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CONFRONTING THE FALSIFIERS OF HISTORY

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FALSIFIERS OF HISTORY

The retrograde turn that began in Albania in 1991 inevitably raised, among other pressing issues, the question of the "revision" of history, proceeding from the recent past towards earlier periods, from the socialist era and the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War to more distant epochs. It could not have been otherwise. A counter-revolutionary overthrow necessarily requires, in addition to political, economic, military, bureaucratic and police support, the ideological and psychological conditioning of the population in accordance with reactionary and collaborationist objectives. The Albanian comprador bourgeoisie and those social strata dispossessed by the socialist revolution, in order to facilitate the restoration of the past, to dispossess the people and to recover the privileges of lost power, have, through a number of pseudo-nationalist and pseudo-democratic intellectuals, found the "revision" of history indispensable both for their own self-justification and for the glorification of their anti-national and anti-popular past. On this basis, as in every other sphere, the remnants of the feudal bourgeoisie, the representatives and descendants of fascist collaborators, those who entered the service of imperialist states after the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War, saboteurs, criminals and anti-national clergy, together with the so-called "democrats" and "anti-communists" organised in various parties and associations that divide the people, have united in a common front.

The undertaking to "revise" history in accordance with the appetites of the reactionary political forces that

emerged after 1991 adheres to two fundamental objectives. The first is to convince the naïve and short-sighted that capitalism represents the highest stage of development and the only path to freedom, democracy, prosperity and the just resolution of the national question. The second is to "prove" that socialism, as a system of social equality, through the expropriation of private owners, the establishment of people's power, the guarantee and strengthening of national independence not only politically but also economically, the emancipation of the people and the suppression of every reactionary attempt, was supposedly a social and political order that "violated" individual rights and freedoms, obstructed development, isolated Albania from the world and abandoned "nationalism."

In pursuit of these two fundamental objectives, a broad propaganda campaign has been launched to distort the historical truth concerning the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War, to deny and denigrate the great achievements of the socialist era and to rehabilitate anti-national and collaborationist forces, with the ultimate aim of legitimising the present political course in the same direction. Within this framework, a particularly vicious and unscrupulous campaign of slander has been organised against Enver Hoxha and his work. Contrary to the abundant facts and documents from diverse sources, the participants in this campaign, relying on little more than abstract and fictitious notions of freedom, democracy and similar concepts, do not hesitate to engage in the crudest distortions and falsifications of historical truth — distortions and falsifications which they themselves do not believe.

The authors of the present volume are not historians: one is a physician, the other a cultural worker. Yet this detail is of little significance. On the contrary, it demonstrates that today in Albania every honest individual cannot but be outraged and protest against the denigration of history, just as against the exhumation of corpses which, in the words of a young poet, spread "the stench of putrefaction." Inspired by this purpose, the authors, not through rhetoric but through facts and documents, convincingly reaffirm well-established historical truths concerning the National Liberation War and Enver Hoxha's strategic positions on the resolution of the national question. Drawing upon Anglo-American and other documentary sources, they also reconstruct the treacherous and criminal character of the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar, the Legaliteti and other quislings, who, just as they served the fascist occupiers, proved ready to serve, have served and continue to serve every foreign agency out of class and personal selfishness and ambition. Here Laver Stroka and Fitim Çaushi identify the point of convergence between the former servants of fascism, the spies and saboteurs who acted with brutality under the instruction and arms of imperialist states and those political forces which seized power and seek to retain it by turning their backs on the people and the Homeland.

Unlike the propaganda of the falsifiers of history, in which insults, slander and vulgar abuse take the place of facts and arguments, this book, animated by a strong polemical spirit, deliberately refrains from employing such unworthy methods, although today in Albania these falsifiers have themselves become objects of rid-

icule and characters in anecdotes. This superiority has been guaranteed to the authors by the truth contained in the documents and by the soundness of their arguments. The opposite is equally true: abuse and curses testify to the absence of reasoned argument. They are the weapons of those who have nothing to say.

Confronting the Falsifiers of History is neither complete nor perfect. In time, these authors or others will broaden the historical panorama by drawing upon Albanian, German, Italian, Greek, Yugoslav, Soviet, Chinese and other historical documents, memoirs and publications, just as the material from the Anglo-American archives sheds light upon the history of Albania during the period 1941–1991 and, in particular, upon the courageous, wise, far-sighted and principled positions of Enver Hoxha.

Finally, the book you now hold in your hands constitutes yet another clear testimony that, however much clamour may be raised and whatever distortions and falsifications may be employed, it will never be possible to uproot from the hearts of the Albanian people, or to erase from their memory, the heroism of the National Liberation War, the magnificent achievements of the socialist era and, together with these, the beloved and illustrious figure of Enver Hoxha. The former collaborators of fascism will never erase the stain of their shame, for the people will continue to brand every one of their descendants with that same mark of disgrace.

Dr Razi Brahimi

PRESIDENT BERISHA IN DEFENCE OF THE QUISLINGS

In the television news bulletin of 23 December 1992, the spokesman for the Presidential Cabinet broadcast a statement by the President of the Republic, Sali Berisha, in which Enver Hoxha was described as a "distorter," a falsifier and "a puppet dictator in Tito's hands during the years 1942–1948."

We initially thought that this statement, unsupported by documentary evidence, might have been an isolated lapse. However, the President continued along this course in the message he sent to the commemoration of the Mukje Conference, organised by the Ballists on 2 August 1993, in which he declared: "This party [the Communist Party] ordered the most hated dictator in Albanian history, Enver Hoxha, the servile follower and servant of Miladin and Mugoša, of Tito and Stalin, of Lin Biao and Jiang Qing, to tear up the Mukje Agreement."[1]

Recalling the assessments made by Sali Berisha before the students and lecturers of the Faculty of Medicine and before the communists of Tirana Hospital concerning precisely this period, which he had then described as the most difficult yet also the most glorious and heroic period in the history of the Albanian people, the Communist Party and Enver Hoxha, we are compelled to tell the President that his recent statements and messages cast doubt not only upon their authenticity and originality but also upon his integrity as both a man and a politician. The President's hostility towards Enver Hoxha might perhaps be understandable had

he fought alongside him in the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War and preserved authentic first-hand testimony. In the present case, however, it amounts to nothing more than a base political intrigue imposed from outside. We are therefore obliged to remind the President of Marx's words: "If, from the theoretical point of view, these people are zeros, as intriguers they are the only ones."

Through these new attitudes towards Enver Hoxha, the President has become the inspiration and support of all the forces of reaction and seeks to achieve three principal objectives.

First, to rehabilitate the political forces that betrayed and opposed the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War, thereby justifying their assumption of political power today and in the future by placing responsibility upon Enver Hoxha for their collaboration with the occupiers.

Secondly, to erase from the consciousness of the Albanian people the strategic objectives and Anglo-American attempts during the Second World War to annex Albania to Greece and Yugoslavia by holding Enver Hoxha responsible for their anti-Albanian policies.

Thirdly, to erase from the national consciousness the most glorious period of Albanian history — the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War — together with its legendary commander, Enver Hoxha.

There exists abundant documentary evidence concerning the treasonous activities of the collaborators with fascism in Albania, and many of those who suffered burning, plunder and bloodshed at their hands

are still alive. The supreme act of national betrayal committed by the "Fathers of the Nation" also remains documented. By decision of the Constituent Assembly of 12 April 1939, they sold Albania to fascist Italy: "As interpreter of the unanimous will of the Albanian people for national reconstruction and as a solemn guarantee for its realisation, [the Assembly] decided to bestow the Crown of Skanderbeg upon His Majesty Victor Emmanuel III."[2]

No quisling anywhere in the world has sold his country so solemnly, leaving it as a pledge in foreign hands. Throughout the official propaganda of the period, the Albanian "nationalists" hailed the Duce as the "liberator" and saviour of Albania. On the first anniversary of the Constituent Assembly, its chairman, Xhafer Ypi, addressed the Albanian people concerning the "happy events" that had taken place, declaring: "The Duce, the saviour of our Homeland, sent his armies among us not as conquerors but as liberators."[3]

Prime Minister Merlika expressed this fascist devotion in even more emphatic terms during a speech at the Savoy Theatre: "Benito Mussolini is not only our ally but also our beloved Duce, upon whom all hopes for the prosperity and flourishing of the Albanian nation now rest... the most important element in the union of Albania with Italy is the fascist regime."[4]

On the fourth anniversary of the union of the two crowns, the new Prime Minister, Maliq Bushati, exchanged mutual congratulations with the senior fascist officials Pariani and Dalmazzo, conveying to His Excellency in Rome "the devoted homage of the Albanian Government and people."[5]

By uniting Albania with fascist Italy, in the political circumstances then prevailing in Europe, these pseudo-nationalists and servants of fascism sought to make Albania an ally of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, as decreed by the Upper Chamber of Fasces in Tirana through Law No. 194 of 9 June 1940, according to which "the Kingdom of Albanian shall be recognised as being at war with any state against which Italy is at war."[6]

Regarding this law, which would bind Albania to the chariot of fascism, the Speaker of Parliament and member of the Imperial Cabinet, Terenc Toçi, declared: "The union of the Crown of Savoy with the Crown of Skanderbeg is sealed with blood. Thus are united not only centuries of history but also this small, poor and betrayed people."[7]

This fascist, who equated the glorious history of the Albanian people with that of a country which had carried out several acts of aggression against Albania, extended his declaration to include friendship with nazi Germany: "Today we undertake a great and noble obligation not only to demonstrate to the world that we are united with the Imperial forces in life and death, but also to proclaim that we are ready and eager to fight shoulder to shoulder with the brave friends and allies of Hitler's Germany."[8]

Although these declarations by the Albanian quislings were presented as expressing the will of the people, they represented nothing more than a handful of pseudo-nationalists who found in the fascist occupation the fulfilment of their own class interests. What policy had Italian imperialism pursued in Albania before 7 April

that its servants could present it as the country's "saviour"? In the journal *Federation Balcanique*, Fan Noli wrote: "Zogu granted fascist Italy the concession for the so-called National Bank, thereby placing Albania under Italian financial and economic control... In 1926 he signed the Tirana Pact, which placed Albania de facto under Italian political control. In 1927 he signed the alliance with Italy, which placed Albania under Italian military control. Under the terrorist regime of Ahmet Zogu, Albania de facto lost its independence... and ended up as a second Italian Somalia."[9]

Proceeding from Lenin's thesis that war is the continuation of politics by other means, it follows that the Italian fascist invasion was an imperialist war and the continuation of imperialist policy. At the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Stalin, in his analysis of international affairs, emphasised: "The new economic crisis is leading to an intensification of the imperialist struggle. The question is no longer one of commercial competition or trade wars. It is now one of a new division of the world, of spheres of influence and colonies by means of war... Italy remembered that when the spoils of the First Imperialist War were divided it had been denied its rightful share and had to be compensated. Germany, gravely disadvantaged by the Treaty of Versailles, joined Japan and Italy and demanded the expansion of its territories in Europe."[10]

Without any serious historical analysis of the nazi-fascist war, the "elite" of our nation welcomed the fascist invasion as one that would supposedly bring prosperity to the Albanian people. Yet immediately

after the occupation, the Italian fascist historian Alfonso Manarezi fully confirmed Stalin's analysis and acknowledged the true purpose of the invasion: "Our arrival in Albania was the fulfilment of an old aspiration long obstructed by the Versailles powers. On the one hand, it constituted a decisive revision of the treaties; on the other, it secured for Italy a leading position in the Balkans, strengthened our domination of the Adriatic and guaranteed us more reliable exploitation of the raw materials of this country, rich in petroleum and metals."[11]

Only after the horse had already bolted did Prime Minister Mitrovica, speaking on *Radio Tirana* on 7 April 1944, declare: "The resistance of the Albanian people was the first blazing spark on the international horizon, and as such it will remain unforgettable not only in our own history but also in that of the entire world... The occupying power claimed in its declarations that it came as a liberating and civilising force. Under this pretext it sought to conceal the long chain of terrible slavery it had forged for the Albanian people. The facts speak for themselves: the meeting of 12 April 1939, through which it purported to guarantee the Albanian people freedom, sovereignty and independence. Thereafter they stole from our people the glorious Crown of Skanderbeg, laying the snare intended to strip Albanians of ownership of their own land... Let us not forget that Albanians were also expected to wear the black shirts, and for this purpose, on 2 June 1939, the Statute of the Albanian Fascist Party was proclaimed. That party had as its mission the denationalisation of the Albanian people. Without the slightest

scruple, the occupier systematically and rapidly sought to implement methods of annihilation and denationalisation, sowing discord and anarchy throughout every corner of our country."[12]

As the American secret service agent Asime Kosova attests in her reports, this active exponent of the Balli Kombëtar remembered to denounce the fascist occupation and expose the very dangers that Enver Hoxha and the Communist Party of Albania had set out from the beginning of the aggression only after Italy had capitulated. After five years, he concluded that the declarations of the Italian fascists, who claimed to have come as a "liberating and civilising force," had in fact been "terrible chains of slavery," citing as evidence the meeting of 12 April, which, instead of guaranteeing Albania's "freedom, sovereignty and independence," as it had promised, prepared "the snare intended to strip Albanians of ownership of their own land." Mitrovica even urged that it should not be forgotten that Albanians had been in danger of "wearing the black shirts of the Fascist Party," whose mission was to be "the denationalisation of the Albanian people." With the "courage" of an "independent" prime minister, Mitrovica accused Italian fascism of being an "utterly unscrupulous occupier" that had sought "systematically to apply methods of annihilation and denationalisation," sowing "discord and anarchy in all four corners of the country."

Mitrovica's denunciation of the fascist occupation and its denationalising aims is "severe," but regrettably it comes only after Italy had been defeated. He denounces only the Italian occupier and the Fascist Party, while

saying not a word about the "nationalists" who took part in the meeting of 12 April, which prepared for the Albanian people "the snare intended to strip them of ownership of their own land." Nor does Mitrovica offer any denunciation of all those government officials, officers and gendarmes who served Italian fascism with devotion. He says nothing about them because he has them at his side, in the Regency, in the government, in the army and in the gendarmerie; together with them he directs and defends the independent Albanian state. To denounce the Italian occupation while speaking of independence under the German occupation is merely a continuation of the same demagogic and deceptive propaganda as before.

With Italy's capitulation, control of Albania assumed great strategic importance for Germany in its war for the domination of Europe. Hitler's special envoy in Albania, Neubacher, wrote that with Italy's capitulation, "Albania came to the forefront because of its position on the narrow sea route of Otranto."[13]

Neubacher also set out this strategic objective at a meeting with German military chiefs in Tirana: "We must create here a strong nucleus for the consolidation of the Balkans."[14]

In order to secure internal support, as every occupier customarily does, in October 1943 the German army convened the Constituent Assembly, which proclaimed Albania's separation from Italy and established a High Council of Regency composed of the Zogite Mehdi Frashëri, the Franciscan Father Anton Harapi, the Balli Kombëtar exponent Fuat Dibra and the member of the Central Committee of the Balli Kombëtar for the Or-

thodox Christian community, Lef Nosi. The President ought to take note that with the fall of one empire, that is, one occupier, those who yesterday posed as patriots placed themselves under the orders of another occupier. On 26 October 1943, the chairman of the High Regency, Mehdi Frashëri, explained the new occupier to the Albanian Parliament as follows: "Albania today is under German occupation, but Germany has come as an army and as a friendly state. This army is here temporarily, for several weeks or several months, but this in no way resembles the national annexation carried out by Italy. From the financial, economic and political point of view, we are free."[15]

This declaration constituted official support for the "Proclamation" of the commander-in-chief of the German armed forces in Albania, General Bessel, which announced that "German soldiers were coming to Albania as friends to liberate us from the Italians" and to "protect us from English occupation." The nazi proclamation loudly declared that "Albanian independence is guaranteed," and therefore Albanians should surrender their weapons and return to their homes.[16]

While the communiqué of the command of the 21st Corps documents that "the attitude of the population in Albania is hostile towards Germany," the propaganda of the new Albanian government repeated the same demagogy as during the Italian occupation. These political jugglers, proclaiming Albania's freedom under Hitlerite bayonets just as they had proclaimed it four years earlier under Mussolinian bayonets, propagated the neutrality of the Albanian people. For its theoretical justification they employed Father Anton Harapi:

"What policy should we, the little flies, now pursue in order to survive? I think that the only path of salvation for us is to take care not to receive a kick from one side or the other."[17]

For the priest, who during the Italian occupation had been a member of the Constituent Assembly that united Albania with fascist Italy, as well as for all the Albanian government officials and pseudo-politicians, the only path of salvation was the abandonment of organised and armed struggle against the German nazis. With the change of master, the government officials hastened to divert attention from the new occupier by exposing the damage caused by the Italian occupation. On 8 November 1943, Prime Minister Mitrovica declared: "Fascist Italy has left the country in chaos; thousands of Albanians are in the mountains, in prison and part of central Albania is in flames... thousands of women and children have been massacred and left without bread... we have enmity with no one and in this gigantic confrontation we, as a small people, are taking part neither on one side nor on the other."[18]

The bombastic propaganda about the "flourishing" of Albania under the fascist regime was now concluding with an account of thousands imprisoned and massacred. Since Albania "had enmity with no one," as Mitrovica declared, why, and by whom, were thousands of Albanians being held in prison, given that the German had supposedly come to us as a friend and only for a short time? Mitrovica does not explain to which social stratum or political force those thousands of prisoners and massacred people belonged, nor those many thousands of Albanians who had taken to the mountains.

The puppet government presented Albania as neutral, although under international law a state containing a foreign aggressive power cannot be neutral. This policy was imposed by the German command in order to portray the German nazi occupation as having been accepted by Albania itself. The only issue for Mitrovica and the Albanian Parliament was the cessation of the Albanian National Liberation War. At that time the Balli Kombëtar issued a similar appeal in one of its leaflets: "The Communist Party has fulfilled its purpose, which was the struggle against fascism."[19]

Since fascism had now "been driven out," the government sought to strengthen the Albanian state, which, according to the prime minister, "requires the problem of an elite devoted above all to the effort for general salvation. Unfortunately, under these conditions, our elite, impressed by various political qualities, has failed in its mission."[20]

Mitrovica acknowledges an historical truth: that during the years of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War, the Albanian "elite" had "failed" in the national cause of saving the Homeland because of its various political characteristics, that is, its fascist characteristics. Yet this prime minister does not reveal the fact that, at that historical turning point, the Albanian "elite" had been discredited before the Albanian people because of its collaboration with the occupiers. What did Enver Hoxha distort or falsify by declaring that the Albanian "elite" had failed because of its betrayal of the Albanian people and by refusing to respond to its appeals to halt the National Liberation War?

While the "elite," that is, the wealthy classes and

the servants of fascism, had failed, the Albanian partisans and communists were mobilising the people and organising the armed uprising. Professor Dr Hakif Bajrami, drawing upon the reports sent to Washington by the American secret service group of Asime Kosova, based in Tirana, writes: "The youth hate the Italians and, under the influence of their national teachers, organise numerous demonstrations against the Italians and the Tirana government."[21]

As this report also shows, the young communists, although subjected to fascist terror, had organised themselves to fight the occupier and liberate Albania, whereas the so-called nationalists, the privileged classes and elements within the fascist regime fiercely opposed the Albanian youth who were fighting and sacrificing themselves. On 16 October 1942, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Mark Gjon Markaj, son of the reserve colonel Gjon Marku, who had been appointed "Prince of Mirdita" by Mussolini himself and had received large sums of money from the Italians,[22] sent the following telegram to the prefectures: "Events so far have convinced us that all the relatives of the fugitives are accomplices with them; therefore, implement the orders of the Internal Affairs Command for the burning and destruction of the houses of fugitive communists without distinction."[23]

One month later, Prime Minister Merlika repeated the order to the commander of the mercenary forces, Qazim Koculi: "All the houses of the fugitives are to be burned, their property destroyed, the children of the fugitives interned and all suspicious elements arrested."[24]

It was precisely in this month, when the communists were continuously being subjected to persecution and massacres not only by the fascist occupier but also by Albanian quislings and collaborators, that the "nationalists" of the "idealist" Mithat Frashëri, as a reaction against the National Liberation Front, formed the Balli Kombëtar organisation. According to a letter from the fascist Militia addressed to the viceroy in January 1943, its mission "was directed against the communists" and especially "against the communist detachments."[25]

This report by the militia would not only be confirmed by the entire subsequent activity of the Balli Kombëtar; it also demonstrates that, from its very inception, this organisation, like the other Albanian and European quislings and collaborators, would fight against those political forces that opposed the fascist occupier.

At first, the Ballists carried out their anti-communist mission secretly, just as the young communists conducted their anti-fascist activity. In his book, Jacomoni writes that the Ballist elements had until then acted conspiratorially. From what emerges, they were inclined to support the Bushati government.[26]

What was the Bushati government that the Ballists preferred? Like its predecessors, it was a fascist government headed by the King's viceroy. Its character is clarified by the organ of that very government, the newspaper *Roja Kombëtare*, which, in its first issue, declared: "In a totalitarian regime such as ours, a political newspaper cannot have a programme profoundly different from that of the regime itself: a monarchical regime under the Savoy dynasty and a totalitarian regime

based on the fascist doctrine created by the genius of Benito Mussolini. These are also the principal points of the political propaganda of *Roja Kombëtare*."[27]

This fascist regime, based on Mussolini's totalitarian doctrine, was implemented by Prime Minister Bushati, and, according to Jacomoni, it was this same totalitarian fascist regime that the Ballists were supporting. Prime Minister Maliq Bushati, who was also a member of the leading organ of the Balli Kombëtar, was an obedient servant of the Italian command. In response to a request from the commander-in-chief of the Italian military forces in Albania, General Dalmazzo, he ordered the Minister of Internal Affairs "to take every measure to ensure the greatest possible cooperation with the military authorities during operations against rebel bands."[28]

In implementation of this prime ministerial order, the government newspaper *Roja Kombëtare* reported: "While searching for several communists hidden in Shën Vlash, government forces encountered three of them. In the clash that followed, Prokop Meksi, a well-known and dangerous subversive, was killed. The other two, although one is presumed wounded, managed to escape. The pursuit continues."[29]

Judging once again according to Jacomoni, since the Ballist elements, that is, their leaders, were inclined to support the Bushati government, they certainly supported it also in the physical elimination of communists. Do today's Ballists have the moral right to call their predecessors "democrats," "patriots" and "nationalists"? With the exposure of the pro-fascist activity of the Balli Kombëtar and the intensification of the strug-

gle against the National Liberation Front, the Ballists needed to provide a motive for this struggle in order to justify themselves before the people. That motive was found: the struggle against communism, which supposedly "endangered" the Homeland. In his report, the Ballist Butka cites a declaration by Mithat Frashëri: "Gentlemen, you know very well that communism is dangerous for Albania."[30]

For this leader of the Balli Kombëtar, fascism, which all of Europe was fighting as a military occupation, posed no danger to Albania. In his view, only communism was dangerous. During the deliberations of the National Assembly, Father Anton Harapi sought to present communist doctrine and the Homeland as two opposing concepts: "I am convinced that few Albanians truly understand communist doctrine... Almost all Albanian communists act with their heads in the noose, without knowing what they are doing. Yet they say that they act for Albania, and I wish to believe them. However, this discrepancy between communist doctrine and communist practice, clothed in a national form, as I have myself heard communist organisers testify, makes me doubt the sincerity of this Albanian movement. Why is it that the communists cloak themselves in patriotic zeal, when what really interests them is doctrine rather than the Homeland?"[31]

Although the priest professes merely to doubt the sincerity of the communists' commitment to the national cause, rather than accusing them openly, he poses the veiled question: "Why do the communists cloak themselves in patriotic zeal when, above all, they are concerned with doctrine?" Father Anton had forgotten

that it was he himself who had been more concerned with fascist doctrine than with the Homeland when he signed the decision uniting Albania with fascist Italy, that is, its annexation to the Empire of Savoy. Together with the privileged classes and social strata, who had surrendered the governing authority entirely into the hands of the occupier, he transformed the principle of national self-determination from an instrument of struggle against annexation into a means of justifying annexation, continually turning the slogans of national liberation into instruments for deceiving the popular masses. As servants of fascism and its ideology, these pseudo-nationalists could not accept the historical truth that only the implementation of communist doctrine could definitively resolve the national question and secure the independence and sovereignty of colonial and semi-colonial countries, among which Albania belonged before and during the nazi-fascist occupation.

During the 1840s and 1850s, the founder of scientific communism, Karl Marx, opposed the national movement of the South Slavs because, at that time, they were reactionary peoples, "the Russian vanguard" in Europe and the advance guard of absolutism. To support the South Slavs would then have meant indirectly supporting Tsarism, the most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary and democratic movements in Europe.

The old mountain chieftain Bajram Curri sent a letter to the leader of the world proletariat, Lenin, because it was Lenin who denounced the secret Treaty of London concerning the partition of Albania, thereby contributing to the Albanian national cause.

The patriot and distinguished son of the Albanian people, Avni Rustemi, compelled the Albanian Parliament to observe five minutes of silence upon Lenin's death.

Fan Noli travelled to Moscow to visit the communist state, towards which he had already expressed sympathy in the press. Were these distinguished patriots, who openly sympathised with communism and its leaders, unaware of the "danger" that communism allegedly posed to Albania? Were they less wise than Mithat Frashëri? It is enough to recall our distinguished poet Çajupi and his political pamphlet *The Salonika Club* to appreciate the "patriotism" of the chairman of the Balli Kombëtar. It was Mithat Frashëri who, at the time when the International Commission was determining Albania's frontiers in 1913, sought the overthrow of the Government of Vlora by supporting the treacherous manoeuvres of Esat Pasha Toptani.

The proposition that communist doctrine and the Homeland were mutually exclusive concepts was also advanced by Mehdi Frashëri, in accordance with German directives. The German nazis adopted racist theory, founded upon hatred of mankind, as their ideological weapon, believing that propaganda promoting a brutal nationalism would create the moral and political conditions necessary for their domination over subjugated peoples. It was Stalin who stripped the Hitlerites of the mask of "national socialism," exposing it as the party of the most rapacious imperialism, "the enemy of democratic freedoms" and "the party of medieval reaction," whose adherents had "lost all human feeling and descended to the level of wild beasts."

With this logic of coercion, Mehdi Frashëri declared during the debates of the National Assembly as early as October 1943: "Communism is a doctrine unsuited to the Albanian character. We shall divert the youth from this path; if they will not listen willingly, we shall be compelled to do so by force."[32]

It would appear, then, that the Albanian character was supposedly predisposed only to feudal-bourgeois doctrine. Yet, irrespective of the ideology that inspired them, the Albanian youth had demonstrated greater patriotism and devotion to the Homeland than the Albanian beys, who throughout history had sold themselves to every foreign power that occupied Albania. A report sent by Asime Kosova to Washington stated: "The youth are secretly organising themselves against fascism and to punish all those Albanians who have sinned against the Albanian nation by serving Italian interests. After every assassination they left behind leaflets bearing the inscription: 'This is what will happen to all those who work against our beloved Homeland.'"[33]

These reports were written by American agents, not by Enver Hoxha's communists. They faithfully reflect reality as perceived by the members of the intelligence group. Nowhere in these reports is the issue of doctrine raised; rather, the issue is the Homeland, which had been gravely harmed by those who worked in the interests of the Italians and who, for that reason, deserved capital punishment. The question therefore arises: who had the greatest interest in diminishing the contribution of Albanian youth to the national cause by portraying their struggle solely in doctrinal terms? Those most interested were precisely those who sought

to conceal their own collaboration with fascism against the Homeland and who, in order to acquire the mantle of "patriotism," began an anti-Albanian propaganda campaign against the partisan forces. Mehdi Frashëri himself offered the following assessment in the National Assembly: "Today, from this tribune, I address the Albanian youth, who have waged a noble struggle but who, unfortunately, are slandered as having fallen into foreign hands."[34]

As Mehdi Frashëri's statement clearly demonstrates, communist doctrine had evidently not prevented the Albanian youth from waging a noble struggle to liberate their country from the fascist occupier.

The declaration of the Chairman of the Regency documents that the Albanian youth, in their noble struggle to liberate the Homeland from foreign occupation, were inspired by communist doctrine. If that doctrine had not prevented Albanian youth from fighting the Italian fascists for national liberation, why should it have prevented them from continuing the struggle against the German nazis for the very same objective? Mehdi Bey's statement, while affirming the patriotic (or, in his words, "noble") struggle of the Albanian youth against the Italian occupier, simultaneously proclaimed violence against that same youth as the principal mission of the pro-German Albanian government — a mission which Mehdi Bey duly carried into effect. The German Consul General in Tirana informed Neubacher of his meeting with the Chairman of the Regency: "The Chairman of the Regency Council informed me of the government's firm decision to cooperate with the German authorities in the extermination of communism."[35]

Mehdi Frashëri conveyed the same decision directly to Neubacher: "During my conversations with the Chairman of the Regency, Mehdi Frashëri declared to me that the Albanian Government would do everything in its power to engage the nationalist forces against Germany's enemies and against every attempt by the Albanian people directed against the German armed forces."[36]

Mehdi Frashëri promised to place at the Germans' disposal, for the extermination of the communists, not only government forces but also the "nationalist" forces. This proves that the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar had reached an agreement with Mehdi Frashëri, expressing to him their readiness to assist in his "lofty mission," the struggle against the National Liberation Front. Mehdi Frashëri also conveyed to Hitler his determination to fight the partisan forces: "There will be no mercy for those who attack the German army."[37]

This requires no comment, except to stress that this ferocity towards those "who attack the German army," that is, towards the partisans, would also be practised by the Ballists. Neubacher reported on his conversation with the commander of the Balli Kombëtar, Kadri Cakrani: "He assured me that these forces would participate without reservation against the red partisans."[38]

Today, all Ballists acknowledge the struggle against the communists. Indeed, on the anniversary of Mukje, Uran Butka, wishing to display the merits of the Balli Kombëtar, declared: "For communism to triumph, Albanian nationalism had to be fought to the death; it was Albanian nationalism that opposed communism from the outset and revealed its true face."[39]

The Ballist deputy resolves for us an historical dilemma: who first opposed whom — the communists the "nationalists," or the "nationalists" the communists? Butka has the merit of providing a definitive answer: "Albanian nationalism opposed communism from the outset and revealed its true face." Although Butka does not clarify when this initial opposition by the "nationalists" began, it is not difficult to understand that he is referring to the imprisonment and internment of communists under Ahmet Zogu.

What consequences would the opposition of the "nationalists," that is, the Ballist-Zogites, to the communists have during the fascist occupation? Its aim was to divert the Albanian people's struggle from the political plane to the ideological plane, to make them forget the external enemy and to degenerate the National Liberation War into a civil war, which served only the interests of the fascist occupiers. Butka's declaration that "nationalism revealed the true face of communism from the outset," that is, from the years of the National Liberation War, is self-exposing for the Balli Kombëtar. What was the face of the communists during the Liberation War? It was endurance under torture in the cells of the SIM and the Gestapo and self-sacrifice under the slogans "Long live free Albania" and "Down with fascism."

The Minister of the Interior ordered the Prefecture of Korça: "Further to telegram No. 231/10, the Military Court of the unified armed forces of Albania, by its decision dated 8 August 1942, has sentenced to death Arqiadh Petro Kosturi and Kristaq Vangjel Greço."[40]

Numerous documents of this kind prove that the true face of the communists was heroism and love of

the Homeland, in contrast to the true face of the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar, which was betrayal and collaboration with the occupier. The deputy's own father, Safet Butka, was the first to oppose the communists. In February 1943, the SIM in Korça reported: "Safet Butka receives directives from the government and conducts propaganda against the communists in order to persuade the people to abandon this war."[41]

The Ballist commander Safet Butka received his orders to fight the communists from Mustafa Merlika, who at that time headed the fascist government, from whom his son Uran Butka seeks to distance himself by describing him as a criminal. If Deputy Butka's call for distancing is sincere and not merely for propaganda purposes, he must also demand distancing from his own father, who carried out the orders of the criminal Merlika. One of the tasks assigned to this commander was to obstruct the partisan forces in their struggle against the fascist occupiers. According to the report of the Prefecture of Korça, at a meeting of the Ballists of the district, Safet Butka "had decided to strike the communists from the rear if they attempted to attack the centre of Erseka."[42]

The other Ballist detachments held the same position. In a letter addressed to the "Reshit Çollaku" Partisan Battalion by the two Ballist commanders of Mokra, Haki Blloshmi and Hasan Çela, extraordinary threats were made: "If you strike the Italian forces, we, with our forces, will strike you from behind; we do not accept that the Italians be attacked in our area."[43]

These documents prove that the Ballists were not committed to the liberation of Albania. They were pre-

pared to defend the occupiers militarily, placing upon them their hopes for the future prosperity and flourishing of their own class. For this reason, they had opposed the communists from the very beginning.

The leaders of the Balli Kombëtar openly revealed the true face of betrayal by signing the shameful Dalmaco-Këlcyra Protocol on 15 March 1943, in which the Balli Kombëtar undertook the following obligations: "...We assure His Excellency Dalmazzo, supreme commander of the armed forces in Albania, assuming full responsibility, that no insurgent movement of a general character will occur in southern Albania... We give our word of honour that we shall use all our influence to prevent attacks and acts of sabotage that may eventually be carried out by hostile elements."[44]

This official positioning of the Balli Kombëtar transformed it into an appendage of the Italian fascist army, which would fight against the National Liberation Front, regarded as a "hostile element" by the occupying army. A similar agreement had also been concluded by the Balli commander Xhevat Starova with the Italian commander Zanini against the partisan detachments, especially those of Mokra.[45]

With the discovery of these documents, the Ballists' patriotic propaganda became more difficult to sustain. They, together with Mithat Frashëri, attempted to deny the signing of the discrediting protocol, admitting only that the talks with Dalmazzo had been a "compromise." "Those who pledge themselves, not only for themselves but also for others, those who, under externally and internally motivated accusations, proceed along a road of thorns for the salvation of a country con-

demned to death, they are compromisers; but they belong to a compromise whose interest is the acquisition of a common capital. Yet these men are, unfortunately, those who have been attacked with fury; they are those condemned by an unconscious society, a society nourished by the communist banner."[46]

The path used by the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar to "save" Albania, "condemned to death," was the path of compromise and collaboration with the occupier. Ballist propaganda admits that the government banquets held for bilateral talks were condemned by "the unconscious society nourished by the communist banner." How could Albanian society have acted otherwise in such cases as that documented by the newspaper *Tomori* of 6 March 1943?

"Last night His Excellency the Prime Minister hosted a reception at the Dajti Hotel in honour of His Excellency General Dalmazzo, supreme commander of the Armed Forces in Albania. Present at this reception were His Excellency Ernest Koliqi, chairman of the Supreme Fascist Council, His Excellency Iliaz Agushi, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, General... Nuredin Bey Vlora, Ali Këlcyra, Kol Tromara... The meeting, which lasted until 23:30, took place in the greatest and most fraternal cordiality."[47]

Both Prime Minister Maliq Bushati and Kol Tromara, Nuredin Vlora and Ali Këlcyra were members of the Central Committee of the Balli Kombëtar, and it is not difficult to understand what they discussed with the Italian generals at their mutual receptions.

The admission of compromise with the Italians became unavoidable. Through this manoeuvre, the Ballists

attempted to conceal what followed from compromise: betrayal. "It is clear that the communists have brought the word compromise into circulation in order to attack and diminish the prestige of the Balli Kombëtar. They have taken their best opportunity from the Dalmaco-Këlcyra Protocol, a protocol that never existed."[48]

In order to conceal their betrayal, Ballist propaganda continued to deceive the people with banal justifications: "Last year, the Italian High Command in Albania, frightened by the growth of the insurgent movements of Albanian nationalism, had decided to carry out a large-scale operation and to burn all of Mallakastra. Ali Këlcyra and a companion went privately to intimate meetings at which the Balli was not represented as an organisation. Dalmazzo revealed the army's intention to put an end, by every means, to the Albanian uprising in the south. Mallakastra was not prepared to withstand the Italian army, and Ali Këlcyra had to do everything possible to change the general's mind and save Mallakastra. He therefore assured the Italian commander, in his own personal capacity, that for two months the nationalist detachments would not be pushed into a general uprising in the south, on condition that the Italian army would not conduct operations in any region. Despite this effort, these proposals were not accepted, no agreement was reached, no protocol was made and Mallakastra was burned."[49]

The extremely crude manner in which they seek to deny the signing of the protocol makes its existence all the more credible, even for those who have not seen the document in the Central State Archive. The newspaper *Flamuri* claims that the Ballist "lambs" went to

the fascist she-wolf on their own initiative, but with the acceptance and support of the leadership of the Balli Kombëtar, since the Dalmaco-Këlcyra meeting aimed at the "salvation" of Mallakastra, whose "nationalist" movement had "frightened" the Italian High Command. Despite the insistence of the beys Këlcyra and Nuredin Bey Vlora, Dalmazzo did not accept their proposal to postpone the operation against Mallakastra for two months, and therefore no agreement was concluded. Had Dalmazzo accepted the proposal of the Balli leaders, the protocol would have been signed and Mallakastra would have been "saved." If the truth were as the Ballists at *Flamuri* claim, then their patriotic duty, after the Italian command rejected their proposal, would have been to defend Mallakastra by fighting against the operation of the Italian troops. Yet the opposite occurred: the Ballists joined the Italian army, massacred the people of Mallakastra and burned their homes. The leaflet of the District Committee of the Balli Kombëtar for Vlora and Mallakastra fully confirms this: "The war waged by the Communist Party is against the Albanian people and not against the enemy. We have proclaimed to the people that such unlawful wars are not fought by firing five rifles and making noise, throwing the masses into panic and causing the people to be massacred. For this reason, the Balli commander Tefik Cfiri turned his rifle against the communists in Mallakastra."[50]

This leaflet alone is sufficient to demonstrate how demagogic and deceptive the propaganda of the newspaper *Flamuri* was regarding the Dalmaco-Këlcyra Protocol, and how discrediting that protocol was for the Balli Kombëtar.

The Ballist leaflet testifies that Tefik Cfiri's band fought against the communists and partisan forces in Mallakastra on the pretext that the communists were conducting partisan warfare in accordance with their circumstances and material and military capacities, striking the enemy under the motto "Attack like lightning and vanish like the wind." According to the Ballists, this harmed the people, and for their sake they united with the Italians.

It is not worth engaging with such mercenary logic. It is enough to stress that the true cause of the union of the Ballist detachment with the Italian army in Mallakastra was not the tactics of partisan warfare, but the obligation arising from the aforementioned protocol, in which the representatives of the Balli Kombëtar had accepted not a two-month "truce," "friendship" or "cooperation," but joint action for as long as the Italian army remained in Albania.

The Dalmaco-Këlcyra meeting was organised in order to destroy the bases of the National Liberation Movement in those areas where they were highly active against the Italian fascists. One month before the "honour" protocol, an agreement had been signed precisely for Mallakastra between the Balli leaders Bektash Cakrani, Eqerem Peshkëpia and Qazim Selfo and the commander of the Italian garrison of Mallakastra: "Gathered in the barracks of the CC.MM [Blackshirts] before the sector commander, Colonel Giulio Enrico, we solemnly affirm, giving our word of honour, that we shall assume the following obligations: Not to provide support or assistance under any circumstances to the actions of the rebels. To disperse the rebels when they

are in small groups, without requiring assistance from the army. To arrest and promptly denounce those rebels who may eventually separate and come to any village or house in Mallakastra."[51]

This "solemn" oath documents that the Ballists became not only an agency of Italian fascism in Albania but also its comrades-in-arms against the National Liberation Front, which was fighting for national liberation. This is not an accusation made by Enver Hoxha, but a public and historical denunciation made by the entire Albanian people against the Balli Kombëtar, because it was the people who were burned, bloodied and massacred by the Ballists. Since an agreement had already been signed to cleanse Mallakastra of partisan "rebels," the beys could not have gone one month later to sign another agreement of the opposite character. The very denial of this protocol shows how discrediting it was for the pseudo-patriotism of the Balli Kombëtar. Could the two principal leaders of the Balli Kombëtar have been so naïve as to ask the enemy for two months' time in order to prepare to attack him? Any occupier would seek the opposite: to annihilate the opponent precisely when he was unprepared, in order to achieve the greatest success with the least loss.

Mallakastra was indeed burned, but the enemy suffered a complete defeat. This proved the strong ties between the partisan forces of the National Liberation Army and the insurgent people. These battles showed fascism that "it was dealing with a people who had resolved to die in defence of their own interests."[52]

In the article "Compromise," the politicians of the Balli Kombëtar attempt at all costs to justify the pro-

tocol with Dalmazzo by invoking two facts from the activity of the communists in the USSR and in the National Liberation Front.

First, they write that "the communists of Russia also made a compromise by signing the non-aggression pact with Germany."[53]

In August 1939, the Soviet Government concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany, but this affected neither the territorial integrity, independence nor honour of the Soviet state, either directly or indirectly. It secured peace for the country in the immediate term and enabled it to prepare its forces for resistance in the event of an attack. This pact was signed at a time when the Soviet Union had not been attacked by the German occupier. Our Ballists, by contrast, signed protocols and agreements with the occupier when Albania was already occupied. The difference here is fundamental.

Secondly, the politicians of the Balli Kombëtar wrote: "The communists of the National Liberation Movement also made compromises; did they not ally themselves with Badoglio's soldiers after Italy's capitulation?"[54]

Here too there is a fundamental difference. The Communist Party of Albania and the General National Liberation Council called upon the Italian army to fight the German nazis, who posed a danger both to the Albanian people and to the Italian people. Many Italian soldiers, mobilised under orders, responded to the CPA's appeal and joined the "Antonio Gramsci" Partisan Battalion. This was not a compromise with the enemy, since at that time the enemy had capitulated and

was leaving our country; rather, it was internationalism, a common struggle for liberation from fascism.

The historical "analogies" that the Balli Kombëtar attempted to employ in the newspaper *Flamuri* show that the protocol with Dalmazzo existed as a document of collaboration with the Italian troops against the National Liberation Movement.

It is not only the aforementioned Protocol of the Balli Kombëtar that proves it was an anti-national organisation with a mission to fight the liberation movement in Albania; the entire political and military activity of the Balli, including in the service of the German occupier, fully confirms this position.

Of particular interest is Mithat Frashëri's conversation with the American secret service agents, including Asime Kosova, in November 1943. Her report informed Washington that: "Mithat Frashëri asked me to tell our Anglo-American friends in Istanbul: 1. We do not fight the German army in open battle so that the people are not harmed... 2. We do not cooperate with the National Liberation organisation because, as we know, it consists of many communists. 3. We do not consider the communists to be Albanians. They receive their orders from Tito's idols and Moscow's agents. This is the reason why we are fighting against them... 4. We shall use our armed forces to crush every communist."[55]

In this direct testimony there is not the slightest indication of a communist war against the Balli Kombëtar. On the contrary, Mithat Frashëri himself explains clearly to the American agent that it was the Balli Kombëtar that was waging war against the communists, on the grounds that Albanian communists

such as Qemal Stafa, Vasil Shanto, Koçi Bako, Manush Alimani, Perlat Rexhepi, Misto Mame, Mihal Duri, Muhmet Gjollesha and many others, who were killed or executed by the Italian fascists because they fought for the liberation of the Homeland, were supposedly not Albanians. Indeed, hundreds upon hundreds of other communists, together with the people fighting the occupier, were supposedly not Albanians either. For Mithat Frashëri, the Albanians were the criminals Mustafa Merlika, Mehdi Frashëri, Muharrem Bajraktari and Gjon Markagjoni, with whom he would continue to collaborate closely in the future.

Mithat Bey's only objection was that the communists allegedly received their orders from abroad. To reinforce this deception, Butka cites in his report Mithat Frashëri's directive that "communism in Albania works under foreign orders."[56]

The accusation that the CPA fought under the "orders" of foreigners for doctrine rather than for the Homeland was used by the Ballist-Zogites to conceal both their support for fascist doctrine and the national betrayal committed by their organisations, which were commanded by the Italian fascists and German nazis. Even if one were to accept the Ballist thesis that the Albanian partisans, alongside their uncompromising struggle against the occupier, also presented a platform for communism, this did not prevent the Ballists, while presenting their own platform for feudal-capitalism, from also waging an uncompromising struggle against the occupier and, after liberation, submitting their ideological platform to the people. The determination of the Albanian people in the National Liberation War

until the occupier was driven from Albanian soil shows that orders against the Albanian national cause were neither accepted nor would ever have been accepted by Enver Hoxha and the CPA.

The Balli Kombëtar, lacking both genuine patriotism and the support of the people, could not organise the resistance of the Albanian people, still less a general uprising for national liberation, because the Balli did not include the struggle against the occupier in its strategy. It therefore manoeuvred with slogans such as "war against communism." Yet the communists were the only organised political force that stood up for the country, ready even to give their lives for the liberation of the Homeland. By opposing this force, the Balli Kombëtar opposed the great cause of national liberation.

The descendant of yesterday's Ballists, Deputy Butka, seeks to appear a greater politician than his father: "It is an undeniable fact that the war against the Balli Kombëtar, Legaliteti and the leaders of the north, as well as against all nationalists and neutral individuals who did not join the National Liberation Front, was waged not only on the military plane but also on the ideological and political plane, against all those forces that did not agree with communism."[57]

This is a flagrant falsification of history, contradicted by Abaz Kupi's declaration of 28 November in the newspaper *Atdheu*: "Was it not my work that assistance and support were openly given to the communists by gendarmes, officers and non-commissioned officers, my former comrades and collaborators?

"Was it not my work that assistance and support

were given by nationalists, who hid and fed the communists within their own families?"

This testimony concerning the support given to the communists by patriotic and national-minded nationalists, and by gendarmes and officers of the national army, motivated not merely by their association with Bazi but by feelings of Albanian patriotism, proves that the communists were supported and assisted by honest nationalists because of their patriotic aims and great sacrifices in the interests of the national cause. It was this ideal that determined their goodwill and fraternal feeling towards genuine nationalists. Had the communists waged war against "all those forces that did not agree with communism," they would not have been supported first by Abaz Kupi himself, nor by the nationalists and his collaborators.

Support for communism, whether by conviction or by force, was not raised at all during the anti-fascist war, either by the CPA or by Enver Hoxha. It was this reality that compelled Bazi to declare: "I was in cooperation with the National Liberation Party solely in order to fight the occupier and, so that this struggle might become more effective, to unite all Albanian parties while each preserved its own tendency," until the liberation of Albania.

At least according to this declaration, until December 1943 the Communist Party had faithfully kept the word it had given at the Conference of Peza for the unity of the entire people, without distinction of ideas, until liberation. Because the Communist Party applied this national and patriotic principle, Abaz Kupi declared that he had supposedly "made" the proposal for

the Mukje Conference in order to draw the Balli Kombëtar too into the struggle against the occupier, that is, onto the side of the Communist Party and the National Liberation Front, while "preserving" its own tendency.

Had the CPA imposed support for communism by force, or attacked the nationalists as anti-communists, Bazi would not only have refrained from "proposing" the union of the Albanian parties in the struggle against the occupier, but in his November declaration he would have proclaimed this struggle anti-nationalist, just as he issued his ultimatum: "The order you have given for a systematic campaign in the press and by word of mouth against our organisation makes not the slightest impression upon us, because we are certain of the granite character of the people who participate in our organisation. We merely advise the National Liberation Party to limit its campaign against us to what it has ordered and not to push it further to extremes, for our counteraction in such a case will be so severe that it will not only astonish the members of the National Liberation War, but will make them repent, since it will cost them very dearly." This ultimatum arose as a reaction to the exposure by the bulletin *Bashkimi* of Abaz Kupi's desertion from the National Liberation Front and his collaboration with the Germans. It proves that until the end of November 1943 the campaign against the Legaliteti and the leaders of the north had been conducted only through the press and by word of mouth, and not, as Butka claims, as a military campaign. Who first began this armed struggle will be documented below. Here it is enough to stress that Abaz Kupi exposes Butka as a falsifier with anti-historical positions that gravely insult

the blood and sacrifice of an entire people, who, relying solely on their own forces and without assistance from anyone, waged a legendary struggle, drove beyond the borders of the Homeland the two most savage empires of the time and gave Albania the honour of being the first country in Europe to be liberated.

The struggle of the National Liberation Front against the Ballists, monarchists and leaders of the north was not waged because they refused to accept communism. This issue was not raised at all during the war. They were fought as collaborators and instruments of the occupier, who did not agree with the liberation of the Homeland and who remained faithful to the annexation of Albania by Italy in accordance with the decision of 12 April. In his report, Butka attempts to absolve the Balli Kombëtar of the responsibility it bears as a treacherous organisation that opposed the struggle of the Albanian people under the pretext that it was supposedly communist. Nowhere in the world during the Second World War did patriotic and progressive forces oppose the communists who were fighting nazism and fascism. Only quislings and collaborators united with the fascist aggressors turned their weapons against the communists. Honest nationalists, guided by the interests of the Homeland, are never in conflict with communists over the national question, since both sides are interested in resolving the national problem in the interests of the people and the nation. The Ballists in Albania fought not from the standpoint of nationalism but from the standpoint of fascism, as numerous documents attest. One of Asime Kosova's reports to Washington states: "The men of the Balli Kombëtar had

made efforts to unite all the various national groups, including the groups supporting King Zogu. The policy of the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar was to use these groups in the struggle against communism."[58]

The documents of the Balli Kombëtar themselves speak of the meetings held by Mithat Frashëri and Ali Këlcyra in the northern zones in order to create a front against the National Liberation Front, in accordance with Italian and German instructions. Concerning these chieftains and standard-bearers, Asime Kosova's group wrote to Washington: "The Italians immediately began to finance these men with money in order to maintain good relations with them. The tribal leaders were permitted to keep their weapons... today all these tribal leaders are passive spectators awaiting the day when the Italians will be shaken."[59]

This is testimony proving that the leaders of the north were mercenaries. They undertook no action against the occupier for the liberation of the country, waiting instead for the Italian army to leave of its own accord. Having no interests opposed to theirs, Mithat Frashëri used them as contingents to divide the people and obstruct the National Liberation War under the absurd and anti-national pretext of the struggle against communism. So discrediting and anti-national was the agreement between the Balli Kombëtar and the Zogites in Lura that, in the newspaper *Atdheu* on 28 November, Abaz Kupi was compelled publicly to deny the essence of the agreement:

"You have been badly informed about the meeting in Lura, for it was convened by Mithat Frashëri, and I too was summoned by a private letter from him. I went

to Lura and was charged with mediating for the unification of the leaders of Dibra for immediate war against the occupier."

The meeting in Lura was held for the creation of an anti-communist front against the National Liberation Front. This is testified not only by Mithat Frashëri but also by today's opposition in its publications. Why, then, does Abaz Kupi deceive the Albanian people by claiming that it was allegedly held for "immediate war against the occupier"?

On 4 May 1944, the Political Executive for War instructed the BBC: "Expose sharply the slogan of the 'Bolshevik spectre.' The call for anti-communism is nothing other than a German trick intended to win Albanians over against the resistance movement. Since the Germans have been unable to hold Albania down with their own forces, they are seeking, through anti-communist lies, to make the Albanians do this work for them."[60]

This is the true explanation of the "struggle against communism" waged by the Balli Kombëtar and the entire Albanian reaction during the National Liberation War as servants of the Italo-Germans.

NEW FALSIFIERS

In order to conceal the collaboration of the Balli Kombëtar with the occupiers — a fully documented historical truth — the Ballists organised a commemoration in Tirana on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Mukje. Safet Butka's son attempted to present the Balli organisation as a "patriotic" organisation, ready for "war and unity," but, according to him, it was Enver Hoxha who "removed" their chance of unity.

One of the documents Butka adduces to prove the Balli's readiness for unity in the struggle against the occupier is the appeal of July 1943, issued by the Ballists after the General Staff of the National Liberation Army had been created and the General Council had invited the Balli to talks: "We can hardly believe it: Unity, unity. O great God, that is precisely what we seek."[61]

This false pathos raises the question: what had prevented the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar from uniting with the people during the two years of its struggle against the occupier? They had been prevented by the struggle against "communism," and now they suddenly remembered to "unite" with the communists in order to "fight" fascism!

Any sensible person is astonished by this unexpected turn on the part of the Balli leaders, who until then had fiercely attacked the CPA and the National Liberation Front while these were fighting heroically against the occupier. The documents concerning this patriotic struggle have been reflected with considerable scholarly objectivity in the history of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War; it is therefore sufficient here to cite the

report of the Supreme Command of the Italian army in March 1943: "The attacks in the region of Devoll, at the Selenica installation, at the worksites of Rrogozhina and Përmet, at Ujë i Ftohtë and elsewhere, the killings of Italians on the roads, have pinned our units down in defence of their bases, and throughout the territory the general uprising is developing."[62]

This uprising had begun with the appeal made to the people by the CPA on 8 November 1941 for armed and uncompromising struggle against the occupier. It was the only political force that addressed the popular masses with a call for liberation struggle, placing Albania within the anti-fascist coalition.

In order to deprive it of this advantage and historical merit, the Ballists and Zogites accused the CPA of being a party created by the Yugoslavs. This position is still maintained today by the servants of Serbo-Slav propaganda, thereby falling into agreement with Serbian social-chauvinists. This anti-historical position is contradicted by the second-ranking figure in the Yugoslav leadership during and after the war, Milovan Đilas. In an interview given to the newspaper *Zëri i Rinisë* in Prishtina, he stated: "Yugoslav historiography has overestimated the role of Miladin and Mugoša as regards their orientations in Albania. They made an important contribution in terms of the forms and methods of work in the CPA, but it cannot be said that the conditions did not exist there or that there were no communist groups. Yugoslav propaganda after 1948 goes too far when it says that the Yugoslavs formed the CPA. This is not true."[63]

The owner sees it, but the crier will not announce it. Yugoslav propaganda may well exaggerate for its

well-known purposes, seeking to belittle an entire people who followed the CPA. But why does Ballist-Zogite propaganda sing in harmony with the Great Serbs? Through such slanders, the rightists are interested in discrediting not only the Communist Party but also its great work: the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War, as though it were a war led by foreigners rather than by the sons of the Albanian people inspired by the ideals of the freedom and independence of the Homeland. They wish to deny, or at least diminish, the significance of this war because neither the Balli organisation nor Legaliteti contributed to its leadership or composition. They wish to deny it because the National Liberation War is the mirror that proves the betrayal of the Ballist-Zogites, who are forever branded with the shame of having served fascism.

The CPA, as an historical reality of major national significance, is fully documented as a party formed by the Albanian communists themselves. It emerged at the head of the people as a political force that fully mastered military activity during the years of the Italo-German occupation, achieving the unity of the Albanian people in the liberation war and establishing democratic power. The absence of any Ballist contribution to this war, up to Italy's capitulation, compelled them to attach themselves to the CPA in order to appear before the people as "organisers" of the liberation struggle. Therefore, after the Mukje meeting, the leaders of the Balli, without even consulting the General Council, hastened to publish a proclamation in the name of the Mukje Committee, issuing the appeal: "Albanians, rise all together around the banner of Skanderbeg, unite around

the Committee for the Salvation of Albania, break the chains of slavery that you have endured for five years."[64]

This Proclamation remains a serious document proving that the Balli Kombëtar intended to begin the struggle for Albania's liberation after five years of slavery, an appeal that gravely insulted the Albanian people, who were already fighting against the occupier and had by then given the Homeland hundreds and thousands of martyrs. Such an appeal, at a time when the Albanian people had their own regular army directed by the General Staff created on 10 July 1943, was absurd.

It was precisely this struggle of the Albanian people that compelled the Anglo-American Allies to recognise and publicise it. Mithat Frashëri himself was aware of the declaration made by the United States Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, in December 1942: "The Government of the United States is not indifferent to the continued resistance of the Albanian people, and the American people eagerly await the day when effective military assistance will be given to these brave men to drive the occupiers from their homes."[65]

Eight months after the congratulatory declaration of the American Government affirming the liberation struggle of the National Liberation Front led by the communists, the Ballists, who until then had opposed this struggle as a "communist war," found the opportunity to accept unity with the communists and to address the Albanian people with a call for war against the occupier. Only Ballists could engage in such buffoonery. A call to war had already been made to the Albanian people in November 1941 and continued on 16 September 1942 at the Conference of Peza. Com-

munists and nationalists took part in that Conference. There the political and organisational foundations of the National Liberation Front were laid and the General Council was created. The Conference set out the platform for the unity of the Albanian people in a single front, without distinction of religion, region or idea, placing at the basis of unity one fundamental condition: the struggle against the occupier. Through this political act, with its profound national content, Enver Hoxha rose to the stature of our National Hero, Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg, who, faced with the fury of the Ottoman janissaries, overcame Albanian feudal division and united the Albanian princes in the Assembly of Lezha. The falsifier Butka seeks artificially to transplant the historical mission of the Conference of Peza onto the Mukje meeting: "Extended into the structures of the base, this form of organisation would have unified leadership, would have averted the danger of civil war, would have united all Albania in a common anti-fascist front, regardless of political convictions, party, religious or regional affiliation and so forth; the path would have been opened to unity in the struggle against the occupier and the neighbouring states."[66]

Observe carefully how Butka speaks in the language of the decisions of the Conference of Peza: "would have united all Albania in a common anti-fascist front, regardless of political convictions, party, religious or regional affiliation..." This is the essence of the Resolution of the Conference of Peza, which Enver Hoxha repeated hundreds of times both during the war and after it. The theoretician Butka imagines that the people have forgotten what they have read from Enver Hoxha and

seeks to present himself as the originator. Why was it necessary to eliminate this resolution, which de facto united the Albanian people in the war against fascism, and to proclaim as such a preliminary meeting such as Mukje? How can one claim unity of the Albanian people in the war against fascism when Italian fascism had already capitulated and was leaving Albania? Is unity achieved at the end of a war or at its beginning?

Mithat Frashëri, although invited, did not deign to take part in the Conference of Peza. Even after the Conference, the Central Committee of the CPA called upon the Balli Kombëtar to appoint one of its representatives to the General National Liberation Council. The leaders of the Balli rejected this proposal on the grounds that they did not recognise the Conference that had created the General Council, since, according to them, "the influence of the CPA predominated" at the Conference of Peza.[67]

Both at the Conference of Peza and in the Council elected there, nationalists, not communists, predominated numerically. The programme of the Conference likewise had as its principal objective the liberation of Albania and the establishment of democracy in the country.

As emerges from the Balli's own documents, what allegedly prevented it from joining the National Liberation Front was the difference of ideas. The question arises: why, on the eve of Italy's capitulation, did the leaders of the Balli accept unity with the National Liberation Front, when the ideas on both sides were the same as they had been at the time of the Conference of Peza? Why does Deputy Butka place the Conference of

Peza alongside the historic assemblies of the Albanian people, while his predecessors described it as a conference under "communist influence"? "The Assembly of Lezha, the League of Prizren, the Assembly of Vlora, the Congress of Lushnja, the Conference of Peza... are monumental testimonies to the unconquered spirit of the Albanians, to resistance, wisdom and courage, to freedom and love of the Homeland, to unity in danger."[68]

This assessment of the Conference of Peza is compelled not only by the fact that it is an historical reality that cannot, for the moment, be denied, but also because, in this specific instance, it is praised in order to make Mukje acceptable as well. For the leaders of the Balli, the Conference of Peza stands as a document proving their pseudo-nationalism; therefore, in time, they will revise it. The first attempt was made by the director of the National Historical Museum, Myslim Islami, who, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference, praised it for the role it played in uniting the Albanian people, "despite the fact that communists took part in it."[69]

It is immoral and anti-historical to say, "despite the fact that communists took part in the Conference of Peza," when it was precisely they who conceived it, organised it and carried its political programme through to the end, that is, to the complete liberation of Albania from the nazi-fascist occupiers.

The unity of the Albanian people in the struggle against fascism was brought about by the communists and by those honest and patriotic nationalists such as Myslim Peza, Baba Faja Martaneshi, Haxhi Lleshi and

others who followed the line of the communists as the only correct line. Mithat Frashëri did not participate in the Conference of Peza or in the National Liberation Front, not because they were imbued with a communist spirit, but because he could not accept the obligations arising from that Conference, especially the fundamental condition of uncompromising struggle against the enemy, since he had assumed the role of servant of fascism.

The Balli Kombëtar initially justified its "neutral" stance with slogans such as "the time for war has not yet come" and "the war will be waged by the great Allies." To these slogans, which sought to distance the Albanian people from the liberation struggle, Enver Hoxha replied: "What happens if the whole world reasons in this way? Something very simple happens: little Albania becomes Mussolini's bride forever... Russia, England and America wage their war with great armies, with tanks, cannon and aircraft, but this does not exclude our waging the war with the single rifle we possess... freedom is not won with words."[70]

The Balli Kombëtar's tactic of waiting is also reflected in the letter sent by the commander of the Ballist detachment in the district of Berat, Abas Ermenji, to Safet Butka: "If we continue to drag things out as we have done until now, it would be better to throw our weapons under the eaves. We must move without listening to what the political committee in Tirana says, because if we do not move, naturally the English will support the other side, which is moving and fighting."[71]

The content of the letter, written on 29 June 1943, informs us that the side fighting against the Italian oc-

cupiers up to the eve of Mukje was the other side, that is, the communist side, the National Liberation Front, whereas the Ballists were only now remembering to "fight" through appeals and proclamations. By ignoring the Conference of Peza and the National Liberation Front, the leaders of the Balli documented their lack of contribution to the unity and struggle of the Albanian people for the liberation of the Homeland. In order to compensate for this deficiency, unlike on previous occasions when it had been invited to fight and had refused, this time, finding itself in unfavourable circumstances, the Balli accepted the proposal of the General Council of the National Liberation Front, about which Butka offers his own assessment: "The most important document on the road to Mukje is undoubtedly that of 10 July 1943, a message from the General Council addressed to the organisation of the Balli Kombëtar: 'The General National Liberation Council, taking as its basis the lofty ideals of our beloved Fatherland, in its extraordinary meeting considered it a patriotic duty officially to invite the organisation of the Balli Kombëtar to a swift and final meeting.'"[72]

The above document clearly proves that the General National Liberation Council sent its delegation to Mukje only for a meeting, indeed a final one, and not for a conference. For speculative purposes, Butka attributes to this meeting the character of a conference without providing any document proving that the meeting proposed by the National Liberation Front was to be treated at the level of a conference. The talks would be conducted according to the proposed level, namely that of a "final meeting," and around the proposed subject.

Through this proposal, the CPA and Enver Hoxha personally expressed their readiness for unity with anyone who accepted the struggle against the fascists while adhering to the national liberation character of the war, in implementation of one of the principles of the Resolution of the Conference of Peza: "The doors are always open to all nationalists who are determined to fight for the liberation of the Homeland."[73]

The purpose of the proposal for a meeting was to unite in the struggle against the occupier all political forces with programmes and patriotic claims. The appeal was directed to the wavering wing in order to place it effectively in the service of national liberation, as an independent political force within the National Liberation Front. Otherwise, the CPA, as the sole leading force of the National Liberation Front, would have had no reason to appeal to the Balli for unity at a time when the partisan movement had spread throughout the country and National Liberation Councils had been established everywhere. Through this proposal, the CPA and the General Council made one more effort to avoid the fratricidal confrontations staged by the Italians, always leaving open the question of power and representation within it to be decided after the war, as had also been determined at the Conference of Peza. This appeal was inspired by a profound responsibility for the unity of the people and the national cause. Although it knew who the discredited leaders of the Balli were, the CPA nevertheless called upon them to change course and return to the people, not in order to become sympathisers of the communists, but in order to remain an independent political force within the National Liber-

ation Front. The CPA had already given an example of this with Abaz Kupi, even though it knew that he was a monarchist and a supporter of Zogu. Enver Hoxha and the CPA had included him in the General Council and in the General Staff of the National Liberation Army.

The platform for the Mukje talks had been proclaimed in the Proclamation of the General Council of 10 July 1943, which stated: "Today we stand at a crossroads; today or never, those members of the Balli Kombëtar who are truly patriots must choose the right path and throw themselves, body and soul, onto the side of the people in the National Liberation Movement."[74]

This proposal was known to the leaders of the Balli, since, in accepting the proposal for talks, they would necessarily have had to discuss at Mukje their concrete participation in the struggle against the occupier, not questions of commands and committees, which had been formed long before and were already directing the National Liberation War.

While Butka refers to the proposal made by the General National Liberation Council for a meeting, he avoids the preliminary discussion held by that very council regarding this meeting at its session of 4–10 July. The minutes of the meeting are held in the archives of the former Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania and record what Enver Hoxha sent in his letter of 17 August 1943 to the District Committee of the Communist Party of Albania for Vlora: "It was decided that another appeal should be made to the Balli, by summoning several of its leaders and telling them openly the aim and decision of the General National Liberation Council... The points on which the talks

with the Balli would be based were also determined. These points were: the Balli Kombëtar must cease its war against the councils and enter the struggle with deeds, not words."[75]

Proceeding from the signatories of the General Council's proposal, Myslim Peza and Abaz Kupi, Butka concludes that it was these distinguished nationalists who convinced and compelled Enver Hoxha from within to accept this meeting.[76]

Such a lapse is not scholarly rigour but a vulgar treatment of history, since in the same report Butka cites an undated letter by Enver Hoxha which documents his efforts to cooperate with the Balli in a common struggle against the occupiers: "The Central Committee has charged two delegates to reach an understanding with the Balli and with all honest nationalists; we are engaged in concrete agreement, we are patient and we do not give up, because we see that the Albanian people demands complete unity."[77]

To Butka's document above we may add Enver Hoxha's clarification addressed to the Communist Party in January 1943: "The Party has held meetings with the Balli; we hope that the final result will be positive."[78]

Leaving aside the scholarly documents that prove that the Mukje Meeting was proposed by the CPA and Enver Hoxha, Abas Ermenji, in his book *Albania during Fifty Years of History, 1912–1962*, testifies regarding its history that: "The Balli Kombëtar made its final appeal to the CP to reach an understanding with it and to form a joint committee... the communists responded to this appeal and the meeting was held at Mukje..."

As even the historian Ermenji shows, the initiative for the Mukje meeting is claimed by the two Abazes. Which of them is right: Ermenji, or Kupi, who claims in the newspaper *Atdheu* that he was the initiator? Butka's pro-Kupi position ignores the chairman of the Balli Kombëtar, Mr Ermenji, as a deceiver; and we cannot determine precisely whether Butka's disregard for his own chairman reflects an objective stance or ignorance of his book.

The Ballist clan's predisposition to present Enver Hoxha as a communist opposed to nationalists is easily refuted by two questions, the answers to which favour Enver Hoxha.

First: why was Enver Hoxha not opposed to the nationalists who fought within the National Liberation Front against the fascist occupier?

Secondly: why did the nationalists within the National Liberation Front, that is, Abaz Kupi, in the proposal for the meeting signed by them, emphasise the temporal aspect, a "final meeting"? The cup must have overflowed with appeals and talks for the July proposal of the General Council and the CPA to warn the Balli that this would be the final meeting, at which it would have to decide whether to throw itself resolutely alongside the people for the liberation of the country or to remain definitively on the side of the enemy.

That the Balli had no intention of unity even at Mukje is confirmed by Hysni Lepenica's own contribution to the discussion, which Butka also cites: "Is it not understood that National Liberation Front, translated into Albanian, means Balli Kombëtar?"[79]

This was the quintessence of Ballist propaganda

and manoeuvring: the elimination and replacement of the National Liberation Front by the Balli Kombëtar. In the Albanian language, National Liberation Front means National Liberation Front; translated into the language of fascism, it may acquire whatever meaning the Ballists desire.

The invitation to talks reached the Balli Kombëtar at the moment of its watching and waiting for the seizure of power after the Italian army began to withdraw. With Italy's departure, they thought that power would be divided. But, calculating the striking force of the National Liberation Army, the mass support of the people for that army and their own discredited position in public opinion, the Balli decided to accept the invitation while simultaneously preparing a project to dominate the leadership of the War and divert it according to the tactics that foreign powers would impose upon it, thereby finally securing political power in Albania. It was the question of power that compelled the Balli Kombëtar formally to accept "unity," not its ideal of national liberation from foreign occupiers.

Arbitrarily and speculatively, Butka assesses Abaz Kupi as a "distinguished" nationalist because he supposedly "compelled" Enver Hoxha from within the National Liberation Front to accept the Mukje meeting. In one of the reports sent to Washington by Asime Kosova's agent group, we read: "Bazi i Canës was to enter Tirana and make preparations for the entry of the Allied army after Italy's capitulation."[80]

On the eve of Italy's capitulation, Abaz Kupi was interested not in unity but in separation from the National Liberation Front, because if he had been the

one who compelled Enver Hoxha to accept the Mukje meeting, why did he not also compel him to accept its decisions?

FAILED ACCUSATIONS

Since Butka lacks documents proving Yugoslav intervention in the Mukje question, he offers an argument that in fact favours Enver Hoxha: "Did he [Enver Hoxha] have the right to break this nationalist agreement, when the agreement had been signed by the representatives of the General National Liberation Council and when neither the CC of the CPA nor the General Council had yet convened? It is self-evident that Enver Hoxha was taking orders from Belgrade."[81]

This "self-evidence" has poisoned the consciousness of Deputy Butka and his party, just as it poisoned that of their predecessors, because they "understood" historical processes by assumption rather than studying them with objectivity and historical truthfulness. Enver Hoxha annulled the Mukje agreement together with other principal comrades of the Party leadership around him, without waiting for the CC to convene, because he found that the agreement contradicted the general line of the National Liberation War and the platform of talks determined collectively. We are convinced that Butka too, had he been in Enver Hoxha's position, and had he been a patriot and an honest man, would have respected collective decisions and adopted the same position. Enver Hoxha had the right to state his view within the Party as its General Secretary, as he did, while not allowing himself to speak in the name of the General Council of the National Liberation Front. The letter of 8 August mentioned by Butka was simply an internal report to the Party, not a public denunciation of Mukje in the name of the

Anti-Fascist National Liberation War, and he did not write to the leadership of the Balli about this matter. In his suggestive question, the novice Butka, instead of diminishing Enver Hoxha, elevates him as a principled and consistent leader. If Enver Hoxha's position on the Mukje Agreement had been mistaken, why was his stance unanimously supported by both the CC of the CPA and the General Council? Were all of them also taking orders from Belgrade? This is what the Ballist Butka ought to have explained.

In its deceptive propaganda, the Balli Kombëtar exploited any deserter from the National Liberation Front and advertised him for its own divisive purposes. The newspaper *Flamuri* published Xhelal Staravecka's leaflet of 20 November, in which he explained the "reasons" for leaving the National Liberation Front: "Comrades, do you know why the Mukje unity was broken? Here is why: in that congress the phrase 'ethnic Albania' had been written, necessarily referring to Kosovo; but Miladin and Mugoša cannot tolerate Kosovo being taken from Yugoslavia. For this reason, comrades, the Mukje unity was broken."[82]

Butka places this renegade speculation on a theoretical footing: "The Mukje Agreement particularly affected the aims of the CPY and the Great Serbs, who sought to perpetuate Serbian power in Kosovo and the other Albanian regions in order to turn them into a seventh republic. The swift reaction of the Montenegrin colonel Miladin Popović is understandable. When the acts of the Mukje Agreement were handed to the 'mentor,' M. Popović tore them up in fury and threw them in Enver Hoxha's face."[83]

This literary buffoon is capable of abstracting comic scenes, accusing Enver Hoxha of submission, when the whole world knows that he was the only statesman who remained unsubdued and undefeated before every kind of pressure from the three most powerful empires of modern times: American imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism and Chinese revisionism. As a distinguished patriot, a great fighter for the national cause and a principled politician, he accepted dictates not from the Titoite clique, nor even from Khrushchev himself, who had within Albanian territory the military bases of the Warsaw Pact, through which he subordinated all the leaders of the East.

The platform of the Mukje talks, entirely different from the Proclamation hastily published by the Balli Kombëtar, had been determined by the General Council, not by Miladin. Therefore Ymer Dishnica, whom the new Ballists use as a puppet just as the old Ballists did, did not go to Tapiza and Mukje as an independent intellectual, nor as an opponent or soldier of Miladin, but as a delegate of the Bureau of the CC of the CPA and as a member of the General Council, which until then had exclusively directed the National Liberation War. While Enver Hoxha adhered to the orientations elaborated collectively, Ymer Dishnica violated them in his assessment of the Mukje agreement. It was therefore not Enver Hoxha who submitted to Miladin, but Ymer Dishnica who placed himself at the service of the Balli Kombëtar and of those who awaited the destruction of the National Liberation Front.

The criticism Tito made of Miladin in the letter mentioned by Butka in his report convinces us that it

was not Miladin who desired the realisation of Yugoslav chauvinist aims; otherwise Tito would have had no reason to criticise only him when he had his own special envoys in Albania. Rather, it was Tito's other retainers who worked not only so that Kosovo would remain with Serbia, but so that all Albania would be annexed to Yugoslavia.

Miladin Popović may have written to Tito about intervention in annulling the Mukje agreement, as Butka informs us, although no such archival document exists anywhere. Yet the position from which Miladin may have proceeded has no reason to be interpreted as chauvinism or anti-Albanianism, because it was not Mukje that would decide and determine the final line of the National Liberation War and the national question. The position from which Miladin may have proceeded is very clear and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Kosovo question. As a communist internationalist, he fought not only against the fascist occupier and its instruments in Montenegro and Yugoslavia but also against the fascist occupiers and their instruments in Albania, where he found himself after internment. Did Albanian volunteers not also fight against fascism and its instruments in Spain? Did British liaison officers not also fight against the fascist occupier and its instruments in Albania? Miladin's intervention for the "breaking" of the Mukje Agreement, if it truly occurred, was a principled intervention to prevent the leadership of the National Liberation War from being usurped by the servants and instruments of fascism. It was not an intervention by order, but support for Enver Hoxha's principled and resolute position. Tempo him-

self, in the book *The Struggle for the Balkans*, acknowledges that the measures proposed by Miladin "for the union of Kosovo with Albania and for the creation of a staff for Kosovo and Metohija, which would be under the command of the General National Liberation Staff of Albania, would help in the broad mobilisation of the popular masses in the National Liberation War."[84]

For this reason Tito criticised Miladin, and for this reason he was eliminated, because he sought not the annexation of Kosovo to Serbia but, as Tempo documents for us, the union of Kosovo with Albania.

Determined at all costs to substantiate his allegations, Butka cites a letter by Mugoša: "The leaflet of the Mukje Conference caused great confusion... the Party organisation in Vlora, on my directive, wrote a leaflet and sent it to all the Ballist, stating: 'Whoever does not unite with us is against us.'"[85]

Mugoša may perhaps have enjoyed presenting himself to his superiors as a giver of directives, but his intervention, if it actually occurred as Butka claims, was nothing more than the implementation of Enver Hoxha's directive of 8 August 1943, through which he instructed the Party: "This leaflet is contrary to the line of national liberation and is disapproved by the Central Committee of the Party... If the Balli asks you for an explanation, tell them that concrete unity must be achieved in your area: first, they must cease fighting our Party, purge their ranks of criminals and agents of fascism and declare themselves openly and in deeds against fascism."[86]

The very content of Mugoša's letter proves what Enver Hoxha had said: that if the Ballists did not join

the National Liberation Movement against the occupier, they would remain opposed to it, just as they did after Mukje.

Mugoša's letter, if it is genuine as Butka presents it, does not in the least prove that Mugoša directed the National Liberation War in Albania, still less that there was Yugoslav intervention in the annulment of the Mukje Agreement. On the contrary, Mugoša, as a man in the field who had nothing whatsoever to do with the highest leadership of the Communist Party of Albania or the General Council, and who dealt only with Tito's official envoy, Tempo, and later Stojnić, emerges as a willing executor of Enver Hoxha's directives.

While Miladin is attacked as a communist, the silence of Ballist right-wing propaganda regarding Tito's envoy in Albania, Vukmanović-Tempo, remains suspicious. Through a contradictory statement, Tempo exerted strong pressure on Enver Hoxha by offering two opposing assessments of the same line and the same issue. Initially he criticised the "sectarian line" towards those very elements whom, a few days later, in early August, he accused of opportunism: "Because of your leniency and tolerance towards the Balli Kombëtar from the very moment it appeared on the scene," Tempo dictated, "you were caught by surprise by it and afterwards did not know what position to adopt. Instead of declaring war on it, you offered it the negotiating table."[87]

Tempo also documents his view of the CPA's opportunism towards the Balli Kombëtar in his book *Revolucija koja teče*, published in Belgrade in 1971: "You are surprised that Dishnica was able to conclude such an agreement with the Balli Kombëtar, whereas in

reality he merely continued to implement your previous line."[88]

Regardless of Tempo's positions, tactics and pressures, Enver Hoxha continued to direct the National Liberation War independently, in accordance with the programme of the CPA and Albania's concrete conditions. This independence is also documented by Vukmanović-Tempo in a letter sent to Tito on 10 August, a few days after Mukje: "Regarding everything I presented at the meeting with the Albanian representatives, they do not agree with me. In Albania there is no desire to hear about the Yugoslav experience, as there is among the Greeks."[89]

Tempo complained to Tito that in Albania there was no desire to accept not merely one or two Yugoslav directives but everything he had presented at the meeting with the Albanian side, especially to Enver Hoxha. Instead of turning to documentary evidence, the Ballist-Zogite camp resorts to slander in order to diminish the most distinguished figure in our nation's history while defending those who were inclined to carry out Yugoslav orders. In his book, Tempo writes: "Koçi Xoxe supported me not only because I was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, in which he had great confidence, but also because we shared the same views."[90]

Sharing the same views as Tempo, Koçi Xoxe would exert the same pressure on Enver Hoxha as Tempo himself. Milovan Đilas recalls: "I remember meeting Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiro when they came to Belgrade. I have a high opinion of Koçi and I believe he was unjustly condemned. The Albanians judged him under the

pressure that he had been a Yugoslav agent. He cooperated with us, that is true, but it cannot be said that he was our agent. For example, he did not accept the claim that we Yugoslavs were fascists and traitors; indeed, he opposed the rupture of Yugoslav-Albanian relations. This, however, did not suit Enver Hoxha."[91]

This testimony comes from one of the leading politicians of the Yugoslav leadership who shaped and encouraged the anti-Albanian line. He acknowledges that in 1947–48 Enver Hoxha regarded the Yugoslav leaders as fascists and sought the severance of relations with them, whereas Koçi Xoxe opposed Enver Hoxha by supporting the leadership in Belgrade.

The true reason why the Mukje Agreement was broken is given by the bulletin *Bashkimi*: "We shall not allow the blood of our heroes to serve in brightening the filthy faces of the clowns of the Balli. We shall not allow the Balli to secure the armchair from which to betray and oppress the Albanian people by adorning itself with our struggle."[92]

The public denunciation of Mukje was made by the Second National Liberation Conference at Labinot. In his report, Enver Hoxha emphasised: "The National Liberation Front and the Communist Party of Albania, which leads it, as you can see, did everything possible. They showed great patience, they strove by every means and with every sacrifice to persuade the Balli Kombëtar to join the struggle against the occupier for the liberation of the people. But the Balli Kombëtar entered the struggle against the people, against the Front and against the Communist Party of Albania. The Balli Kombëtar, or the traitorous Balli, united with the oc-

cupier. Thus it was they who burned the bridges..."[93]

This was the real reason for the breakdown of the Mukje Agreement. Ymer Dishnica emerges as an opportunistic and two-faced figure, and his speech at the Conference of Labinot accuses him of the dishonest positions he has taken today: "I agree with Comrade Hoxha's report, for this is the pure voice of the nation, the voice of the General Council, the voice of our Movement..."[94]

If the fundamental interests of the Balli leadership, together with their actions and manoeuvres, are carefully analysed, it becomes clear that they themselves had entered into a tacit understanding with the Yugoslavs, hoping that the duel between Tito and Enver Hoxha would eliminate their closest opponent, Enver Hoxha. Only in this way could the path to power after the war be opened to them. Were not the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar also waiting for such an outcome from the struggle between Italo-German fascism and Enver Hoxha? A report of the British Secret Service from March 1944 confirms: "The tendency of the political situation in Albania is towards the consolidation of a united anti-communist front, ready to cooperate with anyone who will assist in suppressing the National Liberation Front."[95]

By declaring themselves anti-communists, the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar were active members of this coalition and its principal initiators. Their meetings with the northern leaders in the autumn of 1943 fully confirm this, placing them on the same side as the Serbo-Slav chauvinists, whose objective was to undermine the National Liberation Front through the sub-

ordination of the Communist Party of Albania and Enver Hoxha.

The links of the leaders of the Balli and Legaliteti with the Yugoslav chauvinists were also direct. The American Consulate General in Istanbul informed Washington: "In June 1942 Muharrem Bajraktari went to Montenegro with the aim of finding General Mihailović and discussing with him the question of coordinated action, but instead he found one of his officers, with whom he reached an agreement on cooperation."[96]

This document originates from the American Consulate and not from the works of Enver Hoxha. Therefore, those who belong to today's and yesterday's anti-communist bloc, and who present themselves as "ardent patriots," should follow the continuation of this document and the links between its signatory, Muharrem Bajraktari, and the leader of the Balli Kombëtar, Mithat Frashëri.

Knowing well Mihailović's criminal activity against the Yugoslav people and the people of Kosovo, the nature of the Albanian standard-bearer's agreement with Mihailović's officer becomes clear. The ties between Mihailović and Bajraktari were so strong that when the Italian army attacked Yugoslavia, "Muharrem Bajraktari joined the Yugoslav army and from that time remained in the mountains,"[97] although he did not fire a single shot in his own country against the Italian occupier. This report by Asime Kosova's group convinces us that Muharrem Bajraktari served as one of Mihailović's mercenaries.

On 1 September 1944 Muharrem Bajraktari took part in the congress of the "nationalists" together with

Mithat Frashëri. The representative of the Political Office in Bari, Philip Broad, informed London about the principal participants, who "were: Mithat Frashëri, Ali Këlcyra and Hasan Dosti from the Balli Kombëtar, Abaz Kupi from the Legaliteti, Gjon Markagjoni from the Fascist Catholic Party of Mirdita, Mehdi Frashëri and Muharrem Bajraktari..."[98]

This British information alone, concerning the cooperation of Mithat Frashëri and Hasan Dosti with Mihailović's ally, is sufficient to demonstrate how "nationalist" the leaders of the Balli really were, how repugnant their conduct was towards the people of Kosovo, who were tortured by the bands of Mihailović, Muharrem Bajraktari, Iliaz Agushi, Ferhat Draga and others, and how cynical the so-called slogan of "Ethnic Albania" truly was.

Professor Hakif Bajrami, in his study *Albania after 1939*, removes the only nail on which the Ballists seek to hang the sack of their "patriotism": "In the five points approved at Mukje, Kosovo is not mentioned. Not only that, but at Mukje no international guarantee for Ethnic Albania was requested. The decisions of Mukje were violated equally by the communists, the Ballists and the Legaliteti. However, since the National Liberation communists at Bujan declared themselves in favour of Ethnic Albania including Albanian Kosovo, with the guarantee of the Allies in the presence of the British representative, it is clear that the principles were not violated by the National Liberation Movement. This is also clearly affirmed by the programme of the Albanian Democratic Front of 1945."[99]

Persistent in his mission as a falsifier, Deputy Butka asks: "If it was treacherous and sabotaging, then why did he conclude a nationalist agreement with the reactionary Balli Kombëtar?... Why does he [Enver Hoxha] call the Balli a traitorous organisation?"[100]

This is a crude attempt to make Enver Hoxha responsible for the Balli Kombëtar's eventual role as an agency of fascism. Through such self-suggestive questions, Butka may hypnotise himself or the Ballist clan, but not honest people. First, Enver Hoxha neither signed nor annulled the Mukje Agreement. Those who signed it recognised the opportunistic nature of their own position and annulled the agreement themselves.

Secondly, it would have been more accurate had Butka posed the question differently: "Why did Enver Hoxha send delegations to negotiate with the Ballists if they were traitors, saboteurs and agents of fascism?" This issue was definitively clarified by Ymer Dishnica at the Conference of Labinot: "Our aim had been to create a differentiation within the Balli Kombëtar, considering it a basket of crabs, each biting the other's legs. I know very well that on 15 July a conference was to be held to overthrow their Central Committee. That is why they delayed the letter and our meeting... and that is why the Balli detachments were present at Mukje. Two months earlier we thought that the Balli might improve in some way, but now I see that they are deeply reactionary... There we saw the Balli with its cards on the table, its thirst for office, the true heirs of fascism."[101]

Regardless of its real aims of demagogy and deception, the Balli Kombëtar emerged with slogans calling

for "war," for "Ethnic Albania" and for "independence," and this did not pass without effect. In *The Titoites*, Enver Hoxha emphasises: "To have taken up arms against them at that time would have had grave and bitter consequences. The issue was not a few leaders. The problem lay with a section of the people who had been deceived, as well as a number of elements from the middle strata who had joined them under the slogans of the Balli."[102]

This is why Enver Hoxha continually sought meetings with the Balli Kombëtar: to draw away those Ballists who had been deceived by leaders sold to fascism and to unite them with the people in the liberation war. He sent the delegation to Mukje for the final meeting.

Enver Hoxha knew that the war of the foreign occupiers against all the patriotic forces of the Albanian people and the CPA was not separate from the efforts of internal and external reaction to preserve the rule of the exploiting class in Albania. The landowners, merchants and the new bourgeoisie then emerging could not conceive of Albania's future without their own political rule. They therefore hurled themselves with ferocity against the National Liberation Front. In these circumstances, history placed face to face two opposing social forces and classes: on one side, the patriotic forces of town and countryside led by the CPA; on the other, the nazi-fascist occupier and its servants, the treacherous organisations of the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti, which did nothing but fight and accuse the CPA of having sold itself to foreigners. The documents we present below to Butka and his clan prove who had truly been sold.

1. The Superior Command of the fascist occupation troops reported in April 1943: "On the twenti-

eth of this month, the notables [Ballists] in Gjirokastra, summoned by the prefect, undertook the task of denouncing communists and fugitives within three days."[103]

2. Terrified by popular vengeance before the Italians had even properly departed, in September 1943 the servants of the new master addressed the following request to the representatives of the German command: "From our information we have learned that other officers and agents will follow the path of the first ones and, seeing the life of each of us in danger, we ask you to intercede with the German command for the granting of sufficient force and to accept our proposal to execute every communist we encounter."[104]

3. On the occasion of his killing, the command of the 21st Corps called Lefter Ruço "the best information agent."[105]

4. The staff of the 79th Field Battalion of the German army informed the command of the 21st Corps that "according to the data, 300 armed communists have entered Korça. German informants are operating with difficulty. Our two best intelligence men were killed in the streets of the city during the days of November."[106]

5. In September 1943, the British Secret Service informed London: "The Balli Kombëtar is obstructing guerrilla operations by informing the Italians of their plans."[107]

6. Similar information was sent to Washington in August 1944: "The Germans still use the Balli Kombëtar as an informant."[108]

There are many such documents concerning the Balli Kombëtar's role as an agency. Let us pause, how-

ever, at the letter sent by Mithat Frashëri from Lura to the members of the Central Committee of the Balli, which documents that even had the Mukje Agreement been accepted by the General Council of the National Liberation Front and Enver Hoxha, it could not have brought genuine unity, but only quarrels and war between them, just as the Balli Kombëtar was already practising: "Our agreement with the communists," wrote Mithat Frashëri, "must in no way cause our propaganda to be suspended, nor must we allow the communists to increase their activity."[109]

Faithful to the agreement with Dalmazzo, the leader of the Balli Kombëtar instructed that anti-communist propaganda should not be suspended and that the communists should not be allowed "to increase their activity," that is, their military operations against the fascist occupier.

This letter is a stubborn document of the demagogy and falsity of the Balli leaders on the question of unity with the National Liberation War. Despite the numerous opportunities created for them by the CPA and the General Council, they remained instruments of fascism and consistent in their anti-national positions.

The question arises: how is it possible that the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people, supposedly "ordered" and "directed" by Belgrade, is assessed by Butka as "a great epic of the people's war for liberation from the fascist occupier. It has entered the fund of honour and pride of our nation. The brave partisans and commanders of the National Liberation War, inspired by the ideals of freedom and independence, of democracy and social progress, wrote new

pages in the book of the history of our people. There are thousands of martyrs and victims of this National Liberation War before whom we bow with honour and devotion. Those who deny the National Liberation War and the blood of the martyrs are anti-democratic and anti-national."[110]

A political force that inspired the brave partisans and commanders with the ideals of freedom, independence and democracy, that awakened the people's consciousness and led them in the National Liberation War which entered "the fund of honour and national pride," necessarily existed. The entire Albanian uprising over a four-year period could not have been organised spontaneously, still less could it have ended in victory. Why do Butka and the anti-communists not accept this historical truth: that the Communist Party of Albania was the leading force of the National Liberation War?

While during the National Liberation War Safet Butka killed the sons of the people who fought for the ideal of freedom, today his son Uran Butka raises "hymns" to them as martyrs and "bows" before them with respect and devotion.

We shall not analyse Butka's manoeuvres insofar as they are linked to the psychological peculiarities of his character, but we cannot remain silent before his repellent hypocrisy. To praise the National Liberation War of the Albanian people, which brought victory to the Homeland, while at the same time holding Enver Hoxha, the leader of that war, responsible as Tito's "servile follower," is to declare de facto that the liberation war of the Albanian people was directed by Tito, who, according to Butka, the President and the Ballist-Zogites,

must therefore have the "merit" of placing this war in "the fund of honour and pride of our nation."

This is the gravest insult to the martyrs of the war, to the former partisans, commissioners and brave commanders and to the entire Albanian people, who supposedly followed a "servile follower" and "servant" of Tito. At the same time, it is a humiliation of our national history and of the honour and pride of the Albanians.

Since the National Liberation War was won, why must the organiser and leader of that war, the CPA, be denigrated? Why must the leading role of the Commander-in-Chief, Enver Hoxha, be denied?

The Ballists and Zogites attack Enver Hoxha because they remained outside this historical merit of the Albanian people, the National Liberation War, which "constitutes new pages in the book of the history of our people." In order to conceal their disadvantage and the black deed of betrayal, which denies them the right to power, they attack Enver Hoxha with monstrous slanders that badly expose themselves.

The objective of the CPA at Mukje was: "1. To bring the Balli into the war immediately, through deeds and not words; 2. To proclaim the war against fascism and not independence; 3. To form a joint command after they have fought; 4. To move towards unity by fighting, by entering the National Liberation Council and especially by stopping the anti-communist war it is waging; thus to move towards a conference in which a majority of patriots will participate."[111]

The leaders of the Balli avoided the principal objective, the struggle against the occupier, and proclaimed in the newspaper *Flamuri*: "The principal points of

Mukje are: 1. Ethnic Albania; 2. Proclamation of Independence; 3. Immediate War."[112]

Since the Balli did not have the struggle for liberation in its strategy, it could not place it in the foreground, because it would have discredited itself before the people, who knew its "deeds." In order to verify their "patriotism," displayed in the slogan "Ethnic Albania," we shall present the objectives of the Balli through several documents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BALLI KOMBËTAR AT MUKJE

a — "Ethnic Albania"

The political manoeuvre for "Ethnic Albania" under an Italian protectorate was first attempted through the "Proclamation" of Gjirokastra by the envoy of the Italian king, the commander of the Italian military forces, General Ferrero, in June 1917. It was repeated demagogically in 1939 as a fascist-style "union," placed at the disposal of various fascist governments as a "patriotic" rag with which to conceal Italy's annexation of Albania. This "union" also misled honest patriots in Albania and Kosovo who, reasoning that it was "better under Italy's boot than under Serbia's bayonets," hoped that the Italo-German powers would annul the secret agreements and abrogate the previous treaties concerning Albania. There were also honest patriots who did not believe fascist demagogy and did not accept the protectorate of any foreign power over Albania, since this would not constitute a real possibility for "Ethnic Albania" but rather its final partition. This idea had come as a message from the National Committee for the Defence of Kosovo as early as 1919, when the danger of Albania's partition reappeared at the Paris Peace Conference. The newspaper *Kuvendi* of 9 June published one of the many protests of the Albanian people against Italy's protectorate over Albania, sharply opposing even President Wilson: "President Wilson cries out that he is ready to give Italy Albanian Vlora. We did not believe that Wilson would cover one injustice with another, even weaker one."[113]

Against this partition, which represented the ultimate danger to the national lands, the Committee for the Defence of Kosovo published in Shkodra, in June 1919, its protest explaining why Albania should not have a protector: "The principal aim of the Committee is to establish an independent Albania, exempt from every protectorate; conditions contrary to this lofty aim are rejected by the Committee. If Vlora remains as part of Italy, even if only Karaburun or Sazan does, and if a protectorate is established in Albania, our Committee foresees political, territorial and economic damage for Albania; and because of Vlora our covetous neighbours will develop a thirst for a portion of the most important parts of the Homeland, unless all hope for the salvation of Kosovo is to be abandoned entirely."[114]

This warning by the Albanian patriots of the National Committee was fully confirmed by the occupation of Albania by fascist Italy on 7 April. Italy's declaration concerning the "union" of Albania was as formal as it was demagogic, since at the Ciano-Stojadinović meeting in Berlin in January 1939 Italy had offered Yugoslavia recognition of the existing border, that is, Italy renounced Kosovo, the demilitarisation of Albania's border, a military alliance and support for the occupation of Salonika,[115] as a reward for Yugoslav support in the occupation of Albania. For the rigorous implementation of this agreement, the Yugoslav minister in Rome, Kristić, kept Belgrade constantly informed on the eve of Albania's occupation. In his diary, Ciano noted: "...the reaction of the capitals, including Belgrade, is more or less moderate. Kristić is very alarmed, but after the explanations I gave him he was convinced that

the Albanian question could not become a cause for the disruption of the good relations existing between Rome and Belgrade. Kristić suggested that we should not act without informing Belgrade... Kristić himself, telephoning Belgrade, expressed his approval of what I had told him."[116]

From Ciano's diary we are convinced that the attack on Albania was also approved by Yugoslavia, since the slogan "Ethnic Albania," as a propaganda slogan, did not affect its interests in Kosovo. For this reason, Mihailović's bands operated there as though on their own soil, supported also by the Italian occupiers. The warning of the Committee for the Defence of Kosovo twenty-five years earlier — that "if a protectorate is established in Albania, the Committee foresees political, territorial and economic damage, unless all hope for the salvation of Kosovo is to be abandoned entirely" — was a prophetic concern. For the fascist "gift," Albania had to sacrifice. It had to enter into war with neighbouring states in order to realise "Ethnic Albania," thereby implementing de facto the law of the Upper Chamber that "Albania has entered into war with those states with which Italy is at war." Hakif Bajrami, in his study *Albania after 1939*, writes: "For the Greek chauvinists, these declarations came as a welcome opportunity to use this as a pretext in order to denounce Albania as an enemy country and thus justify their territorial claims."[117]

Had the Albanian people followed the fascist rulers and the Ballists and entered into war with neighbouring states in support of Italian fascism, regardless of the slogans it might have used, Albania would have suffered the same catastrophe it suffered in 1913, when it fol-

lowed Turkey in the Balkan War. This time, however, it would have been still more tragic, and Albania would have lost hope not only for the salvation of Kosovo but for the whole of Albania. For the sake of the false slogan "Ethnic Albania," the Peace Conference would have ranked Albania on the side of the aggressive and defeated states, presenting it as a danger to its neighbours. Under these conditions, it would easily have recognised the territorial claims historically advanced against Albania, in implementation also of the Anglo-American strategic plan. The official of the British Foreign Office, Denis Laskey, commenting on the Government's declaration recognising the National Liberation War of the Albanian people, emphasised: "The declaration does not mean that we recognise an independent Albanian state. There is no reason to recognise any body or person outside Albania as a legitimate Albanian government; therefore Albania cannot become a united nation."[118]

The shared view of the British Foreign Office and the United States Department of State, that genuine Albanian independence after the War was impracticable, compelled them to oppose strictly every attempt to establish any government in exile — the only such exception among the Balkan countries. This was also because of the promises they had given to our neighbours. On 9 October 1943, the Foreign Office secretary Dixon explained: "There are many arguments in favour of the Greek claims. We shall undoubtedly wish to reward the Greeks for the role they played in the war as our allies; we cannot give them Cyprus. For the moment it is impossible to decide whether it would be desirable to reconstruct an independent Albania or not. If

the decision is negative, it would certainly be very easy for parts of Albanian territory to pass to Greece and Yugoslavia."[119]

This was the Anglo-American strategy for Albania, which we shall discuss further below. Here we shall merely mention Hakif Bajrami's observation in his study: "The majority of Albanian intellectuals thought that only America could save ethnic and political Albania. But since Albania was a Balkan and European question, salvation was achieved in Paris in 1946 only through Russian intervention... the disappointment of the Albanian nationalists was great."[120]

Enver Hoxha did not agree with the Anglo-American plans for the partition and annexation of Albania, and for this reason he drew upon himself all their pressures and attacks for four decades. It is the historical merit of Enver Hoxha and the CPA that, by organising and leading the National Liberation War to the end and without compromise with the enemy, he presented it as an independent political and military force that defended the country, compelling foreigners to respect the will of the Albanian people for independence and national sovereignty.

An open denunciation of fascist demagogy concerning the liberation of Kosovo and the "union" of Albania was made by the former functionary of the fascist regime, Tahir Zaimi, in a letter sent to the minister of the Fascist Party, later published in the newspaper *Lidhja e Prizrenit*: "The people of Kosovo, who had awaited with such joy and enthusiasm their liberation from the Yugoslav yoke, continued to endure patiently and calmly many errors and injustices committed here and there

by the Italian military authorities, never losing hope for an improvement in the situation. Unfortunately, the harsh conduct of the Italian soldiers and especially of the carabinieri throughout the regions of Kosovo has gravely shaken the situation and has turned all joy and enthusiasm into despair and disillusionment... For the smallest matter people are taken and imprisoned; no intervention by the Albanian authorities is of any use. Because of this unjustified conduct, the Kosovar villagers have come to say that the Italian army has come here to protect the Serbs, not to liberate the Albanians from the Serbian yoke."[121]

This disillusionment of the Kosovar people fully confirms Enver Hoxha's positions in *Zëri i Popullit* in November 1942: "In Kosovo there reigns a medieval fascist terror. Fascism and Merlika, in agreement with Nedić and Mihailović, are organising white terror in Kosovo, that same Kosovo about which they bark and say that they have liberated."[122]

Mussolini and Hitler, on the one hand, proclaimed "Ethnic Albania" and promised Mitrovica to the Albanian traitors; on the other, they allowed Mihailović and his Chetniks to enter Kosovo and commit atrocities. What kind of union were the Albanian "nationalists" speaking of in this filthy Italo-German game? Although Hitler had proclaimed "Ethnic Albania," and although Mehdi Frashëri, in the name of all the traitors — therefore also of Hasan Dosti, who proclaimed "Ethnic Albania" at Mukje — on the one hand greeted Hitler for the "support" which the "great German Reich" had supposedly given to "the united Albanian people," on the other hand, this same man signed in

Berlin a secret agreement with Nedić to leave Kosovo to Serbia. What did Enver Hoxha distort or falsify by denouncing the secret fascist games played at the expense of the interests of the Albanian people, while the so-called nationalists were being used as instruments by the nazi-fascists?

Those who twisted Mukje for their own interests, as well as their present-day successors, used the slogan "Ethnic Albania" as a battle horse, imagining that through it they would deliver the final blow to the Albanian communists and Enver Hoxha. According to them, had the "agreement" between Dishnica, Frashëri, Dosti and Kupi been approved, today we would be "enjoying" the Ethnic Albania supposedly secured for us by the fascist occupiers. Yet not even this nag, more lifeless than Don Quixote's Rocinante, has helped or can help the Ballists conceal their divisive and pro-fascist aims.[123]

The same Rocinante is still used today by the right-wing forces in their battle against the Albanian communists and Enver Hoxha, accusing them of betraying the Albanian national question. These divisive attempts to set Kosovo against the National Liberation War and against those who waged and won that war have failed and will continue to fail shamefully in the future. They will know how to distinguish between Enver Hoxha's principled policy and the trickery of those who deny tomorrow what they say today.

What position did Enver Hoxha take towards Kosovo?

Before analysing several documents on this question, let us cite the decree of the Council of Ministers

of April 1943: "The Council of Ministers approves the following commission, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Iljaz Agushi, with members Mustafa Merlika, Hasan Dosti, Father Anton Harapi... to collect all documents in every field that may be found and everything that may serve to prove the Albanian character of Kosovo."[124]

There is no collection of documents from the above commission concerning the Kosovo question. Historically, Kosovo and the other Albanian territories divided among several Yugoslav republics are autochthonous Albanian populations, a fact well known to the entire world. Yet unjustly, in order to regulate their own interests, the great powers at the Conference of London, as well as at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, severed them from Albania and artificially attached them to a foreign trunk. The Albanian fascist government, through the above commission and under the bombastic fascist propaganda, undertook to resolve this historical injustice while it had itself annexed Albania to Italy by decision of the Assembly. What the members of the above commission represented in the political landscape of those years was reflected in the newspapers of the time, whether of the fascist wing or the communist wing. In November 1942, Enver Hoxha wrote in *Zëri i Popullit*: "Fascism, through the executioner Kol Biba, Merlika, Ferhat Draga, Iljaz Agushi and others, is mobilising the weakest section of the Kosovars into the militia, which it uses as a fratricidal weapon. These Albanian mercenaries act not only against the Albanian partisan detachments but also plunder and kill within Kosovo itself. Fascism, together with its servants, has recently

been sowing terror in the most bestial manner... Why have the Kosovar patriots risen to their feet and taken up arms against the occupier? The people of Kosovo have risen because fascism and the traitors are transforming it and drenching it in blood..."[125]

Many such exposures of the collaborators with fascism were made, yet their anti-Albanian activities continued. Under these circumstances, Enver Hoxha framed the question of Kosovo as one of the common struggle against fascism in order to dissociate it from the demagogy of Merlika, Iljaz Agushi and others. In March 1943, he wrote: "Between us and Yugoslavia stands the question of Kosovo, which fascism is using as an apple of discord to divide the unity of the struggle being waged by both peoples. It is using Kosovo to drive us into bloodshed with the Yugoslav people and thereby leave fascism free to enslave us more effectively."[126]

Unaware of the Anglo-American-Titoite plans and trusting the Allies, particularly the Atlantic Charter and the declaration recognising the struggle of the Albanian people in December 1942, Enver Hoxha went on to explain the issue of the "Serbian danger," which was loudly propagated by Merlika and his agitators: "Merlika's 'Serbian danger' and that of the 'great politicians' is, for us, the fascist danger, because fascism and Mihailović are one and the same, not two. The destruction of fascism is the destruction of the 'Serbian danger.' Kosovars are being killed by Mihailović, Serbs are being killed by Merlika, Albanians and Yugoslavs are being killed by fascism... We shall win our liberation with blood, for no one will grant it to us as a gift — and the same applies to Kosovo. The freedom of Kosovo

will be won by the Kosovar people themselves; it will be won by Asim Vokshi, Emin Duraku..."[127]

By placing the Kosovo question on this political foundation, Enver Hoxha sought to enable the people of Kosovo to acquire the moral and legal right after the war to demand the implementation of the Atlantic Charter, signed by Roosevelt and Churchill, concerning self-determination, just as Tito himself had declared in December 1942 in the article "The National Question in the Light of the National Liberation War": "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia has not renounced and will not renounce its principle that every people has the right to self-determination up to and including secession, and every people wins this right with a rifle in its hands in today's National Liberation War."[128]

Tito's condition that peoples should earn the right to secession through the National Liberation War was, in principle, correct, regardless of its insincerity. Enver Hoxha, however, knew only the officially published documents and not the secret Anglo-American-Titoite positions. He therefore urged that the Kosovars themselves should secure the right to self-determination through the liberation struggle, whereas the members of the aforementioned commission, instead of encouraging the people of Kosovo to take up arms against fascism, encouraged them to become its servants. In practice, Kosovo during those years was doubly occupied, by the Serbs and by the Italo-German fascists. Yet an historic opportunity existed to demand secession and self-determination after liberating the province from the Italian fascists and their servants, Mihailović's bands, and then to seek union with Albania. This

opportunity was thwarted not only by the secret Anglo-American-Titoite plan but also by the betrayal of certain Kosovar leaders.

Enver Hoxha addressed the Kosovo question in numerous writings and Party directives, yet the falsifier Butka undertook to distort both their meaning and the ideas they expressed. In his paper, he quoted a sentence from the report of the Conference of Labinot: "He [Enver Hoxha] saw only the right to make the people of Kosovo decide for themselves where they wished to go. The word 'make' in this text is synonymous with the word 'compel' the people of Kosovo to go where they are to go."[129]

Butka treats the word "make" as synonymous with "compel." For our "linguist," there appear to be no other synonyms, such as "help," "guide," and so forth. Enver Hoxha expressed his views clearly enough without any need for Butka's synonyms. Let the reader judge for himself: "It is the duty of the National Liberation Movement to make the people of Kosovo conscious of their own interests by telling them that they must save themselves through struggle from the fascist occupier, or from a possible Yugoslav occupier such as Mihailović. We must enable the people of Kosovo to decide for themselves where they wish to go, just as we ourselves desire, and to fight any Yugoslavia that would enslave them..."[130]

Are not all contemporary political conclusions and diplomatic approaches ultimately reflected in this very directive of Enver Hoxha? In order to organise the National Liberation War in Kosovo, Enver Hoxha sent there committed communists such as Emin Duraku,

Hajdar Dushi, Xhevdet Doda (the latter two later becoming members of the Kosovo Regional National Liberation Council), Tefik Çanga, Sabrie Vokshi, Nazmi Rushiti, Qemal Agolli, Ahmet Haxhia, Naim Gjylbegu, Demir Gashi and others, of whom Professor Ali Hadri wrote in *Gjakova during the National Liberation War*: "The arrival of these communists was of great importance for the organisation of the National Liberation War because they were the principal organisers of the National Liberation Movement in these regions."[131]

The intensification of the liberation struggle in Kosovo also created the conditions for the First National Liberation Conference, held at Bujan (31 December 1943–2 January 1944), whose Resolution declared: "The only way for the Albanian people of Kosovo and the Dukagjin Plateau to unite with Albania is through common struggle with the other peoples of Yugoslavia against the nazi occupier and its hirelings, because this is the only path to winning freedom, in which all peoples, including the Albanian people, will have the opportunity to decide their own destiny through the right of self-determination up to and including secession."[132]

How can Enver Hoxha be condemned over Mukje, while Bujan is praised as a "monumental testimony to the indomitable spirit of the Albanians, to their endurance, wisdom and courage, to their love of freedom and of the homeland," when the historic decisions of Bujan embodied the entire political line pursued by Enver Hoxha and the Communist Party of Albania from the time of its foundation?

Enver Hoxha immediately endorsed the Bujan Resolution in the newspaper *Zëri i Popullit*: "The enemy

and its agents wanted to portray Kosovo through the *bashibazouks* of the 'Kosovo' Regiment, but oppressed and martyred Kosovo has answered the enemy and the traitors with the National Liberation Council, around which the unity of the peoples of Kosovo and the Dukagjin Plateau has been organised."[133]

Enver Hoxha welcomed and encouraged the first serious attempt at national unification not only through propaganda but also in concrete terms by sending delegates from the General National Liberation Council to Bujan. He was both the architect and organiser of the Conference of Bujan.

If Enver Hoxha had truly been Tito's "servile puppet," why did he not annul this agreement as well, especially when Tito reacted negatively to it? In his interview, Milovan Đilas recalled: "When we received the Bujan Resolution, we were in Drvar. As I remember, it also mentioned Dukagjin and, since none of those in the leadership knew what Dukagjin was or what it encompassed except me — I knew that Dukagjin included parts of Albania as well as Kosovo — I drew Tito's and Kardelj's attention to the fact that this concerned a change of borders. Tito, who in any case was adamant that no discussion of border changes should take place until the war had ended, instructed me to write a letter to our comrades in Kosovo. The letter did not criticise the Kosovo leadership too severely, so as to avoid creating undesirable situations."[134]

Any further explanation would be superfluous. In an effort to elevate Mukje to historical significance, the pseudo-historian Butka resorts to convenient comparisons: "Mukje and Bujan are brother and sister."[135]

This Ballist fails to understand that Bujan would never recognise such a "wayward sister." First, because Bujan brought together representatives of the same National Liberation Front who had fought and continued actively to fight the occupier, thereby aligning the Albanian people with the common anti-fascist front. Secondly, because those gathered at Bujan met not to discuss questions of power or military command but an issue upon which they had already reached agreement. At Mukje, by contrast, forces from two opposing camps came together, and decisions were taken on matters lying outside the framework of discussion approved by the General National Liberation Council. At Bujan neither "Ethnic Albania" nor "Independence" was proclaimed; instead, decisions were taken that sought to realise those objectives through deeds rather than slogans. How, then, can Bujan and Mukje be "brother and sister," when the Ballists of Mukje, who had definitively aligned themselves with nazi Germany, were in direct opposition to the participants of the Conference of Bujan?

By what right do the Ballists today claim a share in Bujan, when those assembled there were sons of the Albanian people who had shed their blood fighting the occupier, while the Ballists had committed crimes against the partisans?

Although on numerous occasions the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had declared that it would remain faithful to the principle of the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession, when the Conference of Bujan adopted its first concrete decision — particularly regarding the means of resolving

the national question of the Albanians in Yugoslavia — it provoked a harsh reaction. This reaction had already been foreshadowed several months earlier in the pressure and accusations directed against the Central Committee of the CPA in two letters from Vukmanović-Tempo, who arrogantly demanded the immediate withdrawal of Albanian partisan units from the newly liberated town of Dibra. He accused Haxhi Lleshi and the Albanian political commissars of being "Great Albanian chauvinists."

Analysing the actual situation, Enver Hoxha replied to Tempo: "Your judgements concerning the Central Committee of our Party are not correct. Italy's capitulation found Dibra in a situation where the only organised force capable of maintaining control was Haxhi's partisan force."[136]

The liberation of Dibra by our partisan forces and the attempt to establish there the authority of the National Liberation Councils constituted the practical measures undertaken by the General National Liberation Council and by Enver Hoxha personally in pursuit of national unification. This was vehemently opposed by the Yugoslav leadership, who understood that, if permitted, such an action would not remain an isolated case.

The heroic as well as profoundly patriotic resistance shown by Enver Hoxha in the face of Titoite pressure is also documented by Tito's second envoy, Velimir Stojnić, in the reports he sent during August-October 1944: "The Bureau of the Central Committee tries to ignore me. Matters became so tense that they refused to accept the proposals I had brought from our Head-

quarters... I requested information on the size and armaments of their army, but they refused to provide it. The Commander added, half jokingly and with irony: 'As far as I know, such matters concern the State Political Directorate'... The Central Committee has begun to work without my assistance; they look upon me with contempt... When I realised that they were deliberately trying to make it impossible for me to discover the true situation, I decided to achieve this by other means... I placed my trust in the healthy section of the Central Committee, in comrades Nako and Koçi Xoxe..."[137]

As is evident from his report, Stojnić portrays himself as being treated with contempt and ignored by Enver Hoxha. Like Tempo before him, Stojnić found that the CPA and Enver Hoxha refused to accept the "proposals which he had brought from" the Yugoslav Headquarters. This raises the question: where is Enver Hoxha's alleged servility, when in both 1943 and 1944 Tito's official envoys complained that Hoxha simply ignored them? In order to penetrate what he called the "true" situation, which Enver Hoxha had made inaccessible to him, Stojnić decided to rely on "the healthy section" of the Bureau — Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiro — thereby demonstrating that, from the Yugoslav perspective, Enver Hoxha represented the "unhealthy" element. Together with this supposedly "healthy section," Stojnić prepared the backstage manoeuvres at Berat, explaining: "Comrade Nako spoke openly... I acquainted comrades Koçi and Nako with my plan so that they would know how to act at that meeting. I instructed them to raise, in the strongest possible terms, the issue of the inviolability of the post of Organisa-

tional Secretary, which should be entrusted to Koçi Xoxe."[138]

Stojnić's plan for the Berat manoeuvres greatly intensified tensions within the leadership of the Communist Party, compelling him to report to Tito: "For some time I tried to influence the entire course of events through the healthy forces within the Bureau, but this only sharpened matters and relations in general. There were two possibilities: either the composition of the Bureau had to be changed, or my work would be obstructed even further..."[139]

The attempt to influence the work of the Party and the National Liberation Front through the "healthy forces of the Bureau" — that is, Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiro — produced growing conflict. In order to avoid being further obstructed in his mission, Stojnić proposed the alternative: "either a change in the composition of the Bureau" — in other words, the removal of Enver Hoxha — or the failure of the Titoite mission, which indeed ultimately failed.

Enver Hoxha's patriotic resistance to Titoite pressure, which saved Albania from the grasp of Yugoslav chauvinism, constitutes a major historical contribution. This distinguished patriotic act alone entitles Enver Hoxha to the highest honour as a National Hero.

The Yugoslav annexationist ambitions, together with Enver Hoxha's resistance, are acknowledged even by Đilas himself: "Enver struck me as a very intelligent and measured man who approached everything with reservations — and I repeat, a very intelligent man. At that time the Albanian side complained about the conduct of one of our representatives because he was

trying to impose Yugoslav forms upon the Albanians. I personally spoke to him and warned him... I do not believe that the policy of the Yugoslav leadership towards Albania was entirely just and correct, particularly on the eve of the conflict with Stalin... Even today I believe that the Yugoslav plan to send divisions into Albania was a grave mistake, one that could only arouse Albanian suspicions regarding Yugoslavia's intentions. Ultimately, such intentions did exist: Albania was to be incorporated into Yugoslavia, but on terms dictated by us. It is important to note that Albania did not yield even before Soviet intervention... The entire policy of Enver Hoxha amounted to a form of national communist nationalism."[140]

The very man who sought to subordinate Enver Hoxha admits that Hoxha pursued a form of national communism that would not allow the Albanian national question to be compromised and, for that reason, could not be brought under Yugoslav control. The objective of the Albanian reactionary forces, defeated during the National Liberation War, has been to undermine Enver Hoxha's contribution precisely during this decisive period of Albanian history, particularly with regard to Kosovo. On 21 March 1994, the Director of the Central State Archive, Mr Malltezi, announced on television, on the eve of the anniversary of the Democratic Party's victory, what he described as a sensational discovery: a document allegedly proving that Enver Hoxha had "sold" Kosovo.

After searching through the archives of various governments and foreign intelligence services, he claimed to have found the document in the report pre-

sented to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPA, held after the Paris Peace Conference, once the issue of borders had been settled.

With "deep national sorrow," Mr Malltezi publicly read Enver Hoxha's statement to the Plenum: "Under the present circumstances, we should not demand Kosovo."

Whether the passage cited was authentic or fabricated is of secondary importance. What matters is that Mr Malltezi failed to explain the reasons behind this request, reasons which must have been contained in the report itself. Nor did he inform the public how the members of the Plenum reacted upon hearing what he characterised as this "abnormal" proposal by Enver Hoxha. Why did the Director remain silent on these two issues?

It seems remarkable that historians of Mr Malltezi's stature overlook the possibility that Enver Hoxha's statement was made precisely two years after representatives of the Kosovo Albanian population had themselves requested, in the Serbian Assembly, that Kosovo be annexed to Serbia. Abedin Abazi, himself a member of the Kosovo delegation that visited Tito in 1945, later wrote in *Zëri i Rinisë* (Prishtina): "During those days no one spoke to us, except that we attended a session of the [Serbian] Assembly. Before leaving for the Assembly, Mehmet Hoxha said: 'We cannot become a republic, therefore we must join Serbia. This is because Macedonia is as poor as Montenegro, whereas in Serbia we have our workers... Even Tito,' Mehmet said, 'prefers us to be with Serbia.' Mehmet Hoxha then addressed the Assembly and declared that we, our delegation,

wished to be with Serbia... During the meeting with Tito, Mehmet Hoxha and Dušan Mugoša acted as interpreters."[141]

The conversation between Abedin Abazi and the journalist then continues with the question: "How was it possible that, before Tito, you did not raise the issue of Kosovo's status?"

"We knew nothing. Most of us were uneducated, and we assumed that the leaders had discussed these matters. I remember Halim Spahia from Prizren saying, as we left the Assembly: 'Men, from today Kosovo is finished.' Even today I believe that Kosovo was betrayed. The Serbs did it because they were able to."[142]

What, then, could Enver Hoxha have demanded when the people of Kosovo had accepted the course set by their leaders two years earlier and had, de facto, aligned themselves with the Serbian Republic? Following the backstage manoeuvres at Berat, organised by members of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania under the influence of Velimir Stojnić, and the pressures exerted by Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiro after liberation, Enver Hoxha came to understand that, in order to save Kosovo, Albania itself first had to be saved, since it was in danger of being absorbed by Yugoslavia.

While reading the document, Mr Malltezi emphasised the words, "it is not appropriate at present to demand Kosovo." this statement corresponded not only to the political circumstances facing Albania at the time, when Yugoslavia was being supported in the creation of a powerful federation in the interests of the Allies, but it in no way excluded the CPA's long-term

objective of uniting Kosovo with Albania as part of its fundamental strategy and programme.

Were it not today's governing politicians and the political right who once triumphantly proclaimed their demand for the unification of Kosovo with Albania? Are these not the same politicians who have since altered their tactics, declaring that present conditions are not suitable for unification and instead endorsing the partial solutions proposed by European commissions? This tactical retreat by contemporary politicians, headed by President Berisha, does not constitute the "sale" of Kosovo nor a betrayal of the national cause, since Kosovo's unification with Albania depends not solely upon Albanian politicians or even the Albanian people, but remains an international question requiring favourable domestic and international conditions.

To mobilise the people of Kosovo for struggle and to guide them towards national unification, Enver Hoxha also had to confront the obstacle posed by the Kosovo leadership itself, as well as by those elements within Albania who served Yugoslav chauvinist interests with devotion.

The Yugoslav leadership reached its final decision regarding Kosovo's status in February 1945, designating it an autonomous province within Serbia. This annexation was publicly proclaimed before the Serbian Assembly in April 1945 by the Secretary of the Provincial Council, Dušan Mugoša: "I express the wish of the Provincial Council of Kosovo and Metohija that we should be annexed to Serbia."[143]

Such declarations of "union" were presented as expressions of the will of the people of Kosovo but were

in reality manipulations by a leadership dominated by Serbian and Montenegrin elements. Today, Mugoša is portrayed as the Serbo-Slav communist who intervened to overturn the Mukje Agreement, while Ballist and Zogite circles conveniently forget that in May 1951 they themselves authorised him to open the rally of Albanian political refugees in Prizren. On that occasion, Radio Belgrade announced: "The Committee of the 'League of Prizren' calls for unity against Hoxha's government."[144]

In June 1951, the British Embassy in Rome reported on an interview between the British Member of Parliament Noel-Baker and the chairman of the newly established Committee of Political Refugees of the "League of Prizren":

"'What is the objective of your Committee?'

"'We are planning the liberation of Albania from the Soviet yoke.'

"'Have you received any assistance?'

"'Certainly. The Yugoslav government gives us every possible support.'"[145]

Hasan Dosti, former Minister of Justice in the fascist government, pursued the same mission after succeeding Mithat Frashëri as chairman of the Balli Kombëtar and of the "Free Albania" National Committee. Hasan Dosti sought to influence the United States Department of State "to bring about the overthrow of Hoxha's regime," maintaining that "the liberation of Albania can only be achieved with Yugoslav assistance, and that the Yugoslavs can be used most effectively to remove Albania from the Soviet orbit."[146]

This American archival document completely exposes the pseudo-propaganda of the Balli Kombëtar

leadership, including Hasan Dosti himself, concerning "Ethnic Albania." The chairman of the Balli Kombëtar was calling for Yugoslav intervention in Albania, while simultaneously accusing the CPA and Enver Hoxha of being "agents in Tito's service," claiming that they "took their orders from Tito," and so forth. More recently, hysterical propaganda about "Serbo-Slav communism" has become widespread and has been employed to portray Enver Hoxha as anti-national, alleging that he "sold" Kosovo out of ideological rather than patriotic considerations, supposedly for the sake of communist principles. Yet if Yugoslavia after 1947 is accepted as a communist state, then, by that logic, the Ballists and Zogites were themselves fighting Albanian communism with the support of Yugoslav "communism."

The struggle conducted from outside socialist Albania was not undertaken because the Albanian émigrés opposed "Albanian communism that harmed national interests," but because these political refugees fought as mercenaries for the strategic interests of foreign powers, within which they also pursued their own ambitions — just as they had fought during the National Liberation War on behalf of nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

Hasan Dosti's own appeal to the United States Department of State for Yugoslav assistance against Albania demonstrates that Yugoslavia could not genuinely have been communist, since so uncompromising an anti-communist as Dosti would never otherwise have chosen Yugoslavia as the source of interventionist support.

The campaign waged by Hasan Dosti and the Albanian political refugees — Ballist and Zogite contin-

gents allegedly encouraged by Tito and foreign intelligence services against socialist Albania — took place at a time when Albania had already withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact, preserving its national independence and sovereignty outside all military alliances. Consequently, their struggle was not to remove Albania from the "Soviet orbit," but rather to seize political power in Albania and transform the country into a sphere of American influence.

It was precisely these figures, politically and morally degraded, who, under foreign direction and in collaboration with foreign intelligence agencies, exerted pressure on Albania for fifty years until they succeeded in dismantling its socialist economic system and political superstructure. This raises the question: who was truly Tito's servant — Enver Hoxha, who prevented Yugoslav chauvinist ambitions from being realised, or the Ballists and Zogites, who appealed to Tito to occupy Albania?

Finally, there appear to be many striking coincidences between Tito's policy towards Albania and that pursued by the Anglo-American powers.

Arif Ramadan Hoxha, a former delegate to the Prishtina Conference of March 1945, testified: "Xhavit Nimani told us in his report that Tito had sent his greetings and had forgiven Kosovo for the mistakes it had made... 'You Kosovars,' Tito said, 'will remain under Yugoslavia for three years because the Albanian government in Albania is economically weak and you have suffered greatly; we must help you... The Albanian government, Enver's state, is still young, while the reactionary forces are strong both in Kosovo and in

Albania. If the Kosovo reaction joins forces with the reaction in Albania, Enver's state will not survive for long. That is why we have taken you for three years, and after those three years the Albanian territories will be reunited.'"[147]

The three-year period represented Tito's final deadline for completing his "communist" strategy in accordance with the instructions of his patrons, believing that by then he would also have dealt with Albania through his own agents. Tito was fully aware that if the Albanian reaction united against Enver's state, it would not survive for long. Consequently, his policy was not to support the Albanian communists and Enver Hoxha, but rather the Albanian reactionary forces working against the first democratic Albanian state established by Enver Hoxha — just as he in fact did. What is significant is that Tito told the Kosovo leadership and Kosovo delegations that he favoured unification with Albania, thereby confirming the substance of Enver Hoxha's discussions and positions.

By portraying Enver Hoxha as Tito's "puppet," his critics simultaneously depict him as a servant and puppet of the Anglo-Americans, just as Tito himself allegedly was. In the present political climate, however, the President and the Ballists cannot pursue that accusation to its logical conclusion because it would be politically inconvenient. Had Enver Hoxha truly been Tito's puppet, he would have fulfilled the two principal objectives of the Anglo-American-Titoite alliance: he would have accepted Albania's annexation as they envisaged it and would have altered Albania's political course as Tito did, allowing the country to serve as an instru-

ment against the other states of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Reporting to Kostov, Ambassador Ciempli explained: "Tito expressed his disagreement with the Soviet Union's policy regarding the Marshall Plan. He stressed that economically backward countries such as Yugoslavia and Bulgaria could not do without American assistance... 'But before this assistance is granted,' Tito said, 'the Americans require us to break with the Soviet Union.'"[148]

Faced with this condition, Tito yielded and implemented the American scenario. In his testimony, Kostov recalled: "Tito declared that he would not abandon the slogan of socialism in Yugoslavia, which was so popular among the masses, but would conduct affairs in such a way as to make the construction of socialism impossible and the restoration of capitalism inevitable. Arrangements were made so that the break with the Soviet Union and its allies would be presented as a matter of national honour and dignity. It would be claimed that Yugoslavia's national dignity had not been respected, that its contribution to the war of liberation against the Germans had been denied and that the Soviet Union was interfering in Yugoslavia's internal affairs. In this way we shall achieve a break with the Soviet Union and the other people's democracies and join the Western bloc."[149]

These behind-the-scenes tactics employed by Tito demonstrate not only that Tito was not a genuine communist but that he functioned as an agent within the communist movement. Consequently, his anti-Albanian objectives were also those of the powers directing him. Tito's tactics were closely linked to Anglo-American-Titoite plans for the partition of Albania.

The years 1942-1948, identified by the President in his declaration, were precisely the period during which plans were being prepared for the renewed partition and annexation of Albania by neighbouring chauvinist states. The declaration by United States Secretary of State Cordell Hull in December 1942 that "the American Government has not recognised Albania's annexation by the Italian Crown" was not issued out of respect for Albania's independence. Rather, its purpose was to remove Albania from the Italian sphere of influence and ultimately to attach it to Yugoslavia as part of a broader strategic design for the Balkans aimed at creating an anti-Soviet bloc. This is clearly demonstrated by a United States State Department report of April 1944 entitled *The Economic Basis of Albania's Independence*, which concluded: "It seems clear that Albania will remain small and economically weak and will therefore be incapable of overcoming the present low standard of living of its population or of carrying out those functions essential to the continuation of an independent political existence. The problems confronting Albania call for a wider common framework — that is, a Balkan union. It is difficult to see how, in the future, Albania could escape economic dependence upon another power unless it entered into a union with its more powerful neighbours."[150]

On the eve of the end of the Second World War, the American government had already concluded that Albania would remain "small and economically weak." Consequently, it was expected to "unite" with its stronger neighbours in order to overcome its low standard of living after Italy's capitulation. Which neighbour

was the stronger one? Yugoslavia. If the American government had truly been concerned about the poor economic condition of the Albanian people, why did it not offer assistance directly to Albania instead of directing it towards Tito? According to Albanian government officials and the anti-communist opposition, America withheld support because Enver Hoxha had aligned Albania with communism. This interpretation is historically inaccurate, and even the Ballist Butka contradicts it: "...the division of spheres of influence and the assignment of Albania to the Slavo-communist zone of Eastern Europe paved the way for the establishment in Albania of a communist dictatorship, dependence and comprehensive destruction."[151]

According to Butka, Albania entered the Slavo-communist sphere as a result of the division of spheres of influence carried out by the United States and Britain, both of which had already planned, even before that division, that Albania should be joined to its more powerful neighbours — namely "communist Yugoslavia." Did Tito not conduct "communist" propaganda and wage a "communist" struggle until 1948? Why do our President and the entire reactionary camp lack the courage to hold the Americans and the British responsible for placing Albania in the Slavo-communist sphere, instead blaming Enver Hoxha? Why do they not hold America accountable for failing to support Albania after the war, even though the Albanian people sincerely welcomed the American Special Mission to Albania? Indeed, the head of that mission, Jacobs, emphasised in a report sent to Washington on 19 May 1945: "A large crowd of several hundred peo-

ple gathered in front of the diplomatic mission, shouting and cheering in favour of recognition. A group of representatives came to the Legation to express their joy at the victory and their appreciation of the United States. There were many cheers for President Truman."[152]

The United States did not support Albania after liberation because Albania refused to unite with Yugoslavia, as the American government had envisaged. In other words, Albania did not enter Tito's orbit, because only by doing so would it also have entered the American sphere. Regardless of Albania's interstate and economic relations with Yugoslavia, Enver Hoxha struggled to preserve the independence and sovereignty of the Albanian state in opposition to Anglo-American plans. Referring to a memorandum submitted by the Greek government-in-exile to the British Foreign Office on 29 September 1943, Dixon commented: "It is impossible to say whether there will be room for an Albanian state in post-war Europe."[153]

In another memorandum, dated 30 March 1943 and submitted to the Foreign Office, Dixon observed: "As soon as Greece and Yugoslavia regain their independence, Greek and Yugoslav forces will march into Albania and occupy parts of its territory."[154]

Having described the Greek claim to Northern Epirus as "well founded historically and strategically," Dixon further commented: "In every respect we should be prepared to consider satisfying the Greek claim to southern Albania. This would, of course, also require that Yugoslavia be granted the other northern parts of Albania."[155]

This was how the British government viewed Albania before its liberation. In order to satisfy the Greek claim, British diplomats were prepared to cede Albanian territory. Along similar lines, Anglo-American intelligence in Kosovo informed London in September 1944: "Albania cannot survive as an independent sovereign state. Even with Kosovo it would lack the necessary resources to sustain all the services and functions required of a sovereign state."[156]

Through such assessments, the Allies not only reaffirmed the territorial separation of Albania and Kosovo but also questioned Albania's viability as a sovereign state because of its low level of economic development.

In contrast to Anglo-American plans and policy, Enver Hoxha raised Albania from this condition of economic backwardness, which threatened its very existence, and for fifty years ensured its independence, national sovereignty, dignity and international standing.

Meanwhile, Stalin offered Albania genuine support in securing its independence. During British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's visit to Moscow on 16 October 1941, Stalin reportedly expressed the following view: "Albania should be an independent and reconstituted country."[157]

Much has been made by self-styled champions of the national cause of the provocation Stalin directed at Đilas in Moscow, seemingly designed to "ease Tito's position": "At my first meeting with him, Stalin told me that Yugoslavia should swallow up Albania. I do not think he really meant it; rather, he wanted to see my reaction. I replied that the issue was not one of swallowing Albania but of political relations and cooperation,

to which Molotov responded, 'That is precisely what swallowing means.'"[158]

b — "The Proclamation of Independence"

The Balli Kombëtar leaders' insistence at Mukje on "proclaiming independence" and overturning the decision of the Constituent Assembly of 12 April 1939 demonstrated that they had something to hide. Why were the Ballists so concerned about the decision uniting the two crowns when Italy itself was on the verge of capitulation unless they bore direct responsibility for it? During the negotiations at Tapiza and Mukje, Enver Hoxha sent the following instruction to Ymer Dishnica: "It would be madness on our part, and we would be the only ones, to proclaim independence without having fought and expelled fascism."[159]

The expulsion of fascism through armed struggle would automatically bring independence; otherwise, what value would independence possess while the occupier remained in the country? In the same letter, Enver Hoxha explained what he regarded as the real reason for the Ballists' insistence: "If we examine the list of the Assembly, we shall see that the entire Balli is represented there. We have never recognised that decision, nor do we recognise it now. The people have neither recognised nor accepted that decision."[160]

What, then, was Enver Hoxha allegedly distorting or falsifying when he asserted what he considered an historical truth that honoured the Albanian people, in contrast to the Ballists' efforts to make the nation

collectively responsible alongside the quislings who had signed that anti-Albanian decision?

The Albanian people's participation in the National Liberation War demonstrated to the world that it was not the Albanian people who had surrendered Albania to the House of Savoy, but rather the exploiting classes, the wealthy strata, bankrupt politicians and advocates of compromise. After Mussolini's downfall, these same individuals who had collaborated with those who had stripped Albania of its independence now sought to proclaim that very independence. At the Conference of Labinot, Ymer Dishnica acknowledged in his speech: "There we had the opportunity to expose all those who had emerged as the beneficiaries, because events had favoured the Balli... Instead of saying to them: 'How can you possibly have the audacity, you who invited the Duce, you who took part in the Constituent Assembly, you, Hasan Dosti, who until yesterday collaborated with the fascists — how dare you now stand before us, who have shed blood, and demand that we proclaim independence?'"[161]

In order to emerge with their reputations intact before history, the Balli leadership intensified their patriotic rhetoric by proclaiming independence while the occupier was still present. They believed that only in this way could they claim the right to power after the war. It is precisely this struggle for power that Butka identifies as the second reason for the collapse of the Mukje Agreement: "Fear that power might be shared with the nationalist forces and the other political groups led Enver Hoxha to adopt this anti-democratic position."[162]

Butka thereby exposes what he considers the true weakness of Balli Kombëtar — the very factor that ultimately drove it into collaboration with fascism. Ymer Dishnica, speaking at the Conference of Labinot, described the Balli's preoccupation with power as follows: "The Balli became anxious over who would take power in Albania, and they tried to erase their past and present themselves differently. If we dig beneath the surface, we find what they really are and how rotten they are."[163]

Regarding this second alleged reason for the collapse of Mukje, Butka concludes that it was the Yugoslavs who compelled Enver Hoxha to reject the agreement, "even though the Yugoslavs themselves resolved the question of power differently. The Vis Agreement laid the foundations for cooperation, and after the war a coalition government was formed consisting of representatives of the National Liberation Committee, the royal government-in-exile and the other Yugoslav parties."[164]

On the basis of Butka's own argument, the Yugoslav leadership would also have preferred a pluralist government in Albania, since, according to this interpretation, they intended eventually to eliminate the communists in their own country as soon as their superiors gave the order. The post-1948 Yugoslav purges, during which tens of thousands of communists were imprisoned or eliminated, support this conclusion. As *Le Figaro* reported on 22 October 1949: "The conflict with the Cominform confronted Yugoslav communists with a dilemma. When General Ivanović was killed on the Romanian border, his fellow escapee, General Petrović, was sentenced to death on Tito's orders. General

Kuzuić, the presiding judge, refused to carry out the sentence: 'I cannot judge a comrade whose only crime is that he loves Stalin.' His deputy, Stepanović, together with General Žižić, the prosecutor before the court, supported this refusal. All three were arrested on the orders of their superiors... Military prisons became overcrowded, and even army barracks were converted into prisons."[165]

Since Tito pursued an anti-communist mission, he had no reason to sympathise with Enver Hoxha, whose communist positions had obstructed Tito's ambitions to subordinate the Communist Party of Albania and extend Yugoslav influence over Albania. From this perspective, Tito would have preferred that the Mukje Agreement include the other political parties, particularly those with anti-communist and anti-national tendencies already demonstrated through their collaboration with the Italian occupiers, so that, should the opportunity arise, the Ballists would also be prepared to surrender Albania to him, just as they had surrendered it to fascist Italy.

The Ballists and Zogites express their hatred of Tito not because of his annexationist ambitions towards Albania. The Italian occupiers had entertained similar ambitions, yet the Albanian "nationalists" had welcomed them. They hate Tito because he failed to eliminate Enver Hoxha and hand power over to them as the nazi-fascists had done. Does this not become evident from the actions of the committee of Albanian political refugees, who sought the overthrow of Enver Hoxha's government while relying upon Tito? Are these not the same people, and their successors, who

today make the law in Albania under the shadow of a President who is himself only a shadow?

By drawing a parallel with the Vis Agreement, Butka demonstrates that after liberation political power in Yugoslavia was exercised jointly by "communists," monarchists, Ballists, nationalists and others. This raises the question: if monarchists and nationalists also participated in the Yugoslav government, what position did they take on Kosovo and on the Albanian national question more broadly? Why do yesterday's and today's Albanian Ballists speak only of Serbo-Slav communists, while remaining silent about Serbo-Slav monarchists, nationalists and Ballists? Was it only the Yugoslav communists who obstructed the Kosovo question and the rights of the Albanian population in their ancestral lands, or did Yugoslav monarchists, nationalists and Ballists do the same? The one-sided and hysterical hostility of the right towards communists is self-exposing, because it reveals them as allies of anti-communist political forces in Yugoslavia, forces that have only harmed, and continue to harm, the interests of the Albanian population.

How can Deputy Butka enthusiastically endorse Tito's solution to the question of power in Yugoslavia by affirming political forces which, before the war, had committed the most inhumane massacres against the Albanian population in Kosovo and other Albanian-inhabited regions? Who fought against Sulejman Vokshi, Mic Sokoli, Sef Kosharja, Idriz Seferi, Isa Boletini and Azem Galica...? It was precisely the Serbian and Montenegrin royalist and nationalist forces that prevented the Albanian population from living freely

and independently in their own ethnic territories.

Had Enver Hoxha accepted the Mukje Agreement, Albania would have suffered the same fate as Yugoslavia and Greece after the Vis and Varkiza Agreements. Thousands of Albanian fighters who had waged the war and liberated the country would have been persecuted, eliminated or interned in concentration camps, as occurred on the islands of Yugoslavia and Greece, in accordance with Anglo-American strategic plans.

It was not fear of sharing power that led Enver Hoxha to annul the Mukje Agreement, but rather his sense of responsibility towards a people who had made immense sacrifices and shed so much blood for the country's freedom and independence.

The Balli Kombëtar's demand for the "Proclamation of Independence" was merely a device for seizing political power, an objective they pursued through numerous efforts. Several examples are cited:

1. OSS agent Harry Fultz reported to Washington in June 1944 on a meeting of nationalist leaders held in Tufina, attended by:

— Fiqiri Dine, representing the so-called "Union of Dibra";

— Eqrem Vlora, representing the landowning beys;

— Abaz Kupi, representing the monarchy;

— Mithat Frashëri, representing Balli Kombëtar;

— Gjon Markagjoni, representing the fascist Catholic group of Mirdita.[166]

According to Fultz's report, the meeting decided that the Mitrovica government should resign and be replaced by Fiqiri Dine.

This document leaves no doubt that the "cream of Albanian nationalism" consisted of fascists and collaborators of the Hitler regime, secretly promoted by Mithat Frashëri and Gjon Markagjoni. They merely replaced one pro-German prime minister with another who would prosecute the struggle against the National Liberation Movement even more ruthlessly, thereby creating conditions for their own future seizure of power.

2. Following the defeat inflicted upon the enemy's winter and June offensives by the National Liberation Army's counter-offensive, the Balli Kombëtar lost hope of crushing the National Liberation Movement, and with it their dream of political power. Giuliano Amery, an eyewitness, wrote in August 1944 about the meeting between Fiqiri Dine and Preng Previzi at Abaz Kupi's headquarters: "They went there to meet Kupi concerning his hopes for British support and to learn whether they could still hope to save their own skins by rallying around his cause."[167]

This is a pitiable situation for the self-styled "fathers of the nation." Only a year earlier, Mithat Frashëri and the lawyer Ali Bey had claimed they would rally all nationalists around the Balli Kombëtar through their visits to northern Albania. This transformation reduced them to courting Abaz Kupi and pleading for British support. He expresses astonishment that present-day Ballists still have the audacity to celebrate the patriotic merits of predecessors whom, he suggests, even "the stones in the road laugh at."

3. As the National Liberation Army's counter-offensive delivered the final blows to the German army and

liberated a series of towns and regions, the pseudo-nationalists, anxious about the question of political power, convened the Congress of Preza in September. Philip Broad reported that the principal participants included: "Mithat Frashëri, Ali Këlcyra and Hasan Dosti from the Balli Kombëtar; Abaz Kupi from the Legaliteti; General Preng Previzi, former commander of the army and gendarmerie; Hysni Dema, commander of the puppet gendarmerie; Gjon Markagjoni; Mehdi Frashëri, chairman of the Regency; and Muharrem Bajraktari — all individuals who had collaborated with the Germans."[168]

It cannot escape notice that the leader of the Balli Kombëtar and the "idealist" Mithat Frashëri was part of the puppet government, and perhaps even above it, albeit unofficially. It is impossible to accept Butka's and his clique's call to distance themselves from Mehdi Frashëri while at the same time embracing his mentor, Mithat Frashëri. What bound Mithat Frashëri to such figures as Mehdi Frashëri, Preng Pervizi, Hysni Dema, Gjon Markagjoni and Muharrem Bajraktari, the ally of Mihailović?

Broad's report further emphasised that "they have emerged from the merger of the Balli Kombëtar and the Legaliteti and constitute a military force under the command of Abaz Kupi, while forming a united national government with Mithat Frashëri as Prime Minister and Mehdi Frashëri as Foreign Minister."[169]

According to Broad, as soon as the Germans withdrew, "the government would automatically seek to proclaim itself the government."[170]

Was this not the very same attempt that had been made on the eve of Italy's capitulation at Mukje? The

ideal of the "nationalists" was neither the national cause nor the proclamation of independence, but the seizure of political power in order to preserve their own privileges. At the very moment when the Albanian people were fighting the nazi beast tooth and nail, Mithat Frashëri was being proclaimed by the servants of nazism as the future Prime Minister of Albania after the war!

Butka's attempts to distance himself from Mehdi Frashëri and Mustafa Merlika are futile! Mithat Frashëri himself rejected any such distancing, for in the "national government" of Preza he brought Mehdi Bey into the cabinet as Foreign Minister and, together with him, definitively sealed both national betrayal and their shared criminal responsibility with the puppet government during the German occupation.

4. The President and Butka accuse Enver Hoxha of having allegedly received orders from Belgrade to repudiate the Mukje Agreement. This raises the question: from whom did Mithat Frashëri receive his orders when he pursued power with such determination? An American intelligence report sheds light on this: "The nationalist leaders still hope that the British will disarm the communists and summon the old guard to govern Albania."[171]

When the leaders of Balli Kombëtar realised that neither the Allies nor the Germans were capable of disarming the Albanian communists, they sought Anglo-American military intervention in order to secure political power. Today, this is justified as part of the struggle "against communism," yet the American intelligence document states explicitly that the aim was

"to disarm the communists and summon the old guard to govern Albania." Thus this repeatedly anti-national position stemmed not from the necessities of anti-communism but from the desire to seize political power in Albania. Mithat Frashëri, together with several exiled nationalist leaders, repeated this argument at a press conference in Paris on 26 August 1948, where he announced the formation of the National Committee for a "Free Albania," whose purpose was "to present a realistic vision for the Albanian people, believing in the liberation of Albania from communist rule."[172]

Ten days later, the British Foreign Office informed the American Embassy in Athens that "Muharrem Bajraktari, Gjon Markagjoni, Mustafa Merlika and Ihsan Toptani had joined the National Committee 'Free Albania.'"[173]

For anyone who had believed in the supposedly "idealistic" Mithat Frashëri, his collaboration with Mustafa Merlika — former Prime Minister of the fascist government during the Italian occupation — should be astonishing. Regarding Mithat Frashëri's "independence" from "communist rule," the U.S. Secretary of State, George Perkins, reportedly declared: "We have proceeded with the formation of the Albanian National Committee."[174]

The American government not only supported the "Free Albania" National Committee, but incorporated all of its members into its plans. An OSS report of August 1945 stated: "In an attempt to overthrow the present government, the Catholic Church, together with a representative of Fiqiri Dine and Muharrem Bajraktari, sought to approach the Americans and the British in

order to secure their assistance in promoting a so-called anti-communist group which had been organised in the mountains..."[175]

This attempt was put into practice at Koplik and Shkodra in 1945-46 but ultimately failed because Anglo-American forces were unable to carry out a military landing.

In order, in practice, to seize power during the war itself, the Balli leadership imposed at Mukje the creation of a joint "Committee for the Salvation of Albania," intended to function as a provisional government until elections could be held, with equal representation from the National Liberation Front and Balli Kombëtar. However, the National Liberation War had already possessed a regular leadership for an entire year: the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Council established at the Conference of Peza, which included communists, nationalists and monarchists, among them Abaz Kupi. Since such a leadership already existed and had assumed responsibility for Albania months earlier with popular support, why was there any need to establish another committee during what was merely intended to be a consultative meeting?

The Balli's self-proclaimed "patriots" made partnership in the leadership of the war a precondition. If this demand were rejected, they would not merely refuse to fight but would take up arms against the National Liberation Front — which they subsequently did.

Enver Hoxha and the General Council rejected such a partnership with the Balli Kombëtar because of the advanced stage already reached by the National

Liberation War, which possessed a regular army comprising tens of thousands of male and female partisans, in addition to many thousands more serving in territorial battalions that had struck fear into the enemy.

Hermann Frank, an officer in the German army stationed in Albania, wrote in his memoirs: "...the partisans are attacking us along the Erzen River. We hear a warning cry. The ground beneath our feet is boiling, the air is burning, the men can scarcely breathe and the situation appears hopeless. The enemy has received further reinforcements. Now our only hope is to hold out until darkness falls, because it is impossible to disengage from the enemy in daylight. Yet even if we wait for nightfall, there remains the possibility that the enemy will completely encircle us. The sun seems determined never to set."[176]

The Balli Kombëtar could not have been an equal partner with the National Liberation Front not only because it lacked numerical strength but also because it had not yet begun fighting the occupiers. In November 1943, Maclean informed London: "The majority of the Ballists have withdrawn into collaboration with the Germans. From a military point of view, their support would produce no practical result."[177]

This report demonstrates how insignificant the Balli Kombëtar's military strength was in comparison with the National Liberation Army. Harold Macmillan reached a similar conclusion regarding Abaz Kupi in July 1944: "A principal condition for providing Kupi with assistance is that he should reach an agreement with the National Liberation Front whereby they resolve their political differences and cease fighting one

another. Although the result would not materially increase the strength of the resistance, it might contribute to establishing, on an eventual basis, a reasonable government."[178]

Macmillan's statement establishes, first, that Abaz Kupi's military force was likewise so insignificant that, even if it had joined the struggle against the Germans, "it would not materially increase the strength of the resistance" of the Albanian people. Secondly, Macmillan envisaged that Albania should ultimately be governed by forces actively engaged in fighting the occupier, which explains why the Allies sought to draw the Ballists and Zogites into the war before later including them in government. What, then, did Enver Hoxha distort or falsify by instructing Ymer Dishnica at Mukje to pursue precisely the same objective that also interested the Anglo-American Allies?

Butka continues: "At Mukje it was decided that the question of political power and the form of government would be determined after the expulsion of the occupier by the people themselves through free elections. This highly democratic solution shook Enver Hoxha."[179]

First, it was not within the competence of that meeting to decide the question of political power, particularly since the Conference of Peza had already resolved that the issue would be settled after the war. By endorsing that decision a year earlier, Enver Hoxha had already demonstrated his commitment to a democratic government.

Secondly, Enver Hoxha had no reason to fear democratic elections because his entire revolutionary practice had been guided by democratic methods. On 4 May

1944, the BBC reported: "An important statement has recently been made by the Political Commissar of the General Staff of the National Liberation Movement in Albania, Enver Hoxha. He stated that the future form of government in Albania would not be imposed upon the Albanian people but would be freely chosen by them. From the context, it appears that he meant that, if the National Liberation Movement were to assume power, communism would not be imposed upon the people by force. Hoxha's statement may constitute a valuable contribution to any plan aimed at drawing the nationalists into the struggle against the Germans, preferably in cooperation with the partisans and, if possible, accompanied by some political agreement."[180]

Foreign agencies themselves recognised Enver Hoxha's democratic position regarding the post-war political settlement, whereas the Ballists failed to understand it. Butka's claim that the Ballists had proposed a democratic solution in the interests of the people is contradicted by American intelligence. Harry Fultz, an agent of the Office of Strategic Services, reported to Washington in September 1944: "...being extremely feudal in their outlook, they combine it with fascist methods and German nazism. These blend together well, which is why it is no coincidence that members of such a group supported the fascist plans, thereby establishing common ground with the German nazis. They have no confidence in their own people, claiming that they are ignorant and primitive, while at the same time adopting measures that keep them in ignorance, poverty and backwardness. They prefer the people to remain submissive. They have never hesitated, nor do they hes-

itate, to employ the most vicious and ruthless methods to keep the population in conditions of subjugation and fear. Members of this group who hold positions of authority have never hesitated to label every expression of dissatisfaction or every demand for better conditions as communist. The constituent elements of this group are:

"a. The beys, the large landowners of central and southern Albania — the Vërlacis, Vloras, Libohovas, Vrionis and others.

"b. The Muslim bajraktars and clan chiefs of Mat, Dibra and Luma — the Dines, Elezis and others.

"c. The fascist Catholics of Mirdita, Shkodra and Dukagjin — the Markagjonis, Krujas, Bushatis, Çobas and Harapis.

"d. The Ballist elements, the majority of whom come from the aforementioned groups and from the strata of medium and small landowners, the professional officer corps of the army and gendarmerie, career officials, wealthy merchants, privileged doctors and judges.

"With few exceptions, the majority display nazi-fascist sympathies and represent the country's most fundamentally anti-democratic influences."[181]

A fuller and more detailed exposure of the Ballist-Zogites during the National Liberation War would be difficult to find. In his assessment, Fultz sheds light on a political grouping within an historical period of great significance in modern Albanian history. He knew all the above-mentioned figures personally, was familiar with Albania's political and social conditions during those years and concluded that the Albanian reactionary forces, now claimed to have fought communism for democracy during the National Liberation

War, were composed of elements that had "supported the fascist plans" and represented "the country's most fundamentally anti-democratic influences."

It is impossible to believe that at Mukje the Ballists proposed leaving the question of political power in the hands of the people when, according to Fultz, they despised the people as "ignorant and primitive," not "hesitating to employ the most vicious and harshest means to keep the people in a condition of subjugation and fear."

If the Ballist-Zogites and the entire Albanian reaction during the National Liberation War are to be believed as "patriotic" and "democratic" elements, they must publicly denounce Harry Fultz as a liar and present the people with evidence contradicting what he reported. Before doing so, however, they should obtain the permission of President Berisha, who decorated Mr Fultz with the Order of "Naim Frashëri." If our President does not accept Fultz's assessment quoted above, does he not risk, through his own grandiose declarations, branding even his "American friend" as a "distorter, falsifier, dictator and Tito's servile follower"?

Enver Hoxha's declarations during the war that the people should have the right to choose the regime they desired were borne out by the elections of December 1945. On 12 December 1945, Jacobs, head of the American Special Mission in Tirana, informed Washington: "The elections in Albania were successful. There was no evidence of threats or intimidation and voting was conducted by secret ballot. In order to give the opposition an opportunity to register its own candidates, separate ballot boxes were established at the polling stations."[182]

On the same issue, the British military mission informed London: "The authorities responsible for the ballot boxes conscientiously and correctly complied with the electoral law. The voting system functioned well. No armed person was allowed into the polling stations. The existing electoral laws were clearly defined and were implemented quite properly. The opposition lacked courage."[183]

This assessment cannot simply be ignored by the Ballist-Zogites; otherwise they would be insulting the Allies, particularly since the above evaluation was reinforced by the final report of the American mission: "The elections brought satisfaction to the people as an expression of the wishes of the greater part of the Albanian people. This is not only the opinion of the Mission, but also that of the press correspondents who came to Albania to observe the elections."[184]

How, then, can the President describe Enver Hoxha as "anti-democratic" and "the most hated dictator" when contemporary Anglo-American documents portray him as a committed democrat? The opposition, having once again failed to obtain power — as it had also failed during the war — and dissatisfied by the loss of its privileges, sought foreign support under the encouragement of foreign intelligence services. In a report of June 1946, Jacobs informed Washington: "Opposition to the present regime is concentrated among those elements that benefited most materially from the Italo-German occupation: merchants, officials, government functionaries, officers, large landowners and the wealthy classes, whose personal interests were threatened by the objectives of the National Liberation

Front's programme. They suddenly found themselves without external support and failed to secure even the slightest backing from the people, who knew very well how little they could expect from them. The absence of support from the Italian and German military forces has left them deeply disappointed, and they now appeal to the British and American armies to come and help them restore their privileges. This is an organisation based not upon political principles but upon personal privilege. They quickly proclaimed the principles of Western democracy because they now believe these may help them achieve their aims, not because they genuinely believe in such principles."[185]

This assessment by the head of the American Special Mission demonstrates that the political forces opposed to the National Liberation Front remained fundamentally anti-popular, anti-democratic and anti-national, since, in order to restore "their class privileges," they appealed for foreign armies to occupy Albania. Deputy Butka, the President and other domestic and foreign writers may attempt to rewrite history, but Jacobs' conclusion remains equally applicable to the contemporary political situation, in which those same forces have attained political power: the Albanian reactionaries hastily embraced "the principles of Western democracy" merely because they believed these would advance their objectives, not because they sincerely believed in them.

Ten days after Jacobs' report, the American mission informed Washington: "The National Liberation Front enjoys greater support among the people than the opposition group. The opposition elements are organ-

ised in a most miserable fashion and possess no positive programme.

"In general, the leaders of the National Liberation Front are patriots with good intentions. They enjoy considerable esteem among the people."[186]

How, then, can Enver Hoxha be denounced as "the dictator most hated by the Albanians" when representatives of the American mission testified to the high regard in which he was held? Jacobs even explained the basis of that esteem: "Having met all the members of the cabinet, I must tell you that I was impressed by their sincerity and by their concern for the welfare of their country. They are intelligent people."[187]

We have no doubt that this sustained campaign of hostility towards Enver Hoxha is the product of a carefully conceived political strategy, one whose echoes carry the same militant tone that characterised the fascist regime in Albania.

Contemporary politics have reached a point where values are so inverted that "people go to bed peppers and wake up aubergines," to the extent that the President describes the criminal Ndue Gjon Markaj as a democrat while branding the genuine democrats who liberated the Albanian people from the fascist occupiers as dictators!

Within this political climate, the Ballists and Zogites portray the massacres of Albanians who fought the foreign occupiers as "democratic" actions. However, there is a document which demonstrates that the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar held not only the Albanian people but even their own followers in contempt. In a letter dated 13 July 1944 addressed to several influen-

tial figures within Balli Kombëtar, Ismail Golemi, the organisation's leader in the Gjirokastra district, wrote of Mithat Frashëri, Ali Këlcyra and Abaz Ermenji: "These gentlemen are entirely unmoved by our sacrifices; they regard us as livestock... They want Albania to be their private property. What they seek for themselves is comfort and position."[188]

These were the very figures who had proposed the so-called "democratic solution" at Mukje.

c — "Immediate War"

Did Balli Kombëtar actually fight, and against whom?

Ballist propaganda, both then and now, loudly advertises the single battle in which the Balli Kombëtar took part: the participation of Hysni Lepenica's detachment in the Battle of Gjorm. However, this participation was neither voluntary nor inspired by the ideals of freedom and national liberation. Rather, it was compelled by pressure from the local population: "If you do not go and fight, you are against the people." Faced with this alternative and unwilling to discredit himself completely, Hysni Lepenica chose, at Gjorm, to fight alongside the partisan forces against the Italians. The Balli Kombëtar in the Vlora district did not continue this "anti-fascist" course thereafter. With the arrival of the German army, they joined forces with it as though they were allies. Asime Kosova's intelligence reports state: "The detachments of Balli Kombëtar entered Vlora under the protection of the German army and its tanks."[189]

This association with German tanks demonstrates that the Ballists in Vlora stood in opposition to the people.

During the first months of the German occupation, the leaders of Balli Kombëtar did not openly display their cooperation with the puppet government in Tirana, employing the same tactics they had used under the Italian occupiers. General Davies reported to London in November: "The Balli Kombëtar has declared that it does not approve of the pro-German government, but my impression after lengthy discussions with them was that they are closely connected with it."[190]

Within less than a month, Davies believed his suspicions had been fully confirmed: "Recent developments make it imperative to expose, collectively and by name, both the Regency Council and Balli Kombëtar; they are all collaborating with the Germans."[191]

Numerous documents attest to the relationship between the Balli Kombëtar and the quisling government in Tirana, citing only a few examples:

1. The newspaper *Rilindja* reproduces the following report from Asime Kosova's intelligence group: "In December 1943 an American officer landed in Vlora and sought a meeting with Mehdi Frashëri. The Regent declined to expose himself. In his place went Skënder Muço, commander of the Balli Kombëtar for the Vlora district. Pleased with the discussion, he stated that the Americans advised the 'nationalists' to support the government, while at the same time insisting that the government should not go too far in its cooperation with the Germans."[192]

2. According to Hakif Bajrami, the Balli Kombëtar formally resolved to cooperate with the government following a meeting of its representatives in Berat on 2 January 1944, where it was decided "to cooperate with the government and to fight the communists."[193]

3. April 1944 — British Secret Service reported: "Many of the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar joined the new puppet administration. The Balli Kombëtar has been accused of pro-German sympathies, and the evidence fully substantiates this accusation."[194]

4. May 1944: "The Balli Kombëtar is a supporter of the puppet government."[195]

5. June 1944: "The government in Tirana and the Balli Kombëtar are actively collaborating with the Germans."[196]

6. July 1944: "Albanian formations organised and equipped by the Balli Kombëtar with German assistance, and operating together with German army units, have fought engagements against the National Liberation Front and the partisans. This agreement between the Germans and the Ballists has the approval of the central government in Tirana. Documents captured from the Ballist gendarmerie fully confirm this agreement."[197]

These Anglo-American reports demonstrate that Mehdi Frashëri fulfilled the assurances he had given to Neubacher by mobilising the "nationalist" bands — that is, the Ballists and Zogites — against the National Liberation Front.

A British intelligence report of February 1944 also described the benefits that the Germans derived from the Balli Kombëtar's assistance: "It is abundantly clear

that in southern and central Albania the members of the Balli Kombëtar are fighting alongside the Germans and against the partisans. There is no doubt that the Germans derive considerable assistance from the Balli Kombëtar, first through their attacks upon the partisans and secondly through their participation as police within the administration of the territories that have been cleared."[198]

It is surprising that Butka calls for distancing from Mehdi Frashëri, who headed the quisling government in Tirana. If the Ballist deputy and his associates genuinely wished to be credible, they should distance themselves from the Balli Kombëtar itself, since it supported, assisted and fought alongside the German-sponsored governments in Tirana against the Albanian people's National Liberation Movement. The Ballists justified this cooperation by invoking the programme of the supposedly "neutral" government in Tirana: "...2 — To organise an army which would fight all detachments of the National Liberation Front, regarding them all as communists... To support every genuinely nationalist organisation whose common objective is the destruction of communism."[199]

To implement this programme, the government in Tirana and the Albanian mercenaries strengthened the army and the gendarmerie. To organise these forces, General Fitzthum, the former commander of SS troops, was sent to Albania. Acting under the orders of this "organiser," the Commander of National Defence, General Preng Previzi, replaced the absent Italian generals with German officers and, on 16 February 1944, issued the following circular: "Since the Albanian Gov-

ernment has recognised the need to organise the armed forces in order to establish complete peace and order throughout the country, in accordance with Article 185 of the Fundamental Statute of 1928, I have sought distinguished organisers for this service. Accordingly, a number of German officers assigned for organisational purposes will be distributed among our military units and recruitment offices. All military and gendarmerie authorities are instructed to receive the German officers properly and to assist them in carrying out their duties."[200]

The "devoted" general, having searched everywhere for capable organisers, ultimately found Hitler's officers to strengthen the Albanian army and gendarmerie in the service of "order" and "tranquillity" — and, as was well known, Hitler's officers had their own methods of imposing order.

The Albanian government had already confirmed this position in December 1943 through a declaration made before General Panzer Fehn, authorising the general "to prepare plans for and direct the war against the communist bands, as the sole holder of command authority over all the forces to be employed in this campaign."[201]

The declaration further stated that the government undertook "to place the executive forces at his disposal so that, together with the German forces, they might destroy the common enemy as quickly and as completely as possible."[202]

General Fitzthum himself identified this "common enemy" in an order addressed to the Minister of the Interior, Xhafer Deva: "It has been agreed in full

cooperation between the Albanian Government and the Reich that the organisation of the Albanian armed forces shall serve the purpose of restoring order and tranquillity and, above all, of destroying the communist bands."[203]

This governmental programme fully coincided with the mission of the Balli Kombëtar, which shared the same objective as the quisling government and General Fitzthum: the destruction of the communist detachments. In order to realise their programme, the Ballists therefore inevitably aligned themselves with the Albanian government army.

Mithat Frashëri's association with General Preng Previzi, with whom he also attended the Congress of Nationalists in Prezë, demonstrates that the Balli Kombëtar fought as an integral component of the nazi military apparatus against the National Liberation Army.

Asime Kosova's assessment of the balance of forces between the National Liberation Front and the Albanian reaction is particularly significant: "The National Liberation Front organisation was supported by 85 per cent of the population, which was opposed to the present government."[204]

Since, according to this estimate, 85 per cent of the population opposed the quisling government, they likewise opposed its allies in the Balli Kombëtar, who had allied themselves with the occupiers in order to suppress the 85 per cent of the population that supported the communist-led movement.

The distinguished Swedish intellectual Jan Myrdal, referring to a document by Neubacher in his book *The Albanian Challenge*, wrote: "The Balli Kombëtar

did not fight against our armies; for Balli, the principal enemies were the red partisans."[205]

This assessment is corroborated by General Davies following his meeting with the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar at Shëngjergj, near Tirana: "No one could persuade Mithat to agree to cooperate with the National Liberation Movement. I gave up. I had tried every method I knew to convince them. It was impossible. Enver Hoxha had been right. The Balli refused to sign the undertaking to fight the Germans."[206]

It seems unbelievable to us that President Berisha and his Ballist-Zogite clique seek to view history as a frog views the sky from the bottom of a well, attempting to falsify the historical truth at the expense of the achievements gained by the nation during Enver Hoxha's fifty years of leadership.

BALLI KOMBËTAR'S CLAIMS REGARDING THE "CIVIL WAR"

In an effort to justify and conceal the crimes of Balli Kombëtar, Deputy Butka resorts to the claim that: "The National Liberation War was a civil war... a tragic consequence of the collapse of the Mukje Agreement."[207] This assertion even contradicts President Berisha himself, who, during the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference of Peza, declared on television that: "The Albanians did not take to the mountains to kill one another, but to fight against the enemy."[208]

Butka's "conclusion," when compared with a letter sent by Ali Këlcyra to the Central Committee of the Balli Kombëtar concerning atrocities committed by Ballist forces in the Libohova area in July 1943, exposes him as "a first-rate falsifier." In that letter, Ali Këlcyra wrote: "The former Ballists there, led by Nexho Bejleri, have gravely compromised us before public opinion by fighting the communists and killing innocent villagers."[209]

Ali Këlcyra leaves no room for ambiguity: he clearly documents that Ballist forces committed crimes against both communists and innocent peasants, and that these events occurred before the Tapiza and Mukje negotiations — that is, before the agreement was signed. By what moral right can Butka so blatantly distort the historical record by claiming that "the civil war" — understood as fratricidal conflict — was a consequence of the collapse of the Mukje Agreement? Since Butka is aware of Ali Këlcyra's letter, he is obliged to take it into account and call for a repudiation of Nexho Bejleri.

Instead, he refuses to acknowledge the historical fact that the Ballists initiated fratricidal violence long before Mukje. Persisting in this course of deception, Butka also establishes the chronology of the alleged "civil war": "The National Liberation War became a civil war particularly during the winter of 1943–44, and in the summer and autumn of 1944."[210]

This chronology coincides exactly with the fiercest operations conducted jointly by nazi and Ballist forces against the National Liberation Army: the Winter Offensive, the June Offensive and the final German retreat under pressure from the National Liberation Army. Butka should be thanked for this chronology, since it provides an opportunity to document the Balli Kombëtar's military actions against the partisan forces precisely during these operations, in which the nazi army had planned to annihilate the National Liberation Army. The evidence comes from the Balli Kombëtar's own newspaper, *Flamuri*.

January 1944: "It is worth noting that the First Brigade suffered another heavy blow from a Balli Kombëtar force at Balibardha while returning from its mission. This Balli force, commanded by Muharem Kapllani, succeeded in halting the First Brigade's advance, inflicting heavy losses upon it and preventing its passage."[211]

This draws attention to the newspaper's own wording — "another heavy blow" suffered by the First Partisan Brigade. This indicates that the brigade had already endured several blows from the combined German-Ballist forces before receiving yet another attack from a Balli Kombëtar detachment during its return. No clearer confirmation of the Balli Kombëtar's nazi

mission could be found than in its own newspaper. The First Partisan Brigade was attacked not because it had initiated hostilities against the Ballists but because it was returning from a mission undertaken to rescue the General Staff, which had been encircled by German forces. During this withdrawal, the Ballists treacherously attacked the partisans, inflicting "heavy losses" upon men who were attempting to break out of encirclement while fighting for the people. Historically, even Albanians engaged in blood feuds united when faced with a foreign threat, settling their internal disputes only after the external danger had been removed. In this instance, the Ballists behaved worse than sworn enemies.

According to a British Secret Service report, the Balli Kombëtar's conduct during the Winter Offensive reached the point of "warning members of the National Liberation Front to return to their homes by 25 January under threat of being punished as traitors."[212]

Who was demanding that the partisans desert the liberation struggle during this brutal offensive? The answer is obvious: the nazis. At the height of this campaign, following the massacre in Tirana on 4 February 1944, the newspaper *Bashkimi i Kombit* wrote: "Terror against the terrorists; terror against the members of the National Liberation Movement; terror against its sympathisers. Blood must flow in torrents through the streets of Tirana if we are to restore order."[213] The same newspaper also wrote in February 1944: "The enemy has destroyed our people and our homes, our villages and our towns. The economic and social damage is beyond measure; we are living through the misery that

has engulfed Albanian life. Infants without shelter or bread cry without hope or assistance; mothers mourn their sons; children mourn their fathers; sisters dress in black for their brothers. At such misery our hearts should bleed, our feelings should awaken in revolt for a constructive response."[214]

This Ballist propaganda is profoundly hypocritical. At the very moment when the war was at its height and the German occupiers were inflicting ever greater human and material losses, the Ballists called for "a constructive response" rather than urging the population to resist, show solidarity and wage armed struggle against the occupiers.

The failure of the enemy's Winter Offensive of 1943–44 demonstrated the strength of the Communist Party of Albania's ties with the broad masses of the people, the soundness and foresight of its policies and the resilience of the insurrectionary people and the National Liberation Army under the leadership of its legendary commander, Enver Hoxha.

June 1944: "At the meeting of 31 May, a section of our battalion in Kavaja, formed ten days earlier by Major Çaush Aliu and commanded by Mehmet Alltuni, surrounded a detachment of communists in the village of Gërmenj. At four o'clock in the morning the battle began, after which the communist detachment, having been routed, withdrew leaving thirteen dead and seventeen wounded, among them the partisan battalion commander Maliq Muço and two company commanders, Sadik Barahysa and Fadil Laveri."[215]

We do not undertake to prove whether *Flamuri*'s report is wholly or only partly accurate. What matters

is the essence of the report itself: the nocturnal encirclement of a partisan detachment by Ballist forces.

Why was such a terrible massacre carried out against those who were courageously fighting the German occupiers? Why was the encirclement carried out so treacherously, under cover of darkness? Have President Berisha and Deputy Butka ever read their own newspaper?

Through this book we publicly denounce the distortions and falsifications of the history of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War that seek to rehabilitate war criminals and to insult the blood of thousands of martyrs, as well as all the sacrifices and privations endured by the Albanian people, upon whom fell the brutal violence of the nazi-fascist occupiers and their Ballist-Zogite collaborators. It is sufficient to recall document no. 3 of the Central State Archive, the decision of the commission for the confiscation of the property of "subversive fugitives," to see against whom the Ballists fought and why they fought: "We, the undersigned members of the special commission for the confiscation and administration of the property of subversive fugitives [communists] and of those compromised by this policy, assembled today, 21 June 1944, in our usual place under the chairmanship of Sali Shehu. Having considered the matter, we have decided to confiscate all the lawful property of the persons listed below."[216]

There follows, village by village in the Kardhiq district, a list of the families whose property was to be confiscated. The accusation of "civil war" serves not only to diminish the significance of the National Liberation War, in which the Ballists did not participate because

they stood on the opposite side of the barricades, but also to conceal the crimes and looting they committed against the people.

Autumn 1944: In November 1944, the American Secret Service reported: "The Balli Kombëtar Party collaborated with the Germans in the war against the National Liberation Front. As collaborators, the Ballists are now fleeing together with the Germans."[217]

They fought together against the Albanian people, suffered defeat together and consequently departed together.

To complete the fourth season, spring, which Butka has omitted, a British Secret Service report from April 1944: "Balli Kombëtar forces, as has become known, joined the Germans in fighting the partisans. The Balli Kombëtar admitted that its military headquarters had sentenced to death and executed captured individuals who had assisted the partisans... Skënder Muço regretted the collaboration with the Germans, but believed it to be the only means of crushing the partisan movement, which he regarded as his principal enemy."[218]

The Ballist leaders thus admitted that they shared the same principal enemy as the German army: the Albanian people who had risen to liberate their country from the nazi occupiers. The documentary evidence of the Balli Kombëtar's criminal conduct is irrefutable and demonstrates that, from their perspective, collaboration was their only course of action. A British intelligence report from December 1943 further stated that: "Mithat Frashëri is definitively pro-German... Mithat Frashëri demands that Albania should, for the time being, cease fighting the Germans. The Balli Kombëtar

has appealed to us to understand that it collaborated with the Germans solely because it had no other course open to it."[219]

Why did Mithat Frashëri close every possible avenue except the one leading to the Germans? What prevented him from fighting the Germans? Was it the abandonment of the demand for an "Ethnic Albania" in the Mukje Agreement? Did an alliance with the nazis secure an "Ethnic Albania" for the Ballists? It may be claimed that communism first had to be defeated during the war in order to achieve an "Ethnic Albania." Yet, if this truly served the national interest, why did Balli Kombëtar fail to defeat Albanian communism, which liberated the country relying solely upon the strength of its own people, while the Ballists tied themselves to Hitler's bayonets?

Was their refusal to fight the Germans due to the abandonment of the "proclamation of independence" at Mukje? They could have won the war first and proclaimed independence afterwards, as the people desired.

Or was it because the agreement's provision for a joint command had been abandoned? The same conclusion always follows: the Balli Kombëtar aligned itself with whichever side promised it political power. It fought neither for an "Ethnic Albania" nor for independence. It knew the people would never entrust it with power because of its conduct before and during the war, and therefore sought to impose itself by force, killing and torturing the communists and innocent civilians. Above all, it exercised this nazi-style violence in cooperation with the German army against the National Liberation Army.

The alliance of these self-styled Albanian nationalists with the occupiers revealed both their weakness and their lack of popular support. Recognising that they could no longer dominate the population through traditional means, they resorted to the terrorist methods employed by fascism and pursued a policy of war against the National Liberation Front. If this conflict is to be described as a "civil war," then Balli Kombëtar must bear responsibility for initiating it.

Butka declares that those who "deny the blood of the martyrs are anti-democratic and anti-national." The statement appears impressive, but its application is hypocritical. If Butka truly honours the blood of the martyrs of the National Liberation War, then he must condemn their killers — the Ballists — who themselves admitted to killing communists, partisans and innocent civilians who were later recognised as martyrs. At the same time, he should also condemn his own party's policies, which led to fratricidal crimes.

Butka attempts to justify the Balli Kombëtar's opposition to the National Liberation Front through monstrous falsehoods: "Caught between two fires, the Balli Kombëtar ceased fighting the Germans in order to respond to partisan attacks. Thus Mithat Frashëri sent the following circular to the regional committees: 'The Communist Party not only fails to honour the Mukje Agreement but attacks us by every possible means, through propaganda as well as through murder. Therefore instruct your committees to respond immediately to every communist attack and activity with the same methods.'"[220]

Until 7 October, when Mithat Frashëri dispatched

this circular, the National Liberation Front had not yet begun armed conflict against the Balli Kombëtar. It was still engaged in a political campaign to expose the Balli Kombëtar as a collaborator with nazism. As evidence of this, we cite a speech delivered by Ali Këlcyra in Gjirokastra on 28 September 1943: "Following the numerous agreements the Balli has concluded with the party organisations of the northern regions, I am fully convinced that Albanian nationalism, united within the organisation of the Balli Kombëtar, will be able to dominate the situation with its strong fist... There is no doubt that, should the communists provoke us, what has happened in the wider world will also happen in the smaller Albanian world."[221]

Ali Këlcyra demonstrates in the newspaper *Flamuri* that, nine days before Mithat Frashëri's letter, the communist side had still not "provoked" the "nationalist" side, despite having rejected the Mukje Agreement two months earlier. This fact, illuminated by Ali Këlcyra's speech, is further reinforced by a British intelligence report from September 1943: "The Balli Kombëtar has become an obstacle in the path of the partisans. They prevent in advance the destruction of vital installations and even assist the Germans in repairing those that have been damaged. The leaders of Balli are, in the final analysis, quislings."[222]

The above document testifies that it was not the partisans who "provoked" the Ballists; rather, it was the Ballists who provoked and obstructed the partisans in their struggle to liberate the country. Both of these documents contradict Mithat Frashëri's circular and portray him as the instigator of fratricidal conflict, direct-

ing the Ballists against the partisans. Mithat Frashëri's directive in his letter of 7 October demonstrates that he was taking his orders from the German command.

The Balli Kombëtar "suspended" its war against the Germans not because it found itself caught between two fires, as Butka seeks to persuade us, but because ceremonial demonstrations were now of no further use, having failed to seize control of the National Liberation Front and the National Liberation Army. Consequently, its plan to capture political power at the most opportune moment had collapsed. Deprived of any hope that its manoeuvre would succeed and placed in a thoroughly discredited position, as evidenced by Ali Këlcyra's letter of 23 September 1943 — "The people deeply hate the organisation of the Balli Kombëtar because it has been seriously compromised in public opinion"[223] — Mithat Frashëri cast aside the mask of the diplomat and issued the order against the National Liberation Army, which, as the documents prove, was the force that truly found itself caught between two fronts.

Following Mithat Frashëri's order, the command of the 21st Corps reported in November 1943: "A change has now been observed in the attitude of the nationalist groups and bands. They have abandoned their waiting policy and have placed themselves at the disposal of the German army for cooperation."[224]

This cooperation is confirmed by a subsequent report: "The Ballists have participated in all the operations of the past month against the communists."[225]

With his open directive against the partisans, Mithat Frashëri and the Balli Kombëtar completely discredited themselves in the eyes of the people. This

discrediting enabled Abaz Kupi to undertake a temporary manoeuvre by declaring, after leaving the National Liberation Front, that: "All Albania knows that the organisation to which I belong is founded upon principles entirely different from those pursued by the Balli Kombëtar."[226]

Abaz Kupi's public distancing from the Balli Kombëtar was not over secondary matters but over "entirely different principles," which, according to him, constituted the essence of the Legaliteti's political line, allegedly fundamentally distinct from the anti-Albanian policy of the Balli Kombëtar.

However, in reality Abaz Kupi's principles were not fundamentally different from those of Balli Kombëtar. Rather, the situation had become so disastrous for the Balli that Abaz Kupi's patrons instructed him to exploit the Ballists' disintegration by uniting the opponents of the National Liberation Front into a single anti-communist front under the leadership of the Legaliteti.

The head of the British military liaison mission attached to Abaz Kupi's headquarters, Maclean, wrote: "One of the reasons that prompted Abaz Kupi to leave the National Liberation Front was to exploit an excellent opportunity to increase his own influence by attracting many members of the Balli Kombëtar and other nationalists into his party."[227]

Since the Zogite party had opened its doors even to the Ballists, the extent to which the leadership of the Balli Kombëtar had become discredited is readily apparent. By November 1943, the Balli should effectively have ceased to exist as an organised movement, if indeed it had ever truly been one.

In response to the attacks carried out by Balli Kombëtar against the National Liberation Army pursuant to Mithat Frashëri's directive of 7 October 1943, the Communist Party and the General Council of the National Liberation Front issued instructions for armed struggle against them as collaborators of the Germans. Nevertheless, neither the Communist Party nor the General Council ever altered the general political line adopted at the Conference of Peza. By faithfully implementing its political platform, the Communist Party preserved the war's character ofnational liberation and maintained its policy of uniting the entire Albanian people, irrespective of religion, region, political convictions, party affiliation or social class within the National Liberation Front.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania never allowed attention to be diverted from the principal enemy, the German occupier. On 23 November, Enver Hoxha wrote to Baba Faja: "With all those elements of the Balli who recognise their mistake and who demonstrate through their actions that they are genuinely fighting the enemy, we cooperate and are brothers."[228]

To divert public attention from their own crimes, the Ballists employed the deserter Vlash Arapi as their spokesman. Arapi wrote: "It was established that the overwhelming majority of the people inclined towards nationalism and that the Balli, by organising itself day by day, would eventually encompass all Albanian forces and energies. The terrorist party regarded the Balli Kombëtar as its greatest enemy, not only as a military force but also as a morally and intellectually very sound force."[229]

The terminology employed by this renegade is identical to that used by the German nazis. A report by the commander of the German forces stated: "In this situation, it must be borne in mind that without the assistance of the government troops it is impossible to wage an effective struggle against communist terrorism."[230]

Both allies complained of "communist terrorism." Were the German nazis likewise concerned for the Albanian national cause when they waged so ferocious a campaign against what they called "communist terrorism"?

For the proponents of the "civil war" thesis, we present two further characterisations of the Balli Kombëtar:

1. Major Rexhep Çela, in a report sent from Vlora dated 25 September 1944, stated: "The remaining Balli forces are looting, torturing and dishonouring people in so intolerable a manner that the population has united and now impatiently awaits the victory of the Communist Party as the force that will liberate them and guarantee the most fundamental gifts that God has bestowed: life, honour and property."[231]

2. British mission officer John Block wrote: "The Ballists were a mixed bag of Albanian criminals, resembling the Ustaše of Yugoslavia. They spread terror and caused destruction wherever they went."[232]

It was precisely upon this collection of criminals, comparable to the Yugoslav Ustaše, that the British Foreign Office based its plans for a civil war in Albania. This project is revealed in a dispatch sent by the American ambassador in London, John Winant, to Washington: "The view of the British Foreign Office is that, if

the National Liberation Front remains entirely on the Left, some form of civil war might break out and King Zogu might return."[233]

This is a flagrant deviation from the principal objective of the Anti-Fascist Coalition — the struggle against nazism and fascism — and at the same time an arbitrary and arrogant violation of the Atlantic Charter, signed by Churchill and Roosevelt, which affirmed the right of peoples occupied by fascism to self-determination.

By violating the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the British government sought to intervene brutally in Albania's internal affairs, an intervention that would have led to Albanians shedding one another's blood. In the view of the British Foreign Office, the outbreak of civil war in Albania depended upon whether the National Liberation Front remained on the Left or shifted to the Right, rather than upon any objective internal conditions within the country. Such a conflict would have been artificially instigated, just as it had previously been encouraged by the foreign occupiers through the right-wing Ballist-Zogite forces, whose policies served Anglo-American strategic objectives while simultaneously advancing their own ambitions to dominate political power in Albania.

The above document from the American ambassador demonstrates that the British government also played a role in attempting to divert the National Liberation War from the political sphere into an ideological conflict. Against this tendency, Enver Hoxha instructed: "We must not allow the reactionaries to impose upon the people the view that the struggle between us

concerns ideological questions. We fight against the reaction first and foremost because it is, from head to toe, in the service of the occupier."[234]

THE "MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS" OF THE BALLI KOMBËTAR

John Block's assessment of the Ballists as the equivalent of the Yugoslav Ustaše is further substantiated by the newspapers *Roja Kombëtare* (*National Guard*) and *Flamuri* (*The Flag*). On 21 April 1943, *Roja Kombëtare* reported a "bloody clash between government troops and a band of brigands": "For many years Rexhep Picalla has lived the life of an outlaw. He has killed and wounded people and abducted girls and women. Government forces encountered the band led by Xhep Picalla. A fierce exchange of gunfire followed and, taking advantage of the darkness, the band withdrew after leaving two dead and several wounded."[235]

Three days later, the Balli Kombëtar protested through leaflets, prompting the same newspaper to comment: "The Balli informs us through its customary leaflets that Xhep Picalla's band was one of the pillars of its organisation. We must thank the Balli Kombëtar for this clarification because we had heard of its good reputation, though we had not known it personally. Now that we know Xhep Picalla well, we also know the Balli Kombëtar. Tell me with whom you associate and I shall tell you who you are."[236]

This episode is self-explanatory, and it would scarcely be believable were it not for the fact that *Flamuri* itself confirmed both the criminal character of this band of thieves and Xhep Picalla's reputation as a man of "action": "In central Albania, on 20 August, the Balli Kombëtar units of Majors Xhemal Herri and Rexhep Picalla attacked the militarised company 'Bel-

lasi' near Tirana. The units looted and seized materials for the war of liberation."[237]

Looting constituted the very essence of Ballist military activity. Every honest Albanian should feel revulsion at the claim that such robberies were carried out "for the war of liberation"! Other bands, including those led by Hamit Matjani and Ismail Golemi, are likewise portrayed as "fighters for freedom." Concerning Golemi, Major Tilman wrote in his book *Where Mountains and Men Meet*: "The *bashibazouk* army had plundered everything movable, including the animals needed to transport the stolen goods. The Balli Kombëtar, which followed behind the Germans like jackals under the leadership of a man named Ismail Golemi, bore responsibility for this."[238]

The BBC likewise confirmed these activities. On 1 June, it received the following instruction from the Political Executive: "When a man such as Nuri Dino or Ismail Golemi is denounced for participating in a German military operation together with his collaborationist bands (like a jackal following a tiger) in the plundering of villages overrun by the Germans, their conduct should be described in the most contemptuous terms, as that of a quisling gang trailing behind the Germans."[239]

Tilman's descriptions of the burning of the villages of Zagori, Pogon and Cepo by Ballist forces are both horrifying and deeply moving: "It is easy enough to describe a Ballist band setting villages ablaze, but when we see men working solely to burn the homes of peaceful families; when we watch the flames reaching towards the sky, the roofs collapsing inward; when we see all the

labour, care and cherished possessions of a lifetime reduced to ashes within a few minutes, it is impossible not to be overcome by a burning wave of hatred."[240]

Among these Ballists was the father of the deputy Butka, Safet Butka. The culmination of Safet Butka's "patriotism" was described by the bulletin *Bashkimi*: "Safet killed himself because he was caught red-handed. The people of Korça and the National Liberation units caught him after he had stolen more than 150 quintals of grain at Rëmbec. Safet had with him some 300 *bashibazouks*, but despite their numbers, the powder of Safet's heroes failed to ignite, for facing them were the partisan battalions and detachments that had come to demand an accounting from him... In such circumstances, these 'heroes of the chickens,' these volunteers of banquets and feasts, of raki and revelry, Safet's lackeys decided, like 'real men,' to surrender the grain and flee with their tails between their legs, leaving Safet behind."[241]

The British liaison officer Tilman, who had witnessed first-hand the devastation wrought by the burning of the villages of Cepo, expressed hatred for the Ballists. It is therefore astonishing that President Berisha expresses admiration for them. Fifty years later, he honours the so-called "martyrs" of Grehot by awarding them decorations and extolling their "patriotism." Butka expressed the same view in his paper, writing: "In the Battle of Grehot, where thirty-three nationalist heroes led by Hysni Lepenica fell fighting the Italian occupiers of the 'Perugia' Division, they became martyrs thanks to communist treachery."[242] Hysni Lepenica himself was killed inside his own vehicle!

Moral decay within the new bourgeoisie appears to have advanced to such an extent that the murderer now claims to be the victim. Butka accuses the Communist Party of precisely the conduct that the Balli Kombëtar itself had so plainly exhibited, as demonstrated by the foregoing documents, without explaining in what manner the Communist Party supposedly betrayed these thirty-three Ballist "martyrs."

How could the Communist Party have betrayed the Ballists when it was the Ballists, rather than the communists, who were allied with the Italian fascists?!

We present to Deputy Butka the testimony of the British officer Tilman, who participated, together with Bedri Spahiu and Shefqet Peçi, in all the negotiations with the Italian officers: "General Chiminello sought a way out... the Ballists had also established contact with him, demanding that he surrender to them in the name of the Provisional Government of Tirana."[243]

Following Italy's capitulation, the leaders of the Balli Kombëtar, who purportedly had established a provisional government, instructed their ally to hand over his weapons and matériel. How could a fully motorised division possibly have surrendered to thirty-five "delegates" of a puppet government created by Italian bayonets — a government that, in reality, did not exist?

The delegation from the partisan headquarters at Cepo, of which Tilman was a member as the representative of the Allies, presented the general with three alternatives: "First, to join us in attacking the Germans; second, to hand over the weapons to us as representatives of the Allies; third, to destroy everything."[244]

Fearing attack from the Germans during his withdrawal towards Saranda and under pressure from his officers, who insisted that "the honour of the soldier was at stake," the general replied: "I shall hand over my weapons to no one." Tilman continues: "Feeling utterly foolish, we set off to leave. Before we had even reached our own lines, heavy enemy fire erupted along the main road. For reasons that remained obscure, the mountain battery began shelling several empty fields beside the river. That same night I departed for Sheper to report to headquarters how far matters had progressed. When I returned at dawn, I found that the worst had happened."[245]

By accusing the Communist Party of "treachery," Butka simultaneously accuses Tilman, the representative of the Allies, who had remained throughout alongside the partisan headquarters. The deaths of the thirty-three Ballists at Grehot were not the consequence of communist betrayal but rather of the Ballists' own insistence and provocation in attempting to seize the Italian matériel. A single Ballist detachment could not have fought a fully armed division to the finish, especially since all of them were killed at the entrance to the garrison rather than in combat positions.

BUTKA'S CLAIMS CONCERNING THE BRITISH MISSION

Butka seeks to attribute the defeat of the Balli Kombëtar not only to the Communist Party of Albania but also to what he describes as "the one-sided attitude of the British mission."[246]

The documents of that mission demonstrate that the Balli Kombëtar did not deserve Allied assistance, despite being the first political force in Albania to receive the greatest material and moral support.

In September 1943, Dixon explained: "We must first wait and see what happens with the Italians."[247]

Guided by this strategy and in accordance with this policy, the British Foreign Office acted in a manner unfavourable to the National Liberation Movement in Albania. Although the earliest reports of British military intelligence stated that "the activities of the Albanian guerrillas against the Italians are continuous and widespread,"[248] they nevertheless underestimated the fighting spirit of the Albanian partisans, their intense desire for freedom and independence and their highly developed sense of national dignity, reporting: "The partisans display great stubbornness, believing that with their army they can carry out operations that are beyond their capabilities. Poorly organised and poorly equipped, if the Albanians resist the Germans they will undoubtedly be committing suicide."[249]

The Albanian partisans, however, not only avoided "suicide" through their resistance to the Germans but also won the admiration of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who in November 1943 made the following

statement in the House of Commons concerning their fighting spirit: "Thousands of Albanian guerrillas are now fighting in their mountains for the freedom and independence of their country. The British liaison officers who are with the guerrillas have expressed the highest admiration for their fighting qualities. We see that the Albanians, in accordance with their ancient traditions, will play their part in the future military developments in the Mediterranean... We wish to see Albania free from the yoke of the Axis and restored to its independence. Its national frontiers will be taken into account at the forthcoming peace settlement."[250]

We shall not dwell upon the attitude of the British government at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, noting only that the Anglo-American support for Caldaris' claims to Northern Epirus and their opposition to Albania's participation in the San Francisco Conference are well known. Instead, the relevant point here is Churchill's explicit recognition that the Albanian partisans were fighting "for the freedom and independence of their country."

As is evident, the National Liberation War waged by the Albanian partisans under communist leadership was not a struggle for "communist doctrine," as the Ballist-Zogite reactionaries had claimed in order to justify both their war against the National Liberation Front and their collaboration with the occupiers, but rather a war of national liberation. If the Ballist-Zogites continue to adhere to their thesis, they thereby gravely insult the memory of former Prime Minister Churchill and the House of Commons.

The Allied documents demonstrate the substantial

assistance that the Anglo-Americans provided to the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti. Politically, these organisations offered the prospect that the post-war regime would be conservative and, in order to survive, would necessarily remain dependent upon Britain. The policy adopted by Britain was therefore, in practice, one of assisting and encouraging the "nationalists." Only gradually, and reluctantly, under pressure from military personnel who personally witnessed the sacrifices made by the National Liberation Front, was aid extended to the Albanian partisans. This is confirmed, among other evidence, by Alexander Kirk, the United States political adviser at Allied Headquarters in Caserta: "Aid in the form of gold and promised support was given to the so-called nationalists... The policy of assisting every group fighting the Germans was implemented gradually, though at first only reluctantly in relation to the National Liberation Army."[251]

It was precisely this Allied policy that Tilman described as "the true tragedy of the Albanians."[252]

Those who lived through the war know well how painful that tragedy was. "Only one party," Tilman wrote, "the National Liberation Front, fought and suffered. The other two were either enemies or weak neutrals. Yet we continued to support them morally and materially, by sending them our missions while obscuring the deeds and sacrifices of the National Liberation Front."[253]

Confronted by the overwhelming military strength of the nazi-fascist forces and by Anglo-American duplicity, the Albanian people were able to prevail only through their political and military unity, placing

all their material and human resources at the disposal of the National Liberation War. This was a broad popular alliance, led by Enver Hoxha, founded upon the national cause and the defence of the country's independence and sovereignty.

Balli Kombëtar remained outside this unity because, as a political organisation, it did not emerge as an opposition force within the National Liberation Movement itself but rather as a political force opposed to the Albanian people's war of liberation. The split with Balli was not over questions of tactics but of strategy.

Butka's assessment of the National Liberation War, expressed in a pharisaical manner, remains identical to that of his predecessors. He serves as chairman of the parliamentary committee on education and culture, while Albanian Television and Radio broadcast endless programmes rehabilitating those who harmed the National Liberation War, yet have failed to produce a single programme devoted to the martyrs of the homeland. Why are the songs of the National Liberation War no longer broadcast? Why was 29 November abolished as a national holiday, when 28,000 sons and daughters of Albania gave their lives for that very day?

Through a report filled with falsifications, Butka denies both the martyrs and the National Liberation War, thereby revealing himself to be anti-democratic and anti-national. We remind this deputy of Fan Noli's assessment of the Ballists, published in the newspaper *Dielli*: "Recently a number of Ballists have arrived in America and have begun carrying out extensive activity in several cities. Their objective is to overthrow the Democratic Government of Albania and seize power

themselves. The Albanians of America must take measures against these reactionary provocateurs for the following reasons:

"First — the Ballists are beys or the instruments of the beys, who oppressed and enslaved the people for some four hundred years during the period of Ottoman domination.

"Second — in collaboration with the Italians and Germans, the Ballists burned, devastated and drowned Albania in blood during the recent war.

"Third — both in the past and in the future, the Ballists have been and remain prepared to ally themselves with the enemy in order to partition Albania and enslave it for the benefit of their own class."[254]

In the not too distant future, the President and the Ballist faction will also denounce Noli himself as a "distorter and falsifier."

THE STRATAGEMS OF THE LEGALITETI

Certain chroniclers of Abaz Kupi and admirers of the Legaliteti, both within and outside Albania, through their propaganda and interventions, are preparing the ground to re-evaluate Bazi as a great "patriotic" figure of national stature. Their objective is clear. We shall not concern ourselves with the "legends" surrounding him, but shall instead present several documents which demonstrate his treasonous activities.

It is well known that Abaz Kupi was brought to Albania, together with Muharrem Bajraktari and Mustafa Gjinishi, by Oakley Hill, head of the SO2 espionage and sabotage section based in Belgrade.

Regarding Bazi's landing in April 1941, in addition to archival documents, we also have the testimony of Julian Amery: "The United Front was the product of plans patiently worked out over long hours within the extra-territorial security of the British Legation and at conspiratorial meetings in the dark corners of Belgrade."[255]

It is therefore perfectly clear that it was not "burning patriotism" that brought Abaz Kupi to Albania, but rather the British intelligence service and the "dark corners of Belgrade." Although Abaz Kupi participated in the Conference of Peza and accepted its political platform, he not only remained reserved towards the National Liberation Front but, following Italy's capitulation, withdrew from the Front and sought to establish the royalist-nationalist party.

The Congress of the Legaliteti, held on 21 November 1943, proclaimed the royal regime to be the legit-

imate government, declaring that "our King declared war on Italy, mobilised heroic resistance and gave the signal of patriotism."[256]

Royalist propaganda, too, was dominated by demagogy. King Zogu not only failed to declare war on the Italian occupiers, but capitulated in a shameful manner before Mussolini's ultimatum. Count Ciano recorded in his diary on 1 April 1939: "The Duce approved the outline of the treaty... Tomorrow Jacomoni will present the King with a new draft and make it clear that every action must now be regarded seriously: either he accepts it, in which case a solemn ceremony will be organised in Tirana, or he refuses to sign, and on Thursday evening disturbances will break out throughout the country, making our immediate intervention necessary. We would then land at dawn on Friday.

"During the morning Sereqi, Albania's new minister, came to see me. Passing through Bari, he noticed the concentration of our troops and understood what was being prepared. I spoke frankly and amicably with him. He said he agreed but recommended that the operation be handled in such a way as to be acceptable both to the King and to the people. I took him to the Palazzo Venezia, where the Duce issued him a blunt warning. Sereqi decided to depart for Tirana together with Jacomoni in order to persuade the King. Apologising that he was unable to return the currency, he accepted from Jacomoni his first gratuity of 15,000 lire."[257]

Zogu not only failed to organise the resistance of the Albanian people against the fascist aggression, but entered into negotiations to provide that invasion with a justification, while his foreign minister had al-

ready given it his full approval. Ciano continued in his diary:

"5 April: The King still asks for another 24 hours in order to reflect carefully. In response, through an autograph telegram, the Duce fixes noon on Thursday as the expiry of the ultimatum.

"6 April: At four o'clock a telegram from Zogu to the Duce awaited in the anteroom. He communicated his decision in favour of a military accord and a kind of bargain. We replied that he should send his representatives to Guzzoni... At 7:45 we flew over Durrës. Nothing could be seen except a few people. Some sort of resistance had been organised, as I saw detachments of Bersaglieri sheltering behind piles of coal defending the port... The situation was excellent. I received numerous Albanian delegations who paid me great honours... News of Zogu's flight to Greece extinguished every expectation of resistance in the mountains. Indeed, the soldiers began returning to their barracks after throwing their rifles into the garden of our Legation."[258]

To regard as "heroic resistance" what amounted to a staged military arrangement approved by the occupier is to endorse King Zogu's national betrayal. The spontaneous resistance of Mujo Ulqinaku and his comrades cannot be attributed to the "resistance" of either the King or Abaz Kupi, but rather to their own patriotic spirit. How could the King call upon the people to resist while simultaneously making plans to flee after concluding his bargain with Guzzoni? As the newspaper *Tomori* wrote of Zogu: "Only two things make this man's black soul tremble: money and blood."[259]

Abaz Kupi's ceremonial demonstrations with a handful of gendarmes, while the soldiers surrendered their weapons in the garden of the Italian Legation, did not constitute the "mobilisation of heroic resistance" but a manoeuvre intended to legitimise King Zogu's return to the throne after the war. These manoeuvres became apparent after Italy's capitulation.

On 28 November 1943, Abaz Kupi publicly explained in the newspaper *Atdheu* why he had left the National Liberation Front: "At the Labinot meeting on 25 June I proposed union with the Balli Kombëtar so that together we might fight the occupier. My proposal was regarded as reasonable... At Mukje the union was achieved and a joint committee for the 'salvation of Albania' was elected. Unfortunately, it became apparent that the decisions unanimously adopted at Mukje were not implemented, and this once again caused relations between the two parties, the National Liberation Front and Balli Kombëtar, to deteriorate. Faced with this unexpected development, my comrades and I saw that their union was impossible and therefore decided to proclaim the Legaliteti as it had existed before 7 April."[260]

The newspaper *Bashkimi* exposed Bazi's stratagems, prompting him to clarify: "It is true that I maintained a cool attitude towards the National Liberation Front from as early as 25 June at Labinot, where I observed changes in the decisions of the Conference of Peza. For example, the council which was supposed to consist of five nationalists and two communists appeared with eight communists and two nationalists. This made me realise that the communists had no intention of behav-

ing sincerely towards the nationalists. Under the guise of common struggle they sought to conduct propaganda in order to implement their own programme based on communist principles. This conclusion was further confirmed by the Communist Party of Albania's repudiation of the Mukje Agreement. Everyone knows that I have neither practised nor intend to practise opportunistic politics."[261]

In both of his statements, Kupi identifies as the Communist Party of Albania's error the "disruption" of the nationalist-communist balance within the General Council of the National Liberation Front. He had known of this alleged "error" as early as 25 June at Labinot, where he himself "proposed" negotiations with Balli Kombëtar. Since he was aware of it and had accepted this supposedly "incorrect" balance, why did he not remain faithful to his own proposal to bring the Balli into the National Liberation Front so that "all together" they might fight against the occupier? He did not remain faithful to his own proposal not because the Mukje Agreement collapsed, for its collapse altered nothing in the allegedly "incorrect" balance that Abaz Kupi had already accepted, but because, as noted above in the report of Asime Kosova's intelligence group, following Italy's capitulation Kupi received instructions from the British to go to Tirana and prepare for the landing of Anglo-American forces. This permanently severed him from the National Liberation Front and drew him into the wider Allied strategic design. For the sake of an allegedly "incorrect" balance — which was not incorrect at all — should this principled "nationalist," who claimed never to practise opportunistic

politics, have joined the nazi occupiers against the sons of the Albanian people who had already been fighting for two years to liberate their homeland?

In his own newspaper, Abaz Kupi also declared: "It is absolutely untrue that I have entered into any agreement whatsoever, either with the Balli Kombëtar or with anyone else..."[262]

With this statement, he appears not merely as an opportunist but as an outright liar and deceiver. In a letter from the Balli Kombëtar addressed to its local organisations and signed by Mithat Frashëri, one reads: "We inform you that we enjoy friendship and cooperation with all the leaders of the north, especially with Major Abaz Kupi, whom we have met quite recently."[263]

The letter is dated November 1943 and refers to the agreements concluded by Mithat Frashëri and Ali Këlcyra with the northern bajraktars and tribal leaders, including Kupi, not for immediate warfare against the occupier but for the anti-communist front, evidence of which has already been presented above. Why did Abaz Kupi conceal his agreement with Mithat Frashëri if it did not possess an anti-national character?

Philip Broad, the British representative attached to the Political Office in Bari, informed Harold Macmillan, Minister Resident with the Allied Forces in Algiers, of the composition of Kupi's "army": "Major Kupi's party consists chiefly of former officials of King Zogu's regime who had received no appointments from the Italians, together with members of the gendarmerie and army officers who fled to Yugoslavia with Kupi in 1939."[264]

Regarding these remnants of Zogu's gendarmerie, General Davies reported in December 1943: "The

Zogites are cooperating with the Germans, who are supplying them with ample quantities of weapons and employing them to guard the principal roads as town police and mobile patrols."[265]

This presents an unflattering picture of these supposedly "patriotic" and "non-opportunistic" figures. After the National Liberation Front made several proposals to Abaz Kupi to coordinate military operations against the German army, despite his withdrawal from the Front, a meeting with Enver Hoxha was finally arranged at Shëngjergj near Tirana in December. There, Kupi made recognition of King Zogu a precondition for cooperation. Major Seymour of the British military mission confirmed this: "Kupi insisted upon the full recognition of King Zogu. He would not fight unless Zogu were recognised."[266]

British intelligence likewise informed London: "During consultations with Major Seymour, Abaz Kupi stated that he would undertake no action against the Germans unless the Allies recognised King Zogu... Seymour considers that this policy is in reality merely an excuse for not fighting at all."[267] This document demonstrates that Abaz Kupi fought not for national liberation but for the restoration of the King.

Another British report explains the inactivity of Kupi's forces: "Kupi's real objective is to remain militarily inactive so that he will retain sufficient forces to carry out a coup d'état after the Germans have fallen."[268]

The reason for Abaz Kupi's alliance with the Germans is therefore to be found not in the pretext of nationalist-communist relations but in his behind-the-scenes plans to restore the King to power after the war.

Consequently, it is futile to hold Enver Hoxha responsible for the eventual descent of the "nationalists" into the camp of fascism. Following Maclean's December report expressing the hope that "Abaz Kupi may be persuaded to return to the National Liberation Front,"[269] Kupi became the central figure in Britain's strategy regarding Albania. This policy was confirmed in a report from Alexander Kirk to Washington: "Efforts are under way to create a nationalist bloc around Abaz Kupi, with whom they have been in agreement since 1940. If such a bloc were to fight against the Germans, British support would enable it to draw the moderates away from the National Liberation Front and emerge as the future government of Albania."[270]

Caught between his two sets of allies, the Germans and the British, Abaz Kupi could not enter into combat against the nazis. What he sought was political power, which he believed both sides would secure for him once the National Liberation Front had been defeated. Concerned by Kupi's manoeuvring, Maclean informed London: "It would be excessively optimistic to expect results unless money and supplies are delivered to Abaz Kupi before the commencement of operations."[271]

By making Allied material assistance a precondition for military action, Abaz Kupi placed himself in the position of a mercenary willing to fight not for the liberation of his homeland but for British interests. We do not understand how the President and Kupi's chroniclers can ignore so compromising a fact concerning the man they portray as the "third Skanderbeg" (the second having been Ahmet Zogu, so designated by Faik Konica in 1927).

The Allies made every effort to induce Abaz Kupi to launch at least a few attacks against the Germans so that he might later serve in their political calculations. Instead, hoping for German success, he allied himself with them against the National Liberation Army. In December 1943, the British Military Mission was instructed to follow the line laid down by the Special Operations Executive, namely that aid should be used as leverage "to bring the Legaliteti into at least symbolic activity against the German occupying forces and into some form of agreement with the National Liberation Front."

In July 1944, the United States Department of State similarly instructed: "We should endeavour to secure a non-political agreement between Abaz Kupi and the National Liberation Front for joint action against the Germans."[272]

Despite the considerable efforts made by the Allies as well — which demonstrate the National Liberation Front's complete willingness — the Zogites, like the Ballists, did not enter the war against the Germans, neither in May, nor in July, nor even in November when the war was drawing to a close, whether through a political or a non-political agreement. They neither wished to understand nor succeeded in appreciating in time the opportunity that the Anglo-Americans sought to offer them to rehabilitate themselves and re-emerge after the war.

Despite receiving substantial supplies of weapons, an OSS report to Washington drew attention to Abaz Kupi's military inconsistency: "Kupi has adopted a contradictory position. According to available informa-

tion, he possesses sufficient forces and means to attack the partisans, yet at the same time he reports that he lacks the arms and ammunition necessary to attack the Germans unless Britain supplies him immediately."[273]

Palmer, understanding the purpose for which Abaz Kupi wanted the weapons, informed London: "No arms should be sent to Kupi because they would be used against the partisans. I recommend the immediate withdrawal of the Mission from Kupi."[274]

Influenced by the negative impression created by Abaz Kupi's double-dealing, London appears to have recommended that Bazi obtain from the Germans the additional weapons he needed to resist the partisans through a civil war. Jan Myrdal quotes Neubacher in his book *The Albanian Challenge*: "Fiqiri Dine maintained good relations with Abaz Kupi. From the very beginning of his candidacy for Prime Minister, Fiqiri Dine told me that he could undertake the formation of the government if the Germans provided equipment for two mountain divisions. I remain convinced to this day that this request was made on Kupi's instructions, who had almost certainly reached an understanding with the officers of the British liaison mission in order to secure an arsenal of weapons before the German forces withdrew. With such an arsenal it would have been possible to resist the activities of the red partisans."[275]

Documents concerning Abaz Kupi's cooperation with the Germans against the National Liberation Army are numerous. Here we confine ourselves to the judgement delivered by the United States Department of State in November 1945: "There is abundant evidence obtained by British and American intelligence

services that Kupi and his followers, after October 1943, became involved in collaboration with the Germans and with the puppet regime in Tirana."[276]

How can President Berisha and his historians disregard so significant a document, in which the United States Department of State itself condemned Abaz Kupi and his followers as collaborators of the nazis?

In light of this reality, confirmed also by the declaration of the United States Department of State, Enver Hoxha was entirely justified in saying that Abaz Kupi was neither a man of his word nor a man of action, but remained a figure defined by betrayal.

Opposition to the National Liberation War on ideological pretexts was an attempt to divide the Albanian people. Consequently, the Ballists and Zogites bear historical responsibility for artificially intensifying the class struggle, a conflict which they continued to sustain throughout the entire period of the People's Republic by encouraging anti-Albanian elements both within Albania and in the diaspora, as members of the émigré community themselves have acknowledged.

Regarding the ultimate fate of the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti at the conclusion of the National Liberation War, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden presented their final catastrophe to Winston Churchill on 9 October 1944: "Under these circumstances there is no alternative but to grant full recognition to the National Liberation Front, so that we may retain control over Albania after the war and redouble our efforts to secure complete influence as a counterweight to Russian influence."[277]

The President and admirers of British policy should

note Eden's tactical retreat, whereby he was not only compelled to recognise the National Liberation Front but also openly stated Britain's purpose in doing so: "to retain control over Albania."

The same conclusion concerning the opposition was confirmed by Alexander Kirk, who informed Washington: "The complete overthrow of the entire opposition by the National Liberation Front."[278]

Why were the "nationalists" defeated by the National Liberation Front when they had so confidently proclaimed that "the victory of Albanian nationalism is certain"? The most accurate answer was given by General Davies: "The Albanians have successfully played this quisling game with the Turks, the Italians, the Germans and now with the Allies. I believe that the Allied position should be made publicly known, emphasising that quislings, traitors and those who fail to resist the Germans will receive the punishment they deserve from the Allies when the time comes. I therefore recommend that an open declaration be made in favour of the National Liberation War,"[279] upon whose shoulders "rested the burden of the struggle against the nazi occupation, while the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti readily became partners in the anti-communist front."[280]

The Allied governments did not adopt General Davies's recommendation. Instead, in pursuit of their objective of bringing Albania under their control, they relied precisely upon those quisling and traitorous elements whom, according to Davies, ought to have been punished after the war. Accordingly, the Foreign Office issued the directive: "that the Albanian nationalists be evacuated from Albania for possible future use."

BRITISH PLANS FOR THE OCCUPATION OF ALBANIA

Great Britain had occupied a dominant position in Albania until 1939. Although Chamberlain declared that "Great Britain has no particular ambitions regarding Albania,"[281] the war nevertheless raised the question of who would ultimately control this small country with its exceptionally important geographical position. Albania constituted the key to the Strait of Otranto, commanding access to and from Trieste, which the Americans regarded as a city of immense importance and a strategic focal point. The expansion of the National Liberation War caused concern in Britain that Albania might slip from its grasp. Consequently, among other measures, pressure began to be exerted through General Elliot. Yet these Anglo-Saxon powers failed to achieve through pressure what they had hoped for. They found the Albanians' desire for independence deeply inconvenient. Albania, as a small country lacking sufficient military strength, substantial natural resources and possessing an history marked by hardship, appeared to them an easy prize. However, the emergence of the National Liberation War as an independent military and political force committed to defending the nation's freedom and independence compelled the Anglo-Americans to resort to manoeuvres and pressure in an effort to steer the National Liberation War in accordance with their own interests. Giuliano Amery, explaining the purpose of the "Maclean Mission," observed: "We encouraged our senior authorities to exert the necessary pressure on Hoxha by suspending supplies and propaganda in fa-

vour of the National Liberation Movement, going so far as to threaten an eventual British occupation."[282]

Encouraged by this new tactic, Abaz Kupi issued ultimatums against the National Liberation Front, threatening open military attacks. Philip Broad reported on 4 July: "Kupi will not permit any further advance by the National Liberation Front into his territory."[283]

Abaz Kupi sought to divide Albania into separate territories and zones corresponding to the estates and spheres of influence of the northern clan chieftains, placing northern Albania at the disposal of an Anglo-American landing. On 31 July the Balkan Air Force reported to the United States Department of State: "Kupi has declared that he will resist any partisan movement towards the north, near his Mat region and north of Tirana. He has secured German assistance in transport, ammunition and military supplies."[284]

This document from the Balkan Air Force, preserved in the American archives, serves as evidence that Abaz Kupi, equipped with weapons supplied by nazi Germany, was encouraging a civil war in Albania in cooperation with the Germans. As the National Liberation Army advanced against both the German forces and Kupi's mercenaries, General Wilson hastened to defend them in an ultimatum addressed to Enver Hoxha: "[He] will not tolerate Albanian partisans interfering with his strategic objectives through civil war, and the National Liberation Movement cannot control the whole of Albania or confront the Germans without Allied assistance."[285]

Thanks to Enver Hoxha's intelligence, courage and ability to grasp the deeper significance of events and

emerging political and social developments, the National Liberation War escaped the trap being prepared for it. Contrary to Wilson's assessment, it successfully confronted the Germans and ultimately established complete control over Albania without requiring Allied troops on Albanian territory.

Enver Hoxha's reply to General Wilson is presented as embodying both the strategic and political line of the National Liberation Front: "There is no internal conflict in Albania, still less a civil war. There is only one conflict, one war: first and foremost the war against the occupier and against the traitorous collaborators. There are no political groups or parties outside the National Liberation Front that are fighting the occupier. The Balli Kombëtar, the Legaliteti under Abaz Kupi, as well as the bands of Shefqet Vërlaci and the leaders of Dibra, are all in direct collaboration with the German military command in Albania and constitute the principal support of the puppet government in Tirana. These organisations and these men form an integral part of the quisling betrayal and are fighting side by side with the Germans against the National Liberation Movement in Albania, and therefore also against the Allies."[286]

Having failed to divert the National Liberation War into a civil war in accordance with their plans, the British allegedly turned to planning the occupation of Albania itself. They insisted upon organising a joint operation against the Germans that would involve the landing of British troops on the Albanian coast. During preparations for the operation, Philip Broad reported to London the views of the British liaison officers:

"If everything goes well we shall be in a position to keep Albania occupied."[287]

The military occupation of Albania was subsequently envisaged in a memorandum of the British War Office in September 1944. The occupation was to be carried out "in order to establish law and order after Germany's capitulation."[288]

Such a military landing, however, could not be undertaken, not only because of Enver Hoxha's firm opposition, but also because the Tehran Conference rejected it. Stalin opposed Churchill's proposal for an Allied landing in the Balkans, insisting instead that Allied forces should invade Western Europe, a position ultimately endorsed by the Conference.

In order to justify a military intervention, the British allegedly sought to provoke incidents within Albania through Abaz Kupi. Such incidents would provide a pretext for intervention before international public opinion. Deception remained Britain's only remaining instrument. Palmer reported to London on a conversation with General Wilson: "I pointed out the difficulties we would encounter with the National Liberation Front lest they conclude that this was an occupation force. I suggested that, if it had been decided to remove Hoxha from Albania, the most suitable moment would be before the liberation forces were sent into Albania. Hoxha's presence in Italy would weaken his position. General Wilson expressed the same view."[289]

Perceiving the danger posed by a possible occupation, Enver Hoxha, following the joint operation at Saranda, issued the ultimatum: "The operation is over and your forces must withdraw immediately," while warn-

ing the British: "We shall make no distinction between British officers and bandits such as Abaz Kupi. Should we capture your officers, we shall bring them before a partisan court as war criminals who collaborated with the enemy."[290]

Philip Broad communicated Enver Hoxha's unwavering position to London: "A pronounced unwillingness on the part of the Commander-in-Chief of the National Liberation Front, Enver Hoxha, to grant his approval for the employment of British troops in Albania."[291]

These documents demonstrate that Enver Hoxha was the principal figure responsible for thwarting Anglo-American plans to occupy Albania, thereby explaining the intensity of the attacks directed against him by "the servants of many masters." What, precisely, did Enver Hoxha distort or falsify by refusing to permit one occupying power to be replaced by another? Enver Hoxha's entire conduct demonstrates that he was the architect of modern Albanian history and the only leader in the Balkans to lead his people to victory solely through their own efforts. Furthermore, he contributed to the liberation of Yugoslav territory, thereby demonstrating his commitment to the common cause of the Balkan peoples.

To occupy Albania, the British used UNRRA aid, whose director instructed: "These operations must be conducted in such a way as to avoid any contact with General Hoxha's administration. Further details must not be disclosed for reasons of secrecy."[292]

The same guidance came from the deputy director, Peter Flood, in information sent to Haskell in Decem-

ber 1944: "The aid will be delivered through the landing of the naval fleet without prior consultation and without informing the Albanian authorities."[293]

This constituted a flagrant violation of the UNRRA Resolution, which stated: "The UNRRA Administration shall act only after consultation with the recognised governments or national authorities, and only with their consent."[294]

The Military Aid Headquarters claimed that this provision of the UNRRA Resolution did not apply to Albania on the pretext that "no liberation movement had been officially recognised; therefore the plan must be carried out without the involvement of any Albanian representative."[295]

Although this occurred at the time when the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee elected at the Congress of Përmet had become the Provisional Democratic Government in Berat, this reality was ignored. Instead, the Balkan Air Force prepared alternative plans for landing military forces in the areas of Durrës and Vlora, accompanied by the ultimatum that "military aid must enter Albania as part of the occupying forces."[296]

The *History of UNRRA*, dated 12 January 1945, records: "General Hoxha was cordial towards the representatives of the MM [Military Mission], but he was entirely firm on two issues. First, as a matter of principle, he opposed attaching conditions to the receipt of aid. Secondly, as a practical matter, he considered the number of personnel proposed by the MM excessive. He insisted that the aid should be taken under the control of his authorities on board the ships, and that they

alone would bear responsibility for its distribution."[297]

Enver Hoxha's demands, both in principle and in practice, were connected with the dignity of the Albanian people. At the same time, they reflected vigilance towards the British intention to create confusion through the large number of Military Mission personnel involved in distributing the aid. An Allied memorandum commented on Hoxha's position: "Hoxha suspects military penetration under the pretext of aid... This suspicion has arisen from the events in Greece."[298]

After considerable hesitation, the UNRRA Administration was compelled to accept Hoxha's insistence, as he "categorically refused to allow Military Aid personnel to remain with UNRRA,"[299] since it was a civilian humanitarian organisation.

This represented the final blow to Anglo-American hopes of a military occupation and caused irritation within the British government. Ivor Pink, Acting First Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented: "It seems to me absolutely intolerable that a handful of uncouth Albanian communists, who are being offered urgent assistance free of charge and for nothing, should have the impudence to say that they will accept our aid only on their own terms."[300]

Mr Pink, however, appears not to have been aware of the letter written by the head of the Mission, who stated: "I am fully convinced that a large proportion of our difficulties with the government resulted from the great irresponsibility of a group within the Mission, which went astray under Haskell's influence. This conduct consisted of irresponsible anti-government discussions and deceitful behaviour towards Albania."[301]

Why should Enver Hoxha be described as a servile dictator simply because he did not allow Anglo-American intrigues and covert schemes against Albania to succeed, as they allegedly had in Tito's Yugoslavia or in Albania today? UNRRA documents themselves state: "It was difficult to avoid the conclusion that this aid was determined not by humanitarian factors but by political ones."[302]

This assessment was confirmed by the devastating floods that struck Albania in October 1946. The United States government "opposed authorising the export of grain to Albania,"[303] and the UNRRA Administration, whose director had approved a fund of 250,000 dollars, "failed to find another source from which to secure the grain."[304]

This is evidence of the American government's "humanitarianism" towards the Albanian people. In December 1946 a memorandum expressing the unanimous opinion of the 69 members of the Mission and the voluntary organisations declared: "As a result of the close integration of UNRRA with the Military Mission, UNRRA had become involved in an operation that was contrary to the fundamental principle that aid should not be administered by force or clandestinely. This situation could only be remedied if the Director General or his authorised representative made it clear to the world and to the Albanian people that UNRRA had no connection with this operation."[305]

Thus the honest officials who served within the UNRRA Administration themselves condemned the secret British attempt to occupy Albania militarily.

Today there are renegades, capitulators and serv-

ants of new masters who describe Enver Hoxha's determined struggle to preserve Albania's independence and national sovereignty as nothing more than a personal whim. His struggle to prevent Albania from becoming a foreign protectorate was not a whim, but a profoundly patriotic act inspired by the ideals of the Albanian National Renaissance, ideals that he placed at the very foundation of the Communist Party of Albania's political programme.

THE "DEPUTIES' GROUP" AS AN ANGLO-AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE NETWORK

The Anglo-American attempts to overthrow the people's government in Albania and establish a political regime that would serve their interests, thereby restoring Albania as a sphere of influence and strategic zone, were numerous. To this end, after the liberation the British government dispatched a military mission to Albania. In June 1945 the Foreign Office acknowledged: "The military mission will serve to establish links with the opposition groups and provide them with the support they require."[306]

One of the groups that served British policy was the so-called "Deputies' Group." On 13 March, following the arrest of Gjergj Kokoshi, a report was sent from Caserta to the British Foreign Office stating: "Kokoshi's visit to the military mission is evidence compromising the military mission... Major Arnott has become somewhat alarmed. He believes that his name may be mentioned in certain political trials. The War Office has likewise become anxious. It is possible that those implicated in this trial will tell the truth and reveal that they had contacts with this mission."[307]

Fear that Arnott's name might arise during the trial prompted him to request his removal: "The situation has become extremely difficult. The personnel of the Military Mission should be withdrawn... the safety of the Mission's members will be endangered if they remain there."[308]

On 30 June Arnott reported: "The statements

made during the Albanian trials are undoubtedly correct. They correspond with the implications drawn from the notes kept by the convicted Albanians. I believe that further information may emerge concerning the other accused: Kokoshi, Asllani, Shaban Balla, Musine Kokalari and Anastas Papapostoli."[309]

Since the British Military Mission's major accepted that "the statements made by the convicted Albanians are undoubtedly correct," it remains only to cite several of those statements by way of illustration. The defendants admitted before the court that they had committed crimes by killing several regional figures and that they had intended to assassinate Enver Hoxha.[310]

Riza Alizoti, the son of a former minister executed as a war criminal, declared: "In 1929 I continued my studies at the technical school under Fultz. In 1945 I signed a contract with SBS and again came under Fultz's direction... On his instructions I organised a sabotage group at the Kuçova oilfield."[311]

Sulo Klosi, a member of the Balli Kombëtar, admitted not only his activities and contacts with the Anglo-American mission, but also that it directed other sabotage organisations, including the Deputies' Group and the group of "technical intellectuals."[312]

It is impossible to reproduce all the statements made by those arrested and convicted. It should be emphasised, however, that they were convicted on the basis of sabotage in the economic sector, terrorist activities and espionage. The following extract from Prosecutor Josif Pashko's closing argument illustrates this: "From the defendants' own admissions it became entirely clear that the deputies' organisation, at the request of

the Americans, decided to launch an uprising in September 1946 by mobilising the fugitives into a general action and attacking Shkodra. Simultaneously with the capture of the city, an Anglo-American landing was to take place. The assault on Shkodra had been prepared several months earlier. Riza Dani of the deputies' organisation and Abdyl Kokoshi of the Balli Kombëtar group had both travelled there."[313]

A report dated 10 July confirmed the connections between the various groups and the Anglo-American agents: "Number 12, Larry Post, is the Military Mission's liaison within Organisation A. Qehan Dibra maintained contact with Colonel Palmer. Numbers 1, 2, 3, 8, 12 and 14 maintain contacts with Major Arnott..."[314]

The coding and numerical designation of opposition figures by the British Military Mission categorically excludes the possibility that this was an opposition animated by national or democratic ideals. It has been fully established that these were intelligence networks which, with remarkable audacity, have been rehabilitated by the President and contemporary propaganda as genuine "democrats" who supposedly "fought communism," but who, it is claimed, were "unjustly condemned" by Enver Hoxha's communist dictatorship. Where has it ever been seen that spies and saboteurs should not be punished? Such a thing could occur only when those rehabilitating them are themselves the descendants of spies. Roger Pisenti's report reinforces the claim that the post-liberation opposition groups were intelligence organisations: "The British Military Mission in Albania established

contacts with opposition elements in order to obtain intelligence."[315]

The failure of the conspiracies against the new democratic government during the first years after liberation, just like the withdrawal of the forces landed in 1944, did not bring anti-Albanian activity to an end. Giuliano Amery, a friend of the President and the Democratic Party, acknowledged in March 1949: "The intelligence services asked me to organise an organisation for a counter-revolution in Albania. I expressed my willingness to do so."[316]

Foreign intelligence services organised numerous counter-revolutionary groups, which were employed in various ways. Nicholas Bethell, an international judge on freedom of information, records the following concerning the military invasion prepared by the Anglo-American intelligence services: "The United States and Britain were at peace with Albania, and the attack they sponsored constituted a clear violation of international law. Members of the British intelligence service who participated in the conspiracy admitted that they had violated international law."[317]

In conclusion, what did Enver Hoxha distort or falsify by describing these organisations as intelligence and sabotage groups, as documented by Anglo-American testimony itself?

Why should the punishment of such elements, who sought to overthrow the people's government by relying on foreign powers, be described as a "crime of the communist dictatorship"? Perhaps our President regards such blatant interference in Albania's internal affairs as "commitment" and "assistance" in the victory

of democracy. Our people have never desired this kind of "freedom and democracy" imposed by foreigners through the dictatorship of the overthrown classes. They hate, despise and fight spies and saboteurs.

The most dangerous intelligence network, which inflicted incalculable damage upon our country and our people, was that of the double-agent Mehmet Shehu. As early as 1944, reports by American and British intelligence services identified him as the individual most likely to lead a coup d'état.

November 1944: "...A pro-British sentiment is evident among several of the principal leaders. It is clear that there are some who are completely opposed to the Party's present policy but are unable to express their views openly. Nevertheless, it is important to take into consideration the potential opposition within the movement and its possible leaders. These are: Mehmet Shehu: personally an ambitious and boastful man. He is undoubtedly the most respected and important military figure within the movement. He is a communist, but his personal ambition outweighs his loyalty to the Party... Every effort should be made to prevent the elimination of these pro-British elements, already known to us, and we should endeavour continually to strengthen their position."[318]

We do not know precisely what efforts were made by the American intelligence service to save from elimination those individuals whose personal ambition outweighed their loyalty to the Party and who might potentially have been used to overthrow the democratic government. It is only now that it becomes known that Mehmet Shehu's apparent loyalty to Enver Hoxha had

itself been directed by foreign intelligence services in order to win Hoxha's confidence.

December 1944: "Mehmet Shehu is strongly inclined to pursue his personal ambitions by attacking the government of the National Liberation Front. The only man in Albania capable of diverting the army's loyalty from the government to himself is M. Shehu... This opportunist group consists of men who, driven by a desire for power and personal ambition, may exploit various dissatisfied elements of the Right, especially the non-political sections of the army, to overthrow the government from the Right. There is no doubt that if this type succeeds in cultivating elements hostile to the leadership of the National Liberation Front, he has the best chance of overthrowing them. Any successful revolution in Albania would have to be supported by a major external power."[319]

August 1951: The British Embassy in Paris quoted the French Foreign Minister: "Of the two factions which appear to exist within the Communist Party of Albania, the one led by Enver Hoxha appears to be giving ground to that led by M. Shehu."[320]

The Yugoslav Foreign Minister commented to a representative of the British Embassy in Belgrade: "A principal feature of Albanian politics today is the struggle between Shehu and Hoxha."[321]

February 1952: *Albania News Bulletin* published a statement by the "Free Albania" National Committee: "The rift between Prime Minister Hoxha and Interior Minister M. Shehu... has deepened further in recent months."[322]

The British Embassy in Belgrade reported in Au-

gust 1952 on an article in the newspaper *Politika*: "The conflict between Hoxha and Shehu may soon come into the open, and Shehu is likely to succeed in eliminating his rival."[323]

In September 1952, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden paid a visit to Yugoslavia. The British Foreign Office summarised the discussions: "Our interest in the internal situation in Albania centres upon the degree of popular dissatisfaction with the regime and the struggle for power between Prime Minister Hoxha and Interior Minister Shehu."[324]

Tito, meanwhile, expressed to Eden his doubts regarding Enver Hoxha's position: "Prime Minister Hoxha's position appears to be weakening, and perhaps he will be overthrown by his rival M. Shehu."[325]

There were many attempts to overthrow Enver Hoxha during his lifetime, but they failed because of the great affection and support he enjoyed among the people.

In July 1954, Ivor Vincent, an official at the British Foreign Office, reported: "General Mehmet Shehu has been presented as pro-Yugoslav."[326]

According to the above documents, Mehmet Shehu was described by foreign sources as pro-British, pro-American and pro-Yugoslav, thereby fully deserving the label that Enver Hoxha attached to him: double-agent.

It is important to emphasise that Enver Hoxha had received information regarding Mehmet Shehu's links with foreign intelligence services. However, suspecting that such reports formed part of a propaganda campaign intended to sow division within the Party

leadership, he disregarded them, particularly in view of the extraordinary zeal displayed by the alleged double-agent for the Party and the people's government. This demonstrates not only that Enver Hoxha consistently governed through collective leadership, but also refutes what is described as the monstrous slander that "Enver Hoxha eliminated his associates in order to preserve his own power."

Had Enver Hoxha followed such a practice, he would have eliminated Mehmet Shehu immediately after receiving the first report and would thereafter have governed alone with complete security.

Butka's absurdity reaches its height when he declares that the "civil war" in Albania continued until 1953 through the bands of infiltrators.[327]

This Ballist maintains that Albania should have opened its doors to infiltrators and criminals, allowing them to turn the country into a slaughterhouse.

Anglo-American-Yugoslav political strategy worked intensively to destabilise and occupy Albania. Louis Dube, an officer involved in CIA-directed operations, declared under oath in September 1982: "The FOIA plaintiff seeks information regarding the concealment of operations in Albania. This can neither be confirmed nor denied. An affirmative or negative response could cause disruption to national security."[328]

Some of these officers presented documents to the international judge for Freedom of Information, Nicholas Bethell, showing that the Anglo-American intelligence services had begun planning these operations some time before they received formal high-level approval in the autumn of 1949.

According to these plans, training centres were established for saboteurs drawn from Albanian political émigrés. In his book *Albanian Assignment*, David Smiley describes the purpose of the Albanian political exiles trained in the camps on Malta: "The recruited Albanians would be infiltrated into the country to establish contact with their comrades and relatives so that together they could strengthen the nucleus of the active opposition against the communists."[329]

According to Smiley, the infiltrators had received "training in the use of rifles, pistols, knives and radio transmitters."[330] Why did these infiltrators require knives and firearms? They needed them in order to terrorise the population. In his book Smiley also writes about Karaburun and the northern coastal areas of Vlora, where his infiltrators landed and met the same fate as the others.

One of these infiltrators trained by David Smiley in Malta later wrote in the newspapers of the Balli Kombëtar that news of their landing had been transmitted on the radio by an American officer who was a communist. The notification was in fact made by the CIA in order to enable Interior Minister Mehmet Shehu to demonstrate his "loyalty" to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The *Sunday Times* wrote: "The operation was a disaster; its outcome was swift and bloody. Within a month more than half of the total force had been killed or captured."[331]

The landings and parachute drops of bands of infiltrators were numerous and well known throughout Albania. It was likewise understood that someone would be waiting to intercept these groups. Nicholas Bethell

cites statements made by the American intelligence services: "The American intelligence service, encouraged by the results of its intelligence work, declared that 'the bases of the opposition had been established.'"[332]

One radio broadcast announced: "There was now in Albania a nucleus of army and police officers prepared to act against the communist regime."[333]

The arbitrary actions of these officers, concealed under the pretext of serving the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat, resulted in unjust convictions intended to create public dissatisfaction and undermine national unity. Today, all of these deliberate actions are presented as examples of Enver Hoxha's dictatorship, whereas the above American archival document allegedly demonstrates that it was army and police officers recruited by foreign intelligence services who carried out these unjust punishments in pursuit of predetermined objectives.

In October 1951, investigations began in Tirana into the fourteen captured agents. Bethell writes: "The information emerging from the Tirana trials of 1951 was essentially accurate. The data, names and details contained in the records are generally consistent with the facts later provided by the Albanian and American participants, thrity-three years after the operation."[334]

The Yugoslav government displayed the same degree of aggression. Intelligence officer Robert Grash testified in August 1950: "The Yugoslav Committee has sent several bands into Albanian territory during the past six months. Some of these have been captured."[335]

By describing the suppression of these infiltrators as a "civil war," was Butka in fact advocating that the gates

be opened to Tito's armed bands in order to overthrow communism in Albania and seize political power?

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENT BERISHA

The projects of the Anglo-American intelligence services also included plans to assassinate the leaders of the people's government. Bethell writes: "If several Albanian leaders could be eliminated, even by means of a suicide mission, it would be worthwhile... If Enver Hoxha or someone close to him were publicly disposed of, it would have a tremendous effect."[336]

This method was considered too conspicuous, and it was agreed that "the operation should proceed according to the American plan devised by the Office of Policy Coordination."[337]

Since they failed to defeat Enver Hoxha while he was alive, his enemies, with the assistance of the President and those who follow him, are now vainly attempting to dishonour him after his death.

To accuse Enver Hoxha of distortion and falsification during the period 1942–1948 is to assume a grave responsibility. Such an accusation inevitably raises the question: what, then, of the Albanian people who supported and endorsed Enver Hoxha? Are the people themselves also to be regarded as distorters and falsifiers?

One might debate Enver Hoxha's responsibility for the period criticised by our President if the National Liberation War had ended in failure. However, since the National Liberation War, to which Enver Hoxha made a decisive contribution, was victorious, why is he accused of being a falsifier and a dictator? Did the President perhaps wish that the war had been lost?

One might also debate Enver Hoxha's responsibility if Albania had lost even a single inch of its territory under his leadership. Yet since Albania preserved the territorial integrity recognised by international treaties, why should the man who prevented the partition of Albania be denounced as a falsifier and a dictator? Did our President and the circle accompanying him in anti-Enver hysteria wish to see Albania partitioned?

Enver Hoxha forged among the heroic Albanian people a modern army, equipped with a strategy and tactics suited to the lofty objective of defending the Homeland, based above all upon the experience of the National Liberation War and all the wars fought by our people in the past. He based national defence upon Albania's own forces rather than foreign assistance, economic or political circumstances or the protective umbrella of one or another superpower, challenging military blocs which, he maintained, were nothing more than traps designed to enslave nations. As Enver Hoxha emphasised, the foundation of the art of people's war was the determination to defend every inch of the homeland.

In these turbulent days through which we are now living, together with the destruction of the socialist superstructure, our people's army was likewise dismantled and placed under the authority of military blocs. There is now a tendency to give the armed forces an anti-popular character and subordinate them to foreign command. The attitudes of neighbouring states demonstrate attempts to partition Albania and reduce it to a protectorate, reflecting traditional imperialist policies and rivalries in which the Albanian question is

treated as a bargaining chip. Albanian military officers must not permit themselves, amid the present highly charged political situation and any future developments in Albania, to be used as counter-revolutionary forces against their own people, with whom the army had remained as inseparable as flesh from bone for fifty years.

Deputy Pashko, one of the leaders of Albania's early "democratic" movement, warned in a parliamentary statement that "dictatorship is once again knocking at the door of Albanian society."[338]

The healthy part of the Albanian people is not alarmed by such declarations because it has long understood that when a communist party degenerates into a bourgeois political party, or into several bourgeois political parties, state power inevitably degenerates from the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The new bourgeoisie emerging through the restoration of the capitalist economic system seeks, in a new form, to intensify the bourgeois dictatorship and to develop the political system best suited to consolidating its own dominant position. Yet the Albanian people possess the historical experience of resisting dictatorships, beginning with the expulsion of Mussolini and Hitler from their soil, retain the memory of the stability of the past and will know how to determine their own future.

Enver Hoxha armed an entire people to defend themselves against dictatorships, whereas today's "democrats" and government leaders disarmed the people because they feared them. The experience of the glorious National Liberation Army will remain a source of

inspiration and profound respect for those courageous men who fought and sacrificed themselves for national freedom and independence.

It has now become entirely clear that the campaign against Enver Hoxha, orchestrated by traitors and renegades who capitulated before foreign intelligence services and external pressures, is directed not merely at repudiating him personally but at repudiating the ideals and aspirations that he represented throughout that half-century.

During the struggle against modern revisionism, the same accusations levelled against Enver Hoxha had previously been directed against Stalin by agents of imperialism: Tito and Khrushchev, who denounced him as dogmatic and dictatorial, despite Tito's own lack of democracy, exemplified by the forced displacement of thousands upon thousands of Kosovo Albanians from their ancestral lands. Equally well known were Khrushchev's vehement demands, made while intervening in the internal affairs of Albania's Party and state, from the podium of the Twenty-Second Congress, for the overthrow of Enver Hoxha. Tito had likewise sought Hoxha's overthrow through four conspiracies against Albania in 1944, 1948, 1956 and 1960, including plans for an armed attack in cooperation with neighbouring states and the United States Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

The overthrow of Enver Hoxha was also demanded by the Albanian political émigré opposition abroad, who opposed him not only through propaganda, diversionary and terrorist bands but also through armed uprisings, such as those they attempted in Koplik and Shkodra during 1945–46.

Fan Noli offered the following assessment of Enver Hoxha in the newspaper *Dielli*: "The blazing sun is the democratic government of Enver Hoxha, under which, for the first time in its history, little Albania stood face to face with those who sought to bully it and knew how to give them their answer, whether they were the defeated in war, such as Greece, or great powers such as Britain... Like all the other reactionaries, our Ballists who emigrated to Italy and elsewhere have launched an offensive, if not with weapons then with propaganda. They evidently believe in all seriousness that a swift Russo-American war will return them from exile to Tirana. But our Ballists died politically the moment their policy of collaboration with the fascists and nazis collapsed. Providence decreed that the partisans, with Enver Hoxha at their head, arrived and not only pulled Albania back from the brink of death, but also placed it among the living, alongside the Allied states. Had the unimaginable occurred and our Ballists remained in power after Germany's defeat, the outcome would have been complete anarchy, worse than that of Greece, leading either to a reactionary dictatorship or to the final partition of the country. No Albanian possessing even a modicum of sense can support the Ballists, who wish to bring Albania to the edge of the grave for a second time. Pay them no heed, but put them in their place, and their place is in the graves of fascism."[339]

Time proved that the Ballist-Zogite reaction had not died. Following America's victory over Russia forty-five years later, they emerged from the cellar of old Nurihan's house, where, as Kadare describes it, they had been waiting for the downfall of communist rule.

President Berisha and his successors will never succeed in their objective of eliminating Enver Hoxha as the central political figure of Albania during the second half of the twentieth century.

This poses a natural question: can a man who realised the great slogan, "Socialism is the work of the masses," truly be called a dictator? A semi-feudal Albania made a qualitative leap in every sphere of life solely through Enver Hoxha's leadership. Under his leadership, Albania experienced a population increase of more than threefold — greater than that of any other European country — a doubling of life expectancy, unprecedented mass education, free health care, admirable public security, international prestige and genuine sovereignty. He armed the entire population, including schoolchildren, under the Leninist slogan, "The whole people are soldiers." Can such a man be called a dictator when he entrusted weapons to the masses without relying upon any foreign power to impose dictatorship over them?

If Enver Hoxha had truly been "subservient" and had "taken his orders from Tito," he would have knelt before him, just as Khrushchev and others did at America's behest. Instead, Enver Hoxha courageously resisted the pressures and blackmail of the renegades of Marxism-Leninism, just as he resisted the hostile policies of Western reaction led by the United States.

At the Congress of Sociologists in 1978, President Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, reportedly declared: "In 1977 Tito made an extraordinarily important move in foreign policy with his visit to China, which Hua Guofeng is now reciprocat-

ing. For both Yugoslavia and China this relationship is of multiple significance. Yugoslavia is gaining not only a political ally but also an ideological one against Soviet pressure, thereby strengthening its position within the international communist movement. China, meanwhile, gains a direct window onto Western Europe, which it lost when Albania slipped from its sphere of influence."[340]

The fundamental conflict between Enver Hoxha and the Communist Party of China arose not only because China enabled Yugoslavia to gain both a political and ideological ally, thereby strengthening Yugoslavia's already discredited position within the international communist movement, but above all because of the Chinese proposal to establish an anti-Soviet alliance in the Balkans comprising Yugoslavia, Romania and Albania under Tito's leadership. The Chinese leadership wanted Albania to become subordinate to Tito!

By holding Enver Hoxha responsible for the break with China, did certain pseudo-politicians in fact wish to place Albania under Yugoslav domination? Had Enver Hoxha truly been "Tito's puppet," there would have been no reason for the continuous tensions in post-war Albanian-Yugoslav relations, tensions which consistently stemmed from the anti-Albanian orientation of Yugoslav policy, its refusal to accept the existence of an independent Albanian state and its failure to recognise Albanians as a nation. Why did our President and certain Albanian intellectuals join Belgrade's calls to renounce Enver Hoxha?!

Reflecting upon the entire period analysed above, several questions arise:

1. Who sought the elimination of Enver Hoxha during 1942–43? The Italian fascists.

2. Who sought the elimination of Enver Hoxha during 1943–44? The German nazis.

3. Who sought the elimination of Enver Hoxha during 1944–48? The Yugoslav Titoites and the Anglo-American intelligence services.

4. What links President Berisha and his followers with the Italian fascists, the German nazis, the Yugoslav Titoites and the Anglo-American intelligence services?

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