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Protocol of the Conversation between Chairman Mao Zedong during the Reception of the Friendship Delegation of the People's Republic of Albania, Headed by Shefqet Peçi on 18 December 1967

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Summary:

A discussion between Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Shefqet Peçi, and Vasil Nathanaili. The two sides discuss an earthquake in Albania, the Cultural Revolution in China, and the Albanian delegation's travels throughout the PRC.

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Present at the meeting from the Chinese side: Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Yang Chengwu, and Wang Shusheng. Present from the Albanian side were all members of the friendship delegation: the sculptor Shaban Hadëri, the painter Kujtim Buza, and the ambassador of the People's Republic of Albania to the People's Republic of China Vasil Nathanaili.

Chairman Mao: Welcome comrades! How long have you been in our country?

Comrade Shefqet: We have been here for 29 days.

Chairman Mao: I learned that you went to different regions. Where have you been?

Comrade Shefqet: We went to Canton, Wuhan, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai. Comrade Mao, let me convey to you the regards from comrade Enver Hoxha, who asked me specifically to do this.

Chairman Mao: Please give to comrade Enver Hoxha my regards and wishes for good health. I heard that there was an earthquake in your country. Were there great damages?

Comrade Shefqet: Twelve people were killed and over 4,000 buildings were destroyed. Last night we learned that comrade Enver Hoxha and comrade Mehmet Shehu visited the damaged locations.

Chairman Mao: How far from Tirana are the locations that were at the center of the earthquake, and was it felt in Tirana?

Comrade Shefqet: The locations are about 250 kilometers away, on the border with Yugoslavia. There was some shaking in Tirana also.

Chairman Mao: Last year there was an earthquake in our country as well. That ground movement was also felt in Beijing. I believe that you, comrade ambassador, may have been here and felt it. I was in Hangzhou at the time. Comrade Zhou Enlai visited the affected region.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: At the time, comrade Lin Biao was in Suzhou.

Chairman Mao: There were many victims at the time, a total number of some 10,000 victims and wounded, including hundreds of deaths.

Comrade Shefqet: Your earthquake has been serious. The earthquake we experienced was also serious.

Chairman Mao: It looks like the earth is not quiet.

Comrade Kang Sheng: This time around the earthquake was more serious in Yugoslavia.

Comrade Shefqet: More earthquakes happen in Yugoslavia. An even worse one happened in Skopje. We have taken the necessary measures this time. The Central Committee comrades have visited all of these locations and everything is being put back in its place.

Chairman Mao: They say that there are tens and even up to hundreds of tremors across the globe in a given year.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: As I reported last year, there were some 1,000 tremors within a two-month period last year.

Chairman Mao: Yes, there were tremors in Japan as well. This shows that there are contradictions and conflicts deep inside the earth. Just like an earthquake, a violent class struggle happened in our country. They say that this time around some 1,100,000 weapons—grenades, guns, machine guns, and canons—were stolen. This is not a coincidence, but a result of the existence of Kuomintangists, the bourgeois, the landowners, the spies, and the counterrevolutionaries left from the period of liberation. These people became the leaders of the armed fighting, deceiving the masses and pushing them to fight one another, participating in the conflicts themselves. The so-called stealing of the weapons is not true. The weapons were not stolen by the masses, but they were distributed to them. The leftists gave them to the leftists, and the rightists to the rightists. If problems between them could not be solved, they would begin to fight with weapons.

In the Zhejiang province and in the city of Nanjing there has been armed fighting.

A part of the cadres of the local army units, the army regions, the independent divisions, the self-defense regiments, and the mobilization branches, used to be collaborators with the Kuomintangists, the landowners, and the bourgeoisie. Some cadres had degenerated in their way of thinking and living. This time they were unmasked. What do you think about this?

Comrade Shefqet: This has its good and bad aspects. Without muddying the waters, it is impossible to filter it. We saw ourselves that the situation is getting better.

Chairman Mao: That is correct. During the second half of this year, the situation has changed when compared to the first half.

From September 5, when we gave the order to collect the weapons, 900,000 weapons have been handed in. There are still one-tenth of the weapons left, which people are keeping as reserves.

Comrade Shefqet: They will hand those in as well.

Chairman Mao: In the future, they will. We have also distributed some weapons among workers in the province of Hunan, in the Ningxia autonomous region, and in the cities Wuchang and Nanchang.

Comrade Kang Sheng: Where there has been unity, we have given them weapons because it is safer to give weapons to those who have united.

Chairman Mao: In general, parts of the local units in some provinces are weak. The regular army units are very strong, but there are also local units that are good.

Comrade Shefqet: Your army is strong and disciplined.

Chairman Mao: We rely on the strength of the army. Now in Beijing we have four divisions with 10,000 troops each. Until May of last year, in Beijing, we only had two divisions, but in May we brought another two to settle scores with the former party committee of Beijing.

So there, you see that there have been people who did not obey the Central Committee under my leadership—like the Beijing committee. There have been many people who would not obey us.

Comrade Shefqet: Now that the Cultural Revolution is underway, all of them will be persuaded because otherwise the revolutionaries will swallow them up.

Chairman Mao: It is so. We must find support with the masses because the masses persuade them, not us. Those people fear the masses, the students, the workers, the peasants, and the dazibaos [big-character posters].

Comrade Shefqet: We visited a division close to Beijing and saw how strong it was. We saw practice shooting there and we took part in it.

Chairman Mao: Our experience is that wherever the regular units go, they change the physiognomy of the local army too.

Comrade Kang Sheng: I have learned that our comrades only showed you the positive side of things.

Comrade Vasil Nathanaili: No, in the four provinces that I visited, according to the recommendation of comrade Mao, there had been fighting and armed conflicts. The comrades spoke to us about these.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: The ambassador was there earlier, not with the delegation.

Comrade Shefqet: They showed to us everything, and we saw everything. Comrades Mehmet Shehu and Ramiz Alia told us that the situation in your country is improving every day, and this pleased us very much. Your comrades showed everything sincerely, without hiding anything.

Chairman Mao: They must speak to you about the development of the revolution. In the past, the situation was like still water, but now it is flowing again. The armed struggle began ever since June of this year and continued until October. Now there are only rare cases of it.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We have learned that in the cities Linyngan [sic; proper spelling unclear], Wuhu, Kunming, and Chongqing they are preparing for armed struggle.

Chairman Mao: It is better that they start the fire in these places. They have not

fought as much as needed, and the fate of victory or defeat has not been determined between the two large groups.

Comrade Shefqet: This way, all things will come out in the open.

Chairman Mao: Where there was very heavy fighting, the problems got solved more easily. Beijing is a very cultured place. There was fighting all over Beijing, but very few people were killed. They did not steal the weapons here because the support of the bad people had been eroded. In Beijing there was heavy fighting between the units of three types [unclear] but there were no victims. Some 2,000 people who were beating people up and stealing did not have weapons in hand, and so they were isolated and crushed in a short time. Only their remnants are left now. They have enjoyed the support of influential people like Wu Kehua, formerly commander of the artillery, who now has been fired from his duties and is in auto-control.

Comrade Shefqet: Is he alive?

Chairman Mao: Yes, he is alive (laughing).

Comrade Shefqet: Yes, the rule is that when you commit treason, measures are taken.

Chairman Mao: He does not see this as treason, but as a revolutionary position. The number of such people is not small. There have been people like this in the military units in the provinces of Shaanxi, Hunan, Hebei, and Zhejiang. We have transferred some of them and fired some others and sent them to enroll in study programs. Such people make up 1-3 percent of the general number of cadres. If more than 95 percent of the cadres are self-aware, the bad elements cannot do anything.

For example, there was fierce fighting between two groups at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but this fighting was very polite.

Comrade Shefqet: Diplomats always behave politely.

Chairman Mao: In the past, we were not able to predict some things. Almost in all centers and provinces people were divided into two groups. In the past, we did not see fighting among the masses of people. This happened last year, and we understood that this phenomenon happens everywhere. People were divided into two factions; there were groups within the party committees and within the party ranks as well. For example, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the bad people incite other people and take the lead. The former member of the Kuomintang party Shao Xun Han [sic; proper spelling of name unknown], deputy director of international relations at the Foreign Ministry, was there. There were also suspicious people like Liu Xiao, and bad elements like deputy minister Chen Jiakang. Liu Xiao was a despot at our embassy in Tirana. He adopted the chauvinistic position of a big state against a small one, against you. He was ambassador to Moscow for seven years and adopted the position of conciliation with revisionists. But the main issue related to him concerns the period before the liberation. He was arrested twice by the Kuomintang and was set free. He had very close ties to Phan Han Nien [sic; proper spelling of name unknown], former deputy director of the Executive Committee and party secretary in Shanghai, Chiang Kai-shek's spy. Some former members of the Kuomintang entered our party's ranks.^[1]

The people arrested by the Kuomintang issued statements or published them in the press. We did not know these things. The Red Guards uncovered them recently. Liu Shaoqi, Peng Zhen, Tao Zhu, Lu Dingyi, Bo Yibo, and others made these types of statements, whereas Luo Ruiqing never officially joined the party and, anyway, his history between 1927 and 1929 is still very murky.

In short, we can say that these people are a minority. This time around, masses of people carried out a verification of the cadres. It is possible that some good cadres are also attacked in the midst of all this, but we do not kill people, and so we can rehabilitate these victims again. There are people who have made mistakes and so the masses of people do not trust them. For example, this is what was happened with Xhan Ti Sia [sic; proper spelling of name unknown], secretary and chief of the [Hebei?] province, Zhang Pinghua, Hunan province secretary.

Both of them were military cadres. We have defended people like these, not leaving them where they are, because otherwise the masses will rise and fight against them and turn them into "jet-planes."^[2]

Comrade Vasil Nathanaili: As they did with the Wuhan commander Chen Zaidao.

Chairman Mao Zedong: His own guard and secretary turned him into a “jet-plane.” Later we convinced people not to do this any longer.

But we cannot say that this is an entirely bad thing, because many people who turned into “jet-planes” became more fit physically. For example, the Henan party secretary Ji Dengkui is a good person, but the rightists turned him into a “jet-plane” hundreds of times. I asked him how his health was, and he said he was doing very well. This is a kind of physical fitness for good people.

Our cadres no longer go to vacation resorts, sanatoriums, and hospitals. Earlier, they would go there even when dealing with a small ailment, exaggerating the condition. But they no longer go there.

Comrade Shefqet: They have been healed.

Chairman Mao: Now, not only are no longer suffering from illnesses, but their health is very good. It is not that their health was bad before, but their will was weak.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: They are afraid of the revolutionary overthrowers.

Chairman Mao: The “jet-plane” also served to make physically fitter the rear guard secretary Qiu Huizuo and Wu Kehua, artillery commissar, who were attacked by rightist elements.

As you have said, comrade Lin Biao, it is an honor when good people are attacked by bad people. But bad people must also be attacked by good people.

The “jet-plane” phase lasted for a year and it is now over. Now they would not even make Chen Zaidao do that.

I spoke about politics with you. It is an important issue for you, just as it is for us. This shows that the situation here was not normal, and it means that we are carrying out a revolution. The term Cultural Revolution is a general one; in fact, this is a political and economic revolution.

For example, earlier a factory would have at minimum four levels: the director’s office, the sector, the brigade, and the team. Now, two of them have been eliminated, and the number of people who are not in production has decreased a lot. There used to be provinces where the number of cadres in the party committee and the executive committee was in the thousands. Now three-fourths of them can be cut.

Comrade Vasil Nathanaili: In Qingdao they told us that, compared to the past, nine-tenths of the number of cadres has been cut.

Chairman Mao: This is even better. In the institutions where there are a lot of people, a bad situation develops. These people eat and then do not what to do, so they issue orders and write memos and sink into bureaucracy.

Have these comrades ever been to China? Who are they?

(Comrade Shefqet introduces the individuals one by one. Upon finding out that comrade Sotir Naçi has stayed in China for a long time) he said:

It is a good thing that people who have been here for a long time, who know the history and the Chinese language, are the ones who study China’s problems. You must also read the dazibaos, and not only *Renmin ribao* [“People’s Daily”], which is not sufficient. You must also read the small papers put out by workers and the Red Guards. In [Shaanxi/Shanxi] there is still no official newspaper. They only have small papers. In many large provinces and cities the papers were shut down. I am very happy about this. Our youth paper has been a revisionist one. *Renmin ribao* and *Guangming ribao* [“Enlightenment Daily”] have been semi-revisionist, so we took control of them. We took control of *Renmin ribao* on 30 May 1966. Likewise, we took control of the Xinhua [news] agency and Radio Beijing. Power has been wrestled several times in these sectors. At Xinhua, we have established a military administration. There are many intellectuals there, and among them there are rightist elements and agents and spies of other countries. This is all I had to say.

Comrade Shefqet: I wish you a long life. Many thanks for the warm reception.

Chairman Mao Zedong: Please give to comrade Enver my regards. I wish comrade Enver a long life.

[1] Translator’s note: The romanization of Chinese terms, places, and names in Albanian-language documents is often inconsistent, complicating translation into

English. One Albanian variant might apply to different Chinese equivalents. To note this, uncertain variants are marked with brackets and question marks. Readers who spot errors are kindly encouraged to get in touch with corrections.

[2] Translator note: A form of physical abuse in which the person being denounced was forced to stand for a long time in an uncomfortable position, kneeling or standing, with the head pulled back and arms raised to the side, which resembled the wings of a plane.