

Earthy and fascinating reading provided by the Selected Works of Enver Hoxha

(Book Review reprinted from The Bulletin of the New Albania Society).

It seems almost impertinent to attempt such a summary review of the first two volumes of the English translation of the Selected Works of Enver Hoxha. The material covered deals with the most important part of Albanian history - its independence from fascism and colonial exploitation and then the exciting road to socialist advance. Being written by the architect of much of Albania's revolutionary planning and its implementation it bears a special significance. Hoxha writes clearly and his exposition is always easy to follow. He also has a lovely habit of combining high Marxist analysis with the most down-to-earth remarks about people - Party cadres, bigwigs or humble people.

Volume 1 is divided into two parts, the first part dealing with Hoxha's many reports about the conduct of the national liberation war against fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Mobilising the peasantry, fighting the reactionary nationalists who were being backed by Britain and also trying to root out disruptive pseudo-revolutionaries who "parrot communist slogans" but are more dangerous than the overt enemy (p. 93). Hoxha's report to the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party in February 1943 is an important contribution for all those anxious to apply Marxism-Leninism to problems of national liberation.

The second part deals with the seizure of power and the establishment of the Democratic Government of Albania, later the People's Republic of Albania. For British readers, particular interest will surely lie in the way in which the Albanians had to fight the manoeuvres of British Imperialism and then Anglo-American Imperialism which used



military means and intrigue against the revolutionary forces. Later the debacle of the then Labour Government's attempt to force warships into Albanian waters, ships which sank after hitting mines placed by the fascist forces, are interesting side-shows to the main story of an infant socialist state having to fight enemies on all fronts, including the defection of an erstwhile ally, Yugoslavia, when the latter degenerated into an anti-communist, Trotskyite base for US imperialism. Hoxha's speech to Tirana activists in October 1948 is one of the fullest analyses of Tito's revisionism.

Volume 2 deals with the fascinating story of building socialism in a semi-feudal land and transforming "a backward agrarian country into an agrarian-industrial one" (p. 507) with industry as its base. Hoxha's Reports to the first and second Party Congresses in 1948 and 1952 are interesting accounts of socialist construction in all spheres of life - agriculture, industrialisation, education, culture. But what is more

remarkable than the plans for changing the very face of a tiny country into a modern thriving workers' state is the political prescience shown by Hoxha and the Albanian Party.

The Report made at the third Party Congress is particularly good on this and not surprising, as it came shortly after the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU where Khrushchev and his fellow renegades had begun the process of dismantling the Bolshevik state erected by Lenin and Stalin. Ideas which today have received much prominence because of the proletarian cultural revolution initiated in China by Mao in 1966 were being discussed by Enver in these early days - the need to revitalise the Party, get rid of its bad features such as bureaucratisation, all kinds of personal weaknesses of cadres, the need to forge links between the masses and the Party by making leaders give up their comfortable jobs and do the hard tasks in the countryside, the need to develop socialist consciousness and ideals through socialist and not capitalist emulation among workers and the peasantry.

Reading Hoxha enables one to realise why Albania did not follow the road of its east European neighbours, which today are in the morass of revisionism and firmly in Russia's clutches. Hoxha can take much of the credit for saving Albania from such a fate. It is therefore no surprise to find that it was he who took up the challenge of Russia's defection from Marxism and made that brave and brilliant speech attacking Khrushchevite revisionism right in the lion's den, in Moscow during the World Conference of Communist Parties, 1960.

(Vols 1 and 2 of Enver Hoxha's Selected Works are available from the Bellman Bookshop).