

TITO SPEAKS



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FOREWORD

The speech which we herewith present to the British public was delivered by Marshal Tito at the Second Meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (known from its Serbo-Croat initials, as AVNOJ), held at Jajce in liberated Yugoslavia in November, 1943. The decisions and decrees of this meeting have already been published by the United South Slav Committee in London in an English booklet called "New Yugoslavia."

The Second Meeting of AVNOJ marks a turning-point in the political development of Yugoslavia. It endorsed the decision to turn Yugoslavia into a federative state and to establish a provisional government as the highest executive authority, AVNOJ, which has assumed all the functions of a parliament, elected this Government (called the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia) from its own ranks and appointed Marshal Tito as head of the Government.

The speech which Marshal Tito delivered at this gathering is an historic document of first-rate importance, and constitutes the most complete analysis yet made of the various causes which have determined the course of events in Yugoslavia. It is also the clearest reflection of the stage of development at present reached by the nations of Yugoslavia in their fight for a better and happier future.

Neither their fight nor their development has yet come to an end. The national liberation struggle is in full swing and has gained the undivided admiration of public opinion all over the world. Under Marshal Tito's leadership the political evolution of our country is following a course parallel to the military developments; it is directed towards the formation of a federal and multi-national state administration on a truly democratic basis, supported by all the nations of Yugoslavia.

It is to be pointed out that in the meantime an agreement has been reached between Marshal Tito and the Royal Yugoslav Government under Premier Shubashich. The documents concerning the agreement will be published separately.

The United South Slav Committee hopes that the publication of this English translation of Marshal Tito's speech will contribute to a deeper understanding of the Yugoslav problem on the part of the British public.

THE UNITED SOUTH SLAV
COMMITTEE

LONDON, *June 28th*, 1944.

**MARSHAL TITO
SPEAKS**

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Full Text of the Speech delivered by Marshal Tito at the opening Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia at Jajce on November 29th, 1943:

The development of our struggle for national liberation may be divided into four stages:—

1. The capitulation of Yugoslavia and the beginning of national resistance. This at the outset assumed the form of organising numerous partisan detachments for the fight against the occupation forces.

2. The transformation of partisan detachments into regular military units, battalions, brigades and divisions and the formation of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia.

3. The transformation of the National Liberation Committees into a true national authority and the establishment of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ).

4. The present stage, i.e., the transformation of the Anti-Fascist Council from an all-party body into a supreme legislative body and the establishment of the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia as a Provisional National Government.

The first stage. The causes of Yugoslavia's rapid capitulation and subjugation by the German, Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian conquerors are to-day quite clear to the majority of our people. The twenty years' of oppression of the nations of Yugoslavia, such as the Croats, Macedonians, Slovenes and others by a handful of Pan-Serbian hegemonists, plus the unprecedented corruption of the ruling circles within the country and their links with the most reactionary circles abroad, particularly with the Germans and the Italians with a view to retaining power, and finally, the unprecedented treachery and espionage in our army, especially in our General Staff—all these were the causes of the disastrous and shameful defeat of the Yugoslav

armies in the war. This defeat had disastrous consequences for the nations of Yugoslavia. The King and the Government together with the group of people responsible for our country's fate, fled abroad. Yugoslavia was dismembered and became the prey of worse plunderers than any recorded in history. Unprecedented terror and the extermination, not merely of the most progressive people, but of the entire Serbian populations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Voyvodina, and of the Slovene population in Slovenia, etc. began. The German and Italian conquerors brought to power the bloody Ustashi beasts in Croatia and the despicable traitor Nedich in Serbia, and with their help started to carry out their diabolical plan for the extermination of the Slavs in the Balkans. In this difficult, I may say with certainty, the most difficult situation in the history of our nations, there was only one organisation in our country—that had for twenty years been outlawed and persecuted by all régimes in Yugoslavia—which placed all its experience and organising abilities, all its tried fighters, at the service of its enslaved people. The Communist Party alone led the people to armed uprising, and without faltering raised high the banner of the liberation struggle and persevered together with its people in this struggle till to-day.

THE FORMATION OF PARTISAN BANDS

Partisan detachments were formed first in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, later there was a nation-wide uprising in Montenegro in July, and subsequently the partisan movement spread to Croatia, Slovenia, etc. All this proved that our country although enslaved remained unconquered and that our nations were ready to make even the greatest sacrifices for their liberation. Small, almost barehanded, partisan detachments grew quickly and developed into large units which seized arms from the enemy. They delivered ever heavier and heavier blows against the foe and showed that they could not be destroyed in spite of all the German, Italian and other occupation forces which were being dispatched to suppress the partisan movement in the various regions of the country.

Having withstood all the assaults of the enemy and transformed themselves increasingly into large partisan units, the partisan detachments in the autumn of 1942 by a decision of the Supreme Headquarters were re-organised into regular military units and thus the creation of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia was brought about.

Here *the second stage* of the national liberation struggle emerged; brigades, divisions and corps were formed and whole territories were freed from the enemy and their Chetnik and Ustashi hirelings. Our young National Liberation Army showed

itself immediately at the beginning able to solve the most difficult tasks. Many towns were liberated, e.g., Livno, Glamoch, Mrkonjichgrad, Jajce, Ključ, Bihac, Krupa, Slunj, etc. The formation of the National Liberation Army aroused a new impetus in regions where hitherto a comparative lull had prevailed. In this period, the national liberation struggle assumed an ever stabler form and won the confidence of the broad masses of the people throughout all regions of Yugoslavia.

The National Liberation Committees which had hitherto been formed only in the liberated territories now began to be formed also in semi-liberated and even in enemy-occupied territories, and this *embryo* national authority became more and more popular among the people who turned to it with ever-increasing confidence. While at the outset the National Liberation Committees were formed more as auxiliary organs of the partisan detachments, in the course of the war, at the time of the formation of the National Liberation Army they transformed themselves into the only genuine national authority. They were now confronted with many other tasks apart from aiding the partisan detachments and the National Liberation Army.

The third stage was then reached which imposed the necessity of forming a single all-party national body to be the central body to unite all already existing National Liberation Committees and to form new ones.

THE ANTI-FASCIST COUNCIL

The historic meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) was convened at Bihac. Great and important decisions were taken at this meeting. For the first time since the enemy occupation of our country a central political organ, consisting of representatives of all nations of Yugoslavia, was set up. For the first time there met a body of national representatives sprung from the people themselves in the hardest hours of their history, to whom the Supreme Headquarters could render account for its past work. **The establishment of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia is one of the greatest gains in our national liberation struggle up to the present.** Foundations were laid upon which true fraternity and equality of rights for all nations of Yugoslavia, and the basis for a real, genuinely democratic, national government are being built. With the establishment of the Slovene Liberation Front began the practical application of the principles of the equality of rights of the nations of Yugoslavia, and the realisation of the centuries-long aspirations of the individual nations of Yugoslavia to govern themselves.

During the year since the establishment of the AVNOJ, big changes have taken place not only in our country but throughout the entire world. We have had to wage hard and bloody struggles with the invader. Our National Liberation Army has been confronted with difficult but honourable tasks. In the six months from January to July, 1943, we survived two huge enemy offensives, the fourth and the fifth, which were undertaken with the intention of annihilating our National Liberation Army and re-occupying our liberated territories. These were heavy ordeals for our National Liberation Army. We made tremendous efforts in which our sons showed such unprecedented courage and self-denial that future generations will be proud of them for centuries to come. In spite of the enormous numerical and technical superiority of our enemies, they failed to annihilate the core of our National Liberation Army. On the contrary, they sustained formidable losses, and we not only gained by this heavy and bloody struggle great sympathy and admiration from the entire progressive world, but in addition, for the first time, the Allies began to recognise our National Liberation Army by sending their military mission to its Supreme Headquarters. In the course of these battles and especially in the course of the fifth offensive we, too, sustained heavy losses. Amongst these are Members of the Executive Committee of the AVNOJ: Nuriya Pozderats, Veselin Maslesha, Sima Miloshevich and several other members of the AVNOJ who fell in battle. These are heavy and irretrievable losses. Let us pay homage to these glorious sons of our nations who gave their precious lives for our better and happier future.

It has been necessary to shed torrents of precious national blood, it has been necessary that tens of thousands of the finest sons of our nations should lay down their lives in the course of the two years' unequal struggle with the enemy in order that the truth about the real situation in Yugoslavia might be made plain to the world. Perhaps never has a small people paid such a high price to convince the world that the blood that has been shed in Yugoslavia is its own blood and not that of those shameful traitors whose leaders have been enjoying the hospitality of the Allied countries.

THE MIHAILOVICH FRAUD

An unprecedented fraud on the whole world has been unmasked in the course of this year. The treacherous Yugoslav Government in London has been cheating the world by saying that the struggle in Yugoslavia was being led by their Minister

of War, Drazha Mihailovich. To make the irony still greater, the Chetnik bands led by this Minister-traitor have been and are still fighting against the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia on the side of the invader. At the same time, however, nothing prevented these scoundrels from exhibiting the successes of the National Liberation Army as their successes. In the course of the fourth offensive, the traitor Drazha Mihailovich reached an agreement with the Germans, Italians and Ustashis in order to deliver jointly a mortal blow to the National Liberation Army. Numerous documents which fell into our hands in the course of our offensive against Drazha Mihailovich's Chetniks clearly unmask this diabolical plan and the unprecedented treachery of these degenerates. As is already known to our public, in the course of the great and glorious battles on the river Neretva and at Gornji Vakuf, Drazha Mihailovich mustered about 18,000 Chetniks from Serbia, the Sandzhak, Montenegro, Herzegovina and Eastern Bosnia and brought them to the river Neretva in order to stab us in the back. Our 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 7th divisions as well as units of the 9th Dalmatian division covered themselves with glory not only by routing the Germans, Ustashis and Italians on the river Neretva but also by passing immediately to a decisive counter-offensive against Drazha Mihailovich's Chetniks, chasing them from the river Neretva to Kolashin where, by a knock-out blow they were liquidated as a serious military force.

These are all facts which the treacherous fugitive Government was not able to conceal from the world public. Thus the fraud was finally exposed.

THE ITALIAN COLLAPSE

As a result of events abroad, i.e., the successes of the glorious Red Army on the Eastern Front and the smashing of Hitler's élite armies, conditions have been created for the victory of the rest of the Allies, especially for Britain and the U.S. in Africa. Conditions had been created for the Allied landings on Sicily and finally in Italy, and for the capitulation of Hitler's main partner, Fascist Italy. Here I must stress that in putting Italy out of action our National Liberation Army played a great part, for we have been pinning down 16-20 Italian divisions during the entire course of the war. Even before the capitulation of Italy, units of our National Liberation Army passed to the counter-offensive after the fifth enemy offensive, and liberated nearly the whole of Eastern Bosnia, a large part of Central Bosnia and Bosanska Krayina. After the capitulation of Italy and the disarmament of 10 Italian divisions in our country, our National Liberation Army not only came into possession of huge quantities

of arms but also increased its number by 80,000 new fighters, and liberated new huge areas in Dalmatia, Slovenia, etc. In this way conditions were created for new, victorious operations by the units of our National Liberation Army which gained the reputation of being a serious factor with which not only the Allies, but also the Fascist conquerors had to count.

After the capitulation of Italy there was an unprecedented upsurge of national resistance in Dalmatia, Slovenia and Croatia. Thus, to day there is no region in Yugoslavia which is not engulfed with the flame of national resistance. Up to November 1st, 1943, huge new areas of our country have been liberated. A great part of Dalmatia with the islands, a great part of the Croat Littoral, a great part of Slovenia, Bosanska Krayina, all Eastern Bosnia, a great part of Central Bosnia, the whole of the Sandzhak and a great part of Montenegro and a part of Herzegovina, have been liberated. Several of our divisions have already passed the border of the Sandzhak and entered Serbia, and begun to liberate the Serbian people from the German and Bulgarian conquerors, and from Nedich's armies and the Chetnik bands of Drazha Mihailovich. One of the significant facts is that our partisan forces in Macedonia have lately achieved considerable successes and for the second time have captured Kichevo and Debar and thus created conditions for the still further intensified development of the partisan movement in Macedonia. The partisan movement in Macedonia is closely linked up with the partisan movements in Albania and Greece, and at the same is becoming a great stimulus to the development of the partisan movement in Bulgaria itself.

One of the most brilliant successes of our national liberation uprising which is of the utmost historical importance, is the liberation of the Julian March (Istria and the Slovene Littoral) after the capitulation of Italy. The twenty years of slavery of these sections of the Slovene and Croat nations under Italian rule failed, in spite of all efforts of the Fascists, to deprive our enslaved brothers of their national character or to weaken their aspirations for unification with their brothers and with the other nations of Yugoslavia.

As is already seen from the foregoing, the situation both in the world and in Yugoslavia, particularly in the course of the last year, has completely changed. Thanks to the victories of the Red Army, Hitler's war machine is facing disaster and the victory over this greatest enemy of mankind is not far off. In the course of this year, the Fascist bloc has disintegrated. Italy has been put out of action. There is still greater confusion and disintegration amongst Hitler's satellites. The relations between

the Allies, the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S.A. are growing increasingly firmer as was particularly expressed at the Moscow Conference of the representatives of these three Great Allied Powers. All these facts are also of enormous importance to our struggle for national liberation. Faith in imminent victory and in the final liberation of our nations from the yoke of the enemy is embracing the broadest sections of the nations of Yugoslavia, as witnessed by the mass influx of new fighters into our National Liberation Army, and by the many distinguished political, cultural and public figures joining our struggle for national liberation throughout all the lands of Yugoslavia. All this accelerates the disintegration of Pavelich's and Nedich's puppet states and so weakens the positions of the occupation forces in our country.

However, there is one thing that has not changed even in the course of the last year, in spite of all these aforementioned facts, and that is the policy of the treacherous fugitive Government now residing in Cairo which is still unfortunately considered by our Allies as the legitimate representative of the nations of Yugoslavia.

THE POSITION OF KING PETER

I have no intention in this brief report of entering into details on this subject. Why are the Allies tolerating this Government which has no support whatever among our people, and which for the last two and a half years has been collaborating through its Minister of War, Drazha Mihailovich, with the invader against the National Liberation Army, i.e., against the nations of Yugoslavia; a Government which is openly reactionary and Pan-Serbian as is seen by its composition, and by the inclusion in it of such people as the notorious Pera Zhivkovich. I may say, however, that there is no fighter in the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia nor any patriot who to-day participates in the gigantic struggle, whose heart does not bleed or who does not feel indignant every time he thinks that this Government which has so many crimes to its charge and which consists of war criminals is still in power and enjoying the hospitality of our Allies. We are fully aware that the Government is doing its best to infiltrate back into our country in one way or another as is also the King before the people has decided about his fate. We are also aware that there are certain reactionary circles abroad who support the Government and the King in their endeavours. However, we also know that the vast majority of the progressive democratic elements in the Allied countries sincerely wish our people to decide their destiny themselves and to create whatever state organisation they think suitable.

We have been and are still being slandered from all sides, but according to a single plan. All the invaders, their Quislings—the paid traitors—the Ustashis, the Nedichites, the Chetniks of Đazha Mihailovich at home and their masters abroad have been, and are still, saying that our struggle for national liberation in Yugoslavia has been purely a Communist affair and involves the Bolshevization of the country; that it is an attempt by the Communists to seize power, to abolish private ownership, to destroy the Church and religion, and culture, etc. These slanders are old and worn-out; they owe their origin to Goebbels's insipiration and have now become the *gleichschaltet* propaganda which Goebbel's disciples feed to the population of "New Europe" and try to export outside Europe. Few people, however, believe these lies and least of all the nations of Yugoslavia. Our struggle for existence is too bloody and too costly; our nations have been suffering far too much in the course of the last three years to be sidetracked by such shabby slanders from the path of their great and glorious struggle for independence, for a better and happier future. Those times have gone when a handful of reactionaries ascribed, sometimes successfully, to the Communists of Yugoslavia such and similar plans in order to isolate them from the people; the nations of Yugoslavia have convinced themselves through this great struggle for liberation that the Communists have been the most faithful sons of their people, always ready to make the greatest sacrifices for their happiness.

In connection with all this, especially with the development of the nation-wide resistance and the liberation of ever larger territories and the ever-increasing tasks confronting our nations and finally in connection with the development of events abroad, it is necessary to take in time all adequate measures for the further successful development of our struggle for national liberation and to ensure to our nations a state organisation based on the brotherhood and equality of rights of all nations of Yugoslavia, which can guarantee genuine liberty and democracy to all sections of the community. During the past 23 years the Monarchy has compromised itself with the people. It has not been the bearer of democratic principles but of the dictatorship of the most reactionary cliques. The Monarchy has not been a link between the nations of Yugoslavia, nor a cornerstone for the creation of a strong national state commonwealth. The Monarchy has been the sponsor of Pan-Serbian hegemony and the oppression of other nations. The late King Alexander dissolved Parliament in 1929 and introduced a military dictatorship. He introduced a régime of terror and violence. King Peter has immediately, at the very beginning of his reign become the centre around which

gather all those reactionaries who brought our country to doom. Furthermore, he has been and is still supporting that most contemptible traitor Drazha Mihailovich and his subordinate commanders. There are hundreds and thousands who give living evidence to this and all our people are aware of it. Only a republican democratic form of Government can prevent similar misfortunes happening again to our nations.

THE NEED FOR A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

Such is the situation in *the fourth stage* in the development of our struggle for national liberation. Consequently, our national representation has laid upon it the duty of undertaking all necessary measures to justify the confidence of the vast majority of the freedom-loving nations of Yugoslavia. During this fourth stage, in connection with internal and external events the necessity arises of creating national organs, political, legislative and executive, able to overcome all difficulties in this situation; organs which will worthily represent the nations of Yugoslavia both in the country and abroad, and which will be able to frustrate any attempt, no matter from whatever side it may come, which would tend to frustrate the realisation of the aspirations for which our people has shed so much blood in this great liberation struggle. To-day it is important that the AVNOJ may really become the supreme legislative and executive body of the nations of Yugoslavia. To-day the time has already come for the establishment of an executive organ in the form of a Provisional Government which will be able to administer all affairs which a real Government must direct.

To-day we have the AVNOJ which was created a year ago. Therein all the nations of Yugoslavia are represented. Therein all sections of our community are represented. For the first time in their history our nations are delegating to this organ representatives who spring from their own midst, whom they freely elect and who enjoy their full confidence.

What we are undertaking to-day is a mighty event in the history of our nations. It is also a mighty event in relation to the outside world and in relation to our Allies, because thereby our nations through their representatives clearly and resolutely express their will. Of course, a mighty step of a people such as the establishment of a supreme executive organ, in our case, the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia, may at first meet obstacles and misunderstandings even with our Allies abroad. This is, in our case, due to the existence of another would-be Government abroad. **However, in the course of these two years' and nine months of hard and bloody struggle for free-**

dom and independence, the nations of Yugoslavia have acquired the right to decide their own destiny and this right is completely in accordance with the Atlantic Charter. We feel confident that our Allies will not misunderstand this historic step but on the contrary will do their utmost to give our nations moral and material assistance and support through the representatives chosen by the peoples themselves.

THE MIRACLE OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY

And now a few words about our glorious National Liberation Army. I may boldly claim that the creation of a national army under such conditions as ours is unique in history. From bare-handed partisan detachments, without factories, arms or ammunition, without store-houses, military supplies or provisions, without assistance from any side, an army of about a quarter of a million has been created, not in a peaceful period of time but in the course of the most terrible and bloodiest struggle ever waged by the nations of Yugoslavia. This is a gain of which the nations of Yugoslavia may be proud and of which their future generations will boast.

The creation of our National Liberation Army under such conditions has been an extremely difficult matter. We did not have any military academies or schools nor any cadres of officers. All these were being created and born in the process of the struggle itself. On the 1st of May the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia issued a decree about the introduction of ranks for officers and N.C.O.'s into our National Liberation Army. Peasants, workers and students and sections of the *intelligentsia*, who had been growing and developing in the national liberation struggle, became officers in our National Army. These, the finest sons of our nations, have been elected from their midst by the fighters themselves. All the nations of Yugoslavia may be proud of such officers and N.C.O.'s. Here it is necessary to point out that all those officers of the former Yugoslav Army who joined our ranks at the very beginning, though numerically small, occupy worthy positions in our army. Of course, their number would be greater had not a great number of Yugoslav officers become prisoners of war which made it impossible for them to take part in the national liberation struggle. The Supreme Headquarters created and promoted 5,000 officers and in the name of the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia I hereby ask this supreme national representation for the confirmation of the

decrees of May 1st, 1943, and that of November 1st, 1943, regarding the creation and promotion of officers of the National Liberation Army.

The Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia passed a decree about the introduction of Orders, i.e.:—

1.—The Order of National Hero; 2.—The Order of the Partisan Star, 1st Degree; 3.—The Order of the Partisan Star, 2nd Degree; 4.—The Order of the Partisan Star, 3rd Degree; 5.—The Order of National Liberation; 6.—The Order of Valour; 7.—The Medal of Valour; 8.—The Order of Fraternity and Unity.

I ask the supreme national representation to confirm this decree of August 15th, 1943, regarding the introduction of Orders into the National Liberation Army.

The organisation of our National Liberation Army is not yet completed; we have formed up to date 8 Army Corps which have all the necessary military and political cadres, but the influx of new fighters is increasing daily. New brigades and divisions are being formed, new corps will be formed too. Up to now the formation of our National Liberation Army has been mainly on a voluntary basis. Henceforth, however, since our nations have their executive organ in the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia, it will be the duty of this executive organ to issue a decree regarding military conscription of all citizens of this country from the ages of 18 to 50. Of course, anyone not belonging to these classes retains the right to volunteer for our Army. At the same time the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia will have to make a statement about all those soldiers and officers who still remain on the side of the Germans, either in the Croat Army or in any other units.

With reference to the Moscow Conference of the three Allied Powers it is timely for the national representatives to declare themselves on many important issues of interest to our nations, such as:—

1. The question of war criminals.
2. The question of shipping, both war and mercantile, which was seized by Italy from our people during the occupation of our country.
3. The question of our internees in Italy and other countries.
4. The question of the return to our people of national property looted by the Italian occupation forces.

All these are important and urgent questions which should be solved as soon as possible.

ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH MISSION

As has been pointed out above, in May, 1943, a delegation from the British High Command in Cairo came to our Supreme Headquarters. A similar delegation had arrived at the Headquarters of Croatia a few days before. The task of these delegations was to establish contact with the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia and to make preparations for the arrival of a main delegation to the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia headed by a British General. The Supreme Headquarters agreed to accept such a mission. In September, 1943, a British Military Mission, consisting of several high officers headed by Brigadier Maclean, who had full powers from General Wilson, Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East Forces, came to our Headquarters. In the credentials of General Wilson it was stated that the purpose of this Mission was to establish the closest possible relations between our National Liberation Army and the British Forces, to organise the dispatch of war supplies to our National Liberation Army, and to co-ordinate military operations.

The Allies began sending us in July some war supplies by air but in negligible quantities, which was understandable because the only means of transport were planes. The liberation of the Dalmatian seaboard and islands furnished the opportunity for receiving larger quantities of war supplies and provisions for our Army, and certainly the Allies have sent us by ships larger quantities of war supplies and ammunition. It is likely that we shall still receive by sea greater quantities of war supplies which are necessary for the conduct of the war. Of course, we need to-day heavy up-to-date armament such as tanks and aircraft. The Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia has made certain approaches to the Allies in that direction.

The Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, having established contact with the Allies, has been approached more than once on matters which are no longer of a purely military nature but on political matters belonging to the sphere of Government. Moreover, Supreme Headquarters, i.e., the Commander-in-Chief has also put forward certain demands and requests to the Allies which in normal circumstances fall within the sphere of an existing government. Supreme Headquarters has already sent a delegation to Italy to discuss the reception of war supplies, the organisation

and reception of our war prisoners and internees and their repatriation to our country. Further, Supreme Headquarters has already put forward a demand to the Allies for the return of all war and merchant vessels which were seized by Italy from our people. It has also raised the question of our internees and prisoners of war. It has raised the question of the dispatch of heavy up-to-date armaments, tanks, aircraft, etc. to our army as well as the establishment of air and naval bases in Italy. With reference to all this, the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, with the consent of the British High Command in Cairo has sent its delegation to try to solve all these questions on the spot.

It is evident from all this how necessary and important is the establishment of a Provisional Government to deal with all these issues and to act abroad as the sole and true legitimate representative of the nations of Yugoslavia. Supreme Headquarters has established contact with the Allies, i.e., the British and Americans whose military representatives are with us, while efforts are now being made for the representatives of the U.S.S.R. to come. It is the desire of all our nations and our army to establish as soon as possible contact with this great fraternal state in which the nations of Yugoslavia have the greatest confidence as their greatest protector.

The struggle of our people and the brilliant successes achieved in the field of battle by their glorious National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia have won for us the sympathies of the entire progressive world and all the necessary conditions have been created so that our nations may succeed in realizing their aspirations—a free, genuinely democratic, fraternal and federative Yugoslavia.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECISIONS OF THE ANTI-FASCIST COUNCIL OF NATIONAL LIBERATION OF YUGOSLAVIA

for the further development of the liberation struggle
and the creation of a Federal State.

*(Leading article by Marshal Tito published in the periodical
"New Yugoslavia" of the 1st of March, 1944).*

There is no doubt that the decisions reached at the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) are among the greatest successes which the nations of Yugoslavia have achieved in the course of their liberation struggle. They mark a turning-point in the process of this liberation struggle. The first foundations have been laid down for a new, happier Yugoslavia, built on a just order, which will guarantee a better and happier future for our suffering peoples: an order based on national equality of rights, fraternal concord and social justice. These decisions are the expressions of the aspirations of all our nations and that is why they are welcomed with such enthusiasm by the vast majority of all the people of Yugoslavia.

These decisions found an immediate response throughout the country and abroad. At home, they had the following effects:—

- (a) They strengthened the profound faith of all those who have been fighting in this unequal struggle for their freedom and equality of rights that their superhuman efforts and sacrifices have not been in vain.
- (b) All those who were uncertain of what to-morrow may bring, and who were afraid of the past, were given a clear perspective and a definite aim, to which they could give their wholehearted support in this hard struggle.
- (c) All waverers and speculators who were sitting on the fence, waiting for an opportune moment to see which side would win, were by these decisions deprived of the further possibility of excuse that the "time has not yet arrived." They are now forced to take a stand: one way or the other, for or against the people.
- (d) These historic decisions are the most powerful weapons not only against the invader, but also against all kinds of traitors and reactionaries, who have hitherto been slandering the National Liberation Movement by calling it a purely Communist affair.

TRAITORS AND QUISLINGS

These traitors soon took a definite stand. The majority of them found themselves in the same ranks as the invader. The Yugoslav fugitive Government took up an openly hostile attitude. The reactionaries and the leaders of some former parties in the country were extremely worried and secretly began to look for help in all directions. They are now uniting—both at home and abroad, regardless of their political or party affiliation. Secretly, they are plotting in every way to turn back the wheel of history with the aid of the invaders. The invader's hirelings—Nedich, Pavelich as well as Drazha Mihailovich—endeavour by all means, with the help of the invader to carry out forcible mobilization and to prevent the nations of Yugoslavia from realizing their great projects. The invader himself tries very hard to take the fullest possible advantage of the criminal work of these home-bred traitors and reactionaries, in the hope of prolonging his own life. With one hand he graciously offers Eastern Bosnia and Montenegro to traitor Nedich in exchange for a few tens of thousands of Serbian soldiers who are to replace the Germans in the fight against the National Liberation Army. With the other he promises the Bosnian Moslems autonomy. To Pavelich's Ustashis he promises the Bay of Kotor, Herzegovina and the rest of Bosnia. Here is a real muddle which has caused dissension between the "Pan-Serb" Nedich and the "Pan-Croat" Pavelich. Neither can the Moslem reactionaries understand how their autonomy can conform with the division of Bosnia between Pavelich and Nedich. But at least, as a result of these German stupidities, our nations need not fear any "United Front" of the reactionary traitorous cliques of Belgrade and Zagreb.

The decisions reached by the representatives of the nations of Yugoslavia at the Second Session of the AVNOJ regarding the future organisation of Yugoslavia, have met with the sympathy and the unanimous approval of all democratic allied countries. They were recorded in the democratic press abroad and by radio stations as one of the most important events in recent times. It could not be otherwise. This war is far too harsh a lesson, not only for politicians, but also for the man in the street, not only in our country but also in all Allied countries where to-day—very rightly—the vital powers of a nation and its ability to govern itself are measured by its resistance in the fight against the German Fascist invaders.

But to-day we cannot be content with the statement that our decisions have met with approval abroad. The national representatives—the AVNOJ, its Presidium, and the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia—have taken over a tremendous res-

possibility in the eyes of our nations. This applies especially to the National Committee, as the executive organ of national power. It is clear that the National Committee has to carry out its work under most difficult conditions, as the result of the existence of a whole series of obstacles which prevent the normal development of its work as a whole, as well as the work of the individual commissioners. However, the point is that even under these difficult circumstances everything possible must be done in order to justify the confidence which the people have placed in their representatives.

“EVERYTHING FOR THE FRONT, EVERYTHING FOR VICTORY”

The first and most important task of the National Committee at the present time is the liberation of our country and its attention must be focussed primarily in this direction. The main burden is being borne by our National Liberation Army. Therefore “Everything for the front, everything for victory” still remains our leading slogan. The question of food and general supplies for our army is one of the most important issues on which depends the success of our further struggle. The National Committee has to devote to this question its maximum attention. The necessary means can be found within the country itself, and the people are only too glad to help. But the burden has to be divided equitably and therefore it is necessary to organise the collection of materials in such a way as to prevent some areas and villages being over-taxed. Already now a way must be found to help our peasants in liberated territory with seeds and labour so as to ensure that the greatest possible acreage may be sown. In addition, new sources of supplies have to be found, as the war has for the past three years been mainly waged at the cost of the poorest section of our population, in those districts which can hardly provide sufficient food for themselves. These resources can, of course, only come from abroad. The National Committee, however, will have to take organisational measures so that this help may be quickly and equitably distributed as soon as it becomes possible to receive it. Statistical data must be collected regarding the condition of individual families, the number of their livestock, the acreage of land under cultivation, the number of people who need full or partial help, etc.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Lika, Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, Dalmatia, Slovenia and Vojvodina, hundreds and hundreds of houses have been burned down, and the population lives in dug-outs and huts. This is very dangerous here as far as the present day conditions allow it. Help should be immediately given to our peasants to enable them

to build wooden houses. Forest areas must be marked where trees will be cut according to plan; nails and similar articles will have to be provided because the peasants are unable to obtain them and it is impossible to build without them.

As we have seen, our people live under terrible sanitary conditions and therefore it is necessary to undertake the most urgent measures in order to preserve the people from infectious and other diseases.

Over the whole of the liberated territory and wherever it is possible, regular school tuition must be organised at once. It is therefore necessary to provide teachers, text books, premises, etc.

THE POVERTY OF THE PEOPLE

The majority of the members of the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia have had the opportunity, in the course of this hard liberation struggle, of becoming acquainted on the spot with all the poverty of our population. This poverty was caused not only by the occupation but also by twenty years of plunder on the part of various anti-popular regimes, and by the system of corrupt and violent rule of an organised clique of profiteers, alienated from the people and wishing to get rich quickly at the expense of the people. In Serbia, the Sandzhak, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lika, and Montenegro we saw people living in small, narrow huts, dirty and unhealthy, often together with their cattle. We saw terrible living conditions, which forced us to ask ourselves: how could these people remain alive at all? What on earth did they pay taxes and other duties for? There at the same time, we found an answer to the question why these people are fighting to-day so hard for their freedom. Certainly not for that former step-motherly Yugoslavia, but for a new Yugoslavia, which will ensure for them a life worthy of man. That is why the poorest people to-day give their last crust of bread, that is why they bear so stoically and without grumbling all the sufferings of this war; that is why they give their blood and their lives. That also explains why our people feel such an irresistible hatred for everything that reminds them of the past.

The greatest attention should be devoted to the fact that even to-day, while the majority of our people are making the greatest sacrifices in the struggle for their freedom and a better future, striving with all their force to chase the invader out of the country, there is a section of Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Moslems, Montenegrins and Albanians, etc. which is openly serving the invader. In the ranks of the Germans, fighting against our nations we find considerable numbers of Croat "Home Guards," Slovene "Home Guards," Bosnian and Herzegovinian Moslems, with

Serbian Chetniks of Drazha Mihailovich and the "State Guard" of Nedich, Albanians from the Kossovo region as well as Montenegrin, Bosnian and other Chetniks. They are all committing the most flagrant treachery against their country and their people. All these in so far as they do not come over immediately into the ranks of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia and cleanse themselves from the shame of treachery by their fighting, will be placed before a national tribunal and will have to bear the hardest consequences for their treachery. In the history of our people their names will be recorded in a chapter of shame and future generations will remember them with scorn.

All those who continue to serve the invader, even if they may not be brought to book by popular justice, will nevertheless have no right to take part in the future organisation of our state commonwealth. They will have no right to enjoy the fruits of this magnificent liberation struggle.

Our glorious National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments is composed on a voluntary basis. They give voluntarily their blood and their lives for the better and happier future of their country. Nobody has a right to ask them to go on carrying alone the whole burden of this hard struggle. All those who are standing aside will have to be called up to do their duty in the ranks of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia. Whoever fails to respond to this most honourable duty will rightly be branded not only as a coward but also as a traitor to his country. It is the duty of every decent Serb, Croat, Slovene, Moslem, Montenegrin, Macedonian, etc., to give all he has in this hard and bloody struggle—the justest fight in the history of our nations.

THE NEED FOR RECOGNITION

In international relations, every day increases the necessity for an early "de jure" recognition of the National Committee as the only lawful Government of Yugoslavia. This is an imperative interest of our nations, who have already been sufficiently damaged by the treacherous work of the Yugoslav fugitive Government.

The national funds which were deposited in Allied countries before and during the war, are being recklessly squandered by the Yugoslav fugitive Government for its own personal purposes and for the purpose of financing the treacherous Chetniks at home. Here we see the absurd fact that an irresponsible, treacherous Government takes advantage of earlier existing treaties and obligations of the Allies to squander undisturbed

and to ruin recklessly the national property, although it has no connection whatsoever with its people and its country. In this way these emigrés are committing a common crime against the nations of Yugoslavia, who are to-day very much in need and who to-morrow, when this struggle is over, will need it very badly for the reconstruction of our devastated country.

The fugitive Government filled with an irresistible hatred against the nations of Yugoslavia who entered the fight against their sworn enemy against its will, is trying to push its adherents into various international Committees, where it is most probable that they will not act in the interest of our nations. We cannot be indifferent to these facts. We must do all we can to save the national funds, and to see to it that representatives who enjoy the confidence of our nations, i.e. representatives delegated by the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia, enter these Committees. With this aim in view, constant appeals should be addressed to honest international public opinion and to our Allies. **We consider that the nations of Yugoslavia, who have been making such tremendous sacrifices in this fight for the common Allied cause, can rightly expect that the Allied States will at the earliest possible moment sever relations with the treacherous fugitive Government and will make it possible for our people to use their national funds—i.e. that the Allies will establish normal relations with the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia.**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERATION

Although the question of our internal organisation will be definitely decided only after the liberation of the country from the invader, much preparatory work will have to be done at the present time. This is essential not only for an easier solution of this question after the end of the war, but also for the more successful conduct of to-day's liberation struggle. The issue of federation at present is only a word to many citizens of our country—a word which implies something better than the old Yugoslavia but has no actual meaning for the country as a whole nor for the individual nation in particular. A successful explanation of this point cannot be achieved by propaganda alone, it must be substantiated by practical work, i.e. by an immediate solution of certain issues by federative organisation. The National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia must try now not only to cede all branches of internal administration, which belong to the domain of a federative organisation, to such a body, but also to assist it by initiative and advice. The National Committee should also see that the leading organs of the federal units do not take

over matters which belong to the sphere of the National Committee, i.e. to the central organ of Yugoslavia. This differentiation can be introduced immediately in the process of this war, but at the same time care must be taken to ensure that those taking part are in complete mutual accord.

From some regions, for instance from Voyvodina and others, we are often asked what will happen to that particular region. Will it have autonomy or will it belong to some other federal unit? These questions are, of course, quite appropriate, showing the great interest of our people in all parts of our country for their future organisation which will bring them all those rights which they can properly claim. To-day we can answer only this: there is no doubt that Voyvodina, like other regions which may claim it, will receive the broadest autonomy, but the exact nature of the autonomy and the question of the federal unit to which the region in question will belong, depends on the people themselves, i.e. on their representatives, when the final structure of the State is decided after the war.

This is only a small part of the tremendous tasks which are placed before the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia and before the organs of every individual nation in particular. It would be quite wrong to expect that these questions can be solved without the utmost help not only from the National Liberation Committees and other national organisations, but also from the whole people. The AVNOJ and the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia have a great responsibility to our people, but I am confident that they will be able with the help of the people, to solve all tasks in the same way that our heroic partisans and the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, supported by all the patriotic nations of Yugoslavia, have waged successfully their gigantic struggle for liberation.

