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Conversation between Hysni Kapo and Kang Sheng in Beijing on 24 January 1967, at 10:00 am

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Summary:

Hysni Kapo and Kang Sheng discuss the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guard movement, and purges inside the Chinese Communist Party.

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**Conversation between Hysni Kapo and Kang Sheng
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Present at the meeting are comrades Behar Shtylla, Liu from the [International Liaison] Department of the Central Committee of the CCP, and Xun (translator).

After the usual greetings, comrade Kang Sheng takes the floor and speaks about the following issues:

1) On 22 January, when I said goodbye to you at the Red Guard exhibition I said to you that I was leaving because comrade Mao was asking to see me. At the time, he was speaking with the military cadres responsible for the districts and provinces. On 23 January, these cadres met to speak with comrade Lin Biao, who is now doing better health-wise than before.

The content of these meetings is the following: That the Liberation Army should take active part in the Cultural Revolution. For the cadres at the Corps level and down, education is carried out through positive examples. For the cadres above the Corps level, in the military institutions and academies, the Cultural Revolution will take place as it does all around the country. Comrades Mao Zedong and Lin Biao said that the People's Liberation Army has great merits, both from before the liberation and afterwards, but military cadres should not be satisfied with past merits, and they should demonstrate new merits in the new class struggle. For 17 years following the liberation, the military has existed in a peaceful setting.

It is very easy for it to be detached from the masses. Many cadres have now been housed in large buildings, have cars available to them, [and they] have started families. They can no longer rely on old experience alone. They should actively support the leftist revolutionary masses. In this revolutionary class struggle at a national scale, the armed forces cannot take a neutral stand.

Before comrade Mao received the leading military cadres, we had meetings with them for several days. We spoke to them about:

- 1) Our military is based on Marxism-Leninism and the idea of Mao Zedong.
- 2) Our military is directly led by comrade Lin Biao, the closest comrade-in-arms of comrade Mao Zedong.
- 3) Under the leadership of comrade Lin Biao, our military has achieved great success in the study of the works of comrade Mao in recent years.
- 4) During the liberation war and the war in support of Korea, as well as in the resistance against American imperialism and against the Indian reactionaries, our military has shown great merits in the defense of the victories of socialism.
- 5) The leading cadres of the People's Liberation Army are seasoned cadres with long experience.

For all these reasons, our army is of the people, a great army, a Marxist-Leninist army, an unbreakable one. That is why Comrade Mao has said: All the people of our country must learn from the popular liberation army. All of the people of our country must learn from the People's Liberation Army.

These are all positive aspects of our military. This is the first issue that we raised with the military leadership. Besides this, we also raised the following:

- Is there a class war within the military, or not?
- Is there a struggle between two lines in the military, or not?
- Do bourgeois thoughts emerge within the military, or not?
- Is it possible for our proletarian military to transform into a reactionary and bourgeois military, or not?

Keeping in mind the positive aspects of our army, our military cadres do not think, or think very little, about other aspects. If they do not think about these aspects, then they will also think the Cultural Revolution is not necessary in the military. If this goes on, there is a good chance that the revisionists take power in the military, and they lead the military down the wrong path. Therefore, we answer in the affirmative to the above questions. Since class war exists in Chinese society, it definitely exists in the military as well; also, the struggle between two lines exists in the military since its establishment. In its early phases, our Red Army consisted of two parts: one part was composed of the rebellious peasant forces, and the other part derived from the old

military forces. A part of the Red Army leaders also came from the old military. Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, He Long, etc. Therefore, we say that the struggle between two lines existed from the beginning. We can see this clearly in the selected works of comrade Mao Zedong, especially in the piece "on correcting mistaken ideas in the party" (first volume of the selected works). This work is in fact a program for our party for the creation of the military [and] for the building of the party. It points the main arrow against the evils that have come from the old military but that are also coming from the new military. The first problem in this work is the struggle against the mistaken views on the art of warfare—views that place this ahead of politics. This problem has continuously existed in our military, and it exists now as well. Politics or the military profession of the soldier [?] [T]o merely fight or to become one with the masses [?] Should the military be led by the party, or the party by the military? Comrade Mao has said: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." So then, should the military lead the way, or the military be led by [the people's] power? It often happens that political power is won through armed warfare, but after the military victory, the political power and the party organization come out and lead the military.

We have encountered these problems at various times. We have also encountered this problem: Should the military be built on a militarist basis or on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, of the idea of Mao Zedong? We have also encountered this problem over the course of these 17 years. In 1953, we waged war against Gao Gang, who was a careerist and tried to usurp the power within the party and in the military. The same struggle took place in 1959 with Peng Dehuai and with Huang Kecheng. He emphasized only the military aspect, whereas comrade Lin Biao placed the emphasis on politics, placed politics in command. This was in fact a harsh battle between two lines. It was a reflex within the military of the struggle waged by comrade Mao with the line of Liu Shaoqi. Related to this struggle are also other military leaders like He Long, whose line was the same as Luo Ruiqing. Of course this goes beyond He Long and also includes the former deputy political director of the army Lo Ze Xe [sic; proper name spelling unknown], the navy commissar Su Zhenhua, [and] the armored vehicle commander Xu Guangda.[\[1\]](#)

The dazibaos placed on the streets should also be divided in two, because there were dazibaos directed at the military political director Xiao Hua, who has been to Albania, but his issue of a different character from the others. Xiao Hua has made mistakes during the Cultural Revolution. He did not understand whether or not the Cultural Revolution should take place within the military; did not properly understand that class struggle and the struggle between the two lines existed in our military. But on the big issues in last several years, he has followed the line of comrade Mao and the instructions of comrade Lin Biao. Regarding the struggle between the two lines within the military, the people who are against Lin Biao and in support of He Long rose against Xiao Hua. So the dazibaos reflect the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.

Lately, we see that there are very few dazibaos against comrade Lin Biao in the streets; there are even dazibaos against Chairman Mao. In the army we have not seen such dazibaos, whereas we have seen them in schools. Last year there was one such dazibao at Tsinghua University, "down with Mao Zedong, we are with the Communist [P]arty." Lately there are many dazibaos against Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, Jiang Qing. These are meant to soften the struggle against Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. On the 19th, 20th, and the 21st of January there were rough dazibaos against Zhou Enlai and against me, but in recent days there have been dazibaos of this sort in Tiananmen Square: Kang Sheng is a determined revolutionary on the the side of Mao Zedong. By way of these, the masses unmask the negative dazibaos.

Since the struggle between comrade Mao's line and the line of Liu Shaoqi is now aggravating, this is also reflected in the military. He Long has admitted the mistakes. Chairman Mao's directive is to defend He Long. Some time ago, there were a lot of dazibaos against He Long. Comrade Mao on the one hand criticizes him He Long, but on the other hand defends him with the masses. Comrade Mao does not agree that he should be attacked in front of the masses. A few days ago, He Long lived in the house of Zhou Enlai. We have hidden him now. The Red Guards are looking for him. So the struggle between the two lines in the military exists since its establishment, from the liberation to the present day. This struggle will continue in the future. But

our military is strong. The fact that we are confident to wage the Cultural Revolution in the military shows that it is led by the ideas of comrade Mao Zedong, that it is strong, powerful. This time we had meetings with the leading military cadres so that they understand the situation and don't stay asleep. Do bourgeois ideas exist in the military? The struggle between the two lines shows very clearly that two kinds of ideas exist in the military: a proletarian side and a bourgeois one. These ideas might derive not only from the old military, but also from ideas that exist in our new military. This is why we told them that if the revisionists usurp military power, the military might switch colors precisely as Khrushchev's military and the Yugoslav military changed colors. The military is a very important instrument for strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. If we become satisfied only with past merits, and fall asleep, and if we do not place politics in command and the revisionists usurp power in the military, then our army can switch colors. Proceeding from this, the Cultural Revolution in the military is more necessary than in the schools. This is one front. Therefore, comrade Mao Zedong and Lin Biao received personally the leading military cadres, spoke with them, and asked them to decisively stand on the side of left revolutionaries, to decisively take part in the Cultural Revolution.

This is a strategic measure. The overwhelming majority of the cadres approved comrade Mao Zedong's call and expressed determination to put into action the guidance of comrade Lin Biao. At the same time, we should keep in mind that it is inevitable that some individual, some person that has fallen behind, stays behind, or pursues an opposing path and destroys himself politically. Earlier we had this kind of regime: the party bureau secretary of a region was at the same time military region commissar. For example, Tao Zhu was at the same time commissar of Central-South China. Therefore, during the Cultural Revolution, soldiers should establish a clear demarcation line with the former region commissar Tao Zhu. Ordinarily, under normal circumstances, one cannot do such a thing within the military. Now, those who support comrade Mao's line are fighting against all those who continue [to support] the line of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. This is why this is a very complicated struggle.

II. So this is one issue. Now, onto the other issue. A few days ago, we had many meetings related to industry, communications, the economy, and we have done and want to still do a lot of educational work with the employees of the factory administrations, the state planning commission, etc. To an extent, the cadres of the industrial sector hold common views with the military cadres, and they differ from the schools. Indeed, there are differences between the army and the schools, as there are between the industry and the cultural institutions. In the course of work, we encountered this kind of thinking among the cadres in industry: They say that comrade Mao's line is put into practice in industry, that the instructions on the fulfillment of production and assortments have been executed, and that this is a fact. There have also been great successes in the field of science. The cadres of these sectors say that the line of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping has not exerted influence in the army and in the scientific institutions, meaning that there is no struggle between the two lines there. According to them, the schools are the headquarters and camps of the intellectuals, whereas the working class has gathered in the factories. Based on Lenin's theses that capitalism is born every day and every hour from small-scale manufacturing, and since these sectors involve large manufacturing, they say that there is no way how capitalism can be born there. There is also another point of view: between plants, factories, and industrial enterprises on the one hand, and schools on the other, there is yet another difference. In schools, there are various professors who only teach, whereas in the factories there are party cadres who also partake in physical labor. There is also this kind of view: The factories are different from the schools also due to the fact that it is possible to give permission to stop the teaching in the schools and to wage a Cultural Revolution, but if factories are closed for the Cultural Revolution, this would negatively influence production. So here we get Lenin's idea: Is politics primary or is economics?

Thus, in the Cultural Revolution, Marxism-Leninism develops through the struggle. We should explain many of the Marxist-Leninist views on socialist society to the cadres, especially in the current novel circumstances of the development of Marxism-Leninism on the basis of the ideas of Mao Zedong.

Some time ago, we discussed with the cadres from socialist industry these issues: Can capitalist ideas emerge in the large socialist manufacturing plants, or not? We should accept that these plants are socialist, because their means of production are socialist and not private, the production is socialist and not capitalist. As Lenin has said, the working class of the great socialist industrial production is different; it does not work like capitalists who seek to obtain profit but to increase the wealth of the people, of the socialist state, in our case of socialist China. Therefore, as Lenin has said, the labor and the character of working class labor have undergone a great change. In this sense, in the large manufacturing industry capitalist ideas cannot emerge. But there is another aspect of the problem in our industrial plants. There is equal pay for equal work. As Marx has said in his "Critique of the Gotha Program," the remnants of bourgeois legality exist in our society; [more] concretely, pay now is determined by work, not need. As Marx has said, the principle of the exchange of equally priced goods has changed but not completely. Under socialism, work and not need determines pay because the output is not abundant. The principle of rewarding work serves two roles: on the one hand, it encourages production and on the other, it encourages the birth of bourgeois ideas. We sometimes do not take measures to combat this factor, which encourages the emergence of bourgeois ideas, [and] the government sometimes even defends it through laws. In the fifth chapter of "The State and Revolution," Lenin says that, from this perspective, the socialist state is a bourgeois state without bourgeois people.

As in China, Albania also applies the principle of equal pay for equal work. In practice, the results of this principle vary according to the workers, for example, we have two workers in a factory who each earn 100 yuan but one is young, single, and the other one has a wife and two children. In fact, the second one earns 25 yuan per person, whereas the first one earns 100 yuan. So we see young workers buy watches, radios, whereas the worker with the family cannot afford them. One can afford to dress up in expensive clothes, but the other wears inexpensive ones. Thus, this manner of remuneration naturally influences the emergence of capitalist ideas among people. Our industrial plants, then, are socialist but at the current stage of our society, capitalist ideas might emerge there. If we do not place politics in command and if we do not carry out class education, there are plenty of possibilities, as comrade Mao has said, for our working class to degenerate, as Khrushchev has done with material stimuli. For this reason, we have recently instructed cadres to read Lenin's "Once Again Against Bukharin."^[2] There, Lenin has said that politics is the concentrated expression of economics, that it is primary; he emphasizes that if you do not understand this principle, you have not understood the ABCs of Marxism. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping have behaved precisely this way for a long time. In this work, Lenin criticized Bukharin. He said that Bukharin pays attention to politics and the economy but places them on a single plane, that Bukharin's philosophy is eclectic, that Bukharin did not understand the ABCs of Marxism.

On this issue, a problem often emerges with our cadres who focus on the economy: They say, we are very busy with the plan. Will the Cultural Revolution, if we carry it out, not have a bad influence and hamper production? They do not understand comrade Mao's thesis that the matter can transform into ideas and ideas into matter. For the economy, for production, man's activity is of decisive importance. I have also seen this in Albania, among the Albanian workers and peasants led by comrade Enver Hoxha, among whom the profound ideological revolutionarization of man has played a major role. Following the Fifth Party Congress in Albania, there was an even greater burst in industrial plants, in the clearing of new lands, among workers. Facts have shown the answer to the question of whether the revolutionarization of man encouraged production. In 1964 I went to Tianjin to see how the studying of the works of comrade Mao in the industrial plants was going. In the wall newspapers, I read many good articles written by the workers. One worker had written an article with the title "Pluses and minuses in production." He proposed to decrease somewhat the time of production, if not direct production, at least the preparatory work for production, in order to study the works of comrade Mao. Formally, this ate up some of the time for production, but the result would be a plus because after the study of the works of comrade Mao, the people's thoughts change and they perfect techniques and the operation of machinery, [and] production increases. This was an interesting article. At times, I come across better articles in the industrial plants than those written by

professors and by the newspaper editors. When professors explain in school how matter transforms into ideas and ideas into matter, the more they explain the more they confuse the students, whereas in the factory and in the village, it is easier to understand this principle from the workers' practical work.

Thus, there are a series of problems with our cadres. We want to conduct educational work with them. In the industrial plants there is a class struggle, there is the question of the birth of capitalist ideas, the struggle between the line of Comrade Mao Zedong and the line of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. If they fall under the leadership of the revisionists, our industrial plants may degenerate into capitalist ones. Therefore, the Cultural Revolution in the industrial plants is of greater importance than in schools and cultural institutions, because it has to do not only with the superstructure but also with the economic base of our society. We have recently conducted educational work in this regard.

III. With the schools, the universities and the intellectuals, we are working so that they merge with the workers, peasants, and soldiers.

The Red Guard movement in the schools has developed quickly, but there are also some shortcomings with it: it is not closely connected to the workers and the peasants. If the revolutionary movement of the intellectuals does not unite with the workers and the peasants, it cannot join a united whole; on the contrary, it might deviate down the wrong path, become sick from petite bourgeois liberalism, sectarianism, petite bourgeois revolution, become enthused from the successes and despair because of the lack of successes.

Lenin has spoken about the petite bourgeois revolutionarization in the old society, but this exists in the new society also. For example, the *Hong Weibing* (the Red Guards) of the higher institute of Geology have taken Bo Yibo, brought him from Canton to Beijing and keep him under supervision. Bo Yibo gives the materials he writes only to them, [and] they do not let others have them. They consider Bo Yibo to be their property. Peng Zhen was taken by the Red Guards of the Higher Institute of the Arts. Logically, it would make sense for them to unite with the other groups in the struggle against Peng Zhen, but they monopolize Peng Zhen and not let others. After some explanatory work, they had a meeting with the others also, but they monopolize Peng Zhen. They do the same with Jan Zē [sic; proper name spelling unknown]^[3], Bo Yibo, Jen Çen [sic; proper name spelling unknown]. They even keep information about their collaboration with the Kuomintang from other people, because this is how they increase their own authority.

If the Red Guards do not unite with the workers and the peasants, they might not pay attention to unity between themselves, and so several factions emerge. We are carrying out a lot of educational work in schools and universities, so that pupils and students can study the works of comrade Mao. We will send them to the countryside. This is not an easy thing to do because in the past they have gotten used to liberalism. On the other hand, we should keep in mind that with the further expansion and deepening of the Cultural Revolution, a differentiation will also emerge within the masses of pupils and students. The boundary between the left and right forces will become increasingly clearer, and the leadership of the mass movement will undergo changes in its development: in the beginning, a movement leader may be a leftist [but] with the objective development of the movement, he may be left behind. This is why we need to conduct comprehensive educational work with the petite bourgeoisie, with the intellectuals. This problem exists in Beijing now, and we are carrying out lot of work in all of the schools and the universities, so that the notion of factionalism disappears. There are also contradictions between the leftist groups of one school with those of another. For example, a youth group has taken over the newspaper *Beijing ribao* [*Beijing Daily*]; another leftist group tries to take it from them and they do not unite together.

Throughout the fighting, the goal should be to unite their thoughts and actions. Only on this basis can the organizations of the Red Guard unite. On the issue of the struggle against the line of Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and Tao Zhu, they can unite and have shared views, but in other issues they may not come to an agreement.

All young people wish to study the ideas of Comrade Mao Zedong, but on how they should study, understand, and execute them—there are contradictions here too. Nevertheless, the movement has now entered a new phase, which is to say that

intellectuals should become one with the workers, the peasants, and the soldiers. From the school they are going to factories, from the city to the village, [and] a class struggle on a national scale is taking place in all parts of the country. By eradicating the shortcomings and overcoming the difficulties, the revolutionary movement is moving towards a great union, a greater depth. If the remnants and wrongdoers who have hidden in the first phase of the movement unite, they will be unmasked. This is the issue that we are studying.

IV. Now the revolutionary movement has also begun in the villages. A few years ago in the villages there was the movement of socialist education, but that was mostly a top-down effort, whereas now it should be carried from the bottom up. As Comrade Mao has said, class struggle in China has been carried out like this: first we have liberated the country and took over power through the army, whereas now this should be done from the bottom up, to obtain power from the bottom.

The movement has now entered a new phase. The most important issue is the issue of the party leadership. We will talk about this issue another time, because I took a lot of your time today. We can also talk about other issues that interest you. On this basis, let us draw a plan and talk. What do you like to see? However many times you would like to come and speak, there are no limitations here.

The party issue here [in China] has not come up only now with the Cultural Revolution. The struggle between the two lines exists in the party from an earlier time. This cannot be explained with a single conversation, or two.

Notes kept by Behar Shtylla, according to the translation of Xun.

[1] Translator's note: The romanization of Chinese terms, places, and names in Albanian-language documents is often inconsistent, complicating translation into English. One Albanian variant might apply to different Chinese equivalents.

[2] Translator's note: *Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin*.

[3] Translator's note: Possible reference to An Ziwen.