



November 12, 1960
Report of the Meeting of the Albanian Labor Party
Delegation with Leaders of the Communist Party of the
Soviet Union, 12 November 1960

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Summary:

An Albanian delegation headed by Enver Hoxha meets with Khrushchev and other Soviet officials to discuss the deterioration of Albanian-Soviet relations.

Credits:

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Original Language:

Albanian

Contents:

- English Translation

Albanian delegation represented by: Enver Hoxha, [ALP CC Member and Ministerial Council Chairman] Mehmet Shehu, [ALP CC Secretariat and Politburo Member] Hysni Kapo, [ALP CC Secretariat and Politburo Member] Ramiz Alia.

Soviet delegation represented by: N. S. Khrushchev, [Soviet First Deputy Premier Anastas I.] Mikoyan, [CPSU CC Politburo Member Frol] Kozlov, [CPSU Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties in Socialist Countries Head Yuri V.] Andropov.

N. S. Khrushchev: You may start. We are listening

Comrade Enver: You have invited us. The host must speak first. There is a proverb in our country: "The host must take forty more bites after the guest is finished, and he must also speak first."

N. S. Khrushchev: We accept the Albanians' conditions.

In the name of the Presidium of the Central Committee I express my desire to find and understand the reasons that have brought about the deterioration of the relations between us. I do not understand what has happened since my visit to Albania in 1959. If you have been unhappy with us since then, I must be very dense and naïve not to have understood this. After I returned to the USSR I spoke to all the comrades about the great impression the warm reception by the Albanian people left on me. Besides nice words, we have said nothing (aside from a few jokes, such as the one about the poplars I made with Comrade Mehmet Shehu).

Comrade Mehmet: Certainly, jokes cannot influence our relations.

N. S. Khrushchev: I mentioned that joke because it was the only one I could remember. What are, then, the reasons for the deterioration of our relations?

Comrade Enver: If this is a preamble to our talks, it is another matter. The poplar joke has no place here. You saw how we all laughed when you spoke about the poplars.

N. S. Khrushchev: Then what other reason could there be? Why have you changed your attitude toward us?

Comrade Enver: It is not us but you who have changed attitude. We have had disagreements before, such as about the Yugoslavs, but the change in attitude happened after Bucharest [the Third Romanian Workers' Party Congress in June 1960, at which Khrushchev criticized the Albanian delegation] and it is all coming from your end.

N. S. Khrushchev: I want to make something clear. I thought that we had no disagreement about Yugoslavia. I am hearing for the first time that we have different positions on the Yugoslav issue. You have spoken much more than us on this matter, and we have written and expressed our opinion but always without passion. We have always held that the more they are talked about, the more their luster increases. And this has proven true.

Comrade Enver: We do not see it that way.

N. S. Khrushchev: I am talking about us. But that we have had different views on this issue is news to me. I hear it for the first time. We have held talks in Albania and you never raised this issue. I would like to ask you: What tone of voice should we use? You ask me questions and I answer you, but you are still brooding. If you do not want our friendship, please tell us so. We want a friendship with you, but a proverb of ours says that friendship cannot be forced.

Comrade Enver: We want to be friends forever. We would like to talk amicably. But this does not mean we have to agree on all issues.

N. S. Khrushchev: Who says we should agree on all issues? You are brooding while I try to plead

with you. Three times we have invited you for talks. Do you want to doom our relations? I do not understand in what direction you are trying to lead the conversation. I want relations to go back to what they used to be. The Yugoslav matter, which you consider as contentious between us, we may set aside for the moment. That is not a principal issue.

Comrade Enver: The deterioration of relations between us after Bucharest was your fault. We have shown numerous documents to your comrades that attest to this fact. They should have relayed them to you.

Mikoyan: Yes, you have sent them to us. But the point is that you accuse us while we accuse you. Hence we must look to find the issues that can be resolved.

N. S. Khrushchev: I do not understand this very well. [Hysni] Kapo and I did not have such disagreements in Bucharest. He said he was not authorized by the Central Committee to express his opinion on the issues then being discussed.

Comrade Hysni: In Bucharest I expressed our party's position. As to the need to wait for authorization from our Central Committee, I was only referring to the authority to sign the communique.

N. S. Khrushchev: That is exactly what I am talking about. Then Comrade Kapo said that the authorization from the Central Committee had been granted and that he would sign the communique.

Comrade Hysni: In Bucharest you pointed out that you found the position of the Albanian Labor Party (ALP) strange. You did this at the meeting of the twelve parties of socialist countries, as well as at the larger meeting of the more than fifty parties. The truth is that we expressed to you our party's position even before the meeting of the 12 parties. I spoke to Andropov about this. After he relayed this to you, you instructed him to relay back to the Albanians that they should think it over and try to change their position. When Andropov and I met, we did not talk about the Moscow Declaration, but about the issue of us supporting the Soviet material.

Andropov: I think this issue needs to be analyzed well as it is the second time it has been raised. Initially I met Comrade Kapo along with Comrade [Alexandru] Moghioros, member of the Romanian Workers' Party Politburo, in whose house we were holding the meeting. When I handed him our [information] report, I also talked to him about its contents. Comrade Kapo said that I should relay to Comrade Khrushchev that the Albanians agree with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on this issue. I relayed it to Khrushchev. He said he did not expect a different position from the Albanians. Then Comrade Kapo asked to meet me again and talked to me about a letter he had in front of him saying he was only telling this to me. That night I informed Khrushchev about this. He instructed me to relay back to Comrade Kapo that we do not understand the Albanian position and to relay back to Comrade Enver Hoxha to think over this issue once more.

Comrade Enver: This is nonsense. Our Central Committee has never agreed to the Bucharest Declaration. I have been in the loop with everything going on in Bucharest from the very start.

N. S. Khrushchev: This is not important. The issue seems to be that even before Bucharest you have not been in agreement with us. Yet, you have failed to notify us of this, though we have considered you to be our friends. The fault with all this rests with me for having trusted you too much.

Comrade Mehmet: We ask Comrade Khrushchev to remember the conversations with us in 1957. You gave us your word as we wholeheartedly spoke to you about all the issues, including Yugoslavia. I spoke first, and then Comrade Enver spoke in more detail on the Yugoslav question. You listened and then after a rebuttal from Comrade Enver, you rose and said to us. "Is it your intention to take us back to the Stalin line?" This means that you knew all along that we see the

Yugoslav issue differently. But if you remember, when you went to Yugoslavia in 1955, we answered your letter [saying] that we had reservations and asked the opinion of the Bureau of Information on the matter.

Mikoyan: This is exactly how it happened, but this never impeded our friendship. We ask why this happened after Bucharest.

N. S. Khrushchev: Tell us your opinion on why this happened?

Comrade Mehmet: Maybe you could tell us yours.

N. S. Khrushchev: You say that in the USSR the people who recently have come to power are young and inexperienced. Are you trying to lecture us? [ALP CC Politburo Member and Ministerial Council First Vice Chairman] Beqir Balluku has said to our officers, "Khrushchev expelled all the Bureau [Politburo] comrades, [CPSU CC CC Secretary] Malenkov, [Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M.] Molotov, [CPSU CC Politburo and Presidium Member Lazar] Kaganovich, [Soviet Premier Nikolai] Bulganin, etc." I have been so many years in this party; I do not know who is older than me here. Here is the letter that Bulganin sent me three days ago, if you would like to read it.

Comrade Enver and Comrade Mehmet: That would not be necessary. This is an internal affair of yours.

Andropov reading the Bulganin letter: (a short review of the letter) Greetings on the occasion of the anniversary of the Great October Revolution. The 43rd year of the Soviet order is characterized by great successes achieved by our country under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with you at its helm. We wish you and your family success and health. Friendly regards. Bulganin. Moscow, November 1960.

Comrade Enver: We are not interested in why you removed Molotov, Bulganin and the others from the Presidium.

N. S. Khrushchev: We have informed you on this matter.

Comrade Enver: These are your own internal affairs. You know how you have relayed the information to us. Now to the matter of what you said about Beqir Balluku. While we were in Albania nothing of the kind had happened. If this has happened after we came here, then we will go to Albania and look this matter over. To throw around accusations simply because the old [officials] have been removed and replaced by the young is not right. This is your own internal organizational matter. If Beqir Balluku has said such a thing, we will take the appropriate measures.

N. S. Khrushchev: Unfortunately he has said it a few times.

Comrade Enver: Yes, but do you know what your own ambassador has said? Instead of mentioning many cases, I will mention one that is a military matter. He has put into the question to which side the Albanian army would swear allegiance.

N. S. Khrushchev: Who has he said this to?

Comrade Enver: To our generals, at the airport, in the presence of your general. Our officers replied that the Albanian army would remain faithful to the party and the socialist camp.

N. S. Khrushchev: If our ambassador has said such a thing, then that is sheer stupidity.

Comrade Enver: But this stupidity is political.

N. S. Khrushchev: This is every kind of stupidity.

Mikoyan: Maybe you are inferring that the ambassador's behavior is our official position?

Comrade Enver: One case of stupidity from one idiot may be forgiven, even if it is political, but when it is repeated many times it is official position.

N. S. Khrushchev: Yes, this is true.

Comrade Enver: Your ambassador has been the best friend to our party and to us on a personal level. He is not an idiot.

N. S. Khrushchev: If he has spoken so, he is an idiot.

Comrade Enver: His stupidity only came out after Bucharest. Why did he not do this for three years in a row? This is strange.

Mikoyan: It is not strange. He used to get information from you regularly and had not seen such a behavior from your part.

Comrade Enver: I think you said that he did not know about the disagreements between us.

Mikoyan: No, he did not, because this case was after Bucharest.

Comrade Mehmet: After Bucharest you thought we had betrayed you, so you said dolloi [Russian in original, meaning 'down with'] the Albanians.

Mikoyan: Comrade Enver told us that he used to tell everything to [Soviet Ambassador to Albania V. I.] Ivanov, but then stopped doing so. The behavior of the ambassador is a result of this. We spoke about this issue already.

Comrade Mehmet: How would you feel if our ambassador went to Stalingrad and started collecting information? Obviously you would not like it. And what is worse is that not only your ambassador, but even his people have behaved in such a manner.

Comrade Enver: If, as Mikoyan says, we have already spoken about these issues, then why are we still here? If, after we discuss these issues, we proclaim that we are not in agreement with you, then you may say that we already discussed them.

Mikoyan: But we already recalled our ambassador, why are you making an issue out of this?

Comrade Enver: OK, let's leave the issue of the ambassador aside. Now, look what you have written in the letter to the Chinese. This for us is a monstrosity.

Mikoyan: We have simply expressed our opinion.

Comrade Ramiz Alia: (Reading from page 46 of the letter). You publicly accuse us of anti-Sovietism.

N. S. Khrushchev: This is our opinion. Do not get angry.

Comrade Mehmet: You attack us, and we should not get angry?

N. S. Khrushchev: You accused me over our conversation in [April] 1957. [Back] then, Comrade Enver spoke for two hours, while I kept my mouth shut. I spoke for five minutes and you interrupted me immediately, and then again and again. I said that you do not wish to listen and I could stop talking. Then you came to our Central Committee, said that what happened was not a good thing and [we] reconciled. Now you should let me speak. All four of you are interrupting me again.

We are sorry about what happened to these people. You do not believe us. I do not know Koco Tashko. I may have seen him before, but even if you showed me a picture of him, I would not recognize him.

Comrade Enver: If you would like a picture, we can bring you one.

N. S. Khrushchev: Why do you talk this way?

Comrade Enver: I apologize.

N. S. Khrushchev: You sent me the picture in which we are hugging. Maybe you burned that one. I keep mine at the Central Committee. I will keep it no matter what happens.

Comrade Enver: I keep mine in my children's room.

N. S. Khrushchev: When I was in Albania, I spoke a lot. You made me an Honorary Citizen of your capital and, I think, a representative of Albania in Moscow. I have served this task well. I have ordered that everything should be done in order that Albania becomes a garden. I know [recently ousted ALP CC Politburo Member Liri] Belishova much less than you do. I know that she is a member of the Bureau [Politburo], faithful to the revolution, a good communist. We heard that you expelled her from the Central Committee Politburo. We consider ourselves the guilty party in this. She told us about the conversation she had in China. [Soviet Premier Alexei N.] Kosygin told Comrade Mehmet [Shehu] about this when he was in the hospital. When Comrade Mehmet heard this, his face became white. Was this the reason for her expulsion? You want us to believe that this was done to strengthen our friendship[?] She was a strong woman. She told us openly what she felt. This is a tragedy. You expelled her because she was in favor of our friendship. This is why we wrote about this in the document.

Comrade Enver: Then you consider what is written here as just.

N. S. Khrushchev: Yes.

Comrade Enver: There are two issues here. First, it says that we expelled a member of the Bureau undemocratically. Who told you that this was not done following democratic rules and Leninist norms, but, as you call it, through Stalinist methods? Secondly, you say that we expelled her for pro-Sovietism and deduce that we are anti-Sovietists. Could you explain this?

N. S. Khrushchev: We are people who know and stand by what we write. This is an act that we do not think will lead to the strengthening of our friendship. If you have come here with the predetermined objective of degrading relations instead of finding agreement, then tell us so as not to waste more time.

Comrade Enver: You did not answer our question. This material has been distributed to all the parties.

N. S. Khrushchev: Only to those parties the Chinese themselves gave it to.

Comrade Enver: We also have our point of view and it does not coincide with yours. You have asked us two or three times whether we want to strengthen or degrade our relations. We have come here to strengthen our friendship. But you do not accept any of your mistakes. You have criticisms of us and we have [criticisms] of you. You have criticized us openly and publicly as well as behind closed doors. You may even have more criticism. Tell us about it so that our Central Committees can know about it. Our Central Committee sent us to strengthen our friendship.

N. S. Khrushchev: Beqir Balluku has said to our military officers that Khrushchev is not a Marxist.

Comrade Enver: We have spoken to your comrades on the issue of the military officers. How could

it be in our interest that our military officers at the [Vlora] base quarrel? You keep bringing documents that Comrade Beqir said so and so. You should look at your own officers. I told Comrade Mikoyan that your Rear Admiral in our headquarters is not a Rear Admiral.

N. S. Khrushchev: If you want, we could remove the base.

Comrade Mehmet: How did you arrive at that conclusion?

Comrade Enver: Then what Malenkov and [Supreme Commander of the Warsaw Pact Marshal Andrei A.] Grechko told us is true! Are you threatening us? If the Soviet people hear that you seek to remove the base from Vlora at a time when the Albanian people wholeheartedly asked for it to defend Albania and the whole [socialist] camp, because Vlora will be burned before Sevastopol...

N. S. Khrushchev: Comrade Enver, do not raise your voice. Let's speak in turn.

Comrade Enver: If you remove the base, you would be making a big mistake. We have fought without bread, without shoes and...

N. S. Khrushchev: We also fought.

Comrade Enver: Yes, and you have fought zdorovo ['well'; Russian in original]. We are here thanks to how the Soviet army fought.

N. S. Khrushchev: You do not know that when the Warsaw Pact was being created [in 1955], Molotov insisted that Albania and the German Democratic Republic not be allowed to enter. "Why," he would say, "should we fight if Albania is attacked?" There are documents attesting to this. I said then that if Albania was not admitted, it would be swallowed whole, so we must admit it. If necessary, we would fight for Albania and for the Democratic Republic of Germany. Now we say that if you want, we can remove the base. The submarines are ours.

Comrade Enver: Yours and ours. We fight for you.

N. S. Khrushchev: But you spit on me.

Mikoyan: Who proposed that the base be created?

Comrade Enver: I did and I have asked for it since Stalin's time.

N. S. Khrushchev: You have no respect for me.

Comrade Enver: I defend the interests of my country. The base territory belongs to us, the submarines to you, and both of us belong to the [socialist] camp.

Mikoyan: It was Khrushchev who proposed that the base be created.

Comrade Mehmet: No, it was Comrade Enver.

Kozlov: We are saying that in our Central Committee this matter was brought up by Comrade Khrushchev.

Mikoyan: You proposed the base to Stalin, but he did not agree to it. And now you say that Stalin is a Marxist, while Khrushchev is not, and that he has not given anything to you.

Comrade Mehmet: This is not true.

Mikoyan: Your tone says so. It says Khrushchev has given you nothing. We have discussed the base among ourselves. Khrushchev was not for removing the base. I said to him, "if our officers will

quarrel with the Albanians at the base, then why do we need it?"

Comrade Mehmet: You have considered us enemies. Even here in Moscow you have undertaken intelligence operations against us. You know this well.

Mikoyan: In that conversation I asked Khrushchev, "Maybe the Albanians are angry because they want the base to be removed." Khrushchev said that the base was in a very suitable place, so we would be sorry to see it removed. "But, even though it is a good base," I said, "if it will cause problems, it is better to remove it." Our Central Committee is for keeping the base. Now we ask you. You also want it to remain [in place]. Very well then.

Comrade Enver: The way the matter was presented here, we should discuss it at [a meeting of] the Warsaw Pact. I want to point out that you have thought about this, while we never have. You say that if we want, you would remove it. Good relations between the Albanians and the Soviets have always existed at the base. Only after Bucharest have there been problems and they were caused by bad-tempered officers of yours. If you insist, we could request a Warsaw Pact meeting. We would lose the most. You would lose eight submarines, and Albania would turn to ashes. We are for keeping the base.

N. S. Khrushchev: You lose your temper. It is impossible to have a conversation with you.

Comrade Enver: You always say that we are hot-tempered.

N. S. Khrushchev: You always twist my words. Does your translator know Russian well?

Comrade Enver: I respect you and you should also respect me.

Mikoyan (talking to Comrade Mehmet about Comrade Enver): He always speaks with passion, while Khrushchev speaks calmly.

N. S. Khrushchev: [British Prime Minister Harold] MacMillan also wanted to talk to me this way.

Comrades Mehmet and Hysni: Comrade Enver is not MacMillan, so you should take back that statement.

N. S. Khrushchev: And where should I put it?

Comrade Mehmet: Put it in your pocket.

Comrade Hysni: How could you say that he speaks to you like MacMillan?

Mikoyan: He speaks worse than MacMillan.

Comrade Hysni (to the comrades of our delegation): I do not agree to continue talks under these conditions.

(Comrade Enver and the other comrades stand up to exit the room.)

Comrade Mehmet (to Khrushchev): You should know, Comrade Khrushchev, that Albania will always remain faithful to the Soviet Union and be a member of the socialist camp.

These notes were kept by the translator F. Gjerazi.

This copy has not been edited, corrected or checked.

[signed]