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**Conversation between the Party of Labor of Albania
Delegation, Headed by Comrade Beqir Balluku, and
Comrade Mao Zedong on 5 October 1968, at
19:00-20.30**

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Summary:

Mao Zedong provides a survey of how the Cultural Revolution is unfolding in localities across China.

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Conversation between the Party of Labor of Albania delegation, headed by comrade Beqir Balluku, and comrade Mao Zedong on 5 October 1968, at 19:00-20.30

Present at the reception were comrades Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Huang Yongsheng.

Present from the Albanian side were comrades Rita Marko, Adil Çarçani, Koço Theodhosi, and Vasil Nathanaili.

Comrade Beqir Balluku: Allow me, comrade Mao Zedong, to express the most heartfelt greetings of comrade Enver Hoxha, of the Central Committee of the PLA, and of the Politburo, on account of the great successes of the proletarian Cultural Revolution in your country, which You personally launched and directed, and which marches onwards all the time, illuminated by your great Marxist-Leninist ideas.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Thank you.

The defeated classes will writhe a few more times, in the agony of death, to try and resist. So we cannot say that we have achieved the ultimate victory.

Similarly, we cannot say that we will achieve the ultimate and complete victory over the next decades. We cannot lose vigilance and give up control over the overthrown classes. There are, in fact, still remnants of these classes, mainly elements of Kuomintang and the bourgeoisie, who have entered our party ranks. Many of them managed to infiltrate the central and provincial leading organs. There have been elements of this sort in many workplaces, so we must enact a purge of these elements, one by one. I can say that in many workplaces, the leadership has been in the hands of bad elements.

I do not know if there were bad elements that took charge among the leadership of the garment-manufacturing complex that you visited?

Comrade Rita Marko: Yes, there were. Over there, we learned that the former security chief was a kulak's son.[\[1\]](#) But the workers had purged him now.

Comrade Mao Zedong: There was only one such delinquent at this complex?

Comrade Rita Marko: They are continuing to purge bad elements. We also saw people there who had made mistakes, but had done the work to understand their mistakes and are self-correcting. For example, the former director of the complex had made mistakes even though he came from working-class origins. At first, he did not understand the mistakes, but later he understood them and corrected himself.

Comrade Mao Zedong: This is why the ideological work one must conduct with these people that have made mistakes is important. A great deal of work must be carried out with them, an intensive, ideological kind of work, because it takes time for them to understand their mistakes and to correct them. One must see this issue as important because one cannot just set aside all these people; they are not all enemies. As I said to you, some of them are remnants of the Kuomintang, a reflection of the series of contradictions between the enemies and us. Besides them, there are other people, even communists, who have made mistakes. These latter ones are contradictions from within the ranks of the people.

There are two types of contradictions: the first are the contradictions between the enemies and us, and the second type consists of the contradictions within the people. This is why a great deal of work has been carried out during the proletarian Cultural Revolution, and one must say that this revolution was much harder than the war we waged to liberate the country.

Comrade Beqir Balluku: Yes, the Cultural Revolution has been much more complicated because it was related to a political, ideological, economic, educational, cultural, social, and class struggle—and all of these had to be solved correctly.

Comrade Mao Zedong: We must purge ranks in rural regions also, one by one, in every commune and brigade, on all fronts. (Turning to comrade Zhou Enlai, comrade Mao asks if the Albanian comrades had visited workplaces recently. Comrade Zhou Enlai replied that in addition to the garment-manufacturing complex, they will visit Beijing's typographic printing house, the metallurgy complex, etc.)

Comrade Mao Zedong: The metallurgy complex in Beijing has been behind. At the

“7th of August” metallurgical factory work for purging the class ranks has not even started. (Comrade Zhou Enlai replies that perhaps the work for the purging of the class ranks may have started at the factory where the delegation is scheduled to visit.)

There are industrial enterprises like the Xinhua “New China” printing press where there are people of four dynasties, meaning from the time of the military juntas in northern China, and then of the Japanese, Kuomintang, and then from the time of the Communist Party. Earlier, at this press, they used to print money and then they started printing newspapers. All this time, they had not carried out a purge of the delinquents, but they did it this time. There used to be old officials, Kuomintang generals, lieutenant-generals, major-generals, and various officers who disguised themselves as workers and worked in these various places.

Comrade Adil Çarçani: Yes, they have concealed their origin and have disguised themselves by posing in various enterprises as workers.

Comrade Mao Zedong: One guard in a factory in the city of Xi’an had managed to put on a mask. In the past, during the Kuomintang period, he used to be a garrison commander in the same city. But now he got caught in the purge. He was a guard for 18 years after liberation and nobody knew that he had this background. There are many examples like this. In Shanghai, for example, there have been elements like these, Kuomintang types and capitalists, who had found their way into our factories, institutions, schools, in the arts, in literature, in education, and in culture.

Shanghai is a big industrial center of our country. The industry and transport workers in Shanghai comprise 1,200,000 people, without including the workers of other sectors like artisans, those in the social-cultural services, trade, and the family members of the industrial workers. So they are 1,200,000 if we only include the actual industry and transport workers. Beijing, on the other hand, has 800,000 workers of this type, excluding those of other sectors. In the past, Beijing had only 220,000 industrial workers. Industry had developed a great deal over these 18 years, after the liberation of the country, and as a consequence, the number of workers has increased. Today it is 800,000 individuals, which means that it has grown fourfold when compared to the past.

We still have not carried out a radical purge of the ranks; we have carried out some purging, but it has not been thorough.

On the occasion of the October 1st celebration in Beijing, our national holiday, we invited this time only representatives from the working class, from all provinces and cities of China, a total of 10,000 people. They represent the working class from across the country. For example, from the 1,200,000 industrial workers in Shanghai, we invited 700 people; from Beijing, [Jiangxi?], and other autonomous provinces 600 people; from some provinces we invited 500 people, from others 300, 200, and 100, according to size and the numbers of workers who live there. In fact, from Tibet we only invited 20 workers. This time, to celebrate our national holiday in Beijing, we did not invite students. As you saw, working class representatives who had traveled from all of China’s provinces were placed on the side tribunes in Tiananmen Square, and very representatives of the students of Beijing.

The highest number of disturbances took place when you visited last year, which is to say in February and March of last year, but also in July, August, and September of last year. The confusion was great because there were a lot of fights at that time; we refer to this as “armed fighting.” We do not support this kind of struggle but we support a struggle carried out with pens and words, though there are people for whom armed fighting is needed.

With “armed fighting” we mean disorder and physical combat. As a matter of fact, one to two million weapons have been collected, including guns, which have been taken away from these people. There were different groups, and they fought against one another. Various instigators caused this, helping to create groups of this type and pitting them against one another. There are even examples where family members have been members of two or three different groups, so that the father supports one group and the mother supports another and the son yet another. In some regions these groups reconciled through peaceful agreements. This was made possible by the fact that the central mass of these groups consists of revolutionaries

and that good people were in the leading positions. But one must say that such fights also took place among communists. The result was splintering into groups. But it is sufficient to bring the bad people out in the open, to secure peace, and to establish the revolutionary committee. This can only be achieved when the groups are united because, for example, an enterprise cannot have two revolutionary committees. There have been cases when there was fighting and beatings, but in the end the masses got tired from fighting and did not want to keep up the conflict any longer.

You might say that this revolution is unnecessary but I say that it is entirely necessary.

Comrade Rita Marko: Yes, it is very necessary because it is a great sifting through, like a sieve that exposes all the bad people.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Yes, that is correct. In the Sichuan province alone, they collected 360,000 weapons, which had been taken or had been distributed among various people.

Comrade Begir Balluku: That is how many armed people Albania would have in the event of a general mobilization.

Comrade Jiang Qing: The Sichuan province has 70 million inhabitants, as many as the entire population of Germany.

Comrade Mao Zedong turning to comrade Zhou Enlai, asks: Is there still this kind of fighting in Sichuan?

(Comrade Zhou Enlai responds that in general there is no fighting of this sort.)

Comrade Koço Theodhosi: Nevertheless, in the West they are saying that there is still fighting in China.

Comrade Mao Zedong: These communications are not all lies, but partially true because in fact the fighting and the skirmishes have actually taken place, but their wish was that this fighting would continue for 10-20 years, so that we would constantly face disturbances.

Comrade Koço Theodhosi: Those who most often speak in this fashion are your neighbors to the north.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Our neighbors do not like the establishment of revolutionary committees across all of China. Some comrades have listened to the radio programs of these countries. They say that supposedly the main current of the war has now turned against the working class. This means that some people listen to the foreign radio stations. As for me, I do not listen to the radio, neither the foreign ones and nor those of China, but I only broadcast.

In my opinion, the disturbances across the world will continue because of the existence of contradictions and the fact that in order to solve them, these disturbances are necessary. How will these find an expression? One way is through a world war, and another way is a partial war, like those in Vietnam, the Suez Canal, in Czechoslovakia, and so on. In short, this will ensure that the people of different countries rise in revolution. As far as we are concerned, we must be prepared for war, to be ready in the event that our enemies take this kind of action. We must do this even though it is not our wish. But since our enemies want to go to war, let them go ahead.

During these two and a half years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in our country, in almost every industrial enterprise, in every workplace—or, more precisely, in most of them—there has been armed fighting, both in the center and the districts and the various regions. A good number of the people wanted armed fighting, but we cannot say that everyone without exception was of this opinion. They made their own weapons; in fact, they were even capable of making tanks, primitive cannons, and various other weapons. Especially in the regions where there are chemical and mechanical industries, they manufactured many different weapons. For example, from the 3,600 cannons that have been collected until now, 2,000 were primitive cannons manufactured by the centers and enterprises themselves.

I think that this armed struggle has at least two benefits: First, the masses become fitter through the struggle, and they are even capable of manufacturing weapons. But there is also the negative side in the sense that in 18 years we have not seen armed

fighting, which is not a good thing. Secondly, this struggle has served to unmask wrongdoers.

We can say that Beijing, for example, has been a civilized place. No major fighting took place here, or armed struggle, although there was some fighting. There was fighting in Beijing's seven higher education institutions. People were divided into two groups there for a long time.

Some reactionary people adopted the slogan that we used back in the day: "encircle the city from the countryside", and they exploited this for their own purposes. Back then, however, we adopted this slogan because the Japanese and Kuomintang were in the cities, whereas now the cities are governed by the Communist Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. So how can the countryside now encircle the city? Those who disseminate this kind of slogan today seek to pit the countryside against the city. In fact, in order to put this slogan into practice, these wrongdoers had established armed units, and the people who served in these units received payments. Thus, someone who participated in the actions of these groups, encircling the city from the countryside, received one yuan, or one-half, per day. Those who got killed received 200 yuan. So they used material incentives even in these cases. Such actions to encircle the city from the countryside were very frequent, especially in Shaanxi, Hunan, Anhui, Hebei, Guangxi, Sichuan, and Guangdong. This also took place in some villages near Beijing, like Pautim [sic; possibly Baoding but proper spelling unknown] where this slogan was used.

Within the army troops, also, there were cases when different units split into two groups, supporting different groups fighting against one another. In reality, both sides are communists. The reconciliation between them has not yet been completed.

If we look at this issue historically, this is a contradiction that emerges and develops. These fights are not only the result of the wrongdoers' encouragement; not all responsibility can fall on Liu Shaoqi for this.

For example, the 38th Corps and the Hebei Military District have still not had reconciliation. We brought the representatives of these two sides here to Beijing so that they can take part in the study course. They reached an agreement not to continue fighting against one another. But after leaving Beijing, they began fighting again. So the agreement was not comprehensive. There have been examples like this, when an agreement has been achieved and breached three or four times.

There have been splits of this nature into groups and polycentrism in many workplaces and cultural and artistic institutions. For example, the Hebei Military District supports the enemies. Both the commander of the Hebei Military District and the 38th Corps commissar are stubborn people. Despite the fact that both sides are leftists, they hold this position. It would be a good thing if both of these switched positions with each other.

In many cases, we transfer the cadres who have made mistakes from one place to another, because the masses at their current places do not like them. In the new places, however, they once again are respected by the masses. This way of doing things has been effective especially in the Hunan province. These people are not wrongdoers, but they have mistakenly supported some group or another. For example, in the universities, or even in the small city of Baoding, people have split into two groups. There are many examples like this in our country, at least hundreds of them. I do not think we should rush into having them stop the fighting. They will themselves stop the fighting altogether.

Not all of these people are bad people, but they are selfish and stubborn. One side has supported one group, and the other side has supported another. By transferring cadres from one place to another, we have achieved results and the situation has improved.

Comrade Begir Balluku: There will be cases like these. Some people understand mistakes more quickly, but there are also people who understand them with difficulty. They are not bad cadres; they are people who can be corrected.

Comrade Mao Zedong: This is correct. For example, at the manifestation yesterday, where you spoke, some thousands of people from the 38th Corps had arrived to keep order. The Corps have been very strong and combative.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We sent a regiment from this Corps to the Seventh Ministry of

Machine Building, and they did a good job there.

Comrade Beqir Balluku: And I suppose that now the Corps is a good one, combative, given that you hold it in great esteem again.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Yes, this is correct. It is a good Corps; only a few people from it have made mistakes when support was shown to the leftists. It cannot be said that this whole category of the people who made these kinds of mistakes falls under antagonistic contradictions. These are not contradictions between the enemies and us, but rather contradictions that exist within the masses of people, even though their form of fighting is the same as the one between the enemies and us.

There are many examples like these, similar things, which we did not predict. We have said that this revolution of ours is a cultural revolution, but then it transformed into a military revolution as well. This is a social phenomenon, conditioned by many factors. For example, there has been *bajraktarizëm* [2], anarchism, but there are also contradictions between the groups, which the enemies have created. For example, in Guangdong, there was the "Red Flag" group, which had some bad people in it. Similarly, the political director and the deputy political director of the military district of this city were bad people that had supported the "Red Flag."

Comrade Huang Yongsheng: They were enemy elements that intentionally encouraged these quarrels so as to sow division.

Comrade Mao Zedong: This time around, a relatively large purging of the wrongdoers was carried out within the party organs, the state organs, in the army, in enterprises, in educational and cultural institutions, and everywhere, and this purging was carried out by the masses themselves. So the bad people were unmasked by the masses themselves.

The proportion of bad people in relation to the population is approximately one in one thousand. This is in reference to those elements that are a reflection of the antagonism between the enemies and us. We identified some 400,000 such elements in the Guangdong province, including former soldiers, Kuomintang officers and policemen, spies, and members of the party who followed the Kuomintang line and a reactionary religious sect. But not all of them can be called enemies. I think that in these 400,000 persons, only 40,000 are truly bad, so one in one thousand.[3] So will we slaughter all of these 40,000 people, or send them to Taiwan? No, we can do no such thing, because it would not be good, so we will offer them a way out, offer them work and reeducation because they constitute a workforce and they have children. If we execute them, what will their children do? Who will feed them? The danger here was if we would not have identified them, if we had allowed them to remain hidden from view, disguised.

I think that we still need another six months up to a year to purge the class ranks from these elements and to reorganize the party organizations. This way, we can ensure tranquility for a period of approximately 10-20 years. But we cannot say that we have completely purged these elements from the ranks this time around, that this has been fully achieved. Similarly, we cannot say that no mistakes were made in how people were treated during this whole movement. I think that you are aware that such mistakes have been identified; some people, for example, have been treated poorly, and so we have rehabilitated them. These kinds of examples are not few. There have also been instances in which the masses did not identify these people at first, and then, once it identified them, it waged a very aggressive war against them. This was not a "well-mannered" war; the war was waged with weapons, with beatings, by making people wear those pointed hats, or putting them in the "jet-plane" position,[4] with their hands in the back. I do not believe those who say that the Chinese are civilized people. When the masses get angry, they do not engage in civilized warfare. In this sense, the leader must convince the masses not to use the wrong methods in their struggle because the problem cannot be solved with these methods. Various groups employed such methods against one another. At the podium on the occasion of the October 1st celebration, the first secretary of the Hubei province, Zeng Siyu, told me that the masses of people had placed him in the "jet-plane" position one hundred times. I asked him how he could endure something like this, and he answered that there is no better physical training than this. (Comrade Mao explains the meaning of the "jet-plane" position and then continues) I think that this form of punishment, if used to serve "physical training," would be

something good and in fact, it has worked well in this sense. Before our cadres pretended to be ill, sought to take the most expensive medications, undergo cures, and go to resorts for 7-8 months in a year. Now they have become fitter and have not asked to go to the cure resorts. This shows that their illness has mainly been a spiritual one, a weakness of their revolutionary spirit and their readiness to make sacrifices. They behaved like this because they thought of themselves as having merits, and so they should enjoy happiness, tranquility, and comfort. The proletarian Cultural Revolution, however, delivered a blow and healed them, and so they no longer merely enjoy happiness and comfort. Some of these “ill” people even took active part in the “hot” war during the revolution; some of them, in fact, pitted one group against another, or even both groups separately against one another. For example, the secretary of the party committee of the higher petroleum institute in Beijing commandeered both groups as they fought against one another. He would not come out openly himself, but encouraged the groups to fight against one another. In other words, he was pulling the strings but playing the innocent. Both groups have now unmasked this person. Those who behaved in this fashion have nowhere to hide.

With this, I conclude my speech because you also have work to do.

Comrade Beqir Balluku: Thank you very much for this very interesting and constructive conversation. We will pass on all of these lessons to our Party.

On behalf of all of the comrades, I wish you good health, a long life for the good of your party and your people, for the good of all peoples of the world, and the international communist movement.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Please give our greetings to comrade Enver Hoxha, to comrade Mehmet Shehu, and to the other comrades.

[Signature of stenographer]

[1] Translator’s note: Kulak, adopted into the Albanian language via Russian, refers to land-owning peasants deemed to be class enemies.

[2] The word attributed to Mao here, *bajraktarizëm*, rooted in the Ottoman-era *bayraktar*, is used in Albanian to describe a form of rule that is based on divided territories and marked by arrogance, old-fashioned ways, and patriarchy.

[3] Translator’s note: The numbers are given here as they appear in the document. It is unclear if the mistake is Mao’s or a transcriber’s.

[4] 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.