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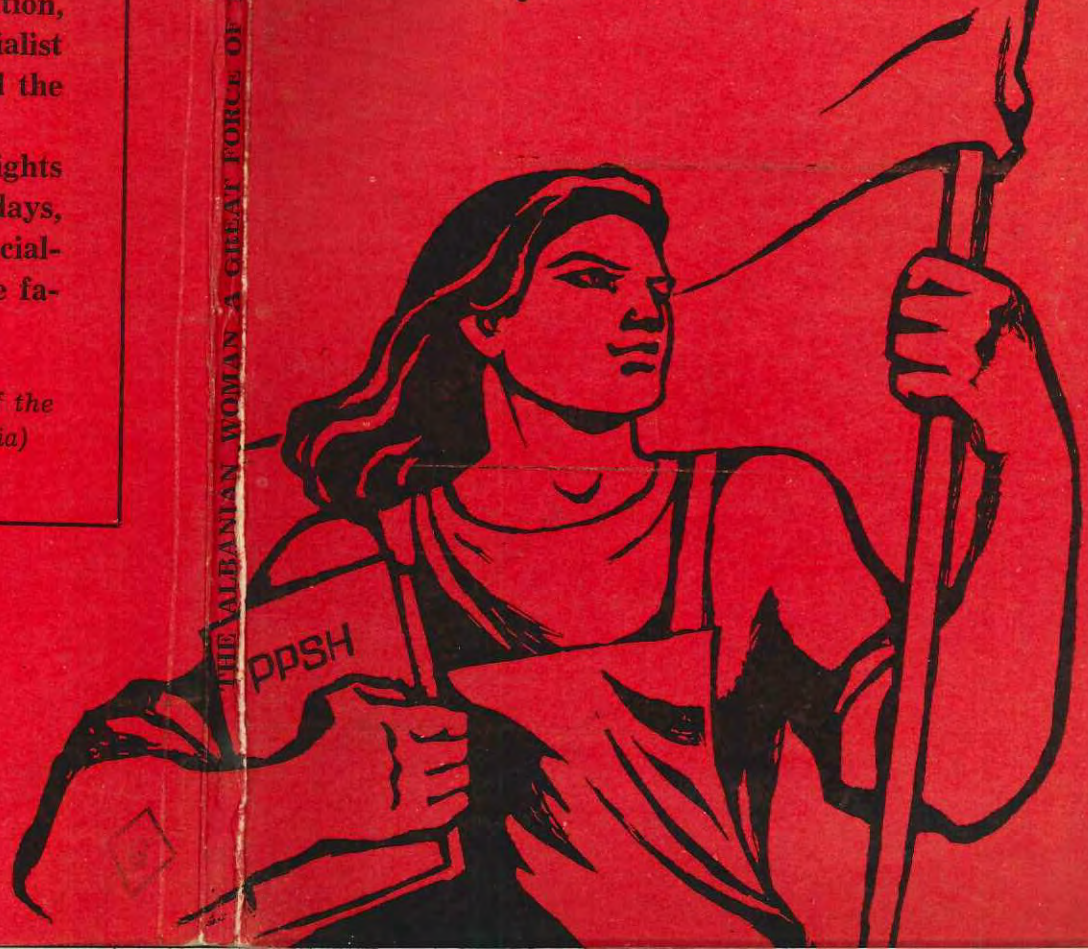
The Albanian woman a great force of the revolution

The woman, liberated from political oppression and economic exploitation, as a great force of the revolution, takes an active part in the socialist construction of the country and the defence of the Homeland.

The woman enjoys equal rights with man in work, pays, holidays, social security, education in all social-political activity, as well as in the family.

(Article 41 of the Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania)

THE ALBANIAN WOMAN A GREAT FORCE OF THE REVOLUTION



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**THE ALBANIAN WOMAN - A GREAT FORCE
OF THE REVOLUTION**

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SOCIALIST TRUTH IN CYPRUS

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Mother Albania — a monument at the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Homeland in Tirana.

INTRODUCTION

One of the great achievements of the socialist revolution in Albania is the enhancement of the role of the woman as an active force equal with man in the construction of the new society. The problems of the woman are seen and determined here in the context of the socialist revolution, closely connected with all other practical, economic and social problems.

The legends and the history of our people are a truthful reflection of the greatness of the figure of the Albanian woman in the centuries. At different times great artists, writers and scholars have drawn their inspiration from the figure of the Albanian woman. In crucial moments of the history of our people, although oppressed by the savage laws of the canon laws, regimes and religion, the woman broke the fetters and, side by side with man, fought to defend freedom and the Homeland, sword in hand.

But a new century, the century of the socialist revolution, a brilliant leader, the Communist

Party, were needed to break off the fetters of the woman once and for all. And the woman showed that she deserved the confidence of the proletariat and its vanguard, especially during the National Liberation War, in which she fought with rare bravery.

The years of the socialist construction in Albania are the years of the outburst of the colossal energies of the Albanian woman as a great revolutionary force. There is no field in the political, economic and social life where the woman is not present. Her word and creative work carry as much weight as that of man. In Albania, the woman is a worker in the factory, an agronomist in the agricultural cooperative, but she is also a minister, a surgeon, a lawyer, an educator in kindergartens, a member of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, a deputy to the People's Assembly and a tractor-driver. Through struggle and work, all the myths of her inferiority to man are overthrown. Her social consciousness has risen and she is advancing with sure steps towards her complete emancipation, which is achieved only in the framework of the socialist revolution, only in a socialist state, where the dictatorship of the proletariat is established.

The Marxist-Leninist Party, the Party of Labour of Albania is the sun which illuminates the road of the woman towards new perspectives of progress.

The Albanian women are proud of their socialist Homeland, they are grateful for ever to the Party

of Labour of Albania and the beloved leader and teacher, comrade Enver Hoxha.

This booklet contains a series of materials from the press of our country: speeches, conversations, reports and documents of various kind, which will give the foreign reader an outline of the efforts and achievements of the women of socialist Albania on the road towards their emancipation.

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
ON WOMAN**

Article 40

All citizens are equal before the law.

No restriction or privilege is recognized on the rights and duties of citizens on account of sex, race, nationality, education, social position, and material situation.

Article 41

The woman, liberated from political oppression and economic exploitation, as a great force of the revolution, takes an active part in the socialist construction of the country and the defence of the Homeland.

The woman enjoys equal rights with man in work, pay, holidays, social security, education, in all social-political activity, as well as in the family.

Article 48

Mother and child enjoy special solicitude and protection.

A mother is entitled to paid leave prior to and after childbirth.

The state opens maternity homes and crèches and kindergartens for the children.

**THE STRUGGLE FOR THE COMPLETE
EMANCIPATION OF WOMAN IS AN INTEGRAL
PART OF THE GENERAL STRUGGLE FOR THE
GRADUAL NARROWING OF EXISTING
DIFFERENCES, OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALISM AND
COMMUNISM.**

The past five-year plan is, on the whole, characterized by rapid rates of development in all the fields of socialist construction. By comparison, the rates of the waging of the struggle for the complete emancipation of the woman in our country have been even more rapid. In its work for further achievements of the revolution in the life of the Albanian woman, besides combining correctly the struggle for doing away with everything reactionary and purging the ground of all ruins, our Party has also shown special concern about the tempering of the woman with the new values of socialist society and this process will continue and will be further deepened in the days to come.

The participation of the woman in the social productive work — which is an important factor for her economic, political and ideological eman-

icipation — is considered as generally solved in our country, in which women make up over 46 per cent of the population. This colossal victory in the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, has opened broad vistas to the implementation of the other women's rights, through which new relationships are being established everywhere, and the distinctions in all fields of life, especially those in the relations between husband and wife are being narrowed more and more.

The last five-year plan was distinguished for the qualitative improvement of the forces of the women participating in various social activities, it helped discover their dormant talents and gifts. As a result, the ideas of the Party are prevailing everywhere: women are more and more being entrusted with posts of major responsibility. Nowadays, in Albania, there is no more question of some individual women, but of an entire army of able and emancipated women, brought up and educated in the epoch of the Party, militating everywhere side by side with men. In the recent elections to Party forums, over 33 per cent of those elected to all levels, at the grassroot and district level, were women. They make up 33.2 per cent of the deputies to the People's Assembly, the supreme state organ, and 30.8 per cent of the members of the Supreme Court. In our country women have a long record of service, they are trained and capable to make extensive use of their political and economic rights, to have their say everywhere. It is inspiring to hear

that most of the 540 distinguished field-brigades, which took in 40-60 quintals of wheat per hectare, are led by women.

In our country, great progress has been made in treating women as men's equals in all the fields of life, and this finds its brilliant reflection in the report of the Central Committee. During the last five-year plan, 23,813 women and girls finished their studies in 8-year and secondary and higher schools and institutes, whereas this year their number exceeds 40,000. Today in many villages, especially in the lowlands as well as in many work centres, the educational level of women is even higher than that of men, while in many economic enterprises utilizing modern processes of production, most of the women working there have finished secondary schools. In the 1975-1976 school-year, 7,000 women attended secondary schools in the countryside, while this year the number of cooperativist women enrolled in these same schools is 17,000. However, seeing this problem in its dynamic development, we as communists can never forget the distinctions and discrepancies existing in the life and in the work of women in comparison with the possibilities which the people's state power has created for them and the bright prospects towards which they are marching.

The thorough-going and broad revolution carried out in the life of the Albanian woman is the deed of the Party, with comrade Enver Hoxha at the head, which opened broad prospects to the solution

of women's problems, in compatibility with the reality of our country and from class proletarian positions...

No important political, ideological and economic action in our country, beginning with the first shots fired for freedom, has been carried out without the participation of women. In the entire process of the class struggle, in the gigantic struggle for the building of socialism, defending Marxism-Leninism, breaking imperialist-revisionist blockade with success, smashing enemy groups, women have always been a great active and revolutionary force. Through terror, the class enemy endeavoured to eliminate the woman — the new factor which was added to the constructive, creative and defensive potential of the country. Their hostile activity was combined with the envenomed word of the priest, the malevolent gossip of the kulak, of the former bourgeois, the short-sighted conservative and the renegade from our ranks. But all this hostile activity went after the example of the venomous slanders spread by our former enemies, the fascists and the Ballists (members of the collaborationist organization in the pay of the fascist occupiers — editor's note), met with the same failure.

In complete harmony with the process of development of the socialist revolution, new Albania is doing magnificent work for the emancipation of the woman, which is of colossal importance both for the woman herself and the fate of the revolution.

Marxism-Leninism teaches us and our experience confirms it that socialist construction makes headway through a sharp class struggle. It is generally known that distinctions and discrepancies inherited from the past in many fields of life, like the distinctions between town and countryside, between physical and mental work, between skilled and unskilled work, as well as the differences in the level of education, culture, etc., continue to exist under socialism. In its fight against us, the internal and external class enemy exploits also these distinctions and phenomena which socialism can reduce and limit, but cannot do away with altogether. The leftovers of the feudal-bourgeois ideologies and the penetration of other hostile ideologies, also affect the consciousness of people, create differences in their stand towards work, property, education, culture, therefore, in this or that way, they become obstacles to the construction of the socialist society. The differences between men and women, in their cultural level, which still exist today, are additional impediments to the rapid development of our society, therefore we fight to narrow this gap more and more, all this at a time when the class enemy seek to preserve and, indeed, even deepen it. Marx considered the wiping out of all class distinctions, which are the product of the capitalist relations of production, as well as of all the ideas which stem from them, as one of the most important tasks which revolutionary socialism must undertake. Our socialist society is realizing this task gradually and with

success. Speaking of the tasks to be carried out in the struggle for the complete emancipation of the woman, comrade Enver Hoxha has emphasized that «just as we are fighting to bring together the scissors of economic distinctions between town and countryside, so shall we also bring together the scissors of the distinctions existing in relations between men and women, so as to ensure their complete equality not only in the letter of law, but also in reality». The struggle for the complete emancipation of women is a constituent part of the general struggle for the narrowing down of existing distinctions, of the struggle for the construction of socialism and communism.

The emancipation of the woman and of all the working people has strengthened the socialist norms of conduct in the family, too. Now these norms are defended by a healthy public opinion, which, being active everywhere, has strengthened our family, enhanced the role and elevated the prestige of the woman in it. The new Albanian woman, who militates as man's equal everywhere, plays not only her noble role of mother, but also has her say on every problem. She keeps alive the spirit of collectivism into the family and, frequently, becomes the initiator of lofty revolutionary stands. This is borne out by numerous examples. The further consolidation of the norms of conduct and the perfecting of socialist relationships in the family have special importance to the complete liberation of the woman, because the family, more than anything else, pre-

serves the old customs and leftovers, because it cultivates the feeling of inequality between sons and daughters, in some cases it even fosters the tendency to personal profit, a life of comfort and ease, egotism and personal glory, sometimes, even becoming a stumbling block to the revolutionary initiatives of young people, especially of young women and girls. One of the requirements of our socialist development is to make our family a real center of the revolution.

Today the problem of the woman is posed with greater force than ever before. But its real essence is distorted by the capitalist-revisionist bourgeoisie, which seeks to impose its reactionary ideology on the masses, alleging that the woman is an «inferior», «weak», «delicate» creature, that she must be treated with «condescendence», «humanity», that she «belongs inside the house», etc.

Speculating on the sentiments of women, the Khrushchevite revisionists want the women to applaud their demagogical slogans about «peace», «détente», «disarmament», etc., etc., as though they were not the real instigators of new wars of aggression, of fresh sufferings and horrors. Posing as people who have taken the problems of the woman to their hearts they advise them to return to their homes, to work reduced hours, which means reduced wages. Faced with the grave crisis which has the capitalist world in its grip and which has caused many millions of women and men to be laid off, the revisionists of Western Europe, today more than

ever before, come out as ardent champions of the interests of the bourgeoisie over the problem of the woman. They urge women to do homework for the capitalists, which is tantamount to working overtime, for a mere pittance to do an ill-paid work which exploits not only women but also other members of the family, especially children.

In an effort to cover the real essence of the capitalist exploitation, the bourgeois and revisionist theoreticians have fallen so low as to attack the most natural human relationships, blaming on the husband and the child the grave situation of women in their countries. They deliberately ignore the real problems of women, and raise the problems of divorce, abortion, etc. instead. All their efforts are intended to keep the women away from the real revolutionary road, deprive the working class of its natural allies, hold in check those colossal energies and forces which would burst out if women threw themselves into combat actions and joined the main stream of the revolution. Hence, in the problem of the woman, too, two realities emerge: on the one hand, the capitalist and revisionist reality, and on the other hand, the socialist reality, the Albanian reality, which connects the problem of the woman with the problem of the working class, with the carrying out of the revolution through each of its stage. Around this question, too, as around any other great issue of the time, the Party of Labour of Albania upholds a new view which has its source in our reality.

THE LEGEND OF THE INFERIORITY OF WOMAN AND OUR REALITY

Whenever we draw balance-sheet of the brilliant victories achieved on all fronts of socialist construction, in all the trenches of the revolution, the reality of the Albanian woman emerges spontaneously before us. This great reality constitutes one of the most important victories of our people's revolution.

What the Party and the revolution have done for the women of our country are already the history. They are not actions of individuals, or deeds of the illuminist and man-lovers, or undertakings of a merely cultural character. They are a brilliant overturn, which only revolution can bring about, which only an equally brilliant construction work can bring about, which again only revolution can bring about.

Besides other things, the years of socialism in Albania, are years of struggle for the thoroughgoing, real emancipation of the Albanian woman. No important political, economic, socio-cultural action, ranging from the reconstruction of the Ho-

meland to the struggle to cope with the bourgeois-revisionist ideology, has been carried out without the participation of women.

Therefore, we can affirm that what the Party has done for the woman is written down as one of its monumental deeds, is one of the glories of socialism.

Our leader, comrade Enver Hoxha has said: «If women lag behind, the revolution marks time».

These words clearly indicate the seriousness with which our Party has seen and continues to see the problem of the woman in our country. They bear testimony to the greatness of the struggle for the emancipation of the Albanian woman today.

This struggle has become part of the class struggle, and just like all the struggles of our working people for the defence of the victories of socialism, just like the struggle of the world proletariat for liberation, it has drawn and continues to draw upon itself all the pent up hatred of world reaction expressed both in conservative and liberal form.

The struggle against women throughout the world is centuries-old. It has been joined by all the forces of darkness, beginning with religion and ending with the efforts of bourgeois-revisionist degeneration. It is part of the struggle for the enslavement of the peoples. By enslaving women, the ruling classes at all times have endeavoured to ease their job of oppressing the peoples, because, by doing this, practically, they settle accounts with half of mankind. Therefore, when it has come to the op-

pression of the woman, the reactionaries have easily cast away all contradictions among them.

The struggle for the enslavement of the woman has had its specific features; it has been carried out under the guise of a far-ranging propaganda of pseudo-scientific character. All the reactionary superstructure of oppressive regimes, beginning with the Indian vedantists up to the present-day adepts of Freudism, have offered their vile and criminal services to the rulers to suppress the women. It is precisely this obscurantist superstructure which created the legend of the inferiority of women, a legend which was taken up by the reactionary forces and transformed into a banner of assault, which they took up, utilized and continue to utilize up to day.

Torrents of slanderous charges, venom and pent up hatred, were let loose against women, the source of life. They were unleashed against women in the form of laws, proclamations, «scientific» dissertations, circulars, pornographic literature, proverbs and Constitutions.

The defence of women by the progressive arts of all times, folklore, painting, poetry, was something which could not possibly contribute to changing anything at all in the state of the women, because it remained within the spheres of ethics and culture. All propositions, undertakings and campaigns to help the women were useless, even ridiculous, confronted with the savage reality, because they remained within the framework of philanthropy, mercy and

idealist theories. Only the teachers of the world proletariat, Marx and Engels, pointed out the true road for the liberation of woman which is inseparable from the road for the liberation of all working people. They linked the enslavement of women with the exploiting orders and private property.

The history of the oppression of Albanian women is a constituent part of the history of our people, of their tragedies and sufferings. The position of women in our country was further deteriorated especially due to the Ottoman invasion together with the accompanying Islamic mode of living and culture, which was of a lower level in comparison with the level our culture had achieved prior to their invasion. Being a general calamity for our country and nation, this invasion was, at the same time, a veritable disaster for Albanian women. The Ottoman invaders, together with the local oppressors beginning from the beys, and the clergy to King Zog, who was their successor, shackled the Albanian women with double chains, made life unbearable to them, veiled their face with the yashmak, sold them out like animals.

It is interesting to note here that original popular culture has constantly revered the woman. In many folk songs, dances and legends, at wedding parties, and in the costumes, the woman is treated as a dignified figure, represented in lovely colours and special tenderness. It is the other culture, a subculture, which vilifies women, the culture which Lenin speaks about, it is the culture of the oppres-

sors, of the enemies of the people. The contradictory views about women, in the psychology of the people are the result of the struggle between these two cultures. Although the reactionary trend in it never had the upper hand of the broad popular culture, its pressure was felt also in the distortions it made, and they were of bitter taste.

Besides bearing all the disasters of the nation and society on their shoulders, the Albanian women had also their own specific misfortune: servitude added to servitude. It was a horrid burden, from which they would be freed only through the revolution.

The news of the first Albanian women going to the partisans was an epoch-making event in the thousand-year old history of the Albanian women. Sporadic cases of this kind were recorded even before this, among them some heroines as well, but this mass phenomenon was quite new, never heard before. Hundreds of girls and women took to the mountains, rifle in hand, to fight side by side with their brothers, urged by no accidental events or complications of their life; they were inspired by a great ideal, by the word of the Communist Party. This was a magnificent smashing of conservative concepts, amazing and almost legendary breaking with the past. The external and internal enemies were awe-struck by this news. They felt that a new force was being awakened, precisely the force that their centuries-long propaganda had looked down upon as an inferior being. Terror stricken by this, the

enemies began to pour out their venom, to slander them, desperate in their helplessness. But time could not be turned back. The strength of the Party had done what seemed impossible: the arousing of the women in the struggle for liberation.

The emergence of the first partisan women was a great political manifestation of the revolution. And then, there were the first women martyrs, the first women commissars, heroines, Party and State cadres. A new epoch began for the Albanian women.

The entire history of the years under socialism kept up and supported the spirit of this great action. In the uninterrupted process of the class struggle the women and their problems were present everywhere. The terror of the diversionists, of foreign spying agencies, of internal reaction, the poisoned word of the priest, the gossip of the kulaks, the overthrown bourgeoisie and narrow-minded fanatics, the ruffians of every shade, all this was the continuation of the venom of the former enemies, of the fascists and stupid Ballists. And they all shared the same fate.

The women grew up side by side with men in all the actions of the Party, on all fronts of socialism. Whether as a worker or peasant, a student or physician, a soldier or artist, everywhere and at all times, the woman set the example at work and performed feats of unprecedented heroism in the long history of Albania. The outburst of the energies of women was wonderful. The legend of her inferiority was smashed to pieces.

With great solicitude, the Party followed every step of the great struggle for the emancipation of the woman. It fought both against conservatism, which sought to turn the woman back to her former state, and against liberalism, which, by borrowing bourgeois concepts, did nothing else but created a new humiliation for women. Whereas conservatism considered women as mere tokens of barter, liberalism, by distorting the objectives of the emancipation of women, considered them only as objects of love, thus transforming them just as it has transformed every other human value, into broad consumer goods. On this front, conservatism and liberalism join hands.

Comrade Enver Hoxha's historic speech of 6th February, 1967, was a great event in the life of the entire country, and especially in the life of women. By strongly exposing all those forces of darkness which sought to trample underfoot the rights, which the revolution, socialism gave the Albanian women, which they themselves won through their own war and struggle, with their own blood, with their own hands, our leader once more stressed the importance of the problems of the woman to the Party, indicating the inviolability of the victories of the revolution in all fields. The revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist word of our Party on the question of the woman assumes ever greater importance today when all the joint forces of the bourgeoisie and revisionism are seeking to turn the mankind back. Just as in all other problems, in the question of

women, too, these are rabid reactionary forces. They endeavour to replace the class struggle with a mythical conflict between sexes, they try to befuddle the minds of the people with «stars», whether of the cinematography of the western style, or the «stars» of space flights, in the revisionist Tereshkova style.

Our country, as the country of the victory of the revolution, as the bastion of Marxism-Leninism in Europe, is at the same time, the country where women are really honoured. The women and young women of our country, from the oldest to the youngest, are and will be grateful to the Party for ever and ever in their life for everything it has done to their advantage. Through the milk of their breast their gratitude will go down from generation to generation, and it will be always a regenerating force for new victories.

ACTIVE FIGHTER FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE DEFENCE OF THE SOCIALIST HOMELAND

In the glorious history of our people and the People's Army, the great role of the Albanian woman in the National Liberation War will shine with undimmed brilliance.

History has shown that through the centuries the Albanian women fought side by side with men, but they never won anything. They found their real road only after the birth of the Communist Party of Albania. This marked a profound turn in the life of the Albanian women, one which threw into relief their marvellous features, abilities, talent and gifts, and inexhaustible energies.

Responding to the call of the Party, which was the call of the enslaved people and Homeland, the Albanian women unreservedly rose in war and took part in it. They joined the detachments and units of the National Liberation War, they were elected to the national liberation councils. Courage

and bravery, unflinching loyalty to the cause of liberation, determination to make any sacrifice, selflessness, this was what characterized them in all they did. The women always distinguished themselves for their spirit of initiative in the implementation of the combat tasks of the time, especially in the application of the directives of the Communist Party, which was the leading staff of the War for Liberation. Their participation in the Liberation War aroused them to action, enabled them to shake off the centuries-old dust, to break the chains which tied them hand and foot, to raise their revolutionary consciousness and build up their confidence in final victory. The Albanian women adopted the line of the PLA and fought heart and soul for its implementation, because in it they found not only the sure road for national liberation but also for social liberation, the road in which they would win all their rights and liberate themselves from the fetters of the past, once for all.

The fascists and traitors to the country left nothing undone to estrange the women from the Party, from the large organization of the National Liberation Front and the Army. Women were persecuted, imprisoned, deported, tortured and even hanged, but nothing shook them, they stood united in a revolutionary combat unity around the Communist Party of Albania.

Out of 70 thousand partisans 6 thousand were women. They fought arms in hand in the first line

of battle, setting examples of lofty courage and bravery. Many of the women and girls who had joined the partisan ranks gave their lives for the freedom of the Homeland and a happy future. From Konispol, the southernmost corner of the Homeland, up to Vermosh, the northernmost corner, the Albanian land was drenched in the blood of brave women and girls fighting for its liberation. Many others laid down their lives beyond the boundaries of the Homeland, chasing the fascist occupiers across Kosova, Macedonia, Montenegro up to Vishegrad and the regions of Bosnia.

The Party assigned women to posts of responsibility in the partisan detachments and units: they were commanders and commissars, secretaries of Party cells and of Youth organizations, they carried out important tasks and functions in the political apparatuses of the Party in the Army.

Incorporated in the partisan storm brigades or territorial units, the Albanian women were characterized by rare heroism and bravery, patience and determination to surmount the difficulties of the partisan life, they endured the hardships of long marches, put up with sleepless days and nights, lack of food, the inclemency of weather in winter and summer. Together with their partisan comrades, they attacked the enemy from unexpected directions and at unpredictable moments. The names of brave girls like Zonja Çurre, Margarita Tutulani, Bule Naipi, Persefoni Kokëdhima, Ylbere Bilibashi, Shejnaze Juka and many and many others who fear-

lessly faced up, to enemy bullets and the scaffold will be remembered forever by the younger generations. Theirs is an inspiring and educative example for the present and the future generations.

Tens of thousands of other women assisted the National Liberation War in many ways, attending the wounded, carrying water, bread and ammunition to the combat positions of the partisans, etc. Our mothers spared nothing for the cause of the Liberation War. They provided shelter for the partisans, shared the last morcel of bread with them, collected clothing, ammunition and weapons for them; they watched the movements of the enemy, and led the partisans on secret paths to attack the enemy by surprise. Here is what comrade Enver Hoxha tells about a brave Albanian mother: «In the time of the war, mother Zyra of Orenja had only three sacred things: first, her son named Beqir Koçi, who went partisan, fought for the Homeland and fell a martyr. Mother Zyra had another sacred thing: her only goat from which she got a drop of milk. But in storm and rain during the war, night overtook me on the way and I was forced to go for shelter into her barn. She slaughtered her only goat, she sacrificed it, and remained alone in her old barn, which let inside every drop of rain and all. But soon, after our departure, the Germans, who were informed that Mother Zyra meant a lot to us, set fire to the barn... Mother Zyra lost the third and last sacred thing she had in her life, but she won the most sacred thing

of all, she won the freedom of her Homeland, her Party, her People's State Power, and became a mother respected in all Albania.»

This is the stuff the Albanian women, our mothers who gave birth and brought up brave sons and daughters «for a new world», as a folk song has it, are made of.

After Liberation, the strength, bravery, maturity and patriotism of the Albanian women burst out with unexampled, ever increasing vigour. Today the Albanian women concern themselves with all the problems the country is faced with. They take active part in production, in the running of the country, in the fields of education, science, arts. Today, we see the Albanian women active as soldiers and cadres worthy of our Armed Forces. The Albanian women are conscious that the construction of socialism in our country is being carried out in the conditions of a double imperialist-revisionist encirclement and in stern class struggle. Therefore, along with the conscientious accomplishment of their tasks in the political, social, economic, and other fields, they train themselves militarily for the defence of the Homeland. As cadres of the Armed Forces, soldiers or people's volunteers, middle school or university students, they fight to grasp the principles of our Military Art of People's War. Women are very active in military drill, give proof of a lofty spirit of mobilization and readiness to fulfil the tasks of defence to the best of their abilities and with honour.

Together with the entire soldier-people, the women and girls of our country stand vigilant guard of their Homeland and keep the powder dry, their rifles trained on all external and internal enemies, who would dare encroach ever so slightly upon the borders of Albania or touch our socialist victories.

THE WOMAN AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO ART

True art is inconceivable without the woman. She has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the writer and painter, for the poet and sculptor, for the film-maker and the composer in their creative activity. Women make up half of mankind. Without this half represented in it art is untrue, without this section of mankind art goes half-way through its mission. This is a truth of which every writer and artist, who lives in an epoch of great transformations in present-day Albanian society, is aware. The noble figure of the Albanian woman, as a transforming and fighting force, is ever present in all our arts, in painting, sculpture, engraving, etc. Our painters and sculptors seek and find the true figure of the Albanian woman in history and everyday life, in the struggle and the work of all our people. Therefore, this figure, far from being the product of imagination or fancy, is the product of our reality itself. With their spiritual assets, with the great deeds of their gifted

hands and brilliant minds, our women have made a magnificent contribution to raising generations of valiant young women and courageous young men.

It is the tradition of our fine arts, just as of our literature and folklore, to represent women as beautiful and proud, unyielding in the face of difficulties, ardent patriots and champions for progress, loyal wives fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with their husbands, and tender mothers. On the contrary, aristocratic and bourgeois art have always shied from the woman, treating her as a weak creature, as a toy to embellish their parlours, or as an object of sexual pleasure. The bourgeoisie and revisionism utilize the figure of the woman in art as a means to transform artistic creativeness into market commodity and as a means of degeneration.

-In Europe and in the world,- comrade Enver Hoxha says, -there are philosophers and innumerable writers who have raised the superiority of man over woman to a myth. According to them man is a fighter, he is stronger, more courageous, and more intelligent than woman, hence he is predestined to rule, to direct. Whereas the woman, on her part, because of her very nature, is weak, defenceless, lacking in courage, hence she must be ruled and directed. Bourgeois theoreticians such as Nietzsche and Freud, have made up the theory of male aggressiveness and female passiveness. This reactionary and anti-dialectical theory leads, as it actually did, to reaction in policy and action in sociology. The reactionary ideas of these -men of letters and philosophers-



In the textile industry the overwhelming majority of working people are women.



Young women learn the secrets of modern kumru-bure.



In the PSE of Albania special technique is shown for mother and child welfare.



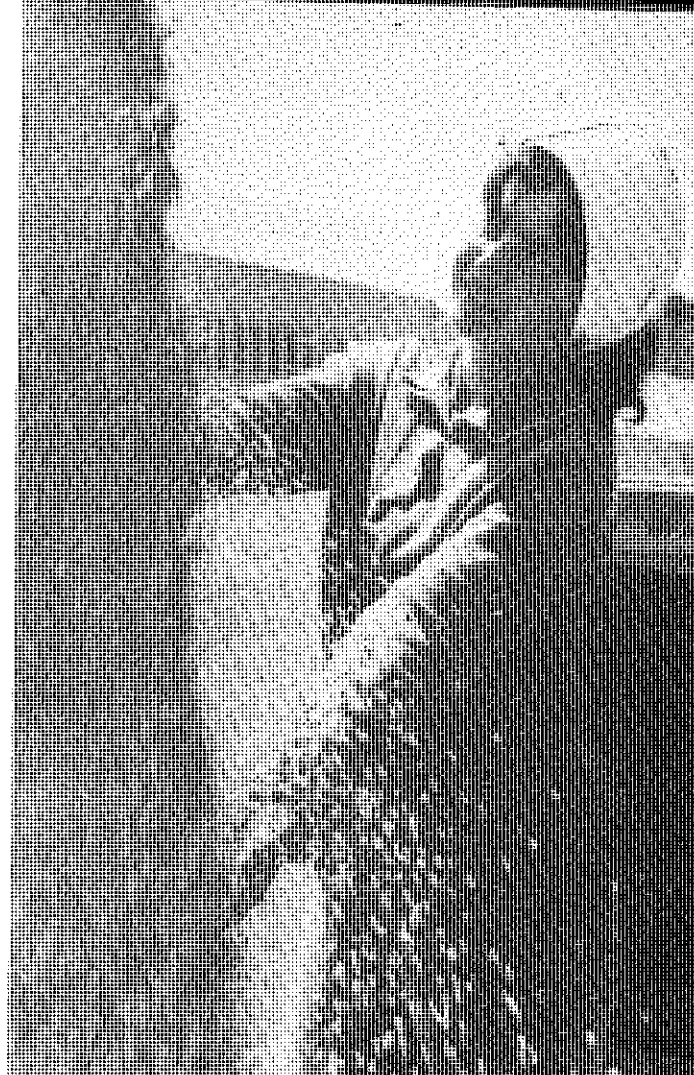
In the PSAC of Alabama women take active part in the technical-scientific revolution.



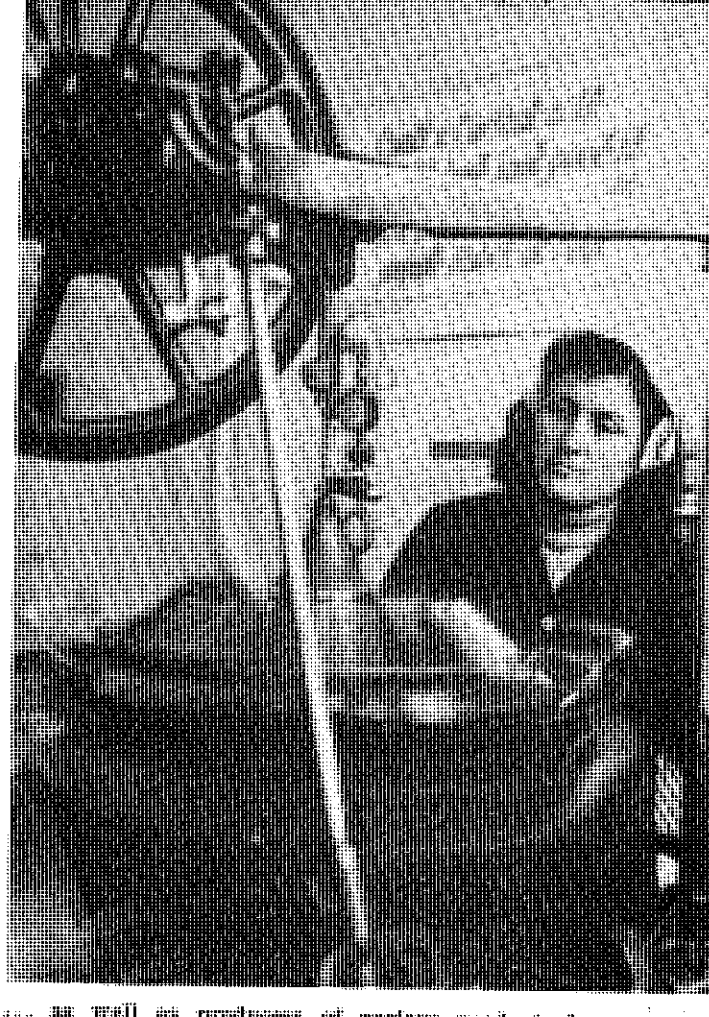
Today not only men but young women, too, can operate farming machinery.



Five articles turned out by the hands of the gifted young women and girls in the artistic enterprises.



The joy of the new wheat crop.



... as well as products of various products from
natural areas, such as copper wires and cables.

...
... work also as products...



After work.

...about the woman are embodied today in the bourgeois and revisionist painting and sculpture.

Our art, which elevates the figure of man and his work, strives to represent woman in the context of the great epoch of her complete emancipation, as a colossal force in factories and fields, in education and culture, and on all fronts of the construction of socialism. This allround reflection of the life and the activity of the woman is contributing to the enrichment of our fine arts with new and vigorous ideas, opening up broad prospects for the development of all genres and forms of art. The broad theme of the life of the woman in our country takes up a special place in the artistic creative process. This imparts to art not only its fine lyricism, its deep concern about life, the rejuvenation of society, but also impregnates it with revolutionary communist optimism and humanism, gives it fresh strength. The truthful reflection of the life of woman in art becomes a great educative force and builds up faith in the ideas of the revolution and socialism.

The study of the historical and present-day reality of the Albanian women has enabled our painters and sculptors to treat the figure of the woman in the different aspects of her struggle and work. Our artists are guided by the idea that without the participation of the woman in social activity the complete construction of socialism and communism cannot be achieved. Therefore in our painting and sculpture we find women represented as partici-

pants in the national and liberation wars of our people, women in men's clothes, sword in hand, or in the people's revolution, women in men's breeches and with a cartridge belt tight on their waists, or in the period of the construction of socialism, women holding the pick, the book and the rifle in their hands. Our people are proud of their «graceful girls» and have dedicated to them beautiful songs which continue to inspire our artists of the easel and chisel up to our days.

Just like in poetry, in painting and sculpture, the figure of the woman has become the symbol of «Mother Albania». On the brow of a hill commanding Tirana, in the Martyrs' Cemetery, of the martyrs who fell in the National Liberation War, a monument towers skywards, the symbol of all our «Albanian Mothers». The figure of the women raised to this symbolic height indicates the great respect of our society towards them. But the woman is not the heroine of artistic works alone. She is herself the author of many achievements in all fields. The Albanian women have made a name as writers of novels and poems, film-makers and playwrights, singers and painters, symphony composers and sculptresses. The worker of our country stops with respect before the works of his emancipated women contemporaries displayed in exhibitions of fine arts, and admires the power of their talent and their creative capabilities in the field of art. In their paintings and sculptures, the Albanian women artists express their rich spiritual world, their originality.

THE WOMEN'S UNION OF ALBANIA WAS CREATED IN THE HEAT OF WAR

The National Liberation War of the Albanian people, led by the Communist Party of Albania, was a great war, a genuine popular revolution which would be successfully crowned if the broad masses of the people, among which the women who represent half the population, were drawn into it. Viewing the problem from this angle, the Communist Party elaborated a line of work among women, as a component part of its general line.

The line followed by the Party during the National Liberation War with regard to its work among women could not be carried out without organizing the women, without uniting them. Besides the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, an exclusively women's organization, which would teach and train women how to fight for the liberation of the country and their emancipation, would also serve this purpose.

Under the conditions of our country and in the circumstances of the National Liberation War, from

the day of its founding, the Party correctly appraised the necessity of uniting the revolutionary forces of women in an anti-fascist organization of theirs.

Many a document of the Party upholds the necessity of organizing the women. More complete orientations about this issue, however, were given by the Central Committee of the Party of February 1943, as well as by the 1st Conference of the CPA of March 1943. The Conference attached special attention to the problem of the participation of women in the general uprising of the Albanian people against the fascist invaders. It set the task that «the Anti-fascist Front of the Albanian women set up by the women's anti-fascist councils, should rally around itself and organize the masses of women of every social stratum and political tendency.»

One month later, in April of the same year, in a letter to the regional committees instructing that the decisions of the conference of March be put into practice, the CC of the Party stressed the necessity of creating the Women's Anti-fascist Front. The best way to attain this objective was through the organizing of conferences in city quarters and villages, which would elect women's anti-fascist councils.

To coordinate the activity of women's anti-fascist councils until a central organ of the Women's Anti-fascist Front was elected, in April of 1943 an initiatory commission was created in secrecy in Tirana. The Party appointed comrade Nexhmije Xhuglini (Hoxha) to lead this commission, which

began to take prompt measures to set up women's councils everywhere. Their objective was «to organize the assistance for the National Liberation War, to contribute to its strengthening, to organize the anti-fascist movement of women and to elevate them politically everywhere they are. The union of the anti-fascist women should be felt everywhere, in town and countryside...»

All these orientations of the Party met with enthusiastic support of the masses of women. Conferences of women to elect their councils were organized everywhere under most difficult conditions of fascist terror, in secret, in the poor houses of the workers and patriotic citizens of the occupied cities. In many villages, though their participation in the women's councils was facilitated by the conditions existing in the liberated zones, the peasant women had to stand up against backward prejudices and the hostile propaganda of reaction which was conducted by the collaborationist organizations such as «Balli Kombëtar», and others.

The invaders imprisoned and exiled hundreds of women but did not reduce them. Even though in prisons and concentration camps, women carried on their struggle against the enemy, strengthened their unity more and more.

Along with the elections to the councils of city quarters and villages, elections to the city councils were held in October 1943.

Of special importance to the creation of the Women's Anti-fascist Front was the calling of the

2nd National Liberation Conference (The 1st Conference known as the Conference of Peza was held on September 16, 1942, in the region of Peza, some kilometers from Tirana - editor's note.). A delegation of women took part in the Conference, which was held in the Labinot village of Elbasan, from September 4 to 9, 1943. This delegation put forward to the Conference the request for the recognition of the Women's Organization, and pronounced its adherence to the program and composition of the National Liberation Front. The request was accepted.

Now the Albanian women had their own organization, which was called the Anti-fascist Women's Union of Albania (AWUA).

In the heat of the war, the AWUA stepped up its activity and, with each passing day, succeeded in drawing the broad masses of women into the liberation war. No sooner the magazine «Albanian Woman» began to be printed than it became a powerful weapon for the mobilization and organization of women.

Due to the work and solicitude of their organization, the members of women's councils in town and countryside raised their political level and their revolutionary consciousness. Their contribution in the armed struggle against the fascist invaders was growing with every passing day. They were active fighters in the general popular uprising.

Hundreds of women who were elected to the councils, together with hundreds of other women activists, skillfully led the masses of women by set-

ting their own example of courageous attitudes in the face of every difficulty and sacrifice. Numerous examples of such attitudes may be quoted. Everybody in Albania knows about the selfless patriotic activity of Duze Bajrami, a woman from Kurvelesh, who gave the lives of her two sons to the cause of Liberation. Undaunted by this loss, Duze walked from village to village, in an effort to encourage the activity of women's councils there. Many members and activists of women's councils, such as Sarete Gabaj from Vlora, whom the nazis burned alive, and a lot more laid down their lives for the cause of the liberation of the Homeland.

The regional councils were elected in meetings, which were attended by delegates from the liberated zones, or the fascist occupied zones such as from Gjirokastra, Korça, Durrës, etc. which were still under fascist cannon fire.

Their political and organizational activity led to the assembling of the 1st Congress of women, held on November 4, 1944, in the city of Berat which the partisan brigades had just liberated. The Congress drew the balance of the victories achieved, set the tasks for the future, and elected the central organs of the AWUA — the Central Council and its Presidency. The AWUA, today the Women's Union of Albania (WUA), is a strong organization of the masses of women. It plays an important role in the political, economic and social life of the country. By carrying out successfully its high mission as a revolutionary organization of the masses of women,

under the leadership of the Party, it is faithfully marching on the sure road to socialism, following the revolutionary traditions of the National Liberation War. In a lofty revolutionary spirit, it is gathering around itself and training in its bosom thousands of worker, cooperativist and intellectual women who have hurled themselves enthusiastically into the great battle for the complete construction of socialist society in Albania.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW ARE PUT INTO EFFECT

The principle «equal pay for equal work» places woman on an equal footing with man by law. The state provides everything for the protection of women and children. Expectant and nursing mothers are exempt from night shifts or overtime work, or jobs requiring great physical exertion. Nursing women workers or office workers are granted a leave of not less than half an hour in the interval of every three or four hours to breast-feed their children, as well as the time needed to travel to and from the nursery. This time-off is included in the official work-time. Women workers enjoy other advantages, as well, which enable them to take part in social work and to carry out their duties as mothers and housewives. For the pre — and after child-birth period, women workers enjoy the right to a paid leave which extends from 13 to 15 weeks and is paid to the amount of 75 to 95 per cent of their average wages calculated on the basis of their length of service.

Hundreds of health institutions function everywhere in our country to attend to the needs of

working people in general and women, in particular, free of charge. The following is an illustration to this: for the patient M. Q., hospitalized in the Tirana maternity-home, the state laid out 4,083 leks for ten day's hospitalization, which is equal the average worker's pay of 7 months. An equally great solicitude is shown for children.

Many facilities are created for women and young women in the field of education and schooling. Women who attend schools work reduced hours and are paid supplementary paid-leave wherever they have to sit examinations. The paid-leave extends from 3 to 6 hours weekly, and from 15 to 25 days yearly to sit examinations, and up to 30 days for the writing diploma and sitting final examinations.

Before Liberation, in the conditions of the obscurantist feudal-bourgeois regime, woman was abandoned to a state of complete illiteracy and ignorance: about 90 per cent of women were illiterate. Inside of a period of 10 years after Liberation, precisely in 1955, illiteracy was completely obliterated among all men and women of a certain age in our country. Important steps forward have been made also in the direction of raising the ideological and political, educational and cultural, technical and professional level of women. This was an imperative duty raised by the socialist construction of the country. To this end, the Party and People's Power have created all the possibilities and conditions, especially for women to go through schools and courses,

and raise their cultural level, because they had been lagging behind all sections of society. A broad network of schools functions throughout the country, for part-time and full-time attendance, for men and women workers. Under the last five-year period alone, 23,816 women and young women went through part-time schools. This school-year (1977-1978), 94,422 working people were enrolled in schools of various categories in the city and country, of whom 40 per cent are women. Important progress has been made by women workers in the field of secondary education. While in the 1975-1976 school-year 50,044 women attended part-time schools, in the 1976-1977 school-year attendance rose to 56,238. Women make up 37 percent of the number of cadres of secondary and higher qualification.

The following are some comparative figures bearing on different periods prior to and after Liberation: in 1938 there were 18,057 school girls and students in all categories of schools in our country. In 1973 their number for the same categories of schools went up to 337,991 pupils and students. In 1938 there were only 337 young women attending secondary schools, in 1973 the number of young women attending secondary schools reached 46,805 while in 1977 — 56,238. Before Liberation, not a single young woman attended any part-time vocational school. In 1973 the number of women workers attending schools without interrupting their work reached 15,698, in 1977 it increased to 22,768.

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WOMAN AS WE UNDERSTAND IT

More than a century ago, Marx and Engels, the great teachers and leaders of the world proletariat, made a scientific definition of the real causes of the inequality between man and woman. They demonstrated that the enslavement of woman by man does not stem from physiological or psychical factors, but from the nature of the exploiting order, from the establishment and the predomination of the private property over the means of production. Since then, the struggle of progressive women for liberation and emancipation began to make its first sure steps and to assume larger proportions, until it grew strong enough to become a disquieting concern of the societies with opposed classes.

Today, in the face of this threatening rising power, the chiefs of the bourgeois-revisionist system in decay and their scribes resort to deception, mystifications, stratagems and every other means to fight Marxism also on the problem of woman, and whenever their needs dictate it, they falsify it.

Engels has indicated in a genial way that the birth of private property and the institution of inheritance constitute the fundamental economic premise of monogamy within which woman is submitted completely to man. The revisionist and bourgeois theoreticians deliberately pass in silence the real cause of the antagonisms between man and woman, i. e., private property, and fan the flames of the struggle between sexes. To reduce the struggle for the emancipation of woman to the limits of a struggle within the family alone, means to divorce it from the great cause of the proletariat which aims to abolish the capitalist private property, the source of all evils and of every kind of inequality.

The Albanian experience bears clear testimony to the necessity of linking the struggle for the emancipation of woman with the struggle for national and social liberation. In this common struggle women affirm their abilities, raise their demands for their right to work; they ensure their own economic independence in the family and, as a result, ensure also more human relations within the family because nobody can snap at her any longer with such rude expressions as, «I feed you» or «You are fit only for the kitchen, church and children».

Comrade Enver Hoxha teaches us: «The question of woman, the problems of woman, should always be seen with the eye of the revolutionary proletariat and not with the eye of the denigrating conservative and liberal».

The complete emancipation of woman, as the Party of Labour of Albania has pointed out, is a long and complicated process. It is intended not only to emancipate woman but also to definitely liberate the entire society from political, economic and social oppression, to free it from alien concepts and prejudices about woman, too. The emancipation of woman is carried out in the conditions of socialist society which is led by a Marxist-Leninist party.

Under the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania and on the basis of the teachings of comrade Enver Hoxha, the Albanian woman has become a brilliant example which bears full testimony to the fact that she has embarked on the road to her complete emancipation. The linking of the question of woman with the national liberation and the treatment of this question by the PLA and comrade Enver Hoxha as an integral part of the non-stop socialist revolution, ensured the conditions necessary not only for the solution of all the problems of woman, but also made a contribution of great generalizing value in this field. With their contribution in the solution of the problems of the revolution, the women carry the revolution forward and emancipate themselves.

Comrade Enver Hoxha has pointed out to the entire society: «The Party and the working class should measure the advance towards the complete construction of socialist society with the deepening and advance of the emancipation of woman within

our proletarian revolution. If the woman lags behind, the revolution marks time».

Proceeding from these teachings, the political revolution was carried out in Albania, the people's state power and the dictatorship of the proletariat were established, and all these transformations were carried out with the joint forces of men and women. Thousands of women and girls militated in the ranks of the National Liberation Army, while hundreds of thousands of others disseminated the word of the Party through leaflets and proclamations. After the establishment of our People's State Power, the revolution in the economy was carried out, and this required the conscious efforts of men, women, and the entire people, to fight with self-denial to carry out the collectivization and the socialist industrialization of the country, to safeguard, administer, strengthen and raise the common property to a higher level. Men and women are trained at work, in schools, in qualification courses, in political and ideological groups, to see the emancipation of women, among other problems, as a problem of the socialist revolution.

The People's State Power abolished capitalist exploitation, established a new legislative code, and opened the way to the operation of the objective laws of socialist society. Under the People's State Power, the new man, armed with the Marxist-Leninist ideology, with new concepts about work, property, the family, the woman, and so on has been educated. The emergence of these new factors

brought about a situation in which a girl is no longer treated as a slave, in which love must be the basis of every marriage. All roads have been opened to young people to guide themselves by lofty socialist motives in the creation of the family and not by material interests, careerism and other motives which humiliate the woman.

At the present stage, the problem of the Albanian woman is raised within the context of the class struggle in the ideological field. Under these circumstances, even though all these objective conditions exist, the processes which go on within the family must not be left to spontaneity. Therefore, a direct but tactful struggle is waged to establish socialist relations and standards in the family, such as relations of love, equality, mutual aid and respect. In order to ensure equality between the wife and the other members of the family, the struggle is now being waged in two directions: first, to make family affairs, day to day life, duties towards raising the children and so on, the concern of the whole society; second, to have every member of the family understand that they are all responsible for all these things.

Under these conditions, the participation of the Albanian woman in the entire life of the country has become an objective necessity. The efforts, the physical and mental energies of woman are also needed to promote the non-stop revolution, to strengthen the People's State Power, and further democratize it according to the line of the masses.

The efforts of woman are necessary, too, for the strengthening and defence of the Homeland against all enemies through the training of the whole people.

The emancipation of women in Albania is not a «feminist movement» as in the capitalist countries, but is the advance of women to a high level, to full equality with men, the march of women hand in hand with their menfolk in harmony of feelings, aims, and pure ideals, the march towards communism.

A WOMAN OF OUR DAYS

The door of the hall, in which the presidium of the women's organization of the Toshkëzi agricultural cooperative (Lushnja district) held its meeting for the new elections, was hardly opened when a number of girls and women clustered around a 25-years old woman, showering her with congratulations: she was the newly-elected head of the women's organization — Violeta Gjordeni.

We met and talked with Violeta; we talked with the comrades of the cooperative, too. Everything bears testimony to Violeta's modesty, which is so typical of our time.

Violeta Gjordeni is a young woman from the Zhelizhan village. She was married in Kundje, a village included in the same agricultural cooperative. She has got one child and expects a second one. She used to work in the field-brigade, and in the evening attended the part-time school. As a vanguard fighter, she joined the ranks of the Party. She had a clear view of the road on which she should march, as a new woman of socialist Alba-

nia. She had to work and study. Many young women and girls here have carried their studies zealously to the end. Violeta's case was not an exception. But in the third year of the secondary school she was engaged to be married. Now, the question was presented in a different light. Some said: «Can a woman carry water on both shoulders?» This referred to the work in production, school and the family she was about to set up. But the young bride did not back down in the face of difficulties. After her marriage she did not interrupt her studies, despite one hour's walk to school. «She's got mettle in herself», some said, «but... wait! she can't do more than the secondary school. That's the long and short of a woman in the village», some others said. This is the way with all sceptics, when the reality comes to clash with their concepts, they catch hold of a new **but**. The young bride gave the short cut to this **but** of theirs. After graduating from the secondary school, she made another step forward, one which astonished many people in the cooperative. «The question is not to start doing a thing, but to carry it to the end!» The sceptics were up again with a new **but**. Violeta did not hear them. Unhesitatingly, she climbed a new step in the ladder of knowledge, towards her affirmation as a worthy woman of our days, a woman of socialist Albania. She began her correspondence course in the Faculty of Economics at the Tirana University.

It is an arduous task to attend higher studies after working all day long in the fields, and to be

an activist in the social life of the cooperative, to accomplish the great tasks as communist and... rear a child, too. But she does it with determination. At times she is tired, but she gives proof of her strength, courage and worth, equal with men in all the fields of life. In her struggle and efforts, Violeta had the powerful support and encouragement of the Party basic organization, the support of her husband, family and collective.

She tells us:

«As a communist, I feel I must be at the vanguard in everything, set the example to everybody. You cannot divide the tasks: this is for women and that is for men. To advance ahead, only one thing is required: the will to do it. We have all facilities: do you want work? — here it is, get doing it! You want school? — here the school is, study! What about the child? My husband and I look after it. We have creches and kindergartens for children during the work-time.»

Violeta's thinking and actions are very correct and just. Now she is working in the accountant's section of the cooperative — she is an economist. From time to time she joins her comrades of the brigade in fields. She never forgets her hoe. Frequently, she reads lectures on political and economic problems to her comrades. In the evening she is back home. Her husband, Lefter, returns home, too. There is their daughter and mother Pulia waiting their return. The happy family spend a couple of hours in pleasant talk. When the others

go to sleep, wife and husband remain behind to study; Lefter attends studies, too. They seem as if they are competing with each other as to who is going to attain better results.

Violeta is a loving mother, and a good housewife, too. In her character she embodies the distinguished features of the new women of socialist Albania. Her life and work reminds us of comrade Enver Hoxha's words when he referred to women, «...You, our comrades and sisters of war, work and school... have put all your energies to the front of production, defence and school. This raises the personality of the Albanian woman higher and is a vivid expression of her struggle under the leadership of the Party, to implement the complete equality of woman with man».

THE COMPLETE EMANCIPATION OF WOMAN IS CARRIED OUT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

In his report to the 7th Congress of PLA, speaking on the problems of woman, too, comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out, «Our experience has fully confirmed the necessity of linking the problem of the complete emancipation of the woman with the question of national liberation and the cause of the proletariat. Without the participation of the woman the socialist revolution cannot be successfully carried out, and without the socialist revolution the complete emancipation of woman cannot be achieved».

It is the great merit of our Party that, as in all problems, in that of the complete emancipation of woman, too, it has always charted the ways of development of, and defined the means of resolving correctly, this great social problem in each stage of the revolution and socialist construction. Our present reality is a living testimony of the correct line pursued in our country for the complete emancipation of woman, this colossal force of society,

within the general context of the development of the revolution and socialist construction. Our reality abounds in thousands of facts showing the unprecedented heights to which the Albanian woman is raised and the splendid prospects which are opened up for her further progress.

The dictatorship of the proletariat constitutes a powerful and decisive weapon to carry the socialist revolution through to complete and final victory. The dictatorship of the proletariat, as a form of state of the domination of the working class and other labouring masses, helps to bring the masses of people, among which the women, to power, and also to fulfil the other tasks of the revolution such as the allround socialist transformation of the base and superstructure, the allround economic and cultural development of the country, etc. The dictatorship of the proletariat plays a decisive role in suppressing the resistance of the overthrown classes and individual elements of these classes, in the struggle against the internal and external enemies for the defence of the socialist victories and the Homeland. Likewise, it is an important element in the communist education of workers, in weeding out of their consciousness and of the life of our society anything that impedes our march forward, any hangover and alien manifestation inherited from the past, as well as any current influence of the bourgeois-revisionist ideology. It unites all our working people, the masses of women, also, the working class and Party ever more closely, so that

all together they work and fight consciously for the construction and defence of socialism.

The successes achieved in these directions are great, among other reasons, also, for the reason that the Party and our socialist state have ensured a real democracy for the masses of working people, the women included. It is the socialist democracy, which constitutes a fundamental condition for the defence and strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat itself, just as the dictatorship of the proletariat, in turn, constitutes the indispensable and decisive condition for the existence of democracy for the working people. Only in a socialist system, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party, can the broadest and most complete democracy for the working masses be ensured. This principle permeates the entire state and social organization in our country through and through.

Seeing the problem in this wide context, it becomes clear that only the People's State Power, the dictatorship of the proletariat is able to secure a correct solution, among other, of the problems of the emancipation of woman, and to carry them through to the end. This is why in the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the defence of the victories of the socialist revolution, of the independence and the freedom of the Homeland, the women of our country see their certain future.

To ensure the continuity of the revolution and the strengthening of the dictatorship of the prole-

tariat, the women of socialist Albania are charged with the very important task of making their contribution to the further deepening of socialist democracy, the development of democracy for the masses more and more by participating in the governing of the country in growing numbers. By exercising their rights extensively, the women of our country defend the socialist principles on the further widening and deepening of democracy, and help to implement these principles in life. They have become a great force without which the solution of the various socio-political, ideological, economic, cultural problems and the defence of the country, is inconceivable.

The role of the Albanian women in the organs of the state power, economy culture, in different social organizations, etc., is enhanced at the same time as they themselves have grown from the point of view of their political, ideological, cultural and professional maturity. Nowadays, many women are elected to the organs of the state power and the organizations of the masses, they run state and social affairs in many sectors. 46 per cent of the labour force in the social production is comprised of women. It is up to us to consolidate and advance these achievements in order to further increase the role of women in the struggle for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the construction and the defence of socialism in our country. The ever more extensive and effective participation of women in the governing of the

country, the drawing of this great social force into the solution of all the problems of our socialist state, is a condition indispensable for the deepening of our socialist democracy in action, because without properly setting in motion this colossal force of the population, which as Marx has put it, represents the natural degree of their general emancipation, the further deepening of the principle of socialist democracy is called in question.

The general fulfilment of the economic targets of the 5th Five-year Plan with success was a significant indication of what people can do when they are masters of their country and are clear about what they work and fight for. In the heroic struggle to fulfil these great tasks, smashing blockades and frustrating the designs and plans of our internal and external enemies to reduce us to our knees, the women of our country, side by side with their husbands, brothers and children, placed themselves in the forefront of the struggle to fulfil all the targets, and distinguished themselves for their determination and patriotism at work and in life.

Today, women are to be found everywhere, on the broadest front of social production, in factories and plants, in the ranks of the vanguard of the working class, in the fields of our Homeland as advanced peasant women, they take part in governing the country and running our socialist state, in which they discharge important tasks of responsibility; they can be found in the management of the production, the economy, culture, etc.

The colossal successes achieved in our country in emancipation of woman, also, reject all the bourgeois-revisionist theories and practices on the solution of this question. The revolutionary experience of our Party in connection with the complete emancipation of woman, with this problem vital to the fates of the revolution and socialism, is spreading all over the world irresistibly.

AMONG FUTURE WOMEN TRACTOR-DRIVERS

The revolutionary life and activity always gives birth to new phenomena, releases latent energies, reveals new reserves and spiritual assests. One form of these magnificent manifestations is the reality of our new woman who grew and advanced through work. The woman's attitudes, world outlook and feelings went through a transformation. This was the case with Vojsava Hoxha, who is training to become a tractor-driver.

Let Vojsava herself tell us how she came to do it.

«To say the truth, it never occurred to me that some day I would become a tractor-driver and turn the fields with a tractor. A few years ago when I came to the machine and tractor station, I was struck by the magnificence of the work people were doing here. There, in the fields, I saw for myself the difficult but pleasant job of the tractor-driver. I had heard of a young woman who drove a tractor, Cajë Shelnja, who works in Fushë-Kruja. When I came to work here I was sorry I had not begun it earlier. Cajë Shelnja, on her tractor, her image,

flashed again in my mind. I wonderd at her courage and marvelled with her work. She, a whisp of a woman, with her brittle built, operated the steel machine which rumbled and roared across the fields.

When I got home, I told my husband,

«— I want to become a tractor-driver.

— Really! But can you do it? You've got two children.

— Yes, I know I'm a mother of two children, and you. . a father of two children! What of it?»

We laughed. But still, a question haunted me: «Can I do it? And I answered it myself, tightening my fists as if to strike down that evil boding: I'll do it or die, by all means, I'll do it!»

And Vojsava's wish became a reality. In the MTS of Fushë-Kruja, a course for women tractor-drivers had been opened. It was attended by thirty women and young women, who came out on their own to learn the new profession of a tractor-driver.

It was a time when the Kruja men and women could hardly bring themselves to believe that thirty women would become tractor-drivers. Even in this case, just as in everything else, soon time had the better of all inhibiting concepts about it. The Kruja women came out of the shell of their restrictions, they joined work in the enterprise and in the fields of the agricultural cooperative, ascended the scale of knowledge, invaded even those sectors of the economic-social life which once carried, as to say, the label «for men only.» We have heard how

the first women turners, fillers and installers, and drivers got down to work, and now we can speak of our women tractor-drivers with pride.

«The beginning was very difficult for me», Lutfije Halili tells us, «we heard rumours, spread high and low by some ill-willing people. Through our work and behaviour, in a few months' time, we triumphed over these mean, pretty-bourgeois people, who consider the woman fit to attend to house-chores only, call her a brittle human being who cannot be trusted with any job.

Vera Faruku worked as a turner in the engineering workshop of the Burizana cooperative. She told her family that she wished to become a tractor-driver. Her words did not go down well with them. But she knew how to go about it patiently. She brought them round to her view that the tractor-driver's job is just as good as that of a turner. The case with Miranda Imeri was quite different: it was her husband who encouraged her to become a tractor-driver.

The woman engineer Fatmira Minga, the responsible of the course for tractor-drivers, is convinced that when these young women sit the examination, they all will take the driver's licence. All the necessary conditions to acquire as complete knowledge as possible, not only in theory but also in practice, are created for them. As emancipated women and young women, all together, they will be a new contingent of the large army of the builders of socialism.

THE GOLDEN-HANDED FIERY-HEARTED

(From a conversation with a group of amateur women artists and workers of Kavaja)

The dusk has set in. The town is decked out as never before on the eve of this New Year. The tree-lined streets are bustling with people and traffic. The lights are all on. All stores are full with many varieties of goods, and working till late into the night. In factories and work centres, everybody is doing his best in these last minutes of the last day of the old year to do something more for the production, for the fulfilment of the five-months' plan. We are in a hall on the third storey of the new building in the Enterprise of Artistic Rugs and Carpets. Here, we talk with a group of women workers who are also members of the amateur artistic ensemble of this enterprise.

R. Arkaxhiu, a woman chief of shift is speaking: «It's a good idea to write about our artistic ensemble»

ble, though our ensemble is not new, or unknown, either. It's been set up long before, but it is only inside of these last 3 years that it's grown and assumed its present features, to be more precise, it has made improvements only after the speech comrade Enver Hoxha made on 20th December 1974, after which, about one fourth of women and girls here joined the artistic ensemble. How many women workers and unveiled women were there before the liberation of the country? you may ask. (The Moslem women of the town covered their faces with yashmak before the establishment of the People's Power — editor's note). For the sake of precision it is necessary to leaf through the historical records of the town. But, at most, their number could not have exceeded 20, at a time when our town counted 7,000 inhabitants in all. Our town inherited more saloons than work-shops from the past. The body of our society bore the deep scars of the wounds of starvation, unemployment, economic backwardness, illiteracy, fanaticism. Today Kavaja boasts 25 thousand inhabitants. Thousand of women workers, specialists, who have gone through secondary and higher training, directing cadres in the organs of the Party and the People's Power, are our pride. Our enterprise alone employs over 1,200 women and young women. The secretary of the basic organization, the Directress, the Vice-directress of this enterprise have been raised from the midst of these women. The veterans of this enterprise, indeed even the first participants of the artistic group, are gray with

years now. But young blood, young forces have been constantly swelling our numbers. Vullnete, Kristina, Valbona and many others are among the new-comers.»

Vullnete: «When we read comrade Enver Hoxha's speech of 20th December, we were literally carried away with enthusiasm. He spoke about us in a special manner: "In one TV broadcast," comrade Enver Hoxha said, "I heard some very beautiful songs interpreted by the folk singers of the town of Kavaja, which I liked very much. They were about the golden-handed girls who weave carpets...," After this, the most talented girls, came in to join our ensemble. The place of the veteran dancers, the communist women, Marieta and Dima, was taken by younger dancers. Those of the older generation are Nafrika and Fania, still working for it. They have taught us not only how to weave fine carpets and rugs, but they have taught us also to be courageous and have the spirit of initiative, to sing and dance. Songs and dances are our second life now. Some fanatics dared raise their voice against the young girls who joined the ensemble on their own. Three or four among us were then just engaged to be married. What should we do in the face of such ill-willed rumours? Withdraw? Certainly not! We would not even dream of it. We talked the matter over with the communists here, we talked it over with Dima, Fania. Fania is still in charge of the ensemble when we go out on tours. We shall never let her go from us. She, too, does not

want to leave us. Fania and the others of her age are like mothers and sisters to us, they are our masters and teachers. Their experience paves the way for us to march boldly ahead. But, let's return to the subject. I told you that the beginning was difficult for us. Therefore, I went to my mother-in-law to see what she thought about it. 'Mother, what should I do?', I said 'aunt Fania, Dima and many other women there dance together... they want us to sing together to the new life and work... But there are some old bigots who think that it is bad if we...' Do you know her answer? 'Stick together my daughter, just as the Party tells you to do. Go on singing to the Party and Enver Hoxha! Let fanatics, those who sneak in the dark corners, burst with rage. Now it is their turn to veil their faces for shame as we used to do before. For, now, we have the sunshine of our party. Sing and dance you shall, to spite them, of course!'

The artistic performances we have put on the stage during the last two years have been shown round not only in our town but also in the countryside. We have toured other towns and cities».

Fania (the veteran member of the ensemble): «The young women of our group are also among the best workers of the enterprise. They rehearse the performances after work-hours. All of them have formed correct concepts about the relationships between production work and artistic activities. **Production work has priority.** When good results are achieved in production, then the song, the dance,

everything, are more lively, stronger in feeling and carry more freshness. Vullnete and Kristina are among those who frequently overfulfil their production tasks, but they are real masters of the art of dancing. Everyone of us, especially the younger ones, had it rather difficult in the beginning. But that's how it was with all of us. I remember the time when Nafrika, who is our directress now, joined the ranks of the Party. It was a day to remember for us all, we sang revolutionary songs, songs dedicated to work and production, songs about the joy of life. Dima also is an active woman, but when she came on the stage for the first time, the evil tongues were let loose against her. We encouraged her to follow her own path intrepidly. And she conquered all conservative stands with the revolutionary attitude. In the 50's when our generation was initiated into social activities, we had a hard and arduous job to do. Then, fanaticism was more widespread and operated rather rampantly. Today fanaticism is still seeking to check or halt our revolutionary drive. Some times, when the ensemble performs and the girls sing, I tell them to sing it a bit louder, though it should not be sung that way. And they reply in surprise: "Aunt Fania, this song is for gentle tunes and voices". I certainly know that they are right, but my heart tells me to have it louder and louder still, just to make it burst the eardrums of the fanatics. In the last analysis, this is our struggle, it is one form of our struggle: it reminds us of the armed struggle of the years

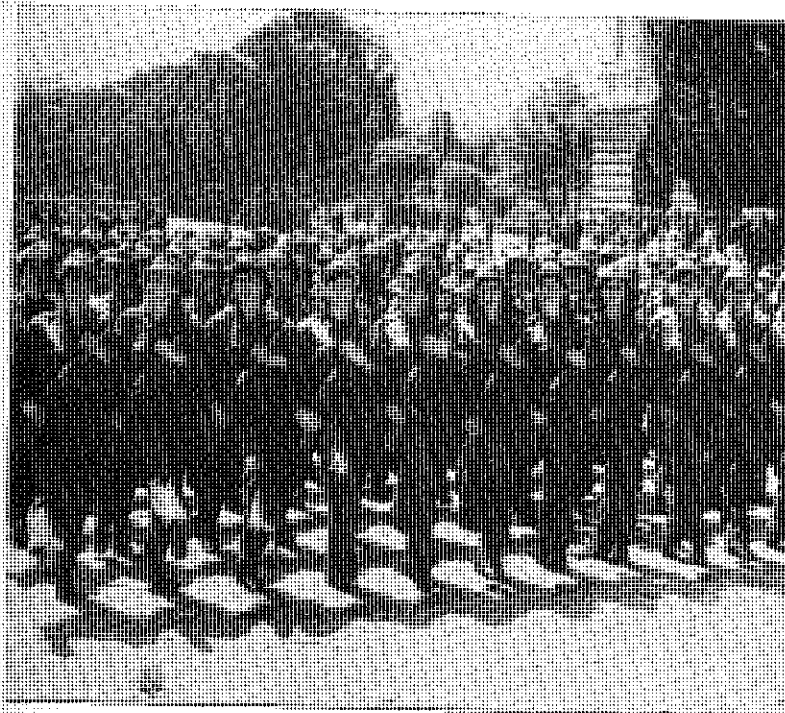
of the National Liberation War, of the efforts we made after the liberation of the Homeland for the setting up of the People's Power and for its strengthening. Today, just as then, whether in production work, at school, on the stage, in the camps of military training and drill, we fight for socialism, for our own emancipation, in particular».



Albanian women — active participants in the life of the country. They can be found at various leading posts of the Party and State.



Ready to defend their free socialist homeland.



Women marching bravely to the ranks of the Voluntary Forces.



After work - military drilling.



To help flourish our socialist countryside.



After work, a stroll around the cooperative.



The number of girls taking part in sports activities increases with each passing year.

REPORTING FOR THE PRESENT AND THE DAYS TO COME

Mother and its offspring

It was a new mine. Everything was new, there the workers, the galleries, the vigour and drive at work. It was called by a simple name which bears something from rocks and blood, «Red Rock». This name merged with the life of the town, it became a household name, it got into its streets, factories, beaches, vineyards, gardens, orchards, making it prettier and more pensive.

A steep path, lined by tall green oak-trees on both sides, was like a tiny bridge, a life artery, linking the town with the new mine in the depth of mountains where its sources lie, with Červenaka.

Červenaka was brought into existence at a memorable date, on March 8, 1959. Its half-barracks, half-dwelling houses huddle together in a wind-swept valley. A small courtyard and a flower garden.

There are only a few buildings there, but they house everything necessary to link this center with the activity of the new mine. A dining hall, the center of technological progress with many photo-

graphs, graphs, medallions and books, quite a number of them on the shelves: comrade Enver Hoxha's works, Anti-Dühring, selected works by V. I. Lenin and Karl Marx, and a lot of novels, too.

Green oak-trees all around the place somewhere near a reservoir, a rye-field spotted with poppies.

«Just have a look at this picture», says Vangjel Temo, who has spent nearly twenty five years of his life in the geological service and mining. Now he is Chairman of the Trade Unions of Çervenaka, «just look at them. That's how we began it. Along with the mineral we came across rusty shells of the First World War».

Everything about the mother-mine carries the imprints of the history, modesty, self-abnegation and smiles of its miners. They are stamped there for good on the features of its sons, like this frail fair-haired youth, Thimaq, who is chief engineer of the mine. He takes pleasure in telling us about the increase of output, savings, modernization and mechanization of work processes, the struggle against the hardships caused by the blockade, the highest medallion and decoration of the mine, the First Class Work Order, awarded by the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania to the collective of the Çervenaka Iron-Nickel Enterprise.

«And thus we doubled the output,» Thimaq added, «but you had better write about our women comrades».

In fact, the life-record of the mine has been enriched with a new element. Women came to work here by and by. At first there was only one of them, Drita, the communist and activist of the Women's Union of Albania. Drita is a very lively and intelligent woman. She has worked hard to emancipate herself and her companions. Now there are many other women at the Çervenaka mine. They can display their real fighting spirit and mobilization at work also during such days when the snow blocks the valley and piles high up to the window-sills, compelling them to walk hand-in-hand, in Indian file, along the foot of the walls in order to reach their work posts in time.

«At first it was a tough job for us», says Drita. «Look at comrade Fatmira, the Secretary of our basic organization of the Party. She came directly from the farm, but once in here, she began to learn how to combat stand up to prejudices and hardships. We consider it an honour to have become members of a collective of determined and unswerving miners. We have learned a lot from their modest and selfless spirit. Here the personality of such women comrades as Shahe, the energetic activist of the youth organization, Drita, the assistant in the supply office, Minire and Feride, who distribute milk, has been shaped.

Çervenaka, the mother-mine, boasts a long record of activity, a long struggle. The miners are confident in the brilliant future of its offspring, the new mine «Red Rock». It bears all its minor and

major preoccupations, like all mothers do. It has trained and distributed fifty-six young girls and boys to Reps in Mirdita, to Elbasan and Bulqiza in order to specialize in running the mineral upgrading plant which is gaining new heights by the edge of the lake.

These wandering fledglings, who are now following study courses all over the country, will treat the mineral. The course this mineral will follow by rail is from the «Red Rock» Mine, through the mineral upgrading factory, to plant No. 12 of the Metallurgical Combine in Elbasan.

The mother-mine smiles at the drive and youth of its offspring. It knows that the miners of the southern sector, its newest sector at «Red Rock», are winding up their work and handing over the horizon 870 before schedule. At the central sector and in that of digging the shafts of the mine, the miners have attained a new success: they have joined hands in the horizon 750 with the new auxiliary pit before schedule.

Mother and offspring stand proudly facing and competing with each other.

Further down there is a stretch of a road which ends at the fortress at the entry to Pogradec. The new hotel, which from a distance looks like a big bird, is built with much art and skill; it bears the name of the new mine, «Red Rock», written in brilliant pebbles.

THE MONOLOGUE OF THE VOLUNTEER GIRL AT THE RAILROAD

A stone monument towers in front of me.

A song is devoted to the event to which this monument is set up.

*«A tuft of smoke and haze appear,
Some shots are heard from far away,
Some fighters brave who know no fear
Attack the foe and carry the day».*

Some thirty five years ago, a handful of brave communists and partisans took the warpath. And we are following it in the building of this railroad.

In the twilight of this fine evening, the valley is resounding with our song.

The girls are scattered about, some do the washing by the lakeside, some stay indoors, others have joined the boys and are rehearsing their parts in the orchestra. After work, this evening there will be a dancing party.

We are of the 1st volunteer Brigade of medical students, participating in the mass action of the youth in the building of the railroad at the Pojska sector. We have been worrying because we have failed to reach the work quota for two days in succession and are lagging behind the 2nd Brigade of medical students. Today we held an operative meeting by the monument. Also attending were

photoreporters and journalists. We took the floor to criticize our comrades and make self-criticism. The commander of the brigade, a frail but severe young man criticized himself for lack of efficiency in organizing the work. We had spent the first days digging the canal. And now we had to work harder to make up for the time lost. In two days, the rails will be laid here and the work at the Pojska sector will be considered completed. Our commander said we should follow the example of the best of our brigade.

We decided to reach the targets set by our best comrades like Muharrem, Agron, Mimoza, Fatmir, Enver and Lulieta, and proclaimed the remaining time as days of assault on all work fronts.

We are quite a few girls in our brigade. Our hands are full of blisters and we are sun-burnt, but we would never tolerate to be left at the tail-end of the brigade. A night before, one of our girls wrote a plaintive letter to her mother, but we cast a reproachful glance at her and she tore the letter to pieces which fell on the floor. She bent down and picked them up one by one in order to gain time.

«Listen, girls, what happened at the plant No. 12 of the Metallurgical combine,» said our commissar.

Plant No. 12 is here with us, like this monument, like this song, like this beautiful and serene lake. The commissar reads the newspaper:

«Plant No. 12 is seething with the builders' activity. Nearby we single out the traces of a rising

furnace. Further away there is the steel plant, and opposite the converters hall there stands a bulletin board carrying a poster in large characters. The distinguished workers of Furnace No. 3 call on those of Furnace No. 2 to keep pace with the smelters in turning out more steel for the Homeland. On the stand of the welders' brigade there is a photo of comrade Enver Hoxha among the metallurgical workers, with those who gave the Party and the Homeland the first pig-iron from our high furnace.»

Yes, we have now our own Metallurgical Combine. Workers and builders like Mehmet Bektashi, Maqo Polena, Lllazar Papamihali and former worker, Liman, now director of Plant No. 12 in the heart of our Metallurgical Complex, are all familiar names to us.

... Towards evening a song rends the air. It is the song of the Pojska martyrs:

*«A tuft of smoke and haze appear
Some shots are heard from far away...»*

They were young like us, and they, too, dreamed of a beautiful future. They are now here, among us in this mass action of the youth. They will stand guard of our happiness and aspirations on this spot, where their monument soars skywards. Once, it was surrounded by a barren plain, by the blue waters of the lake and, further away, by the cold and pensive Mali i Thatë. But we came along to add

something of the pulse of our youth to their glorious deed. We will never forget these nights at the Pojska monument, on the future highway of the mineral. And we march night and day towards our new plant. Our youth. I don't know why it reminds me of the poppies. Probably, because we come across so many of them in every inch of this land, probably because they hold the motto of the past and future of my generation.

COMPAÑERA ALBANESA

At crucial historical moments the Albanian women have displayed their strength and capability of weathering all storms, side by side with their menfolk. They have always been inspired by the lofty ideals of freedom and progress. This narrative treats a theme from the Spanish people's war for freedom in which the Albanian women, too, fought shoulder to shoulder with their own comrades and brothers in the International Brigades.

(Editor's note)

«Compañera, I have seen the lists of the wounded. There is an Albanian. Can it be your brother?»

«Where is he?»

«Here, this way!» Carmen said.

Kristina caught her by the arm and they hurried out to the hallway of the hospital.

Every night fresh groups of wounded were brought in from the front. The girls hurried down-

stairs and ran past a wounded man plodding down the stairs, and pounding the marble floor with his clutches. What a noise he made!

«Who can it be?» Every time she heard of her Albanian comrades, Dimo's face flashed before her eyes.

The dusk was falling.

The courtyard of the hospital was bustling with ambulance cars carrying the wounded to the station.

Feelings were running high in Murcia. Tranquility was long lost and the city itself looked as if it was severely wounded although it bore no scars in its face as yet. The Republicans held Franco's sister hostage there and this saved the Interbrigade hospitals from being bombed. But now they were heading north for Barcelona, on an open road, with the aircraft of Hitler's «Condor» legion and the Franco fascists constantly overhead.

Kristina's fingers went instinctively to Dimo's letter which she always carried about her. It was not only a letter from him alone. It was a letter he had written on behalf of all his Albanian comrades. Kristina had read it over and over again until she had learned it almost by heart: «And the day dawned on the height 196 on the Ebro banks, revealing the corpses of the enemies, a dim gleam in their helmets. An airplane kept flying overhead and one hundred twenty pieces of various calibres kept us under hedgehog fire. One of our pill-boxes was blown up. Communication with our staff

was interrupted. Only two dug-outs were left untouched with nine men and one machine-gun each. Then all of us ventured out to try to re-establish the liaison with the staff. Just now we managed to pass and get away unharmed under the hail of bullets which kept showering over the whole zone, no one could tell. But anyhow the liaison was restored and two companies of our battalion mounted a counter-offensive. Within thirty-five minutes, the two battalions of the enemy were routed strewing the vineyards which were razed to the ground with their corpses. Not a single pine-tree was left standing and everything was toppled over and altered. If you could but only see how our comrades attacked under fascist bullets shouting, «*Viva la vida!*»

Kristina fondled the letter with her small slender fingers and felt wonderfully strong. Now she realized where its charm lay. It ended with, «*viva la vida!*». That is why compañera Albanesa never got tired. She never gave up even when she had to face the hardest of tasks, even at the most critical moments. She stood by the bedside of the wounded and never tired of cleansing swollen wounds, wounds caused by fascist bullets. She recognized all kinds of bullets by the wounds she cleansed...

«Here, this is the Albanian,» Carmen said.

Kristina grew suddenly pale, because she recognized at once the dense dark hair of Dimo Orhani. She had always been proud of her fortitude.

No one could read in her face the beating and trembling of her heart. War is a stern school. And in spite of this, she could now hardly move her hands when she bent to feel his pulse; they suddenly failed her.

«He lives! he is alive!» she shouted with relief which was more of an attempt to convince herself, «he lives, he is alive, Carmen!»

«Your brother?» Carmen asked, because she could not understand what the Albanesa said in her mother tongue.

«Yes!» Kristina said, «He is my brother. Help me to prop him up!» Carmen knew that her compañera Albanesa was never perturbed so easily. And she was surprised when she saw hurry and impatience in her movements.

«Quick, quick!» Kristina said, this time greatly alarmed.

They carried Dimo directly to the operation hall.

Kristina had no time to wait for the result of the operation. She asked Carmen to please look after him and got into an ambulance car which was to take the wounded to the station.

Twilight was falling quite slowly this evening. Twilight was grey and wandered reluctantly over the troubled city. It was penetrating Kristina's heart together with the thought of the last night at Casa Roja. She had a light dress on. Her hands shook and she shivered time and again. But Kristina never gave herself up. The road from the hospital to the railway station was constantly busy.

Ambulance cars raced in and out with medical orderlies and doctors. Dimo was the last to be operated on in Casa Roja.

When she returned to fetch another group of wounded, she found Carmen at the landing. The young girl whispered almost inaudibly:

«The Albanesa has not yet been driven out of the operation hall».

«I know it, Carmen, I know it,» Kristina said.

Dimo was brought in from the Ebro, from the former river-bed, carrying with him the longing and sorrow of his fallen comrades.

In that night's bustling traffic from the hospital to the railway station, in that constant movement and hooting of ambulance cars, feverish agitation of doctors and sanitary workers, time seemed to have lost something, that it was in persistent search of something. Looking at Carmen's pretty face, Kristina's thoughts turned to the paths of peoples, apparently far apart but which suddenly cross as though out of predestination. And now Kristina could not imagine herself to be out of this turmoil, away from this hospital, this war. True, she had had to go through so many tests and trials until she came here on a passport procured by her comrades, but this had no special importance now. All those days she had walked the streets of Paris from one address to another breathlessly pushing her way through crowds of demonstrators, in search of Halim Xhelo and Gaston Bronn. But she had met Dimo Orhani instead. Dimo was one of

the first volunteers from Albania to hurry to Spain. Kristina had expected to find him in Madrid but there he was in Paris, close to her again as if they had never separated! Dimo introduced her to the doctors and nurses who would set out for Spain in a small boat and disappeared leaving no trace behind as if the earth had gulped him up. But no sooner had she landed at Port-Boué than she was told that an Albanian had been looking for her. This time she was certain that it was Dimo. They set out at once for Albacete where they met a number of Albanians of the International Brigades. And in no time they found themselves at Casa Roja.

During those years the threads of Kristina's life were entangled with the events on all the fronts where the Albanians fought.

Kristina smiled. In her waggon, Waggon N^o. 21 of the freight train, the Albanian volunteer would be looking after twenty-two heavily wounded fighters. No one of them could move. While Dimo!... This time, at the last shift, she would learn whether Dimo would be with her.

The big square in front of the railway station, which had been filled with wounded, was almost empty now. The hospital train, which would set out for Barcelona, was so crowded that one hardly believed it could carry this cargo, that it would be ever able to move on its rails.

Kristina looked smaller and slenderer than usual. But she had enough courage as to serve the

wounded without betraying her feelings on account of Dimo. She spoke to them in a calm voice. She told them she had come from far away, from Albania, to attend those sturdy boys from the five continents, from fifty three countries of the world, to help them return to the front healed.

It was a long night. Kristina carried all of them to the waggon, most of them on her shoulders. Dimo, uncle Fernandez, too. Dimo was unconscious. His life hung by a thread. Kristina shivered at the thought of it. She walked to and fro taking care of the wounded like a good mother and seeing to it that her patients felt no cold, hunger or hurt. She realized that the wounded and the sick are like real children who stand in need of good care, love and heart. She even tried a couple of jokes, in order to boost their morale during that tedious and risky travel. She herself had been brought up in poor circumstances. But the great hour of her life had come one day when she met the communists, her friends and comrades-in-arms.

«The hospital train bound for Barcelona!»

The speaker announced this in different languages in a plaintive voice as if pronouncing the farewell from Murcia: «Till we see you again, comrades!» Kristina sat by Dimo, cutting the bandage with a small pair of scissors while watching his movements with her heart in her mouth.

She could hardly wait to hear a word in her mother tongue. Only one word: «Well!». One who has been in foreign lands knows too well what it

means to hear a word in one's mother tongue, a precious and extremely beloved word. «They are alive! They are very well, Kristina...» the words came to her mechanically... «We wrote with our blood 'No pasaran!' on this land...» She would ask Dimo about all the Albanians fighting on the Ebro front. All had turned their eyes to the Ebro. The Ebro was the last stronghold.

«The train for Barcelona ready to start!»

The waggons started moving. And Kristina heard her comrades all striving with pain.

The train was racing into the night, with a protracted whistle, through Valencia, between the Mediterranean and the Ebro, to Barcelona.

Kristina held Dimo's hand gently and watched with deep emotion his protruding cheek-bones, his face which gave no sign of life whatsoever. His pulse was feeble. He was still sleeping under the narcosis. It was a pallid face, all his hair had turned grey. It sent a pang, a sharp pain to her heart to see it so changed. Uncle Fernandez was opposite them and saw well into her heart, for she could hardly refrain from giving vent to her feelings.

«Compañera Albanesa, don't despair!» he butted in as if he had read all her worries on her forehead. «Genuine communists like this Albanian young man will always shout 'Viva la vida!', won't they?»

«Yes, uncle Fernandez».

Except that Kristina wished to shout loud, at the top of her voice, so that all should hear: «Why go to Barcelona in the night, uncle Fernandez? A

lot of blood has been shed on this land. The departure is bitter, bitterer than the death itself...»

... The train panted through the night, winding its way towards Barcelona, towards the Ebro and the Mediterranean. The night was cloudy, but even clear nights filled with fluttering autumn leaves were similar on these hills. Carmen's gurgling voice was nowhere to be heard. The girl was in her waggon, and all the rainy night passed under the distant burring of the fighter planes of the «Condor» legion.

Kristina felt tired. She had spent sleepless nights and days. Now she seemed to have been used to that state of drowsiness, more awake than asleep, characteristic of all mothers who watch over every breathing of their young children. She would at once hear even the most imperceptible movement of Uncle Fernandez or Dimo.

In waggon N^o. 22 of the freight train they were singing:

*«Soldados: la patria
Nos llama a lid
Juremos por ella
Vencer o morir!»*

It was a long night. Kristina could not tell whether all hope within her had vanished. No, nothing had died within her. Except that she felt that somewhere the reptiles were closing on the bleeding land of Spain with their cold and sloth body in the darkness.

It was no longer an alien land.

«Soldados: la patria!»

The song was taken up by everybody in subdued voices. Comrades slept in the bosom of this land. In its warm bosom, near age-long olive-trees, evergreens, near the ruins of Bilbao and wounds of Guernica, which built up the confidence of the comrades from all the continents.

«Kristina!»

She bent over uncle Fernandez and adjusted the blankets over his shoulders.

«Kristina, do you hear it?» the old man asked under his breath. From quite a distance the gurgling noise of the Ebro reached them.

«Yes!» Kristina said.

Only then she noticed that uncle Fernandez was holding out a bouquet of flowers to her. She was delighted. She would offer to Dimo as soon as he woke up. She would keep the bouquet of flowers, which an old man had offered to her during that last night in their hurried run on along the paths of the battles and show it to her comrades. Kristina felt in the bottom of her heart that the moment was approaching. It seemed to her that all her life she had done nothing but bandaged wounds, cured the wounded, holding white flowers in her hand while battles raged everywhere.

«Compañera Albanesa, these flowers... the boys brought them for you,» uncle Fernandez said.

She could hardly find a word to thank him. But she did not find the time, either. No sooner had they left Valencia than the fascist planes began to bomb the train.

Kristina remained standing in the middle of the freight waggon as if wishing to take all the wounds upon herself, as if she wished to carry all the weight of their sufferings on her tender body. She knew too well that none of the wounded could move out of the waggon and then, more than ever, she felt that one's life could be centered on one single moment. She was well aware that she had lived up to this moment, this occasion, when her life, too, could be worth something, no matter how little.

She stood there, smiling, as she looked at each one in turn.

Outside, it was a real slaughterhouse. But Kristina did not suppress her smile. She did not want the wounded, who had fixed all their eyes on her, to read the truth in her face.

She was slim and delicate, but she was the only person on her feet in waggon N^o. 22 of the freight train and she seemed to stand there like an oak tree, with deep roots and lofty branches, as if wanting to attract upon itself all the thunder from the black sky. And then, all of a sudden, she was the first to take up the song: «Soldados, la

patria!». The others joined in as if hypnotized. Had a shell not interrupted uncle Fernandez's word, everything would have looked like a dream.

But uncle Fernandez kept bleeding. And Kristina, who had often watched Dr. Norman Bethune during critical moments in the forefront of the battle, took hold of uncle Fernandez and began to transfuse blood from her own. Everything was done at lightening speed. Kristina saw the old man's eyes fixed on her, his bulging eyes and his fast breathing.

The bouquet of tender flowers with their fresh petals floated on his blood.

The wounded were tense and silent.

Kristina held uncle Fernandez tight by her side. The blood of the young Albanese oozed on and on in silence. The wounded followed that oozing as if hypnotized by it. Dimo Orhani, who had just come to his senses, also watched that transfusion. Amazed by all this, he looked at each one in succession as if wishing to fix this occurrence in his mind forever...

THE FIGURE OF WOMAN IN THE FOLKSONGS OF THE GJIROKASTRA DISTRICT

An important place in the folksongs of Labëria is held by the image of woman who, at different moments of our history, from the past to the present, has been treated from different viewpoints. But she has always been sung to with love and respect.

In the light of our present reality, it is hard for us to imagine our mothers and grandmothers, all townswomen and girls leading a life of stifling seclusion within the four walls of the house, prohibited to cross the doorstep, having to spend a despairingly monotonous life, as slaves to their menfolk.

But as comrade Enver Hoxha said in his greeting to the students and teachers of the Secondary School «Asim Zeneli» on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its founding, in the songs «our grandmas and mothers have sung to their children from the cradle, they lament their own misery and oppression»:

*«On the bridge at Zerzibili
Darling daughter of Bakiri,
Your villain's bullet laid your low
'Cause you dared your face to show».*

These songs reveal the gross social injustice done to the Albanian women in the past. In songs and lamentations they speak of the:

*«Brittle as a grass blade,
Pure as a golden leaf,
Luckless girl ever in grief,
A life that's gone fade».*

A note of despair is especially felt in the songs which portray the girl who has been wedded against her will to a man of parent's choice:

*«I shan't go, oh, ma,
Mother mine, oh, ma!
You should go, or die,
'Cause my pledge I can't deny».*

Such obligations knew no age-limits; there were cases when the girl was only fifteen and the husband over 40 years of age, as the song has it:

*«Off in Vlora you married me,
I am young, oh, very young,
Sold me off to a man of forty,
I am young, oh, very young!»*

The folksongs treating the townswomen give a clear picture of their total lack of rights, but there are also a number of other songs in which the people extol the moral image of women. This is best portrayed in the songs in which the hero-

ines are peasant women who, on account of economic and other special factors, played an important role in the everyday life of the family and society. The former exclusive tendency of the agricultural economy of our country to live-stock raising, the constant absence of menfolk from home, because they were engaged in driving their flocks from summer pastures to winter shelters and vice-versa, or emigrated abroad, assisted the enhancement of the role of women in family matters and in society. The folk songs treating such themes represent women as sharers of the concerns of their menfolk, as their fellow fighters in the struggle for bread and freedom. The songs of the period when the Reforms of the Tanzimat were proclaimed by the Sublime Porte, make mention not only of the Albanian freedom fighter Gjoleka of Labëria, but also of the:

*«Kurvelesh of rock and stone,
Where women wield their swords alone».*

These songs show that, in spite of the heavy burden of the prejudices against them, women have forced their way undauntedly through events, determined to place their revolutionary abilities in the service of society. These qualities were further tempered and developed during the National Liberation War.

The image of the Albanian women comes out at its best in the songs composed during the most

glorious epoch of the history of our country, the National Liberation War, when the lofty patriotic traditions of our mothers were revived and their role increased in rearing and endowing their sons and daughters with the highest virtues which characterize our people, with patriotism and hatred of all foreign invaders, any internal and external enemy of our native land:

*«We brought you up in misery,
We fed you all on bread and brine,
Good council and advice gave we
To behave well in company.»*

These few lines sum up the sacrifice of the Albanian mothers, who in dire poverty, managed to rear their children and bring them up to be worthy of the traditions of their family and Homeland.

The folk poet speaks in highest terms of mothers who gave birth to brave sons and daughters, to freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the Homeland.

*«Mothers gave you birth to be
Makers of a new century,
Valiant men, cream of the brave,
Your young lives to the country you gave.»*

The active role of the Albanian mothers in the patriotic education of their children, urging them to take up arms, is clearly evident in the songs

devoted to the war against the Italian fascist invaders:

*«Mothers call: 'where're you sons?
Take up arms and shoot them down!
If you have no arms, no guns,
Take them from the wretched hound!».*

The bravery, and at the same time, patriotic spirit of our Labëria mothers are also evident in the songs to our martyrs, men and women. The mothers of the martyrs never bent, even before the pain caused by the death of their sons and daughters. When a Labëria mother learns that her son is killed in action for the freedom of the Homeland she says,

*«I came to lament by your side,
I dug your grave and wept and sighed,
I touched the spot where you had bled,
Where the bullet had pierced your head.»*

She finds strength enough to turn pain into a call for fiercer struggle to fight for the freedom of the country, to follow the example of her own son. Thus, when her second son is brought to her, riddled with machine-gun bullets, the Labëria mother does not shed tears, as could be expected, but stresses that to her the Homeland is dearer than her son:

*«'Tis no time for my son to weep,
From mourn and tear to vengeance comes,*

*Boys stand up, the fascist sweep!
Lest they kill more of our sons!»*

In these songs there is the expression of the pain felt at the loss and the joy of all the people for the major achievements made in our country. Let us recall these lines:

*«They were killed and they did well,
What they did has yielded fruit,
Everybody can now tell,
Communism has taken root».*

The treasure of our popular heritage contains a number of poems dedicated to the heroic deeds of our women fighters who, with their stand and abnegation during the war expressed, at the same time, their sentiments of revolt against the bitter past. The song devoted to martyr Bukurie Bazo runs as follows:

*«The heavy bonds of slavery,
The old chains of bigotry,
The misery and dire stress,
Fascism and all its dregs,
You stood up boldly to destroy!»*

In the songs devoted to the figure of the woman during the National Liberation War there is the popular poet's high esteem of girls who are no longer considered as inferior beings, as they were

looked upon in the past, but as co-fighters and comrades-in-arms sharing common ideals with the men.

*«Boys and girls, the cream of the country,
Take their orders all from the Party».*

The problem of the emancipation of women, the assessment of their equal contribution with their menfolk to political and social life, run like a red thread through the line of action of our Party. Comrade Enver Hoxha has clearly pointed out the fact that the Party has always abided by «the unalterable principle that the emancipation of the Albanian women is an urgent and primary condition in the struggle for the liberation of the people from all kinds of yokes».

In addition to ridding them of all feudal and bourgeois leftovers, the participation of women in production work helps them advance to a higher level of emancipation. This is reflected in the songs devoted to the complete emancipation of woman, which occupy an important place in the repertory of our new folklore.

*«Woe-begone we'll never be,
Ropes no more will strangle us,
Goddesses and Saint Mary
Will not darken our eyes!
No one dare order us about,
Go-betweens we shall drive out!
Our heads we'll never bend,
With menfolk we shall contend...»*

*With great joy work we shall,
March towards victories and do well!»*

This is, in general, a balance-sheet of the unprecedented achievements of the Albanian women, after the triumph of our people's revolution led by the Party of Labour, achievements which transformed also their inner world, lifting their consciousness to an undreamt of level.

These major achievements become more obvious when compared with the situation of the dark days of the ugly past. The bitterness over this past is a means for turning the Albanian women into enthusiastic participants in the socialist construction of our country. They sing with joy to the brilliant reality of the days they are enjoying at present:

*«At that time of slavery,
At that time of misery,
Twice the life of slaves we spent,
Lacking joy and merriment.
But the Party came along,
Gave us life and light and song».*

In the emigration songs which are sung to this day, women not only recall the dire economic situation of the past which forced their menfolk to the migration road and caused the breaking up of many families:

*«My soul and heart in a sad plight,
My husband's left me overnight,
Left me weeping day and night».*

or their revolt:

*«Where do you go! I wish you were dead!
Our joys of life we have not tasted yet!».*

but they sing also to the thorough-going transformations brought about in our countryside today, the mountain regions included. This is what the son writes today to his father in exile in a famous Zagoria song:

*«Foreign money we need no more,
We'll ne'er take migration's road».*

and further:

*«We are proud and so should you,
For old shackles have been removed.
Zagoria and everywhere
The fruits of our toil all bear!».*

Of the wide range of songs of deep-felt pathos, love and affection, devoted to comrade Enver Hoxha and his magnificent work for the benefit of the people, many are composed by women. In these songs, too, recollections of the dark past bring out in sharp contrast the brilliant historical reality of our country since the triumph of the socialist revolution:

*«Gone forever are the days,
Days of hardships and of pangs,
That is why our song displays
For Enver our deepest thanks».*

and further:

*«Where our menfolk are assigned
At the Party's clarion call,
We will never lag behind,
We the girls and women all».*

In the new folksongs we come across figures of emancipated women in the various stages of the socialist construction of the country, portrayed as worthy participants of the historical process of the last thirty five years of the Party which is, at the same time, the process of the development and complete emancipation of the Albanian woman.

They express women's confidence in their own forces and energies in this way:

*«Long may our mother Party live,
For championing our rights and claims,
A lot of service we can give
In running squads and work and all».*

These songs portray the rich inner world of our women, their political and social activity, the purity of their sentiments as mothers and champions of the new. These songs speak of our women's initiatives, of their massive heroism in coping with the hardest problems in new sectors of work:

*«I am tirelessly working
At the new knitting plant»,*

or:

*«A modest salesgirl am I.
I serve my people, I serve my nation,*

*Our Party's teachings I hold high,
I enjoy my life, my occupation».*

Contrary to the past, when girls dared not cross their doorsteps, or even pop their heads out of the «**portals under key**» or «**barred window cap-a-pie**», when they were humiliated and deprived of all possibility of displaying their true personality, married by force and made to renounce all the dreams of love and the happiness of their youth, our girls today are free to choose their mates:

*«Our brides today lead work brigades,
Our bridesmen vie with one another,
To persuade the best of maids,
To become their children's mother».*

Our songs sing with pride to the emancipation of our women — one of the highest achievements of our Party. Highest assessment of these achievements and further consolidation of their rights is expressed in Article 41 of the Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, which is immortalized in these significant lines of the popular poet:

*«Comrades, do let us sing a song
To article forty-one. . . .
Bless our Party for what you've done,
To bring us women to the fore,
To make our lives happier still,
Higher and higher climb we will».*

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