

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ALBANIA — ORGANIZER AND LEADER OF THE WAR FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE COUNTRY AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S POWER

(1941-1944)

1. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY. ATTEMPTS TO UNITE AND MOBILIZE THE MASSES IN THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION WAR.

The Party had to cope with very great difficulties and obstacles in order to accomplish its historic tasks.

From the communist groups, from which it had originated, the Party inherited very weak connections with the masses. Throughout the country savage terror reigned. The Italian armed forces, maintaining the occupation regime in Albania, reached nearly 100 thousand men. In December 1941, «strong man»

Mustafa Kruja, a lackey and inveterate agent of fascism, was placed at the head of the Quisling government, in order to crush the communist organizations and to subjugate the Albanian people. The work of the Party was impeded by the fifth column and the «Zjarri» chiefs, who had passed over to the service of the aggressors, as well as by other enemies. Under these circumstances, all Party activity had to be carried out by clandestine methods.

To prosecute the armed struggle, the Party needed weapons, financial means, and military cadres.

As a newly set up Party, it had insufficient experience of political leadership, its members lacking a thorough and extensive theoretical preparation.

However, all these obstacles and difficulties, of which the Central Committee and all the Albanian communists were fully aware, did not prevent the Party from pushing ahead courageously. It did not make the mistake of waiting to first prepare the cadres, to find arms and money, to accumulate experience, to strengthen itself theoretically and only then to start the work and the war. All this had to be acquired in the course of fighting, by relying on the revolutionary situation created within the country, on the lofty patriotism of the people, on the loyalty of the Albanian communists to Marxism-Leninism and the cause of communism in general. Its confidence

in the victory of the World antifascist forces and, in the first place, in the victory of the Soviet Union over fascism, further strengthened the Party's conviction that it would succeed in carrying out its tasks.

First Organizational Measures The most pressing task was to organize the Party. All the members of the Provisional CC were dispatched to various districts in order to set up new Party cells, to organize Party conferences, and to form district Party committees. Some 200 communists were chosen from the members of the former communist groups and admitted to membership of the cells. Eight district committees were set up. The majority of them emerged from Party conferences. In the cells and at the conferences, the communists vigorously supported the fusion of groups and the welding of them into a single Albanian communist party, which they had long demanded. They approved the political line of the Party laid down at the Meeting of the Communist Groups, and expressed their determination to fight unreservedly under the guidance of the Provisional Central Committee.

Almost all the early cells were organized in the towns. The first members of the Party were mainly workers, artisans and intellectuals. Close to each Party cell there was set up an educational group of militants loyal

to the cause of the people and socialism who, it was thought, might eventually become Party members. Groups of sympathizers also were organized.

The organization of the Party was almost completed in January 1942.

Within this period, the Provisional Central Committee also took measures for the creation of the Albanian Communist Youth Organization, which was founded on November 23, 1941, by young militant communists attached to communist groups. Qemal Stafa, member of the Central Committee of the Party, was chosen as Political Secretary of the Communist Youth Organization. Under the direct supervision of the Central Committee and of Comrade Enver Hoxha personally, the Communist Youth Organization was built on Marxist-Leninist foundations. It was assigned the task of becoming the surest and the most powerful assistant of the CPA for the education of the broad masses of the Albanian youth in the spirit of patriotism and with communist ideas, for the mobilization of these masses in the antifascist liberation war. The Albanian youth was an inexhaustible source of revolutionary energy. The Party regarded them as the greatest source of the most active anti-fascist revolutionary forces. Replying to the salute addressed by the Communist Youth Organisation on the occasion of its founding to the Central Committee of the CPA, Comrade Enver Hoxha wrote:

«The Party cherishes the greatest hopes that the Albanian Communist Youth will be worthy of the trust our young Party has placed in them and that they will know how to carry out the lefty task they have been assigned to in a revolutionary manner... in steel-like unity of mind and of heart with the Party, to organize and to lead the enslaved Albanian youth in a revolutionary manner toward their bright future, toward their liberation from the mediaeval chains of fascist bondage and toward a new life of progress, culture and joy». ¹⁾)

For the ideological advancement of the Party members and of the young communists, the study of the history of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the Soviet Union and of the fundamental problems of Marxism-Leninism was organized in Party cells, in the educational groups, the sympathizers groups and among activists of the communist youth.

The Foremost Task: Along with the work
Linking up with the to lay and strengthen
Masses its organizational and
ideological foundations,
the Communist Party of Albania did its utmost
to link up with the masses and to convince

1) Principal Documents of the PLA, vol. I, p. 29.

them of the correctness of its political line. It placed this task in the forefront, as the key to solving the problem of uniting and mobilizing the people in the struggle.

Immediately after the founding of the Party, the Provisional Central Committee addressed itself to the entire Albanian people with a proclamation which resounded like a battle cry:

«We call on all true Albanians who really hold Albania dear, to unite all our forces and place them at the service of the war for national liberation. Open war is the only stand to take toward the invader. Each son of this land of ours should be a soldier in the National-liberation War. To vanquish the enemy, our struggle must be organized, united, and powerful...

Everyone unite in the war for **national liberation against the fascist invader!**» 1)

The CPA devoted great attention to propaganda and agitation by the press and by word of mouth. The Central Committee issued repeated calls and distributed leaflets addressed to the entire Albanian people or, separately, to peasants, soldiers, women and to youth.

1) The First Call of the CC of the CPA. Important Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 27-28.

Appeals and leaflets were issued by the Party district committees as well. From the early part of 1942, the local Party organizations also issued communiques and periodic bulletins on the events of the antifascist war at home and abroad.

Never before had any political group or organization in Albania ever carried out such widespread and militant propaganda and agitation with such sound ideological content, so clear and down to earth, as the propaganda and agitation the Communist Party of Albania began to carry out with the masses of workers, peasants, intellectuals, youth, women, and soldiers. Through this untiring work, the Party elucidated its general line, explained the international and internal situation, popularized the Soviet Union and the heroic war of the Red Army, denounced fascism, the Italian invaders, the Hitlerite aggressors and the traitors to the Albanian people.

Of all forms of agitation and propaganda, agitation by word of mouth occupied the most important place — discussions with people, separately or in small groups, discussions at gatherings of workers, of peasants, and of the youth. This form of agitation yielded most satisfactory results. The communists penetrated wherever the masses gathered. In order to come in contact with the people, they made use of all the means and methods that came to hand. They exploited extensively all old and new acquaintances, national and popular

festivities, weddings, market-days, family ties, and so on.

Relying on the general line of the Party, the Provisional Central Committee elaborated its principal slogans to be disseminated through its publications, in antifascist demonstrations, and by means of oral agitation. The slogans responded to the demands and aspirations of the masses, they were comprehensible and acceptable to the people. The slogan «Death to fascism! Freedom to the people!» became the basic motto of the National-liberation War.

As a result of the Party propaganda work, the need to unite in an organized war against the invaders became more clear. This aroused a revolutionary enthusiasm, especially among the masses of the youth. Young communists succeeded in breaking up the youth sports and cultural associations set up by the Italian fascists and replacing them with new organizations under the direct guidance of the Communist Youth.

Propaganda and militant agitation were a most efficient weapon to win over the masses, but that was not enough. The CPA had drawn valuable lessons from the shortcomings in the work of the communist groups, realizing from the start that the masses understood and mastered what the Party told them only if words were backed up by facts, concrete actions responding directly to their demands, interests, and aspirations.

At first, a section of the population, especially in the countryside, did not understand

the objectives and the political activity of the communists, because the Party had not yet become well known, and because they had prejudices inculcated by bourgeois propaganda against communism and communists.

The Central Committee instructed the Party district committees to organize and carry out more and more political and militant actions, such as antifascist demonstrations, strikes, acts of sabotage, armed operations, and so on, as the most important means of strengthening the Party and linking it with the masses. The communists were required to become examples of valor, determination, and loyalty to the people and the homeland.

In December 1941 and the beginning of the year 1942, guerrilla units set up in almost all the cities carried out operations under the direct guidance of district Party committees. The first guerilla units comprised communists, communist youth and sympathizers. They were small armed groups of from 5 to 10 persons. The members of the units in general were not «illegals».

At the beginning of the year 1942, the guerilla units in Tirana, Korça, Vlora, Shkodra, Gjirokastra and other cities killed dozens of Italian fascist officers and high officials, Albanian spies and traitors. They attacked and blew up arms depots and other military objectives. Antifascist demonstrations took place under the guidance of district Party committees in Shkodra, Tirana, Durrës, Elba-

san, Vlora, and in other localities. It was in these clashes with the enemy that the first Party members fell.

The actions of guerilla units were not intended solely to inflict losses on the enemy, but they were aimed, first and foremost, at bringing political advantages to the national-liberation movement, at influencing the rise of the political consciousness of the masses.

The armed actions and antifascist demonstrations aroused admiration for the communists among the broad masses of the people and rapidly raised the authority of the CPA. The exceptional valor and maturity displayed by the communists in their struggle against fascism rallied the masses closer and closer around the Party and won the people's trust.

Early in 1942, the Central Committee of the Party issued instructions that steps should be taken for the organization of partizan bands, as soon as the necessary conditions, especially the bases of the movement, were established in the countryside. The partizan bands would be able to carry out more powerful actions and on a broader scale than the guerilla units.

The Party accompanied its propaganda and militant agitation, its political and military actions with its work for the organization of the people. It did not begin its work with the creation of mass organizations, because the masses had to be politically prepared beforehand for such organizations. The initial forms used for the organization of the people

were the individual ties of the Party members, of the young communists and of the sympathizers with the workers, peasants, craftsmen, intellectuals, women, secondary school students, as well as the sports and cultural circles of the youth, women's handicraft courses and educational gatherings. These forms ensured the participation of the masses at illegal gatherings and conferences and effected their political enlightenment and active participation in the antifascist movement.

In February 1942 the Central Committee of the Party issued the first instructions to establish national-liberation councils which would serve as instruments organizing and mobilizing the people for the antifascist war and at the same time, as the «nuclei of our future government»¹⁾. The councils were to serve as very important links in the connections of the Party with the broad masses of the people and unite them in the National-liberation Front.

Of particular importance in linking the CPA with the people was its correct attitude toward the patriotic nationalists. A section of them exerted an important influence over various strata of the population, in the countryside especially. By collaborating with the patriotic nationalists, it would be possible to draw into struggle also those sections of the masses of the people who were under their sway. The Central Committee and the district Party

1) Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 39.

committees displayed great care, patience and tact in dealing with the nationalists. This sector of work was considered as one of the most important, and requiring special attention.

While aiming at uniting and sincerely collaborating with the nationalists, the CPA had always to take into account the indecisiveness and vacillation of some of them, their inconsistency in a revolutionary war for the democratization of the country, their tendencies to compromise with the imperialists. The Party had to cope with the instability and neutralize the influence of those nationalists who, for some reason or other, did not agree to take part in the National-liberation War but who did not collaborate with the fascist aggressors, either.

The collection of material aid for the Party and the National-liberation War was treated as part of the work with the masses. No one other than the people could help them surmount their financial and material difficulties. Any voluntary aid in cash or in material, no matter how small, given by the workers, craftsmen, peasants, small or medium tradesmen, teachers or any other patriot to the Party, was at the same time an approval of its line, a bridge linking the Party with the masses. The campaigns carried out by the Party organizations collecting aid for the Party and the National-liberation War served as a means to do an extensive work of political enlightenment of the people. One such campaign, for instance, was organized

in January 1942, throughout Albania under the name: «The Communist Party Week».

The popularizing of the Communist Party, the growth of its authority with the masses, the audacious actions of the guerilla squads and the antifascist demonstrations aroused alarm among the fascist invaders and traitors. The occupation authorities and the Quisling government hastily took a series of emergency measures aimed at annihilating the Communist Party. Martial law was reinstated and special orders were issued to carry out «a firm policy against subversive elements».

On the other hand, the Italian enslavers resorted to new manoeuvres in order to deceive the Albanian people, particularly, the nationalists and the youth. The fascist propaganda depicted the national-liberation movement as merely a «communist» and «anti-national movement». Mustafa Kruja attempted to convince public opinion that fascist Italy was the architect of «Great Albania» and the protector of the national independence of the Albanian people. Mussolini sent instructions to the Italian viceroy in Tirana «to give the Albanians more autonomy». The invaders decided to remove the «fascist symbol» and the crown of Savoy from the Albanian flag, as they construed these signs to be «the cause of the resentment and revolt of Albanian patriots». The word «National» was added to the title of the «Albanian Fascist Party».

But fascist terror and demagoguery were powerless to stop the growth of the national-liberation movement and the authority of the Communist Party of Albania.

Appreciable successes were achieved as early as the first months of the Party's existence. Nevertheless, these successes could not be considered as satisfactory. The work of the communists was affected by sectarianism, a malady inherited from the past. Little had been done for the organization of workers, but the greatest weakness lay in the work with the peasants. Out-of-date mental attitudes from the former communist groups, according to which the peasantry had to remain outside the sphere of communist work, greatly hindered a proper understanding of the decisive importance of linking the peasantry with the Party and of ensuring their active participation in the National-liberation War. There were a number of Party members who found it difficult to go to the countryside and expected the peasants to come to the city to work with them.

The Central Committee emphasized that the Party activity was hampered not only by hangovers from earlier work of the communist groups, but also by the spirit of groupism which was still accentuated, as well as by the factional anti-Party activities of Trotskyites Anastas Lula, Sadik Premte and a number of their like, all of them former members of the «Youth» Group.

There were signs that a dangerous anti-

Marxist liquidationist trend was crystallizing within the Party.

The spirit of groupism and the hostile activity of the Trotskyites within and outside the Party were a great obstacle to the expansion and the strengthening of the links with the broad masses of the people, and to their joining the antifascist war.

The Conference of the Party activists of the CPA For the purpose of surmounting this obstacle and imparting a new impulse to the work of the Party, the Provisional Central Committee called the first Conference of the Party Activists of the CPA.

The Conference was opened in Tirana on April 8, 1942, under the leadership of Comrade Enver Hoxha. The members of the Central Committee, the political and organizational secretaries of the district committees and a number of other communists took part in it. All the questions discussed were centered on the problem of linking the Party more closely with the masses, on their organization and mobilization in the National-liberation War.

Pointing out the successes achieved in the political work of the Party, the first Conference of the Party Activists remarked that in Albania,

«the idea of a general uprising is going through a process of formation and

of consolidation, and the people are beginning to realize that their liberation should and can be won through their own efforts, by linking their own war with that of the Soviet Union, America, Britain and China, as well as with that of the enslaved countries» 1).

The successes achieved, however, were regarded only as the first steps. The Party would have created more wide-spread and stronger connections with the masses, had it not been affected by the spirit of groupism, had its discipline not been violated, and erroneous theories spread by unhealthy and factionist elements.

The Conference considered the weakness of the connections of the Party organizations with the masses of workers impermissible.

«But how can our Party be strong without workers», it remarked, «when the workers should be its basis?» 2)

In this regard the communists were charged with carrying out an untiring explanatory political and organizational work with the workers, to rally them more and more around the Party

1) Resolution of the First Conference of the Party Activists of the CPA, April 8, 1942. Important Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 56-57.

2) Ibid. p. 61.

and to prepare leading cadres for the National-liberation War from among them.

The activists devoted special attention to the work to be carried out to attract the masses of peasants and to mobilize them in struggle. As a condition for surmounting the difficulties which had to be confronted in this field, the communists were urged to fight their old outlooks and their defeatist views regarding the peasantry, to get well dug in the countryside, to become acquainted with the life of the peasants and to know and feel their troubles and their problems.

The Conference instructed the Party organizations to renounce all backward ideas in their work with the youth and women, to improve and intensify their activity in these sectors. The youth and women should become powerful supports of the Party.

The Party activists assessed as correct the practice pursued by the Central Committee in giving priority to the political and military activities.

«Without action there is no communist party... What raises and strengthens the party is action and the struggle. We cannot become linked with the people, if we cannot prove to them that we are capable of leading them»¹⁾

1) Resolution of the First Conference of the Party Activists of the CPA, April 8, 1942. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 62.

The most pressing need for the broadening of the armed struggle was considered to be the increasing and strengthening of guerilla units, the creation of partizan bands.

At this Conference, the concept of uniting the masses of the people in the National-liberation Front and creating the national-liberation councils took a more concrete form.

The Conference assessed the Party's close connections with the masses as the best index of its strength and capability as a Marxist-Leninist party, of the correctness of its policy, and as an essential condition for the preservation of the Party from enemy attacks.

At the centre of the activity of the Party, the activists placed the struggle against the attempts of the fascists to lure the Albanian people into a trap disguised with slogans of nationalism and autonomy in order to incite them to fratricidal war and antagonism with their neighbors.

The activists pointed out that the main internal problem of the Party was to eliminate groupism and the factional activity within its ranks. It advised Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte to sever all their former connections, to turn back from their crooked course, warning them that severe measures would be taken in case they did not do so. The Party activists called for a purge of the Party, mercilessly expelling all incorrigible elements, but, at the same time, exerting every effort to place the unsteady elements on the right road.

As to admitting new members to the Party, mainly from the ranks of the workers and poor peasants, instructions were given to the effect that the shortcomings of their theoretical and political knowledge should not bar them from becoming members of the Party. These insufficiently schooled but resolute people would be further developed and educated as fiery militants for the cause of the people and communism, within the ranks of the Party.

While calling on the communists to fight with all their might to eliminate the Trotskyite trend within the Party, the Conference instructed them not to neglect the struggle against the renegades outside the Party, particularly, against the Trotskyite «Zjarri» Group. They should likewise be vigilant and frustrate all the attempts of the Italian fascists and the internal reactionaries to have their agents provocateurs penetrate the ranks of the Communist Party.

2. DEALING A SMASHING BLOW AT THE FAC- TIONIST LIQUIDATORY TREND AND ESTABLISH- ING UNITY IN THE PARTY

After the Conference of the Party Activists, Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte, far from renouncing their disruptive activity against the Party, intensified it further. The promise

they had made at the Meeting of the Communist Groups called for the founding of the Party, namely, that they would submit to the will of the majority and to the directives of the Central Committee, was only a pretence. Taking advantage of the great difficulties the young Communist Party had to cope with, they resorted to all ways and means to sabotage the organizational consolidation of the Party and the implementation of its political tasks. A. Lula and S. Premte continued to maintain their old connections with most of the former members of the «Youth» Group. Infringing the rules and norms set by the Party, they held «organizational» and «educational» meetings with them and gave them directives in opposition to those of the Central Committee. They did not turn over to the Party all the theoretical and propaganda material, nor the equipment and finances of their group.

The dissidents continued to strongly oppose the general line of the Party, sabotaging the activity of the Central Committee, of the district committees and of the Party cells in every way.

The faction members were assigned the task of occupying leading posts, alleging their «greater capability» and «superior theoretical preparation»! From these positions they were to strive to seize the reins of the Central Committee.

To attain their objective, the dissidents had directed their principal blows at the Party

leaders in the center and in the districts and accused them of being incapable and unschooled persons, who knew only how to give orders but not how to lead. They cried themselves hoarse at the «injustice» that had been done to the «Youth» Group, which allegedly was not adequately represented in the Central Committee nor in the district committees of the Party, and demanded that this situation should be changed.

Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte with their associates instigated discontent among ambitious, conceited, and careerist members of the former communist groups and tried to win them over to their side. They urged them to demand an accounting for why they had not been assigned responsibilities in the Party compatible with their merits and ability!

The dissident group carried out its hostile activity throughout the country, but it was in Tirana that its activity reached its peak.

There was not the least doubt that an anti-Party factional group with its own organizational connections and political platform had been created within the Party. The political platform of the dissidents consisted of the discredited liquidatory theses according to which armed struggle and cooperation with the nationalists and peasants were impossible to achieve, the antifascist alliance and, particularly, the liberating role of the Soviet Union in the war, were not to be relied upon, etc.

The situation was really disquieting. The newly founded Communist Party of Albania was in great danger of ceasing to exist due to blows dealt by the Italian fascists and the Trotskyites of the «Zjarri» Group from outside, and by the liquidationist faction from within. There were even signs that some agents provocateurs of fascism were operating in the ranks of the Party. As a result of their activity, the police had managed to capture and imprison a number of communists and non-Party patriots. Qemal Stafa, Political Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth fell a victim of these agents. He was besieged and killed in a Tirana house while fighting heroically against the militiamen and carabinieri on May 5, 1942. The fascists also succeeded in detecting and seizing the equipment and archives of the Central Committee and of the Tirana District Committee.

There was not complete unity in the Party. Without a sound ideological and organizational unity, without steel-like discipline equally obligatory on all its members, the Party would have been unable to win over and lead the masses, and as a consequence, there could have been no unity of the people around the Party, and no victory achieved over the enemy. Without unity the Party either would have turned into a Trotskyite or social-democratic party or would have been crushed.

**The Extraordinary
Conference of the
Party**

To eliminate the great danger menacing the Party, the Provisional Central Committee con-

voked an extraordinary conference, which was held on June 28 and 29, 1942 in Tirana. It was attended by members of the Central Committee, members of the District Committee and other communists of Tirana. Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte were invited to attend.

Comrade Enver Hoxha presided.

The Extraordinary Conference dealt with only one question: the elimination of the liquidatory factionist trend and establishing unity in the Party.

The many efforts of the Party to put the factionists on the right road had not yielded any positive results because of their persistence in their sabotage and liquidationist activity. Now «the cup was full to overflowing», remarked the Conference.

The groupism and lack of unity could not be tolerated any longer in the Party, particularly, at the crucial historic moments the country was going through, when the national liberation movement was mounting rapidly towards a general uprising, and when the unity of the people around the Party was obviously more essential than ever.

The Conference emphasized:

«In order to be able to cope with the heavy and difficult tasks lying before us, we absolutely must achieve

identity of opinions and views in both political work and in the organization itself (identity of views should exist in all Leninist-Stalinist type parties, hence our Party also must be based on these foundations, because identity of views is indispensable, it is the prime condition for the Party to achieve its aims.)»¹⁾

To ensure the unity and consolidation of the Party, it was decided to purge it of all the incorrigible factionists by expelling them immediately. The Conference called on the Party organizations to be ruthless against all those who had wanted to bury the Party.

After weighing the crimes of Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte and their closest accomplices, the Central Committee, in line with the assessments and proposals made at the Conference, decided to expel them from the Party. Some other factionists were suspended for three months.

In a special circular letter, the Central Committee informed the entire Party of the proceedings of the Extraordinary Conference and of the measures taken against the principal

1) Circular of the CC of CPA about the condemnation of the inimical activity of the Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte group at the Extraordinary Party Conference, July 1942. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 81.

leaders of the liquidatory factionist trend. At the same time, it gave instructions that measures should be taken to expel factionists operating in the districts.

The factionists excluded from the Party, the Central Committee recommended, should not be outcast and entirely abandoned, but should be helped to realize their mistakes. Every effort should be made to bring back to the Party ranks those who make amends. At the same time severe steps were to be taken against those continuing their hostile activity.

Finally, the Central Committee urged that this purge should be correctly understood as an operation to rid the Party of the liquidatory factionists to establish unity in the Party, and not as a measure directed against the former «Youth» Group members. Under no circumstances should this Group as a whole be disparaged simply for the fact that Anastas Lula, Sadik Premte, and the most of the factionists had come from this group. There were many communists from the «Youth» Group who had not been involved with the factionists, who had given proof of their determination and loyalty to the Party and stood in the forefront of the struggle together with the other comrades.

The decisions of the Conference of the Party Activists and those of the Extraordinary Conference, as well as the directives of the Central Committee, found complete approval in the Party organizations throughout the coun-

try. Within a short time the Party was purged of all factionists and splitters. Hundreds of new members, tempered in struggle, loyal to the cause of the people and communism were admitted to its ranks. Many supporters of the factionist trends, deeply understanding their mistakes, broke away from their Trotskyite chiefs and wholeheartedly pledged to the Party that they would firmly abide by its correct line.

The defeat of the liquidatory factionist trend sharpened the vigilance of the communists and invigorated the internal life of the Party.

The struggle against the factionists brought to light signs of rotteness and other shortcomings which had hampered the work and consolidation of the Party.

At this time, the Central Committee censured the divisive activity of Mustafa Gjinishi, of Koço Tashko and certain other people dissatisfied over their failure to be elected to the Central and district committees of the Party. In talks with Party members and non-Party individuals, they deprecated nearly all the Party directives, describing them either as premature, or belated, either as sectarian, or opportunist, fomenting, thus, personal grudges that people might have. This was done to engender distrust towards the Party leadership. They had been repeatedly advised by the Central Committee to refrain from this anti-Party activity.

During the struggle to do away with the factionist trend and establish unity in the Party ranks a secessionist tendency was detected in the Gjirokastra District Committee. This committee had failed to carry out, and had even distorted, the Central Committee's directives on the armed struggle and the partisan bands, the national liberation councils, the youth, and so forth. It did not report to the Central Committee about its activity nor send in the principal instructions and propaganda materials it issued. The person mainly to blame for fostering these trends was Bedri Spahiu, at the time political secretary of this district.

The Central Committee took these manifestations very seriously, severely condemned the secessionist trend of the Gjirokastra District Committee, dissolved it and organized the election of a new committee.

The energetic measures adopted by the Provisional Central Committee found immediate support in all the Party organizations throughout the country. The dangers of groupism and factionism threatening the newly created Communist Party were rooted out and a sound unity was assured, — a militant unity based on Marxism-Leninism.

3. THE FOUNDING OF THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION FRONT. THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE EXTENSION OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE

The Conference of the Party Activists and the Extraordinary Conference gave fresh momentum to the work of the communists aimed at making the Party's political line clearer to the broad masses of the people, at exposing the new tactics of the enemy and mobilizing the people for war.

On the initiative of the Party and under its guidance, the first national-liberation councils were set up in a number of villages. Besides those in the towns, guerilla units were organized in a number of provinces. Non-Party anti-fascists also fought alongside the communists in these combat units. The formation of guerilla detachments had begun as far back as Spring 1942. By July, fighting detachments were operating in Peza, Kurvelesh, Gora, Skrapar, Mokra, Shkodra, Devoll, Dibra and Mat. They purged the first areas of the country of the military and civil authorities of the fascist invaders and the traitors. On the instructions of the Central Committee, on July 24th all telephone and telegraph lines were cut and destroyed throughout Albania. Everyday military vehicles along the highways were destroyed, fascist carabinieri and militia posts were assailed, military depots were blown up, offices of fascist organizations and other administrative

buildings of the enemy were burned down, etc. All these actions were accompanied with demonstrations, protests, strikes and sabotage.

These unremitting activities panicked the enemy, threw the occupation authorities and their collaborating puppets into utter confusion. Information and reports from the local military and civil organs on the «alarming situation in Albania», «the hopeless situation», «the penetration of communist ideas into the people's minds» poured into Tirana and Rome. The enemy resorted to fresh arrests and imprisonments of patriots, deportations of families of fugitives and partizan fighters, issued new and more rigorous orders providing the death penalty for any one carrying out anti-fascist activity. More communists laid down their lives as martyrs showing great heroism in the armed clashes against the enemy, or in prison, facing torture, the firing squad, or the hangman.

These unremitting activities against the Italian invaders and their stooges moved more and more people to embrace the political line of the Party and give it their support and assistance.

Zëri i Popullit

«Zëri i Popullit», the organ of the Communist Party of Albania, the first number of which came out on August 25, 1942, was a powerful political weapon in the hands of communists. It was founded by decision of the Provisional Central Committee and directed by Comrade **Enver Hoxha**.

In the leading article of its first number, the organ of the CPA set as its objective:

«to unite all the Albanian people around this organ, to unite all honest and anti-fascist persons, regardless of their religious beliefs, political opinions and trends... for an independent, free and democratic Albania»¹⁾

«Zëri i Popullit» propagated the political line of the Party, the anti-fascist war of the Albanian people and of other peoples, explained the road which must be followed for national liberation, exposed the policy and the activity of the fascist invaders and the Albanian traitors. It published Party proclamations, articles and comments on the internal and international situation, chronicles on the principal events, and correspondence from the various districts of the country.

The publication of the «Zëri i Popullit» was warmly received by the broad masses. Through Party members, young communists, and non-Party patriotic activists, «Zëri i Popullit», the word of the Party, was spread to all corners of the country. It was read with the greatest interest. Soon «Zëri i Popullit» became the favorite newspaper of the Albanian people.

The Peza Conference Through its explanatory, mobilizing, and organizing activity against the invaders during the first months of its existence, the

1) «Zëri i Popullit» No. 1, August, 1942.

Party laid the foundations of the militant union of the Albanian people. To strengthen these foundations, to put the political and organizational union of the people throughout the country on a sound political and organizational basis the CC of CPA called the Albanian National-liberation Conference.

This Conference was held on September 16, 1942 in Peza. Besides the communists, nationalists of differing political trends took part. Some of these nationalists stood very close to the Communist Party, having embraced its political line and been active in fighting against the invaders. Others supported the liberation of the country and rallying the people in the war against the foreign invaders, but were taking no part in action, having adopted a wait-and-see attitude. This category included ex-King Zog's supporters of whom the principal representative was Abaz Kupa.

The Communist Party also invited another category of nationalists, such as Mithat Frashëri and others, who had not yet openly disclosed their stand, to take part in the conference. These nationalists did not accept and attempted to boycott the Conference.

At the National-liberation Conference the problem of uniting and organizing the Albanian people in the war against the fascist invaders was thoroughly discussed. The participants, including the overwhelming majority of the nationalists, stressed the vigorous activity and the great organizational role of the Com-

munist Party in the National-liberation War. It was pointed out that the Italian fascists and Mustafa Kruja had not succeeded in dividing the Party from the patriotic nationalists, that the communists had won the affection and confidence of the people, that

«fascist propaganda about the «communist danger» and the «communists being disloyal to the country» has been exposed. Communism in Albania is no longer the bogey of the peasant, of the owner of medium means, of the intellectual.»¹⁾

Neither Abas Kupa nor any other nationalist dared to oppose openly the guiding role the CPA had begun to play in the struggle. They strove to hinder the growth of its authority by opposing some external manifestations which bore the Party mark, such as calling the fighting units «partizan» units and the red star they adopted as an emblem. This opposition and some contradictory views on the mass participation of the youth in the struggle and on some terms of the resolution were surmounted after the repre-

1) Resolution of the Peza Conference, September 16, 1942. Documents of the Supreme Organs of the National-liberation Revolutionary Power, Tirana, 1962, p. 12.

representatives of the CPA had patiently defended their correct points of view.

The Conference elected the (Provisional) National-liberation General Council and adopted unanimously the platform of the National-liberation War proposed by the Communist Party. This platform contained the following main items:

To wage uncompromising war against the fascist invaders and the traitors, for a free, independent, and democratic Albania.

The real foundations of the union of the Albanian people had been laid and would be strengthened only in battle with the invader.

Sound organization of all true Albanians in a united National-liberation Front should be effected without discrimination as to class, political conviction, religion or region.

National-liberation councils should be set up everywhere as organs uniting and mobilizing the people in the war, and as organs of the people's power.

The people's general armed uprising should be popularized and prepared for as the ultimate stage, as the logical consequence of the partizan war

An organized campaign should be waged against the Agricultural Bank, Italian shareholders' companies, and all exploiters who, by the agency of the invaders, extorted profits at the expense of the people.

The Peza Conference laid the foundations of the National-liberation Front and of the

people's power. It confirmed the leading role of the Communist Party of Albania in the National-liberation War, thus making the Party's first great political victory.

The Peza Conference was not a conference of political parties. Only the Communist Party, the organizer of the conference took part as a political party in its proceedings. There were no other anti-fascist political parties participating.

Thus, the National-liberation Front was not founded as a coalition of political parties. The Peza Conference legalized the voluntary union of the broad masses of the people, a union whose foundations had been laid at the grassroots in the war against the foreign invaders. It was the Communist Party that forged this union and was the direct and sole leader of the National-liberation Front. The Front had at its foundations the alliance of the working class with the peasantry, the latter constituting its broadest base. In the program of the Party, the patriotic nationalists saw the fulfilment of their immediate national aspirations and joined the National-liberation Front either in groups of the same tendency or as individuals.

The National-liberation Councils The theses advanced by Comrade Enver Hoxha at the Peza

Conference on «the National-liberation councils as organs of the union and struggle of the

Albanian people» were adopted as a basis for setting up the national-liberation councils.

In the regions not yet liberated the councils were combative organs uniting all the people's anti-fascist forces. They enlightened the masses and launched them into struggle, prepared them for the general uprising, collected material aid necessary for the war, gathered information on the movements and the size of the enemy armed forces, organized the economic struggle against the Italian capitalist companies and sabotaged the accumulation of agricultural products by the fascists.

In liberated regions, the councils exercised the functions of organs of the people's power. They maintained law and order, looked after the development of the economy, the food supply, trade, sowing and harvesting of grain, organized education, culture and the press; they settled conflicts, patched up blood feuds, maintained the people's readiness for war, and so on.

«The importance of the national liberation councils is great», the Peza Conference stressed. «Through them the government functions and the people are mobilized for struggle and for the uprising.» 1)

1) The Resolution of the Peza Conference. Documents of the Supreme Organs of the National-liberation Revolutionary Power, Tirana, 1962, p. 131.

For the organization of the national-liberation councils the CPA had the rich experience of the Soviets, but, naturally, it did not merely copy this experience. First and foremost, it relied on the concrete circumstances under which the people's antifascist uprising was developing in Albania. The composition of the organs of this uprising harmonized with its national-liberation character. These councils, the Central Committee instructed in June 1942, should include the militant representatives of all the anti-fascist forces, regardless of their political opinion and class background. The concept of these councils was acceptable to the masses of the people in Albania. From time immemorial it had been a tradition of the Albanians to create «conventions» and «councils» whenever they felt obliged to rise up to fight against foreign aggressors or to solve their internal problems. The national-liberation councils, however, varied from the «conventions» and «councils» of the past in their completely new composition and organization. They were born and grew as revolutionary democratic organs created by the masses themselves under the sole leadership of the Communist Party. They were the negation of all the former anti-popular and exploiting State organs and organizations.

As such, the national liberation councils won great popularity among the masses. Following the Peza Conference their number increased rapidly both in the liberated and not yet

liberated regions. People saw in them the defenders of their own interests and those of the Fatherland.

Because in 1942 only some rural regions had been liberated, the councils began to exercise their functions as organs of people's power in the countryside, the towns being still occupied by the Italian fascists. The councils became important links binding the Party closely with the peasantry.

The Partizan Detachments Besides the uniting of the people in the National-liberation Front and setting up people's councils the armed partizan struggle was also extended and intensified.

Partizan warfare was a form of war known and tested throughout centuries in Albania and in other countries. The Albanian people preserved strong traditions of patriotic guerilla warfare against foreign invaders. The Peza Conference expressed its conviction that the glorious path of the forefathers of the Albanians would be followed with courage and honour.

By making use of the guerilla warfare experience of the former Albanian patriots, the CPA imparted to the war against fascist invaders and traitors a deeply popular and revolutionary content.

The guerilla units were the first schools of partizan warfare. Through the formation and activity of partizan detachments, the partizan

movement rose to a higher level and assumed vast proportions throughout the country.

The creation of fighting detachments in general followed this course: the Party district committee sent from the towns to the countryside a number of Party members, young communists and sympathizers tested in the guerilla units, charging them with the task of organizing fighting detachments. Around this nucleus, the fighting detachments were built up mainly with peasants. The countryside became the basis and the principal source of partizan detachments.

There was no class limitation in the make up of the fighting detachments. All those who desired to fight the enemy were admitted. Only persons with a shady past, common criminals and robbers who had aroused the contempt and hatred of the people were not allowed to join. All the partizans were volunteers. There could be 50-60 fighters in each partizan detachment. At the head of each detachment stood the commander and the political commissar, who together directed its activity and were jointly responsible for the readiness and the combat and political preparation of the partizans. In most cases commanders were not Party-members, whereas commissars were representatives of the Party within the partizan detachments.

In each detachment there was a Party cell which was its heart.

The detachments carried out intensive

combat activity against the fascist invaders and traitors. At the same time, they had to develop a political, cultural and educational activity not only with the partizans but also with the population of the region in which they were operating. The fighting detachments had the liberated zones as their base. There they had already done away with the old oppressive power and helped the people to set up national liberation councils. They assisted the peasants in their agricultural work and served as the armed support of the people's councils in maintaining law and order.

In the partizan detachments the masses saw for the first time their own army, the champion of their own interests. They gave it their all-round support. The partizan detachments were given shelter and supplied with food by the peasants; the towns people also supplied various material aid. Without such aid and without such all-round and unsparing support from the people, the partizan war could not have been organized and the people's revolutionary army could not have been set up.

Besides partizan detachments, after the Peza Conference, territorial units made up of volunteers were organized in the liberated regions, in each large village or 2-3 small villages. They were irregular self-defence detachments which took up arms whenever they were called upon by the partizan detachments to carry through an important thrust or to ward off operations undertaken by the

enemy against the liberated regions. These detachments served at the same time as a source of replenishment of the regular partizan units.

Following the Peza Conference, the number of guerilla units, partizan and territorial detachments, increased rapidly. By the end of the year 1942 there were about 2,000 partizan fighters, besides some thousands of others taking part in the guerilla units in towns and in the countryside.

In order to crush these detachments, from September to December 1942, the Italian invaders engaged in large scale punitive operations in 27 regions of Southern, Central and Northern Albania. They burned down hundreds of peasants' houses, massacred old and young people, women and children, but they failed to attain their objective of suppressing the partizan movement. In Peza, Skrapar, Dibra, Mat, Korça, Kurvelesh, Vlora and other regions, thousands of men and women joined the partizans in their fight against the Italian hordes. Hundreds of fascist soldiers, militiamen, and officers were killed in bitter fighting.

The successes of the partizan warfare and the utter failure of the 1942 Italian military operations brought to light the inner rottenness of the invaders, the invincible strength of the Albanian people, and confirmed the correctness of the policy pursued by the Communist Party. A real people's revolution had begun in Albania.

The echo of this heroic struggle passed

beyond the boundaries of Albania, arousing the admiration and high appreciation of the peoples and countries fighting against fascism. In December, 1942 the Government of the Soviet Union in an official statement expressed its sympathy for the liberation war of the Albanian people. The Soviet Government did not recognize any claim of Italian imperialism to Albanian soil and desired to see the whole of Albania liberated and independent. Official statements recognizing the anti-fascist struggle of the Albanian people were published simultaneously also by the governments of the USA and of Great Britain, although the latter purposely made no declaration against imperialist claims on Albania. These statements, particularly that of the Soviet government, were of great support to the Albanian people, strengthened their confidence in victory, and helped to further extend the armed struggle against the fascist enslavers.

**The Attitude of the
CPA towards the
«Balli Kombëtar»**

The impulsive growth of the anti-fascist war under the leadership of the Communist Party stirred all classes, groups and political currents in Albania. The surge of anger and the anti-fascist movement of the masses, the partizan warfare, had caused an irreparable political crisis in the enemy ranks. This crisis could not but affect the reactionary classes of the country and their repre-

representatives who had linked their fate with the invaders. They were scared to death by the revolutionary impetus of the antifascist war and the growth of the authority of the Communist Party, because here they saw the danger of losing their privileges. A heavy blow was dealt them by the Peza Conference and the founding of the National-liberation Front. Immediately after these events, the alarmed reaction began to speak of the «communist danger» and the struggle against it. The representatives of the reactionary bourgeoisie and of the big landowners, with the support of the fascist invaders, towards November, 1942 hastily announced the creation of a political organization to be conterposed directly to the National-liberation Front. This organization was named «Balli Kombëtar» («the National Front»). It was headed by the sham-patriot Mithat Frashëri.

Reactionary bourgeois intellectuals, big landowners and merchants, reactionary clergymen, rich peasants and others, joined in the «Balli Kombëtar». The Trotzkyite «Zjarri» group also joined it.

The «Balli Kombëtar» was a motley political union of various reactionary trends. Its organization was rotten. Comrade Enver Hoxha characterized this union as follows:

«The «Balli Kombëtar» is a «ramassi's» (amorphous assemblage, — Edit.) of elements of various groundless trends

who have adopted nationalist slogans as their wet nurse... Seen from within, the «Balli Kombëtar» is a basketful of shrimps (... one pulls one way, the other the other)... Others are men of 99 tricks and of one valor, others are addicted to sounding the alarm, while still others to speech-making, but none of them are men of deeds.»¹⁾

It was only their common class interest, their hatred against the Communist Party and people's revolutionary movement, that brought these men together.

The «Balli Kombëtar» immediately announced that it did not recognize the Peza Conference and published its own program of sheer demagogy from top to bottom. In highflown words the «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs boasted of allegedly fighting for «an economically and socially normalized Albania, without exploiters and exploited».

In a great hurry they set up some «illegal» bands in the mountains, which were not there to fight the invaders, but to obstruct the combat and political activity of the partizan detachments, to propagate the policy of the «Balli Kombëtar» and to intimidate the peasants.

1) Enver Hoxha's Letter addressed to the Korça District Party Committee, January, 1943 — Works, Vol. I, Tirana 1968, p. 169-171.

They set up in the countryside «councils» of the «Balli Kombëtar» which were to replace the «national-liberation councils». They likewise made use of other forms and means very similar to those employed by the Communist Party, which enjoyed great popularity. Posing as «ardent patriots», they advised the Albanian people not to fight against Italian invaders, for such a struggle would entail the annihilation of the Albanian nation! The prime slogan of the «Balli Kombëtar» was: «Wait till the time comes». Its adherents launched an unrestrained campaign against the National-liberation Front and the Communist Party, against communism and the Soviet Union.

The whole aim of the «Balli Kombëtar» was to alienate the masses of the people, especially the peasantry, from the Communist Party, to destroy the National-liberation Front, to quell the national-liberation movement, and to seize all political power after the war.

To achieve its aims, the «Balli Kombëtar» chose to collaborate with the invaders. It could not have acted differently, its intentions towards the Communist Party being shared by the invaders who could not tolerate any independent activity of the «Balli Kombëtar». Nevertheless, their reciprocal interests required that their collaboration should be kept secret. Otherwise nobody could be misled.

The emergence of the «Balli Kombëtar» greatly complicated the situation within the country. Lenin teaches that there can be no

revolution without complicated situations, that «the revolution itself in the course of its development always creates an extraordinarily complicated situation»¹).

In the complex situation which arose after the emergence of the «Balli Kombëtar», the Communist Party of Albania was compelled to act with great maturity, wisdom and farsightedness. Only by resorting to skilful tactics towards the «Balli» was the Party able to preserve the successes it had achieved and further strengthen its bonds with the masses, thus leading the Albanian people to the complete victory of their struggle for national independence and a people's democratic Albania.

The Communist Party was well aware that the «Balli Kombëtar» was the offspring of reaction and an instrument in the hands of the fascist invaders. Faced with the sabotaging activities of the «Balli Kombëtar», some Party grassroot organizations, even some district committees insistently demanded the use of armed force against them.

But the Central Committee of the Party held firmly to its principle that there is no greater danger for a proletarian party than to build its tactics according to subjective wishes. Answering those who demanded that open war should be declared on the «Balli Kombëtar», Comrade Enver Hoxha, on behalf of the Central Committee, instructed:

1) V. I. Lenin, Works, Vol. 26, p. 117 (Albanian edition).

«...it (the «Balli Kombëtar» — Edit.) is a great obstacle indeed, because we should not underestimate the individual influence of its adherents in Albania, always bearing in mind that they have succeeded in creating among the people the opinion that there exists a nationalist organization with which the communists should come to an understanding and agreement... We should not forget that among the «Balli Kombëtar» ranks there are quite a number of good and resolute elements who sincerely desire to unite and fight» 1)

For these reasons the Communist Party of Albania at the beginning laid down the following tactics towards the «Balli Kombëtar»: the defeatist slogan of «the time being not ripe to fight against the Italians» should be denounced; it should be demanded publicly that the «Balli Kombëtar» accept the union of all the anti-fascist forces of the country on the basis of an immediate and all-out war without compromise against the Italian fascist invaders; the «Balli Kombëtar» should be required to cease immediately its propaganda against the Communist Party and communism; talks should be held with its representatives on the ques-

1) Enver Hoxha's Letter addressed to the Korça District Party Committee, January 1943, Works, Vol. I. p. 171.

tion of the war against the invaders; but some «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs compromised as fascists and traitors should be exposed before the people.

Through these tactics the Party aimed at differentiating between the members in the ranks of the «Balli Kombëtar», attracting into the war against the invaders all those who would be willing to take such a step. Thus, the «Balli Kombëtar» as a whole would be compelled from below to adhere to the national-liberation movement, the anti-national policy and two faced stand of its chiefs would be exposed so that the people might single out and punish all those who would obstruct the union of the people and the war against aggressors.

The weakest point in the tactics of the «Balli Kombëtar» was the question of the all-out armed struggle against the Italian invaders, as it was in fact against it. Therefore, in order to expose the «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs, the CPA decided to deal the main blow precisely at this weak point. The masses of the people who were for the war against the invaders had to be convinced through their own experience that the «patriotism» of the «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs was false and that all their hysterical «patriotic» clamour was sheer demagoguery.

Determining the particular tactics to be carried out towards the «Balli Kombëtar», the CC of the CPA called on the Party organiza-

tions to put its instructions into practice to the letter. It regarded the question of the attitude to be taken towards this organisation as most intricate and requiring the greatest prudence. On the one hand, the Central Committee instructed, this matter had to be handled with patience and farsightedness, acting always with a cool head in order not to fall into the trap of the provocations of the enemy and bearing always in mind that:

«... the war cannot be waged by ourselves alone but together with the people as a whole, and for this reason we must take work with these nationalists seriously» 1)

On the other hand, the Central Committee instructed, no step backwards from the assigned road should be taken, because the union of all the forces of the country could be achieved only through a relentless armed struggle against the invaders, and not through bargains with the nationalists:

«We should neither tolerate that the dignity of our Party be trampled upon, be it even so slightly, nor should we allow stones to be put under the wheels of the National Liberation

1) Enver Hoxha, Letter to the Korça District Party Committee, January 1943. Works, Vol. I. p. 174.

War..., we should attempt to forestall their (the «Balli Kombëtar» adherents — **Edit.**) drive first by arguing with and persuading them, and only afterwards «à la manière forte» (by force — **Edit.**)»¹⁾

The situation after the founding of the «Balli Kombëtar» was fraught with great dangers for the Party and the National-liberation war, various strata of the population had no clear-cut political ideas as to the road they should take. Through demagogy and threats the «Balli Kombëtar» succeeded in winning over a part of the population, especially in the countryside. A number of wavering elements in the rural areas abandoned the National-liberation Front and went over to the «Balli Kombëtar». In view of this situation, Comrade Enver Hoxha instructed, «much, very much caution is required». «If we emerge with success» from this situation, «our cause will win, if we slip we will break our necks.»²⁾

1) Enver Hoxha, Letter to the Gjirokastra District Party Committee, February 23, 1943. Works, Vol I, p. 198.

2) Enver Hoxha, Ibidem, p. 199.

4. THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ALBANIA. DIRECTIONS ON THE GENERAL UPRISING

The decision to call a National Conference of the Party to elect its definitive Central Committee and to outline its forthcoming tasks had been taken as early as April 1942 by the Consultative Conference of the Party Activists. According to this decision the conference was to be held only after the Party had been purged of factionists and splitters and after the establishment of a sound unity. This had now been achieved.

In December 1942 the Communist Party of Albania received the directives of the Executive Committee of the Communist Internationale on the national-liberation war. These directives stressed the need to organize the national-liberation war against the Italian and German aggressors, to unit the people in one single national-liberation front, to have as many upright patriots and nationalists as possible participate in the war and in its leadership and demanded that Party slogans should not go beyond the demands of the National-liberation War.

This event was of great import for the young Communist Party of Albania. These directives showed that the political line of the Party defined at the foundation meeting and further concretized by the provisional Central Committee was a correct one. Besides, the CPA

had been recognized as a section of the international communist movement.

Under these circumstances, towards the end of December 1942, the provisional Central Committee decided to call the First National Conference of the CPA for March 1943.

Deepening Political Crisis in the Enemy Ranks While the Party was preparing for its First National

Conference events both in the international and national arena developed rapidly.

In the second half of 1942 the eyes of Albania, like all the rest of the world, were on Stalingrad, where the fate of the anti-fascist world war was being decided. The heroic struggle of the defenders of Stalingrad inspired the Albanian partizans and patriots in their liberation war against the invaders.

On February 2, 1943 the battle of Stalingrad ended in a brilliant victory of the Red Army. Military history had never before recorded a victory on such a scale, the encirclement of so large a strategical grouping and its annihilation.

The Stalingrad victory marked a radical turning point, not only for the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, but for the whole course of Second World War. «The downfall of the German fascist army began at Stalingrad». 1)

1) J. V. Stalin «On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union», Tirana, 1952, p. 100.

This event exerted a great influence on the extension of the national-liberation movements in the countries occupied by the fascist states. Amongst all the people belief in the inevitable total destruction of Hitlerite Germany was strengthened.

The Stalingrad victory was of profound importance for Albania, as well. Under the favorable conditions created for all the anti-fascist forces in the world, the liberation war of the Albanian people was further extended and intensified.

The armed struggle rose to a higher level: from isolated military acts to coordinated combat actions of two or more partizan units. Such actions, with the participation of a number of partizan units were those carried out against the Italian fascists at Voskopoja, Snosëm of Gramsh (January 1943), Patos, Selenicë of Vlorë and Libohovë regions, on the Kukës-Puka highway near Shëmëri (February). Within three months the number of liberated regions was almost doubled.

The authority of the national-liberation councils was enhanced parallel with the extension and consolidation of the partizan movement. Underground national-liberation councils were set up in a number of towns. The masses of the people were increasingly induced to look on these councils as the sole organs of the people's power, trusting and submitting to their decisions and ordinances alone.

On the eve of its First National Conference, the CPA scored another success of major importance in the struggle against the Trotskyites and opportunists in Albania: at the beginning of March 1943 the «Zjarri» group was totally crushed. The final blow was dealt them by Comrade Enver Hoxha's editorial, «A Few Words on some Servants of Fascism — the «Zjarri» group», published in «Zëri i Popullit» in January. This article exposed the Trotskyite tactics of the «Zjarri» group chiefs, who sometimes launched such leftist slogans as «for a proletarian revolution», «for the struggle against capital», for «the dictatorship of the proletariat», with the intention of winning the trust of the working masses, sympathizers of communism, or, at other times posed as «nationalists» with the intention of detaching the nationalist patriots from the National-liberation War and from the Communist Party. The article proved with facts, that the chiefs of the «Zjarri» group were enemies of communism and the Albanian people, that they were agents provocateurs and tools of the aggressors.

Many members of the «Zjarri» group, perceiving the treachery of their chiefs, abandoned them and went over unconditionally to the side of the CPA. Many of them were reeducated by the Party.

The wiping out of the «Zjarri» group dealt a heavy blow at the «Balli Kombëtar», as well. Playing their role of «communists» of the «Balli Kombëtar» the «Zjarri» group members had

propagated and defended the cause of the reactionary bourgeoisie.

The rapid growth of the national-liberation movement under the leadership of the CPA, as well as the defeats the fascist armies had suffered on the Eastern and other fronts of the Second World War still further deepened the crisis among the ranks of the invaders and their collaborators in Albania. In January 1943 the Italian fascists removed Mustafa Kruja from the office of Prime Minister for being incapable of suppressing the national-liberation movement, and set up a new Quisling government. But after only one month they were compelled to replace this government also with another one. The latter, too, had a very short existence. Meanwhile among the ranks of the Albanian soldiers, militiamen, and carabinieri, mass desertions began to take place.

The Italian governors themselves were compelled to admit the failure of their policy in Albania. On his part, Hitler, too, in February 1943 wrote to Mussolini that the Albanians, like the other peoples of the Balkans, «had shown very little proof of being trustworthy», and he described «the unbounded hatred» of the Albanian people against Germany and Italy as «a harsh reality» 1).

In order to preserve their occupation regime, the Italian fascists considered it impe-

1) «Secret letters exchanged between Hitler and Mussolini», Paris 1946, p. 150.

rative to intensify the use of violence. In February 1943 the fascist Viceroy Jacomoni was replaced, by General Pariani, who was regarded as being a man «who knows how to speak with force of arms and who is able to make use of this force». The Italian Command drew up a plan for a series of major operations in various regions of the country.

For this purpose the aggressors sought and found the support of the «Balli Kombëtar». In March 1943 the Central Committee of the «Balli Kombëtar» with the Italian commander-in-chief signed the secret Dalmazzo-Kelcyra protocol, 1) on the strength of which it undertook to prevent any assault against the Italian troops and to help them in their punitive operations in Southern Albania.

Simultaneously the Italian fascists appointed a member of the «Balli Kombëtar» 2) as Prime Minister of the Quisling government, proclaimed the creation of the «Albanian National Army» and of the «Albanian Gendarmerie», the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Italian State and the «Albanian State», the substitution of the «Albanian National Fascist Party» with the «Guard of Great

1) The protocol was so called, because it was signed by Renzo Dalmazzo, Commander-in-chief of Italian forces of occupation, and by Ali Kelcyra, member of the Central Committee of the «Balli Kombëtar».

2) Maliq Bushati.

Albania» and so on, all this within the framework of the «Union of Albania with Italy» and with Victor Emanuel III as «King of Albania».

Both parties to the protocol aimed at extracting advantages from the false ideas spread about the «creation of an independent Albanian State». While the Italian fascists sought to strengthen the shaken faith of the reactionary nationalists, to exploit them as far as possible in suppressing the national-liberation movement, the internal reaction headed by «Balli Kombëtar» hoped to seize the political power, however the situation might change.

On the Order of the Day – The Organization of the General Uprising

The deep crisis among the enemies, the extension of the armed struggle, the growth of the patriotic revolutionary consciousness of the people and the propitious international circumstances placed on the order of the day the organizing of the general uprising of the Albanian people and of the National-liberation Army.

In carrying out this task, a historic role was played by the Ist National Conference of the CPA. It was held in Labinot near Elbasan from March 17-22, 1943. 70 delegates and guests took part. The delegates had been elected at district Party conferences during February and at the beginning of March. They represented nearly 700 Party members.

The Conference fully endorsed the activity

of the provisional Central Committee and reached the conclusion that the political line of the Party was correct, having been corroborated by practice.

The problem of preparing the people for the general uprising and its organization occupied first place in the deliberations of the conference.

While stressing the great progress achieved in the anti-fascist struggle, the Ist National Conference drew the attention of the Party organizations to the difficulties that lay ahead, to the intricate problems which had to be solved in organizing the general uprising and ensuring complete victory. The masses of the people were under the direct pressure of the hostile propaganda of the «Balli Kombëtar» and other reactionary groups, under the unremitting menace of fascist terror. As a result, now and then cases of wavering and indifference, where the CPA policy was not understood as it ought to be, had been noticed; a section of the population was being deceived by the «Balli Kombëtar».

The pending tasks for strengthening the links of the Party with the broad masses of the people and preparing them for the general uprising were worked out through a sound criticism of sectarian and opportunist manifestations.

Reminding the communists that the workers were the pillar of the Party, the Conference urged the Party organizations to come into

closer contact with the masses of the workers in mines, factories, building sites and elsewhere, especially in the main industrial center of the country: at Kuçova, Selenica, sea ports, and so on.

This conference also condemned the erroneous opinion of Tuk Jakova who maintained that there was no proletariat in Albania.

This groundless point of view had been rejected already at the Meeting of the Communist Groups. By now the Albanian working class had its own Communist Party through which it was playing the leading role in the National-liberation War.

The Conference pointed out the progress which had been achieved in the work with the peasantry, the major part of whom regarded the Communist Party as their own. However, not all the peasantry in all the regions of the country, especially in the North, took an active part in the war against the invaders and traitors and accepted the leadership of the Party. The «Balli Kombëtar» had concentrated its efforts in the countryside. The Party had to face the urgent task of maintaining and strengthening its ties with the peasants, of detaching the «Balli Kombëtar» from the masses of the peasants. To a great extent, the preparation and the outbreak of the general uprising depended on the solution of this task. Emphasizing the very important role of the peasantry in the National-liberation War, the Conference directed:

«We should attach particular importance to work in the countryside, because the peasants make up the great majority of our people, and consequently it is there that we should look for the main source of our forces in the present war»¹⁾

The Conference considered the alliance of the working class with the peasantry as the surest weapon in the National-liberation War. It instructed the communists to broaden and to improve their political, explanatory, and organizational work in the countryside. First and foremost it was required that they should enliven the national-liberation councils and draw more and more peasants into the partizan units and territorial detachments. At the same time, the peasants should be roused in struggle against all sorts of taxes, fines, speculations, robberies, and all other forms of oppression and exploitation by fascism and its Albanian tools; illiteracy should be combatted and culture spread in the countryside.

Although the majority of the wealthy peasants had crossed or were crossing over to the «Balli Kombëtar» against the National-liberation War, the Conference demanded, as in the past, that the broad peasant masses should be

1) The Resolution of the 1st National Conference of the CPA. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 113.

drawn into the struggle without any discrimination as to class.

An important place at this Conference was taken up by the work with the youth and the women.

The enthusiasm and revolutionary spirit of the Albanian youth, their readiness to undertake any sacrifice, the tireless work of the Party and the Communist Youth organizations were stressed. Sectarianism, the concentration of the activity mainly on the school youth, the insufficient work done with the peasant youth and, finally, some trends of parallelism with the Party work, which had been observed in the Communist youth leadership, were criticized as shortcomings. The youth, the Conference emphasized, is the vital source of the new forces of the Party, the inexhaustible force of the national-liberation War. For this reason, the Party line towards the youth had to be more deeply understood, a sounder activity with the youth masses in the towns and the villages had to be carried out, the Party giving greater assistance in this so important sector.

The problem of the women was considered as a problem of prime importance and was viewed in its two principal aspects: drawing the masses of women into the national-liberation movement, and their social emancipation. Women could and should play an important role in the anti-fascist war and in social life. To attain this objective, it was necessary, above all, for the Albanian women themselves to

deeply understand the age-long slavery and the harsh oppression of the invaders, to rise up against them, becoming resolute fighters for the national liberation and a happy future. The communists were particularly instructed not to confine their work to intellectual women alone, but to go to the masses of housewives, peasant and worker women, as well.

In the work with the youth and women, the Conference gave first importance to their organization. It issued directives for the formation of the Albanian Anti-fascist Youth organization and the Anti-fascist Women's Front.

Great care was devoted to the attitude towards the nationalists and to collaborating with them.

The ranks of the nationalists were continually sifted by the revolutionary course of the National-liberation War. A good part of them, especially the representatives of the middle bourgeoisie had joined or were continuing to join the National-liberation Front. Others maintained a neutral attitude, having no trust in the people's forces, not thoroughly understanding the character of the National-liberation War, and being skeptical about the collapse of fascism. Those groups of nationalists, who represented the interests of the reactionary bourgeoisie and the big land-owners, either aligned themselves with the «Balli Kombëtar» or awaited a more favorable occasion to take a definite attitude towards the National-liberation War.

So complicated a sector as the work with the nationalists was fraught with the danger of committing grave blunders and taking open sectarian and opportunist postures. The 1st National Conference of the CPA criticized the lack of patience and tact shown by some communists and organizations towards uncommitted and wavering nationalists and those who had already joined the «Balli Kombëtar». It demanded the greatest forbearance to achieve a sincere unity or collaboration with the nationalist elements. The communists were charged with working tirelessly with all those who hated the aggressors and wished to fight against them, even with those who seemed obstinate, to convince them and make allies of them, however unstable they might be.

Still more vigorously criticized were those communists who had manifested tendencies of kneeling under the pressure of the reactionary bourgeoisie. Such irresolute elements had gone so far as to express the opinion that the Party should give up its individuality and merge with the national-liberation movement.

«These views», the Conference pointed out, «lead to the liquidation of the Party» 1)

1) Resolution of the 1st National Conference of the CPA. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 111.

It laid down the task of strengthening the individuality and the leading role of the Party within the National-liberation Front, still more popularizing the Communist Party as the standard-bearer of the struggle for the liberation of the people from fascism and for the rights of the poor strata of the population.

The Conference dealt in particular with the stand to be taken towards the «Balli Kombëtar» which was carrying out a two faced, reactionary, anti-national policy. Its chiefs were exposed as utterly conservative and reactionary elements, always ready for any kind of collaboration with the invaders. They opposed the National-liberation War because it opened the eyes of the people, raised their consciousness and drew them away from all those who were deceiving, oppressing and exploiting them.

In the «Balli Kombëtar», however, there were a considerable number of persons, especially in the countryside, who were eager to fight against the invader. «With them,» the Conference pointed out, «it is possible to build a common militant, national-liberation front». 1)

Only the participation of the «Balli Kombëtar» in the armed struggle against the fascist invaders could make it possible for them to join the National-liberation Front. All means should be used to bring this about, including even negotiations with the «Balli Kombëtar»

1) Resolution of the I National Conference of the CPA. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 104.

representatives. The conference, however, criticized as opportunist any idea that the whole work with the «Balli Kombëtar» in particular and the nationalists in general was to be carried out only through negotiations and political combinations. It was re-emphasized that the major importance was to be attached to the work with ordinary, honest, rank and file members of the «Balli Kombëtar» to establish militant links with and launch them into actions against fascism. The pressure from below and the armed struggle against the invaders would bring about a differentiation within the «Balli Kombëtar» and detach the masses from their reactionary chiefs.

The Party would continue more intensely the exposure of the defeatist propaganda of the «Balli Kombëtar», especially its slogan that «the time has not yet come»; it would fight all collaborators of fascism, including those «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs who had emerged or were emerging openly as such; it would expose the reactionary tactic about an allegedly «independent Albanian State» under fascist Italy.

In order to expand and strengthen the National-liberation Front and to proceed steadily towards the people's general uprising, Party organizations were required in the first place to always bear in mind the anti-fascist and national-liberation character of the war, and not to allow distortions of the Party policy in any field.

«We are not opportunists,» Comrade Enver

Hoxha pointed out, «nor have we forgotten in the least our more remote tasks, but before reaching that stage we must accomplish our most immediate tasks: to carry out the National-liberation War.»¹⁾

The Conference defined the organization of the National-liberation Army as the main link of the general uprising. This army was being founded in the course of the impetuous development of partizan warfare. Under these circumstances, it was decided:

«From the partizan and volunteer units to set up a regular National-liberation Army, which will be a force striking terror in the hearts of the invaders and a sure and powerful guarantee for the liberation of the people»²⁾

Accordingly, the organization of the army, the military detachments and units, of the district staffs and the General Staff, the problems of supplying them with arms, ammunition, clothing and food, questions of combat tactics and the political training of the fighters, etc, were worked out.

1) Enver Hoxha «The directives of Communist Internationale and the National-Liberation War». Report delivered at the meeting of the CC of CPA, February 1943, Works, Vol. I, p. 230.

2) Resolution of the First National Conference of the CPA. Important Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 114.

Emphasizing the absolute necessity and decisive importance of organizing the National-liberation Army for the general uprising to achieve victory over the enemy, the Conference demanded that the communists thoroughly appreciate that the principal sector of the Party work at that time was the army.

Further Strengthening Party Unity At this Conference, the organizational problems of the Party were discussed in close connection with its political line and with the fundamental question: the general uprising.

The strengthening of its unity was regarded as the greatest victory in the internal life of the Party. This was an absolute necessity, if the militant union of the people under the leadership of the Party in the National-liberation War was to be ensured. It approved the decisions taken by the Extraordinary Conference of June 1942, the measures adopted by the provisional Central Committee to smash the liquidatory factionist current, and its Marxist-Leninist stand against the «Zjarri» group.

Even after their expulsion from the Party ranks Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte not only did not give up, but, on the contrary, increased their hostile activity against the CPA and the national-liberation movement. At this time, the same stand had to be taken towards them as towards the other traitors and enemies to the Party, to the people and communism. The Con-

ference instructed the communists to always stand vigilant, to combat relentlessly all alien anti-Marxist ideas, all Trotskyites and deviators, and all deserters from the ranks of the Party and the national-liberation movement, never forgetting that the enemy would continuously attempt to infiltrate his agents into the ranks of the Party. The Conference considered the steel-like discipline of the Party as the prime condition for upholding and further strengthening Party unity. At the same time, in spite of the war conditions, it did not neglect the development of internal Party democracy. It laid down the tasks of opposing any attitude of commandism within the Party, of strengthening criticism and self-criticism. The communists, Party cells, and lower Party organs should not await everything from above. The strengthening of democracy and the development of initiative would raise the capabilities of the communists and of the Party organizations, would raise their leading role to a higher level, would further develop the sense of responsibility of the cadres and would ensure closer links with the masses.

A particularly important task was to establish Party organizations on a broad scale in the countryside,

«because without them the work of the Party and the National-liberation War will not be successful»¹⁾

1) Ibidem, p. 117.

The conference gave the instruction to improve the composition of the cadres by unhesitatingly elevating to posts of responsibility young communists who had given proof of outstanding self-sacrifice and allegiance to the cause of the people and of communism.

The Conference attached great importance on the ideological and political training of the communists. It stressed that in the complicated conditions the young Albanian communists would not be able to accomplish their difficult tasks with honour, unless they mastered the Marxist-Leninist teachings. The views of a number of communists who maintained that in time of war there was no need for books, but only for guns, were criticized. «We must have both books and guns,» the Conference stressed, and called on the communists to surmount all difficulties and obstacles in the study of Marxism-Leninism.

The Central Committee of CPA was elected, composed of 15 members and 5 alternate members, amidst whom were Enver Hoxha, Nako Spiru, Hysni Kapo, Gogo Nushi, Mehmet Shehu, Vasil Shanto, Ramadan Çitaku, Kristo Themelko, Petro Papi, Sadik Bekteshi. The conference also elected the Political Bureau of the CC with Enver Hoxha as Secretary General.

All the decisions were carried unanimously. In closing, the 1st National Conference expressed its confidence that the Communist Party of Albania would resolutely forge ahead

under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, accomplishing its important tasks with honour, thus ensuring complete victory for the Albanian people.

«No force on earth,» wrote the conference delegates to the Executive Committee of the Comintern, «will be able to make our Party renounce the great ideals of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, the ideals of the Communist Internationale»¹⁾.

The decisions of the 1st National Conference played a great historic role in the all-round strengthening of the CPA as a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary Party. The Conference worked out in greater depth and breadth the general Party line on the basis of the experience accumulated.

5. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION ARMY AND OF THE PEOPLE'S GENERAL UPRISING

After the 1st National Conference, the political and organizational work of the Party was concentrated mainly on preparing the people for the general uprising, first and foremost on organizing the National-liberation Army.

1) The minutes of the 1st National Conference of the CPA. PCA.

The Party called on the Albanian people, workers and peasants, young people and women, nationalists and patriotic intellectuals, to unite all their forces and place them at the service of the struggle against the fascist invaders and traitors. As many as possible should join the ranks of the partizans, so that new detachments could be created and the armed struggle intensified to the point of the general uprising.

«Our country's fate,» the Party taught the people, «depends on the war we are waging, and the more widespread and fierce this fight against the invaders, the sooner will come the day of liberation.»¹⁾

Exposing the «Balli Kombëtar» propagandists who trumpeted about that the Albanians could not fight against Italy, nor had they need to, as the latter would be crushed by the allies who would bring freedom and independence (!) to Albania, Enver Hoxha wrote in «Zëri i Popullit»:

«What would happen if the whole world were to reason like these «great politicians»?... One very simple thing

1) Call of the CC of CPA to the Albanian people, April, 1943. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 123.

would happen. . . tiny Albania would be a vassal of Mussolini forever. . . One for all and all for one. . . Russia, England, America wage their war with great armies, tanks and aircraft; but that does not mean that we should not carry on our war, be it with the only gun we possess. . . Wars are not waged with roses and cotton wool, but with suffering and bloodshed» 1)

Along with a broad political activity among the masses of the people, the communists increased their underground work with the Albanian soldiers, gendarmes, and policemen, among all those who had been deceived into the service of the invaders as well as among the Italian soldiers and workers stationed in Albania. Leaflets of political propaganda in Italian were distributed to the latter.

Responding to the call of the Party and inspired by the intensified activity of the communists, hundreds of young men and women came to fill the ranks of the partizan detachments. Most of the middle and high school students took to the mountains and joined the freedom fighters. The partizans were joined also by patriots who had deserted from the enemy military formations. In less than

1) Enver Hoxha «The Barbarities of Fascism and of its Henchman Mihailovich», March, 1943, Works, Vol. I, p. 246-247.

three months the number of the partizans had doubled. In May 1943, the first battalions and regional staffs were formed. By July, in Albania were operating 20 partisan battalions and 30 smaller fighting units.

Crushing a Faction in Vlora District

While the whole Party was occupied carrying out the tasks laid down by the 1st National Conference for the preparation of the General uprising, in the Vlora district Sadik Premte and Pali Tërova, enemies to the people and communism, in great secrecy set up a faction plotting against the CPA. In fact they had started organizing their faction precisely at the time when the principal Party leaders of the Vlora district were away for the 1st National Conference of the CPA. Taking advantage of the absence of the leadership and of the lack of a sound Marxist-Leninist vigilance, discipline, and training of the rank and file communists, they succeeded in deceiving and winning over a number of Party members, as well as the command of the Vlora Veteran Partizan Detachment. In April the factionists announced that they did not recognize the Party District Committee and called for the convocation of a so called «party conference» which was to revoke the district committee, and elect a new one with Sadik Premte and his close friends at its head.

The objective of this hostile faction was to seize the reins of the Party organization and

put under its control the command of the partizan detachments of the Vlora district, to exterminate the resolute communists and, first and foremost, the leading cadres, to end the liberation war in the district and then to carry their destructive work over to the other regions of the country, to overthrow the Central Committee and to completely smash the Communist Party. For this purpose, the traitors had reached an agreement with the «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs to act in collusion with them. Through machinations and slanders, with the support of the «Balli Kombëtar», they tried to raise the rural population in arms to strike a blow at the Party and the partizan detachments. Simultaneously they sent letters to a number of communists in various districts as well as to the Gjirokastra District Committee. In those letters, as a pretext for their revolt, they put forward the allegedly «unjust» decisions of the Party against Anastas Lula, Sadik Premte and other dissidents, and sought support.

The grave situation arisen in the Party organization of the Vlora district was correctly considered by the Central Committee as a great challenge to the whole Party. Secretary General Enver Hoxha went there to lead the fight against the faction.

The struggle to wipe out this faction was conducted under the slogan «the Party above everything». At gatherings, meetings and talks, in the first place, with individual Party members, Comrade Enver Hoxha, together with the

district committee secretaries Comrades Hysni Kapo and Mehmet Shehu, laid bare the real aims and the great danger inherent in the hostile activity of the faction. Almost all the misled communists thoroughly appreciated the mistakes they had been led into by the traitors and severed all connections with them. Information on Sadik Premte's treachery was given also to the people of the Vlora and Mallakashtra regions, who, together with the Party, took an active part in smashing up this faction. In May everything had come to an end. Sadik Premte, exposed as enemy of the people and of the Party, managed to escape by going to Vlora, then occupied by the Italian fascists.

After the liquidation of this hostile faction in the Vlora district in June 1943, the Party Central Committee, in a special circular letter, in which the roots and aims of this faction were laid bare, instructed all the communists:

«This painful experience should serve as a lesson for all the Party organizations, especially for the Vlora organization... Our fight against these base enemies should be carried out with the greatest severity... we should hate these people and ruthlessly deal them hard blows wherever they raise their heads»¹⁾

1) Circular Letter of the CC of the CPA, June 17, 1943. Principal Documents of the PLA Vol. I, p. 146.

The Vlora events served as a lesson for the entire Party. They helped the communists to thoroughly grasp the danger threatening the Party from the acts of these enemies, to reinforce their discipline and increase their vigilance and militant spirit in their revolutionnary activity. No other events such as those of Vlora were ever to take place up to the end of the war.

General Staff Set Up While the Party was fighting to wipe out the Sadik Premte faction, the partizans and volunteers were dealing successive blows at the fascist invaders throughout the country. The most powerful of these were the assaults on Italian troops near the Selenica mine (April 1943), at Leskovik (May), on the Struga-Dibra highway (June), at Përmet-Kuqar-Mezhgoran and Këçok-pass (outset of July). In the Përmet battle alone, the enemy lost over 500 killed. On July 6th the Albanian partizans also carried out their first attack on the German troops at Barmash on the Korça-Janina highway. At the same time, partizan fighting units together with the rural population beat back the military operations the Italian fascists undertook at Kurvelesh and Mesaplik (April), at Peza, Mallakstra, Tepelena and Shpirag (June). In these operations the invaders threw whole divisions against the partizans and the people. They massacred thousands of men and women, old people and children, burned down hundreds

of villages, seized entire herds of cattle, but failed to obtain any military, or political advantage. Their only achievement was to inflame still more the hatred and resentment of the people.

In the atmosphere of extraordinary revolutionary enthusiasm throughout the country, the Central Committee of the CPA proposed that the National-liberation General Council take up for discussion the problems of the war against fascism, which required urgent solution. The main problem to be tackled was the organization of an Albanian National-liberation Army.

The meeting of the General Council was held on July 4, 1943 in Labinot. There the formation of the General Staff of the National-liberation Army was agreed upon unanimously. Secretary General of the CPA Enver Hoxha was chosen political commissar of the General Staff. On July 10th, the National-liberation Council and the General Staff informed the people of this important event by means of a special proclamation.

The General Staff carried through the organization of the Albanian National-liberation Army (ANLA) and concentrated in its hands the strategic and operative leadership of the armed struggle against the invaders and traitors, working out at the same time the tactics of this war. In order to centralize the direction of the partizan detachments in the various regions, district staffs and the staff of

the 1st Operative Zone were set up. In some districts partizan groups subordinated to these staffs were formed. On August 15, 1943 the 1st Shock Brigade was set up. Comrade Mehmet Shehu was appointed as its commander.

At the time when the General Staff was formed, the ANLA was made up of about 10,000 fighters organized in permanent partizan detachments. Approximately twice as many volunteers served in the units of villages, towns and regions of both liberated and occupied areas.

Another most important measure to be taken by the General Staff was to organize the partizan military administration in the rear areas. «District» and «local commands» served as organs of this administration. They exercised the functions of the people's police in the liberated zones and were of great aid and support to the national-liberation councils and partizan detachments.

With the creation of the General Staff, the armed struggle entered a new stage, the stage of superior organization and rapid expansion, the stage of the people's general uprising. All over the country, National-liberation Army detachments and volunteer units backed up by the masses of the people rose to fight against the Italian and German invaders, the latter having just started to enter and move about on Albanian territory. The General Staff said in one of its orders:

«So long as the armies of the Italian and German invaders have not capitulated unconditionally, so long as there still remains even one single armed fascist soldier on the soil of our dear Fatherland, our war must be carried on with the greatest severity»¹⁾

Nearly 1,000 enemies were killed in the battles fought by the partizans and people in July in Mallakastra and Tepelena, against the Italian divisions, attempting to annihilate the national-liberation war bases in those regions. The fascists suffered heavy losses also at the Pojska battle on the Thana-pass-Pogradec highway. Bloody actions took place against the Italian troops especially in Burrel, in Shtamapass and Buall-pass, where about 3000 local inhabitants fought shoulder to shoulder with the partizans; in coordinated assaults in Zerqan and Sofracan of the Dibra district; in Kardhiq and Mashkullore of the Gjirokastra district; in Vithkuq of the Korça district (August); in Reç of the Shkodra district (August-September). In these encounters the enemy lost about 1,500 killed. During this period the partizans attacked the German troops also in Konispol (August)

1) Order of 30th July, 1943. Documents of the General Staff and the General Command of the Albanian National-liberation Army. Vol. I, page 32, Tirana, 1965.

and on the Elbasan-Tirana highway (early in September).

Frightened by the general uprising which had burst forth throughout the country, in July the fascist invaders proclaimed the entire Albanian territory an operational zone. The Italian Commander-in-chief had to admit that «the majority of the Albanian people, without class distinction, have risen up against Italy and against the stationing of our troops in Albania»¹). He urged his headquarters in Rome to increase the number of the occupation armed forces to enable him to cope with the situation in Albania.

The ANLA — the People's Revolutionary Army.

Through the General Staff of the ANLA, the Communist Party fully applied the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the people's armed uprising under the conditions of Albania and solved the fundamental military, political, and organizational problems of the National-liberation Army.

Even after the creation of the General Staff, the National-liberation Army was obliged to resort mainly to guerilla warfare, on account of the superiority of the enemy armed forces in number, and especially, in ammunition, transport, liaison, food and clothing. Under these

1) Comando 9-a Armata. Notizie mensili, Nr. 8, Agosto 1943. 9th Army Command Monthly Notice NO. 8, August 1943.

conditions frontal war would have been fatal for the national-liberation general armed uprising.

The fighting actions of the partizan detachments and units were essentially attacks carried out uninterruptedly and were outstanding for the masterly use of skilful manoeuvre, surprise, for the great initiative of the commands, of the brigades, groups and battalions and for the efficient use of the terrain.

Through its partizan warfare the Albanian National-liberation Army had also to resolve a series of strategical problems. The Party had assigned it the mission of liberating the whole country through its own resources and, at the same time, of securing the establishment of the people's power and serving as armed support of this power.

Such tasks could be completed only by a regular army. That is why the CPA exerted so much effort for setting up the National-liberation Army and developing it into a regular army of the Albanian people.

In the beginning brigades were to be the biggest formations of the people's regular army. The General Staff drew up a special plan for successively forming a number of brigades which would gradually include the greater part of the detachments, battalions and groups in the various districts.

With the organization of the National-liberation Army and its uninterrupted growth there grew likewise the need for trained military and

political cadres. But our Party did not possess such cadres at that time. Under war conditions, it was impossible for the General Staff and Council to open officer training schools. Commanders and commissars of the National-liberation Army were trained in the heat of fierce battle against the enemy from the ranks of the workers, peasants and patriotic intellectuals, from the staunchest partizan fighters, the bravest and most devoted to the cause of the people and Fatherland.

Even after the founding of the General Staff and to the end of the war, raiding the enemy's ammunition dumps and army depots was to remain the principal source of supplying the partizan units with arms and ammunition.

As to the supply of the detachments and units of the Albanian National-liberation Army with clothes and foodstuffs, these were mainly provided by the population of the cities and, especially, the countryside, as well as by raids organized against enemy depots. Regarding quarters, the partizan fighters were sheltered in the houses of the peasants and of the city dwellers in the liberated zones.

The Party attached primary importance to maintain the high morale of the army. Each partizan fighter was ready to lay down his life for his country's freedom, for the Communist Party. The fighters' moral force had its roots in their high consciousness. They knew well what they were fighting for, they thoroughly understood the correctness of the

political line of the Party, they were fully aware of the difficulties, privations and sacrifices required by the war, and they had unshakable confidence in the victory of the cause they were defending.

The moral figure of the partizan was raised still higher by his conscious discipline, his love for the people, for his comrades, his great honesty and exemplary conduct towards the population, his upholding the best traditions and customs of our country with the greatest care.

The high moral, political and military qualities of the partizan fighters were deep-rooted, for they were based on political conviction and democracy. Unlike the armies of the past which had to defend the interests of the reactionary classes, in the National-liberation Army the rank and file enjoyed equal rights and complete freedom to take part, along with their commanders and political commissars, in the political life of the country and in the solution of the various military, political and organizational problems of the army. All combat actions, political work, the activity of commanders, the partizans' and cadres' conduct, were submitted to the judgement and criticism of the collective. Orders from above embodied the demands of the rank and file fighters and the people themselves. Debates and a broad exchange of opinion were organized to find the best way to carry out these orders and the decisions and directives of the Party.

Democracy within the ranks of the National-liberation Army was the expression of its character as a people's army and derived from the principle that the masses play the decisive role as the makers of history.

This democracy in no way weakened military discipline, but, on the contrary, strengthened and made it more conscious; likewise, it did not damage the centralization of leadership, but, on the contrary, helped in realizing it.

The masterly use of the tactics of partisan warfare and the extremely high morale of the National-liberation Army made it possible to neutralize and overcome the enemy's superiority in numbers and means of warfare.

It was the Communist Party which forged the high moral, political and military qualities of those who fought in the ranks of the National-liberation Army.

Brigade, group, battalion and company commissaries led the political work of the Party in the army detachments. At the same time, the political commissars were members of the staffs of the various partizan fighting units. The deputy commissars performed the duties of Party secretaries. The Party sent most of its best cadres to develop the political work in the army.

Communist youth organizations were set up in the army with a view to helping Party organs and cells.

Political commissars and deputy-commissars and Party and youth organizations

carried out a broad political and educational work in the partizan fighting units, ensuring the vanguard role of the communists and of the young communists in the performance of their combat duties. They educated the fighters in the spirit of patriotism and loyalty to the Fatherland, the people, and the Communist Party. They imparted to them the revolutionary fighting traditions of the Albanian people, Marxist-Leninist ideas, the principles of proletarian internationalism, love for all the peoples fighting against fascism. They implanted in the minds of the partizans and the people confidence in victory, and saw to it that the orders of the General Staff and various army commands were carried out to the letter.

The Communist Party enjoyed the confidence of and wielded the highest authority among the fighters and cadres of the National-liberation Army. The Party had won such confidence and authority through the example the communists set in battle and in their everyday life.

All the problems of the construction of the army, of its strategy and tactics and its military actions were solved in line with the directives and instructions of the Central Committee. Secretary General Enver Hoxha was the principal organizer, leader and teacher of the National-liberation Army.

The formation of the National-liberation Army was a great political and military victory of the Party. The Communist Party of Albania,

thus, succeeded in accomplishing one of its most decisive and difficult tasks.

**Sham Patriotism of the
«Balli Kombëtar» Ex-
posed**

This victory was achieved not only in the heat of battle against invaders and traitors, but also through a harsh political struggle with internal reaction, with the «Balli Kombëtar».

To sabotage our armed struggle against the invaders, the «Balli Kombëtar» resorted to all means and tricks ever used by the enemies of the people and revolution: slander, demagoguery, frightening people with the «Communist Bogy», threats, intrigues, lies, false promises, the foulest murders of communists, of partizans and people's council members, striking secret agreements with the invaders in order to coordinate their actions against the revolutionary forces. In some cases, the «Balli Kombëtar» succeeded in duping whole villages. There were peasants, instigated or threatened by the «Balli Kombëtar», who refused to shelter the partizan fighters in their villages, to attack the Italian army during military operations, or to recognize the national-liberation councils.

Had such occurrences become widespread, they would have led to the neutralization of the peasantry, which formed the basis and main source of the national-liberation forces, thus jeopardizing the ultimate victory in the National-liberation War. This danger was aver-

ted by the resolute and well pondered stand and actions taken by the Party, relying on its deep knowledge of the objective conditions, of the actual situation in the country.

The overwhelming majority of the peasantry wanted to fight against the invaders for the liberation of the country. This aspiration was fulfilled in actual deeds only by the Communist Party. The «Balli Kombëtar» was opposed to fighting the fascists. This stand of the «Balli Kombëtar» was in direct opposition to the aspirations and demands of the peasantry in particular and the people in general.

In the spring of the year 1943 a number of peasants misled by the «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs, heeded their «advice» and did not offer armed resistance to the Italian troops operating in their regions, nor did they leave when the latter entered their villages, believing that the fascists would do them no actual harm. However, the fascists burned their villages indiscriminately and barbarously massacred the men, women and children who had remained there. This was a bitter lesson for all those who had been deceived by the reactionaries.

In order to wreck the National-liberation Front, the «Balli Kombëtar» organization worked ever more closely with the invaders and, together with them, took part in actions against the national-liberation councils and partizan fighting units. The «Balli Kombëtar» gangs gave direct help to the Italian army in its punitive operations against the partizans and people

of the Kurvelesh, Peza, Mallakastr, Tepelena, Shkodra and other regions. The people's anger at the line pursued by the «Balli Kombëtar» increased.

The Communist Party came out in support of the peasants in resisting the fascist plunder of their grain, dairy products and wool. Great success was achieved in this direction.

Meanwhile the «Balli Kombëtar», far from advising the peasants not to hand over their agricultural products to the invaders and the Quisling government, actually helped the enemy to plunder them. These actions of the «Balli Kombëtar» increased their alienation from the masses.

Through extensive political work, the Communist Party propagated its line, the program of the National-liberation Front, denounced the manoeuvres of the fascist enslavers and Albanian traitors, exposed the substance and the real aim of each action and stand taken by the «Balli» chiefs and gangs against the Albanian nation and people.

Thus the Albanian peasants were gradually convinced through their own experience that real victory over the fascist invaders and the traitors could only be achieved under the leadership of the Communist Party. The peasants were ever more deeply comprehending that their age-long dream of liberty and land could be achieved only with the Party, whereas the «Balli Kombëtar» did not want to do away with oppression and exploitation.

The more the demagoguery and treachery of the «Balli Kombëtar» was exposed, the more the peasants and representatives of the other strata of the population rallied around the Communist Party. The masses of the people throughout Albania derided the «Balli Kombëtar» wait-and-see tactics with satire such as: «Once there was a big grey ass which waited and waited and didn't crop grass», nicknaming it «Bishti Kombëtar» (in Albanian *bisht* = tail).

The Mukje Agreement Rejected

The situation that had arisen required that everything possible should be done to avert a fratricidal war which was being instigated in various ways by the fascist invaders. On the proposal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, this question was taken up at the July session of the General Council. The Council decided to make a final attempt to turn the «Balli Kombëtar» organization from its road of treason and draw it into the national-liberation struggle. For this purpose, a delegation was appointed to negotiate with the «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs on the following points: The «Balli kombëtar» was to join in the war against the invaders and to cease its activities against the National-liberation movement and the Communist Party; it was to purge its ranks of fascists, bandits and criminals; it was to recognize the national-liberation councils; through the war and common efforts against fascism to lay the basis

for holding a conference, in which the «Balli Kombëtar» would participate, where all questions of unity would be discussed and solved.

The first meeting with the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains took place in Tapiza near Tirana, and the second one in Mukje near Kruja on August 1st-2nd.

The «Balli Kombëtar» chiefs agreed to meet the delegation of the General National-liberation Council for the sole aim of strengthening their position which had been severely shaken by the exposure of their treachery, so they could seize political power when Italy capitulated, which following the downfall of Mussolini, was obviously only a matter of days.

In the discussions, Ymer Dishnica, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, who led the delegation, gave way under the pressure and demagogy of the reactionary bourgeoisie and of the landlords. Far from stubbornly defending the line of the Communist Party and taking the correct stand agreed upon by the General Council towards the «Balli Kombëtar», in Mukje he accepted an agreement which was in direct opposition to the interests of the national-liberation struggle and the Albanian people. Another member of the delegation, Mustafa Gjinishi, played an altogether negative role, coming out at this meeting as an ardent supporter of the claims of the reactionary bourgeoisie.

The Mukje agreement regarded the «Balli Kombëtar» organization, which had sabotaged

the National-liberation War and helped the occupiers in various ways, as a factor against fascism on an equal footing with the National-liberation Front. Instead of demanding of the «Balli Kombëtar» to join in the war against the invaders, Ymer Dishnica and Mustafa Gjinishi agreed to the demagogic demands of the «Balli Kombëtar» for the «proclamation of independence» and for the «overthrow of the fascist assembly of April, 12th,» in which almost all the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains had participated and which had never been recognized by the Albanian people. They accepted the «ethnic Albania» hoax, a weapon of the fascists and reactionaries to beguile the Albanian people into forgetting who was their main enemy at that time and stirring up antagonisms against the neighboring peoples. They accepted the proposal of the reactionaries to set up a «Committee for the Salvation of Albania» with equal numbers of representatives from the «Balli Kombëtar» and the National-liberation Front. This committee was to be vested with the attributes of a provisional government.

The General Council and the power of the National-liberation Councils, which arose from the people's revolutionary struggle, were completely forgotten. Without any authority from the General Council and of the Central Committee of the Party, Ymer Dishnica and Mustafa Gjinishi grunted their approval to a proclamation of the «Committee for the Salvation of Albania», through which the people

were to be informed of the Mukje decisions. Thus they fell into the reactionaries' trap.

The Communist Party of Albania was not against any agreement with the «Balli Kombëtar». It had striven to draw the «Balli Kombëtar» into the struggle against the foreign invaders and, on this basis, to make it join the National-liberation Front, had conducted negotiations and accepted the formation of «coordinating commissions» for the struggle against fascism, and so on. When the General Council decided on July 1943 to conduct negotiations with the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains, it was a last attempt to turn the «Balli Kombëtar» organization away from the road of treason to that of the struggle against the invaders. This attempt had to be made in the interests of the Fatherland and of the National-liberation War. But the Mukje agreement violated the interests of the people and of the Fatherland. It led the people astray and drew their attention away from the war against the invaders, giving the idea of a false union reached through bargainings from above. The Mukje agreement would have reduced to naught the great victories achieved in the anti-fascist war under the leadership of the Communist Party and even worse, paved the way for political power to pass into the hands of the reactionary bourgeoisie who had not fired a shot and had not undertaken to fight against the foreign enslavers, but, on the contrary, had actually collaborated with them. Therefore, such an

agreement was a betrayal of the people and revolution.

For this reason, on the initiative of Comrade Enver Hoxha, the Central Committee, immediately and without hesitation rejected the Mukje agreement.

Right from the moment he had received the first documents couched in such ambiguous terms, Secretary General Enver Hoxha apprehended that, at the Mukje meeting, «the orchestra had played under the baton of the «Balli Kombëtar» and, expressing great concern, instructed Ymer Dishnica:

«... not to forget the interests of our Party. It should continue to be the organizer and leader of the National-liberation War, remaining as such and not becoming a faction in this war»¹).

When the treachery became quite clear he called the agreement «a complete capitulation to the «Balli kombëtar», and wrote to Ymer Dishnica: **«You have fallen head over heels into the positions of the «Balli Kombëtar»... This agreement, which completely violates our political line... is denounced by the Central Committee»** ²)

While informing the communists of this

1) Enver Hoxha. Letter addressed to Ymer Dishnica, August 6th, 1943, Works, Vol. I, p. 334.

2) Enver Hoxha, Letter addressed to Ymer Dishnica, August 9th, 1943. Works, Vol. I, p. 340.

grave violation of the decisions of the General Council and the political line of the Party, the Central Committee expressed its determination not to agree in any way whatsoever to share the fruits of the liberation war of the Albanian people and the people's democratic power with the «Balli kombëtar» or any other opponents of this war and this power.

The surrender of Ymer Dishnica and Mustafa Gjinishi caused confusion in the ranks of the people and played into the hands of the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains who used the Mukje agreement in their fight against the Communist Party. Under these circumstances, the Party organizations had to carry out a broad explanatory work, exposing the reactionary content of the said agreement and the objectives of the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains who, with the help of the invaders, were attempting to seize the fruits of the liberation war of the Albanian people.

**The National-liberation
Councils — The Only
People's Power**

In order to further strengthen the unity of the Albanian people in their antifascist war, the IInd National-liberation Conference was held in Labinot from the 4th to 9th of September 1943.

The Conference took up the question of the people's democratic power as its principal issue. With the deepening of the revolutionary process of the war this question was assuming

an ever greater importance, the more so as «Balli Kombëtar» and reaction in general were exerting every effort to take State power into their hands.

Under these circumstances the Conference launched the slogan:

«to have the National-liberation Councils recognized as the sole people's power in Albania» 1)

The IInd National-liberation Conference adopted a series of measures to strengthen and deepen the democratic basis and to centralize the people's power in Albania. It increased the General Council from 7 (elected at the Peza Conference) to 62 members. It worked out and adopted the Statutes and the Regulations of the national-liberation councils, documents of constitutional importance. It was decided to set up executive organs with their administrative-economic apparatus, at the General and district councils.

The Conference recognized the Anti-fascist Youth Union, the Anti-fascist Womens' Union, the Union of Anti-fascist University Students (recently created under the guidance of the Communist Party) as integral parts of the National-liberation Front and issued instructions

1) Resolution of the 2nd National-liberation Conference, September 8th. 1943. Documents of the Higher Organs of the National-liberation People's Power, p. 58.

to give them the greatest help and support possible. Like the National-liberation Front itself, they were not class, but mass organizations of the young people and of the women of the different classes and strata of the country, and had no program other than that of the National-liberation Front.

At the Labinot Conference the agreement of Mukje was publicly condemned as an act that violated the fundamental principles of the Peza Conference and ran counter to the interests of the war and the unity of the Albanian people.

As the «Balli Kombëtar» organization continued its hostile activity against the national-liberation movement and pursued its collaboration with the Italian fascists, it was decided to take a clear cut stand against it, to expose its anti-national and anti-people's policy, to denounce its demagogical slogans of unity, its attempts to sow discord and instigate fratricidal war. At the same time, instructions were issued not to reject, but to make use of every chance to collaborate with the «Balli Kombëtar» and other political groups outside the national-liberation movement, but on the basis of the decisions of the Peza Conference and, above all, only if the «Balli Kombëtar» and other groups would participate in the uncompromising and relentless war against the invaders, and if they recognized the national-liberation councils as the sole people's power.

Such a stand would open the eyes of those

who had been duped and would divide them from the reactionary chieftains.

The Labinot Conference did not harbour any hopes that the «Balli Kombëtar» would give up its perfidious ways. It pointed out to the people that the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains were going further down the road of collaboration with the invaders and of overt war against the national-liberation movement.

Upholding the decisions of the Labinot Conference, the Central Committee of the Communist Party instructed the district committees

«... we should make it clear to the people that the «Balli Kombëtar» is an assembly of splitters and instigators of fratricidal war. We should make the people see that the policy pursued by the «Balli Kombëtar» chieftains will bring us to armed clashes with them, make all the people revolt against them so that the historic responsibility for this... to fall, as in truth it should..., on the «Balli Kombëtar» organization; we should prepare ourselves, prepare all those of the national-liberation movement, prepare the people as a whole for a clash with the «Balli Kombëtar»; the «Balli Kombëtar» is preparing for this clash and it should not catch us unawares...»¹⁾

1) Directive of the CC of the CPA, September 10, 1943. Principal documents of the PLA. Vol. I, p. 161.

On the final day of the Conference, the news of the capitulation of fascist Italy was announced. This event changed the situation in Albania. The Communist Party of Albania drew new tasks from this newly created situation.

6. INTENSIFYING THE WAR AGAINST THE NEW GERMAN INVADERS AND CRUSHING REACTION

The capitulation of fascist Italy was announced on September 8, 1943. This came about as a result of the heavy defeats the German and Italian armies had suffered on the Soviet-German front, in North Africa, and the landing of allied troops in Southern Italy. Italy's capitulation was also brought about by the rapid growth of the resistance of the Italian masses against the war and fascism.

The Albanian people, who for four and a half years had waged a fierce war to throw off the yoke of the Italian invaders, had made their own valuable contribution to this victory.

The Situation After the Capitulation of Italy and the Country's Occupation by the German Nazis

The General Staff, in compliance with the capitulation agreement, immediately called on the Italian occupation army either to lay down its arms and surrender or to join the Albanian National-liberation Army and fight

against Hitlerite Germany. The Italian Commander in Chief, however, failed to respond to this call. He ordered the Italian troops in Albania to surrender to the Germans. Only some 15 thousand Italian officers and men who disobeyed this order, surrendered to the National-liberation Army. The Communist Party of Albania saw to it that all those who had surrendered should be received everywhere in a fraternal manner, in spite of the atrocities the Italian fascist army had committed in Albania. All those responsible for war crimes would be brought to account and severely punished during or after the war, whenever they were caught.

Of the Italian soldiers who had surrendered to the National-liberation Army forces, about 1500 men agreed to join the ranks of the Albanian partizan units and fight arms in hand against German nazis. The «Antonio Gramsci» battalion was formed as part of the First Storm Brigade of the Albanian National-liberation Army. The Italian soldiers who did not wish to fight were sheltered in the liberated zones of the country, where they were hospitably received by the Albanian peasants, in spite of the extraordinary economic difficulties they were up against.

In place of the Italian invaders in Albania came the German aggressors. They were met with fierce fighting everywhere. On the Struga-Librazhd highway, at Drashovica near Vlora, at the Kardhiq bridge near Gjirokastra,

along the Elbasan-Tirana highway, at Kruja, Konispol, Delvina and Saranda, at Bilisht, along the Korça-Leskovik highway, and at other places, the National-liberation Army units inflicted heavy losses on the new invaders and prevented them from deploying over the entire territory of Albania. The major part of the regions and a number of towns remained free.

The German invaders stationed in Albania an armed force of about 70,000 men. Once established in Albania, they assumed the task of crushing the national-liberation movement and of making the Albanian people a satellite of Germany. To attain this objective, the nazis at first made use of tactics which aimed at disguising the occupation regime and at deceiving the people who had allegedly won their «national independence» through «the creation of a sovereign Albanian State». They loudly proclaimed that they had come «as friends» just to «liberate Albania from the Italian yoke»; that the German army «would guarantee the independence of the Albanian people, if they would give their assistance in the war against communism»! They called on all those who had taken to the mountains to surrender their weapons and return to their homes, as their mission had been accomplished with the help of the German army! The Hitlerites instigated and aided the traitors to proclaim «the secession of Albania from Italy» and to create the organs of «the independent Albanian State» such as the «Executive Committee», the

«Regency», the «Albanian Government», the «Albanian Army», the «Albanian Gendarmerie», and so on. These manoeuvres were very loudly propagated by the reactionaries.

But no matter what tactics they resorted to, the Hitlerites could by no means conceal the aggression they had committed against Albania. The Communist Party had made it clear in due time to the Albanian people that the German nazis were the most savage enemies of mankind. On the first day they set foot on Albanian soil they razed the village of Borova to the ground and massacred the entire population, even children in cradles.

Neither were the Germans able to conceal the establishment of a barbarous regime of occupation in Albania. Along with their proclamations of «respecting» and «guaranteeing» the national independence of Albania, they issued directives on the disarmament of the whole population, on shooting or hanging from 10 to 30 Albanians for every German soldier killed, for every act of sabotage, for all concealed weapons, military materials or food-stuffs! A curfew was imposed throughout the country. The «Regency» and the Quisling government could take no decision without the approval of the German occupation command. The Hitlerites seized the National Bank and all the economic resources of the country.

The Albanian people, under the leadership of the Communist Party, were not deceived by

the Nazi demagogy. They carried on their struggle against the new aggressors with even greater vigour. Before one month had passed the Hitlerites were fully convinced that the Albanian people were mortal enemies to them as well as to any collaborationist «Regency» and «Albanian government».

In the Autumn of the year 1943 the National-liberation Army detachments and units launched powerful attacks on the Hitlerite troops and reactionary forces throughout the country, killing thousands of them. On October 18, 1943 the ANLA artillery shelled the Quisling assembly convened on the initiative of the German command. On that same day, the CPA distributed in Tirana leaflets with the headlines: «How do the Albanian people reply to the Gestapo assembly? WITH GUNS!»¹⁾

Besides the battles fought by the Anti-fascist Liberation army, various acts of diversion were carried out by guerilla units in occupied regions and cities. These actions became more frequent and better organized.

The Central Committee of the Party followed the course of events with greatest attention and carried out vigorous activity in order that war against the new invaders should be waged unremittingly and more fiercely throughout the country. The moment it was informed that the Berat District Staff led by Gjin Marku had

1) Proclamations and leaflets of the CPA 1941-1944. Tirana 1962, p. 310.

allowed the German soldiers to enter the liberated town of Berat for a short time, it stigmatized this act as a crime and severely censured the Berat District Staff.

«We might have expected anything from a partizan command, — Comrade Enver Hoxha wrote at that time to the Berat District Staff, — but to come to terms, be it even for a single minute, with the greatest enemy of our people and of mankind, this was beyond our imagination... Even if you were to lose the entire army, even if the whole work already achieved were to be imperilled, never at any time should you have come to terms with the barbarous nazis» 1).

A new situation arose in Albania following the occupation of the country by German troops. The distinctive feature of this situation was the aggregation of all reactionary groups, trends and forces around the new invaders and their going over to open general war against the national-liberation movement.

Internal reaction felt more and more incapable of coping with the situation with their own forces. The helplessness of the reactionaries and the concurrence of their objectives with those of the German invaders prom-

1) Letter addressed to the Berat District Staff. November 5, 1943. Central Party Archives.

pted the Albanian traitors to seek the open backing and protection of the nazis and to put their forces under the German command.

Crushing Internal Reaction — an Indispensable Condition for Successfully Fighting the Invaders

The «Balli Kombëtar» organization, the tribal chieftains, the upper clergy of the Catholic Church, and all the fascist politicians, immediately aligned themselves with the German invaders. The chiefs of the «Balli Kombëtar», the representatives of the clergy and other reactionary trends took office in the puppet regency, government and other high organs of the Quisling administration.

Now that the «Balli Kombëtar», persisting on their way of treason, had openly joined the German nazis in their war against the national-liberation movement, the Communist Party and the General Council were obliged to reply to these tools of the invaders with armed struggle.

«Under present circumstances, any unity of actions with the «Balli Kombëtar», the Central Committee of the CPA instructed, «is out of question. Now it is a matter of crushing «Balli Kombëtar». 1)

1) Letter of the Central Committee of the CPA, October 1, 1943. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 177.

It was precisely at this time that the treason of Abaz Kupa and the Zogites became apparent. Having refused to take part in the Labinot Conference, Abaz Kupa deserted the National-liberation Front. He had joined the Front with ulterior motives of enhancing Zog's credit and hindering the growth, the influence and the leading role of the Communist Party. He had always acted according to the instructions of the British imperialists, who, by means of the Zogites, aimed at securing control of the national-liberation movement and post-war Albania. Having been unable to achieve this aim following the capitulation of Italy, Abaz Kupa thought that the propitious moment had come to annihilate the National-liberation Front and the Communist Party. In September 1943, with the aid of the British, he announced the formation of the «Legality» organization, and in November of the same year, convened a so-called «congress» of that organization. The «Legality» undertook the task of detaching the Albanian people from the Communist Party and rallying them around Abaz Kupa and his men who were to reestablish Zog's regime. Accordingly, the Zogites launched a propaganda campaign to represent Zog's regime as the only «legal» regime, idealizing it as a «regime of liberty, of tranquillity, order, peace and justice»! They then demanded that the various political parties, including the national-liberation movement and the Communist Party, rally under the banner of the «Legality»! At the same time

Abaz Kupa joined forces with the Quisling government and the «Balli Kombëtar» and relied on the German invaders for support.

The nazis were willing to give Abaz Kupa and the «Legality» all their aid and support, although they well knew that these were puppets in the hands of the British. The Hitlerites and the Zogites were united by their immediate common objectives, namely, to crush the Communist Party and to do away with the national-liberation movement.

The Communist Party exerted all its efforts and made use of every possible means to persuade Abaz Kupa and the Zogites to give up their inimical stand towards the national-liberation movement and to join the armed struggle against the Germans, by aligning themselves with the National-liberation Front. Regarding the proclamation of the «Legality», it made clear once again that it was not opposed to the creation of a Zogite party or any other political party in the country, but on one indispensable condition namely that all parties which might be created should fight against the invaders and take part in the common National-liberation Front.

In the actual circumstances, no party, no organization and no armed force outside the National-liberation Front could remain neutral, but was absolutely bound to serve the enemy. Therefore, despite all the attempts of Abaz Kupa to carry out the instruction of the British not to attract attention as a collaborator of

the German invaders, he could not but fail to do so. At the beginning of December, the National-liberation General Council, after due deliberation on the criminal and anti-national activity of Abaz Kupi, decided officially on his expulsion from the Council and the General Staff. At the same time, it issued instructions to denounce him as an enemy of the Albanian people and the «Legality» as a traitor organization.

The passing over of the entire reaction to open armed struggle against the National-liberation Army and the National-liberation Front together with the German invaders denoted that a deep differentiation process of the internal political class forces was taking place. The revolutionary movement sorted out these forces into two blocs — mortal enemies to each other. On the one hand, the overwhelming majority of the Albanian people — the working class, the poor and middle peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the major part of the medium bourgeoisie of the cities, the patriotic intellectuals and some individual elements from the higher strata, were united and organized in the National-liberation Front under the leadership of the Communist Party. The principal striking force of the National-liberation Front was the National-liberation Army, while its external support was the Anti-fascist World War, first and foremost, the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. On the other hand — the landlords, the tribal chieftains, the reactionary bourgeoisie, the

majority of rich peasants, the reactionary intellectuals, and the clergy, joined heterogeneous organizations and groups which had no sound connections between them. The reaction had the detachments of the gendarmes and the «Balli Kombëtar» bands, the Zogites, and tribal chieftains as its armed force. The reactionary organizations and armed forces did not constitute an independent bloc in itself; they were at the service of the nazi invaders and relied mainly on their support.

In these circumstances, the Communist Party, considering the struggle against reaction as an integral part of the general struggle against the invaders, issued the instruction that all the reactionary organizations and armed forces outside the National-liberation Front should be crushed by force of arms. The General Staff gave orders to the partisan detachments and units to purge all the liberated regions of reactionaries. The war could not have been successfully carried on and victory over the German nazis could not have been achieved without, at the same time, fighting their obedient tools.

The broad masses of the people immediately supported the Party's call to wipe out the «Balli Kombëtar», the «Legality» and the other reactionary forces. They themselves demanded that such action be taken, because out of their own experience they had been convinced of the treachery of these organizations.

While it was compelled to fight, arms in

hand, against the «Balli Kombëtar» and the «Legality», the CPA did not retreat from its general line laid down at its Constituent Meeting and at its First National Conference. Just as previously, the national-liberation character of the war and the principle of rallying the entire Albanian people in the National-liberation Front without discrimination as to class, political opinion, religious belief or region, were upheld. The National-liberation Front remained open to all those «Balli Kombëtar» adherents, Zogites and gendarmes whose hands were not stained with blood and who had abandoned the ranks of the reactionary organizations and armed forces. Instructions were issued that unceasing efforts should be made to detach the misled from their treacherous leaders.

In particular, the Party saw to it that there should be no slackening of the war against the German aggressors, who remained the chief enemy.

No Foreign Interference In the National-liberation War In the Autumn of 1943 National-liberation War of the Albanian people was confronted with another peril which came from the British — U.S. allies.

As far back as May 1943 representatives of the Anglo-American Mediterranean Command had come uninvited to Albania. A British military mission to the General Staff of the National-liberation Army was

established, to be followed later by an American military mission. There were British officers attached to some partizan commands as well. They justified their arrival in Albania allegedly as dictated by the common military interests in the war against Hitlerite Germany, and undertook, in words only, to aid the National-liberation Army with needed arms and war materials. In reality they came to Albania mainly for political aims. With these aims in view, they carried out subversive activity and became an obstacle to the war against the invaders and their tools in Albania. The British - U. S. allies gave the greater part of their aid to the opponents of the national-liberation movement, to the reactionary forces. They set up special military missions to these forces and supplied them with arms, ammunition, clothing and gold. When the «Balli Kombëtar» and the «Legality» aligned themselves with the Germans against the National-liberation Front, the British - U. S. military missions neither departed nor cut off their aid. The Anglo-American Mediterranean Command began to exert great pressure on the General Staff not to launch any attacks on the reactionary forces. It demanded that the British and American officers should be recognized as playing the role of arbitrators in the internal affairs of the Albanian people.

As was proved in practice, the governments of Great Britain and of the U.S.A. had not the least intention of giving real aid to the national-

liberation movements in the Balkans. They aimed solely at preventing the victory of people's revolutionary forces, at destroying the authority and the influence of the communist parties, and establishing Anglo-American control in the Balkan countries.

The Communist Party saw in the Anglo-American interference a threat to the victory of the revolution and national independence, and without any hesitation took a resolute stand against it. The General Staff warned the allied missions to give up interfering in the internal political and military affairs of Albania and obstructing the prosecution of the Albanian people's war against the Hitlerite invaders and their servants. All the British and American officers who continued to collaborate with the reactionary forces would be regarded as enemies. The Central Committee instructed the Party District Committees, that allied missions

«shoul not interfere in our internal affairs, they should in no way be regarded as arbiters between us and the reaction. If our war against the reaction is agreeable to them, so much the better, otherwise the door is wide open for them to leave» 1).

Any allied representative who would not observe the principle of non-interference in our

1) Directive of the CC of the CPA, November 3, 1943. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 200.

internal affairs would be escorted to the General Staff Headquarters and would forthwith be expelled from Albanian soil.

This revolutionary, resolute, and correct attitude toward the Anglo-American allies was of major importance for the further development of the National-liberation War and for the fate of the people's revolution.

**First and Foremost
Strengthen the Peo-
ple's Power and the
ANLA**

In the new situation after the capitulation of fascist Italy, the question of the political power became of even greater importance. Following the failure of the Mukje agreement — the most perilous attempt to undermine the power of the people's councils and the leading role of the Communist Party, the reaction resorted to new means to crush that power. The National-liberation Councils were to be annihilated by armed force. In their stead, with the connivance and support of the German invaders, the former State power of the landowners and the bourgeoisie was to be re-established. The nazis unreservedly supported the idea of the ex-king Zog regime put forward by the «Legality». This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that they had established the Quisling «Regency», had appointed Zogites to top posts in the collaborationist government and gendarmerie, by the freedom the «Legality» enjoyed to publish and to distribute its press

organs and carry on its activity in the cities and regions occupied by German troops. The reinstatement of the Zog regime was supported particularly by the British and American governments. At the time, Churchill held talks in London with ex-king Zog on the creation of a royal Albanian government in exile.

The Communist Party and the Albanian people dealt crushing blows to those manoeuvres. Confronted with this situation, the Central Committee instructed:

«The first question to be taken up is that of State power... the establishment of National-liberation Councils everywhere, their reinforcement and their protection from all attempts on the part of the «Balli Kombëtar» or any other party to sabotage them, or to combat them overtly. On this matter, there should be no ambiguity: there should exist no other power than that of the National-liberation Councils. On this issue there should be no compromise and duality»¹⁾

The Berat and Gjirokastra District Committees were severely criticized for failing to take immediate steps, after the capitulation of fascist Italy, to do away with the apparatus of the former regime in their liberated cities, for having allowed this apparatus to come

1) Letter of the CC of the CPA, October 1, 1943. Principal Documents of the PLA, vol. I, p. 170.

under the control of and to be used by the «Balli Kombëtar». After that criticism, this mistake was corrected immediately in line with the instructions of the Central Committee.

The Party organizations carried out widespread propaganda and agitation work to expose the old regime as a regime of misery and oppression. They made it clear to the masses that political power is not granted nor donated by anyone, but, on the contrary, it should be seized by force, that the Albanian people themselves would decide their own destiny with the arms in their hands, that they would not allow the Zog regime to be imposed on them, that the British and Americans had no right to interfere in the question of the regime, nor in any other political and military affairs of the Albanian people.

To strengthen the people's power, a series of measures were taken on the basis of the decisions of the Second National-liberation Conference and of the Statutes and Regulations of the people's councils, which had been approved at this Conference. In all the liberated cities and regions elections for new national-liberation councils were organized and in some regions district national-liberation conferences were held. The people's councils were purged of wavering individuals. They were broadened and strengthened. The governmental activity of the General Council and of the district councils in the liberated regions and cities was improved and invigorated through setting up

executive organs and the administrative-economic apparatus attached to them. The national-liberation councils had the strong support of the masses of the people in all their activity. The unity of the masses around the Party and the national-liberation councils was cemented still more by the founding of the Councils of Antifascist Youth and the Antifascist Women throughout the country. The main problem of the National-liberation War, on which the achievement of national independence and the establishment of the people's power depended, continued to be the reinforcement of the army. Complying with the instructions issued by the Central Committee in the Autumn of 1943, the majority of the Party members and young communists joined the ranks of the National-liberation Army. Thousands of young men and young women from the ranks of peasants, workers, and students responded to the call of the Communist Party to swell the ranks of the partizan fighting detachments. By July 10, 1943, the National-liberation Army had doubled in size. Two new storm brigades—the second and the third—were formed in the following Autumn. The General Staff led the fighting operations carefully directed and supervised the implementation of its plans for the formation of new brigades, groups and battalions, for the training of cadres and for securing supplies of food and clothing for the winter. It criticized

and put on the right road those partizan commands which violated or failed to comply well with the requirements of revolutionary partizan warfare. It drew valuable lessons from errors committed by various detachments and units and took them up with all the partizan commanders. The General Staff severely criticized particularly some partizan commanders who undertook no assaults, but waited in position for the enemy. It drew important lessons from the attempts of the German command to put their tactics of anti-partizan war into operation. Measures were taken to completely defeat all these enemy plans. The attempts of the German nazis to engage the partizan detachments in frontal battles met with equal failure.

The successful prosecution of the war against the German invaders, the expansion and consolidation of the people's power, enhanced still further the authority of the Communist Party of Albania. The endeavor of the Hitlerites, of the internal reaction, and of the Anglo-American imperialists, to detach the Party from the people met with failure. The masses became more conscious of the need to wage an uncompromising war against the enemy through to final victory.

It was natural that the German invaders and the traitors would not be reconciled to this situation, that they would exert all efforts to change it to their advantage by launching relentless attacks on the Communist Party and the National-liberation Army.

The Central Committee warned the Party organizations not to become intoxicated by success, to look into things objectively and to grasp the situation aright, taking care not to be caught unawares, to train their members, to prepare the partizan fighters and the people as a whole to face the great difficulties which lay ahead. Above all, the Party should be made as strong as steel.

«The burden on our Party is exceptionally heavy, and if we are to bear it and come out victorious we should have a sound and healthy backbone, we should have an organized and strong Party, we should have comrades with high political consciousness and military skill capable of facing fascism in any eventuality without losing their bearings in these difficult and crucial moments and situations»¹⁾

**7. THE CPA ORGANIZER OF THE HEROIC
STRUGGLE OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE TO FOIL
THE ENEMY'S PLANS IN THE WINTER
1943-1944**

In the Winter of 1943-1944 the German invaders, with the help of their Albanian collaborators, mounted a broad campaign against the

1) Circular Letter of the CC of the CPA, November 3, 1943. Principal Documents of the PLA, Vol. I, p. 199.

National-liberation Army with the aim of crushing it and annihilating the national-liberation movement. Four Hitlerite divisions and several thousands of gendarmes, «Balli Kombëtar» adherents and Zogites, altogether about 45 thousand men, participated directly in these operations. At that time the National-liberation Army had an effective strength of approximately 20 thousand fighters dispersed all over Albania.

If the enemy had numerical superiority in troops, his superiority in military equipment was overwhelming. On their part, the partisans stood in great want of arms, ammunition, food and clothing. Besides, they had to fight under the difficult conditions of winter in the mountains.

The Failure Of The Enemy's Winter Operation

The great enemy operation was developed in two main phases.

In the first phase (November 1943 – January 1944) the Hitlerite and reactionary forces undertook a series of operations in Central and Northern Albania. The German nazis, supported by the Albanian traitors who acted as their scouts, launched simultaneous attacks from many directions. They succeeded in overrunning the regions held by the National-liberation Army detachments and units and created a very grave situation for the population and the partizans. The enemies inflicted great losses on the partizan battalions of the Elbasan, and Dibra regions, of the Kruja,

Mati and Tirana districts, on the IInd and IIIrd Brigades. Many partizans were killed in fierce fighting; some of them were cut off from their detachments and dispersed. Nevertheless, the partizans in Central and Northern Albania were not wiped out. After the operation, they were obliged to fight in small formations in the zones occupied or cut off by the enemies. In spite of the losses it suffered, the Peza fighting detachment succeeded in preserving its main forces, their fighting capacity and constant readiness.

The Central Committee and General Staff members with Comrade Enver Hoxha found themselves in a very dangerous situation, cut off as they were by the enemy in the Çermënikë-Shingjergj-Martanesh zone. The nazis, the «Balli Kombëtar», and the Zogites left no means unexploited to detect and destroy the leadership of the National-liberation War. But they did not succeed. Many a peasant knew the places where they were sheltered, but not one of them was intimidated by the enemy's threats into betraying the Communist Party and the General Staff. The leaders of the Party and of the people, braving extreme dangers with heroism and presence of mind, with the help of the local peasants, broke out of the encirclement without suffering any losses. Meanwhile, in Southern Albania the Hitlerites undertook localized attacks. Of these activities the most important were the operations in the regions of Mallakstra and Mesaplik.

Through these operations the German inva-

ders aimed at keeping the partizan forces pinned down in Southern Albania, to prevent them from going to the aid of the partizan detachments in Central and Northern Albania. These actions were also intended as a preparation for the decisive offensive against the National-liberation Army. Through incessant fighting, the enemies counted on wearing out the partizans, consuming their ammunition, discovering their combat capacity, seizing the initiative from their hands, weakening their morale, terrorizing the rural population through severe reprisals and, finally, on compressing the partisan forces into as small an area as possible, where they could more easily be encircled and wiped out.

The second phase of the enemy's great Winter campaigns took place during January and February 1944 against the main forces of the ANLA in Southern Albania. In this operation the German invaders and the collaborators launched three successive offensives. Everywhere they came up against heroic partizan resistance. The heavy blows they were dealt, especially at Opar, at Tenda Qypit (Skrapar), in the surroundings of Përmet, at Kardhiq of Gjirokastra, at Vajza and Tërbaç of Vlora, caused them heavy losses in men and material, and upset their plans. When the Hitlerites thought they had completed the encirclement of the partizan forces and expected them to surrender, the commanders of the National-liberation Army detachments, rapidly

and skilfully regrouping their forces, outmanoeuvred the enemy, broke through the encircling forces and dealt sudden blows at his flanks and rear.

With the exception of some territorial battalions, the partizan brigades and groups operating in Southern Albania were not thrown into confusion and did not lose their combative spirit and efficiency, although they had to wage an unequal struggle in difficult circumstances.

At the same time, the Hitlerites pushed ahead with their operations in various regions of Central and Northern Albania, in Peza, in the Dajti region, in Tropoja and in other places.

The German invaders accompanied their major operations against the National-liberation Army with a reign of terror unprecedented in Albania. They plundered entire villages and reduced them to ashes. Thousands of men, women, old people and children were shot, slaughtered, burned alive, imprisoned, and sent to extermination camps. The Albanian cities were turned into real concentration camps. At any time of the day or night the German nazis, the henchmen of the «Balli Kombëtar» broke down doors, ransacked homes, plundered everything they could, took away young boys and girls, beat and killed them out of hand, and threw their bodies into the streets and ditches. They loaded horses with the corpses of murdered partizan fighters they had captured or had dug out of their graves and paraded them

through the streets or exhibited them in market places. On the day of the great massacre of February 4th in Tirana, the enemies wrote in their daily press: «Bleeding is a radical cure for the infected. Blood should flow in torrents through the streets of Tirana, if we are to re-establish peace und tranquility. One day of terror ensures ten years of tranquillity». The regime of terror imposed on the Albanian people, however, failed to gain even a minute's tranquility for Hitlerite hangmen and the Albanian traitors.

Besides terror and plunder, the German nazis and the reactionaries tried to starve the people into laying down their arms. They sealed off the cities and grain producing villages, so that not even a grain of corn or wheat should go to the partizan bases in the mountains. But this attempt, too, met with failure.

In order to break the spirit of the people, the invaders and their stooges announced loudly and more than once that the partizans had been wiped out and the Communist Party had ceased to exist. But precisely at this time, the National-liberation Army seized the initiative and passed to the counter-offensive. Within February and March the partizan fighting groups and units in Southern Albania cleaned out almost all the regions that the German and reactionary forces had violated during their operations. In Central and Northern Albania, too, the partizan movement was not extinguished although those regions remai-

ned for some time under the control of the Hitlerite invaders and of traitors. The heroic march of a section of the 1st Brigade (February-March) deep into the enemy rear through the Čermenika, Golloborda, Mat, Shingjergj, Peza and Dumre regions strengthened the confidence of the people in the ANLA and helped to invigorate the national-liberation movement in the Northern regions of the country.

The great operation of the German invaders and traitors in the winter of 1943-1944 failed. More than 1000 partizan fighters lost their lives in encounters with the enemy, from cold, wounds, and sickness. The ranks of the National-liberation Army, however, were neither thinned out nor weakened, on the contrary, they were increased and strengthened. The implementation of the plan of the General Staff to set up new brigades was not interrupted. The IVth, Vth, VIth, and VIIth Brigades were set up during this winter. In clashes with the enemies, through hardships and sufferings, the morale of the National-liberation Army was tempered to an unprecedented degree.

The commandants, the commissars and the rank and file were equipped with a rich military and political experience. There was also a great improvement in the armament situation of partizan detachments and units with weapons captured from the Germans in the fighting.

In their offensive, the invaders and the traitors lost almost three times more troops:

than the partizans. But their heaviest losses were of a political nature, especially since the major part of the reactionary forces began to see more clearly and more deeply the uselessness of the war waged against the National-liberation Front, and began to lose confidence in the success of this war.

The enemy did not succeed in destroying the overwhelming majority of the national-liberation councils, nor in bringing about the interruption of their activity. The national-liberation councils rendered great help to the National-liberation Army by providing food, clothing and means of transport and, especially, by providing it with new volunteers. They carried on a wide range of activities, maintaining the high morale and fighting spirit of the people, helping those damaged by the war and seeing to it that the peasant masses did not die of hunger.

During the operations of the 1943-1944 Winter campaign the Communist Party, the National-liberation Army, and the entire Albanian people stood the greatest and hardest test of the whole National-liberation War.

By foiling the enemy offensive, the Albanian National-liberation Army gave proof that it was an organized and disciplined army, with high morale, loyal to the end to the Fatherland and to the people. Although in battle and on the march day and night, unclad, unshod, unfed, in high snowy mountains, the National-liberation Army fighters never lamented

over their difficulties and privations, never lost faith in their victory and in the justice of the cause they were defending. Isolated partizans or partizan groups, cut off from their bases and surrounded, preferred to perish from cold and hunger or fall fighting, rather than surrender to the enemy. There was nothing more sacred to them than to always hold high and unstained the name and honor of the National-liberation Army fighter. The commandants and commissars showed great mastery in making use of partizan warfare tactics, and developed political maturity in appreciating situations, taking decisions and initiatives for independent actions.

Through its representatives in different regions of the country, the General Staff supervised the execution of its orders and the instructions which it had given previously, sized up military and political situations and issued new pertinent instructions. Although with widely dispersed forces, its control, assistance, and leading role in the army were never interrupted. The greatest danger at that period was to slacken the militant spirit of attack of the partizan detachments and units, and to give rise to an atmosphere of rest and relaxation after an operation. The General Staff obviated all danger of that sort by demanding that the National-liberation Army be thrown without waiting into counter-offensive. Attack, the General Staff instructed, keeps the morale of the army high, saves time and

energy, demoralizes the enemy, eliminates his superiority in numbers and equipment. Attack is the sole method of warfare appropriate to a revolutionary army. The offensive spirit of the combatants develops only in continuous battle against the invaders and the reactionaries by seeking battle, and not waiting for it to come.

The high level of consciousness and the readiness of the Albanian people to make the heavy sacrifices required by the liberation war stood their hardest test in the critical winter period of the 1943-1944. It was the support of the masses of the people that saved the National-liberation Army from annihilation, that encouraged it, multiplied its forces, and enabled it to emerge victorious in this unequal war. The peasants never shut their doors to partizans wearied in battle, they shared with them the last piece of bread they had saved for their children. In towns, young men, young women and children, defying all perils, distributed Party propaganda material, maintained the links between the Party organs and the National-liberation Army. A number of young men, women and children, gave their lives. Many of them were imprisoned and deported, but no enemy terror could shake their determination.

The traitors and the German nazis tried hard to detach the youth from the Communist Party and to compel them to give up their weapons. This is how the youth replied to the enemy calls and threats:

«For the Albanian Anti-fascist youth there exists only one course, only one decision: fight on to victory... The Anti-fascist Youth are not afraid to face the gallows, they do not tremble facing bullets, they are not discouraged by the attacks launched by the enemy and the traitors. They are confident in the victory of their cause and of the cause of the people. They are determined to win whatever the cost. And win they shall.»¹⁾

**Great Proof of the
Correctness of the
Political Line of the
CPA**

The inspirer and organizer of the resistance and of the heroic war of the National-liberation Army, of all the

Albanian people at their most critical period during the 1943-1944 winter campaign was the Communist Party.

In this period, it was proved how sound and unbreakable were the bonds of the Party with the masses, how correct was its political line. At no time did the National-liberation Army fighters or the masses of the people lose their confidence in the Party. The sons and daughters of the Albanian people fell in the field of battle, died on the gallows, and in the torture chambers with the name

1) Reply. Leaflet of the AAYU, January 17, 1944.
CPA.

of the Communist Party on their lips. Thousands of common men and women sacrificed everything to defend the Party from the blows of the enemy.

In the Winter of 1943-1944, the ties of the Party with the masses became stronger still. The Albanian people saw more clearly and realized more thoroughly that the Communist Party was the sole leading force capable of ridding them of the foreign yoke, of winning their freedom and national independence, of defending their interests.

At their most critical moments, the fighters of the National-liberation Army and the popular masses everywhere, in town and country, in the liberated zones and in those under occupation, felt the Party's helping hand close to them, saw that the Party had not abandoned them; they were nurtured each day by its teachings and words of encouragement.

Even in the fiercest battles and during strenuous marches, the commissars of political sections, the Party organizations, carried on active all-round political work, always keeping high the morale and the fighting spirit of the partizans and not allowing any weakening of their confidence in victory. The meetings of the Party organizations were held in all circumstances, no matter how critical they might be. At these meetings, collective decisions were taken to ensure the success of combat actions, the vanguard role of communists both in coping with the problems of the war

and enduring sufferings and privations. During the 1943-1944 Winter period the number of the Party members in the army was increased by admitting partizan fighters tested in clashes with the enemy and in complicated situations.

Party work was not slackened in the occupied cities and regions, though only a limited number of communists had remained there. The Party District Committees re-organized the work of Party cells and of the Communist Youth activists to meet the state of terror and the savage persecutions of the enemy who aimed at wiping out the Communist Party by any means. The Party organizations in the occupied cities never ceased publishing and distributing bulletins, communiqués, leaflets and proclamations addressed to the people. The enemies were infuriated by the fact that they could not discover the equipment with which these materials were printed and destroy the Party organizations. The most severe conditions of martial law did not succeed in stopping the activity of the national-liberation councils, the Anti-fascist Youth and Women's organizations, or the guerilla units. The audacious actions carried out by the guerilla units according to the instructions of the Party District Committees did not give the enemy a moment's respite or permit any fall in the morale of the urban population. The Party District Committees paid great and continuous attention to the activity of each communist, always kept the Party members informed of events, never allowed

them to fall into inactivity, issued instructions and assigned them concrete tasks. The communists paid particular attention to waverers, gave them heart, and prevented them from falling victims to enemy pressure. They kept in touch with the political prisoners and those isolated, sick and wounded partizans who had been brought to the cities. Party cells were active in prisons and concentration camps. The district committees organized the collection of material aid, of clothing and medicines for the National-liberation Army, gathered information on the situation and the enemy plans and sent them to the partizan headquarters.

It was during the enemy's Winter campaign that the valor, the spirit of sacrifice, and the loyalty of the Albanian communists to the Party, to the people, and to communism stood their hardest test. Many Party members, nine members of Party District Committees, one brigade commissar and candidate member of the Central Committee, Vasil Shanto, gave their lives as true heroes in action against the Hitlerites and the reactionaries. The example set by and the heroism of the communists, inspired the masses of the people to stand, and fight against the occupiers and traitors.

The never failing leadership of the Central Committee of the Party, and of Comrade Enver Hoxha personally, was of great importance at these critical moments. They were in permanent touch with the District Party

Committees and with the political organs of the National-liberation Army. The Secretary General never lost his connections with the Central Committee members distributed throughout the country to lead the war from close at hand. These connections were maintained over a thousand obstacles and perils. They were not interrupted even at the moment when the principal Party leaders found themselves cut off in the Çermenika and Shengjergji mountains. The leadership of the Central Committee studied reports and informations most attentively, drawing conclusions and summing up experiences from the activity of the Party organizations on each terrain and in each military detachment. It drafted and issued the necessary instructions, criticized errors and shortcomings and taught the comrades how to solve the complicated problems they faced. The Secretary General kept all the members of the Central Committee in touch with all the problems of major importance, sought their opinions and their proposals about these problems.

Wherever there are people we must be with them, no matter how strong the reaction may be, instructed the Central Committee. This was the fundamental principle guiding the Party organizations in their practical activity, in order to keep up the morale of the masses at the grave moments the country was passing through and to eliminate the enemy pressure on the population. At that time, the Party

leadership criticized the Vlora District Party Committee because for the moment it had lost its connections with the city.

Special concern was shown by the Central Committee for the youth, encouraging them not give up and withdraw from the struggle, because the enemy, too, had centered their attention on them. Under the direct care of the Party leadership, all the attempts of the invaders and of traitors to persuade the youth to abandon the National-liberation Army were defeated. The uproar the nazis and the reactionaries raised about certain anti-communist statements fabricated by them and signed by isolated young men, who had faltered in the difficult moments, was exposed. The attempts of the enemy to win over the youth through sports clubs and cultural circles met with no success whatsoever. All attempts to create an allegedly «independent» youth organization were nipped in the bud.

As soon as Comrade Enver Hoxha was informed that in the Tirana District Party Committee the idea had been voiced of allowing some young men to declare that they «kept aloof from politics» in order to escape imprisonment and deportation, he severely criticized this attitude and warned against falling into any enemy traps. The Central Committee also rejected a proposal to form a «Democratic Republican Party» with National-liberation Front elements for the alleged purpose of attracting to the Front some «Balli Kombëtar» members,

who were opposed to their chieftains. The formation of such a party was considered to be something altogether artificial and harmful to the liberation war.

The Central Committee devoted particular attention to preventing Party leaders in those very difficult circumstances from falling into pessimism and losing confidence in their own forces, in the forces of the Party and of the people. Criticizing some manifestations of pessimism observed during the 1943-1944 Winter campaign, Comrade Enver Hoxha instructed:

«The situation is difficult, very difficult indeed. . . but it is precisely under such difficult circumstances that we must try not to lose our bearings. . .»¹⁾

Referring to the question of losses suffered by the IInd and IIIrd Brigades and some territorial battalions, he regarded it as a mistake to succumb to despair on account of these losses. There is no war without losses and without damage, he said. The main thing is not to lose the track, not to lose faith in our own forces and in those of the people, to know how to amass the forces, to manoeuvre with skill, to replace the losses, to be prepared for the worst and to be able to turn the situation in our favour. There is nothing more dan-

1) Enver Hoxha. Letter addressed to Comrade Nako Spiru, March 1944. Works, Vol. II, p. 115-116.

gerous than losing the track and doing nothing in critical situations.

Above all the Central Committee took great care to protect the Party to keep its ranks pure and strong. It instructed the leading cadres to act not only bravely but also judiciously, not to take unnecessary risks. First and foremost they had to distinguish themselves as mature and wise political leaders, knowing how to organize the work in accordance with the circumstances, looking vigilantly into the tactics and means resorted to by the enemy whose aim was to destroy the leading cadres and to wipe out the Party organizations. The Central Committee insisted that the Party should be preserved from the provocateurs of the enemy who might have wormed their way into its ranks, paying particular attention to those who, in the past, had shown accentuated groupist tendencies, because such tendencies were liable to reappear in those difficult circumstances. The vigilance of the Party and the political tempering of the communists warded off dangers of that sort.

Even in the grave circumstances of the 1943-1944 Winter period, the Party found the time and the possibility to organize a course of study in Panarit of the Korça district with the participation of leading Party cadres of the National-liberation Army and of the other Party cadres from the region.

As a result of the attention and vigorous activity of the Central Committee and of all

the leading organs of the Army and other Party organizations, Party work was fruitful as never before. At no time had the Party been either as monolithic or mature as in this period. Confronted with the power and the authority of the Communist Party, all the attempts of the enemy to weaken and to smash it failed. All the attempts of the Hitlerite Gestapo and of the «Balli Kombëtar» to create a «Genuine Communist Party» and a «Social-democratic Party», which were to replace the Communist Party of Albania, came to naught.

The bitter battles and the great sufferings during the 1943-1944 Winter period enhanced the revolutionary tempering of the Communist Party, of the National-liberation Army, of the national-liberation councils, and of the whole Albanian people, prepared them for the decisive battle in the war against the nazi invaders and traitors.

8. THE FOUNDING OF THE NEW STATE OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

After the failure of the enemy Winter campaign, the National-liberation War assumed a new impulse in the Spring of the year 1944. As early as March, the initiative had passed into the hands of the ANLA. In compliance with the General Staff order of April 5th, the partizan detachments and units everywhere took the offensive. Almost all the regions south

of the Shkumbini river were again liberated. The partisan movement in Central and Northern Albania became more active. The Nazi invaders and the reactionary forces were again forced to ensconce themselves in towns, in barracks and in fortified centers along the main highways and the seacoast, under the perpetual menace of attacks by the ANLA fighters.

The intensification of the National-liberation War immeasurably deepened the crisis in the enemy ranks in Albania. Disorder began among reactionary organizations and armed forces. Gendarmes and «Balli Kombëtar» adherents deserted in groups.

By May 1944, the National-liberation Army had grown to 35 thousand fighters. It was strong enough to launch the general offensive for the liberation of the towns and of the whole country.

This prospect became still brighter as a consequence of the Red Army's brilliant victories over the German army. As far back as January 1944, the Soviet Army had mounted a gigantic offensive on the Eastern Front. Advancing irresistibly westwards, in April it entered Rumania. The German troops in the Balkans were thus in danger of encirclement.

Smashing Enemy's New Manoeuvres

Faced with this critical situation, the alarmed enemy left no stone unturned to find a way out and to change the situation in his favor. Great hopes were

laid on a new large-scale operation the German Command was preparing against the National-liberation Army. In preparation for this operation, the Albanian reaction also was mustering all its forces. The Hitlerites counted on starting the operation in April.

But this was not possible because the ANLA upset their plans with its Spring offensive and because their efforts to recruit mercenaries failed by the people's resistance.

At the same time, the Albanian traitors tried to play a new card. They intended to set up a coalition of the Greek and Albanian reaction, which would eventually be turned into a Greek-Turkish-Albanian military alliance. According to the enemy's plan, the united forces of these countries would be employed to crush the national-liberation movements in Albania and Greece. The Albanian people's revolutionary war, however, nipped this scheme in the bud.

The same fate was shared also by the attempts of the reactionaries to beguile the people through clamorous announcements of some measures of economic character, like «the agrarian reform» and the creation of a «society for the economic development of the country». These measures, promised the traitors, were to defend the peasants' and workers' rights and to do away with the economic backwardness of the country which was, according to them, the cause of the grave crisis in Albania. These beautiful promises, however,

could not deceive the Albanian people. They were already convinced that it was only by achieving victory over fascism and by crushing the traitors that they would realize their dreams and aspirations.

It was at this time that the U.S. - British imperialist reaction came to the rescue of the Albanian collaborators. The British Government had not given up its plan of bringing the Balkans under its control. In the powerful growth of the national-liberation movement it perceived a great obstacle to the implementation of this plan in Albania. The General Council and the General Staff of the ANLA had not accepted the U.S. - British dictate. It was only by relying on the opponents of the national-liberation movement and by weakening it as much as possible that the Anglo-American imperialists could put their plan into operation. For this reason the allied Mediterranean Command increased its aid in arms and other means to the reactionary forces of the «Legality», the «Balli Kombëtar» and the treacherous tribal chieftains. The British military mission tried to convince the ANLA General Staff not to move its forces towards North Albania, because that was the zone of action of the «Legality», and that would give rise to conflicts. In London, the British Government increased its attempts to set up an Albanian reactionary Government in exile.

The Communist Party assessed the moments the country was passing through in the

Spring of the year 1944 as decisive for the fate of the people's revolution in Albania. It became imperative that all enemy attempts to turn the situation to their advantage should be frustrated, that all the tricks of the internal and foreign reaction should be beaten, that such military and political measures should be taken as to ensure the complete liberation of the country and the triumph of the people's revolution. In this connection, the Central Committee defined as the key link the strengthening and legalisation of the power of the national-liberation councils as the sole legal power of the Albanian people, the setting up of the new Albanian State with its own democratic government and its own regular army.

**The Permet Congress.
The Creation of the
State of People's De-
mocracy.**

With this aim in view, it was decided to call the Ist Anti-fascist National-liberation Congress which would take up for discussion and solve the political and military problems. The proposal of the Central Committee of the CPA for the convocation of the Congress was discussed and adopted at the meeting of the Presidium of the National-liberation General Council in April 1944.

At the same time, and in line with the Central Committee directives, the General Staff began to draft the plan for changing the whole National-liberation Army into a regular army as well as the operative and strategical plan

for ridding the entire Albanian territory of the German nazis and traitors.

These major political and military problems were taken up at the meeting of the Plenum of the CPA Central Committee which was held on May 15, 1944 in Helmës of Skrapari. The Plenum approved the decisions of the Central Committee and of the General Council Presidium for convening the Anti-fascist Congress. The steps for creating a Provisional Democratic Government and turning the National-liberation Army into a regular army were considered timely. The Central Committee made a correct assessment of the dangers threatening the National-liberation War, national independence, and the people's revolution from the inimical activity of the British Government and of the British and American military missions in Albania. It reaffirmed its determination not to allow any of the allies, whoever it might be, to interfere in the internal political and military affairs of the Albanian people.

To deal with the situation, bearing in mind some incorrect viewpoints which had made their appearance from time to time, or which might emerge in the future in the Party, in the army, or in the National-liberation Front, the Plenum drew attention to two important problems concerning the Party line. It warned against any alterations of the Party slogans, insisting that the national-liberation character of the war should be preserved to the end. The

task was set of popularizing still more the Communist Party's role of leadership, but always within the line of the National-liberation War. The Central Committee argued that the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and democratic stage of the revolution had not and could not come to an end without assuring the complete liberation and the democratization of the country. On the other hand, it gave the instruction to combat the opinion that with the termination of the National-liberation War, everything would be over and that once the Germans had been driven out, the National-liberation Army fighters should lay down their arms and return to their homes. The Plenum demanded that it should be made absolutely clear that the Albanian people would retain the arms in their hands after the liberation of the country as well, in order to ensure their full freedom, to destroy any enemy, to defend the victories achieved, and to develop them further. It instructed the Party to study carefully the circumstances that would arise, to determine in time the necessary attitude and measures to be taken.

The Plenum condemned unanimously Ymer Dishnica's capitulation in Mukje and Gjin Marku's compromise with the Germans in Berat. For these grave faults it removed both of them from the Central Committee of the Party.

The Party did a great deal of work in popularizing the decision on the convocation

of the Ist Anti-fascist Congress both in the liberated and not yet liberated regions.

The people enthusiastically welcomed the decision to hold the Ist Anti-fascist Congress. At meetings and gatherings, they expressed their allegiance to and love for the Communist Party, thanked the Party for its correct leadership and heroic struggle in defence of the interests of the fatherland, confirmed their readiness to fight to the end against the invaders and traitors, and supported the decision to convoke the congress and to establish a provisional democratic government.

On account of the war conditions, the election of delegates to the congress took place by open ballot. Nevertheless, they were the first democratic elections in Albania. Women, too, took part in these elections, for it was during the period of the National-liberation War that they were given, for the first time in the history of the country, the right to elect and be elected to the various organs of the people's power. It was the first time that the representatives of the people were chosen not on the basis of their lineage and property, but on the basis of their merits in the war against the enemies of the fatherland and the people. The delegates to the congress were the representatives of the masses of the uprising people.

The elections to the congress demonstrated the political maturity and the high consciousness of the popular masses. They were another great test of the sound links of the Communist Party with the people.

The convocation of the Ist Anti-fascist Congress caused great concern amongst the enemy. The Hitlerites and the reactionaries exerted all their efforts to discover the place of the meeting so as to direct an armed assault against the Congress. On their part, the U.S. - British imperialists exerted great pressure and left no means unemployed in order to sabotage it. The British Government described the holding of the Ist Anti-fascist Congress as «illegal» and ordered the chief of the British military mission in Albania not to accept the invitation which the National-liberation General Council had extended to him to take part in the congress in his capacity as a representative of the allies. Speaking in the House of Commons one day before the congress was opened, Attley, Deputy Prime-Minister and later Prime-Minister of Great Britain, attributed the heroic war of the Albanian people under the leadership of Communist Party, to the «Legality» and the «Balli Kombëtar» organizations which were enemies in this war.

The Communist Party, following with attention and vigilance the evolution of the situation, succeeded in foiling all the enemy attempts, and the Congress accomplished its tasks successfully, according to plan.

The Ist Anti-fascist National-liberation Congress of Albania was held from 24th to 28th of May, 1944 in the liberated town of Përmet.

The work of the Congress proceeded in a profoundly revolutionary spirit and complete unity. The report «On the Prosecution of the National-liberation War of the Albanian People in the Background of the International Events», submitted by Comrade Enver Hoxha in the name of the National-liberation General Council was vigorously discussed by the delegates who voiced their unanimous approval of all the proposals presented.

The Congress elected the Anti-fascist National-liberation Council (ANLC) as the highest legislative and executive body in Albania, as the representative of the sovereignty of the people and of the Albanian State. The Anti-fascist Council elected in Përmet was the first people's convention of Albania. The Congress charged the Anti-fascist Council with forming the Anti-fascist National-liberation Committee with the attributes of a provisional people's democratic government. The Anti-fascist Committee, which was approved at the Congress, was the first people's democratic government of Albania. The Secretary General of the Central Committee of the CPA, Enver Hoxha, was elected Chairman of the Committee.

Establishing the supreme organs of the people's power, the Përmet Congress decided: «the new people's democratic Albania is to be built according to the will solemnly expressed today by the people through the Anti-fascist National-liberation Council»; to prevent former King Zog from returning to Albania; not to re-

cognize any other government which might be set up within or outside the country against the will of the Albanian people; to continue the war against the German invaders and Albanian traitors more fiercely until they are utterly destroyed and the state power of the people's democracy has been established throughout the country.

At its first session the Anti-fascist Council took a series of decisions of major importance which were adopted by the Congress and which constituted the first laws of the Albanian State of the people's democracy. Of particular importance was the revolutionary decision to annul all the political and economic agreements the Zog government had concluded with foreign States, as incompatible with the interests of the Albanian people. The Council set up a special State commission for detecting and identifying war criminals and investigating all the crimes committed by the invaders and the traitors.

In close connection with the problems of setting up the people's state power at the highest levels, the Congress also took up and settled problems concerning the further consolidation and perfection of the National-liberation Army, as the main weapon for the complete liberation of the country and the defence of the new State power. It was at this Congress that the unification of the high command of the National-liberation Army and the introduction of military rank were decided on. Comrade

Enver Hoxha was appointed Commander-in-chief. The Congress decided to set up divisions and army-corps. The General Command announced the formation of the 1st Storm Division.

The Përmet Congress expressed its gratitude to the Soviet Union and to the Red Army which, by their heroic war, had accelerated the liberation of Albania and of other countries enslaved by the fascists. It reaffirmed its allegiance to the Soviet-Anglo-American alliance and the friendship of the Albanian people with all the peoples of the World Anti-fascist Coalition. The Congress expressed its determination to strengthen the militant relations with the member States and peoples of this coalition and to fulfil all the obligations deriving therefrom, at the same time, making the best use possible of the help of the allies. Quite unlike former congresses and conventions in Albania, the Përmet Congress appealed to no one for aid in solving the problems and deciding the fate of Albania. On the contrary, it warned the imperialist powers that the time when Albania could be used as a medium of exchange was gone for ever, and that the Albanian people would not tolerate any bargain struck at their expense. They themselves would decide their fate. The Përmet Congress publicly denounced the attempts of the U.S. - British allies to interfere in the internal political and military affairs of Albania.

The historic decisions of the Përmet Congress were received with great joy and imme-

diately embraced by the broad masses of the people.

The efforts of the Communist Party of Albania to demolish the old anti-people's State power and to set up the people's democratic State power in the heat of the National-liberation War were crowned with success. The Peza Conference laid the foundations of the new State power. The Labinot Conference centralized it and proclaimed it the sole State power in Albania. The Përmet Congress solved the problem of the political power in favor of the revolutionary people. It founded the Albanian State of people's democracy. The decisions of the Përmet Congress comprise the basis of the Albanian State Constitution.

After this, the internal reactionaries were incapable of re-establishing the rule of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, either by their own forces or with the aid of the Hitlerite invaders.

At the time of the Përmet Congress, half of Albania was still under the control of the German nazi invaders and their collaborators. In the occupied regions and towns the National-liberation Councils carried on their activity underground. In many regions there were no councils at all, but this was not the main thing. The main thing consisted in the fact that, following the Congress of Përmet, in the liberated zones as well as in those not yet liberated, the Albanian people recognized as their own actual government only the Anti-

fascist Committee, and obeyed its orders and the laws of the Anti-fascist National-liberation Council. The Albanian National-liberation Army preserved the people's democratic State power from the blows of the enemy and was in a situation to secure, in the immediate future, the complete liberation of Albania and the establishment of this State power throughout the whole country.

The decisions of the 1st Anti-fascist Congress on the founding of the Albanian State of people's democracy, on the formation of the Anti-fascist Council and the Provisional Democratic Government, were not simple decrees. The new Albanian State and its supreme organs were the offspring of the revolutionary liberation war of the Albanian people under the leadership of the Communist Party.

The power of the National-liberation Councils in Albania differed entirely from the old state power, both as to its form and substance. It had nothing in common with any sort of State power in the bourgeois parliamentary republics. As a type of political power, it resembled the Paris Commune and the Soviets. Nevertheless, it preserved its full originality, in conformity with the objective conditions of Albania under the circumstances of the National-liberation War of the Albanian people.

In line with the decisions of the Përmet Congress the National-liberation Councils and the Anti-fascist Committee were charged with the task of giving all-round help to the Natio-

nal-liberation Army for the complete liberation of the country; of ensuring the triumph of democracy throughout Albania, doing away with any possibility of the re-establishment of the Zog or of another reactionary regime; at wiping out any remnants of fascism and the old methods of government; of organizing the life of the people through an all-round transformation of the country, and development of the national economy and culture.

From their class composition and the tasks they were charged with, the national-liberation councils represented a democratic dictatorship of the revolutionary forces under the direct and sole leadership of the Communist Party.

The solution of the problem of the State power demonstrated that one of the strategic tasks of the Party had been accomplished. Nevertheless, this problem could not be considered as definitely solved, so long as the other historic task was not yet carried through — the complete liberation of Albania from the German invaders.

The decisions of the Përmet Congress dealt a heavy blow at the invaders, at the internal reaction and at the Anglo-American imperialist reaction. They were of major importance for throwing off the imperialist yoke and for the social emancipation of the Albanian people.

9. THE COMPLETE LIBERATION OF ALBANIA. THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

On May 28, 1944, Commander-in-chief Enver Hoxha ordered the National-liberation Army to launch a general offensive for the complete liberation of Albania from the German invaders and the annihilation of the «Balli Kombëtar», of the «Legality» and the other reactionary forces. On the basis of a strategic operative plan worked out in detail by the General Staff, the Ist Storm Division was to attack the enemy north of the Shkumbin river. This offensive was to be associated with a series of attacks by detachments and other units of the ANLA against garrisons and communication lines of the enemy throughout the country. In the offensive of the Ist Storm Division were to take part also new ANLA divisions which were to be set up as soon as possible as well as all the National-liberation Army brigades.

The plan of the General Command for the complete liberation of the country was aimed at the same time at foiling the schemes of the Anglo-American Mediterranean Command to stop the ANLA from passing over to the general offensive, thus averting the destruction of the reactionary forces. The plan of the General Command also envisaged the pursuit of the Hitlerite troops beyond the boundaries of Albania.

Failure of the Enemy's June Operation Precisely on the day when the ANLA General Command issued its order for the general offensive the German troops mounted their second large-scale operation against the national-liberation forces.

For this offensive the enemy threw in four and a half German divisions and several thousands of gendarmes, «Balli Kombëtar» and Zogites, altogether over fifty thousand men.

The first phase of the enemy operation (May 28 – June 10) took place in the Korça-Elbasan-Berat-Përmet region. The Hitlerites and the reactionaries came up against the fierce resistance of the 1st Storm division and of other units and detachments of the ANLA. After beating off successive attacks of the enemy, the partizans threw themselves into furious counter-attacks and often exterminated whole columns and detachments of Germans and traitors or compelled them to withdraw in disarray. In some directions the enemy columns could attain none of their objective and withdrew. The 1st Storm Division, cut off by German forces in Tomorica in the first stage of fighting, broke the siege and within the span of just a few days recaptured all its lost positions.

The second phase of the enemy operation (June 10-30) took place in the Vlora-Gjirokastra region, the 1st Operative Zone. After some days of hard fighting the partizan detachments

operating in this zone found themselves in a critical situation. They were encircled by Hitlerite troops. However, thanks to the valor of the partizans and the bold leadership of their commandants and commissars, the partizan forces manoeuvred with dexterity and broke the enemy encirclement. By sudden assaults on the flanks and in the rear of the enemy forces, the partizans inflicted considerable losses and obliged them to withdraw.

The enemy's June operation, like that of the winter, ended in defeat for the German nazis and the reactionaries. This operation proved once more the invincible strength of the National-liberation Army and of the Albanian people. From this operation the people's army emerged stronger and more mature, the people gained still greater confidence in the leadership of the Communist Party, and were deeply resolved to continue the war till final victory.

Under those circumstances it was essential to preserve the forces, the solidarity and the combat capability of the National-liberation Army, and not to impede the operative strategic plan of the General Staff. The order for the offensive of the 1st Storm Division across the Shkumbin river remained in force. In the existing situation, the General Command considered the movement of the 1st Storm division to Central Albania as a step that would secure the complete defeat of the Hitlerite operation. While the German troops were continuing their war activities south of

the Vjosa river, it was considered to be the most propitious moment for the Ist Division to begin carrying out the order it had received.

**The General Offensive
of the ANLA, the Anni-
hilation of the Plans of
Internal and External
Reaction**

On June 26, 1944, the Ist Storm Division crossed the Shkumbini river and started its offensive.

The enemy was taken unawares, unable to face this sudden attack. The forces of the Ist Storm Division, backed up by the partizan territorial units, penetrated deep into Central Albania and continued to push ahead non-stop towards Dibra. By the middle of July, all the regions designated in the order of the Commander-in-chief were liberated. The people of Central Albania and the Dibra district rendered powerful support to the Ist Storm Division, and rose up in arms against slavery of the Germans and traitors. Thousands of youth volunteers from the newly-liberated regions joined the brigades and divisions while the small partizan detachments which operated in the enemy-controlled regions in Central and North Albania rapidly grew into battalions and, a short time later, into brigades of the ANLA.

So unexpected for invaders and traitors was the Ist Storm Division's offensive in the North that at the outset they thought they were dealing with the «remnants» of the parti-

zan forces routed in the South which had crossed the Shkumbin river to find refuge. But they soon realized the truth. Alarmed to the extreme, they at once began withdrawing their troops from the South, transferring them to the North to crush the Ist Storm Division.

The enemy undertook two successive operations against the Ist Storm Division, one in July and the other in August 1944. Both of them failed entirely. The ANLA fighters smashed the Hitlerite and reactionary forces and finally liberated the whole Dibra district with the cities of Peshkopia and Dibra, and a part of Mirdita.

The successful prosecution of the offensive of the Ist Storm Division of the ANLA was not prevented by the pressure of the Anglo-American Mediterranean Command, which had many times demanded in a threatening manner that the ANLA cease fighting against the forces of the traitor Abaz Kupa. The General Command of the National-liberation Army rejected the demands and threats of the Anglo-American allies, and, without any hesitation, accomplished the task assigned by the Party Central Committee and the Përmet Congress.

In August, the IInd Storm Division was set up, which together with the Ist Storm Division launched an immediate offensive against the invading German troops and the gangs of traitors in Northern Albania. Both divisions and all the partizan forces of the various district staffs in Central and Northern Albania,

excepting the Peza Group, were included in the 1st Army Corps of the ANLA. The Central Committee of the Party assigned Comrade Hysni Kapo, member of the CC of the CPA, to the duties of political commissar of the 1st Army Corps.

Meanwhile, in Southern Albania, the other units of the National-liberation Army, also, had launched a general offensive.

The arrival in August of a Soviet military mission to Albania, in response to a request made by the Përmet Congress, was appreciated by the CPA as aid given by the Soviet Union to the liberation struggle of the Albanian people and as a recognition of their sovereignty. This testified also, to the friendship and the revolutionary alliance between the Albanian and the Soviet peoples tempered in their common war against fascism.

The entire Albanian territory was like a volcano in eruption. The German garrisons, the reactionary bands, and their communication lines were subjected to incessant attacks by the ANLA. Unable to counter the general offensive of the ANLA, the enemies evacuated the regions and the cities they had occupied, one after the other. By October 24, all the southern part of the country was entirely purged of Hitlerites. To the North of the Shkumbin, the German invaders continued to hold only the cities of Elbasan, Tirana, Durrës, Kukës and Shkodra.

At the request of the General Command:

of the Yugoslav National-liberation Army, two brigades of the Albanian National-liberation Army (the IIIrd and Vth) had crossed the State borders on the 5th of October to take part in operations against the German nazis in Kosova and the Dukagjini Plateau.

In addition to the liberation of the major part of the Fatherland and to the heavy losses inflicted on German troops, one of the most important events of the first months of the ANLA general offensive was the complete annihilation of the internal reaction. The «Balli Kombëtar», the «Legality», their armed gangs and gendarm detachments, were wiped out under the blows of the ANLA storm brigades and divisions. The Regency and the Quisling government were completely paralyzed.

A new attempt by British officers to form an Albanian puppet government, with the participation of the chiefs of the reaction, as a counter-poise to the Revolutionary Provisional Government had no success.

The remnants of the reactionary forces, gathered around their chiefs under the protection of the German army, rested their only hope of salvation on a possible landing of the Anglo-American troops which would come to their rescue. But even this last hope of the traitors was not fulfilled.

In line with the orders issued by the Central Committee of the Party, the General Command of the National-liberation Army

resolutely rejected the reported demands of the Anglo-American Mediterranean Command to send paratroops and special army units to Albania allegedly for the purpose of fighting together against the Germans. The ANLA was capable of liberating the entire country with its own forces and had no need of assistance from foreign armed troops. When British commandos landed in Saranda after the ANLA brigades had wiped out the German garrison there the Supreme Command compelled the British General Staff remove its forces without delay from the Albanian shores.

Thus the great danger which a landing of Anglo-American troops in Albania would have meant for the people's revolution was averted. The Central Committee of the Party, Secretary-General of the CPA and Commander-in-chief of the ANLA, Enver Hoxha, displayed maturity, wisdom, and revolutionary courage in face of the strong and continuous pressure by the Anglo-American allies in not permitting them to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of the Albanian people. Such a consistent principled stand and revolutionary spirit of the war demolished all the attempts made by the Governments of Great Britain and the USA and their military missions in Albania to seize the leadership of the Albanian national-liberation movement, to destroy the National-liberation Front and the Communist Party, and to occupy the country through landing their armed forces in Albania.

Foundations of People's Democracy Strengthened

The liberation of the major part of the country made it possible to expand and strengthen the people's power, to enliven to an unprecedented degree the activity of the national-liberation councils. The Anti-fascist Committee, along with its duties towards the armed struggle against the invaders, carried out an extensive activity for the organization of the State and social order, for the reconstruction of the regions devastated in the war, for the upsurge of the economy, for the development of trade. In all the liberated regions and cities economic life was activated. Labor detachments and battalions set about the task of rebuilding blown up bridges and wrecked roads, burned down schools and houses. Schools and health service started functioning. The people's councils placed under their administration all projects of special economic importance and all construction materials.

The Anti-fascist Committee took the decision to confiscate all movable and immovable personal property of the traitors. It issued instructions for the registration of lands and the preparation of statistics on arable lands and cattle, on their ownership and on the number of landless peasants. This was the first step towards the agrarian reform, which would be carried out immediately after the liberation of the country.

The masses of the people backed the acti-

vity of the Anti-fascist Committee and the national-liberation councils with all their forces. Loyal to the Anti-fascist Committee, they insisted that it should at once take its real title of the Democratic Government of Albania. This demand was dictated by the growth of the authority of the Committee as the only government of the Albanian people and by the fact that the complete liberation of Albania was now very close.

This question was taken up at the Second Session of the Anti-fascist National-liberation Council, which was held from October 20-23, 1944 in the liberated city of Berat.

The Anti-fascist National-liberation Council took the unanimous decision to change the Anti-fascist Committee into the **Democratic Government of Albania**. At this Session, the Democratic Government adopted a program, in which it pledged before the Albanian people that it would loyally carry out the decisions of the Përmet Congress. It undertook to carry on and further intensify the war for the speedy and complete liberation of Albania, to safeguard the independence of the Albanian State, to strengthen the authority of national-liberation councils and to guarantee and defend the rights of citizens. The Government would reconsider the political, military and economic agreements, concluded by the ex-King Zog's regime with foreign states, and would annul all those that infringed upon the interests of the Albanian people and State. Its program

also envisaged the establishment of close relations and collaboration with the Soviet Union and all the parties of the Anti-fascist Coalition. The Government assumed the obligation of organizing, after the liberation of the country, democratic elections for the Constituent Assembly, which would determine the definite form of the regime and draft the Constitution of the new Albanian State.

The Berat Session of the Anti-fascist Council approved the law on the National-liberation Councils and the law on the Election of National-liberation Councils. Until that time the national-liberation councils had been organs both of the government and of the National-liberation Front. Thenceforth they were to function only as organs of the people's democratic power. The National-liberation Front was to create its own organs.

Among the important decisions taken at the Berat session of the Anti-fascist Council, was the approval of the «Declaration on the Rights of Citizens». All citizens were guaranteed equal rights before the law, freedom of meeting, of speech, of association, of press, freedom of religion and of conscience, equal rights for women and men, the right to elect and be elected for persons above 18 years of age, the right of appeal, etc. The «Declaration on the rights of citizens» represents a constitutional document of the new state of people's democracy.

The decisions of the Second Session of the Anti-fascist National-liberation Council were

the fulfilment and the further realization of the historic decisions of the Përmet Congress and a new political victory of the Albanian people over fascism and internal reaction. They were another blow at the attempts of the Anglo-American imperialists to establish their control in Albania.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party the revolutionary war had torn out the very roots of the power of the Quisling landlords and the bourgeoisie.

By the time the Anti-fascist Council was held in Berat, the whole National-liberation Army had been changed into a regular army of the people and of the new Albanian State. By now it included in its ranks 70.000 fighters organized in brigades, divisions and army-corps. Of these 9 per cent were women, about 80 per cent young people and nearly 90 per cent peasants.

The National-liberation Army units were now carrying through their last operations against the German troops in Albania and in Kosova. Of these operations the most important was that for the liberation of Tirana. This was carried out according to the plan of the Supreme Command. The plan envisaged coordinated combat actions for the Ist Storm Division and other units of the ANLA directly about Tirana and in the main directions of movement of the Hitlerite troops. The aim of the plan was to wipe out the enemy forces, to prevent them from plundering and destroying the city, and to

liberate Tirana at all costs. The operation was to be led by the Command of the 1st Army corps. The fighting in the capital city and its surroundings was directed by the Commandant of the 1st Storm Division, Mehmet Shehu.

The offensive of the National-liberation Army for the liberation of Tirana began on October 29, 1944, after all-round preparations had been made. It continued for 19 days. On November 17th the flag of victory was raised over the city. The operation for the liberation of Tirana demonstrated the high degree of organization, discipline and morale of the National-liberation Army. The people of the capital took an active part, side by side with the storm brigades, in the battle for the city's liberation.

Meanwhile, the forces of the Albanian National-liberation Army operating beyond the Albanian state boundaries in close collaboration with the brigades of Kosova Albanians, by November 18 had cleared the major part of Kosova and the Dukagjin Plateau of Hitlerite troops and, after days of hard fighting, had succeeded in liberating the towns of Junik, Deçan, Gjakova, Prizren and Peja.

The Brutal Interference in the Internal Affairs of the CPA by the Leaders of the CPY

The IInd Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPA was held in Berat on November 23, on

the eve of the complete liberation of the country. At this time the Party had grown to about

2,800 members. The holding of the plenum was indispensable in order to sum up the work and victories of the Party and of the people in the National-liberation War, and to define the tasks for the new stage of the revolution which would begin with the liberation of Albania.

The proceedings of the plenum, however, were completely distorted through the brutal interference of the leaders of the CP of Yugoslavia in the internal affairs of the Communist Party of Albania.

Militant fraternal relations were created during the Second World War between the Albanian people and the peoples of Yugoslavia in their heroic struggle against the common enemy, the fascist invaders. Close links were established between the Communist Party of Albania and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

At the request of the CC of the C.P. of Yugoslavia, a number of cadres of the CPA were sent to organize the Party and the struggle against the fascist invaders in Kosova and in the Dukagjin Plateau. In the towns of Dibra, Gostivar, Tetova, Kërçova and their surroundings, the CPA organization of the Dibra district rendered substantial assistance in organizing the liberation war.

In order to maintain the connections between the two parties, Miladin Popovich, a Yugoslav internationalist communist, whom the Albanian communists had released from a fas-

cist concentration camp in Peqin in the Autumn of 1941, remained in Albania. In the relations between the CP of Albania and the CP of Yugoslavia he always upheld the internationalist stand of the CC of the CPA ¹⁾.

The leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia tried to exploit the close ties between the Albanian people and the peoples of Yugoslavia in order to dictate its will to the CP of Albania and to carry out its chauvinist aims with regard to Albania.

In Summer 1943, Vukmanovich-Tempo, one of the principal leaders of the CP of Yugoslavia, who had come to Albania with the special mission to create the «Balkan Staff» ²⁾, in an absolutely impermissible and unjust manner accused the Central Committee of the CP of

1) Miladin Popovich was withdrawn from Albania in September 1944 by order of the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia. He was assassinated in March 1945 by the Yugoslav secret service.

2) The creation of the «Balkan Staff» was undertaken on the initiative of Tito alone. Through this organ the Yugoslav leaders aimed at bringing the liberation armed forces of Greece, Albania and Bulgaria under their own command. The attempts to set up the «Balkans Staff» did not meet with success on account of the opposition it aroused in the communist parties and in the revolutionary peoples of the Balkans.

Albania of an opportunist attitude towards the «Balli Kombëtar». This gross, malicious defamation was made for the purpose of creating the opinion that allegedly the Central Committee of the CPA was incapable of independent leadership, that it could not avoid serious mistakes without directives from the «experienced leadership» of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

This diabolical accusation was rejected by the CC of the CP of Albania as absolutely unfounded. Nevertheless, this first attempt of the Yugoslav leaders to subdue the CPA did not pass by without leaving certain traces. Koçi Xoxe, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, and Sejfulla Malëshova, candidate-member of the Central Committee, supported Tempo's distorted version and were ready to submit to the line imposed by the chauvinist Yugoslav leaders. From that day onward Koçi Xoxe began, in fact, to serve the Yugoslav leadership as its agent within the Communist Party of Albania.

Vukmanovich-Tempo openly manifested his chauvinist views in the Autumn of the year 1943. Imbued with these concepts, he considered the truly internationalist activity of the CP of Albania organization of the Dibra district in the towns and regions beyond the Albanian State borders inhabited by Albanians and Macedonians, and the great authority this organization and the Staff of the National-liberation

Army of the Dibra district enjoyed among the people of those regions, as a danger to the Yugoslav aims. Furious at this situation, Vukmanovich-Tempo sent from Macedonia two successive letters to the CC of the CPA. He accused the Albanian communists and partisans, the commandant of the ANLA district staff, Haxhi Lleshi, and the CC of the CPA itself, of «unbounded chauvinism» and of «Great Albania» aspirations. He demanded in a most brutal way that all the Albanian partisans resident in Yugoslav territory should be withdrawn from the battalions of the ANLA of the Dibra district and be placed under the command of the Yugoslav Army staff; that Haxhi Lleshi should leave the city of Dibra and come there only when the Yugoslav staff called on him for assistance; that the National-liberation Council of Dibra should sever its connections with the Albanian staff and should place itself under the authority of the Yugoslav staff. «Otherwise,» threatened Tempo, «there will be clashes in which the communists, too, will take part» (!).

The Central Committee, deeply incensed by such impermissible interference, rejected Tempo's calumnies and accusations and expressed its great amazement at the harsh and not in the least communist tone of his letters and monstrous fabrications. At the same time it warned Tempo that it did not in any way tolerate outside persons giving orders to Albanian

partizan detachments or dictating to the Communist Party of Albania.

Pronounced chauvinist manifestations cropped up among Yugoslav military and Party leaders in Kosova and in the Dukagjini Plateau. They did not take into account the wishes of the Albanian population and in various ways combated the idea, so widely spread during the war of the self-determination of peoples, they often carried out acts of discrimination and extermination against the Albanians in Kosova, in the Dukagjini Plateau and in Montenegro, just as the «cetniks» of Mihailovich had done. The Central Committee of the CPA and the party organizations of the Shkodra and Tropoja districts, had several times drawn attention to, and criticized the chauvinistic actions of different Yugoslav leaders, as attitudes which greatly hindered the prosecution of the war against the Italian and German invaders in Kosova.

On its part, the CP of Albania maintained a consistent internationalist stand and did not allow itself any chauvinistic manifestation, no matter how unimportant. It assisted with all its forces the prosecution of the anti-fascist war in Kosova and in the Dukagjini Plateau; it fought for the fraternization, on a Marxist-Leninist basis, of the Albanian people with the peoples of Yugoslavia. As to the problem of Kosova and other regions of Yugoslavia inhabited by Albanians, the CPA had never accepted the fascist slogan of «great Albania». It saw the

correct solution of this problem in the victory of the people's revolution in both Albania and Yugoslavia. The CPA had declared publicly that through the victory of the revolution in both of the countries, the Kosova people would win the right to decide their own fate. On the other hand it would fight against Yugoslavia, if it tried to oppress and enslave the Albanian population in Yugoslav territory.

At that time the CP of Albania did not as yet suspect the leadership of the CP of Yugoslavia of chauvinistic intentions, because it could not conceive that the leadership of a party which called itself Marxist-Leninist, could have such intentions as are held only by social-chauvinistic parties, by imperialists and their stooges. It thought that the chauvinistic manifestations of Tempo and some leaders of the CP of Yugoslavia and of Yugoslav partizan detachments in Serbia and Macedonia during the war were only distortions by isolated persons and not actions expressing the policy of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

In 1944, CP of Yugoslavia increased its pressure on the CP of Albania. It tried in diverse ways to create among the Albanian people the opinion that everything, even the founding of the CP of Albania and the National-liberation War, were due to the «aid» of the CP of Yugoslavia, to Tito, and that new Albania ought to see its future as linked with the fate of Yugoslavia and only Yugoslavia!

This anti-Marxist policy of the Yugoslav

leadership aroused the just opposition of the CP of Albania.

To the Yugoslav leadership the main obstacle to carrying out its aims in Albania was the Marxist-Leninist line of the CP of Albania, of its Secretary-General Enver Hoxha and of the other members of the CC of CP of Albania, who resolutely defended this line and did not admit foreign interference in the internal affairs of their Party and country.

The CC of the CP of Yugoslavia attempted to overcome this obstacle at the IIInd Plenary Session of the CC of the CPA held in November 1944.

Pursuing its objectives, the Yugoslav leadership sent Velimir Stoinich to Albania as chief of the Yugoslav military mission and liaison officer between the CP of Yugoslavia and the CP of Albania. As soon as he arrived in Albania, Velimir Stoinich began the attack on the general line of the CP of Albania, rejecting its political line as absolutely wrong and demanding that radical changes should be made without delay both in the line and the leadership of the CP of Albania. This slanderous accusation and interference in the internal affairs of the CP of Albania were opposed by CC Secretary-General Comrade Enver Hoxha, but, on the other hand, it was supported by members of the Political Bureau Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru.

The perfidious attack of the Yugoslav leadership found strong support in the Political

Bureau of the CC of the CP of Albania, especially after Sejfulla Malëshova and Pandi Kristo were coopted as members in open transgression of the organizational rules, thus assuring a pro-Yugoslav majority in the Political Bureau of the CC of the CP of Albania.

Behind the Central Committee's back and without consulting its Secretary-General, Velimir Stoinich, together with these ambitious careerists worked out the platform which was to be submitted to the Plenum in opposition to the tested Marxist-Leninist line of the CP of Albania.

The banner of the attack against the Party at the Plenum of the Central Committee was carried by Sejfulla Malëshova and the Yugoslav representative,¹⁾ and fully supported by Koçi Xoxe and the other accomplices in this secret plot.

The CPA, which had fought with such heroism and scored decisive victories in the revolutionary war, was described by the plotters as «not a true communist party», as having a «non-Marxist-Leninist line and leadership». Its glorious road, tested in the heat of battle, which had led to the liberation of the

1) Velimir Stoinich was invited to take part in the plenum as a representative of a sister party. With the assistance of the conspirators in the ranks of the CC of the CPA, he interfered brutally in the internal affairs of the Party, violating all the norms of relations between communist parties.

fatherland and to the establishment of the people's power, was denigrated as «a road full of mistakes and distortions», which vacillated continuously «from sectarianism to opportunism and vice - versa». Enver Hoxha, the founder and teacher of the Party, the leader and hero of the National-liberation War, was presented by the renegades as «the synthesis of all errors». Sejfulla Malëshova raised the need for a «chairman» of the Party», a post that should be occupied by a man «with profound theoretical preparation» (!), having himself in mind.

Velimir Stoinich described the work of Miladin Popovich in Albania as erroneous activity which could not be sanctioned by the leadership of the CPY. He presented a «new line» which was «recommended» to the CPA.

Labelling as sectarian the work which was being done for the popularization of the CPA as the leader of the Albanian people, he raised the question that in the future not the Party as such, but the National-liberation Front should be popularized. He demanded that leading and influential representatives of the reactionary bourgeoisie and of the high clergy, regardless of their inimical stand during the National-liberation War, should be drawn into the leading organs of the National-liberation Front. Recommendations of this kind on the part of the Yugoslav leadership were in concord with the plans of the Anglo-American imperialists who were exerting pressure on:

the Democratic Government of Albania to have it admit representatives of the reaction into its ranks and into the Anti - fascist Council, with a view to making use of them later to overthrow the people's power.

The Yugoslav delegate completely blackened the activity of the National-liberation Councils, of the National-liberation Army, of the political commissars, and demanded that the National-liberation Army should have «a strong political head» and «a strong military command». He concentrated especially on Yugoslav-Albanian relations on the basis of the «Balkan fraternization». «Albania,» declared Velimir Stoinich, «cannot build its economy and develop independently, it is just a morsel for imperialism», therefore «there is no way left to Albania, but to join with Yugoslavia in a confederation, or even further than that». To attain this end, he said it was essential that the Albanian people should be prepared for Albania's fusion with Yugoslavia and that Tito be popularized as a «symbol of the liberation of the peoples of the Balkans and of Europe». 1)

With the plotters attacking the general Party line, the urgent problem with which the CPA was confronted in the further development of revolution after the libera-

1) Minutes of the IIInd Plenary Session of the CC of the CPA, November 1944. CPA Central Archives.

tion of the country was completed, went almost entirely undiscussed at this Plenum. The Yugoslav delegate and Sejfulla Malëshova even declared that for a long time yet Albania «would not carry out the socialist revolution and would not go over to socialism».

Knowing nothing of the plot organized behind the scenes and of the diabolic intentions of the Yugoslav leadership, a number of members and candidate-members of the Central Committee wavered and, to a certain extent, accepted the theses of the Yugoslav emissary and the anti-Party group.

In this way, the meeting of the IInd Plenum of the CC of the CPA was subverted by the interference of the CC of the CPY. The directions given and the decisions taken at this session were harmful to the interests of the Party and the Albanian people.

The only correct decision the Plenary session took was to expel Liri Gega from the ranks of the Central Committee for sectarianism and pronounced adventurism. The plotters, however, without any foundation whatsoever, but for a set purpose, attributed all that to the Party line, and designated sectarianism as the principal danger threatening the CPA! In the Plenum it was decided that the Central Committee be enlarged by adding 7 new members and 11 new candidate-members.

The Plenum at Berat dealt a heavy blow

to the unity of the Party leadership. The way was now open for introducing the revisionist and anti-Leninist organizational norms and methods of the Yugoslav leadership into the CPA. A favorable terrain was created for large-scale interference by the Yugoslav revisionists in the internal affairs of the CPA and of the country.

The plot of the Titoites in Berat did not meet with complete success on account of the resolute stand taken by Comrade Enver Hoxha and other members of the Central Committee who defended the Marxist-Leninist line of the Party. The Yugoslav leadership could not achieve its main objective of deposing the Secretary-General, because the majority of the CC members rejected the demand of the plotters to have him removed from his office, and recognized the great merits of Comrade Enver Hoxha in founding the CPA and guiding it through the National-liberation War. Nevertheless, this plot was the first attempt to undermine the foundations of the Albanian Marxist-Leninist Party and a serious threat to the independence of Albania and to its people's revolution.

While the IInd Plenum of the Central Committee of the CP of Albania was meeting in Berat, the National-liberation Army was bringing to an end its operations to clear Albanian soil of the nazi invaders. Hotly pursuing the enemy and destroying his

forces, on 29th of November, the ANLA liberated Shkodra, the last city and the whole of Albania.

The power of people's democracy was now established throughout the country. **November 29, 1944 marks the complete liberation of the Fatherland and the victory of the people's revolution.**

Immediately after the liberation of Albania, by decision of the CC of the CPA and by order of the ANLA Commander-in chief Enver Hoxha, two divisions of the ANLA (the Vth and VIth) continued the pursuit of the Hitlerite troops into Yugoslav territory; the Albanian and Yugoslav soldiers, fighting side by side against the nazi hordes, in December 1944 and in January-February 1945 liberated Montenegro, Sandjak and the Southern part of Bosnia. With their profoundly internationalist stand, their high communist spirit, and their unparalleled heroism, the Albanian partisans won the respect and admiration of the Albanian, as well of the Macedonian, Montenegrin and Sandjak populations of Yugoslavia. In the battles for the liberation of the people of Yugoslavia, hundreds of the ANLA fighters laid down their lives.

10. THE BALANCE-SHEET OF THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION WAR AND THE CAUSES OF ITS VICTORY

The National-liberation War against Italian and German invaders, which continued for more than five years and a half, is the bloodiest and most heroic war the Albanians have waged throughout their history.

The one million Albanian people tied down more than 15 Italian and German divisions and put out of action some 70 thousand enemies killed, wounded or captured. As one of the most active participants of the Anti-fascist World Coalition, relative the size of its territory and its population, Albania gave a most valuable contribution to the historic victory over fascism. It bore a very heavy burden on its shoulders. During the Second World War on the 28.000 sq. kilometres of Albanian territory there trod about 700 thousand fascist soldiers who caused incredible damage and great devastation. Albania was one of the countries that suffered most heavy losses in human life, and particularly, in material and cultural values during the Second World War.

But the heroic efforts made, the blood shed, and the huge losses suffered by the Albanian people, were crowned with absolute victory over their external and internal enemies.

On November 29, 1944, with the complete liberation of the country and the triumph of

the people's revolution, fascist domination in Albania came to an end. At the same time, all dependence on the imperialist great powers was done away with, and all enslaving links and relations with these powers were severed; the Albanian people achieved their full national independence; likewise, the rule of landlords and the bourgeoisie was overthrown. Albania broke away forever from the world capitalist system.

This was the greatest victory ever achieved by the Albanians throughout their entire history.

The National-liberation War remained to the very last an anti-fascist and democratic revolution. However, within its framework, elements of socialist revolution also evolved as well, such as depriving the bourgeoisie of political power, the establishment of the leadership of the Communist Party as the sole leadership in the new Albanian State, and so on. This took place as a consequence of the continual intensification of the war against the principal exploiting classes of the country and of its being interwoven with the war against the invaders. This factor still further deepened the revolutionary character of the National-liberation War.

The Communist Party of Albania did not call for the intensification of the class struggle within the country, nor did it launch slogans calling on the people to rise against the landlords, tribal chieftains, and the bourgeoisie;

to the end, it directed its main efforts against the fascist invaders. The class struggle was intensified by the open treachery of the exploiting classes.

The political organizations, which represented these classes, such as the «Balli Kombëtar», the «Legality», etc. were crushed by the National-liberation Army only because they placed themselves at the service of the fascist invaders. By their undisguised anti-national and anti-people's stand, the former ruling classes lost all possible claim to participate in the political power.

The new political power, which was established in Albania even before the National-liberation War had ended, was entirely in the hands of the democratic revolutionary forces with the Communist Party as their sole leader. This power did not consist simply of a democratic dictatorship of revolutionary forces, but it was a power which contained within itself rapidly evolving elements of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

With the historic victory in the National-liberation War the revolution was carried out only in the political field. The economic and social problems of the democratic, anti-imperialist revolution remained to be solved after the war.

The main social forces in the National-liberation War were the working class and the poor and middle peasantry. The petty and mid-

dle bourgeoisie of cities also took part in the war.

The working class played the leading role in the National-liberation War. This role it carried out through the Communist Party of Albania.

The Albanian working class was small in numbers, dispersed, not yet formed as an industrial proletariat, but it was the most progressive class, which had the future before it. Above all, no other class in the country succeeded in forming a party with a sound organization, with a correct policy built on scientific foundations, as the working class had done in creating its own party.

Both in the leading organs of the National-liberation War, and in the composition of the Party, the number of workers was small. This did not, however, prevent the working class from fulfilling its leading role in this war. Although a good number of its members came from the petty bourgeoisie, the Communist Party of Albania educated them, especially those coming from the ranks of the peasantry, in a profound proletarian revolutionary spirit, imbuing them with a rare determination to defend the interests of the proletariat, of socialism. In the concrete circumstances, these interests were fused and became one with the interest of the National-liberation War, with the interests of the entire people and of the enslaved Albanian nation.

The peasantry became the source of the

main armed force of the National-liberation War, the soundest support of the working class and of the Communist Party of Albania.

The Albanian peasantry constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. It is true that it was backward from the economic and cultural standpoint, but it preserved in its bosom great revolutionary capacities developed through its unremitting struggle for freedom and for land, against the oppression and exploitation of landlords and usurers, against the former anti-people regimes, and, particularly, against foreign invaders. The peasantry, more than other class or social stratum in Albania, was endowed with sound patriotic fighting traditions. Taking this into account, the Communist Party appreciated correctly the decisive role of the peasantry at war. «Under the conditions of our country, the war would be won», Comrade Enver Hoxha said, «by that class which had the peasantry with it»¹⁾.

The peasantry accepted the program and the leadership of the CPA, after having been convinced by its own experience that it was the only political organization standing for resolute war against the invaders matching words with deeds, and capable of ensuring victory over the fascist invaders and traitors

1) Enver Hoxha. Speech delivered at the Solemn Meeting on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Country. Tirana, 1959, p. 9.

and of fulfilling the dreams of the peasants for freedom and land. Under the leadership of the Party, the peasantry displayed great patriotism and heroism.

All through the period of the National-liberation War the Communist Party upheld the slogan of the mobilization of all the peasants without class discrimination. However, the well-to-do peasants, the village gentry as a class, did not accept the program and the leadership of the CPA. In general, they aligned themselves with the traitor organizations of the bourgeoisie and of landlords, with the «Balli Kombëtar» and the «Legality», and became their support in the villages, hoping, thus to be able to preserve their privileges after the war.

The petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie in the cities took part in the National-liberation War without the intermediary of a political party of their own, just like the peasantry. They did not and could not create a real political party, because they were too heterogeneous, economically powerless and, in particular, because they lacked determination, maturity and experience in the political struggle. For this reason, they were unable to play any leading role in the National-liberation War. They accepted the program of the Communist Party, because they perceived that this program embodied their immediate political demands.

The petty bourgeoisie, which constituted the vast majority of the urban population,

though in appearance neither too resolute nor prepared for sacrifices, almost entirely joined in the National-liberation War and displayed remarkable patriotism. Many of them linked themselves closely with the Communist Party.

The middle bourgeoisie displayed great vacillation. Among them there were tendencies for compromise with the invaders. However, finding themselves under the grip of occupation jaws, under the pressure of foreign capital, and under the influence of the traditional patriotism of the Albanian people, most of them opposed the occupation regime and took part in the anti-fascist war, but did not display any great activity. Only a few of them sided with the invaders, by joining the ranks of the «Balli Kombëtar» and the «Legality» organizations.

In general, **the Albanian intellectuals**, the majority of whom came from the upper and the middle strata of the population, proved to be patriotic and opposed to fascism. The more progressive minded ones were distinguished for their love of country, for their resoluteness and profound revolutionary spirit. They embraced the line of the Communist Party and strove to carry it out. Only a small number of intellectuals, influenced by fascist bourgeois ideology, aligned themselves with the invaders. They served as the ideologists of the «Balli Kombëtar» and of the «Legality» organizations.

The most active force of the National-

liberation War was the youth. They stood in the forefront of the war against the invaders and traitors in the towns, the villages and in the National-liberation Army.

The vast majority of these young men and young women stood out for their lofty sentiments of patriotism and, at the same time, for their profoundly revolutionary progressive spirit. They aligned themselves closely with the Communist Party and became ardent fighters for the great ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

The first to join the liberation struggle were the youth of the city, workers and school youth.

The school youth came mainly from the ranks of the middle petty bourgeoisie of the towns. Side by side with the working youth and acting in the ranks of the Communist Youth Organization, they made an important contribution to the propagation of the line of the CPA among the masses. At the same time, they acted as intermediaries in exerting the influence of the Party on the petty and middle bourgeoisie of the cities.

But the bulk of the anti-fascist youth came from the peasantry. Next after the city youth they dashed into the war with rare impetuosity and revolutionary determination. The young peasants made up the majority in the National-liberation Army.

The women played a major role in the anti-fascist war. They took part in this war

on a scale unprecedented in the former liberation wars. The Albanian women embraced the line of the Communist Party and fought vigorously side by side with their menfolk, for its application because in this line they found not only the sure road to the national and social liberation of the people, but also the road to win equal rights with men, to winning emancipation from all the fetters of the past that held them under bondage.

The great victory of the National-liberation War was achieved, first and foremost, through the self sacrifice and lofty heroism displayed by the Albanian people at war. Never before had they been so united, so resolute and so sure of victory as in the war against the Italian and German invaders and the traitors. Never before had they been so deeply conscious of the objectives of the war nor so willing to make sacrifices and undergo privations for the sake of victory.

It was during the National-liberation War that the creative capacity of the masses of the people, regarding the political and military life of the country, revealed itself with all its force. Their inexhaustible strength and great capability were demonstrated in the fire of fierce battles. From the flesh and blood of the people, from the ranks of the ordinary folk workers, peasants, patriotic intellectuals, emerged the fighters and wonderful leaders of the masses, commandants and commissars, members of councils and Ministers. These men and women

of the people, often deficient in formal schooling, excelled in ability and valor and defeated the highly sophisticated generals and officers of the enemy, and the professional politicians of the former landlord-bourgeois regime.

«Our liberation war», — wrote Comrade Enver Hoxha on the eve of liberation, — «placed the people at the head and herein lies the reason for the victory»¹⁾

By the heroic war they waged, the Albanian people liberated the fatherland and brought about their own emancipation.

A very important role for the achievement of victory was played by the brilliant patriotic and fighting traditions, the rich experience which the Albanian people had acquired through the centuries in their struggle for freedom and independence, which were further developed and reinforced in the final National-liberation War.

The CPA was the inspirer, organizer and leader of the National-liberation War, the architect of victory.

In the former liberation wars the Albanian people had not succeeded in creating a monolithic, consistent leadership. This was the

1) Enver Hoxha: «The Historic Decisions of the Second Meeting of ANLC» November 1944. Works, vol. 3, pp. 373.

primary reason why they had been unable to achieve their freedom and complete independence in the past, and why the fruits of their efforts had been plundered by the imperialists, the feudal lords, and the bourgeoisie of the country. From their own struggle however, from the ordeals and misery, they had learned the great lesson that without a revolutionary leadership, their blood and strivings could not be crowned with final victory. They turned this dream into reality by founding the CPA, which they brought into being, reared and tempered in war. Emerging from the bosom of the Albanian people, this Marxist-Leninist Party inherited from the magnificent patriotic traditions, a rich experience in war. It succeeded in accumulating and further evolving these traditions and this experience, giving them a deeply revolutionary content and turning them into reality to secure the freedom and national independence of the people to bring about the victory of the revolution.

The Communist Party worked out a correct policy based on the objective internal and external conditions and on the fundamental Marxist-Leninist principles, a policy which directly responded to the pressing political demands, to the deeply rooted interests of the people, of the fatherland and of socialism and carried it out with consistency, resoluteness and revolutionary daring.

It was the Party that implanted among the

masses such a high consciousness of the objectives of the war and of the correctness of its policy. It was the Party which discovered, developed and employed in the war against fascism all the energies and capabilities of the masses of the people.

The masses were convinced out of their own experience that the Communist Party was the real champion of their interests and of the interests of the Albanian nation, the loyal and consistent fighter for national independence, liberty, democracy, and the land.

With rare mastery the Communist Party solved three tasks which were the key to victory: the union of the broad masses in the NLF, the organization of the general uprising, the arming of the people, the creation of the standing NLA; the destruction of the rule of the invaders and of landlords and the bourgeoisie, the organization and establishment of the power of the people's democracy.

The Party secured many powerful foreign allies for the Albanian people and educated them in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, of fraternal friendship with all the people who fought against fascism. Toward the foreign allies it pursued a correct policy built on revolutionary principles. It taught the people to differentiate between them and to link the Albanian National-liberation War, first and foremost, with the great patriotic War of the Soviet Union. At no time did the Party allow any of the allies to interfere in the

internal political and military affairs of our country. It frustrated the plan of the Anglo-American imperialist reactionaries who attempted to obstruct the victory of the revolution and to establish their own control on Albania. While maintaining an upright attitude toward all allies and making a correct assessment of the assistance and support from abroad, the Party never expected others to bring freedom to the Albanian people. It resolutely carried into effect the principle of the primacy of self-reliance and taught the people to realize clearly that liberty is not granted but is won by bloodshed, with many hardships and sacrifices.

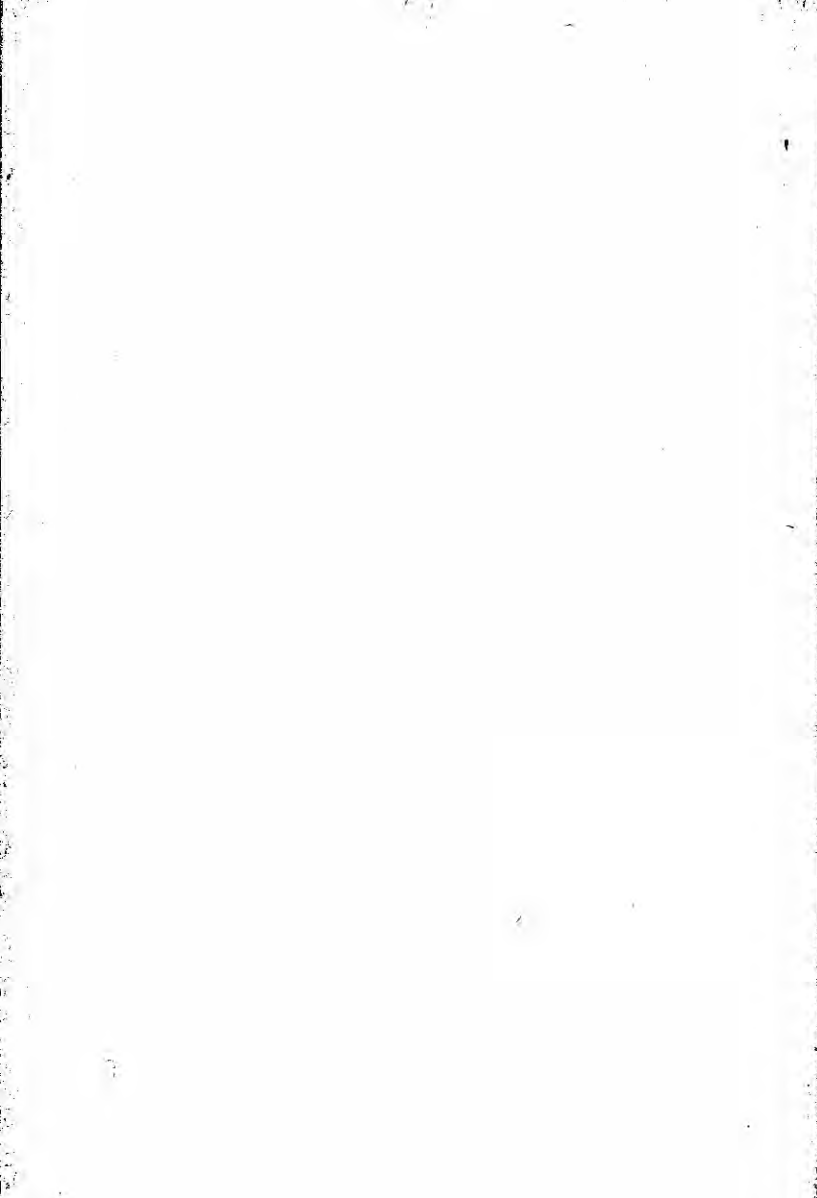
The CPA was born, grew up and proved itself as a leader with capability and unrivalled authority in the revolutionary war against the invaders and traitors. It did not wait to learn the Marxist-Leninist theory before throwing itself into the struggle. It learned this theory and applied it faithfully and in a creative manner in the heat of battle, in complicated situations.

The decisive external factor of the historic victory of the Albanian people was the great patriotic War of the Soviet Union and its great victory over fascism. The Red Army did not come to Albania, but the Albanian people consider the Soviet Union as the liberator of Albania as well. Under the leadership of J.V. Stalin, the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the Second World War and played the principal

role in the destruction of fascism. The great victories of the Red Army over Hitlerite Germany created suitable conditions for the Albanian people to rise up as one man, and through their own heroic war, to assure full national independence and establish the People's Power.

N.B. — THE HISTORY OF THE PARTY OF LABOR OF ALBANIA contains 7 chapters. The first and second chapters published in this volume deal with the struggle to found the Albanian Communist Party, to organize and lead the struggle for the liberation of the country and the establishment of People's Power.

The other chapters will be published in two subsequent volumes.



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