaged, but, as the
sly old fox he was, he did not prove so foolish as to
throw himself into Khrushchev’s arms. On the
contrary, Tito schemed and worked to ensure that
Khrushchev, who had been the first to back down,
would also be the first to openly beg his pardon
in Belgrade. Moreover, Tito was up to his neck
in the mire of imperialism, was bound hand and
foot, therefore if he were to say the odd word about

* Of course, of course (Russian in the original).
«socialism» and «Marxism» he had to do this only to the extent that he was permitted by his Western overlords, first of all the American imperialists. After leaving Khrushchev on tenterhooks for some time, in order to play on the strings which were out of tune, Tito finally replied to him by the middle of August 1954, also in writing.

The essence of the letter from the revisionist in Belgrade was more or less this: I am pleased that you, Nikita Sergeyevich, are proving to be a reasonable and broad-minded man, but go a bit further, come out more clearly for the new course of reconciliation and embraces. We Yugoslavs agree that we should be reconciled, Tito told Khrushchev, but as you know, we have taken up with new friends with whom we have strong and deep links, therefore reconciliation with you «must develop in the direction which responds to our policy of international cooperation», that is to say, the Yugoslavs’ links with imperialism must not be damaged but must be further strengthened.

Likewise, in dictatorial tones, Tito did not fail to set Khrushchev a series of other conditions for their future relations:

First, Tito demanded that the Soviet side should work harder to eliminate the «negative elements» and remove the obstacles which had exerted an influence on the break in 1948 and, obviously, with this the «master» in Belgrade was
openly demanding that the whole correct and principled line followed by the Information Bureau, Stalin and the other communist parties in 1948, should be revised.

Second, the coming reconciliation, dictated Tito, must not imply «complete unanimity in our assessment of and stand towards events», hence, let us be reconciled, but let each of us act on his own account, according to his own ideas.

Third, the road I follow and the road you follow for the construction of «socialism», is a matter for each of us to decide and must not influence the normalization of relations; hence, I shall build «specific socialism» and you must accept this without any quibble.

Fourth, the causes of the conflict, said Tito, are neither Beria nor Djilas. The causes go deeper, therefore you, the Soviets, and the others united with you, must completely abandon the line of the time of Stalin, abandon your former principles, because in this way the true causes of the conflict are automatically overcome.

Finally, Tito rejected Khrushchev’s proposal on a bilateral top-level meeting, making this conditional «on the achievement of preliminary successes in the direction of normalization». The implication was quite plain: if you want to meet me and come to terms with me, you must take further steps on the course on which you have set out, must act more quickly and boldly within the So-
viet Union and other countries and parties to spread and extend this «new» course, which had been and was his old course.

And Khrushchev, sometimes apparently resentful and sometimes enthusiastic in his actions, began to submit to and zealously apply Tito’s conditions and orders.

Amongst us who followed this process with attention and concern, suspicions increased that these stands were leading the Soviet Union on an anti-Marxist course. Day by day we were becoming more convinced that Khrushchev was covering up a diabolical game with his clowning. We saw that he was lowering the prestige of the Soviet Communist Party and state by bending the knee to Tito. We watched this with regret, but, after all, the improvement of the relations between the Soviets and the Yugoslavs was their internal problem and we had no reason to oppose it. However, we were not and could never be in agreement with his efforts to wipe out the past and to treat the causes and reasons for the condemnation of the Yugoslav revisionists as something quite different from what they were in fact. Likewise, we could not agree to become Khrushchev’s partners in this dubious and dangerous ideological and political gamble. What the Rumanians, the Hungarians and the Bulgarians did was their affair. For our part, we were not going to kiss and make up with the Titoites.
Apart from his own revisionist convictions, Khrushchev was undoubtedly urged by Tito to take this anti-Marxist step. He did not want to bend the knee to Khrushchev, therefore he persisted in his demand that Khrushchev should come and bend the knee to him in Belgrade, should go to make a self-criticism in Canossa (Belgrade). And this is what was done. After a year or so of secret and public contacts through special envoys, after an intense and very intimate exchange of correspondence between «Comrade Khrushchev» and «Comrade Tito», in the end, in April 1955, Tito sent the good news to his new sweetheart that he was ready for the marriage and invited him to hold the «wedding ceremony» either «on a ship on the Danube, or if you agree, in Belgrade. In our opinion,» continued the kralj* of Belgrade, «the meeting should be open and made public.» Khrushchev could hardly wait to rush off to Belgrade, where he kissed and embraced Tito, made a self-criticism and «resolutely» wiped off the «accumulations of the past», and opened the «epoch of friendship between the two peoples and the two parties».

Our Party condemned Khrushchev’s going to Belgrade and especially his decision to cleanse the uncleanable Tito. Just two or three days before he set out for «Canossa», Khrushchev informed us

* king.
of the step he was about to take, but we had expected this, because the waters into which Khrushchev had plunged were bound to carry him to that mill. To go or not to go to Belgrade, that was his affair, let him do as he wished. What revolted and profoundly disturbed us was the announcement he made in the same letter that he had decided to annul as unjust the decision of the Information Bureau of November 1949, in connection with the condemnation of the Yugoslav leadership, to communicate this new decision of his to Tito and to publish a communiqué about it in the organ «For Lasting Peace, for People’s Democracy!». In this communiqué, Khrushchev said that the communist and workers’ parties, that were members of the Information Bureau, had allegedly re-examined the question of the third Resolution of the meeting of the Information Bureau on the Yugoslav problem adopted in November 1949 and had decided that the accusations contained in that resolution against the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party should be considered as without foundation and the resolution of the Information Bureau on the Yugoslav question should be annulled.

We wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on this and protested sternly. Such a decision about an enemy of international communism, that had been condemned jointly by all the parties, could
not be taken unilaterally by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union without consulting the other parties, including ours. The other parties submitted to the decision of Khrushchev and the desire of Tito that, after Khrushchev, the leaders of the parties of the socialist camp should go to Belgrade, kiss Tito's hand and beg his forgiveness. Dej and company went there, but we did not. We continued the struggle against the revisionists. It was in vain for Levichkin, the Soviet ambassador in Tirana, to come and try to convince us to withdraw our opposition.

I received Levichkin and once again put forward in principle to him what we had written in the letter to the Soviet leadership.

Amongst other things, I said, «The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has taught us to express our opinion openly and sincerely, as internationalists, on any question which has to do with the line of the party. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has informed us in advance and sought our opinion, too, on all matters which have to do with our common policy in connection with Yugoslavia. We have carefully studied the opinions of the Soviet leadership, have expressed our opinion on these problems and, as you know, we have agreed that we should make efforts to improve relations with Yugoslavia.»

«But in your reply of yesterday you oppose
the new step of Comrade Khrushchev,» said Levichkin.

«Yes,» I said, «and we have reasons for this. We think that in connection with the Yugoslav question there are many differences between the content of earlier letters of the Soviet leadership and that of the last letter.»

«To what differences do you refer?» asked Levichkin. «I think the view of our party has not altered.»

«Let us see,» I said, and took the letters of the Soviet leadership. «Here, for example, in the letter of June 4, 1954, your leadership writes: 'Re-examining the materials which have to do with the history of the breaking-off of relations between the Yugoslav Communist Party and the communist and workers' parties, as well as Yugoslavia's subsequent leaving the democratic camp, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union holds that the leading nucleus of the Yugoslav Communist Party has undoubtedly made serious departures from Marxism-Leninism, has slipped into the positions of bourgeois nationalism and launched attacks against the Soviet state. The leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party also extend their hostile policy, in regard to the Soviet Union, to the countries of people's democracy, towards which, up till before the break of relations, they maintained a boastful and disdainful stand, while seeking for themselves re-
cognition of priorities and special merits which
they did not have.'

«That letter also stresses,» I told Levichkin,
«that 'the criticism which the communist and
workers’ parties made of the nationalist deviations
and other deviations from Marxism-Leninism
of the leaders of the Yugoslav Communist
Party was necessary and completely correct. It
contributed to tempering the communist and
workers’ parties from the Marxist aspect, to
sharpening the vigilance of communists and to
their education in the spirit of proletarian inter-
nationalism'.»

«That is true,» murmured Levichkin.

«Even after the initial efforts of the Soviet
leadership to improve relations with Yugoslavia,»
I continued, «the Yugoslav leadership persisted in
its former course and stands and, only two or three
months ago, in February this year, the Soviet com-
rades wrote to us that 'the leadership of the Yugo-
slav party is seriously entangled with the capi-
talist world in its political and economic rela-
tions'.»

«That is true, that is true!» repeated Levich-
kin in a low voice.

«Then how did the opinion and stand of the
Soviet leadership towards these very important
problems change so surprisingly and suddenly?!»
I asked. «And how can they so readily take a
unilateral decision such as that to throw out the 1949 decision of the Information Bureau?!

«Our Political Bureau discussed the problems which are raised in your letter of May 23 with great attention and concern and in our reply we openly and sincerely expressed a series of opinions to Comrade Khrushchev.

«First, we think that the general line, the main content and principle of the November 1949 Resolution of the Meeting of the Information Bureau, is correct and the content of this resolution should not be taken separately from the resolution of July 1948. The daily experience of our Party in our relations with the Yugoslavs, both before the break with them in 1948 and to this very day, confirms this correctness.

«Second, the procedure, which is proposed to follow for the cancellation of the November 1949 Resolution of the Meeting of the Information Bureau, does not seem to us correct. It seems to us that the very short time allowed the communist and workers' parties, members of the Information Bureau, to express their views in connection with the content of your letter is inadequate to decide such an important matter as that which is raised in the letter. In our opinion, such a hasty decision on a matter of major importance of principle, without first making a thorough analysis, together with all the parties interested in this question, and moreover, the publication of this
decision in the press and its announcement in the Belgrade talks, would not only be premature, but would cause serious harm in the general orientation in connection with Yugoslavia.

«In regard to our Party of Labour, for seven years it has been fighting to implement its general line in regard to Yugoslavia, which is founded on the resolutions of the Information Bureau and endorsed by the 1st Congress of our Party. We are convinced that the general line of our Party in connection with relations with Yugoslavia is correct, but even if we thought for one moment that there is something to be changed in this line, for this the congress of the Party would have to be called together, or at least a conference of the Party, and the change could be made only after first thoroughly analysing the general line of all the communist and workers' parties in regard to Yugoslavia as well as the decisions and conclusions of the Information Bureau.

«Therefore,» I said to Levichkin in conclusion, «we propose that the matters which are raised in the recent letter of the Soviet leadership should be analysed at a meeting of the parties which participate in the Information Bureau, in which our Party, too, could possibly take part and have its say. Only there can a joint decision on this question be taken.»

Levichkin, who had gone pale as he listened
to me, tried to convince me to change my opinion, but when he saw my insistence he retreated:

«I shall report what you have said to me to the leadership of the party.»

«We have written everything I told you in our letter to Comrade Khrushchev,» I concluded, «but I repeated it to you, too, to make clear to you what impelled us to adopt this stand.»

Our opposition was completely correct and within the Marxist-Leninist norms of relations between parties. We were well aware how correct, substantiated and well based were the analyses and decisions of the Information Bureau and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in connection with the Yugoslav problem during the years 1948 and 1949. When the decision was taken to condemn the anti-Marxist activity of the Yugoslav leadership, we were not members of the Information Bureau. However, during that period, Stalin, the CPSU and the other parties that were members of the Information Bureau frequently consulted us and listened carefully to what we had to say in connection with our relations with the Yugoslav leadership. Stalin and his comrades did this, not only because ours were sister parties and, according to the Leninist norms, there should be wide-ranging and exhaustive exchanges of opinions, but also due to the important fact that, because of the special links we
had had since the wartime years with the Yugo-
slav leadership, we had a lot to say about it.

Among the many meetings and consultations
on this problem was my incognito meeting with
Vyshinsky in Bucharest, at which Dej was also
present. There we exchanged opinions about the
common stand we should adopt towards the trea-
cherous activity of the Yugoslav leadership. The
many incontestable arguments and facts which I
brought to that meeting were valued very highly
by Vyshinsky and Dej, who described them as a
valuable contribution which our Party made to
better knowledge of the hostile and anti-Marxist
activity of the Belgrade leaders. This is not the
place to speak at length about that meeting, from
which I have many memories. I mention it only to
show with what great care and wisdom Stalin and
the Information Bureau acted at that time in the
analyses they made and the decisions they took.

Now quite the opposite was occurring with
Khrushchev and the other Soviet leaders. Pre-
cisely those who were now condemning the In-
formation Bureau and Stalin for allegedly having
acted and judged matters in an incorrect way,
were trampling with both feet over the most ele-
mentary rules of relations between parties, were
posing as indisputable masters who did not deign
to seek the opinion of others. This could not fail
to dismay and worry us.

Levichkin came to see us several other times
during those days. Apparently they were urgently demanding from the centre that he convinced us to give up our opinions and reconcile ourselves to Khrushchev's stands. Those were very difficult and grave moments. From what we could see, Khrushchev must have reached agreement in advance with the leaderships of other parties over what he was going to do in Belgrade. Thus our proposal that the Information Bureau should meet to examine the problem in detail, would fall on deaf ears. After we discussed the matter at length in the Political Bureau, we decided that I should summon Levichkin once more to make our stand clear to him. I met him on May 27, one of the days on which Khrushchev was in Belgrade, and the things which I told Levichkin were also written in a second letter to the Soviet leadership. Later, Khrushchev used this letter of ours as an «argument» allegedly to prove that we were wrong in our first letter of May 25, and that two days later we allegedly made a «self-criticism» and «re-treated» from our former opinion. But the essence of the truth is not as Khrushchev and company said.

Both in the meeting with Levichkin on May 27, and in the second letter to the Soviet leadership, we explained once again why we were in open opposition to them on this occasion.

In this letter we again stressed to the Soviet leadership that although we had been and were
agreed that every effort must be made to solve the disagreements over principles with Yugoslavia in a Marxist-Leninist way, we were still convinced that the Yugoslav leaders would neither recognize their grave mistakes, nor abandon their course.

We have been and continue to be particularly sensitive on the Yugoslav question and especially towards the anti-Marxist activity of the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party, we said in the letter, because this hostile activity against the Soviet Union, the countries of people’s democracy and the whole movement of the proletariat has been carried out in a specially ferocious way against our Party and the sovereignty of our Homeland.

Seeing the problem in this way, we continued, when we read that part of your letter which says that eventually it might be communicated to the Yugoslavs that the Resolution of the Information Bureau of November 1949 should be revoked and that a communiqué about this would be published in the organ «For Lasting Peace, for People’s Democracy», we were profoundly shocked and said that if this were done it would be a very grave mistake. We considered that this Resolution should not be revoked, because it reflects the logical development of the hostile and anti-Marxist activity of the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party in practice.

This is how we reason: if this Resolution is
annulled, all that has been written there is cancelled out, and the trials of Rajk in Hungary and Kostov in Bulgaria, for example, are also annulled. By analogy the trial of the traitor gang headed by Koçi Xoxe and company ought to be annulled, too. The hostile activity of the traitor gang of Koçi Xoxe had its source in and was linked with the anti-Marxist, liquidationist and bourgeois-nationalist work of the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The just and principled struggle against this hostile activity was one of the directions of the line of our Party at its 1st Congress. «We will never budge from this correct line,» we stressed in the letter. Hence, we thought that if this Resolution is annulled as wrong, not only will the truth be distorted but a grave situation will be created for our Party, confusion will be created, anti-party and enemy elements will be encouraged to become active against our Party and state, as well as against the Soviet Union. We can never allow such a situation to be created.

We went on to say to the Soviet leadership: «We have been in a grave situation and we regret that, on this point, we cannot be of the same opinion as you.»

That was the essence of the content of our second letter to the Soviet leadership.

If there is any room to use the word «retreat» in regard to this, the only such thing on our part was the non-repetition of the proposal that a meet-
ing of the Information Bureau should be organized first. By this time this proposal would have been valueless, because Khrushchev had made the whole affair a fait accompli and had left for Belgrade. On the other hand, although we expressed our opinion in defence of principles, we could not come out openly against the Soviet leadership and the others at a time when the problem was still developing. However, we made our vigilance even sharper and kept our eyes even wider open. For us, both in the past and even after this, the stand towards the revisionists of Belgrade has been and still is the touch-stone to prove whether a party is following a sound Marxist line or a wrong anti-Marxist line. In the future, we were to put Khrushchev and the Khrushchevites to this test.

Not long after this event, in the summer of 1955, I received a most pressing invitation to go «for a holiday in the Soviet Union».

In Stalin’s time I went there for work and very rarely for a holiday. In Khrushchev’s time they began to put such pressure on us to go for holidays that it was difficult to refuse, because the Soviets, for their part, put the matter forward on the political plane. However, I did not like to go because, in fact, I could not rest there and it took a lot of time. To go to Moscow we had to travel eight days by ship from Durrës to Odessa, and the ships («Kotovsky» and «Chiatura») were not big and rolled heavily. Two more days were
needed for the train trip from Odessa to Moscow and one day by aircraft from Moscow to the Caucasus (to go to Kislovodsk, etc.), that is, a trip of eleven days each way, plus several days of meetings, so you can see what sort of holidays they were.

Once in Moscow the meetings with the Soviet leaders would begin, but these meetings were no longer pleasant like those with Stalin. Now they were held sometimes with smothered anger, sometimes with open flare-ups.

This is what occurred on this occasion. As soon as I arrived in Moscow I had two meetings with Suslov.

In his opening words he told me that we would talk about the Yugoslav problem and stressed in a dictatorial tone:

«The leadership of your party must take careful account of this question, it must not look at the Yugoslav problem in a rigid way.»

I did not take my eyes off him as I listened. Sensing my displeasure, he back-pedalled a little:

«Their mistakes remain mistakes,» he said, «but our objective is to become friends and to advance the friendship with Yugoslavia. At its last meeting, our Central Committee once again analysed our relations with Yugoslavia,» he continued, «and we shall give the report delivered there to you personally, because it is top secret.»

He was silent for a moment, trying to assess
what impression his words were making on me, and then went on:

«The main problem is that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has examined the Yugoslav question in a realistic light, bearing in mind the traitorous work of Beria, and we made self-criticism about this. Our Central Committee came to the conclusion that the breaking off of relations with Yugoslavia was a mistake, that is, we were hasty.»
«In what way, hasty?!» I said. «At that time, thorough analyses were made, long and thorough discussions were held and the true ideological and political causes of the existing disagreements were uncovered.»

«The main cause for this break,» continued Suslov, «was not the ideological issues, although they were making mistakes, and they have been pointed out openly to the Yugoslavs. The main cause lies in the slanders that were made against the Yugoslav leaders and in our lack of patience. The Yugoslavs' mistakes of principle should have been discussed, backed up by facts, and ironed out. This was not done.
«From all the facts examined,» he continued, «it turns out that there is no basis at all for saying that the Yugoslav comrades have deviated and have sold Yugoslavia, just as it does not turn out that the Yugoslav economy is dependent on foreigners.»
«Pardon me,» I said, «but let us not go back to those things we have analysed and decided in 1948 and 1949. Let us take only your correspondence with the Yugoslav leadership during the last two years. Not only in several of your letters, but the Yugoslavs themselves in their letters, admit that they have created strong links with the West. What are we to think now of your opposite assessment of these matters?»

«A number of mistakes have been made, but they must be examined carefully,» said Suslov, and started to list a series of «arguments» to convince me that the Yugoslav leaders were allegedly not on a wrong road. Naturally he also tried to lay the blame on Beria and Djilas and the efforts of imperialism «to attach Yugoslavia to itself».

«Molotov, too, has maintained a very sectarian stand on this problem,» continued Suslov. «He personally made mistakes in state relations with Yugoslavia while insisting that it was the Yugoslav comrades that made the mistakes. However, the Central Committee demanded that Molotov proved where the Yugoslavs had been wrong, and we criticized him severely for his stand. Finally he, too, expressed his solidarity with the Central Committee».

I began to speak and gave a detailed presentation of our relations with the Yugoslav leadership, beginning from the years of the National
Liberation War. I mentioned their main activities as an anti-Albanian agency, which they had undertaken and were undertaking against us continually, and I concluded by saying:

«It is these and many other facts, one more grave than the other, which convince us that the Yugoslav leadership has not been and is not on the right road. Nevertheless, we have always been and still are in favour of developing state relations with them normally.»

«Agreed, agreed!» said Suslov. «We must act with open hearts. This is in the interest of our camp; we must not allow the imperialists to take Yugoslavia from us.»

At the end of this meeting, as though in passing, he said to me:

«During past years you have condemned many enemies, accused of links with the Yugoslavs. Have a look at their cases and rehabilitate those that ought to be rehabilitated.»

«We have never accused and condemned anyone for nothing,» I said bluntly, and as we parted, he instructed me to be «more broad-minded».

It was clear why they had invited me to come for a holiday. However, the Khrushchevites did not content themselves just with this. They had hatched up diabolical plans to compel our Party, too, to follow their course of conciliation with the revisionists of Belgrade. This time they had
put me in a villa outside Moscow, which, as they
told me, had been Stalin’s villa. It was a simple
house, all the main rooms were on the ground
floor, including our suite, which was separated
from the entrance hall by a glass door. On the
right were the dining room, the study, and the
sitting or reception room which, I remember, had
very little furniture. On the left, through a cor-
rridor and a room with sofas around the walls, one
centered the cinema room. The garden outside had
been neglected, there was very little in the way
of flowers and greenery. There were no trees for
shade, but they had built a small semi-circular
besedka* with seats, which were also semi-cir-
cular, attached to the pillars built around the
curve, where the children played. Beside the
house there was a small vegetable garden. In this
house one night we heard a loud knock at the
glass door which led to our suite. My wife, Nexh-
mije, got up quickly, thinking that our son was
not well, since he had fallen over that day and
had hurt his hand. She went out, immediately
returned and said to me:
«It’s one of the officers of the guard — Miko-
yan wants you on the telephone.»
I was sleepy and asked what time it was.
«Half past twelve,» said Nexhmije.
I put something over my shoulders and went

* Pavilion (Russian in the original).
into the study to the telephone. Mikoyan, at the other end of the line, did not beg my pardon for ringing me up after midnight, but said to me:

«Comrade Enver, Comrade Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo is here in Moscow and I was with him till now. You know him and it would be good if you were to meet; he is ready to meet you tomorrow.»

For a time I remained silent on the telephone, while Mikoyan, who had no intention of asking, said: «Tomorrow then, you agree,» in a tone as if he were giving an order to the party secretary of an oblast*.

«How could I agree to this, Comrade Mikoyan,» I said. «I talked with Comrade Suslov, and expressed the view of our Party about the position of Yugoslavia and Tito.»

Mikoyan began to deliver a standard monologue about «socialist Yugoslavia», about Tito who was «a fine chap», about Beria’s mistakes and the sins they had allegedly committed (the Soviet Union and the Information Bureau), and then he concluded:

«You ought to take this step, Comrade Enver. You know Tempo, talk with him and try to iron out your differences, because this is in your interest and in the interest of the camp. You, too, must help ensure that Yugoslavia does not go over

* region (Russian in the original).
to the imperialist camp... So, you agree, tomorrow.»

«All right, I agree, tomorrow,» I replied, clenching my teeth in rage. I went back to bed but I was so disgusted over these backstage manoeuvres and faits accomplis which the Khrushchevites were hatching up in the course of their betrayal that I could not sleep. I had met Tempo twice in Albania during the time of the war and both times we had quarrelled, because he was arrogant and a real megalomaniac. He made unfounded accusations against our war and the people who led it, or made absurd proposals about the «Balkan Staff», without mentioning how this staff was to function in those conditions, when we could communicate from one zone to the other within the country only with difficulty, let alone mentioning the ulterior motives hidden behind the organization of this «staff». What was I to say to Tempo now, after all those things which Tito, Rankovic, their envoys Velimir Stoynic, Nijaz Dizdarevic and their agents Koçi Xoxe and Co., had done to us? Must we swallow this too?! I tossed and turned sleepless all night thinking about what should be done. The time had not come yet to settle accounts with the Khrushchevite revisionists.

The next day we met Tempo. I began to speak about those things that had occurred.

«Let bygones be bygones,» he said and began to speak about the situation in Yugoslavia.
He told me that they had made progress in the sector of industry but were short of raw materials.

«Our agriculture is in a very bad state,» he said, «we are very far behind, therefore, we think we should devote more forces to it. The mistakes we have made in agriculture have left us hard pressed.»

He went on to tell me about the difficulties they had had and said that they had been obliged to accept aid at heavy interest rates from the Western countries.

«Now the Soviet Union is helping us and our agreement with the Soviets is going well,» he concluded.

I, too, spoke about the progress which our country had made during this time and the difficulties which we had had and still had. I spoke about the commission on the Ohri Lake, in which the discussions were being dragged on by their side, but he told me he knew nothing about it because «these were the plans of the Macedonians.» «Nevertheless, we must look more carefully at the question of the Shkodra Lake where the benefits will be greater for both sides, especially for your side,» he added.

And that is how the meeting which the Soviets had arranged between Tempo and me, passed. After this meeting, when I met Mikoyan and Suslov, they both said to me:
«You did well to meet Tempo because the ice has been broken.»

According to them, the mountain of ice created between us and the Titoite revisionists could be broken with one chance meeting or contact, but this was not our opinion. There would be no «spring thaw» in the ideological field in our relations with Yugoslavia and we had no intention of plunging into the murky waters of the Khrushchevites and the Titoites.