

June 27, 1966

**Excerpt from a Conversation between Zhou Enlai
and Albanian Party Leaders, 27 June 1966**

Citation:

"Excerpt from a Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Albanian Party Leaders, 27 June 1966", June 27, 1966, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Arkivi Qendror Shtetëror (Central State Archives, Tirana, Albania), Fondi 14/AP, Marrëdhëniet me Partinë Komuniste të Kinës, V. 1966, Dos. 13, Fl. 001-130. Contributed and translated by Elidor Mëhilli.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/300029>

Summary:

Zhou Enlai, Enver Hoxha, and Mehmet Shehu have a detailed conversation about high-level purges in the Chinese Communist Party. Zhou also discusses China's difficult relations with North Korea and the Vietnam War.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Original Language:

Albanian

Contents:

Translation - English

[Translator's note: This translation includes pages 80-102 of the original document, which totaled 130 pages and covered several days of meetings held from June 24-28.)

[...]

[Comrade Zhou Enlai:] Comrade Lin Biao has put forward the need that all soldiers study comrade Mao Zedong's works, absorb them, and effectively put them into practice, connecting them closely with life, with practice, with the conditions of the army. For this purpose, so that he could help in this direction, comrade Lin Biao has prepared a brochure where he has collected a large number of quotes from the works of comrade Mao.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Is it perhaps the brochure you had with you last night?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes, because I also use this brochure.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Do you have it in French?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: No, it is not in French, but I will give you a copy. The brochure is a collection of quotes related to communist education. (Comrade Zhou Enlai presents a copy of the Lin Biao Chinese-language brochure as a gift to comrade Enver.) The opponents of the Cultural Revolution attack us, accusing us that this a vulgarization of philosophy, an act of labeling and simplification.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Khrushchev did the same after Stalin's death, when he heavily criticized those who quoted Stalin and Lenin, calling them "people who parrot" and saying that one must fight against citation mania.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes, but in fact he very much allowed his own speeches to be quoted. Lu Dingyi was against the ideas of Mao Zedong, against Stalin, but not against Khrushchev. In the sphere of education, he was also against the guidance of the Central Committee, in support of the establishment in China of the bourgeois educational system, and he did not agree with our revolution in the sphere of education. He is among the few members of the Party Central Committee who has finished higher education, and he stems from a feudal family.

This year we put forward the idea of the great Cultural Revolution but in fact the practical preparation of this work started before some time. This year we took measures to criticize in a more focused way the incorrect views of Peng Zhen. We also provided the material on this issue to comrade Mehmet.

The great Cultural Revolution deeply touches people in their soul. It is a true class war in the ideological sphere, the broadest, deepest, and most severe, most complicated and most enduring class war.

Speaking from our experience, we cannot say that we no longer have class war today, against the existing classes, and we cannot say that there are no exploitative classes, but merely their remnants, along with the danger of the restoration of capitalism, because we must not solely proceed from the angle of ownership, since we now only have socialist property that dominates and belongs to all the people; or collective ownership, meaning property that is in the hands of the people, and therefore there are no classes now. Similarly, we cannot solely proceed from the fact that these exploitative circles are big or small ones, [and whether they are] scattered or not, because, as I said, we have many people from these categories, even if they are scattered in various parts of the country. We must also not proceed from the fact that in relation to the external forces, they hardly compare to the masses of people who are in support of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We must go deeper into this issue, to view it especially in terms of ideology, in terms of a worldview, in terms of the large influence they have on the broad masses of workers. Seen this way, the conclusion is that their influence on the people is great, because wherever they are, they act to spread poison and to hurt us as much as they can, inside the country. With their spiritual viewpoints, the elements of the exploitative classes influence in every sphere, especially in culture, education, the press, in publishing, in science, etc. These elements have also entered the party organs, in government, in mass organizations, and in enterprises, and they will undertake reactionary actions, of course not only openly but also covertly. As Lenin has said, during the transition period from socialism to communism, the overthrown exploitative classes will not comply with the new situation but will attempt restoration. The difficulty is that these elements work in the shadows, and in fact some of them are very cunning in the way

they work against us.

We must fight against old habits, the remnants of the past. Although we might all be hardworking, workers raised and educated in a socialist society, these old habits and remnants continue to exist and influence even our best people. This is why we emphasize the education of the people according to a new style, the shaping of their consciousness according to the new customs and habits of life, in opposition with the old ones. Comrade Mao Zedong has said that without bringing out the broom, the dust does not disappear by itself. But there are people who say that a level 12 typhoon can clear out the dust. But it is not so; if one shuts the door, the dust does not go away. This is related to the soul of the people, with the customs and habits in their lives, so a great and constant war must be waged against these remnants.

It is also important to view the issue from the angle of the position and the role of our people who are influenced by old worldviews. They become agents of bourgeois ideology. The classes that I mentioned have supporters within leading cadres in the party, in government, in the state enterprises, in various institutions and at different levels, in the people's communes, in the army, in the mass organizations, etc., of the socialist country. Their policies help in the preparation of the restoration of capitalism. They are not Marxist-Leninist policies.

In other words, we must not only look from the outside but go to the core of the issue, the essence.

Even though the people that I mentioned earlier, who have been influenced by others, whether they are bourgeois or not, although they may be hardworking, and although they may be self-conscious or not, all of them have been influenced by bourgeois ideology and are in the service of it. This is Marxist-Leninist, and it is dialectical, does not depend on the will of the people. Since we accept that class struggle exists, this means that there is class activity on behalf of the bourgeoisie and that classes exist without a doubt. So we must not look at the issue through absolutes, in an isolated manner, as stable and unchangeable, but see it as undergoing change. We must not look at the issue solely from the angle of ownership, but in a more general manner and from an economic basis, and especially in terms of the superstructure.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: (turning to the translator): When comrade Zhou Enlai says that if we accept that class struggle exists, therefore classes exist also, does he mean China only, or does he mean more universally, including all the socialist countries?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Of course, I have until now only referred to China.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: No, because you mentioned all socialist countries.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: I will get to that. This is why we cannot only look at the internal factors, but also the external factors, as the Moscow Declaration emphasizes.

In the socialist countries led by revisionists, as we know, there is no question. It is very clear that not only do classes exist there, because with the exception of the Soviet Union, they did not even completely finish the collectivization of agriculture, so without a doubt there exists the exploitative class of the kulaks.

But what about the semi-revisionist countries? Cuba, for example, is headed towards revisionism. We spoke to your ambassador to Romania, who spent four years in Cuba. He told us that exploitative classes exist there. Or take Romania: With the exception of the mountainous region, which comprises roughly six percent of the arable land, collectivization has supposedly been completed everywhere. But in fact, as you have also said, they have a bureaucratic class there, and a class made up of privileged elements, and rich peasants are emerging.

As for our two neighbors, Korea and Vietnam, the situation there develops as in the other countries, the more so because they have not yet achieved the unification of the homeland. In the southern parts of these countries, the exploitative classes are in power, whereas people in North Korea and North Vietnam still have strong family ties with the south, and as a consequence these classes exert direct influence.

So only Albania is left. It is possible that there are here only elements of the exploitative classes, meaning that there are select individuals, but I think you are in agreement with what I said about the influence exerted by inherited customs from the old society in your country as well.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Yes, these exist in our country also.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: This is why it is impossible not to have any one of the ten phenomena that I mentioned. In other words, class struggle exists here, as do the common actions of the exploitative classes, which stand for their own interests. Their intention is the restoration of the domination of the exploitative classes and, as you said comrade Enver, the emergence and formation of bureaucratic and privileged classes helps the restoration of the exploitative classes to power, in other words the restoration of capitalism, unless we deliver a constant blow against them and destroy them.

So only the manner of presentation, the form, differs here. You present the case a different way, in another form, proceeding from the concrete conditions of your country, but in essence this is the same class struggle for both [of our] sides. Perhaps I am not correct in this because we have only exchanged views on this issue twice, once with comrade Mehmet Shehu when he was last in China, and the second time now.

Therefore, on the basis of the thoughts of comrade Mao Zedong, who says that revisionist and dogmatic elements, both old and new, exist in all socialist countries, somewhere more and somewhere less than others, the greatest danger in our time is revisionism, which in the service of imperialism, the reactionaries and their agents. This is the crux of the matter, on which we are in agreement.

As comrade Enver also said, in our socialist countries the forms of the restoration of capitalism can be varied. It is not possible for all these landowners, kulaks, and capitalists to have willingly given up their properties, whether land or other kinds of riches. They will try to create other ways of overthrowing our system. This emerges like a new phenomenon. In fact, it might be the case that in a socialist country, after all the elements from the exploitative classes have died, new ones emerge, their successors and representatives, who will try to restore the exploitative capitalist rule.

Assessing the situation in the socialist society and its perspective, as comrade Mehmet Shehu also pointed out in our meetings, comrade Mao Zedong has pointed out that there are two possibilities in the socialist society:

One possibility is that modern revisionists take power through force, like for example [Hungarian communist official and leader during the 1956 revolution] Imre Nagy did in Hungary, who executed a counterrevolutionary coup. If the counterrevolution had not been met with a response there, it would have won and Hungary would have moved with the West ever since that time.

The other possibility is that revisionists, through peaceful evolution, usurp the leadership of the party and the government, as it happened in the Soviet Union, or in Hungary with [Communist leader and party General Secretary János József] Kádár, in Poland with [Communist leader Władysław] Gomułka, and in other countries where revisionism is now in power.

Both of these methods fall under a single category, both are ways of assuming power.

Another possibility is adopting the policy of peeling the bamboo. It is known that the bamboo has many layers, which are removed one by one. This is what one must do to avoid the emergence of revisionism and the restoration of capitalism through a coup, to get rid of the "bamboo peels" one by one.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We must throw away these bamboo "layers."

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: We burn them altogether.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Once we remove them, we should burn them and make them into fertilizer.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: But if we leave them in leadership, they still remain dangerous.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: When we burn them, we should be careful not to burn the bamboo itself.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Burning them is not the safest way. It also depends on the

manner of burning. Of course, this also depends on the conditions and phases of each country.

Until today this has been the path of the Chinese Communist Party once it took over power. In these 17 years there have been three anti-party groups: The first was the group of [senior Chinese party official] Gao Gang and [senior Chinese party leader] Rao Shushi, which became apparent in 1953. Gao Gang also had connections to the security organs in the Soviet Union.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: So he was their agent.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Whereas Rao Shushi was in an alliance with Gao Gang. If they had taken over, they would have quickly sided with Khrushchev, and they would have transformed China into a country similar to the Soviet Union today.

In 1961, when the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held, as he was arguing with me, Khrushchev told me that they put Gao Gang's portrait everywhere in the Soviet Union.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Did he kill himself?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: I will get there. The second anti-party group is Peng Dehuai's, which was uncovered in 1959. Throughout his life, Peng Dehuai was against the leadership of comrade Mao Zedong. His aim was to take leadership of the party, wanted it transformed, to pursue the path of bourgeois transformation. Peng Dehuai collaborated in secret with Gao Gang for a long time, but only rose against the general line of the party and the leadership of comrade Mao Zedong in 1959, exploiting the difficult situation of that period.

Peng Dehuai was in the army for a long time, so he had some influence there. You know that he led the Chinese volunteers who were sent to help the Korean people in their war against American imperialism. He made mistakes during the war, would not obey or take into consideration the instructions of comrade Mao. So we acted differently with Peng Dehuai and needed time to uncover him, to get to know him, and then to unmask his activities. This is why both modern revisionists and the imperialists, along with the Kuomintang, often mention Peng Dehuai and Gao Gang.

The third anti-party group is the last one, which we have uncovered since last November. This group came out openly against the party line with a specific revisionist program. Comrade Mao Zedong spoke to comrade Mehmet Shehu about this group when he visited China. This group consists of four people, including Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun. The latter one was a Secretariat of the Central Committee candidate and chief of the general department of the Central Committee. He was twice sent to international conferences as delegation secretary, and he was also at the Moscow conference. For a long time, Yang Shangkun has had ties with Wang Ming, who was mentioned by comrade Beqir Balluku, and who is in the Soviet Union to this day. So they had connections and engaged in secret anti-party activities. On the basis of this information we now have, Yang Shangkun has also had ties with the Soviet revisionists.

Of course, we have acted differently with each of the three anti-party groups, depending on the circumstances. So we expelled Gao Gang and Rao Shushi from the party but Gao Gang committed suicide.

With the members of the second group we took another approach. We removed Peng Dehuai from the position of deputy chairman of the State Council and placed him in another job so that he could be uncovered as he kept working, as a kind of test.

With the members of the third group we acted more quickly and more severely. We expelled them fully from their many positions.

Other than these two possibilities that I mentioned, we do not yet see a third possibility, namely that no more revisionist elements emerge within a socialist party or within a socialist country.

Although we adopt the policy of peeling the bamboo in China, comrade Mao Zedong, seeing through this problem, and as he discussed with comrade Mehmet Shehu, emphasizes that we must especially take care of the future generations, so that we do not have revisionist coups in the future, and so that the struggle against revisionism should not be loaded onto the party leadership alone but that the entire people and the masses become involved in this.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: This is entirely correct.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We must educate communists and the masses of people so that at the first and smallest signs of revisionism, not only in an individual or in a local organization, but in the Party Central Committee itself, then all the party organizations of other regions must rise to their feet and through a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the counterrevolutionary coup.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Entirely correct.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: As you also said, comrade Enver, this is a Marxist-Leninist act.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Comrade Mao Zedong views this issue entirely correctly. This is a great Marxist lesson for all the Marxist-Leninists of the world.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: But if we did not have the lesson of the events transpiring in the Soviet Union, we would not have been able to reach this opinion so quickly.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: This is how it should be done; to teach the party to act on its own also, as comrade Mao Zedong says.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: This is why we must always pursue the mass line, so that the leadership and the correct views of the party are connected to the masses, and by doing this always, we will defeat all evils.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: This is a genius prediction that teaches us not only to uncover the evils, but also how to fight against them and to cleanse them.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes, we have now drawn lessons from what has happened in the Soviet Union.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: You are correct. The masses make history and the mass also includes the party itself.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Marx has long stated this principle, and Lenin also emphasized it, and we are developing it further.

But as long as the masses are guided by correct ideas, these ideas at first are transformed into a great spiritual force, and then into great material strength. Many party members in our country could not imagine how it is possible to transform spiritual force into material strength and then for material strength again to be transformed into a great spiritual force.

This is how things stand with the Cultural Revolution in our country. This is a very great revolution, wide and profound, never before seen in history. And it is only the beginning. Undoubtedly, this is work that involves tens of millions of people in the cities, because everyone is involved in this revolution, because it also involves high school students, sometimes even those in the upper grades of primary schools, and they even criticize their own teachers. Whereas in our village[s], this movement involves hundreds of millions of people.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: The Cultural Revolution in China is terrifying the revisionists, the bourgeoisie, and the imperialists.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: The Cultural Revolution [in China] is in the hands of the masses.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: In the cities, in every enterprise or institution, we have begun writing in big characters the “dazibao” posters. The Cultural Revolution is an expression of broad socialist democracy. Of course, the positive aspect of the dazibao is in uncovering the contradictions between the enemies and us. It helps to uncover the anti-party, anti-socialist, and anti-revolutionary elements everywhere. Your ambassador to China, Comrade Vasil Nathanailli, should go and see for himself these posters in the various workplaces so that he can see how the contradictions are uncovered and resolved among the people in our country.

Of course, our enemies can also put out dazibao posters, but their work is meant to undermine, and it is directed against us. They can engage in provocations and slander with them, but they are a minority. The masses will uncover and expose them. When the mass of people recognizes you, at first it criticizes you and if you continue, it unmasks you.

Therefore, at a time when this great movement is taking place in our country, we cannot stay abroad for a long time. For this reason, we must soon return to China.

I will now turn to the third issue: on the international communist movement and the

struggle against modern revisionism.

I completely agree with what comrade Enver said, that revisionists of different shades are emerging in different countries, according to the different conditions of each country.

The Titoite group is the first, the vanguard of modern revisionism, but Khrushchevite revisionism is the "commander-in-chief." Therefore, in the international arena, in terms of tactics, we must concentrate and direct our forces against the "commander-in-chief."

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Agreed, but let us not forget the vanguard, because it is also dangerous.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes, whereas we must treat differently the rearguard, their followers, in a differentiated manner. We must keep in mind that they quarrel like dogs with one other, that there are contradictions between them, which we can and we should exploit in order to divide their ranks. We must, then, uncover and exploit the contradictions between them constantly.

Sometimes it happens that some people say that they are also fighting against revisionism, based on the struggle someone wages against Titoite revisionism. This can happen, but the struggle is not carried with the kind of intensity that modern revisionism should actually be fought. For example, the Vietnamese often attack the vanguard, speak against Titoite revisionism, but they do not speak at all against the "commander-in-chief." There is a contradiction here. Of course, we must also fight against Tito's line, which supports the American imperialists' campaign for "peaceful" talks, and Vietnam is in reality against such talks, which are also supported by the Soviet revisionist leaders, but [Vietnam] does not speak out against the commander.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: The commander cannot be detached from the vanguard.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: In the speech I will give this afternoon at the rally, I will have a paragraph touching on this issue.

When I was in Romania just now, I told the Romanian leaders that I would speak against Tito in Tirana. [Romanian leader and prime minister Ion Gheorghe Iosif] Maurer was very happy, as long as I did not do this there, whereas [Romanian official and First Vice President of the Council of Ministers Emil] Bodnăraş said that if I wanted I could speak there as well, but [general party secretary Nicolae] Ceauşescu jumped immediately and criticized him.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Nevertheless, it is expected that Tito and the Yugoslavs will protest.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: I have long prepared for what I will say, and when I leave, I will not cross Yugoslavia, but instead pass through the territory of Greece. (Laughs.)

Then there are some who are multicolored semi-revisionists, and they are also undergoing changes. It got my attention what you said about Romania being a semi-revisionist country, or the country of new form of revisionism. This is true, and in our opinion, it deserves to be studied. The Romanian leadership is generally revisionist, but there are also contradictions with the Soviet Union. This is why the Romanian leaders do not want [them] to speak against China in their own country, like others do. We have told them that to date, we have not attacked one other, but as divergences develop in the future, we cannot guarantee that we will not engage in open polemics against them as well.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Even against the Romanians?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes. Since they are not currently conducting any anti-Chinese campaign, there was a high level of enthusiasm and sympathy manifested by the Romanian people for our people during my visit there, and so I found a warm welcome everywhere, of a kind that I have not found in any other revisionist country. Not even in the Soviet Union, when I have been there, did I get such a reception.

Although we have big disagreements, we still must keep working with them, but the Romanians are very afraid to speak openly against modern revisionism, and in fact they do not even dare speak against big state chauvinism.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Because they themselves are small state chauvinists. (Laughter).

Comrade Zhou Enlai: It is for the reasons that I explained that while we broadcast on the radio the full speeches that I gave at receptions and their full texts, in their newspapers, the Romanians published only summaries, because in the speeches that I gave in receptions and rallies in Romania there were many jabs: for example, in connection to relations between socialist countries, on big state chauvinism, on the Warsaw Pact, on the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, against modern revisionism and its collaboration with American imperialism, on their betrayal of the Vietnam War, on the Geneva disarmament conference, on the prohibition and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, etc. The Romanian leaders did not want me to speak openly about these issues because they are very much afraid, and so they constantly asked to remove these issues from our speeches.

We also noticed that in Ceaușescu's speeches there were views with which we do not agree, but he removed some of them so that we could also remove some of ours. Consequently, we had to make some concessions for the sake of reciprocity. In their speeches, they said good things about our successes in the building of socialism, and we also took note of their successes, because among other revisionist countries, the Romanians have done better in the sphere of construction, but of course this will not continue in the future as long as the leadership is revisionist.

Before speaking at the rally, we had to engage in a two-hour-long polemic with the Romanian leaders. This meant that the waiting masses of people outside could see that no one was coming out on the podium, and this happened because we were inside arguing with each other. Finally, since the masses were waiting, we reached a compromise so that both sides would speak there, briefly. Ceaușescu spoke for only eight minutes, and I [spoke] for nine minutes, including the translation, which was very slow. We spoke and mainly praised the people, the party, without mentioning the leaders at all. They also did not say a word about Comrade Mao Zedong. Of course, the foreign correspondents that were at the rally must have taken good notes about this, since it was very obvious.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: They have photographed every word.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We also respectively removed the joint statement, which mainly spoke in support of the war of the people of Vietnam. The statement was generally good, but we did not want to embellish it, so we decided to publish only one piece of information.

This is why the western press blasts Zhou Enlai for totally failing against a small country. Let them say it, since after all it reflects reality and proves that there are contradictions between the two states, and this is a good thing. Nevertheless, in front of the people, the Romanian leaders behave as if the relations with us are still friendly.

While we share common enemies with Korea, as you said the day before yesterday in your expose, comrade Enver Hoxha, it is true that the Korean leaders avoid contact with us these days, whereas they meet in secret with the Soviet leaders.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: The Korean leaders behave very badly.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Last year, as soon as the treaty between South Korea and Japan was signed, the Japanese foreign minister went to the Soviet Union on a visit. The Koreans were frightened by this, so they immediately asked to send a special envoy of [North Korean leader] Kim Il Sung to ask for help because they had no one else to turn to in the other socialist countries. We accepted at once and helped the Koreans to secure grain and oil reserves.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: May the Koreans not enjoy your help^[1], may they be undeserving of this generosity of China, because while China is generous and helps them in difficult days, they make secret deals with the Soviet revisionists, breaking their word to you.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: In terms of the aid that China gives to other countries, Vietnam is in the first place, Korea is in the second place, meaning that it is close to the aid that we give to Albania.

But why does this happen with the Koreans? Perhaps because the Soviets may have blackmailed them, telling them that if you connect with China, it is possible that the war spreads to North Korea, whereas if you connect with the Soviet Union, it is possible that war will be avoided.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Surely this is what must have happened

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Kim Il Sung's so-called special envoy also went to Moscow, where he signed an economic cooperation agreement between the two countries. The Soviets pledged to provide more help to the development of Korean industry, but not agriculture also. In Korea today, as far as we know, there are difficulties regarding grains, and the Soviet Union does not provide anything [to Korea] on this front.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: But the Koreans have said that they produce one ton of grains per person.

Comrade Spiro Kolea: And they have declared this publicly.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We have calculated how much they produce. The annual grain production in Korea is less than three million tons. Last year, they produced 2,600,000 - 2,800,000 tons of grains.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: Which means 2-2.5 quintals per person.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Yes. One should keep in mind that in Korea the urban population is larger than the rural population; the urban population comprises about 60 percent of the total population. Now, with the "help" that the Koreans will receive from the Soviet Union for the further development of the industry, the population of the cities will grow even more.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: In other words, the Korean village will be empty.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: What stands out is that the situation in Korea is more serious than in Vietnam.

Even in Vietnam there have been changes to the previously held positions. Although the Vietnamese face powerful enemies—the American imperialists, against whom they have fought in a revolutionary manner—Soviet revision is now penetrating there. Vietnam proves what we are saying, that the new Soviet revisionist group, Khrushchev's successors, are more cunning than Khrushchev. This has led to decomposition in Vietnam, disintegration from the top of the leadership all the way to the bottom at the base level, and thus a differentiation between leftists, centrists, and rightists. One group is for the further continuation of the war against the American invaders, whereas the other is for the termination of the war. The resistance group is also divided into two groups. Whereas one is for achieving victory through a rapid war, the other is for a prolonged war.

As we have told you, comrade Enver, based on the current situation, in South Vietnam it is more likely that the war will be prolonged and the country will be completely blocked.

But, after a greater penetration of Soviet revisionism in Vietnam, the liberalization process in this country has accelerated, which is having a majorly negative impact on relations between Vietnam and China, on the cooling of these relations, and although comrade [Vietnamese revolutionary and politician] Ho Chi Minh does not accept this, it is, as can be seen, a fact.

If the war in Vietnam is prolonged, it is clear that there will be new difficulties there, and likely prolonged, because the conditions have not yet emerged for the current American government to accept defeat and withdraw from Vietnam.

In this case, then, there are two possibilities: first, the war is intensified even further in southern Vietnam; and second, it is extended further into northern Vietnam, and then throughout Indochina, and as far as China. The Americans are currently increasing their bombings against North Vietnam, and they are trying to block it in order to force it to accept the capitulation conditions as dictated by American imperialism.

If the Vietnamese leadership will insist on a war of resistance, we will make every effort to help it, but we face difficulties in the current conditions because the Vietnamese, being under the influence of the Soviet Union, are very afraid of our help, especially an entry of Chinese troops into Vietnam in order to join the war against American imperialism. But why? Because the Soviets frighten the Vietnamese, telling them that when a solemn gathering is held to celebrate the victory, Vietnam will no longer exist since all the Vietnamese will have been wiped out.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu: According to them, there will be neither winners nor losers.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: The Soviet leaders tell Vietnam that China is getting you into trouble, that you will be wiped out, and repeat to them Khrushchev's theories and pressures.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: So they tell them that the Vietnamese will all be killed and in their place there will only be Chinese people. But this is not true at all; history has always refuted this. There is evidence that Romania had a population of 19 million people even before the Second World War, and with all the big massacres that Hitler's forces and the country's fascists committed there, they did not get wiped out. The Romanian people live.

If Chinese troops are to enter Vietnam, of course the Vietnamese will not have the right of command because they have no way of supplying our troops. If there is a compromise, as a result of the betrayal of the Soviet Union, the revisionists may denounce us as if we did not properly help the war of the Vietnamese people.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: They will even blast you for being responsible for Vietnamese blood having been spilled in vain.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: This is why we do not say that the possibility of "peaceful" talks in Vietnam is entirely ruled out. We must also spiritually prepare in this regard. The same thing can happen in Vietnam that happened in Laos; the war continues, but there would be even greater sacrifices.

Here, too, we must draw lessons. These positions develop because one of the main leaders there, [Vietnamese communist official] Lê Duẩn, changed. He used to be on the left until now.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We understood his turn with the speech he delivered in Moscow. As soon as we read his speech, we immediately said "Oh this one is gone too, he turned into a 'National Front' guy!"^[2]

Comrade Zhou Enlai: The Japanese Communist Party and the Cuban [Communist] Party have gone even further.

In the past, the Japanese Communist Party had thought about translating the works of comrade Mao Zedong into Japanese, but now they forbid party members to read these works, along with the various materials and documents of the Chinese Communist Party. It looks like the Japanese communists are now thinking "about a peaceful transition!"

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Like [Japanese Communist Party official Ichizo] Suzuki and [Japanese Communist Party official Yoshio] Shiga.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: Whereas the Cuban [Communist] Party, as you know, has gone even further.

The Communist Party of Indonesia is undergoing changes. There is now no leadership in the middle and the lower levels of the party. The former party leadership did not prepare the masses for armed struggle, and now they are preparing themselves, spontaneously, with the leadership of the armed struggle undertaken by the party masses themselves, some of whom are taking to the mountains and organizing the people's resistance.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Have the party leaders, like [senior Communist Party of Indonesia leader Dipa Nusantara] Aidit and the other comrades, all been all killed?

Comrade Zhou Enlai: We know that Aidit, [senior Communist Party of Indonesia leader Lukman] Njoto, and [First Deputy Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia Muhammad Hatta] Lukman have been killed; only [Communist Party of Indonesia secretary] Sudisman is left. To date, however, the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party has not published any materials on the lessons the whole party must draw from the events after September 30,^[3] or to express political views on current events, whether inside or outside of the country. This is why many Indonesian comrades who are abroad are desperate about this situation, because they can only act in the international arena now, joining leftist parties and groups, but in their own country they are unable to do anything.

As for the communist movement in other countries, comrade [Cao I Min] spoke with comrade Ramis Alia.

All modern revisionists are now fighting against Albania and China, against Marxism-Leninism. As is known, the divisive activity of the Soviet revisionists and everyone else started a long time ago. This gives us the right and the opportunity to establish more contacts with many leftist groups in different countries.

Of course, we are against the theory of polycentrism, but we also think—as you also are in agreement—that it is not yet time to create an international organization of the left, or to hold a multilateral meeting. We think it is better to wait, to continue to develop contacts or bilateral ties with left-wing parties and groups, and to follow carefully the development of these groups.

In terms of international affairs, as you said comrade Enver, N.A.T.O. and the Warsaw Pact, by their very nature, are each under the control of each of the great powers, that is to say, the first under the control of the United States of America, and the other of the Soviet Union. This is the same thing, except that in the member states of the Warsaw Pact, which are ruled by the Soviet revisionists, they will not be able to command the people as they please.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Yes. So it is.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: In order to be strong, the revisionists hope and think that in the event of an aggression, they can better sustain it if they are united, but the opposite effect also impacts them, as the Soviets try to have all the Warsaw Pact states get in contact with the West, with the United States first and foremost, but in so doing, they are met with resistance because the broad masses of their people do not agree with this course of action.

They have in fact excluded Albania from the Warsaw Pact, and as we know, you yourself do not agree to be a part of this treaty, without them openly admitting the mistakes that they have made against you, and this is a fair request.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: But even if they publicly admit the mistakes they have made vis-à-vis Albania, we know what they are, so we will not participate in this treaty even if they submit to self-criticism. Our statement is based on tactical aims.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: You have announced this condition and have placed it in front of them.

At present we must encourage the tendencies of those countries that are against the treachery of the Soviet revisionists, in order to nail down their forces, otherwise the Soviet-American cooperation will be accelerated and facilitated, the treacherous activity of the Soviet revisionists will be aided, and the agreement on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons will be reached sooner, assisting the United States in moving its forces from Europe to Asia, making the situation in Vietnam even more difficult, speeding the achievement of a compromise and making it easier for the Americans to strike at our forces separately.

The development of the revolution in various countries, or the activity of parties and groups of the left, will progress according to the conditions, the degree of consciousness, and the growth of subjective forces within them. We should support them and have contacts with these left-wing parties and groups according to the concrete conditions, but under no circumstance should we create the impression and conception in them that they should rely more on the external forces. We want to exchange more opinions and information with them in this regard.

We are very happy about the revolutionary measures that your party has taken, and we wish you continued success.

Comrade Mehmet Shehu told us that you will also make some changes to your draft plan for the fourth five-year plan. Comrade Enver, you told us yesterday that the draft plan, after it is reviewed at the Central Committee Plenum, will be submitted to the masses for discussion, and that it will finally be submitted to the Fifth Party Congress for approval.

In our experience, the five-year plan is just a program. All plans, including annual ones, must change and do change constantly, or they are continuously improved, according to the new situation created in the country. Earlier, we also used to say that the five-year plan is the law, unchangeable. But it is not like this in life. Such is our experience, development and moving forward requires that the plan is responsive to the time.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We say the same thing.

Comrade Zhou Enlai: The point is that people must continually improve their work through practice. This is why we have not openly announced our new five-year plan, which is to say that we have not published it but we have only made it known inside our country, in order for our masses [of people] to discuss it and to make the necessary suggestions to improve it further.

With this, I am finished. Excuse me for taking so long.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Nothing to apologize for. We also thank you very much. If we can take a break, then I will speak a little bit.

[...]

[1] Translator's note: Hoxha is quoted using the word "harram" [sic] in the form of a curse, referring to something ill-gotten and undeserved.

[2] Translator's note: The National Front (Balli Kombëtar) was an Albanian nationalist and anti-communist organization active during the Second World War. It promoted the idea of an ethnic Albania and emerged as a rival to the Communist-led forces, who blamed the Front for collaborating with the Nazis.

[3] Translator's note: Calling itself the September 30th Movement, an Indonesian military group captured and killed six generals on 1 October 1965, leading to an abortive coup and the downfall of president Sukarno. The army blamed the attempted coup on the Indonesian Communist Party, launching a large-scale purge against actual or suspected communists and their supporters.