

DOCUMENTS

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THE STATE POWER WE ARE BUILDING IS THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

*From the report submitted to the 2nd Meeting of the
Anti-fascist National Liberation Council of Albania¹*

October 20, 1944

DEAR COMRADES COUNCILLORS,

...OUR MILITARY VICTORIES AGAINST THE SECOND GERMAN OFFENSIVE CAME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE GREAT CONGRESS OF PERMET. AFTER THE FOUNDING OF THE ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE.

THE FOUNDING OF THE ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE, THE NATURAL OFFSPRING OF SO MANY SACRIFICES AND SUFFERING OF OUR MOVEMENT, WAS THE MOST VIVID EXPRESSION OF THE WISHES AND ASPIRATIONS OF OUR PEOPLE, WHO, DURING THIS TERRIBLE STRUGGLE, KNEW HOW TO CONSOLIDATE THE MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONS THEY HAD WON AT THE COST OF THEIR BLOOD. THE ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE IS THE NATURAL RESULT OF THE CONCRETIZATION OF THE FORM OF DEMOCRATIC STATE POWER AND THE NECESSARY FORM FOR THE CENTRALIZATION OF OUR WORK. AT THE SAME TIME, FOR INTERNATIONAL OPINION AMONG THE ALLIED NATIONS, THE FOUNDING OF THE COMMITTEE WAS A LAWFUL EXPRESSION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF A PEOPLE, WHO, WHILE FIGHTING, WERE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING THEIR SELF-GOVERNMENT A REALITY.

The entire Albanian people received the founding of the Anti-fascist Committee with indescribable enthusiasm.

The Presidium of the Committee has received thousands of letters of congratulations and confidence from the

most remote areas of Albania, which express the deep affection and lofty sentiments of our militant people, who demonstrate their firm determination to continue their liberation war with the greatest drive possible, and their complete confidence in the Anti-fascist Committee which is leading this war with success. The formation of the Committee fell like a bombshell among the ranks of the traitors who were closely collaborating with the occupiers and making detailed preparations to annihilate us. At the same time, the formation of the Committee ruined the plans hatched up by the Albanian reactionaries abroad with the support of certain foreign reactionary circles. These people had hidden the truth about our country and our fierce fight from our brothers in emigration,

who, though they are linked heart and soul with our people and their struggle, because they are democrats in spirit and in deeds and are ready to give everything for their native land, are still in the dark about and cannot contribute as much as they should to our war.

The constitution of the Committee has liquidated and made a mockery of the efforts of the Albanian reactionaries within the country and abroad to form puppet governments without any popular basis and against the will of the Albanian people, in which, naturally, the participants would have been all those who, today and in the past, have done nothing but play the game of the enemies of the people.

The Congress of Përmet and the constitution of the Anti-fascist Committee have consolidated our Front and rallied almost the entire people, mobilizing them for this sacred struggle. The people's power has been strengthened and the decisions taken at the Congress of Përmet have been implemented, one after the other, by the Anti-fascist Committee and the National Liberation Army.

One of the major decisions, the decision to step up the war and to liberate the occupied areas, has been implemented. After foiling the second German offensive, our brigades and divisions have marched towards North Albania to liberate the territory and our people there who have suffered extremely at the hands of the Germans and traitors. One after the other, the gangs of Shefqet Vërlaci and Abaz Kupi, of Fiqri Dine and Halil Alia and company, the bands of Gjon Markagjoni and Muharrem Bajraktari have melted away like snow in the sun...

Dear comrade councillors,

Our victories have been numerous and continual in every field of activity, and this is due to the correct political and military stand of the National Liberation Movement. The principles of our just struggle, embodied in the platform of Peza and

amplified at the Labinot Conference and at the historic Congress of Përmet, have been carried out to the letter, councils have been set up in three quarters of Albania, and soon they will be established all over the country. The people participate wholeheartedly in them and see them as the expression of their sovereignty. In them the people have found the best method of government, or rather, self-government. The setting up and functioning of the national liberation councils during the war has been one of the factors in our triumph. In their role as organs of state power and with their untiring political work, the national liberation councils have been the right hand of our army. The activity of the army has been closely combined with that of the national liberation councils, and these splendid results have derived from the full harmonization of the two powers², from their struggle and indefatigable work in an atmosphere of great mutual affection. Let us honour and applaud the untiring work and struggle of the national liberation councils, these worthy representatives of our people.

The creation of the Anti-fascist Committee gave a great impetus to the work of the councils and state power. It was then that the centralization of work began, that the people mobilized themselves around the Front and the army, and gained the greatest confidence in their own work and struggle. The Committee has issued instructions and directions for the strengthening of the state power and the extension of its activity in all fields. The results can be seen. In the educational field, hundreds of schools have been opened in the liberated areas and thousands of children have begun to attend them regularly...

In the four months of life, the Anti-fascist Committee has worked to intensify the struggle against the occupiers and the internal enemy to the utmost, to consolidate state power in the liberated zones, to reconstruct the country and raise the cultural level of the people. We are already seeing the first

fruits of this work, and progress is being made everyday. We shall prove to all the pessimists that our people and the new men and women tempered in this war know how to work and build their sacred Homeland just as they know how to fight heroically for its freedom.

One of the principal tasks of the Anti-fascist Committee has been to work out and draft the basic laws of our democratic state power on which our new state will be soundly established. These laws of capital importance will be submitted for approval and will set down the concrete organization and functioning of the state apparatus.

The greatest concern and care of all the members of the Front should be to see that this whole structure we have built has sound foundations which will stand against all dangers and threats. We must not be satisfied with its superficial appearances, but must look reality in the eye, and wherever the work is going badly, we must rebuild it on a sounder basis. The state power we are building is not a thing of the moment, but has to do with the entire future of our country and our people, who have suffered all their lives, who are shedding precious blood and burning with desire for happier days after the war. Therefore, in all the branches of this state we must bring the people to power, and they must be the masters of their own fate. For this important task to be thoroughly achieved, we must understand the essence of this state power; we ourselves and all our people must understand it. The fundamental laws of our democratic state power are clear, simple, comprehensible and applicable to everyone. Everything has been stripped from the complicated procedure of the former laws which were formulated in this way expressly to keep the people at a distance, and at the same time, to usurp their rights. But it is not enough to understand the laws, we must apply them with the greatest vigour and defend them with the greatest severity against anyone who tries to distort and violate them.

Anyone who violates these laws, anyone who abuses them, who violates and abuses the will of the people, must not escape unpunished in the new state power we are setting up.

Up to now the national liberation councils of the villages, sub-prefectures and prefectures have simultaneously exercised the role of state power and political functions. With the new decisions on the organization of the state power, the national liberation councils and the executive committee are only organs of the state power, and all the councillors appointed by the national liberation councils to the executive committee are state functionaries. As such, they are responsible to the national liberation councils which have appointed them and to the population of the sub-prefecture and prefecture of which they are part. These functionaries of the new state, from the ranks of the people, must carry out the orders they receive from the National Liberation Council and from the Government, and work tirelessly and conscientiously for the people who have given them their confidence. As state functionaries, they should be respected by all, and on their part, through their work and behaviour, should be worthy of respect and affection. In this new state power, no one should think that with his advent to a council he will be permitted to commit abuses and do bad things to the detriment of the people; the people will be close by him, will help him and control him, but they will criticize him and dismiss him if he does work well. On the other hand, the people will wholeheartedly love and defend those who work fair-mindedly for the people. Since we have decided that all this blood which has been shed must not be in vain, we must have these principles clear, both we and the people, and with these sound criteria, let us set to work, devoting all our energies and toil to it.

Around this state power we must rally the entire Albanian people so that no one remains outside the Front, and the broad masses of the people are guided and nurtured with the correct

policy of the National Liberation Front. To carry out this large-scale political work among the masses of the people, the National Liberation Front should itself become a political organization.³ Comrade councillors, the honour for forming this political organization belongs to you, as worthy representatives of our people.

Another important task of the Anti-fascist Committee was to unite the entire Albanian people in the National Liberation Front and to wage a fierce struggle against the occupiers to speed up the liberation of the country. The Anti-fascist Committee has followed the correct road of the unity and fraternity of all Albanian patriots with the greatest loyalty, as the only course for the salvation of our people. The Committee has always been awake to utilize every opportunity for the complete realization of this union of the healthy energies of the people and to snatch any weapon from the hands of the occupiers. In recent times things have been rapidly coming to a head in Europe and in the Balkans. The German troops stationed in Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania were cut off by the Red Army and the national liberation armies of the Balkan peoples. Our army and the national liberation armies of neighbouring peoples attacked the enemy forces from all sides, as they were frantically preparing their retreat. The German ship was sinking and, naturally, the rats on board rushed to abandon it.

The bands of Albanian traitors, who were still at large and assisting their patron with his last massacres and ravages, began to collapse. The Albanian bandits saw their men at arms desert, one after the other. These elements surrendered to the detachments of our army, and, recognizing their error, some gave up their arms and some asked us to let them fight side by side with the partisans. We were witnessing the great differentiation in the ranks of reaction. The Anti-fascist Committee, in the interests of the war and the people, and in order to remove from the Germans' hands the last weapon

they had forged to cause fratricide, made the call you know of. This supreme call to all those who found themselves taking the side of the enemy made it possible for them to leave the ranks of the occupiers, in the highest interests of the country, and gave them the opportunity to reduce their guilt. The Anti-fascist Committee has the duty to accelerate the liberation of the country. Our just call, with its highly political character, was the last summons to all those who might still have a drop of fraternal blood in their veins, to all those who, whatever they had done, still had some scrap of feeling for their country. Our call was a great demonstration of the lofty aim our movement has consistently followed, that of uniting the entire Albanian people...

Comrades,

The Congress of Përmet, convened at a difficult moment and attended by representatives from all the liberated and occupied areas of Albania, gave our country the Anti-fascist Council, a worthy representative of the Albanian people. It was at this Congress that the will of our people was freely expressed for the first time. For the first time, broad strata of the population, men and women, old and young, took part in the political life of the country. The Congress of Përmet vested the Anti-fascist Council of Albania with both legislative and executive powers, and on the basis of its rights, the Presidium of the Council nominated the Anti-fascist Committee its main executive and directing organ. The Anti-fascist Committee had all the attributes of a provisional government, and as such it was faced with the following problems: to lead the Albanian people in the war, to strengthen and intensify this war against the occupiers and traitors, to liberate the occupied areas, to strengthen the National Liberation Army, and to extend and consolidate the power of the councils. At that stage of our struggle, the Anti-fascist Committee, with the attributes of a provisional government, was the cornerstone in the setting up of the people's power

that emerged from bloody battles. The Anti-fascist Committee, as an executive organ of the state power appropriate to the political circumstances of that period, paved the way for a democratic government of Albania, as an executive organ of the state power suited to the present political circumstances. And the present political circumstances differ from those of four months ago. Our movement has extended immeasurably, our war has assumed considerable proportions... At present we have a great number of brigades, divisions and arm corps on a war footing, and day by day our army is moving towards the total and rapid liberation of the cities and the whole of Albania. Even's are moving rapidly abroad and the allied armies are advancing, tightening the pincers on Hitlerite Germany. Therefore, the motto of our war and policy should always be: Forward! In these political circumstances, comrades, circumstances which are totally in our favour, we must adopt important decisions, and one of these decisions should be the transformation of the Anti-fascist Committee into the Democratic Government of Albania. A new factor has emerged on the horizon of our political life and must be taken

into consideration, and the reason which yesterday prevented us from forming a new government, today, when three quarters of Albania have been liberated, when our state power is being extended and strengthened, when our army is expanding and growing stronger, when nazi Germany is being dealt mortal blows, and when the traitors of the country, completely routed, cannot find a place to hide, the same reason impels us and obliges us to transform the Committee into the Democratic Government. Our movement has always been built with a sense of proportion, with political insight, never going beyond the political reality; it has always tried to follow the tempo of internal and external events, and has based itself entirely on what is politically correct and necessary.

The transformation of the Committee into the Democratic Government requires the passing of a law and this law can be passed by you and only by you, for you are the representatives of the people, vested with legislative and executive powers. The law you will pass, after thoroughly examining the question, will most certainly fulfil one of the most ardent wishes of our people, strengthening our internal state

power and consolidating our international position.

The Democratic Government, which will emerge from this historic meeting, will remain loyal to the political and military platform of our movement. It will abide by the decisions of the Congress of Përmet, and will be the continuation of the Anti-fascist Committee. The principal tasks of this Democratic Government will be, first and foremost, to continue the war against the occupiers and their lackeys, to bring the war to a speedy conclusion, to strengthen the democratic state power of the councils, to safeguard all the democratic rights of the citizens, including their beliefs and the protection of private property. The Democratic Government, abiding by the decisions of the Congress of Përmet, will prohibit Zog from coming to Albania until the people express their will about the form of the state. The Democratic Government, following the complete liberation of Albania and the stabilization of the situation, will organize free and democratic elections to the Constituent Assembly, which will determine the form of the state, and draft the Founding Constitution of the Albanian State..

1 The 2nd Meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council was held in Berat from the 20th to the 23rd of October 1944. It decided to transform the Anti-fascist Committee into the Democratic Government of Albania, adopted the Law on the National Liberation Councils and the

«Declaration of Citizens' Rights».

2 The power of the councils and the army.

3 The 2nd Meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council decided that the national liberation councils would remain as organs of the people's power, while the National Li-

beration Front would create its own specific organizations, which would serve as the main support of the power, and it was through them that the education and mobilization of the masses as well as the strengthening of the unity of the people around the Party would be effected.