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Biographical note

Markenc Lorenci is a teaching fellow in the Department of Political Science at the University of Roma Tre. In 2021 he obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Roma Tre in co-direction with the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, with a dissertation on the Albanian Communist Party from its founding to the seizure of power (1941-1944).

FROM POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION TO THE STRUCTURING OF RESISTANCE: THE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE FROM YUGOSLAVIAN TO ALBANIAN COMMUNISTS DURING THE YEARS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Markenc Lorenci

Abstract

This article aims to reconstruct and reflect on the contribution in terms of knowledge given by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*) to the Albanian Communist Party (*Partia Komuniste Shqiptare* – PKSh) both in its organization and structuring and in that of the Albanian partisan movement led by it, in a period extending from the eve of the foundation of the PKSh in 1941 to its seizure of power in 1944. In the study of the transfer of this knowledge, importance will also be given to the analysis of the repercussions that this action had on the relations between the two parties. The ultimate objective of this article is to attempt to give the PKSh, and with it the Albanian partisan movement, a transnational dimension, thus breaking it out of the rigidly national framework in which it has been seen and continues to be seen to the present day.

Keywords: Albania, Second World War, Albanian Communist Party, Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Transfer of knowledge.

1. Introduction

The relationship between the Albanian Communist Party (*Partia Komuniste Shqiptare* – PKSh) and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije* – KPJ) during the years of the Second World War, and in particular the role that the Yugoslav communists played in the period from the foundation of the PKSh to its seizure of power (1941-1944), is a topic that has aroused continuous interest and debate. Albanian historians

during the communist regime and the PKSh leader Enver Hoxha himself, in his memoirs, always tended to minimize the role of the KPJ while simultaneously accusing it of aggressive imperialism.¹ Outside Albania's borders, however, official Yugoslav historiography emphasized the fundamental role of the KPJ in the foundation and organization of the PKSh, in particular (but not only) through its two emissaries, Miladin Popović and Dušan Mugoša, present at the founding session of the new PKSh and during its first years of life.² Some Albanian scholars and those of Albanian origin who have published works on Albania in the West have also been of the same opinion, in particular Stavro Skendi, Tajar Zavalani, Stephen Peters and Nicholas C. Pano, who have attributed a decisive role not only in the foundation of the PKSh but also in its direction during the war to the two Yugoslav emissaries mentioned above and to the KPJ in general.³

With the collapse of the Albanian communist regime and the end of censorship, vigorous debates on the dynamics that led to the victory of the PKSh and the role played by the KPJ emerged in Albania. Yet today there is still little scholarly attention given to this topic and in particular to one of its crucial aspects, namely the transfer of knowledge from the Yugoslav communists to the Albanian communists, an aspect on which the present article aims to shed light. In fact, if in some general works on the events that characterized Albania during the Second World War, the role of the members of the KPJ has been allocated limited and superficial space,⁴ in those works that instead have tried to reconstruct the dynamics that characterized the Albanian communist movement in its early years of existence, attention has been focused on what has been defined as a tendency of the KPJ to dominate the PKSh.⁵ The same deficit can also be seen in those few monographic works which have emphasized political dynamics in the reconstruction of the relations between the two parties, leaving little space for knowledge transfer on the ground.⁶

Consequently, this article aims to reconstruct and reflect on the contribution in terms of knowledge given by the KPJ to the PKSh both in its organization and structuring and in that of the Albanian partisan movement led by it, in a period extending from the eve of the foundation of the Albanian Communist Party in 1941 to its seizure of power in 1944. In the study of the transfer of this knowledge, much importance will also be given to the analysis of the repercussions that this action had on the relations between the two parties. The ultimate objective of this article is to attempt to give the PKSh, and with it the Albanian partisan movement, a transnational dimension, thus breaking it out of the rigidly national

framework that has characterized it and continues to characterize it to the present day.

2. Establishment of a bond

The Albanian communist movement, unlike the others in the Balkan area, emerged very late and was characterized by great internal division. During the interwar period and preceding the founding of the Party in November 1941, a series of communist groups operated in Albania. Among them, the most important were the Korçë Communist Group, the Shkodër Communist Group, and the so-called Youth Communist Group, this last based in Tirana.⁷ In addition to personal frictions between the leaders of these groups, the main division was that concerning in particular the acceptance of the new policy of popular fronts outlined in 1935 during the VII Congress of the Comintern, according to which the communist parties had to join the other anti-fascist political forces in a broad front to fight the main enemy, namely fascist imperialisms.⁸ While the Korçë Communist Group immediately accepted this political line, the Shkodër Communist Group and the Youth Group proved more reserved. In order to overcome such difficulties, in 1936, the Comintern commissioned one of the best-known Albanian communists, namely Koço Tashko, to return to his country and work for the union of local communists in a single party, forged according to the new political line produced by the VII Congress.⁹ However, Tashko's mission came to nothing, precisely because of the continuing hostility between the groups and their continuing differences in political views. Subsequently, the fascist occupation of Albania in April 1939, and above all the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in August of the same year, created a situation of disorientation and stalemate among the Albanian communists which served only to further delay the formation of a single party.

This situation only ended with the attack on the Soviet Union by Hitler's Germany in June 1941. This event made it a matter of urgency for the Albanian communists to overcome their disagreements, to form a single party and proceed to armed struggle. To this end they began to move, searching again for the help of the Comintern to overcome their disagreements. However, the defection from the communist movement of Lazar Fundo, one of the pioneers of Albanian communism, who had been appointed in 1936 to settle in Paris and from there to act as an intermediary

between the Comintern and the communists of his country, together with the outbreak of the War had cut direct connections with the Communist International. To get around this difficulty, Tashko, who still played the role of representative of the Comintern, undertook a trip to Italy with the aim of getting in touch with the Communist Party of Italy and through this with Moscow. Unlike Tashko, who was unsuccessful in his mission,¹⁰ the Youth Communist Group, which had had the same intuition, managed to get in touch with the Italian communist Rutilio Reali through some Albanians interned on the Tremiti islands in Italy. News arrived from Italy that the Comintern, in the situation in which it found itself, considered it impossible to send one of its delegates to Albania to resolve the situation of the Albanian communists once and for all. The Italian communist Reali recommended turning to the KPJ because, according to him, the Balkans belonged to this party.¹¹

Reali's affirmation was most likely due to the fact that during the period 1939-1941 the KPJ had assumed a crucial role in the affairs of the Comintern. In fact, in January 1940, the Comintern had installed a radio transmitter in Zagreb, managed by the Slovenian communist Josip Kopinič, which was used to maintain contact with the Italian, Swiss, Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Greek, Slovak, and of course Yugoslavian communist parties. As with previous operations, for example support for the Spanish republicans via the French Communist Party, the "host" communist party, the KPJ, was expected to provide support structures and to help implement Comintern decisions. Thus, small groups of KPJ members were made available to the Communist International to act as couriers to the other parties. Providing in this way the expected support in terms of personnel but also printed material, the KPJ acquired great prestige in the international communist movement, finding itself at the time of the German attack on the USSR *primus inter pares* among the communist parties.¹²

Simultaneously with the attempts made by Tashko and the members of the Youth Communist Group, the Shkodër Communist Group had instead thought of asking for help directly from the KPJ and precisely from the KPJ Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija with which it maintained contacts through two Kosovar former students of the local state high school, Fadil Hoxha and Emin Duraku. According to the Yugoslav historian Vladimir Dedijer, already in mid-1939 the Secretary of the KPJ, Josip Broz Tito, had sent Miladin Popović, secretary of the Regional Committee of the KPJ for Kosovo and Metohija, to Shkodër with the task

of studying what support to provide to the Albanian communists in order to arrive at the foundation of a party.¹³

To the request for help from the Shkodër communists, the KPJ Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija responded positively by instructing one of its members, Dušan Mugoša, to go to Albania in the absence of its secretary, Miladin Popović, who had been arrested and interned in a concentration camp at Peqin in Albania.¹⁴ Mugoša went to Albania in September 1941 and stayed there for ten days. He was well received by the Shkodër Communist Group and also made contact with the Korçë Communist Group and the Youth Group, who, however, refused to accept Mugoša as a leader in the fusion of the different factions into a single party. In particular, Tashko and members of the Korçë Communist Group considered that Mugoša lacked the credentials necessary to represent the Comintern. Offended by the poor consideration he received, Mugoša put an end to his mission. However, before returning to his headquarters, he made sure to ask the local communists to commit themselves to achieving Popović's release, indicating that he was the most suitable person to help in the foundation of a party.¹⁵

Shortly after Mugoša's departure, Koço Tashko, most likely driven by the lack of alternatives now available and the important role acquired in that period by the KPJ, went to Kosovo accompanied by the Kosovars Xhevdet Doda and Elami Nimani, both members of the Youth Communist Group. They reached the village of Vitomiricë near Peja (Peć in Serbian), home of the KPJ Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija,¹⁶ where on 11 October a meeting was held during which the Albanian delegation accepted the role of the KPJ Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija in the foundation of the Albanian Communist Party.¹⁷ In the meantime, some Albanian communists had freed Popović from the Peqin camp and had taken him to Tirana, where he met Mugoša when the latter returned to Albania for the second time as an envoy of the KPJ. Consequently, with the actual availability of the three main communist groups, namely the Shkodër, Korçë and Youth groups, and with the recognition of the authority of the KPJ members, all that remained was to organize the long-awaited meeting of the communist groups, known as the founding meeting, to create a single party.

Before the founding meeting, however, Popović and Mugoša, who had then taken the reins of the situation, held a series of meetings with the groups present to get a vision of the real situation facing the Albanian communists. Among the problems they noticed, prominent was the strong

feeling of belonging to a group, often based on personal ties, which in addition to hindering the formation of a single party had also led to a neglect of activity among young people and a failure to approach other sympathizers with communist ideas.¹⁸ Furthermore, the presence of personal ambitions in some exponents was highlighted, accompanied by considerable confusion in the interpretation of Marxist theories.¹⁹ Following this series of meetings, the two Yugoslav emissaries established that representatives of the three main groups should participate in the founding meeting, five for each group, together with Koço Tashko as an extraordinary representative, given that since 1936 he had represented the Comintern, though he had long since lost contact with it.

3. Foundation of the Albanian Communist Party: initiation into a new mentality?

The meeting of the three communist groups began on 8 November 1941 in total secrecy in a house in Tirana. As mentioned above, representatives of the three communist groups participated, together with Tashko as an extraordinary representative and Popović and Mugoša as representatives of the Comintern. Popović opened the meeting and directed it, energetically assisted by Mugoša, who spoke Albanian and acted as interpreter, together with one of the delegates of the Youth Communist Group, the Kosovar Ramadan Çitaku, who spoke Serbian. However, regarding this aspect, which is fundamental for communication and knowledge transfer, some clarifications are essential. It has often been argued that unlike Mugoša, who spoke Albanian, Popović only spoke Serbian and French. This is doubtful because given that Popović had grown up in Kosovo in contact with Albanians, it is very plausible that he already spoke a little Albanian in his early days in Albania, or at least understood it.²⁰ It certainly appears that during the three years he spent in Albania he learned and began to speak Albanian.²¹ That said, at least in the early days Popović communicated in Serbo-Croatian with Çitaku and some other members of the groups who knew that language, and in French with the future party leader Enver Hoxha and Koço Tashko himself.

Having proclaimed the foundation of the Albanian Communist Party (*Partia Komuniste Shqiptare* – PKSh), already during the first session on 8 November, Popović gave the first speech, in which he stated that the first task of the members of the PKSh was to form a monolithic party, a

Bolshevik party that was to lead the Albanian people in the war for their national liberation.²² There then followed criticism of the conflicts that had arisen between the groups and of the lack of contact with the masses. In order to overcome these problems Popović stated the need to:

liquidate all the wars that have taken place up to now between groups, between factions [...] liquidate philistinism and useless theories, limitations in work, liberalism and opportunist manifestations. [...] All elements, without group distinction, who will continue in the previous spirit, must be expelled without mercy, because there is no place for such elements in the revolutionary workers' movement.²³

The Yugoslav emissary also did not fail to emphasize self-criticism as a fundamental criterion in the elevation of communist cadres, and the iron discipline that had to be enforced among them: 'No longer will anyone dare not to implement the directives of the Steering Committees. When such manifestations are discovered, they must be crushed with energy, and this is discipline. For this reason, you must submit to the Party's discipline.'²⁴

Once Popović's speech was over, the work of the meeting itself began. Each group wrote an overview of the work carried out up to that point and at the same time offered self-criticism regarding their own group and criticism of the work carried out by the other groups. After each overview, self-criticism, and criticism, a series of heated discussions followed, which lasted for at least four days.²⁵ Unfortunately we do not know precisely the topics of these discussions, since the minutes in three notebooks drawn up during the meeting seem to have been lost, or at least are untraceable. However, some details have been provided by the historian Kristo Frashëri, at the time a member of the Youth Communist Group who was an indirect witness of the meeting, and by Sadik Premte and Ramadan Çitaku, members of the same group, who actually participated at the meeting. According to these witnesses, in addition to the clashes over the mutual faults of the groups, some points presented by Popović and supported by Mugoša also aroused doubts and debates. Among these, of considerable importance for understanding the new mentality that they were trying to instill among the members of the PKSh, was the debate around the conduct of the war and in particular the question of establishing which Albanian institutions were to be considered collaborators with fascism. Regarding this point, Popović proposed that the list of collaborators should include

not only conscious collaborators with the occupier, such as espionage agents and gendarmes who had committed crimes, but also the units of the Albanian army who had been mobilized according to the law. However, many of the participants contested this proposal, considering it incompatible with local political morality that those who had been recruited and mobilized without having committed crimes should also be condemned. Mugoša forcefully lashed out against these objections, accusing the Albanian communists of being micro-bourgeois “pacifists” and “pietists”, and considering their “humanity” a Christian humanity. Heated debates followed, which for the moment concluded in agreement to the death penalty, by assassination, only for those agents whose activity had led to significant damage to the communist movement.²⁶

Another aspect that raised many doubts was the procedure for the election of the Central Committee (CC) of the PKSh, which was to be considered provisional until its future First National Conference. It was again Popović who proposed the procedure, supported by Mugoša. The two Yugoslavs asked first of all that, in consideration of the responsibility that the leaders of the groups had for previous struggles and to avoid such conflicts dragging on into the future governing body of the PKSh, they were excluded from the elective procedure.²⁷ Anastas Lula for the Youth group, Vasil Shanto for the Shkodër group, and Koço Tashko for the Korçë group were consequently ousted, despite the latter having insisted on being considered an extraordinary representative and not linked to any of the communist groups.²⁸ They were then asked to propose three names among the members of their groups, worthy in their opinion of being elected to the provisional CC. However, on the list designated for voting, the candidates, nine in total, were not registered with their respective names and surnames but with the characteristics of each one. The descriptions were vague and therefore it was difficult to guess to whom they applied. This election procedure was highly contested, arousing much tension, as it was considered devoid of any transparency.²⁹ In fact, this election was in all probability reduced to a simple co-optation of the candidates by Popović. The candidates selected were not proclaimed immediately but were informed later, one by one, by the Yugoslav emissaries. They were Qemal Stafa, Koçi Xoxe, Tuk Jakova, Ramadan Çitaku, Enver Hoxha, Kristo Themelko, and, to everyone’s amazement, Gjin Marku, a member of the Shkodër group who had not been included in the list of nine candidates as he was not present at the meeting.³⁰ Regarding this procedure, Ramadan Çitaku himself in his memoirs claimed that the election had not taken

place in a democratic manner, due, in his opinion, to the war between the communist groups, which left no alternative course of action.³¹ Consequently, it seems that the designation of the provisional CC by Popović, assisted by Mugoša, was the result of his own desire to form a CC with elements, in his opinion, as little involved as possible with the previous events and less permeated by the spirit of group.

Before the end of the meeting, the PKSh Resolution was also approved. It had been drafted as a project by Popović and Qemal Stafa,³² and in fact it very much reflected the contents of the opening speech delivered by Popović himself. The Resolution once again stated the need to mobilize the masses of the cities and countryside in national liberation and to unite with all nationalists who loved the country in what was to be the Popular Front. It was obviously specified that the communists had the task of being in the lead in this war.³³ Also in the Resolution, among the errors that were recognized and listed, the largest was considered the non-acceptance and non-implementation of the new line of the VII Congress of the Comintern.³⁴ From an organizational standpoint, localism was condemned, with particular reference to the Korçë Communist Group, and also fractionalism in general, regarding all groups. There was strong criticism of the lack of action to combat factionalism and to remove harmful elements from the organization. Finally, the Resolution also assigned a series of tasks such as: the need to create new cells with selected elements, which were to constitute the basis of the party; the need for the theoretical and political advancement of party members, through the study of Marxist-Leninist theories to be carried out by means of courses on the "History of the Communist Party of the USSR"; the need to establish an iron discipline, which would entail the submission of all members to the party's directives and the removal from its ranks of any undisciplined persons, and the need to work seriously with women, allowing women workers to join the party and helping them in their work of mobilizing the female masses in the war of liberation.³⁵

In this way the meeting of the groups ended with the foundation of the PKSh: a party, however, led by a provisional CC made up of elements who, as some of them later acknowledged, did not have the slightest organizational experience.³⁶

4. Organization and structuring of the PKSh

Once the meeting that gave life to the PKSh was concluded, the next step was to organize its structures, from the reorganization of the cells to the creation of the district committees and other party organizations, such as the Communist Youth Organization. Popović and Tuk Jakova were responsible for the organization of the cells in Tirana and of the district committee of the capital itself, while Koçi Xoxe, Kristo Themelko, and Jakova again, assisted by Mugoša, worked for the organization of the cells and district committees in the other cities.³⁷ It must immediately be specified that in the work of structuring the PKSh on the ground, and as will be seen later also in that of the organization of the partisan resistance, Mugoša stood out for his great mobility, traveling throughout the country, as at least during the first period he was not followed by the police, unlike Popović, who was listed.

For the election both of the various district committees and of the provisional CC of the Communist Youth Organization, the same methods followed during the election of the provisional CC of the PKSh were applied. They were not truly transparent and democratic. For the election of the provisional CC of the Communist Youth, one of the participants, Nexhmije Xhuglini, who became Hoxha following her marriage to Enver Hoxha, recalls that the nominations had been proposed by the provisional CC of the PKSh, and once submitted, once again by the characteristics of the candidates and not by names, they were simply approved unanimously by the participants.³⁸

Furthermore, in the structuring of the party, the creation of two further organizational rings with particular functions was also established, namely a “technical cell” dedicated to the production and reproduction of educational and propaganda material and a “military cell”, which had the task of dealing with the establishment of guerrilla units. In both of these cells, although they were officially led by members of the provisional CC, the role of the two Yugoslav emissaries was important. Mugoša, in addition to his constant movements to create guerrilla units, appears to have contributed together with other members of the party also to the translation of the “History of the Communist Party of the USSR”,³⁹ translated into Albanian and used in the courses for the training and ideological formation of PKSh members.⁴⁰ Popović, on the other hand, appears to have written, at least in the first months, the political manifestos which were subsequently translated by Stafa and Tashko.⁴¹

The fact that Mugoša and most of the members of the provisional CC had been sent throughout the country for the structuring of the party meant that Popović and Enver Hoxha, who had been put in charge of financial affairs, remained in the centre, in Tirana. In addition to a rapprochement between Popović and Hoxha, who was becoming more and more friendly towards the Yugoslav emissary, this also meant that all the directives that came from the provisional CC were nothing more than directives issued by Popović. And precisely in order to affirm the incontestability of these directives and strict discipline, an extraordinary conference was held on Popović's initiative in June 1942, on which occasion the first purge within the PKSh took place. The two leaders of the former Youth Communist Group, Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte, together with other former members of that group, were expelled on the grounds of having contested the directives of the PKSh and of still being animated by a fractionalist attitude.⁴² Furthermore, the first death sentence was also passed against a former member, Ludovik Nikaj, who had been arrested a month before by the police and had revealed information about the party under interrogation which had led to the arrest of a number of PKSh members.⁴³

In the meantime, at the end of May 1942, once the structuring of the party had been completed, Mugoša had been sent to Bosnia, where the KPJ leadership and the headquarters of the Yugoslav partisan movement were located, with the task of reporting on the situation in Albania and exploiting the direct connection of the KPJ with the Comintern to obtain the latter's recognition of the PKSh. Mugoša spent several weeks in Bosnia, meeting Tito several times and informing him about the situation in the country and the foundation of the PKSh.⁴⁴ While waiting for the Comintern's response, Mugoša received instructions, familiarized himself with the structure of the Yugoslav liberation movement, and frequented the First Proletarian Brigade and other units of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (*Narodnooslobodilačka vojska i partizanski odredi Jugoslavije* - NOV i POJ).⁴⁵ Having received the approval of the Comintern, in October 1942 he left for Albania accompanied by Blažo Jovanović and Vojo Todorović, both members of the KPJ, the former having the task of helping in the organization of the First National Conference of the PKSh and the latter of helping in the organization of partisan units.⁴⁶ Returning to Albania, they brought with them, in addition to certain written materials on how the partisan military structure and power in the territories that would be liberated should be organized, also a letter

from Tito addressed to the CC of the PKSh and to Popović. According to this letter, the secretary of the KPJ stated that “Djeda”, the code name of Georgi Dimitrov, General Secretary of the Comintern at the time, had given his approval for a National Conference to be held in Albania and a permanent CC to be elected.⁴⁷ Also in this letter, Tito proposed a series of recommendations for the PKSh, such as: the need to purge the so-called anti-party elements; the need to connect and work more with the peasants, on whom it was necessary to rely for the establishment of partisan bands, given the lack of large industries and a working class in Albania; the need to rely on the Yugoslav model and on the Yugoslav experience in structuring partisan and voluntary units; and finally, the need to proceed with the organization of popular power in the liberated territories.⁴⁸ In addition to these recommendations, Tito delegated Jovanović to participate in the National Conference of PKSh as a representative of the KPJ and as an advisor,⁴⁹ thus officially consolidating the KPJ’s guardianship and leadership role in relation to the PKSh.

Once they arrived in Albania towards the end of December, the Yugoslav delegates together with the local communists began preparations for the conference. During this period, it appears that Jovanović also wrote the manual *The Work of Party Organs in the Army*, which was then translated into Albanian and used for the education of political commissars in partisan formations.⁵⁰ Once the preparations were completed, the First National Conference of the PKSh was held from 17 to 21 March 1943 in Labinot, near Elbasan.⁵¹ From the minutes drawn up during the days of this conference, Jovanović’s prestige as an official delegate of the KPJ clearly emerges, as does the authority of Popović and, to a lesser degree, also that of Mugoša. The discussions that followed each point presented were in fact all concluded by the three Yugoslavians, moderating the discussions in a certain way and giving their final judgment.⁵² Even in the content of the speeches held and in the approved Resolution itself, we may note the acceptance and appropriation of all the directives sent in Tito’s letter.⁵³ Eventually, the election of the definitive CC followed, which once again took place in a less than democratic manner, with the compilation of a list of candidates and the establishment of a commission responsible for electing the members of the CC from this list. The final CC that emerged was made up of fifteen members; in addition, a Politburo made up of six members was also elected. Enver Hoxha was appointed political secretary and Koçi Xoxe, in prison at the time, organizational secretary.⁵⁴ From subsequent testimonies, in particular that of Hoxha,

it repeatedly emerges that both the new governing bodies and his own election as political secretary had been the work of Popović.⁵⁵

Once the First Conference was concluded, Jovanović together with Todorović returned to Yugoslavia, leaving the PKSh again under the leadership of Popović and Mugoša. In this regard, it is important to note that the definitive CC from its election until the end of the war was convened only twice, during the First Plenum of the PKSh, which was held in May 1944 in Helmes (Skrapar), and during the Second Plenum, held in November of the same year in the city of Berat, which had come under the control of the partisan forces. Since most of the members of the CC continued to operate in different parts of the country, Popović almost always remained with Hoxha in the various movements to represent effectively the CC and therefore the party. While Hoxha and Popović sent all directives in the name of the CC, Mugoša continued to devote himself to military actions during this period. Despite his commitments in the field, in March 1944 Mugoša together with Ramadan Çitaku and Liri Gega (also part of the definitive CC) held the first political course for the training of future leaders of the PKSh in the village of Panarit (Korçë), at which 33 young people who had joined the party after its foundation participated.⁵⁶ Once the course was completed, Mugoša was recalled by the KPJ to Yugoslavia, thus ending his mission in Albania. A series of letters were sent to him with notes of affection and gratitude from the leaders of the PKSh.⁵⁷ While Mugoša's Albanian experience was ending, Popović continued his mission for a few more months until September 1944, when he was called by the KPJ to work in Kosovo with the local partisan resistance.

To replace Popović, at the beginning of September the KPJ sent another member to Albania as an instructor at the CC of the PKSh, Colonel Velimir Stojnić accompanied by Nijaz Dizdarević, with the role of his assistant and representative of the Communist Youth League of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije* - SKOJ).⁵⁸ However, upon arriving in Albania, Stojnić and Dizdarević immediately noticed a certain coldness on the part of Hoxha and his circle, particularly Gega and Çitaku, who had been very close to Popović and hoped for his return. In this climate of distrust, the Second Plenum of the PKSh was held in Berat between 23 and 27 November 1944. This was also the last meeting of the Albanian communists before the triumphal entry of the partisan forces into Tirana and the seizure of power. During the speeches, discussions, and self-criticisms held in this Plenum, the dominant role played over those

three years by Popović and Mugoša, the lack of vision and disorientation of the CC members, and their total dependence on the instructions coming from the KPJ emerged blatantly. However, although the fundamental role of Popović and Mugoša in the foundation of the PKSh was effectively recognized, the harshest critics attributed to them, and in particular to Popović, the blame for having monopolized the CC, and thus the PKSh, and for “not having let it rise up and be strengthened”.⁵⁹ In fact, a part of the members of the CC, led by Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiro complained several times that the CC and the Politburo itself had not met, resulting in all political decisions being taken by Popović and Hoxha.⁶⁰ In response to such criticisms, Hoxha had to argue that despite the fundamental help received in the early days from the two Yugoslav emissaries, their presence had later been harmful since they lacked the political and organizational preparation necessary to make the party grow.⁶¹ In stating this, however, the political secretary of the PKSh did not fail to underline, as did the other members present, the crucial importance of the help provided by the KPJ both in sending directives and in the experience provided through others of its members, including the new delegate Stojnić.⁶² Finally, Stojnić himself, in reiterating the support of the KPJ, also spoke about the future political prospects for the Albanian communists, who in his opinion could survive and maintain power only by binding themselves to the KPJ in what could be defined as a confederation. Until then, still according to Stojnić, they should popularize the name of Tito, the Yugoslavia, and its national liberation army.⁶³

5. Structuring of the partisan movement and seizure of power

If the contribution of the Yugoslav communists to the transfer of knowledge was very important for the structuring of the PKSh, it was no less important in the foundation and organization of the Albanian partisan movement and in guiding the latter towards the seizure of power. Thus, once the PKSh was founded and after the first months in which its members had dedicated themselves to attacks against collaborationists and other acts of sabotage,⁶⁴ in September 1942, following an appeal by the communists to some nationalists and military men, a conference was held in the village of Peza, a few kilometers from Tīrana, which ended with the formation of the provisional General National Liberation Council (*Këshilli i Përgjithshëm Nacional-Çlirimtar* – KPNÇ), which in turn sanctioned the birth of the

Albanian National Liberation Movement (*Lëvizja Nacional-Çlirimtare* - LNÇ).⁶⁵ In this way, a popular front structure, so desired by the VII Congress of the Comintern, was created, albeit to a somewhat limited extent, since the presence of non-communists within it was small.⁶⁶

Regarding the Peza Conference, it has been argued that Popović was against the idea of forming a popular front with some nationalist representatives, as he considered these to be simply criminals who would soon turn against the PKSh.⁶⁷ Rather than being against the conference itself, however, Popović seems rather to have been against it's being held in Peza, for fear of the presence of one of the most influential local figures, namely Shyqyri Peza, who was in contact with the collaborationist authorities and was known for the fact that he had no sympathy with communist ideas.⁶⁸ From a letter sent by Tashko to the Comintern, though it never reached its destination,⁶⁹ it appears that Popović had insisted that he also be present in Peza, and that at a meeting of PKSh delegates held one day before the conference, he had expressed the opinion that nationalists should be kept tied to the party as individuals in order to prevent them from developing their own organized political personality and fighting the communists in the future as Dragoljub "Draž" Mihailović, leader of the pro-monarchist resistance,⁷⁰ had done in Yugoslavia. In fact, it would seem that Popović was obsessed with the possibility that the events that had taken place in Yugoslavia in the autumn of 1941, namely the breakdown of agreements reached between Tito's partisans and Mihailović's Chetniks and the consequent mutual attacks, might be reproduced in Albania.⁷¹

Once the LNÇ was established, the formation and coordination of the first partisan bands began. Their action, concentrated in particular in the south of the country, gave life in this space to the first territories liberated and brought under their control. For the management of public power in these territories, the so-called national liberation councils (*këshillat nacional-çlirimtar* – KNÇs) were erected, which, inspired by the Yugoslav national liberation committees (*narodno-oslobodilački odbori*), were to take the place of the ousted collaborationist authorities. However, in their organization and functions the KNÇs showed themselves to be rather weak during the first months and in many cases only a façade structure, also due in part to the unclear delineation of the directives to be followed, set in a superficial manner in the Resolution of the Peza Conference formulated previously by Popović and members of the PKSh.⁷²

Despite the start of a national liberation movement, the beginning of armed resistance and the establishment of the first local civil bodies,

however, it was with the arrival of Mugoša from Yugoslavia in December 1942, accompanied by Jovanović and Todorović, who brought with them a letter from Tito containing instructions and other organizational material, that gave impetus to the structuring of the partisan movement. In fact, while Jovanović worked on writing the manual *The Work of Party Organs in the Army* and Todorović dedicated himself to assisting the partisan bands, Mugoša took to the field again for the establishment of further KNÇs and for the expansion of those already existing.⁷³ Furthermore, in order to give life to a partisan army that was to be inspired by that already existing in Yugoslavia, a few days after the First National Conference of the PKSh, held in March 1943, Tito's special envoy for the Balkan area, Svetozar Vukmanović, alias Tempo, arrived in Labinot, where the headquarters of the CC of the PKSh and the provisional KPNÇ were located, and worked on the details for the establishment of the General Staff and the related organization of the local partisan bands.⁷⁴ With the foundation in July 1943 of the General Staff, which in turn began the structuring of the Albanian National Liberation Army (*Ushtria Nacional-Çlirimtare Shqiptare* – UNÇSh), the 22-page manual *Regulations on the formation of partisan-volunteer groups of the National Liberation Army (Rregullore mbi formimin e grupeve partizane-vullnetare t'Ushtris Nacional-Çlirimtare)* was also printed and distributed: in fact it was nothing more than a translation of the Yugoslav version, with only some small changes at the end.⁷⁵ Shortly after, in the month of August, the First Partisan Brigade of the UNÇSh was also founded, commanded by the communist and former member of the XII International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War Mehmet Shehu, and to which Mugoša was also assigned with the mandate to participate in all decisions taken by it.⁷⁶

In September 1943, during the Second Conference of the KPNÇ, in consideration of the weak role that the KNÇs had initially had, the *Statute and Regulations of the National Liberation Councils (Statuti dhe Rregullorja e Këshillavet Nacional Çlirimtar)* was also approved. This attempted to outline in an articulated and clear manner the guidelines that all local councils would henceforth have to follow.⁷⁷ From a careful reading of the *Statute and Regulations*, which was essential for the better organization of these bodies and for their development, it appears that it likewise reproduced in many points the Foča Regulations (*Fočanski propisi*) approved in February 1942 in Yugoslavia by the General Staff of the NOV i POJ.⁷⁸

In the context of the transfer of knowledge, no less relevant were the directives sent by the KPJ regarding the attitude to be taken towards the British officers who entered Albania starting from April 1943 to support the local resistance.⁷⁹ In a letter sent to Popović in October 1943 Tito, on the basis of his experience, recommended caution: taking advantage of their presence to receive aid in materials, weapons etc., but at the same time preventing them from coming to know about internal military matters and in particular not giving them details about the partisan forces.⁸⁰

Also in this letter, given that there was no Albanian government in exile recognized by the Allies, Tito recommended proceeding with the formation of a People's National Liberation Council, which would carry out all the functions of a government until the time came for the establishment of a true popular government.⁸¹ Based on these directives and after the end of the winter of 1943-1944, which had seen the great German offensive against the partisan forces, the Anti-Fascist Congress of National Liberation was held in May 1944 in the city of Përmet. During the work of this Congress, an Anti-Fascist National Liberation Council (*Këshilli Antifashist Nacional-Çlirimtar* – KANÇ) composed of 115 members was elected, which was to have legislative and executive attributes, and an Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee was appointed, endowed with all the attributes of a provisional government.⁸² Enver Hoxha was placed at the head of this Committee as President and in charge of matters of war and national defence, supported in other roles by members and sympathizers of the PKSh.⁸³ At the end of October, towards the now imminent end of the war in favour of the Allies and when a large part of the southern territories and part of those of central Albania had passed under the control of the partisan forces, the Second Meeting of KANÇ took place in the city of Berat.⁸⁴ Again according to Yugoslav directives, this meeting resolved the transformation of the KANÇ Committee into the Democratic Government of Albania with Hoxha as Prime Minister and the other members as ministers.⁸⁵ In addition to the transformation of the Committee into a real government, the Second Meeting of KANÇ also approved a series of measures, including the "Declaration on Citizens' Rights", according to which everyone should be guaranteed equal rights before the law.⁸⁶ Even in this case, however, the document appeared to have been delivered ready-drafted by the above-mentioned Velimir Stojnić and simply approved by KANÇ.⁸⁷

From its proclamation and until the taking of Tirana by the partisan forces, the self-styled Democratic Government of the LNÇ established itself

in Berat and from here operated in opposition to the last collaborationist government led by Ibrahim Biçakçiu. A few days after the taking of Tirana, on 28 November 1944, the Democratic Government of the LNÇ led by Enver Hoxha made its triumphal entry into the capital and established itself as the only legitimate government.

6. Conclusions

As I have tried to show in this paper, contrary to what Albanian communist historiography and Hoxha himself in his memoirs stated for years, the KPJ had a very important role in the foundation of the PKSh, in its organization and structuring, and in guiding it towards the seizure of power. In terms of knowledge transfer, on which this paper tries to shed light, while the contribution of Popović and Mugoša was fundamental for the foundation of the PKSh and for its initial structuring, nevertheless, as also claimed by Hoxha himself during the Second Plenum of the PKSh, they, and in particular Popović, who really led the party, showed certain shortcomings, especially in a later phase, when the party needed to structure and articulate the partisan resistance. However, the sending of directives by Tito himself, of material containing instructions on how to structure the partisan movement both in the armed struggle and in the management of its rear areas, together with the contribution given directly on the ground by the other members of the PKJ, contributed to fill this gap.

Having said this, however, I do not want to imply that the KPJ had an absolute role, since in fact, in addition to the abovementioned contribution of the Yugoslav emissaries, the same British missions that were sent to Albania on several occasions starting from April 1943 made an important contribution in the supply of weapons and gold and also in the training of partisan forces, as, for example, in the case of Captain David Smiley, who starting from July 1943 began to instruct partisan bands in the use of heavy caliber weapons and mines.⁸⁸ In addition to the British, important help in instructing the partisan forces to use artillery weapons and in their technical and medical training was also provided by the many Italian soldiers and officers who joined the partisan resistance following the Italian capitulation in September 1943.

In the help provided by the KPJ in terms of knowledge transfer, however, one cannot fail to notice a gradual tendency for it to dominate the PKSh. If Popović immediately established himself as the true leader of

the PKSh, making Albania a sort of fiefdom of his, following his departure the KPJ began to assert its hegemony from an institutional point of view, in particular through its last envoy, Stojnić. The propensity shown in those years by both Popović and the other Yugoslav emissaries to continually criticize the actions of the members of the PKSh appears as a clear attempt to subordinate the new neighbouring communist party. Stojnić's statements, during the Second Plenum of the PKSh, on the impossibility of the Albanian communists surviving and maintaining power on their own and on the need to connect to Yugoslavia, also hinting at the possibility of a confederation in which obviously the KPJ was to have hegemony, seem to all intents and purposes to be an attempt to prepare the ground for the entry of the future communist Albania into the orbit of Tito's Yugoslavia. As shown among other things by the historian Leonid Gibianskii, Tito in his contacts with the USSR, particularly during the first year after the end of the war, clearly showed his aspirations to incorporate Albania into the Yugoslav federation.⁸⁹

Finally, despite gratitude for all the help provided in the structuring of the party and the partisan resistance, these aims of the KPJ, which had already been resented by the members of the PKSh during the war years, were subsequently behind the rupture between the two parties, which took place a few years later, in 1948.

Endnotes

- 1 Instituti i studimeve Marxiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Historia e Partisë së Punës të Shqipërisë* (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1968, Botim i dytë 1981); Instituti i studimeve Marxiste-Leniniste pranë KQ te P.P.SH, *Historia e Luftës Antifashiste NacionalÇlirimtare të popullit shqiptar: prill 1939 - nëntor 1944* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1984); Xhelal Gjeçovi, *Marrëdhëniet shqiptaro-jugosllave në vitet e Luftës Antifashiste-NacionalÇlirimtare: nëntor 1941 – 1944* (Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave, 1986); Enver Hoxha, *Kur lindi Partia* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1981); Enver Hoxha, *Titistët* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1982).
- 2 Vladimir Dedijer, *Marredhanjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare (1939-1948)* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1949). Over the years, some memorial works by Yugoslav actors who operated in Albania in the period examined here have also been added to this historiography. See: Dušan Mugoša, *Na zadatku* (Beograd: Četvrti jul, 1973); Blažo Jovanović, *Narodnooslobodilački rat i revolucija, Izabrani radovi I* (Titograd: Pobjeda, 1963); Nijaz Dizdarević, *Albanski dnevnik* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988).
- 3 Stavro Skendi, "Albania within the Slav Orbit: Advent to Power of the Communist Party", *Political Science Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (1948): 257-274; Stavro Skendi, *Albania* (Praeger: New York, 1956); Tajar Zavalani, *Historia e Shqipnis* (London: Drini Publications, 1966), Stephen Peters, "Ingredients of the Communist Takeover in Albania," in *The anatomy of Communist takeovers*, ed. Thomas T. Hammond (New Haven – London: Yale university press, 1975), 273-292; Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania," in *Communism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 213 - 237.
- 4 Muharrem Dezhgiu, *Shqipëria nën pushtimin italian (1939-1943)* (Tiranë: Eneas, 2015); Paskal Milo, *Shqiptarët në luftën e Dytë Botërore I (1939-1943)* (Tiranë: Toena, 2014); Hubert Neuwirth, *Qëndresë dhe bashkëpunim në Shqipëri (1939-1944). Një analizë historike e gjedhes kulturore të mikut dhe armikut* (Tiranë: Instituti i Dialogut & Komunikimit, 2006); Bernd. J. Fischer, *Shqipëria gjatë Luftës, 1939-1945* (Tiranë: Cabej, 2004).
- 5 Kristo Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte në Shqipëri dhe e themelimit të PKSH 1878-1941* (Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2006); Kastriot Dervishi, *Lëvizja Komuniste në vitet 1924-1944 dhe formimi i PKSH-së* (Tiranë: Shtëpia botuese 55, 2016).
- 6 Jurij Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo: propad jugoslovanse širitve na Balkan* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2011); Milorad Komatina, *Enver Hodža i jugoslovensko-albanski odnosi* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1995).
- 7 Besides these three main groups, also noteworthy were the Tirana Communist Group, the Officers' Communist Group, the Kuçovë Communist Group, and the "Zjarri" (Fire) Communist Group. On the presence of these groups, see:

- Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte*, 63-76 and 112-133; Dervishi, *Lëvizja Komuniste në vitet 1924-1944*, 95-108 and 139-176.
- 8 Silvio Pons, *La rivoluzione globale. Storia del comunismo internazionale 1917-1991* (Torino: Einaudi, 2012); Edward H. Carr, *The Twilight of the Comintern* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1982).
- 9 Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte*, 106-111.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Dervishi, *Lëvizja Komuniste në vitet 1924-1944*, 182-183.
- 12 Geoffrey Swain, "The Comintern and southern Europe, 1938-1943," in *Resistance and revolution in Mediterranean Europe 1939-1948*, ed. Tony Judt (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 38-39.
- 13 Vladimir Dedijer, *Marredhanjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare*, 10.
- 14 Ibid., 11; Arkivi Qëndror i Shtetit Shqipëtar (Central State Archives of Albania) hereinafter AQSh, Arkivi i Partisë - Lufta (Party Archives - War), hereinafter APL, Fondi Kujtime, Dosja 26, Kujtime të "Komisionit", undated, 58.
- 15 Dervishi, *Lëvizja Komuniste në vitet 1924-1944*, 187.
- 16 Dedijer, *Marredhanjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare*, 12.
- 17 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, 44.
- 18 Agjencia Shtetërore e Arkivave të Kosovës (State Archives Agency of Kosovo) hereinafter AShAK, Fondi Komiteti Krahinor i L.K të Kosovës, Njësia organ Milladin Popoviçi, nr. i Kutis 2, Letter signed Milo (Miladin Popović) to the KPJ Regional Committee for Kosovo and Metohija, 30 October 1941.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Son of a Montenegrin officer, who since 1922 had been assigned to serve in Peja in Kosovo, Popović had spent part of his childhood and youth in Peja and Prizren, in continuous contact with Albanians. See: AShAK, Fondi Komiteti Krahinor i L.K të Kosovës, Njësia organ Milladin Popoviçi, viti 1933-1945, nr. i Kutis 2.
- 21 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, 45.
- 22 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Dosja 3, 2, Copy of Popović's speech at the opening of the founding meeting, 8 November 1941.
- 23 Ibid., 3.
- 24 Ibid., 4.
- 25 Sadik Premte, "Stalinism and Communism in Albania," *Fourth International* 10, 1 (whole no 91), (January 1949), 22-28.
- 26 Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte*, 253-254.
- 27 Premte, *Stalinism and Communism*, 22-28.
- 28 This objection was not taken into consideration by Popović and Mugoša due to the strong ties that Tashko had with the Korçë Communist Group and his responsibility for the attitude and decisions taken by this group.
- 29 Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte*, 266.

- 30 AQSh, APL, Fondi *Kujtime të Ramadan Çitaku*, Dosja R/4, Konferenca
per formimin e partisë dhe disa vendime ma më rëndësi të Kom. qëndror
provizor të P.K.SH deri me 16-IX-1942, 1.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte*, 268.
- 33 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Dosja 1, Rezolucion i mbledhjes së parë të grupeve
(Resolution of the first meeting of the groups), 8.
- 34 Ibid., 18-21.
- 35 Ibid., 26.
- 36 See the statements of Hoxha and Çitaku during the Second Plenum of the
PKSh. Ndreçi Plasari and Luan Malltezi, *Enver Hoxha dhe katër ditët e
Beratit. Pleniumi i 2-të i KQ të PKSH, Berat, 23-27 nëntor 1944* (Tiranë:
Shtëpia botuese 55, 2007), 31 and 113-114.
- 37 Frashëri, *Historia e lëvizjes së majte*, 201.
- 38 Nexhmije Hoxha, *Jeta ime me Enverin* (Tiranë: “Lira”, 1998), 18-19.
- 39 Precisely “History of the Communist Party of the USSR (Bolsheviks): Short
Course” was approved by the Central Committee of the USSR and published
in 1938.
- 40 Dedijer, *Marredhanjet Jugoslavo-Shqiptare*, 21-22; AQSh, APL, Fondi 14,
Dosja 3, Circular sent to all the district committees, signed by the “Technician
(i.e. the person in charge of press and propaganda) of the CC of the PKSh”,
undated.
- 41 Plasari and Malltezi, *Enver Hoxha dhe katër ditët e Beratit*, 114.
- 42 Instituti i Studimeve Marxiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Historia e Partisë
së Punës*, 87- 90; Instituti i Studimeve Marxiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH,
Dokumenta kryesore të PPSH, vëll. I, (Tiranë, 8 Nëntori, 1971), 82-88.
- 43 Instituti i Studimeve Marxiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Dokumenta
kryesore të PPSH*, 88.
- 44 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, 52.
- 45 Peters, “Ingredients of the Communist Takeover,” 276.
- 46 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, 52; Hoxha, *Jeta ime me Enverin*, 88; Peters,
“Ingredients of the Communist Takeover”, 276.
- 47 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Dosja 7/1, 1-2, Letter from the Central Committee of
the KPJ signed Tito, 22/IX/1942.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Dosja 7/1, Authorization of Tito, 23.10.1942, 3.
- 50 With the Albanian title: “Puna e organizatave të partisë n’ushtri”, see: AQSh,
APL, Fondi 14, viti 1943, Dosja 9.
- 51 Instituti i studimeve Marxiste-Leniniste pranë KQ të PPSH, *Historia e Partisë
së Punës*, 106.
- 52 See: AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, viti 1943, Dosja 10, Minutes of the First National
Conference of the PKSh.

- 53 Ibid., Intervention by Doktor (Ymer Dishnica), 49-50; AQSh, APL, Fondi 14,
viti 1943, Dosja 9, Resolution of the National Conference of the PKSh, 29-30.
- 54 Dervishi, *Lëvizja Komuniste në vitet 1924-1944*, 238.
- 55 Plasari and Malltezi, *Enver Hoxha dhe katër ditët e Beratit*, 75 and 171.
- 56 Dervishi, *Lëvizja Komuniste në vitet 1924-1944*, 276.
- 57 See: Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archive of Yugoslavia), hereafter AJ, Fond 507-IX,
1/I-3, Kutije 1.
- 58 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, 86.
- 59 AJ, Fond 507-IX, 1/II-37, Kutije 6, Speech by Sejfulla Malëshova, 1.
- 60 Plasari and Malltezi, *Enver Hoxha dhe katër ditët e Beratit*, 74, 77 and 81.
- 61 Ibid., 32-33.
- 62 Ibid., 37-38.
- 63 Ibid., 148-165.
- 64 On the first attacks and acts of sabotage, see: Alberto Basciani, *L'impero
nei Balcani. L'occupazione italiana dell'Albania (1939-1943)* (Roma: Viella,
2022), 205-206 and 223; Markenc Lorenci, "Comunisti senza proletariato:
il Partito comunista albanese dalla fondazione alla presa del potere (1941-
1944)" (PhD diss., Roma Tre University, 2021), 85-91.
- 65 AQSh, APL, Fondi 40, Dosja 1, Minutes of the Peza Conference, 16.09.1942.
- 66 Among the truly important non-communist exponents were only Ndoc Çoba,
former finance minister during the interwar period and the pro-monarchist
Abaz Kupi, former commander of the gendarmerie.
- 67 Fischer, *Shqipëria gjatë Luftës*, 181.
- 68 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Dosja 5, Letter from Popović to Koço Tashko, undated,
6.
- 69 This letter ended up in the hands of Popović, who seems to have prevented
it from being sent to Moscow.
- 70 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Dosja 5, Koço Tashko's Report to the Comintern,
October 1942, 12.
- 71 On the agreements and then the rupture that occurred between the Yugoslav
resistance forces, see: Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder: The
Second World War in Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst, 2020), 60-63.
- 72 AQSh, APL, Fondi 40, Dosja 1, Resolution of the Peza Conference, 09.1942,
7-9; Enver Hoxha, *Kur u hodhën themelet e Shqipërisë së re* (Tiranë: 8
Nëntori, 1984), 87.
- 73 Hadalin, *Boj za Albanijo*, 56.
- 74 Peters, "Ingredients of the Communist Takeover", 277.
- 75 See: AQSh, APL, Fondi 41, Lista 1, Dosja 5, Rregullore mbi formimin e
grupeve partizane-vullnetare t'Ushtrisë Nacional-Çlirimtare (Regulations on
the formation of partisan-volunteer groups of the National Liberation Army);
AQSh, APL, Fondi 41, Lista 1, Dosja 6, Formacionet e Arradhes Partizane
(The formations of the Partisan Army).

- 76 Dedijer, *Marredhanjet Jugosllavo-Shqiptare*, 67-68.
- 77 AQSh, APL, Fondi 40, Dosja 5, Statuti dhe Rregullorja e Këshillavet Nacional Çlirimtar (Statute and Regulations of the National Liberation Councils).
- 78 On the Foča Regulations and their directives see: Xavier Bougarel, *Chez les partisans de Tito: Communistes et paysans dans la Yougoslavie en guerre (1941-1945)*, (Paris: Non Lieu, 2023), 87-88 and 166-167; Ahmed Salihćehajić (ed.), *Fočanski propisi* (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1981).
- 79 On the operation of the British missions sent to Albania during the war see: Roderick Bailey, *The Wildest Province: SOE in the Land of the Eagle* (London: Vintage Book, 2009).
- 80 AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Lista 1, Dosja 39, Letter from Tito to Milo (Miladin Popović), 9.10.1943. Regarding these directives, see also: AQSh, APL, Fondi 14, Lista 1, Dosja 39, Letter of Tempo (Svetozar Vukmanović) for the CC of the PKSh, 28.10.1943.
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- 88 The Nation Archives (London), HS 5-143, Albania BLO Reports, Major Smiley's Diary, April – November 1943; David Smiley, *Albanian Assignment* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1984).
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