

April 15, 1957

**Memorandum of Conversation with Soviet Leaders
on Party-Related Issues**

Citation:

"Memorandum of Conversation with Soviet Leaders on Party-Related Issues", April 15, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Arkivi Qendor Shtetëror (Central State Archives, AQSH), Tirana, Albania, Fondi (F.) 14/AP, Marrëdhënie me Partinë Komuniste (b.) të BS (M-PKbBS), Viti (V.) 1957, Dosja (Dos.) 2. Obtained and translated by Elidor Mëhilli. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/119257>

Summary:

Hoxha complains to Khrushchev about Yugoslavia's conduct toward Albania. While Khrushchev says that the Soviet Union will back Albania, he complains about Hoxha's personal demeanor and emotional complaints about Yugoslavia. Khrushchev also criticizes Albania's decision to execute a woman, and a Yugoslav national.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Albanian

Contents:

Translation - English

Present in the meeting:

From the Soviet side: [Nikita] Khrushchev, [Nikolai] Bulganin, [Mikhail] Suslov, [Dmitri] Shepilov, [Boris] Ponomarev, and [Yuri] Andropov

From the Albanian side: Enver Hoxha, Mehmet Shehu, Gogo Nushi, Spiro Koleka, Rita Marko, and Ramis Alija [sic]

Comrade Khrushchev gave the floor to Comrade Enver Hoxha.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: (After expressing gratitude in the name of the Albanian people and the party, etc., he broached the subject of "our relations with the Yugoslavs.") We have done our very best to follow the advice you have given us, namely to remain calm and collected on this issue, but the Yugoslav leaders have continued to provoke us... These provocations have made us realize that their objective is to entirely destroy relations between us. And we also understand that they do this so as to be able to say "yes, we can get along with every other party and every other country, but not with the Party of Labor of Albania and the Albanian government, because it is impossible to get along with them, because the Albanians refuse." They continue to utilize anti-party elements, enemies, etc., dissatisfied individuals... The Yugoslav minister in Tirana himself, along with the first secretary of the diplomatic mission, visited the Ura Vajgurore Airfield and took pictures. Our officer did not intervene but informed us right away, telling us: "I did not stop him, so as not to cause any unpleasant incidents..."

The Yugoslav minister also travelled to Uji i Ftohtë (Vlorë), to a family of patriots, and asked them whether there were any fortifications on the Sazan Island, if there were ships around there, how many ships there were, and so on.

The woman responded: ...

Patriotic individuals have come weeping to us at the Central Committee and they have told us that the Yugoslav minister and embassy employees have visited their families to pass on regards from their relatives in Yugoslavia, and then promptly engaged in propaganda against our party and government. On different occasions, the Yugoslav minister has openly engaged in propaganda against our party and government, to the point that the Polish minister at one point told him: "What you are saying is very despicable!" We have been worried and continue to worry that some public embarrassment might occur. We cannot simply stand by and watch.

We brought in the minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and laid out our concerns. He had this to say: "The Yugoslav government has sent me here to improve relations with the Albanian people and I will continue to work towards this objective!" Needless to say, these are not merely his words. We are confident that he has obtained these directives from the highest levels of the leadership! We have drawn these conclusions from the attitude of the leadership...

At the last plenum of the Central Committee, members demanded that the Yugoslavs treat the Albanian minority in Kosovo more humanely... We expected them to exploit this matter, and they did... But in Yugoslav hands, the "Kosovo issue" can be very dangerous, not because we might get attacked, since we are not alone and have the Soviet Union and others with us, but because they are using and will continue to use Kosovo against us... They are employing hostile methods against the Kosovo population, forcing Albanians to relocate to Turkey, etc.... The Yugoslavs have gathered Albanian political refugees, and intelligence from our secret police tells us that they have also infiltrated subversives into our country. We have additional evidence: A letter from Tuk Jakova addressed to the Central Committee (explains who Jakova is). [i] In this letter, he openly acknowledges that he was in contact with the

Yugoslav intelligence services through the Yugoslav mission in Tirana...The UDB [the Yugoslav State Security Administration] supervisor in Tirana passed on to Tuk regards from the Yugoslav leadership and congratulated him for his courage, but also said that it had been premature and that he should not have chosen that approach at the meeting of the Central Committee.^[ii] In this letter, Tuk Jakova also admits that Bedri Spahiu...was also in agreement with him [...] and there are plenty of other things in this letter.^[iii] Tuk's letter demonstrates that through the Tirana Party Conference and Tuk Jakova, Bedri Spahiu, Hulusi Spahiu, Liri Gega, Dali Ndreu, and others, the Yugoslavs sought to create the conditions in Albania to do what they did in Hungary...and precisely at the same moment! But thanks to the vigilance of our party, they failed.

We believe that they represent a threat not only to us, but to our entire camp; they have deviated from Marxism-Leninism. They write in their newspapers that they are willing to improve relations with Albania, but this is only a bluff. Comrade Khrushchev told us that Scînteia has written that they disagree with us and call us "quarrelsome"...We are generally in agreement with what Scînteia writes, even though all of this was said too late! And we believe that they are not in agreement with us but they could have informed us through party channels, not publicly like this, because this only gives ammunition to the enemy. On the other hand, we do not agree that we are "quarrelsome," because this implies that we quarrel for no good reason...

Given what the Yugoslavs are putting us through, we are right, not Scînteia. For example, on some issues we do not agree with the Polish comrades, but we have never said anything publicly. The same with the Italian comrades: We do not agree with Comrade [Palmiro] Togliatti on some issues, but you will not find any word on this in our newspapers.

The Yugoslavs have not shown any good signs in fourteen years now! After the Belgrade Declaration, we tried very hard, full-heartedly, but they refused! We are Marxists: We may have faults and we may make mistakes, but do we perhaps not wish with all our heart to have good relations with the Yugoslavs? Of course we do. But we do not trust the Yugoslavs: They speak and act against our camp; against the foundations of Marxism-Leninism; against the Soviet Union, which saved and liberated the Yugoslavs too...yet they do not say a word against imperialism. On the contrary: [Constantinos] Karamanlis comes and goes in Belgrade; the U.S. grants Yugoslavia billions of U.S. dollars; and Tito wants to visit the United States!!! Nothing good has come out of the Yugoslavs in fourteen years! If we saw any good signs, if they were to commit to Marxist-Leninist self-criticism, then, of course, we would do everything possible! But they refuse! The last letter of the LCY [League of Communists of Yugoslavia] addressed to the CC [Central Committee] of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] said that we have organized groups in Kosovo and so on! These are despicable lies. The employees of our diplomatic mission in Belgrade do not conduct any intelligence activities there. Where does all of this come from then? It comes from the fact that they have completely fallen off the track of Marxism-Leninism.

What are we going to do with them? We will keep calm but we will also be far more vigilant than we have been. We will be patient. But patience has its limits. We will take no step that might damage our camp without consulting with you. We will not engage in war with Yugoslavia. As always, we will conform to your general political orientation and, above all, follow your line.

We believe that our stance has helped and will continue to help the Yugoslav people. We hold trust in the Yugoslav people, because they are a brave people, but today's leadership has also created a cast of cadres over there. I have seen with my own eyes that the Yugoslav people love the Soviet Union. Therefore, if we keep the stance that we have kept so far, we will help the Yugoslav people see the truth. In Bulgaria,

too, Boris did everything he could, but he could not erase pro-Soviet sentiments.

We do not have confirmed intelligence, but according to what our diplomats in Belgrade tell us, anti-leadership sentiment is brewing in Yugoslavia, though we cannot say if this is true or to what extent it is true. One thing is certain, however, and that is the fact that the war waged by our camp against the Yugoslavs has moved communists to think...We have always talked about the Yugoslav leadership, and it is possible that we have made mistakes, if we look at it from the perspective of what the Bulgarians have been saying, that "some leaders have certain opinions on certain issues..." But the Yugoslav leaders themselves indicate that they are in full agreement on positions that go against the fundamental theses of Marxism-Leninism. We can see that Yugoslavia has adopted a positive stance when it comes to China's bid for admission to the United Nations, etc., which benefits our camp. But on the other hand, Yugoslavia is a member of the Balkan Pact and, thus, also of NATO. We would be completely justified in thinking that the Yugoslav leadership is lying: the United States has nothing to lose if Yugoslavia agrees with China's bid for UN membership, if they speak in favor on disarmament, etc., at a time when the U.S. holds a different position on these issues.

Perhaps we are mistaken, but we say all of this because this is what we think, and we would like to reveal our thoughts to the leaders of the CPSU because this is the party that mentors us. We also want to offer these thoughts so as not to cause any damage to our party and the CPSU. When Comrade Khrushchev told us to support [Władysław] Gomułka, we did. We say all of this because we want to learn from the comrade leaders of the CPSU, because we are their students.

We are in agreement with what Comrade Khrushchev said the other time about "tactics": to continue according to the tactics employed by the CPSU.

We do not have anything else to add; the situation with our party is very good. Right now party conferences have been called and there is a lot of enthusiasm and an ironbound unity of thought and action. Comrade Rita Marko can offer a more detailed overview, should you need it.

In terms of the political situation, it is good—there is no dissatisfaction. The people are standing strong. There is nothing else. This is where we need your help.

Comrade Khrushchev: I wanted to express our party's opinion. We are completely on your side and we support you. But you view relations with Yugoslavia in a somewhat nervous manner. When you talk, you present the "Yugoslav issue" as utterly hopeless. The way you talked about Yugoslavia leads one to think that the Yugoslav leadership is disloyal, that it is not grounded at all, that it has no hope...and so we should cut off relations with them. I do not think they have betrayed us, but it is true that they have seriously deviated from Marxism-Leninism...According to you, we ought to go back to what Stalin used to do, when he called on people not to recognize Tito, when he brought about all of those other things that we know very well...If we view things the way you presented them here, then the conclusion would be that, first of all, Yugoslavia is against the Soviet Union but also against you. When I hear you talk about these matters, you are boiling inside! The Italians, the Greeks and the Turks are no better than the Yugoslavs...With whom do you have better relations?

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We do not have any relations with the Greeks and the Turks. The Italians are imperialists.

Comrade Khrushchev: Let us examine how the Yugoslavs behave towards us. They attack us more than the Greeks, the Turks and the Italians! But there is something specific, proletarian, about Yugoslavia more so than the others...Can we then cut off

relations with Yugoslavia?

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We do not say this.

Comrade Khrushchev: You do not say it, but your words imply that you think so...Of course, Yugoslavia will not become a cause of war against our camp, like Germany, or Italy or some other country. You consider Yugoslavia to be your number one enemy?!

Comrade Enver Hoxha: But what are we supposed to do in light of all of these things?

Comrade Khrushchev: Try to neutralize their activities. What else can you do? Will you declare war on them?

Comrade Enver Hoxha: No. But if the Yugoslav minister goes photographing military targets, what are we supposed to do?

Comrade Khrushchev: Take away the film from him...

Comrade Enver Hoxha: But then they will cut off relations with us.

Comrade Khrushchev: Then what do you want from us? We hold different views and have no advice to give you! I do not understand you, Comrade Hoxha!

Comrade Enver Hoxha: But what if they continue to provoke us?

Comrade Khrushchev: [Konrad] Adenauer is no better than Tito or Kish and so on...nevertheless, we have done everything we can...

Comrade Enver Hoxha: But what are we going to do if they continue to plot against us?

Comrade Khrushchev: What can we do, Comrade Hoxha, you keep interrupting me with constant comebacks! I listened to you for about an hour without interrupting a single time, but you did not let me speak for even a few minutes without interrupting me constantly! I have nothing more to say!

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We want advice, Comrade Khrushchev.

Comrade Khrushchev: I told you once and I am telling you again: I listened to you for a whole hour, Comrade Hoxha, but you didn't give me even fifteen minutes and interrupted me repeatedly! You want to build your policies based on emotions! You say that there are no differences between Tito, [Edvard] Kardelj, [Aleksandar] Ranković, [Koča] Popović and so on! These are people who have differences between them. Take, for example, Eisenhower and Dulles: Both are reactionaries, but they cannot be put in the same category...

We told you during our first meeting: We are not going to attack anyone and we will not provoke an attack. Our attacks and counter-attacks must be carried out in such a way as to enable rapprochement and not further alienation...

We have asked Zhou Enlai to act as an intermediary for a meeting between the two

parties. He agreed. This meeting can happen. The Yugoslavs have agreed to it. But one must not think that everyone will come out of this meeting in agreement. But why would we hold this meeting if you entertain these kinds of thoughts? I do not understand what you are aiming at, Comrade Hoxha! Are you trying to convince us that we are not right or that your line is correct? This will not lead to any solutions, and it is not in the interest of our camp. We have deemed the position of the Party of Labor of Albania regarding the counterrevolution in Hungary to be correct...I would think you should meet with [Veljko] Mićunović (the Yugoslav Ambassador in Moscow) here, not to exacerbate relations but to improve them. However, I am afraid that nothing will come out of this based on your emotional state. You talk about the provocations of the Yugoslav minister in Tirana; here, too, the Yugoslav minister has publicly gone to photograph military objects. Our officer simply took his camera away...

Let me repeat: We will follow the line of improving both state and party relations with Yugoslavia. I do not have a lot of hope that this will succeed. Whether or not we will achieve this is another matter, but the point is that we will have a clear conscience and will serve our party and the other parties. The Romanian comrades are right in describing you as quarrelsome...

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Please excuse me. I did not interrupt you intentionally but only when you asked me a question. We also do not want to cut off relations with Yugoslavia, but to improve them according to the Marxist-Leninist line, according to an internationalist line. What I said here was merely to explain what they keep doing in our country. As for what you said about them not being in agreement...

Comrade Khrushchev: The Yugoslavs say that they are in agreement, but we say otherwise. Tito and Ranković maintain a different stand towards us, whereas Kardelj and Popović are completely hostile towards us...Tempo is an ass...unstable.

We know about the talks between king Paul of Greece and Tito in Corfu. King Paul said in jest to Tito: "We can come to an agreement on the division of Albania." The queen understood that this joke was in bad taste and stopped this exchange with the words: "One must not make these kinds of jokes." The socialist camp, the peace camp, is strong and our enemies will weaken, so we must be calm.

Agents must be put to the test...A cold shower is needed.

I used to have respect for Stalin. He used to say: "We must take a cold shower before we make any decisions, like the Romans used to do." Stalin used to say this, but he would not do it. So let us do it.

We gave everything to the Poles! There are plenty of anti-Soviet developments there! But Gomułka is one thing and Dombrowski is another...

Be calm, always be calm, comrades, and we will prevail. We spoke openly to you, Albanian comrades. We have not spoken to anybody else in this manner as we did with you. You are closest to us and that is why we say all these things.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: A true friend criticizes you to your face. We will never follow another path from that of the CPSU. Perhaps we get carried away somewhat but we will do everything we can to fix our affairs.

Comrade Suslov: State relations are not Marxist-Leninist relations.

Comrade Khrushchev: We—Bulganin and I—will be going to Finland shortly. Perhaps

these relations are also Marxist-Leninist?

Comrade Enver Hoxha: We will do everything we can to improve state relations. When it comes to principles, we will follow the path of the CPSU. We admit that we have erred with our tactics and we are very grateful to Comrade Khrushchev, who is our teacher and who spoke to us openly. We will do everything possible to fix these issues according to a Marxist-Leninist line.

Comrade Khrushchev: Do you understand what you have done by executing a woman (Liri Gega)? You attracted the wrath of the whole world! Why not just keep her locked up? By doing this, you gave them arguments to use against you! Besides, you had a Yugoslav national executed! We wrote a letter to [Soviet Ambassador Leonid] Krylov to tell you not to proceed with the trial.

Comrade Enver Hoxha: Krylov did not say anything to us!

Comrade Khrushchev: You should have understood this much yourselves.

Comrade Khrushchev: (to Ponomarev) Find the document. Then, Krylov has not carried out his duty. (Comrade Enver Hoxha has not said anything about this.) Regardless, this is done now. Everyone thinks that it is us who incite you against the Yugoslavs. Starting with that article by Comrade Enver Hoxha, published in Pravda last November, everyone began to think that we encourage you...because that article started this whole thing...

(Tukhachevsky's execution, etc.)

Then Comrade Khrushchev asked: Does anyone have any questions or things to add?

Everyone responded: No.

The meeting went on for two hours

Notes kept by (Politburo Member and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers) Spiro Koleka.

[\[i\]](#) Tuk Jakova was a veteran communist and served as a party organizational secretary until 1951. That year, at the ninth plenum, he was dismissed from the Politburo on charges of leniency against hostile elements. Nevertheless, he remained in the Central Committee and held on to his government position. Post-Stalin reforms in the Soviet Union encouraged Jakova to demand similar policy changes in Albania, including revised relations with Yugoslavia and the political rehabilitation of formerly purged officials. Bedri Spahiu, another high-ranking member of the Central Committee, sided with Jakova in demanding reforms. Hoxha denounced both in 1955 and had them expelled from the party and placed under surveillance. Jakova, who pleaded in writing with the CPSU, died in prison, officially due to illness, in 1959. In this conversation, Hoxha attempts to link Jakova, Gega, and others who demanded party reforms with a Yugoslav-sponsored conspiracy based on confessions allegedly obtained from the accused individuals.

[\[ii\]](#) Uprava državne bezbednosti (UDB), also known as UDBa, was the Yugoslav secret police.

[\[iii\]](#) An unclear sentence here is given in Albanian as: "Veç kësaj ç'ka shkruhet në letrën jugosllave se është marrë nga pollakët dhe jo nga perëndimi"