

October 12, 1967

**Memorandum of Conversation between Albanian
Labor Party Delegation and the Chinese Communist
Party Leadership**

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Summary:

The record of a meeting between Mao Zedong and the Albanian Labor Party delegation. Mao describes the current condition of China in regards to some fighting that still continues and the waning enthusiasm of the population for continued violence.

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12 October 1967
Second Meeting

CONVERSATION

BETWEEN COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION OF THE ALBANIAN LABOR PARTY AND THE ALBANIAN GOVERNMENT WITH COMRADE MAO ZEDONG AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE PARTY AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

12 OCTOBER 1967

The conversation took place during the reception that Comrade Mao Zedong organized for the delegation of the ALP and of the government of the People's Republic of Albania, led by Comrade Mehmet Shehu.

In the conversation there were present: Comrade Lin Biao, Comrade Zhou Enlai, Comrade Chen Boda, Comrade Kang Sheng, Comrade Li Fuchun, Comrade Liu Ningyi, Comrade Yang Chengwu, Comrade Liu Xiao, Comrade Luo Guibo, and Comrade Wu Faxian.

Along with Comrade Mehmet Shehu there were also [present]: Comrade Ramiz Alia, Comrade Mihallaq Zicishti, Comrade Rahman Perlaku, Comrade Tonin Jakova, Comrade Agim Mero, Comrade Foto Cami, Comrade Piro Bita and Comrade [Albanian Ambassador to China] Vasil Nathanaili.

The conversation took place in one of the conference rooms of the building of the People's Assembly.

The translator was Fan Zenshuo.

The stenographer was Sadik Myftiu.

Edited by Piro Bita.

The conversation started around 6:00 p.m. and continued for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Were you threatened by any danger during your visits? Did someone hit you? (Speaking to Comrade Ramiz Alia) Did you take part in any fighting?

Comrade Ramiz Alia: On the contrary, the masses showed us great love.

Comrade Mao Zedong: We cannot say with certainty that after you left they did not start the fighting once more. To you they were speaking nicely, but after you left they began fighting again. But what you saw in Yan'an should not be considered a bad fight. Were the masses armed with rifles and artillery, or did they only have knives, pikes, and iron bars? In Wuhan the masses were armed with rifles and artillery, which they used during the fighting. But Wuhan is not a province where the fighting happened with cannons and heavy artillery. The worst fighting took place in Shaanxi, and the second-most in Shenyang, Hunan, Anhui, and Nanjing.

I suggested to the Congolese Prime Minister (B) [Republic of Congo (Brazzaville); likely Ambroise Noumazalaye] to visit the mine of Hunan where a fierce battle between two groups took place. There are 10 coal mines in that region, and the production in the past reached up to 45 thousand tons of coal a day. After the battles the production fell down to 10 thousand tons of coal a day. As our prime minister told me, later the production fell even further, in fact it went down to 400 tons a day. Only a little time after the great revolutionary alignment, the production increased again to 25 thousand tons of coal a day. The workers are now assuring us that they will surpass the production goal of 45 thousand tons of coal a day. The prime minister of Congo (B) seems to have read some Marxist-Leninist books, so I recommended to him that [he] come to our country to see the issues in person.

Why are you rushing to leave so early? Why do you not desire to help us a bit more? Stay a few days more, go to some other areas around the country, and help us in some other regions.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: (Jokingly) This is an easy thing, Comrade Mao Zedong. Send a telegram to Comrade Enver Hoxha, and we will be happy to stay for another 6 months.

Comrade Mao Zedong: No, it would suffice if you stayed here one more month. I will send you to all 29 provinces and autonomous cities of our country, including to Tibet as well as Shijiazhuang, where the problem has yet to be resolved, and you can help us. In Shijiazhuang there are two large and divided groups that are fiercely fighting each other; in fact they even celebrated the national holiday by organizing separate events.

Starting from the last third of the month of September, the majority of the national level organizations have joined forces. There is a minority that still needs to join. In general, the workers, the peasants, the students, and the clerks are tired of the fighting and quarrelling, so they no longer want to continue. But for a general solution to the problem we will need a few more months. But for a permanent solution to the problem, we think the revolution will continue for three more years.

Since 1 June 1966 when the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution started, less than a year and a half has passed. It is this: wherever we had the greatest disturbances the problems are easier to solve, but wherever it neither hurts nor itches, the problems are solved with greater difficulty.

As the comrades have reported to us, in northeastern and south-central China the Red Guards battled with soldiers of the People's Liberation Army. In these regions 10 thousand people have been killed, wounded, or beaten. But can this scare us? In the south-central provinces of China, in Hunan, Guizhou, and Jiangxi, 32 cadres of the army have been killed and 2-3 thousand people have been wounded, a few thousand more have been lightly wounded. In other words, 32 people went to meet Marx. Seven thousand more were hurt only lightly, so they were strengthened.

In northeastern China there were [illegible] killed, while many others were wounded or touched only a little.

Comrade Lin Biao has set four rules for the military:

- a) Do not strike others, even if they strike at you first.
- b) Do not curse others, even if they curse you first.

c) Do not anger others, even if they are angry with you first.

d) Do not fire at others, even if they open fire against you first.

These rules are based on the premise that one has to face the popular masses here, where it is hard to pinpoint who is a revolutionary and who is a counterrevolutionary; that is why one cannot open fire on the people.

It is due to this that the masses have great trust in the People's Liberation Army. Why do the masses fight the military? Because they know that our military resolutely carries out the four rules set by Comrade Lin Biao. In this case they have no reason to be afraid of the military. (Speaking jokingly in the direction of Comrade Rahman Perlatu) Do not be afraid.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Only a military well-prepared ideologically and politically, can carry out these four rules in practice.

Comrade Mao Zedong: In general, our army is as you describe it. But there are also many units that are not like that. You did not have a chance to see all this, so after you go, we may keep Comrade Ramiz Alia and the Comrade Ambassador here [so they can] visit a few more regions. Do not be afraid of this, because there is no danger; the problem has now been solved. There were 300 hundred thousand rifles looted in all of China. Some people say that there were more likely 600 hundred thousand rifles looted. Do you believe that these rifles were looted by the masses? No, the people that support leftist organizations gave rifles to those with leftist leanings, while those that support rightist organizations armed the rightists; they want to take over power. This is how the fighting started. It is important that the issue be solved gradually. This is called a sort of a civil war, because you have two groups fighting each other. If we include the Da Zi Bao, the fighting with fists, and the armed battles, then we can say that the entire country is in the midst of fighting a true civil war. After such battles is the time to see who the leftists are and who the rightists are. Some time ago the rightists proclaimed the slogan of "the village must surround the city." This has been our slogan in the past. But they wanted to trick the peasants and convince them that the workers and the students are bad, so you must go and fight against them. They tried to scare them by saying if they would not go to the city, their land would get smaller or their work days would decrease. Those that would go were promised 0.5 to 2 yuan a day, and for those that might get killed in the battle, they promised to give their families 100 yuan on the spot; so for them death costs 100 yuan. These elements exert pressure and force the peasants to go to the city. This campaign lasted for some time. But the peasants are not so able to leave the village, because they have work to do in their homes and in the fields. There is one good thing in this, because there are many peasants who have never seen the city and now have a good chance to do so. The slogan "the village must surround the city" has a good sound to it, but it is very difficult to achieve. When we came out with this slogan, the cities were occupied by Jiang Jieshi and we were attacking them from villages and seizing them; now the cities are under the control of the revolutionary communists, workers, and students.

For this reason, on 13 July we issued an order which prohibited peasants from coming to the city. This is how the plan of the rightists was doomed.

The rightists are doomed to failure.

We have created military sections at every institution in the [agricultural] communes and in [industrial] plants. We have done the same in the districts. This is part of the popular militia. One company has 100 people. Then there is the branch for the military zones that deals with the military forces of the 10 districts comprised of

about 10 thousand soldiers. Then there is the military zone of the province. For example, the Hubei province has two such military zones; one of the Hubei province and the other of Wuhan. This zone covers the provinces of Henan and Hubei, which have 86 million habitants. The highest institution is the Ministry of Defense and is headed by Comrade Lin Biao.

The problem cannot be solved without such an upheaval. We have used this to prevent the rightists from occupying solid ground. Chen Zaidao (former commander of the Wuhan garrison), could not remain in Wuhan, came to Beijing where he is studying. Initially, the servants, the guards and the secretary of Chen Zaidao had sentenced him to stand for 3-4 hours with shoulders bent and holding his hands behind his back; they called this punishment "the jet plane." (Comrade Mao Zedong stands up and shows this punishment by bending his body.) In Wuhan there were two court martials against him. When Comrade Kang Sheng went to Wuhan he said to him, "Old man Kang, you better shoot me because I can no longer stand this." Then we did some work with his servants, officers, and secretary.

Presently we are unable to distinguish our communists and the top or middle cadres that are revolutionaries from those who are backward, centrists, rightists, or revisionists. The same goes in the administration and in the military. This is a very grave test for the military too.

During the past 18 years we have not done a very thorough work with the masses. Those that have high posts, high wages, cars, and comfortable apartments, I think are not dangerous when they have these four things for as long as they remain revolutionaries. But there are some people who when they get a hold of these four favors do not remain revolutionaries and during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution they took the side of the rightists. By detaching themselves from the masses, they turned from people at the base and from soldiers to grand lords. That is why you are correct to fight against bureaucratism. This time the struggle was waged right over their heads. Chen Zaidao mobilized the Regiment of the "100 million" and we rewarded him with the "jet plane." (He takes the position of the "jet plane.") We are not able to take measures to help these people everywhere, be it me, or Comrade Lin Biao, and Comrade Yang Chengwu (the Chief of Staff), because we have a large country and an army of over 2 million people. We have not been able to help 99 percent of the people and the military. It is different in your country, because you are able to keep close relations with the people and your soldiers. There is a good chance to educate and strengthen the cadres.

Did you visit the Polytechnic Institute of Wuhan, and did you get to see the fortifications?

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: We were there, but we did not see any fortifications.

Comrade Mao Zedong: They may have destroyed them.

Comrade Kang Sheng: When we were there, the square where the fortifications used to be was renamed "The Square of Sino-Albanian Friendship."

Comrade Mao Zedong: This school posed a great resistance against Chen Zaidao because it is a polytechnic school and can produce its own chemical and other kinds of weapons. (Turning to Comrade Zhou Enlai) Are there any numbers as to how many in total were killed on the part of the leftists there?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We do not have those numbers.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Hundreds and thousands of the rifles that were looted from us have been returned; by now over 30% of the weapons looted have been returned to us.

Comrade Yang Chengwu: In the province of Jiangxi almost all of them have been returned.

Comrade Mao Zedong: There are provinces where the people have turned in large caches of weapons and munitions. First they looted these weapons from us, and now they are coming and turning them in themselves. It is strange! They looted them and now they are returning them. Now they say that they had the need and the desire to be armed because they could not resist without weapons. While to the rightists the weapons were given by rightist and conservative elements in the military. But later the people that had the weapons started to be scared that the enemy could take the weapons from them and use them to kill them. So they came and turned in the weapons. We are planning to arm the workers and the leftists in a systematic way. We have yet to start arming them in Wuhan.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: This has started as an experiment.

Comrade Mao Zedong: That is why the foreigners are saying that all of China is in shambles. In this they are somewhat right, and the reports they are giving are not entirely lies. But, I think, in some areas there was not enough disorder in place. But why are we not afraid of disorder? It is because without disorder, the many contradictions that exist will not come out. This is not a bad thing. The issue is not only Liu Shaoqi. He still has many other followers, but they still do not comprise the majority; they are a very small minority when compared to the popular masses and the revolutionary cadres.

A year ago we were in the minority; the wider popular masses were still being oppressed. At that time-even in Chinese land-only a minority would listen to my words. The majority of the people did not know what I was saying. Comrade Lin Biao, who is for my cult, published in 1962 the red book with my quotes. But my words started having their true effect only in January of this year. Then how can I be called a dictator, when even in Beijing I could not exert my authority. Even the People's Daily newspaper editorial office did not listen to me.

Now the situation, in comparison to last year, has changed considerably. A turning point has been passed.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: A great upheaval has taken place.

Comrade Mao Zedong: (Speaking to Comrade Zhou Enlai) Did you speak to the comrades about how the events in Wuhan took place?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: No, we have yet to tell them.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Those events were my doing, because from 14 to 21 July I was in Wuhan. I entered the beehive, and when you bother the bees they will sting you. But they could sting neither me nor the Prime Minister, who was also at Wuhan at the time. This way the problem there started to move toward a solution. There are also many other such examples. At the military sector of Wuhan the commander and the commissar were both replaced. The same for the military sectors of Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Jiangxi, Qinghai, Wuhan, Henan, Anhui, and Sichuan, as well as the city of Chengdu-a total of 11 provinces and cities; the former commanders or commissars there were removed, and the bad people were replaced by others.

Now we are starting to open study courses in which the cadres will study for one or two months. [Classes] will be opened in the provinces, districts, locales, as well as in the military regions and sub-regions. We have a total of 29 military sectors at the level of the province or independent city; we also have 13 large military areas in which several provinces are included.

Why do you want to leave at any cost the day after tomorrow? Why do you not care about China's issues anymore? Could we not keep Comrade Ramiz Alia along with the ambassador and your philosopher?

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: We thank you very much for this [invitation], but we must leave the day after tomorrow. We are also paying a short visit to Pakistan. We thank you very much, Comrade Mao Zedong, for the very warm reception, we cannot find the words to describe our feelings about [your hospitality]. Wherever we went we were afforded a very warm and fraternal reception. We especially want to thank you for the invitation to visit Wuhan.

During the short time we stayed in your country we immensely increased our knowledge of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and have tried to learn as much as possible. This is a great and valuable experience that will be useful to us in developing and deepening even further the revolutionarization movement in our country.

We are deeply touched by the feelings of fiery love that the Chinese people have for the Albanian people, for Comrade Enver Hoxha, and for our country.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Wherever you go, the people applaud and cheer and leave their quarrels aside. But whenever you leave, the fighting starts again.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: In Wuhan the revolutionary organizations of the masses had disagreements among themselves, but when it came to defending Comrade Mao Zedong and his idea and revolutionary course, they all were ready to give even their life. We saw this with our own eyes everywhere we went. Though they have disagreements between them, those are internal disagreements and are not antagonistic; they are solvable, and it is precisely because of this that the fighting is occurring.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Is that what they said? They are only making declarations now, but are not coming together. The principal issue that has yet to be solved is in what way the reunification should happen and who should be the nucleus of this reunification. The main thing for them is to get to know each other. I think that the slogan "Let the reunification happen in one month" is not militant enough. The slogan "Let us reunite with me as the nucleus" is not fair either. The others must accept and recognize you as the nucleus; you should not seek this for yourself. But this can only happen in the course of the war. Comrade Enver Hoxha did not call himself the nucleus leader, but he is nonetheless such a nucleus and this happened in the course of a decades-long war.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: They said that they will fight against the egoism of the group. Of course, from saying something to actually doing it is a very long process. Comrade Zhou Enlai and Comrade Kang Sheng directed them to exercise more self-criticism and to study the works of Comrade Mao Zedong, so that they may achieve reunification.

Comrade Mao Zedong: They should employ self-criticism and not curse the other side. They are all leftists and are not fighting the conservative organization of the "one million men" anymore.

I wanted to say this to you one more time: We foresee that in the next year or in 1969 we will have a party congress. We will reorganize our party, but in order to do that we will need to do a lot of preparatory work. We are thinking of having the Party Conference of the Revolutionary Committee of Shanghai in May 1968. At the moment, events are developing at a very fast pace, and the two fronts are becoming more distinguishable from each other. Without even including the Da Zi Bao, only the small newspapers published by the Red Guards and various organizations reach in the thousands. Many of these newspapers, or better said their organizations, are waging a fight to seize the publishing houses. So, for example, the newspaper of the Hubei province falls in the hands of one group at one point, and on those of another just a bit later. Both sides use it to influence the public opinion. In the Hubei province, the newspaper was in the hands of the leftists at the beginning, but later Chen Zaidao took it over and, later still, the leftists took it over once more. Now everyone is against the newspaper being published again, so it has stopped coming out. In its stead, there are all kinds of small papers being published in factories, plants, schools, and institutions. In the past there were two newspapers in this province, now that one has been closed there is only one left, the "Yangtze River."

I am very happy that many newspapers were liquidated because they had fallen in the hands of bourgeois intellectuals. Now there are places where they do not publish any newspapers at all, such as in the provinces of Jiangxi, Henan, Hunan, etc. Wherever the bourgeois intellectuals have gathered around the newspaper it is better that it never gets published. In the schools and the educational institutions, where there are many intellectuals, the press and the sound centers [radio stations] are today in the hands of one group, while tomorrow they fall in the hands of another.

During this movement the organs of security, the police, and justice, will be destroyed too. I am very happy because of this. They include, of course, many good people; but there are also bad people there. Now revolutionaries are coming out from the midst of these institutions. In Wuhan now the organs of security, police, and justice are divided into two groups. As it appears, and it is reality, the prestige of the professors and of the intelligentsia has decreased. That is why Radio Moscow is accusing us that we are, allegedly, destroying the culture.

Comrade Ramiz Alia: In Moscow they are troubled because in China you are destroying the bourgeois culture.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Yes, we are eliminating culture in part; that which belongs to the sphere of the bourgeois ideology.

In other words, in the organs of the press, education, culture, art, and literature, a part of the people already there will not remain, because they have been left there since the Guomindang. There was nothing we could do about it then, and that is why we had to use them. Was it possible for me, or Comrade Lin Biao, or Comrade Zhou Enlai to come and take care of such a task? We were not able to do this, so we were forced to use them. The majority of the students educated by them are good, but there are some people who have been heavily influenced by them. For example, some of my children, nephews, and nieces, which have finished higher learning schools, have been deeply infected by the poison of the bourgeoisie. They consider themselves to be of the left, but I tell them not to rush to this conclusion. One of them graduated from the University of Beijing and his brain is full of Western kings and prime ministers. He also likes European 18th and 19th century novels. I have told him that this is also a good thing, because if you would not read such novels, you will never know what feudal society is, and what the bourgeois society is; they are valuable as materials that increase knowledge. In philosophy, the writings of the English philosopher Berkeley, of the German philosophers Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, etc, must also be read; as will the reading of the French materialist mechanics; by knowing Newton and Copernicus we will enrich our knowledge. That is also how Marx learned about such things in the beginning, but afterwards he came up with the

critique of idealism and metaphysics.

Do you feel tired?

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: No, we are not tired; we are listening very attentively to you.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Did you sleep well last night? You returned to Beijing at night.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Thank you very much for your interesting conversation. We took a lot of your time, Comrade Mao Zedong.

Comrade Mao Zedong: I told you the same things I told you when we met last May, but there were a few new things.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: A conversation with you is a very important thing. We will report all about it to the Central Committee and Comrade Enver Hoxha.

I take this opportunity to once again thank you for the special care that you, Comrade Mao Zedong, as well as Comrade Lin Biao, Comrade Zhou Enlai, and the other comrades, have shown for the correct solution of the military issues that have to do with our letter of June of this year; we consider your answer fully satisfactory.

During the stay in your country we had conversations with Comrade Zhou Enlai, Comrade Kang Sheng, and the other comrades about many issues. Our conversations were very interesting; we exchanged our points of view and shared our experiences on the problems of the international communist movement.

At the same time, in these conversations, we brought forth some problems of the perspectives of the development of our country. I do not want to waste your time with those issues.

Comrade Mao Zedong: You have yet to talk about one thing: you have yet to finish the conversation you started the first time we met about the history of the struggle in the midst of your party.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: If you, Comrade Mao Zedong, have the time, we are ready to continue the conversation.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Today we do not have time to continue that conversation, because you also have to go to the concert. So when you come back to China another time, we will continue that conversation. You had just started that conversation, and I forced you to sit and listen to my speech on the situation in China.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Your presentation was very valuable to us.

Comrade Mao Zedong: (Speaking to Comrade Vasil Nathanaili). Do you go on a tour often, Comrade Ambassador? I recommend that you visit the provinces of Jiangxi, Wuhan, Sichuan, and Anhui; you should come and look at the disturbances where they happen and how the problem is being solved there. Staying in Beijing only is not interesting.

Comrade Vasil Nathanaili: In March of this year, at your recommendation, Comrade Mao Zedong, I visited the provinces of Shaanxi, Shandong, and Heilongjiang.

Comrade Mao Zedong: Did you go by yourself?

Comrade Vasil Nathanaili: Yes, I went by myself.

Comrade Mao Zedong: You could also take some of the comrades of the embassy with you. Beijing is quiet; when I say quiet I mean that it is not experiencing any fierce fighting. The same goes for Shanghai, which does not have any fierce fighting or skirmishing. Did you see any rifle battles? Or were there only fights with fists, rocks, and knives, or other weapons of ancient times?

(At this point all stood up and the conversation was over.)