Siliqi, Llazar.

POEM FOR THE ALBANIAN WOMAN

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THIS NEW photographic album describes a part of the struggle and the results attained by the women of Albania during these recent years. We see every step taken, every height climbed as closely connected with our history and that of our people, with the road which we traversed and victories lying in store for us. Years will roll on, our women will reach new heights in all the fields of life but they will never forget where they started from, their dismal past and their position of bondage and inferiority. Therefore, we like to draw comparisons, for only in this way can we get a better grasp of our revolution.

The history of the Albanian woman, her transformation into a progressive revolutionary force, constitutes a whole epoch of magnificence and stupendous efforts not only for the present but also for the future of our country. Never, not even during her gloomiest past, has the Albanian woman lacked her spirit of combativeness, of creativeness, her mental and physical abilities, her sentiment of heroism and self-denial.

Darkness was a woman's lot in a society composed of antagonistic classes. She was twice enslaved, twice looked down upon and oppressed. The barbarous feudal, capitalistic and patriarchal laws degraded and suppressed her noble and tender magnanimous spirit, her wonderful capacity for social activities. She was born with a dream, inherited a dream and died with the same dream.

But the day dawned for her age-long dream to become reality. She asserted herself and gave full play to her qualities only during the glorious national-liberation struggle, only when the people's revolution triumphed under the guidance of the Albanian Communist Party, now the Party of Labour of Albania, which inscribed on her banner the fight against all kinds of oppression and exploitation. Albanian woman took active part in this struggle. By setting examples of high heroism and abnegation she cemented the foundations of freedom with her own life and blood. In direct clashes with the invaders and traitors to the country, she won a high sense of ideological and political consciousness. This struggle brought

THE DAY DAWNED FOR AN AGE-LONG DREAM TO BECOME REALITY

about not only the liberation of the country but also that of woman. Thus, one of the greatest and most important victories which our people are proud of during this quarter of a century is also the radical change brought about in the position and role of the women in our society.

We can get a glimpse of this position of her important role in all the life of the country also through the pages of this album. During these 28 years of free life in Albania, the Albanian woman has effected a great revolution passing through historical stages. Albania today is one of the few countries in the world to have solved the problem of the total participation of women in socially productive work. We have thus harmonized in the best way the functions of women as mothers and as workers, leaving many countries of the world behind in this respect. Economic independence is one of the greatest achievements of the Albanian woman. Viewing this as closely connected with the interests of the people and the revolution, with her own interests and with the ideological victory of the woman's equality with man, she is now successfully militating in all the spheres of life. Today, she has become such a big force that no progress can be made, no great political, economic and social mass actions can be undertaken without her active participation.

Not only as half of the population but also as half of the productive forces she has affixed her seal everywhere to the socialist construction of the country. Anyone who goes through Albania today finds the woman engaged in the various sectors beginning from food-processing, textile, machine-making industries, public health service, education, etc., to scientific experimentation, creative literary and artistic activities. One will find her also in modern establishments and factories making use of automatic equipment and highly up-to-date technique.

The complete emancipation of woman is one of the deepest and most complicated revolutions covering a whole historical epoch. The struggle which the Albanian woman is actually conducting in order to win in practice the rights accorded to her by law is an integral part of the deepening of the revolution on the ideological front. Without this victory, without the complete emancipation of woman, without her struggle and the struggle of the people as a whole to get rid of feudal, patriarchal and bourgeois habits and customs weighing heavy upon her, the triumph of the revolution is not assured. It is precisely for this that all the people in our country today have embarked in carrying out the decisions of the Party of Labour of Albania and the programmatic speeches of the leader of the Party and of the people, Comrade Enver Hoxha, in order to ensure the full equality of women with men at work, in society and in the family. To be seen also in the pages of this album is evidence of this struggle, of this class storm which wiped out all habits and customs that degraded the woman, that lowered her dignity, that made others doubt her abilities, that intended to keep her under the bondage of man. It is a difficult struggle waged not against an open enemy, but against a hidden one. It is a battle against one's own conscience, against the one who loves you, but fails to understand you because the venom of the past is still alive in his innermost. In this struggle waged for the triumph of the proletarian ideology against age-long prejudices and norms which are stronger than the written laws, the Albanian woman is demonstrating a high degree of consciousness and maturity. Guided by the Party of Labour of Albania she marches at the forefront of the battle for her complete emancipation.

In this struggle she is witnessing day in day out how the last bulwarks of the feudal bastion are being razed to the ground. She feels that she is being tempered every day as a new woman, endowed with great personality at work, in society and in the family.

Elena Kadare

Writer

POEM FOR THE ALBANIAN WOMAN

Today, this woman is happy. Probably because her first-born was enrolled in school, or because she herself has passed the first examination of the part-time university course, or perhaps because she and her family have just moved into a new apartment house, or because she has received a lovely letter from her companions of the mountain village where she helped as a volunteer in the installation of electric lights.

But she is cheerful, she feels happy first and foremost because she lives and works in her free socialist Fatherland, because our Party of Labour has opened up all the avenues of life to the Albanian woman.

This Albanian woman feels happy. This album reflects her happiness. This is a poem for the Albanian woman, a poem for the women workers, peasants and intellectuals of revolutionary Albania.

The sentiments of real love burst forth in all their grandeur when the esteemed leader of our Party and people, the champion of our rights, our wise teacher Comrade Enver Hoxha is in our midst.

Years of an unbearable life under patriarchal laws weigh heavy on this aged mountain woman. The rapid revolutionization of the life of the country has turned her into a merciless denouncer of the old.

Through their own efforts these mountain girls have merited the beautiful and inspiring title of "fighters for the new".

We have flung away for all time the black veil which prevented the sun's rays from shining on our faces.

We will never again bow our heads.

Is there a work front in the country in which the Albanian woman does not take part? . . .

You find her participating in the campaign for light, which led to the complete electrification of Albania 16 years ahead of schedule . . .

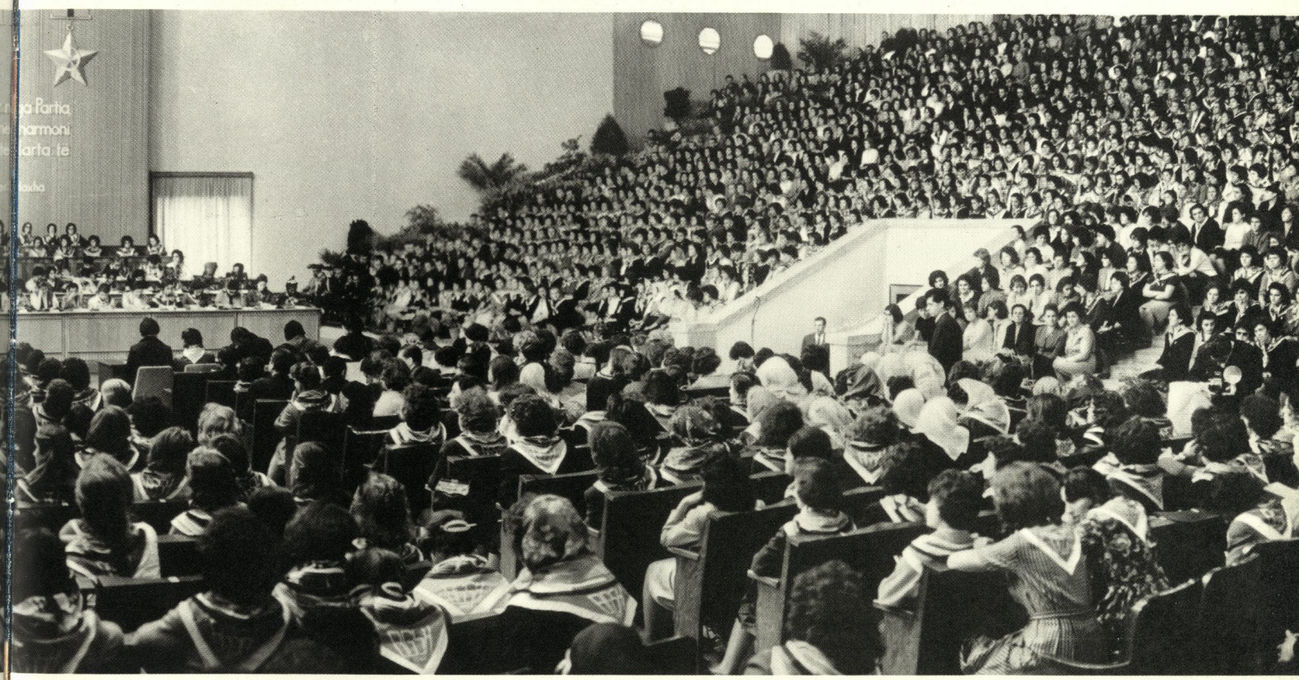
You find her bringing new life to idle hills, turning barren into fertile land . . .

You find her wearing the kerchief of a volunteer worker, cheerful and happy, or cementing the foundations of the Republic . . .

You find the Albanian woman among the ranks of vanguard fighters for the technical and scientific revolution. She has become an inseparable part of the new industrial aspect of Albania . . .

She has become an integral part of the new aspect of the revived socialist countryside.

The woman of new Albania is a builder and a mother, she gives birth to and knows how to protect life just as the 6,000 women and girls who fought with rifle in hand in the ranks of the glorious National-liberation Army against the nazi-fascist invaders.



Our militant organization — the Women's Union of Albania — counts 400,000 women members in its ranks.

We, the women of Albania, never forget the fiery days of our 6th Congress, the inspiring speech by the President of the General Council of the Women's Union of Albania, Comrade Vito Kapo.

Our principal motto in the struggle for the complete emancipation is and will remain Comrade Enver Hoxha's pronouncements which we wrote in big letters on the platform of the Congress: "The emancipation of woman in our country, led by the Party, is a shoulder to shoulder march of man and woman in a harmony of purest and highest sentiments, aims and ideals of humanity; it is a march towards communism."

We followed with keen attention the speech delivered by our comrade Nexhmije Hoxha, member of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, a pioneer of the revolutionary movement of the women in Albania.

Hand in hand at the Vau i Dejës worksite where work on a giant project for light was being completed, the giant hydro - electric power station on the Drini River . . .

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Hand in hand at the depths where crude oil is being extracted.

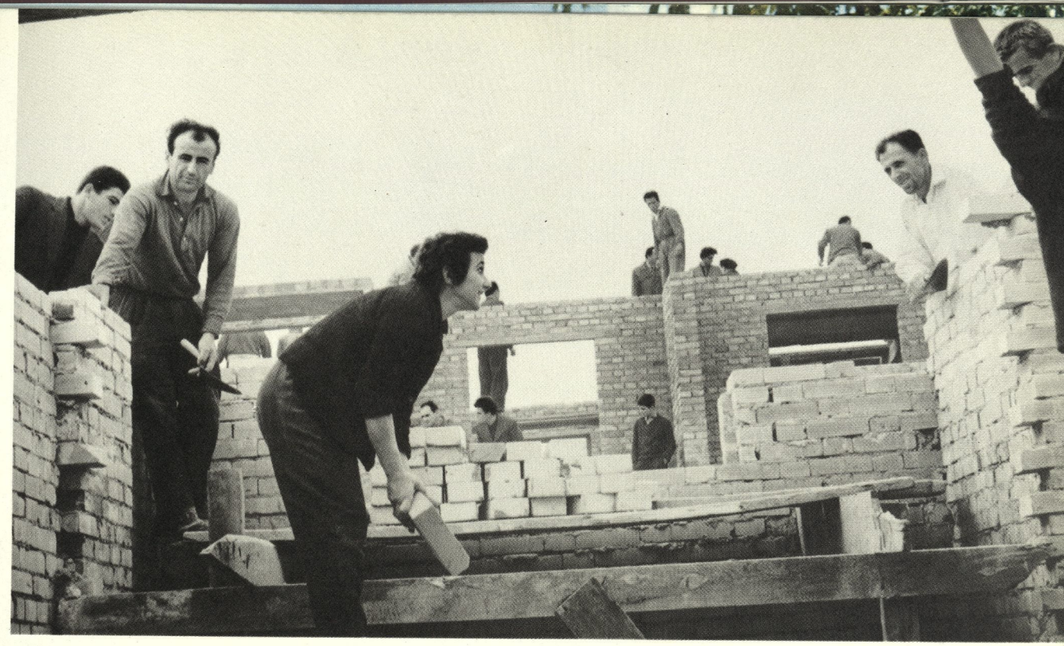
Hand in hand at our higher institutes of learning which were first set up during the years of People's Power.

This is our last photo, a souvenir of the end of studies.

— Fatherland! We are prepared to go wherever you need our services. The whole of Albania is our home!

We work and attend school side by side with our male comrades. In the part-time schools of the country we, the women, make up more than 33 per cent of the student body while in the full-time schools female pupils and students constitute 47 per cent of the total. Today, one in every 3.7 of the female population attends school.

We, men and women, work side by side building voluntary contribution dwelling houses. We have pulled down the barred windows which kept the light out and hid the horizon from our view. We think and work not only for ourselves but for society as a whole. "One for all and all for one."



We, men and women, go to and come from work together. Today, more than 40 per cent of the working class is made up of us, the emancipated Albanian women, who have spared no efforts at whatever job we have tackled. And we lay out the pickets for future buildings side by side with our menfolk.

We hold our future in our own hands. Old backward traditions and customs considered love a shameful thing. Today, we choose our life companions ourselves. We are fighters for the new.

This is one of our young comrades. Her name is Themie Thoma. She runs a big agricultural cooperative at Këmishtaj, Lushnja district. For her merits Themie has been awarded the high title of Heroine of Socialist Work.

The day when our most beloved comrade Enver Hoxha visited our agricultural cooperative at Laknas, in the Tirana district, we, the women cooperative members, felt very happy indeed.

The parents of this woman were peasants who lived in the Myzeqeja swamps, suffering from want and afflicted with malaria. Now, their daughter, Naunka Bozo, is the secretary of the Party Regional Committee in Fieri, her fellow peasants have elected her their representative to the People's Assembly, and the women of Albania have chosen her Deputy-President of their organization, the Women's Union of Albania.

Shpresa Kseno is now a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania and assistant-rector of the State University of Tirana.

Engineer Fahrije Saliçaj began her career in the capital as a plain worker in our first textile mill and today, she is its Directress and a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania.

◀ At another textile mill in Berat, a petite but hard-working young woman worker Marianthi Lakra made a name for herself. It is her devotion to work, the only mainspring of happiness in free Albania, and her wide participation in social activities which are responsible for her election as a representative to the People's Assembly in September 1970.

The Directress of the Knitting Works in Korça, our comrade Dhora Konomi, was also elected a representative to the People's Assembly. Women who, before liberation, enjoyed not even the right to vote, enjoy it today as early as at 18 years of age and occupy 27.2 per cent of the seats in the People's Assembly and 45.8 per cent of the seats at the People's Councils of all levels.

Elected to the People's Assembly is also the Heroine of Socialist Work, our gifted ballet dancer Zoica Haxho.

Our socialist Fatherland is the object of our love, of our most cherished song.

Yonder are the mountains, the unconquerable fortresses of Albania where our unforgettable partisan women-comrades fought and laid down their lives for the freedom and new life we enjoy today.

And our epic mountains are reflected on our lakes which captivate one with their unmatched picturesqueness and exuberance of lyricism.

Our capital Tirana which grows younger and younger with each passing day, and the ancient city of Butrinti.

Our Fatherland is old and young.

Old and eternally young are our folksongs and dances.

Albania is the homeland of brave men and brave women whose bones rest now in mausoleums after bloody encounters.

Albania is the homeland of new heroes and heroines who worked and laid down their lives in the struggle to build socialism like the unforgettable Shkurte Pal Vata and to whom our people have raised monuments as a token of their love and gratitude.

This woman is the brave fighter Melo Xhango, one of the living exponents of the magnificent epic of the National-liberation War who continue to march side by side with the younger generation.

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And the image of the Albanian woman with the partisan red star on her cap remains immortal through the generations as it is perpetuated in songs and works of art.

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While sharing the joy of the new Albanian mother, we can't help turning our thought to the tragic tableau of misery of the days gone by which our revolutionary poet, Migjeni, described for us as "a sick baby wailing as an elf child sucking at its mother's barren breast".

At the charming twilight which lures one to poetry, we often speak of the happy life of our younger generation which are brought up free and healthy.

Today, the working class gives the tone to the whole life of the country. Thirty-five per cent of the workers engaged in the machine-making industry, 62 per cent of those in the food-processing industry and 82 per cent in the textile industry are women.

We are also building workers. With our own hands we build new towns where marshes and wastelands used to lie.

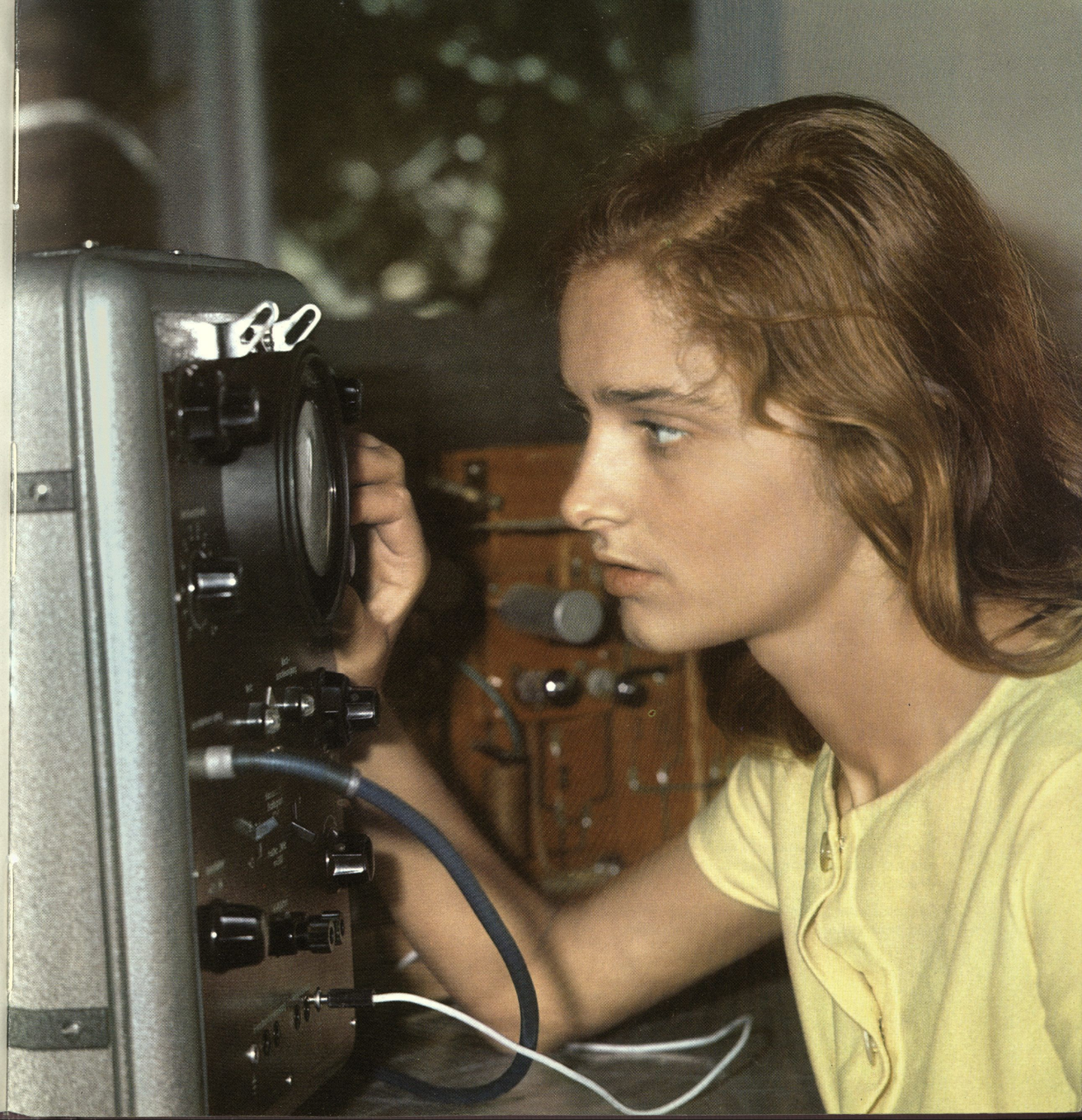
And a wonderful revolutionary initiative sprang up in our country for the purpose of building houses, and whole blocks of them, by voluntary work. This was undertaken during the days of natural calamity, heroism and solidarity of the people in the Dibra and Librazhd districts hit by a powerful earthquake in the winter of 1967. Old and young poured in from all the districts of Albania to help repair the damage. Our leader Comrade Enver Hoxha was among them in those days.

Our people's Government came to the aid of the damaged districts. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Comrade Mehmet Shehu, was also among the people mobilized to erase the consequences of the earthquake.

We, the women of new Albania, work wherever our hands and brains are called for.

At the post and telegraph office we feel glad to receive and transmit good news.

And our words of revolutionary friendship reach every corner of the world through Radio Tirana where we are also employed as engineers and speakers. What news shall we broadcast today? . . . Why not tell them that Albania has become the first country in the world in which the population is exempt from all taxes and imposts! ▶



Revolutionary friendship with our Chinese sisters, glorious front-line fighters against exploitation and bondage, against imperialist-revisionist dupery and demagogy, for real solidarity and unity.

Revolutionary friendship with our Vietnamese sisters who fight with heroism and rear generations of heroic fighters!

Revolutionary friendship with the women of Asia, Africa and Latin America, with all the women of the world who love freedom and progress!

Our organization of the Women's Union of Albania maintains relations with the organizations and sections of the women in 47 countries of the world.

During our visits to other countries or our meetings with the delegates of foreign revolutionary organizations in our country, we have striven and continue to strive to maintain a real militant friendship.

The women of Europe are not in need of illusions but are for a clear-cut program of revolutionary struggle. This basic opinion was expressed by the foreign delegates at our 6th Congress.

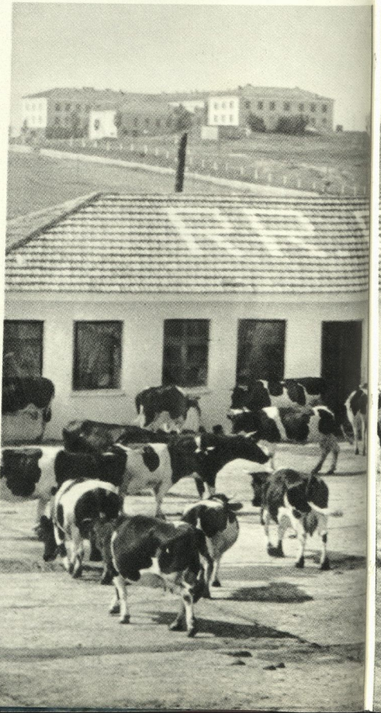
At our rallies of solidarity our cry is: We are with you comrades from the Arab countries, with you in your struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism, against the intrigues of the imperialists, Zionists and revisionists. We are against imperialism under whatever colour or shape it may appear.

Albania of the former ox-driven wagons has yielded its place to Albania of the new and fast trains.

Albania of the former straw-thatched huts has yielded its place to Albania of bold projects.

Albania of the wooden plough has yielded its place to Albania of the tractor and advanced agriculture.

We, the Albanian women, make up 41.9 per cent of the workers of the countryside. We are engaged in farming and in animal husbandry but we do not shelter the animals in dark basements which used to be called "the cows' cells". In animal husbandry also we are fighters for the new. We strive today for modern methods in animal husbandry.



Many of us are engaged in public health service, making up 71.7 per cent of all the workers in that sector. And there is need for more of us because in Albania medical service is given free of charge for all the population. We look after the people's health from the day of their birth to their old age.

On our workdays we leave our babies to the loving care of wardens and educators.

Let the eloquency of figures come to our aid!

In 1970 the number of kindergartens (apart from those of the agricultural cooperatives) reached the 1,760 mark as against 928 in 1969; the number of beds in nurseries in towns and work centers increased 68 per cent above that of 1966, whereas in our agricultural cooperatives the number of nurseries reached the 1,900 mark as against 400 in 1967.

In order to lighten the work of our housewives the number of modern public laundry houses is being increased both in towns and in villages.

The new apartment houses built during the years of People's Power make housework easier and family life more comfortable. Monthly rents too are no more than a day's wages of a worker.

Instruction in schools, just as medical service, is given free of charge in Albania. In our country, where children used to be brought up generation after generation illiterate, there has been established compulsory 8th-grade schooling. And 49.6 per cent of the teachers and pedagogues are women.

These young mountain girls will always remember their young teacher who had come from the city on her own free will. What will they become? Tractor drivers, dairy maids, electricians — or they may continue their studies in our higher institutes of learning. . .

The young women from our cooperative and from the work centers, the young women of the people, can take up any job they like.

These girls will become fighters for the new in the difficult but noble domain of art.

And our art will always reflect life. In our works of art we will often see our contemporaries — geologists who collect precious ores from the Albanian soil instead of dowries for their coffers, or the cooperative members of the newly electrified countryside.

And the working woman, the young generation of Albania, will always be sung in our songs and immortalized in our works of art.

This painting portrays unity of purpose and a wide horizon, a lot of revolutionary optimism and romanticism.

And our art will always reflect life. In our works of art we will often see our contemporaries — geologists who collect precious ores from the Albanian soil instead of dowries for their coffers, or the cooperative members of the newly electrified countryside.

These portraits of the working women depict a lot of love and legitimate pride in work, a strong determination to protect the new and free life from exploitation and prejudices.

Lumturi Dhrami, one of the phalanx of our revolutionary artists. Through the cycle of her engravings, this artist, a winner of the Prize of the Republic, has become a chronicler of the glorious road of the Albanian woman.

◀

The daughters of the people can take up any job.

Eleni Selenica has been elected to the post of Assistant President of the High Court of Justice of the People's Republic of Albania.

Elena Kadare is a writer. She is the author of the first novel written by an Albanian woman.

Mimika Luca, the actress of the People's Theater in the capital is the author and interpreter of her drama "Drita" dedicated to the campaign to cleanse the mind of people of all petty bourgeois remnants.

While this woman is architect Nadja Filipeu. ▶

The ballet troupe of the Tirana Opera House immortalized on the stage "Daughter of the Highlands", a commissary of light which marches through the revived homeland as a symbol of the eagle-eyed fighters for the triumph of the revolutionary new.

The two Gjirokastra heroines, Bule Naipi and Persefoni Kokëdhima, whom the nazi hanged in 1944, dedicated their life to the revolution. Their unforgotten images were reproduced on the Albanian film "Triumph over Death" by Edi Luarasi and Eglantina Kume.

The women are widely represented at the May Musical Decade held each year in Tirana under the motto "Hold High the Revolutionary Spirit".

As in all the domains of life, our working women stand at the forefront of art too. Fifty per cent of the amateur artists of the Republic are women.

The peasant singer with the microphone in her hand is a component part of the physiognomy of flourishing Albania.

A detail of Albania in the outburst of its energies are also these young sportswomen in a country where only a quarter of a century ago the women covered their faces with veils.

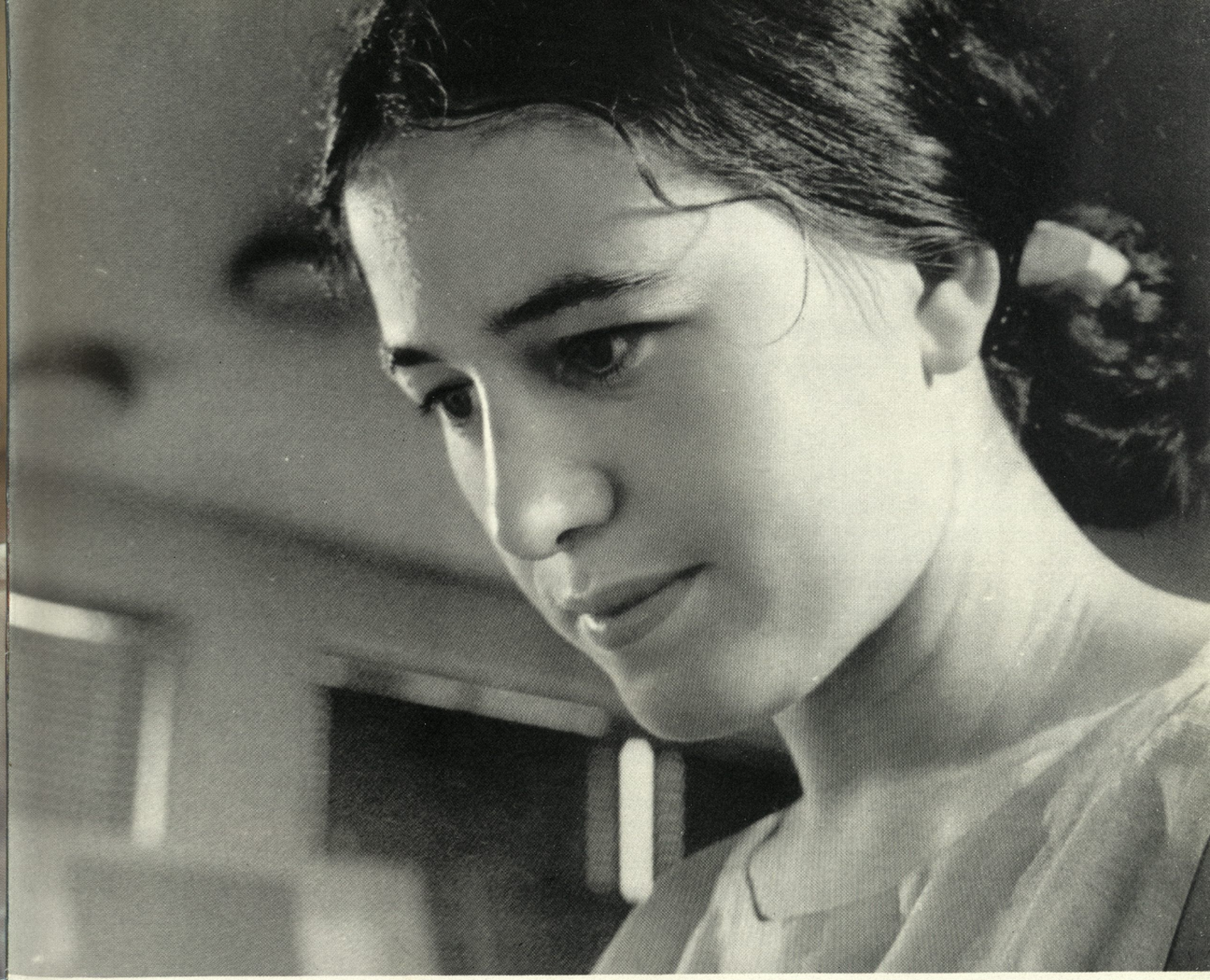
This is athlete Marieta Pronjari, who in all athletic meets has proved to be one of the best athletes of the Republic. In high jump she has reached international records.

Our sportswomen have held their ground also at the international contests in marksmanship. For the rifle has always been in the hands of the Albanian men and Albanian women.

Our revolutionary motto "the pick in one hand and the rifle in the other" dates back to the glorious time of Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg when, as a chronicler of the 15th century testifies, the Albanians held the plough fast in one hand and brandished the sword in the other.

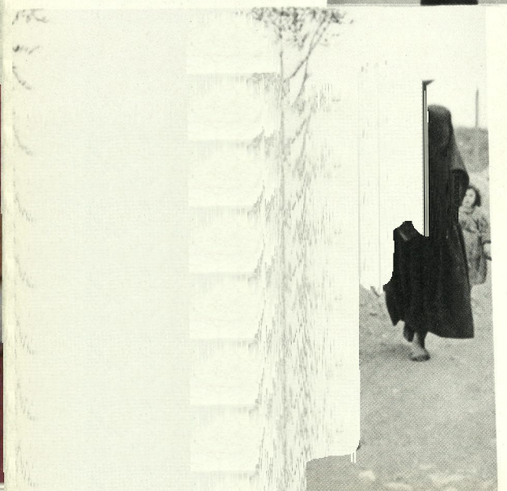
We are workers, farmers or artists, but we are also fighters, soldiers and officers of a people of soldiers!

Work, as well as the defence of the Fatherland is for us a joy, a prestige and honour. We are aware that through work we achieve economic independence and real equality with men, at work we assert our personality and acquire our revolutionary world outlook.



For us work has become a poem. And every comparison in this poem with the lot of our mothers and grandmothers who toiled and drudged with very minor results has become a very distant one now that we have embarked on the five-year (1971-1975) plan.

◀ We, the young women workers, peasants and intellectuals of new Albania are doing better and going ahead because our road is blazed by the red light of our Party of Labour.



The time is far away when darkness was woman's lot, when man deemed it a shame to call his wife by her name, when woman was a household chattel, a slave, to toil and give birth to children.

Years roll on. With the new five-year plan, Albania entered the 27th year of its free life, the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Party of Labour of Albania.

Younger generations will always grow up and the Party bugle will repeatedly call them to the glorious path of mass actions.

. . . and the emancipated Albanian woman will steer the helm of life with an ever steadier hand.

We, the women of Albania, will always fight for the new as we have promised our beloved teacher and leader Comrade Enver Hoxha.

LAVDI P P SH

We are happy and proud.
The Albanian woman has become today one of the symbols of new Albania,
Always surrounded by flowers,
With her face eternally towards the sun,
With her banner always aloft, held fast in her hand!

TEXT by LLAZAR SILIQI (writer)
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