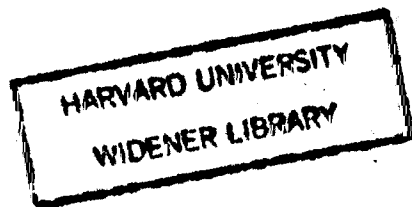


ELENA ATANASSOVA

GEORGI DIMITROV
AND THE ALBANIAN
DEMOCRATIC
AND COMMUNIST
MOUVEMENT
(1920-1939)

SOFIA PRESSE
1979



FAS

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Georgi Dimitrov, as Secretary of the Presidium of the Balkan Communist Federation (BCF), as head of the West European Bureau of the Third Communist International and later on as its Secretary General, devoted a lot of time, took exceptional care of and paid great attention to the development of the democratic and communist movement in Albania, to organizing broad ideological and political work among the Albanian progressive and patriotic emigration and to the problem of forming an Albanian Communist Party (ACP). One can say without fear of exaggeration that the democratization of the Albanian revolutionary movement, its connection with the Balkan and international democratic, national and workers' movement as well as the first steps of the Albanian communist movement and the struggle to found the ACP are closely associated with the name and activity of Georgi Dimitrov.

The problem of Georgi Dimitrov's relations with the Albanian democratic and communist movement and his assistance in the foundation of the first Albanian communist groups, for the democratic and international development of the

Albanian revolutionary movement has not, as yet, been thoroughly researched either in Albanian or in Bulgarian historical literature. Separate articles and papers only point out the decisive assistance rendered by Dimitrov to the organizational and ideological preparation for the setting up of the ACP. Georgi Dimitrov's great popularity with progressive Albanian circles has also been emphasized as well as the importance of his example as a fighter against fascism for the revolutionary education of the Albanian patriots — fighters and communists.¹

The subject of this article is to make a more thorough review and analysis of Georgi Dimitrov's relations with and attitude to the Albanian communist movement, of his support for the first Albanian communists and the revolutionary movement in Albania during a very difficult period of stormy, dramatic events at a moment when the communist movement there first emerged and took shape and the preconditions for the foundation of the ACP were being formed.

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Taking advantage of the favourable situation following the victories of the Balkan allies against Turkey during the First Balkan War, the Albanian patriots declared their country's independence on

November 28, 1912. The age-old Ottoman domination that hindered the economic and social development of the country came to an end. Albania embarked on the road of capitalist development. But since feudal production relations had not yet been entirely eliminated and as the young state fell under the influence of the imperialist powers Albania's overall development was retarded. The First World Imperialist War brought the Albanian people many hard trials. In practice the dismemberment and occupation of Albania long planned and prepared for through diplomatic bargaining was accomplished. The Albanian people did not gain their freedom and independence and had to take up arms to defend their homeland.

Under the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution the general democratic and national liberation movement in Albania gained ground and embraced broad sections of the people — a significant part of the urban and rural population and the progressive part of the bourgeoisie, whose interests were connected with Albania's independent existence and its progress. The peasants started an energetic struggle for the solution of the most important problem in Albania — the agrarian problem, the question of the land and the elimination of feudal vestiges. The Albanian peasants began taking over the land of the rich beys, rejected the corvee, the tithe, the

djeleb and the other forms of feudal exploitation.

Though slowly, capitalist production relations were gaining ground, industry was being built up, the number of the Albanian workers was growing. The unbearable working and living conditions stimulated the struggle of the Albanian workers.²

The uprising in Bulgaria in September 1923, also influenced the further development of the Albanian revolutionary movement. Albanian public opinion became aware of the struggle of the Bulgarian workers and peasants and their heroic battles had a revolutionizing effect on the progressive movement in Albania. It was in connection with the September 1923 Uprising that the Albanian press first mentioned the names of Vassil Kolarov and Georgi Dimitrov as leaders of the rebellious Bulgarian people.³

The appeal issued by Kolarov and Dimitrov from Yugoslavia on October 8, 1923 and addressed to the working people all over the world, to the workers and peasants of the Balkan countries, moved the Albanian revolutionaries as well. The Bulgarian political emigrants who fled to Albania recounted to them the aims and the tasks of the struggle, the tactics of the united front and the common struggle of agrarians and communists; described the leaders of the uprising V. Kolarov and G. Dimitrov.⁴

G. Dimitrov's interest in the Albanian people and their struggles became manifest very early; as far back as the time of the Balkan Wars, assessing the situation in the Balkans, he expressed his sympathy for the Albanian people, their aspirations and struggles for liberation.⁵

Georgi Dimitrov sharply exposed the aggressive imperialist designs of Austro-Hungary, France and Italy as regards Albania during the First World Imperialist War and raised his voice against the occupation of Albania. In his speech on December 2, 1917, which Dimitrov made at a mass meeting in Sofia in defence of the Great October Socialist Revolution, he also condemned in no uncertain terms the big powers' aggressive policy towards Albania and insisted that all the occupied Albanian territories be returned to the Albanian people and that the Albanian people be given the right to solve their internal problems and decide their destiny themselves.⁶

In 1918 the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party (left-wing Socialists) again condemned the occupation of Albania and insisted that the lands seized by Austro-Hungary, Italy and France be returned to the Albanian people. It declared that the only road for the salvation of Albania and for its overall progress was the road to a federation.⁷ At the same time, Dimitrov emphasized the great

influence exerted by the Great October Socialist Revolution on Albania and welcomed the intensifying revolutionary upsurge of the Albanian working people.⁸ He considered the struggle of the Albanian people for freedom and independence a just struggle and appealed to the whole Balkan proletariat to support it.

The conference of the BCF, held in Sofia from May 4 through May 6, 1920, in which G. Dimitrov took an active part, adopted a manifesto addressed to all the Balkan peoples. It pointed out among other things that the Albanian people had already suffered great sacrifices for their freedom and because of foreign interference were in a difficult situation, practically dominated by the imperialist powers. The aggressive policy of the Balkan governments towards small Albania was also condemned because this policy hindered 'the process of the Albanian people's national and political consolidation.'⁹ The Manifesto of the BCF, signed on August 10, 1920 by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party and the Political Bureau of the Yugoslav Communist Party¹⁰ condemned still more sharply Italy's efforts to conquer Albania. Later on, the BCF repeatedly defended Albania from the encroachments of its neighbouring countries and the imperialist powers.¹¹

G.Dimitrov considered the defence of Albania from the aggressive designs of the neighbouring Balkan countries and the big imperialist powers a matter of duty for all the progressive people and organizations. He thought they were in dutybound to support the fighting Albanian people.¹²

As a delegate of the BWSDP (left-wing Socialists) to the Second Balkan Social Democratic Conference in Bucharest in 1915, Dimitrov supported the decision to take measures and set up a Socialist Party in Albania which was to be admitted as an equal member in the Balkan Social Democratic Federation. In his speech to the Sofia Party organization after the conference, Dimitrov underlined the importance of that decision and expressed his faith in the socialist future of Albania.¹³ Subsequently, in spite of the enormous difficulties which the Albanian communist movement had to overcome and the weakness of the workers' movement in that country, Dimitrov always pointed out that there was only one road for the salvation of Albania — the road to socialism.

The Balkan Communist Federation, the Comintern and G.Dimitrov were particularly concerned about the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism in Albania and about the formation of an Albanian Communist Party which was expected to take up the leadership of the national

peasants' and workers' movement and bring together in a united front all the democratic and progressive patriotic forces, for a common struggle for freedom and independence, for the progress of the country. At its conference in Vienna, in February 1921, the BCF discussed the problem of the formation of a communist party in Albania. The representatives of the BCP Vassil Kolarov and Georgi Dimitrov wholeheartedly supported that proposal. The resolution voted at the conference emphasized the need to take all measures and to render all possible assistance for the formation of an Albanian Communist Party which should be included in the BCF.¹⁴

At the end of 1923 and the beginning of 1924, a powerful revolutionary movement swept over Albania and gradually culminated into an armed victorious uprising. On June 16, 1924 a democratic government was formed, headed by Fan Noli. It proclaimed the principles of Albania's democratic development, independent foreign policy and the solution of the agrarian problem.¹⁵

The news about the victory of the Albanian people in the June 1924 Uprising and the formation of the democratic government of Fan Noli was received with interest and sympathy by the BCF. The Presidium of the Federation and the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party addressed an appeal to the workers and peasants in the Balkan countries, in Italy and in

Albania. They underscored the great importance of the victory of the Albanian people who had embarked resolutely on the road of eliminating the feudal system, of winning political freedom and independence, against the political encroachments of Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece. The appeal pointed out the grave danger of foreign intervention on the part of some Balkan governments and Italy and called upon the working people to resist such an intervention. On the other hand, it warned the Albanian people of the grave danger, posed by the internal reactionary forces, and called upon them to protect the victory gained through so much blood and sacrifice.¹⁶

However, the government of Fan Noli vacillated; it failed to carry out the reforms it had promised and did not live up to the expectations of the peasants and the poor urban people. The social support of the government dwindled and the disappointed people's masses gradually withdrew from the revolution.

In December 1924 Ahmed Zogu carried out a coup d'etat and the power was turned once again into the hands of the big feudal lords and the rich bourgeoisie. A terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary circles of the feudal lords was established in the country. A significant part of the progressive intelligentsia and the patriotic forces were forced to emigrate in order to save their lives. The people detested the new regime.

Gradually the discontent intensified and grew into a massive movement against the government of Ahmed Zogu and his patrons — the Italian imperialists.¹⁷

The Albanian patriots in emigration were particularly active. They established contacts with the Balkan Communist Federation and obtained its support and all-round assistance. That had a very favourable effect on the further development of the Albanian revolutionary movement.

During that period Georgi Dimitrov wrote a number of particularly interesting and valuable articles about the political and economic situation in the Balkans.¹⁸ In these articles he made a deep Marxist analysis of the past and present of the Balkans, pointed out the perspectives for their development and outlined with great perspicacity the most important tasks facing the communists in the Balkan countries. In his articles he assigned due place to Albania as well. These articles helped the Albanian communists and revolutionaries to find better their bearings in the situation and become clearly aware of their tasks.

Georgi Dimitrov followed with great concern the dramatic events in Albania in 1924. He saw clearly the mistakes of the government of Fan Noli and he thought that one of the reasons for its downfall was also the discontent of the people's masses brought about by the failure of the government to live up to its promises for reforms and giving land to the peasants.¹⁹ At the same time, Dimitrov unmasked the counter-revolutionary part played by royal Yugoslavia

which helped Ahmed Zogu to organize his armed force and invade Albania.²⁰

Georgi Dimitrov underlined the antipopular character of Zogu's regime — a regime of 'the Albanian beys and big bourgeoisie' serving as 'agents of Italian imperialism'. He pointed out the insignificant social support of Zogu's government and predicted its instability.²¹

Georgi Dimitrov was familiar with the situation in Albania, with the class contradictions existing in the Albanian society and the balance of forces, and on this basis correctly outlined the tasks facing the revolutionary national-liberation and worker-peasant movement. Dimitrov repeatedly emphasized the need for the closest possible relationship between these three currents of the revolutionary movement. These instructions of his were an indication of the creative application, according to the conditions obtaining in Albania, of the Leninist tactics of a worker-peasant alliance and of a united front.

Analyzing the emergence of fascism in the Balkans, Dimitrov pointed out that its social basis was very limited. He wrote that fascism had penetrated Albania from outside, that it had been adopted by the counter-revolutionary forces of the bourgeoisie and the top circles of the petty bourgeoisie, but it was alien to the people's masses who fought in defence of their vital interests, threatened by fascism.²² Further analyz-

ing the situation in the Balkan countries and the struggle waged by the peasants, workers and the patriotic forces, and proceeding from the goals and tasks of that struggle Dimitrov underscored the need for building up a strong, militant alliance of workers and peasants.²³

In this respect the conclusions drawn by Dimitrov in his speech at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern were particularly characteristic and instructive. In that speech Dimitrov pointed out that the main task of the Balkan communist parties was 'the formation of an alliance of the proletariat, the peasants and the oppressed nationalities for a struggle against the onslaught of capital and fascism'.²⁴

Georgi Dimitrov followed with keen interest the struggle of the Albanian people against Zogu's regime. He repeatedly pointed out that the Albanian people were waging a just struggle which should be supported by all democratic forces and the international communist movement.²⁵ Dimitrov himself openly condemned and protested against the aggressive policy of Italy and the Balkan bourgeoisie towards Albania, at the same time unmasking the treacherous policy of Ahmed Zogu, aimed at turning Albania into a protectorate of Italy.

Georgi Dimitrov's concern for the fate of the Albanian people and Albania is also evident in his manuscripts 'Notes on the Situation in Alba-

nia', 'Italy and Albania', 'On the Question of the Italian Infiltration of Albania'.²⁶ In view of the tasks, facing the Albanian militants, Dimitrov emphasized that one of the important tasks of the BCF was to enlist Albania into the united antifascist front of the Balkan peoples, because the Albanian people had a stake in preserving the independence of the Balkans and in overthrowing Zogu's antipopular regime. Dimitrov personally helped in connecting the Albanian revolutionary movement with the Balkan and the international revolutionary movement.²⁷

Following Dimitrov's instructions, at its conferences and plenary sessions the Bulgarian Communist Party made a point of underlining the difficult situation of the Albanian people, the grave national and agrarian problems, requiring solution, raised its voice against the imperialist power's encroachments upon Albania, showed its solidarity with the people's struggle and supported the idea of drawing the Albanian revolutionary movement into the common struggle of the Balkan peoples.²⁸

The Balkan Communist Federation and Dimitrov, in particular, rendered great assistance in the correct political orientation of the Albanian revolutionary movement, in giving correct direction to its work as well as in the organizational consolidation of the established democratic national-liberation organizations. With the help of

the BCF a conference was convened in Vienna on March 25, 1925 with the participation of representatives of the different currents of the anti-Zogist movement in emigration. After thorough discussions, the foundation was laid of a patriotic democratic organization — Komiteti Nacional Revolucionar — KONARE (National Revolutionary Committee) under the leadership of Fan Noli and with the participation of distinguished patriots like Halim Dzhelo and others. On May 5, 1925 the Committee made public a programme, containing the following tasks: salvation of Albania from Ahmed Zogu and his supporters — feudal lords and beys, establishment of a genuine democratic power, an agrarian reform in the interests of the toiling peasants and a number of other democratic transformations.

The revolutionary elements in KONARE engaged in broad activities for the unification of the forces, interested in bringing down Zogu's antipopular regime. A group of right-wing conservative elements that participated in KONARE were displeased with the democratic direction taken by the Committee and left it. This created an opportunity for the genuine patriots to restructure the organization and to set up Komiteti i clirimit nacional - KCN (Committee for National Liberation). With the help of the BCF the new organization set out more boldly on a democratic path of development, unmasked the aggressive policy

of the imperialist powers and launched a struggle against Ahmed Zogu's regime.

In its declaration of April 24, 1927 the KCN took internationalist and democratic positions by stating that Albania's liberation could be accomplished only in unity with the other Balkan peoples, with the fighting working class in the capitalist countries and with all peoples that stood for liberation from the shackles of imperialism. Among the natural allies of the Albanian people, the declaration pointed out first the Soviet Union, whose struggle for equal rights for all nations, 'for peace and in defence of the small nations had won the hearts of the Albanian patriots and democrats'.²⁹

A special merit for the development of the Albanian revolutionary movement during that period belongs to Georgi Dimitrov. He maintained contacts with a number of Albanian revolutionary emigrants, instructed and advised them how to improve the direction of the revolutionary movement. Dimitrov's instructions and advice about the reinforcement of the alliance of workers and peasants and the involvement of the broad masses of working people in the struggle were a particular service of great importance for the Albanian revolutionary movement.

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Alongside the attention, devoted to the consolidation and development of the Albanian revolutionary movement, the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the BCF undertook decisive measures to form the first groups of communists in Albania, to disseminate Marxism among the proletariat in Albania and to build up organizationally the emerging communist movement. Georgi Dimitrov repeatedly underlined the need to deploy systematic activity inside the country in order to found a communist party as the vanguard of the working class which was to take up the leadership of the revolutionary movement.

Georgi Dimitrov also elaborated specific problems connected with the foundation of a communist party in Albania. He drafted a working plan for the preparation of the ideological, political and organizational prerequisites for setting up an Albanian Communist Party. With great ability and Leninist insight, Georgi Dimitrov outlined the most important tasks, facing the first communists in Albania and helped them tackle these tasks better. Dimitrov selected, showing great care and deep insight, the necessary cadres who after adequate training and education in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism were to take up the leadership of the Albanian Communist Party. Thanks to that support the Albanian communist movement embarked on the right road under the banner of Marxism-Leninism.

The struggle to set up a communist party in Albania was a long and difficult process because of the complicated economic and political conditions in the country. Due to foreign dependence and Albania's severe backwardness the working class was weak and disorganized. The oppressive exploitation, the religious prejudices and the low cultural standards of the workers proved to be for a long time an obstacle to the spread of Marxism in Albania and to the formation of a communist party there. In this long and difficult struggle Georgi Dimitrov rendered great assistance to the pioneers of communism in Albania.

Reviewing the situation in Albania and the development of the Albanian revolutionary movement in 1925 the Balkan Secretariat of the Comintern emphasized once more the need to found a communist party in Albania and to expand Marxist-Leninist propaganda there. An introduction to the Communist Manifesto prepared for publication in Albanian was discussed. Vassil Kolarov and Georgi Dimitrov took an active part in the discussion.³⁰ •

Dimitrov personally took great care of the formation of a nucleus of communist cadres, who were expected to take up the struggle for laying the beginnings of an organized communist movement in Albania. On his initiative a group of young Albanian revolutionaries, mainly from the revolutionary organization 'Bashkimi' (Unity),

who had emigrated to Austria following Zogu's counter-revolutionary coup d'etat, was sent to Moscow. He made sure that these young people were admitted to various institutions of learning and Marxist-Leninist schools in the USSR (the Lenin School, the Communist University of the Peoples and the Youth of the West, the Communist University of the Working People of the East, the Communist University in Tbilisi, the Tolmachev Military Academy etc.), followed their development, gave them all the time his advice and support. In his memoirs one of these young people wrote: 'The traditional love between the Bulgarian and the Albanian people was best reflected in the love and care, given by the Bulgarian comrades to those 18 young people that went to the Soviet Union to study. A special mention should be made of Georgi Dimitrov's attention and care for Ali Kelmendi'.³¹ In the USSR the young Albanian communists were accorded a warm brotherly welcome and were given the opportunity to study.

From the rostrum of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern Dimitrov pointed out with great concern that the moment had come to set up a communist party in Albania, which should become leader of the national revolutionary and peasant movement in the country. Dimitrov went on to say: 'The only country where there is no communist party as yet is little Albania, but the necessary conditions for forming an Albanian Communist Party are coming to a head there'.³²

With the help of the BCF and the Comintern, under Georgi Dimitrov's immediate supervision the nucleus of young trained Albanian communists founded the first Albanian communist group in Moscow in 1928. On March 3, 1929 Ali Kelmendi was admitted to membership in the group. He immediately distinguished himself with his resolution and valuable qualities of an organizer and quickly grew up into a talented leader and communist functionary.³³

The communists educated in the Soviet Union became the basic cadres of the Albanian communist movement and contributed greatly to the setting up of the Albanian Communist Party. The first Albanian communist group played a significant part not only as a school for the education and training of cadres, but also as a centre working out some of the basic problems of the revolutionary movement in Albania, translating Marxist books, articles and other papers in Albanian which were needed for the dissemination of the Marxist ideas in Albania. The task entrusted by the Comintern to the first Albanian communists to form a communist party in Albania – was an especially difficult one. In order to carry out this task, they had to find the most suitable forms for work and activity. In this respect as well, the pioneers of the Albanian communist movement relied upon Georgi Dimitrov's support and advice.

The Eighth Conference of the BCF convened in Moscow in 1928, worked out valuable directives for the formation of a communist party in Albania. Assessing the situation in the Balkans and the onslaught of reaction, the report presented by Georgi Dimitrov cited Zogu's coup d'etat as one of the elements, indicating an all Balkan offensive of the reactionary forces. The report pointed out the need for a further development and strengthening of the revolutionary movement in Albania and for founding a communist party in Albania. The resolution, voted at the conference, hailed the idea of setting up an Albanian Communist Party. It expressed a readiness to render all-out support for the organizational, ideological and political preparation for and the formation of the Albanian Communist Party. The conference decided that all Albanian communists-emigrants should return to Albania in order to take up the leadership of the working class struggle; to help in building up communist groups inside the country, which were later on to merge and lay the foundations of the Albanian Communist Party; to put in maximum efforts for the unification and consolidation of all progressive and democratic forces.³⁴

The period 1927-1928 saw an accelerated development of capitalism in Albania which had a favourable effect on the workers' movement as well. The number of Albanian workers, who understood that only through an organized struggle

they could gain better working conditions and improve their material status, increased. Many workers' organizations were set up and mass strikes broke out. The communist movement in Albania made its first organizational steps. The first communist nucleus on the territory of Albania was founded in 1928 in Korce. In 1929 it was reorganized in a group, consisting of several nuclei and led by a committee.³⁵ This was the first political organization of the Albanian working class and it played a very important part in the dissemination of Marxism in Albania and in the foundation of the Albanian Communist Party.

During the period of intensifying workers' movement in Albania, Georgi Dimitrov increased his attention to the Albanian communist movement by rendering most immediate assistance to the Albanian communists. In a note to the Balkan Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International of September 12, 1928, he outlined a broad plan of the directions of and the tasks that had to be resolved by the emigration and in Albania proper in connection with the preparation for the formation of an Albanian Communist Party. 'It goes without saying,' Dimitrov wrote, 'that the materialization of this correct and timely decision requires a long and minute preparation, which should be carried out by the Albanian comrades themselves'.³⁶ Analyzing the state of the Albanian communist mo-

vement, Dimitrov wrote that besides the group in Moscow it had many sympathizers among the Albanian political emigration in Geneva, Paris and in Albania itself that were not as yet in contact with each other and were not working systematically among the Albanian workers, poor peasants, the national revolutionary movement and the intelligentsia. Taking into account the specific situation, Dimitrov pointed out that one should not start forming an Albanian Communist Party until the necessary conditions had been created in the country, meaning a network of communist groups that were subsequently to merge and organize themselves into a party.

In this connection Dimitrov put forward the task of working for the rallying of the progressive workers, peasants and intellectuals and their preparation to join the communist movement. In order to coordinate their activity and to ensure leadership from one centre, Dimitrov proposed that an Albanian Initiative Commission (AIC) be set up which should include the most active and the best prepared Albanian communists. The Commission was to work under the guidance of the Balkan Secretariat of the Comintern and with the support of the BCF abroad. Georgi Dimitrov, outlined also the specific tasks of the AIC: to establish contacts with the communist cadres and the communist groups already formed in Albania; to help set up new communist groups in the coun-

tries with significant Albanian emigration. Dimitrov considered an important task of the AIC the publishing of communist literature in Albanian, the elaboration of different problems of the Albanian communist movement and the analysis of current events and the current situation in Albania. The conclusion and the lessons drawn from the development of the revolutionary movement in Albania were to be made known to the Albanian people by the publication of leaflets and popular booklets. Dimitrov considered that the Albanian Initiative Commission had to take measures for the elaboration of the problems, connected with the future constituent conference founding the Albanian Communist Party.

As a genuine Marxist-Leninist Dimitrov thought that the Albanian communist movement had to develop naturally amidst the people's masses as a cause of the Albanian working class in unbreakable links with the people and should not be planted from abroad. This required a broad propaganda of Marxism, the building up of trade unions, workers' and peasants' cultural and educational organizations so that the Albanian working class, the poor peasantry and the progressive intelligentsia could be prepared to adopt Marxism, to embrace conscientiously the communist ideas and to join the struggle. This diverse organizational and ideological work had to start with the publishing in Albanian of fundamental Marx-

ist works and booklets on the problems of the national revolutionary and peasant movement. Besides that, popular propaganda literature in booklet form had to be published which had to discuss the status of the working people in Albania in connection with the national revolutionary movement and the struggle of the peasants, outlining the tasks of the communists and the role of the communist party. In conclusion Dimitrov emphasized: 'Only after such a systematic, ideological, political and organizational preparatory work can the constituent conference of the Albanian communist groups be convened in order to set up a communist party in Albania, entrusting its leadership to well trained and tested Albanian comrades'.³⁷

Georgi Dimitrov's archives have preserved a paper entitled 'Theses on the Situation in Albania and the tasks of the Albanian Communist Group' which eloquently speaks of the important tasks entrusted by the Comintern to the Albanian communist group in Moscow. After analyzing the economic and political situation in Albania and the status of the revolutionary movement, the 'Theses' point out that the most important task is the formation of an Albanian Communist Party, which was to be at the helm of the national struggle and the struggle of the petty bourgeois masses and was to organize the emerging working class. Since the dissemination of Marxist ideas

among the proletariat and the peasants was very difficult, the 'Theses' defined as the main object of propaganda the intelligentsia and the workers-emigrants in France and the USA. It was from these two groups that the first cadres were expected to be trained, who were to organize the work leading to the foundation of a communist party in the country.

The 'Theses' defined as an important task of the Albanian communists their activity within the Committee for National Liberation — (KCN), which was to develop into a mass militant organization. The 'Theses' pointed out that the KCN was an organization communists could cooperate with. The 'Theses' also envisaged the formation of a youth organization in Albania, similar to the Young Communist League in the USSR, and of mass economic workers' organization and communist nuclei in the army. In order to carry out successfully the tasks for the preparation and the foundation of a communist party in Albania it was necessary to start work for publishing Marxist literature in Albanian, and until the publication of a communist newspaper in Albanian was made possible, the news paper of the KCN, published in Geneva had to be used. The 'Theses' envisaged the establishment of closer contacts between the Albanian communist groups and the communist parties in the Balkan countries with a view to coordinate the activities and the struggle against the

preparation of a new war and with the aim of bringing the Albanian revolutionary and communist movement into the all-Balkan united front.³⁸

The instructions of Georgi Dimitrov and the BCF were accepted by the Albanian communists. The Albanian communist group in Moscow set itself as the main task the implementation of the decisions of the BCF and the Comintern and the preparation of the conditions needed for the setting up of a communist party in Albania. Dimitrov's letter of September 12, 1928 and the 'Theses' played a major part in the further development of the Albanian communist movement and in paving the way for the formation of the Albanian Communist Party. Dimitrov outlined a clear perspective for the communists in Albania, inspired them with confidence in the Albanian workers' movement and in Albania's socialist future.

Georgi Dimitrov was not content with just mapping out the general direction of work and outlining the tasks of the Albanian communists. He followed closely the events in Albania, was in the course of the development of the workers' and communist movement there and was familiar with the country's internal and external situation.³⁹

The world economic crisis of 1929-1933 had a particularly severe effect on Albania, whose economy was closely connected with Italian imperialism. Unheard-of misery and famine spread

throughout the country, the working and living conditions of the working class aggravated incredibly. The workers' struggle became increasingly better organized, more purposeful and effective. The anti-Zogist movement flared up anew and in some parts of the country became massive. The peasants stirred again and launched operations to solve the agrarian question by force. Zogu's government was impelled to carry out certain 'reforms' in order to distract the peoples masses from their struggle.⁴⁰

The Balkan Communist Federation intensified further its support for the Albanian national revolutionary and communist movement. In a May Day appeal of 1929 to the workers, peasants and sailors of the Balkan countries the BCF called upon them to build up a Balkan anti-fascist front to oppose the anti-Soviet front of the Balkan bourgeoisie and to make efforts to enlist the Albanian revolutionary movement into the all-Balkan antifascist front, since the Albanian people were also interested in the struggle against fascism and imperialism. The BCF called upon the proletariat of all the Balkan countries to demonstrate on May Day 1929 in defence of the Albanian people, against the 'bloody dictatorship of Ahmed Zogu', the Balkan vassal and agent of fascist Italy.⁴¹

During this period the BCF maintained regular contacts with the most active functionaries of

the Albanian communist and workers' movement, reviewed the situation in Albania and the tasks of the day. In a letter of June 2, 1929 Dimitrov advised the Executive Committee of the Comintern that the contacts of the BCF with the Albanian functionaries, which had been temporarily broken off, were re-established and that the Presidium of the BCF was going to discuss the situation in Albania shortly, would hear a special report and would work out measures to improve work in Albania. Dimitrov also advised that contacts had been established with communists working inside Albania.⁴² Subsequently Dimitrov regularly informed the Executive Committee of the Comintern about the situation in Albania and the work for the formation of a communist party there.

The First Congress of the Dobroudja Revolutionary Organization was prepared and held in Berlin in June 1929 with Dimitrov's assistance. Under the alias of Victor, Dimitrov was present at some of the meetings. He gave valuable instructions about the mass activity of the national revolutionary organizations in view of avoiding the anarchist and sectarian deviations, for broad legal work. The Congress discussed the problems of fascism and the fascist offensive in the Balkans, the terror and the difficult economic situation of the people's masses and the tasks facing the revolutionaries. Representing the Albanian national revolutionary movement were Fan Noli and others who addressed message of greetings to the Congress.⁴³

On Dimitrov's initiative and with his assistance as head of the West European Bureau of the Comintern, a number of international congresses were held for peace, against war. On his insistence representatives of the Albanian revolutionary movement were included in these international forums. Representatives of the Albanian national revolutionary movement and the Albanian peasants were invited to take part in the European peasants congress held in Berlin in March 1930, in the Amsterdam Peace Congress, held in 1932 etc.⁴⁴ At the European peasants congress the Albanian revolutionary movement was represented by Fan Noli who delivered a speech about the struggle of the Albanian peasants and the difficult situation in Albania.⁴⁵ The session of the Executive Committee of the Union for struggle against imperialism and for national freedom, which was held in Berlin from May 30 through June 2, 1931 elected as a member of the Executive Committee a representative of the Albanian revolutionary movement as well. That same session expressed a sharp protest against Ahmed Zogu's terror in Albania.⁴⁶ The KCN sent an enthusiastic message of greetings to the Amsterdam congress of peace and published a special article in its newspaper about Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse' great activity.⁴⁷

Georgi Dimitrov followed closely the international campaign in defence of the victims of the

terror in Albania, undertaken by the progressive international press and by the International Workers Relief. He took measures for the intensification of that campaign.⁴⁸ With Dimitrov's cooperation in 1926 the French Communist Party organized in Paris a Balkan Committee in which representatives of the Albanian revolutionary movement also participated. Under the leadership of Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland and Marcel Villar the Committee was very active in defending the Balkan peoples from the white terror.⁴⁹ During his stay in Berlin, Dimitrov often met Albanian communists and revolutionaries and gave them advice and instructions.⁵⁰ At that time the young Albanian communist movement had serious weaknesses. The activity of the first Albanian groups was rather detached from the workers' struggle, from the movement of the peasants and from the national revolutionary movement. There were serious differences of opinion and strife among the individual communist groups. The basic weakness of the Albanian communists was their lack of understanding of the problem of the worker-peasant alliance, the role of the peasants as an ally of the proletariat and the relationship between the democratic national-liberation tasks and the tasks of the proletariat in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, for a proletarian revolution.⁵¹ This ideological confusion and organizational disarray of the Albanian communist

movement made all the more necessary the support of the BCF and the Comintern and required even greater cooperation on the part of G.Dimitrov. Indeed, the assistance rendered by Dimitrov to the Albanian communists during 1930-1931 was systematic, particularly specific and effective.

Dimitrov's letters to the Balkan Secretariat of the Comintern bear witness to his enormous work in assisting the Albanian communist movement. Georgi Dimitrov looked after the provision of funds needed for the translation and dissemination of Marxist literature in Albania; he made sure that more active work was carried out among the Albanian workers in France and in other countries. He followed personally and maintained contacts with the communists sent to work in Albania. Georgi Dimitrov advised the Executive Committee of the Comintern: 'Lately we have been trying to step up the work and the preparation for the formation of a communist Party in Albania. A small commission at the Secretariat of the BCF has been charged with this task on a permanent basis. Some contacts have been established with comrades from Albania. Work has started among the Albanian workers in France and ... probably it will be intensified in the future. A part of these Albanian comrades will be sent to Albania'.⁵²

In accordance with the instructions of the Comintern and the BCF Dimitrov helped many of

the Albanian communists, who were in emigration, to return to Albania and work for the formation of a communist party there. The Albanian communists established contacts with the communist groups in the country and started active work within the national-revolutionary and peasant movement. G.Dimitrov took a keen interest even in the details and followed closely the training of the Albanian communists who were to go to Albania. He made sure that they were thoroughly instructed and advised about the tasks they had to carry out, that they got all the printed and other material they had to take to Albania etc. G.Dimitrov took a most immediate part in the preparation for the departure of the Albanian communist Kelm, whom he knew personally and who maintained the contacts of the Albanian communists with the Comintern (documents do not give the full name of this Albanian communist but this was obviously a reference to Ali Kelmendi). On July 18, 1930 Dimitrov wrote to the Balkan Secretariat of the Comintern: 'When everything was ready for Kelm's departure he had to postpone it for a while because there was not enough money'.⁵³

In this connection Dimitrov made sure that the money, allocated for this purpose, was sent in good time and that Marxist literature was published in Albanian. He insisted before the Executive Committee of the Comintern: 'It is necessary that

the Albanian booklets, a decision about which has been taken long ago, be printed at last. Without such propaganda material it is impossible to continue work successfully. We, however, have not yet received these booklets, although we wrote about them several times. We ask that these materials be sent to us soon if possible. We ask you to do everything possible, without any delay, to solve all these problems, because we have, as it is, wasted valuable time and it would be a pity to waste still more'. Dimitrov gave detailed instructions to Kelmendi about his work in Kossovo (Yugoslavia), where he was to go and carry out the decisions of the BCF.⁵⁴ Ali Kelmendi could not make it to Kossovo. He stayed in Albania and played an important part in the deployment of the Albanian communist movement.

Dimitrov was receiving information about the activities of the Albanian communists and was particularly well advised about Ali Kelmendi's work. On August 18, 1930 he advised the Balkan Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Comintern: 'Kelm is already in Tirana. He has established some contacts and has started work'.⁵⁵ Dimitrov set high hopes and had full confidence in Ali Kelmendi and 'his friends', whose activity was so important for the implementation of the decisions of the BCF and the Comintern. In carrying out the instructions of the Comintern, the BCF and those of Dimitrov, Ali Kelmendi work-

ed energetically for the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism, for the organizational rallying of the communists, for building up new communist groups, for consolidating the existing ones and for improving their activity.

In late February or early March 1932 Ali Kelmendi went abroad in order to contact the Secretariat of the Balkan Bureau of the Comintern. We have no exact information about these meetings. It is only known that from Dimitrov he got instructions to set up in Albania 'a united organizational centre for communist activity'. On May 17, 1932 Ali Kelmendi returned again to Albania. Following the Leninist principles of combining underground and legal activities, he set up communist groups within the workers' organizations which achieved significant results. On Kelmendi's initiative, an organization of building workers was set up, called Puna (Labour) in the autumn of 1933. This was a great success for the Albanian communist movement. Puna was the first workers' organization in Albania led by the communists.

Shortly afterwards, the police, which already knew about Kelmendi, arrested him and interned him first in Korce and later on in Gurokastre and in other remote places, where he was kept under police observation. In spite of this, Kelmendi managed to establish contacts with the communists in Korce and helped them to improve their

activity. With his help the communist group in Korce managed to break its isolation, to get closer to the masses, especially to the workers, and to take up the leadership of their struggle, making some successful attempts at combining legal and underground work. Ali Kelmendi paid attention to the problem of raising the theoretical level and ideological training of the communists and to the dissemination of Marxism among the workers.⁵⁶

G.Dimitrov's heroic behaviour at the Reichstag Fire Trial in 1933 exerted strong revolutionizing influence on the Albanian communists and fighters for freedom. The progressive press in Albania carried a lot of news items, articles and informations from foreign sources which familiarized Albanian public opinion with this historic event. They disclosed the serious contradictions and the lack of preparation of the investigation, the insecurity of the fascist court, its obvious subordination to the hitlerites and its biased approach. The newspapers expressed admiration and amazement at Dimitrov's courageous behaviour.⁵⁷ The newspaper *Gazeta e Korce* wrote at that time: 'No doubt the most interesting personality among the three Bulgarians is Dimitrov. He stated openly before the judges that he was 'a hundred per cent' communist, that he was the soul of and was directly responsible for the revolutionary movement in

Bulgaria in 1923 and was sorry that at the time the Bulgarian communists had not had full command of the Bolshevik methods, which, had they been correctly applied, would have led the communist movement in Bulgaria to victory.⁵⁸

Under the bold headlines 'Courageous Behaviour of the Defendant Dimitrov', 'The Defendant Dimitrov Provoked a New Incident at Leipzig', 'A Fiery Statements of Dimitrov', 'The Bulgarian Dimitrov Bravely Defends Himself and His Comrades' and others, the Albanian press carried Dimitrov's speeches in full, underlining the most important passages in them.⁵⁹

The Albanian press followed closely the proceedings and expressed confidence in the fairness of the decisions of the counter-trial in London. The newspapers emphasized that the London trial faced a historical responsibility before the whole world for disclosing the truth about the Reichstag fire. A special information said that following a thorough study of the material and after questioning the witnesses, the court in London, which consisted of 'the most prominent, able and respected lawyers and public figures', had acquitted Dimitrov, Torgler, Tanev and Popov of the charges 'because they had nothing to do with the setting of the Reichstag on fire'. It said that most probably the real incendiaries were the hitlerites themselves.⁶⁰

The Albanian press also carried items about the international campaign in defence of Dimitrov

and his comrades. A cable from a group of Bulgarian communists read: 'We confirm on our honour that Dimitrov is absolutely innocent. He could not have set the Reichstag on fire. Being aware of his genuine idealism for the good of the whole Bulgarian people, we have every reason to believe in his innocence'.⁶¹

The objective information carried in the Albanian press provoked sharp protests on the part of the German legation in Albania. The hitlerites' fear of having the truth about the Reichstag Fire Trial and its hero Dimitrov brought out did not subside for many years. When in 1937 the documentary film 'Le Combattant', which had been made in the USSR and which depicted in a moving way Dimitrov's courageous behaviour, was shown in Albania, at the insistence of the German legation the film was banned by the Ministry of the Interior.⁶²

The period 1935-1936 was characterized by a growing indignation of the people's masses against Zogu's government. A new wave of protests spread all over the country. The peasant movement also tended to intensify. The anti-Zogist movement was not only becoming massive but it was also getting increasingly better organized.⁶³ Significant results were achieved by the national patriotic organization called Organizata e fshehte (Secret Organization), which had been set up in Tirana in 1934 with the purpose of preparing an armed uprising to overthrow Zogu's antipopular regime.⁶⁴

On the advice of Ali Kelmendi, the communist group in Korce decided to make good use of the situation that had arisen and of the militant sentiments of the masses and to start active work within the national movement. In August 1934 a meeting was called in the outskirts of Korce under the leadership of Ali Kelmendi which decided to have a communist group set up in the Secret Organization and through it to maintain contacts, work jointly with the anti-Zogist movement and participate in the preparation of the armed uprising. The communist group worked out a detailed programme about the communists' participation in the uprising and defined the slogans under which the masses would be called to arms.

The communists played an increasingly important part in the struggle against Zogu's regime in other cities as well. Their influence increased. The prominent Albanian communist Riza Cerova, who had returned from emigration in the USSR in 1935, also worked actively in the Secret Organization. The preparation for the uprising of 1935 proceeded under his direction. It was, however, disclosed, broke out prematurely and suffered defeat. The brave communist Riza Cerova perished courageously at his post.⁶⁵

Worried by Ali Kelmendi's activity, the police, acting on instructions of the Minister of the Interior, detained him as 'a dangerous propagandist of

communism and of an antistate policy' and sent him to the Poto Palermo Fortress under a special regime. Prevented from carrying out any further activity, Ali Kelmendi left the country on September 10, 1936.⁶⁶

Thanks to Georgi Dimitrov's assistance and to the Albanian communists' intensified activity within the emigration and especially within the national-revolutionary movement, the KCN improved its work and became more firmly linked with the international workers' and antifascist movement.⁶⁷

The decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow in 1935 and Dimitrov's report to the Congress in particular had great importance for the further growth of the Albanian communist movement and especially for the improvement of the work and the tactics of the people's antifascist front — a vital problem for Albania. The historic documents of that Congress helped the Albanian communists and revolutionaries to improve their overall activity, their tactics and their struggle. Georgi Dimitrov's report was not translated into Albanian but it was circulated in Russian, French, German, Italian and Greek. Among the books, brought into Albania from Bucharest, Geneva, Paris and Athens, Dimitrov's report was also received alongside the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V.I. Lenin and other Marxist authors.

The massive influx of Marxist literature into Albania greatly worried the authorities and a special regime of strict censorship was introduced concerning the newspapers and books brought into the country.⁶⁸ On May 19, 1936 during a search of a package of books in Greek, Dimitrov's report to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern was also confiscated.⁶⁹ In order to stop the penetration of the communist ideas into Albania the government took special measures and banned the import of communist newspapers from France and other countries.⁷⁰

The decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress and Georgi Dimitrov's report also contributed significantly to the improvement of the activity of the Albanian revolutionary movement and the work of the Albanian communists abroad. Dimitrov was very well informed about the activity of the Albanian emigration and about the anti-Zogist movement in France. Albanian communist groups were set up in Paris and in Lyon which played an important part in disseminating Marxism among the Albanian emigrants and workers.⁷¹ The Albanian revolutionary emigration stepped up its struggle against the threat of a new war and against the Italian economic and political offensive in Albania. The KCN entered in negotiations with the biggest anti-Zogist organization 'Bashkimi Kombetar' and discussed the problem of setting up a common

democratic front. The unification was to be carried out on the basis of a platform, proposed by the KCN and based on its programme.⁷²

In February 1936, the emigrants in Paris issued an appeal to all groups of Albanian emigrants to support the idea of holding a congress on March 10, 1936 with the purpose of building up a peoples' front for struggle against Ahmed Zogu's regime.⁷³ In March 1936 the Albanian emigrants formed a people's front under the name of 'Lidhia nacional liberal' (National Liberal Union). This was an important step towards implementing the decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress. On March 16, 1936 a mass meeting of the Albanian emigration was convened in Geneva which took a decision to step up the struggle against the antipopular government of Ahmed Zogu.⁷⁴

As Secretary General of the Comintern Georgi Dimitrov followed with interest the development of the Albanian revolutionary movement and continued to assist it in a most immediate way, although he was very busy with solving important problems of the international communist movement during a particularly hard period. Acting on a report by Ali Kelmendi, the Executive Committee of the Comintern outlined measures to improve both the work for the establishment of a communist party in Albania and for carrying out

the directives of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.⁷⁵ With the support of Dimitrov and the Comintern, in December 1936 a meeting was convened of the Albanian communists, working in emigration. At that meeting Ali Kelmendi presented a report on the basic tasks of the Albanian communist movement. Both the report and the statements of the participants in the meeting, made a thorough analysis of the situation in Albania; the state of the revolutionary and communist movement and its immediate tasks were outlined. The meeting took important decisions for the improvement of the overall work of the Albanian communists and instructed them to broaden their activities among the people.⁷⁶ The decisions were approved by the executive Committee of the Comintern.

In 1937 the Executive Committee of the Comintern again discussed the problem of the Albanian communist movement and issued instructions for further stepping up mass political activity, for disseminating Leninism by putting out Marxist literature in Albanian, which was to elucidate the problems of the national and the agrarian revolution in general and those of Albania, in particular. The Executive Committee of the Comintern emphasized the need for a correct explanation and formulation of the national question in Albania as a question of the workers and the peasants. It required also adequate for-

mulations of the problems of the agrarian revolution within the workers' movement, the formation of trade unions, educational clubs, sports associations and other mass organizations in which the communists were to take a leading part.⁷⁷

The directive of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, worked out on the basis of the resolutions of the Seventh Comintern Congress and Dimitrov's report, and sent to the Albanian communist groups, played an important part in improving the work of the Albanian communists. It set clearly and categorically the task of building up a united people's front not only at the grass-roots level, but also at the level of the leaderships, uniting into the front all democratic and antifascist elements by using properly the contradictions existing in the bourgeois camp. The directive emphasized the specific tasks of the anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle in Albania which had to be further deployed and stepped up.

Unfortunately, this directive was carried out in part, only by the group in Korce. The communists there made an attempt to build up a people's front on a broad basis, tried to use the legal press for struggle against the government and against fascism and for explaining the problems of the revolutionary movement in Albania.⁷⁸ They set up underground communist groups within the mass organizations, the workers' associations and in the army. In 1936 the communist influence in

the army increased and solid communist groups were set up.⁷⁹

The heroic struggle of the Spanish people in defence of the Spanish revolution played no small part in the further development of the communist movement in Albania.⁸⁰

In Spain the Albanian participants in the international brigades had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with and feel Dimitrov's leading role in the international workers' and communist movement in action, to read his articles, brochures and books on the Spanish civil war and the tasks of the communist parties in general. This helped them in their work after their return to Albania.

In 1937 the Albanian communists adopted a new, Leninist line in their activity. Relying on the instructions of the Comintern, the communists in Korce issued in 1938 their programme-minimum, which they published in their newspaper **Perpare** (Forward). They led the strikes of the proletariat and carried out successfully major demonstrations under the slogan of 'Bread to the people'. The increased influence of the communists was especially strongly felt during the municipal elections in June 1938. In many places like Korce, Durrës, Shkoder and others the communists won the majority of the votes.⁸¹ Unfortunately, even during this rather favourable period of revolutionary upsurge, the Albanian

communists failed to build up a united communist organization mainly because of the weaknesses and mistakes of the leaders of the groups and due to the ideological strife and organizational disarray, existing among them.⁸²

The more the communist movement grew and the stronger the influence of the communists became in the mass and revolutionary organizations, the more brutal the government terror and repressions became, aimed at smashing the communist groups and putting an end to their activities. The ruling class raised its voice all the more often against 'the Bolshevik danger'. Arrests and internment increased, and the censorship became draconian.⁸³ But nothing could hold back the development of the communist movement and the spread of communism in Albania.

In the beginning of 1939 the Albanian communist movement suffered a great loss. On February 11, Ali Kelmendi, the most distinguished and best known Albanian communist died while getting ready for his second illegal return to Albania.⁸⁴ Before leaving Moscow, he had a long conversation with Georgi Dimitrov and got from him personally instructions about the work he was to do in Albania in connection with the formation of a communist party there. This meeting touched deeply the young Albanian communist and he told very often his comrades about the fatherly attitude shown towards him by Georgi Dimitrov, the distinguished representative

of the international communist and workers' movement.⁸⁵ Upon learning of the death of Kelmendi, Dimitrov sent a cable to the French Communist Party in which he said that the Albanian communist Ali Kelmendi had been a member of the Comintern, a personal friend of Ernst Thaelmann and of his own and asked that Kelmendi be buried in an appropriate way.⁸⁶ The Central Committee of the French Communist Part complied with Dimitrov's wish.⁸⁷ That was an expression of moral support for the Albanian communist and revolutionary movement at a very difficult moment.

In April, 1939 Italy carried out the long planned occupation of Albania.⁸⁸ The Albanian people were the first victim of the Italian-German fascist aggression in the Balkans. They rose in struggle and resisted as long as they could the debarkation of the Italian troops in Durres, Vlore, Sarande and Shengin.⁸⁹ Gradually, the struggle grew into a mass movement against fascism and the preparation of a new war. Following the instructions of Georgi Dimitrov and the Comintern the international workers' and communist movement, and especially the Italian Communist Party, supported the Albanian people.⁹⁰

The heightened revolutionary upsurge of the masses required urgently that the Albanian communists close their ranks and bring the organizational status of the communist movement in Albania in accordance with the great historical tasks

they had to solve. The unification of all the groups and the formation of an Albanian Communist Party became absolutely necessary.

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The national-liberation movement of Albania entered a new stage in its development after the perfidious invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Under the influence of the victories of the Soviet Army, the national-liberation struggle of the Albanian people marked a turning point.⁹¹ Under these circumstances a meeting of the representatives of the Albanian communist groups was held in Tirana from November 4 through November 9, 1941. It reviewed the situation and the tasks, analyzed the ideological, political and organizational status of the communist movement in Albania and took a historic decision to set up the Albanian Communist Party.

The meeting also adopted a resolution about the guidelines and the immediate tasks of the national-liberation struggle in defence of the vital interests of the people's masses. On the tactics of the party and the driving forces of the revolution the resolution of the meeting said that the peasants were an ally of the proletariat in the armed struggle, in the struggle for a people's democratic government. A Central Com-

mittee of the Albanian Communist Party was elected.⁹² Through these historical decisions, the resolution of the Comintern and the BCF, for whose accomplishment G.Dimitrov had devoted so much time and effort, was implemented.

The young Albanian Communist Party took up the leadership of the people's struggle and put in energetic efforts for the correct organization and concerted actions of the whole movement.⁹³ At this particularly difficult period, the support of the Comintern and the Soviet Union was of great importance for the success of the struggle. In a special note, in December 1942 the Soviet government expressed its sympathy with the Albanian people's struggle against fascism. At the same time, the Comintern, taking into account the importance of the tasks the young Albanian Communist Party was facing, to be the leader of the armed struggle — sent a special directive regarding the national-liberation struggle in Albania. The directive outlined the main tasks of the Albanian Communist Party: 1. To organize and develop the national-liberation struggle of the Albanian people against the Italian-German occupation; 2. To form and consolidate a national-liberation front of all Albanian patriots, raising at first slogans that did not go beyond the framework of the national-liberation movement in Albania; 3. To take the lead in the struggle waged by the communists and to organize massive partisan movement.⁹⁴

For the young Albanian Communist Party, which had no experience of its own, both the recognition by the Soviet government of the just character of the struggle and the directive of the Comintern were of a major importance for its further development. These documents reassured the Albanian Communist Party that the line it had mapped out was the correct one and this inspired the Albanian communists with courage, confidence and greater energy for the struggle. This actually meant that the ACP was admitted to the Third Communist International and formally recognized as a part of the international communist movement. The First National Conference of the ACP, held on March 17, 1943, accepted with enthusiasm the directive and the support of the Comintern and G.Dimitrov.⁹⁵

G.Dimitrov followed with interest the armed struggle of the Albanian people under the leadership of the ACP.⁹⁶ At that time the name of Dimitrov became still closer to the Albanian communists and partisans. A group of partisans from the Pelat Rexhepi partisan detachment was charged with the protection of some Bulgarian functionaries, who had come to Yugoslavia from the Soviet Union and were on their way to Bulgaria, where they had the task to step up the armed struggle. The order for that group of Albanian partisans read: 'Even if everybody has to die, Georgi Dimitrov's envoys must reach their count-

ry safe and sound'. The Albanian partisans fulfilled their task and the Bulgarian communists expressed their comradely gratitude. The Albanian partisans asked many questions and, holding their breath, tried to catch every sentence of the comrades of Georgi Dimitrov about the hero of Leipzig and the distinguished functionary of the international communist movement.⁹⁷

After the victory of the Albanian people and the establishment of people's democratic power, Georgi Dimitrov's prestige and influence in Albania were further enhanced. The first Bulgarian ambassador to Albania after the September 9, 1944 revolution wrote: 'The Albanians and their government cherish good feelings for Bulgaria... The comrades here know very well and appreciate highly comrade G. Dimitrov and comrade V. Kolarov. Comrade Dimitrov's prestige here is very high.'⁹⁸

Today, too, the Albanian people cherish a feeling of respect, sympathy and gratitude for the distinguished functionary of the international workers' movement and friend of the Albanian revolutionaries Georgi Dimitrov, who spared no efforts for the development of the Albanian revolutionary and communist movement. Dimitrov's attitude towards Ali Kelmendi and his comrade-emigrants is yet another proof that the great son of the Bulgarian people was a consistent internationalist and a distinguished functionary of inter-

national scale. Dimitrov's inexhaustible energy and his ability to assist the young and to direct them consistently towards fulfilling their tasks were clearly expressed. Dimitrov's attitude towards the Albanian communist movement was also a proof of his respect and sympathy for the Albanian people, of his faith in the creative abilities of a small and backward nation. That faith was based on the Marxist-Leninist principle of the equality of all peoples adopted and raised high by Georgi Dimitrov.

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- 2 St.Pollo. The Influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Albania, M. 1955, Reports and Papers of the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, volume 5; N.Plassari. The Great October Socialist Revolution in Albania, Institute of the History of the BCP, V. 5, 1958, p. 79-106; Historia e Shqipërisë... p. 518, 519, 554, 599, 653-654; Mbi influencën e Revolucionit të Madhë Socialist të Tetorit në Shqipëri 1917-1924, Tiranë, 1957 d. Nos 53, 54, 61, 64, p. 93, 95, 106-107, 113
- 3 The **Politika** newspaper, Vlora, Nos. 22, 25, 48 of June 14, July 5, Oct. 7, 1923; The **Shtupi** newspaper, Tiranë Nos. 34, 42 of

July 17, Aug. 26, 1923; The **Zeri i Popullit** newspaper, Korce, Nos 68, 69 of Sept. 29, Oct. 6 1923; The **E.Drejta** newspaper, Korce of Sept. 27 and Oct 4, 1923; The **Ura e Shkuminit** newspaper, Elbasan, No. 26 of Oct. 5 1923; No. 43 of March 24, April 12, 1924; The **Republika**, Tiranë. No 28 of May 15, 1924; The **Tirana** newspaper, No 12 of July 11, 1924

- 4 M.Belegu – op. cit. p. 109
- 5 G.Dimitrov; Works, Vol. 2, p. 306
- 6 Ibidem, V. 7, p. 402; Central State Historical Archives (CSHA) f. 173 op. 3, a.u. 1705, p. 21
- 7 Central Party Archives (CPA), f. 1, p. 2, a.u. 229
- 8 G.Dimitrov. Works, V. 8, p. 287
- 9 CPA, f. 207, op. 1, a.u. 46
- 10 Ibidem, f. 10, op. 1, a.u. 2
- 11 Ibidem, f. 1, op. 1, a.u. 20, p. 68
- 12 G.Dimitrov; Works, V. 7, p. 357
- 13 Ibidem, V. 4, p. 109
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- 15 Historia e Shqipërisë... p. 530-554; N.D. Smirnova, The Albanian 'Red Bishop' Fan Noli, Modern and Most Modern History, No. 3, 1973, p. 48-60
- 16 The **Pravda**, June 25, 1924

- 17 Historia e Shqipërisë p. 554-557; L. Jakubini Mbi politikën ekonomike antikombëtare të regjimit Zogolian, Ekonomia popullore Tiranë, 1958; No 3; Al. Haxhi, Politika financiare antipopullore e regjimit zogist, St H, 1966, No 1
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- 21 Ibidem, p. 206
- 22 Ibidem, p. 397-402
- 23 CPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.u. 313, G.Dimitrov . Works, V. 8, p. 378-392
- 24 G.Dimitrov. Works, V. 8, p. 362-364
- 25 CPA f. 146, op. 2, a.u. 313; G.Dimitrov. Works, V. 8, p. 206-378
- 26 CPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.u. 306 ; op 6, a.u. 538, a.u. 609, p. 7-9 G. Dimitrov. Works, V. 7, p. 404; V. 8, p. 78, 136-137, 298, 408, 415
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