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The people of Albania have been duped on a massive scale; they swallowed the lie of democracy and the confidence trick of the free market. Now people who had next to nothing, have absolutely nothing. Albania is one of Europe's poorest countries despite having natural resources that could be the envy of other peoples: petroleum, mineral ores, temperate climate and fertile land. The new 'democratic' rulers have used the state apparatus in order to get as rich as possible as quick as possible. As the poorest ruling elite in Europe they had to be the least scrupulous.

Instead of the legal drugs (alcohol and nicotine) and legitimate trade they are happy to team up with Mafiosi in selling heroin and smuggling desperate migrants into Italy. They set up short term scams instead of the longer haul Western banking methods of wage slavery and debt.

Robbed of what little they have and staring at a hopeless future, Albanian workers vent their anger on what representatives of the state they can find, mostly pasty faced young police conscripts. Even if they broke through them and the army to confront the criminal clique who make up the governing 'Democratic Party' (allied to the Conservative Party via

the European Democratic Union) they would still be missing the true perpetrators that hide in the board rooms of Frankfurt and London. This regime has been propped up by the overseas aid budget of the European Union. The West backed the new regime wholeheartedly. Albania was needed as a buffer state in the Balkans, between the splintering Yugoslavia and Greece. Berisha agreed to let NATO use Albania as a base for operations into ex-Yugoslavia and agreed to backdown over previous support for the Albanian population of Kossovo province in Serbia. The US supervised the purge of the Albanian military high command and the reduction of the armed forces by two thirds. Now, America, frightened by the increasingly insurrectionary situation is telling Berisha to back off and to open talks with opposition parties. These opposition parties will attempt to hijack the insurrection. The Socialist Party (Hoxha's Party of Labour under a new name) has expressed willingness to take part in this fix and be a "loyal party of opposition".

Our own dear Queen was presented with a silver box from President Sali Berisha and Baroness Chalker and looks charming in a silver necklace and matching belt that were looted from Albania's museums and illegally imported into Britain. After all, laws are only for ordinary people.

The banks that have collapsed after promising the Earth were part of a money laundering scheme for various organised crime gangs. The paltry sums sent home by Albania's thousands of emigrants were collected together to make a tidy sum and then shared out between corrupt officials and hoods, who are in fact the same people, and the people now face ruin. Many sold their homes to 'invest'. Some 80,000 people were thrown into complete poverty. This is not an aberration of history; it is how ruling elites gain the wealth and power that after generations become 'respectable'. Albania is remarkable because it is on the continent of Europe. Bokassa, Amin or Hussein are just a little further away from our Eurocentric consciousness. The English ruling class is insulated from its

criminal past by centuries of privilege. Anarchists recognise that capital is only obtained through dispossession, plunder and exploitation.

When the Albanian workers overthrew the remnants of the Stalinist police state they believed in a Voice Of America, MTV and Big Mac future, but the wealth comes from grinding the poor, not liberating them. The market was to be the economic miracle that would spring them from the trap of dependency on the all incorporating state. Like workers across the old 'Marxist' states have found, capitalism is not worker friendly.

The present clutch of vipers in Tirana were functionaries of the old Stalinist Hoxha regime. They converted as quickly to the free market as Hoxha had converted from Moscow to Belgrade to Beijing as it suited his short term need to keep in power. There is no principle in government. The clique who have controlled things for so long have never had much use for the economic insights of a nineteenth century social scientist. Anarchists have always recognised that the strongest element of 'Marxist' doctrine is perpetuating their regime regardless of consequence.

The rioting Albanian workers are like a smith heating iron till it burns in the fire instead of forging the metal into a useful implement. They are working without a vision of a new society, only rage at the present chaos.

The apologists for capitalism wring their hands and declare that 'Albania is sinking into anarchy' blaming the particularly corrupt nature of Albania's rulers for producing chaos. Anarchist Communists are sickened by the dissimulation of using 'anarchy' as meaning chaos. The contradiction does not miss us, it is through leadership that Albania has been reduced to chaos.

The peoples of the Balkans have a history of authoritarian domination from invading imperialists and home grown tyrants alike. The present crisis has its roots in the Congress of Berlin in 1878 when the imperial powers carved up the

world. Albania was given to the Ottoman Empire. Albania has been bled by foreign masters for most of the last thousand years. It has suffered under Byzantine, Serbian, Ottoman and Italian domination and domestic tyrants like Ahmed Zogu ('King' Zog) and Enver Hoxha.

Royalist leaders have failed Albanians, 'Marxist' leaders have failed them, 'democratic' leaders have failed them, leadership is bankrupt. If we were to believe those comrades who worship the 'revolutionary spontaneity' of the working class we would be greatly optimistic for the Albanian people. Surely now they can create the new society from the ashes of collapsing capitalism. But, as anarchist communists, we fear that the crucial ingredient is missing- revolutionary consciousness.

The Albanian people have been denied information of all types, kept in ignorance for generations and refused the opportunity to make even the most basic decisions about their lives or environments. Intellectual ammunition is needed to transform protest into revolution.

The tragedy of the Albanian working class will most probably take another twist when some new saviour comes along on a white charger. The international boss class will probably fund some renewal movement- authoritarians fear a power vacuum. It will give an alternative source of funding to the gangsters so they can transform themselves into 'statesmen'- they hope that somehow enough people will suspend disbelief long enough to be duped again. The Albanian working masses have to reject both the "Democratic" Party and the "Socialist" Party. For an alternative scenario read ACE pamphlets "As We See It" and "The Role Of The Revolutionary Organisation" (sorry, no Albanian translation is available as yet).