

April 28, 1960

**Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation
between Mao Zedong and Blas Roca Calderio, the
Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of
Cuba**

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Summary:

A diplomatic conversation between Chairman Mao and Calderio from Cuba. They discuss the China-Cuba relations, economic aid to Cuba and Cuba's relations with other Central American and Latin America countries.

Credits:

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Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Time: 12 - 18:30 [Noon-6:30 pm], 28 April 1960

Venue: On a train resting in the suburbs of Tianjin

Present: [Mao Zedong, Blas Roca Calderio,] Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, Wu Xiuquan, Li Qixin

Interpreter: Cai Tongkuo

Recorder: Deng Lanzhen

Roca [in the original, "abbreviated as Luo below," not abbreviated here]: My situation this time is better than four years ago.

Chairman Mao (abbreviated as Chairman below): Good, [you] have notable changes. [I] couldn't have a good discussion with you back in 1956, too many people that time.

Roca: Your health is better than before.

Chairman: So so.

Roca: This bag is made of crocodile skin. I'm now presenting it as a gift to you in the name of the Central Committee of the Popular Socialist Party [PSP] of Cuba. It might be useful since you often travel.

Chairman: Thanks very much. We have nothing to give you in return. What could I do? Please, Comrade Wu Xiuquan, help me out on this.

Roca: The second matter is that I'm now greeting you, in the name of Fidel Castro and other revolutionary leaders [of Cuba]. Fidel particularly asked me to greet you on his individual behalf.

Chairman: Thank him. On my own behalf as well as in the name of the entire Chinese people and the Central Committee, I'm saluting Cuba's revolution. We very much welcome Cuba's revolution. Cuba's revolution is a great revolution, a revolution of global significance. The Cuban people do not fear imperialists, [they are] a brave people. Being next to a huge tiger without paying the slightest attention to it, you just break down the superstition. There is a Chinese idiom, "see no people in one's eyes" [muzhong wuren]: in your eyes, there is no American imperialism, no tiger. To you the US can do nothing. The Cuban revolution has been victorious for 15 months.

Roca: The revolution keeps advancing, for which American imperialism feels loathing. It exhausts all sorts of measures to launch attacks upon our revolution. In the past, it was American newspapers, journalists, agents, and capitalist monopolies who made a fuss against Cuba. Now, [US President Dwight D.] Eisenhower himself comes out to oppose the Cuban revolution.

Chairman: What else could he do? [He is] a paper tiger. The South Korean people support you. There is a large US army contingent there, Syngman Rhee had 25 divisions, and atomic bombs are also there. Who could predict that Syngman Rhee would have been defeated within days?[1] The problem is that people were left nowhere to go, just like you. Batista killed 20 thousand Cubans, Syngman Rhee likewise claimed lives of nearly 10 thousand people. Lao Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, observed, "How could one intimidate people with death while people fear no death?" Your past 30-year struggle steels you, two-and-half-year guerrilla warfare steels you, and the past year of the revolutionary regime steels you. They [counter-revolutionaries] could do nothing but kill. Yet [they] could not kill all people. If one group of people are shot down, another group comes up.

I have read your documents which say [Cuba] is facing many difficulties, such as economic embargo, sabotage, Trujillo of the Dominican [Republic] attempting to attack, and the US equipping Batistianists. All of these [difficulties] were expected by you. [These difficulties,] in the worst scenario, would kill a few people, or drive you out of cities. The most important thing is that [these difficulties] would help make you better by steeling you.

In 1957, Castro was left with only 82 individuals, the number then suddenly dropped to 8-some say it should be 12-which is firmer, the group of 8 people, or the group of 82? It seems 8 people are more resolute, because they acquire experience. Your guns were not given by socialist countries, nor any Latin American country. It is Batista who gave you them.

[...] [sic]

Now imperialism and the bourgeoisie are also adopting a two-faced policy.

Roca: Imperialism always relies on two-faced policy.

Chairman: Yes, on one hand, [imperialism] deceives people by [promising] peace, on the other hand, [it] prepares for war. Not only does imperialism prepare to annihilate the Cuban revolution, it also plans to destroy the entire socialist camp.

Deng Xiaoping: [Imperialism] also wants to repress national independence movements.

Chairman: To national independence movements [imperialism] represses on one hand and deceives on the other. To Asia, Africa, and Latin America it too strikes on the one hand, and offers a carrot on the other [yimianda yimianla].

Roca: We have accumulated much experience regarding imperialism's two-faced policy. In April of 1898, the American Congress passed a resolution [the Teller Amendment] declaring that Cuba should become an independent and free country, but afterwards the US occupied Cuba with troops for as long as 4 years. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico became an American colony, and so did the Philippines. Now they still wish to occupy Cuba.

Chairman: They can't do it anymore.

Roca: In 1898, the US occupied Cuba in the name of helping Cuba gain independence, and cooked up the Platt Amendment [in 1901] which stipulated that the US could return to Cuba whenever it wishes. Ever since then, the US has adopted a two-faced policy towards Cuba: on one hand, supporting the Cuban government while on the other hand backing anti-government parties. Once the [Cuban] government stops obeying the US, [the US] pressures Cuba with these parties. Eisenhower once said that he liked Fidel Castro...

Chairman: Last January [1959] the US recognized you and welcomed Fidel Castro's visit to the US.

Roca: At that moment, American imperialism told Fidel, "you are the [Alexander] Kerensky of Cuba. You are being encircled by communists who will kick you out. Communists are everywhere." The Americans demanded that he persecute communists. Fidel did not listen.

Chairman: When did the visit to the US take place?

Roca: [Fidel Castro] went to the US the end of last April [1959] and returned to Cuba on 19 May. Now Eisenhower said that towards Cuba he has always been patient and friendly and that while he loves Cuba, the Cuban government pays no attention to American interests and decides to go against the US. These words are unfair. Who sent flights to bomb Cuba?

[...] [sic]

Chairman: If the Americans were civilized and practiced one-faced tactics, you would have a more difficult time in organizing militias. The US has a military base in your country, it also has [bases] in our country. It burns sugarcane in your place while sending planes here to airdrop agents. So we too are developing [a system of using] militia; so far 240 million militia [members] have been raised. Because the central government could not provide that many weapons to militias, [we] charge each province with the responsibility for equipment, for finding machine guns, rifles, mortars, light cannons, etc. to arm them. I wish that you could produce light weapons on your own. We could help when necessary, as long as the Soviet Union could help transport [them] there. We would give as much as you want. It's all right with us whether you would pay for them or not. Perhaps [receiving] without paying wouldn't be good as far as your national prestige is concerned, let's set a price. If [you] can't afford now, pay later, in 50 years or 100 years, either of which will do.

You support us and we support you. You drive in a nail near the US which assists the world revolution and the world including China. The way of assistance is bringing down Batista, realizing land reform, implementing a series of progressive policies, including organizing militias. By doing these, one has helped oneself and also the people of the world.

Roca: I think that our most important contribution is founding an independent, self-reliant, and sovereign government which does not listen to Washington's orders. Only by doing this could land reform and other progressive measures be realized

Chairman: This government is better than [Indian leader Jawaharlal] Nehru's. Nehru opposes China and the Indian communist party, refuses to implement land reform and to organize militia. The imperialist capital in India stays untouched.

Roca: Nehru still wants to reach a compromise with British imperialism.

Chairman: On top of it, he borrows a huge amount of money from the US, worth 2.2 billion USD. Is the figure of US investment in Cuba 1 billion USD?

Roca: The investment is 700 million, and shrinking gradually. Companies that used to serve the US now serve Cuba. The land reform has transformed the properties possessed by the US into ones possessed by the Cuban people.

Chairman: Brave steps. Imperialism does not dare to do anything.

Roca: Fidel Castro mentioned that he has one more mission to complete. Some foreign telephone and electricity companies are yet to be expropriated.

Chairman: Expropriated with compensation or not? Consider compensating by issuing bonds. The Americans are rich. You could have the compensation settled in 30 or 40 years.

Roca: We prepare [to complete compensation] in 20 years.

Deng Xiaoping: The price could be set lower.

Roca: The US demanded 3000 Pesos for every caballeria [ka]. We gave it only 300 Pesos. They didn't agree. They said that they should be paid in cash with fair price and couldn't wait for 20 years. [They said] who knows what would happen in 20 years. The Cuban revolution, as Comrade Mao Zedong observes, is of global significance and of an ever greater importance to Latin American countries. It has become a model, which is exactly what the US fears.

Chairman: In your opinion, aren't Venezuela, Columbia, and Mexico the friendliest countries towards Cuba?

Roca: [Rómulo] Betancourt of Venezuela is a rascal, declaring himself a revolutionary while in fact he is only a dog of the Americans. He betrays the revolution. Venezuelans are supporting the Cuban revolution whole-heartedly. In Caracas, every day we could sell 500 copies of Hoy. Betancourt said that Venezuela would not attend the meeting of underdeveloped countries held by Cuba. He opposed the meeting. Yet the Venezuela foreign minister publicly announced that Venezuela would participate in the meeting.

Chairman: What countries will attend this meeting?

Roca: India, Indonesia, Egypt, Iraq, Guinea, Morocco, Tunisia, Philippines, and other Asian-African countries, all accepted the invitation. The US pressured them very hard not to attend. Eisenhower's visit to South American countries aims not at discussing peace, but persuading these countries not to participate in this meeting.[2]

Chairman: When will the meeting open? Are Cambodia and Nepal invited? These two countries are better than the Indian government.

Roca: The opinion of the Cuban government is that all underdeveloped countries which joined the United Nations shall attend.

Chairman: China did not join the United Nations. We were "aggressors."

Roca: It won't last long.

Chairman: [We should] better prepare for a long [struggle]. We shall join the UN after our production surpasses the US. When, for example, the annual steel production reaches 100 million tons, things will turn good. Now the US holds us in contempt. World imperialism, many nationalist states, revisionists such as Tito, all hold us in contempt.

Roca: Yet some other countries are supporting us.

Chairman: I have made a calculation. The imperialists and revisionists combined, people who oppose us, account for less than one tenth of the global population, [which means] nine tenths of the global population support China.

Roca: As far Columbia is concerned, its present government is reactionary, listening to the US; it privately opposes Cuba while in public it does not. Because Mexico's people support the Cuban revolution, Mexican president [Adolfo López] Mateos is now preparing to visit Cuba in the hope of winning domestic support.

This is the situation of the three countries. In general, Latin America's people are friendly towards Cuba while each government holds an antagonistic view towards Cuba.

Chairman: What about the attitudes of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina?

Roca: Brazil and Chile are wavering. As to Argentina and Paraguay, they hate the Cuban revolution.

Chairman: But their people are friendly [towards Cuba].

Roca: All Latin American peoples are friendly towards the Cuban revolution. We received support from the Chilean [communist] party, for example, which mobilized the people and sent cadres specialized in economic management to help us. The people of Argentina bought Cuba a plane. Several thousand young men from Chile, Argentina, and Ecuador registered to protect the Cuban revolution as volunteers. Eighty-two senators from Brazil are prepared to [publicly] support Cuba. Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, etc., from Central America, offered great help to us. In Puerto Rico, because of the success of the Cuban revolution, the movement of people striving for national independence re-emerged. The US now calls Puerto Rico [an] Associated Free State. Insurgencies also took place in the Dominican Republic.

Chairman: Is the revolutionary movement in the Dominican Republic also powerful?

Roca: [It] has made progresses, but is facing difficulties.

Chairman: Temporarily being suppressed, [the Dominican revolution] will rise again.

Roca: The problem [for the Dominican revolution] is that the domestic organization has yet to be established.

Chairman: A weak [communist] party?

Roca: Weak, and headquartered abroad.

Chairman: The place [the Dominican Republic] is comparatively small.

Roca: All countries [of Central America] are small.

Chairman: What about Haiti?

Roca: The people's struggle is firm. With a good tradition, the Haitian people's will to struggle is resolute. For the moment, the Haitian people are suffering from terrible repression.

Chairman: It seems to me that these countries are too occupied with their internal affairs and will not threaten Cuba in terms of mounting attacks.

Roca: No. The US might attack us via Guatemala and Honduras. It could instruct the troops of these countries, via the peace committee of the Organization of American States, to join the intervention against Cuba. The US itself could send troops.

Chairman: Imperialism says that it's willing to tackle the problem by peaceful measures rather than by war.

Roca: But in Cuba, it will turn to war to solve the problem.

Chairman: This year Eisenhower won't [attack].

Roca: It's uncertain. Many say that he won't, because the US will hold an election and a meeting of world leaders. It is reasonable for the US not to attack Cuba. Yet American imperialism is unreasonable: whether it's going to be an election or a meeting, the US always wants to put down Cuba. Neither the election nor the leaders' meeting will bother them [the US], the question [for them] is that Cuban people have a resolute will.

Chairman: That is the basic question.

[...] [sic]

Chairman: Cuba is not a small country, but a big one, with over 100 thousand square kilometers, larger than China's Zhejiang Province, and with mountains everywhere.

Roca: There are three mountainous areas: Las Villas Province, Oriente Province, and Pinar del Rio Province. But on the plain war could also be waged, which we have learned.

I wish to stress the contribution of Fidel Castro, which is important. Tactically, we don't give too much publicity to the contributions of Fidel Castro. But it is he who initiated the struggle. When there were only 8 people left, he still refused to surrender. People worship him. He is a revolutionary, anti-imperialist soldier.

Chairman: Is there any possibility that he could accept communism?

Roca: Possibly. He was born in a small bourgeois family and now is leaning leftward. He could become a great communist leader among us, which is important.

Chairman: He is different from [Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Karim] Qasim who is an anti-communist.

Roca: Entirely different. He is also different from ordinary bourgeois politicians of Latin America. He is not obsessed with wealth nor does he indulge himself. He seeks only to fight gloriously to the last moment. In March, he made a 4-hour speech criticizing the anti-communists. He said "anti-communism" serves basically as a tool for imperialism to divide the country and suppress revolution.

Eisenhower attacked Fidel Castro's government saying that this government had betrayed the revolution. Fidel responded, "if we were true traitors of the revolution, Eisenhower would have embraced us in the same way one embraces [Spanish leader Francisco] Franco."

Now Fidel Castro has developed a good relationship with our communist party [of Cuba]. He often talks to us and is willing to foster a Marxist-Leninist position. A revolutionary should study Marxism-Leninism, he says. The [Communist] Party has a notable power. The minister of the Armed Forces [Raúl Castro] is one of us. Party members are in charge of the military leadership in Oriente and Mantanzas, and also participate in the leadership of Las Villas Province. In other words, three provinces out of six are in our hands.

Chairman: What about other provinces? [You] should keep working [to promote communism], and try to control the army. What does regime mean? A regime means army.

Roca: Camaguey Province is led by a person with backward political thoughts. The head of Pinar del Rio has a changeable character, sometimes for us and sometimes against. Three government ministers, along with the military force minister, are our men.

Chairman: In form, this is not a communist force. But in fact the major part is under communist leadership; it is under the joint leadership of the communist party and the 26th of July Movement.

Roca: It works by cooperation. The leader of the Air Force is also one of us. The problem is that [Cuba] has no planes.

Chairman: Not one?

Roca: There are few. I have raised this issue with Comrade Deng Xiaoping. Within the 26th of July Movement, the Head of National Coordination (head of the organizational department) is our man. Many other people of the Movement are too, for example, director of the National Land Reform Committee in which many important offices are taken by our party members. The National Bank is responsible for the industrialization of the country, the head of which [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara is also our man.

Chairman: When did Guevara join the Party?

Roca: He developed some connection with the Youth League while in Argentina, but he did not participate. Later in Guatemala, when [Jacobo] Arbenz [Guzman] was the president, he worked there and applied to join the communist party but was not permitted. In 1957, he applied again and was admitted by us. He isn't quite a cultivated member. His mind is yet in confusion. We patiently teach and persuade him, in the hope of enabling him to become a true [communist] party member, mature in thought.

Chairman: [He] should have a clear world outlook.

Roca: His world outlook is Marxist-Leninist. He has merit, is very loyal and loves the Party. Although sometimes he struggles to find the right way to work things out, he does try to do things properly.

Chairman: How old is he? And what about Raúl [Modesto Castro]?

Roca: Guevara is 30, Raúl 28, Fidel 32.

Chairman: Fidel Castro was 32 last year. Isn't he 33 this year?

Roca: I don't know if he is fully 33. [Fidel Castro was born 13 August 1926, so he was then 33-ed.]

Chairman: Your program does not confer much real power to the president. Is Castro happy or not?

Roca: He is the prime minister. The president is [Osvaldo] Dorticos. The president does not have much power.

Chairman: Nor does the chairman [of government] in our country. I was a chairman of no power, and now it is Comrade Liu Shaoqi. As the chairman of the Party,

theoretically, I don't have power but in practice I do. Comrade [Liu] Shaoqi is the deputy chairman [of the Party]. Fidel Castro is the leader of 26th of July Movement, and meanwhile the Party and Revolutionary Guidance Committee are also supporting him.

I have read the report from the organization secretary of Las Villas Province, Comrade Peña's report, the draft program of your party, and the material composed by our own comrades on the situation and problems Cuba faces after its successful revolution. Short of time, I have read them only once, but I read them earnestly. Your [draft] program will not only make a difference in Cuba, but on other countries in the world it will also have an effect. Countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America all need to work out a program, one that fits their own circumstances. This program, in the case of China, is a combination of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese revolution. [We must] take hold of this, the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, and then adjust it to [the] peculiarity of our own circumstances. I very much agree with your document which is a document of the revolution. At the present, [people] are scared by imperialism, and by the revolution; [but] you are not scared by imperialism or by the revolution. This thing [fearlessness] can combat revisionism.

Roca: Many things were written so as to combat revisionism, though they were not presented explicitly. Our party prepares to open up the representative assembly on 14 June. We have sent our invitation to you.

Roca [sic]: Thanks very much. Still I wish to learn about your opinion on our party program.

Chairman: I have read it only once. As far as our opinion is concerned, Comrade Deng Xiaoping later could discuss it with you. My opinion is entirely individual and for your reference only.

Roca: We have discussed this program with Fidel Castro.

Chairman: Was he in favor?

Roca: [He had] different views on two issues: one, the socialist transition problem, and the other, the bank nationalization problem.

Chairman: What did he make of the transition to socialism?

Roca: He thought this kind of phrasing was simply too blatant, better to be a bit implicit. With respect to bank nationalization, Fidel believed that there are alternatives to putting [the term] nationalization, into the program. For example, transfer banks into state ownership through [the purchase by] the National Bank.

Chairman: In your program, you should also mention national bourgeoisie and other Latin American countries. When it comes to factors favorable to Cuba, you should emphasize that peasants, accounting for 90 percent of the Cuban population, workers and the middle class, are on the side of the revolution and support the revolution; every country within the socialist bloc is behind you; the American people also support you. [...] [sic] How about revising it? First comes the support of the Cuban people, then the sympathy of people from other Latin American countries, third the support and sympathy of Asian and African countries, and fourth the support from the socialist bloc. Put the socialist bloc after the people of Latin American countries and Asian-African countries, and then mention the support of the American people. In this way, all are included. Please think about it.

[...] [sic]

Roca: Let me begin by thanking Comrade Mao Zedong and other comrades of the Central Committee for spending so much time in discussions with us. This is a tremendous help and support. Thank you all.

Chairman: Thank you.

Roca: I would love to express my views on these problems.

The view of paying more heed to national bourgeoisie and Latin American countries is correct. The program does not fully reflect our policy. We attach a great importance to this area and have made lots of efforts in this regard. Now there is a Cuban delegation visiting Latin American countries. Most of its members are from the party, representing Cuban intellectuals, workers, etc. They have received a great welcome in places like Argentina. Although the Argentine government banned people assembling to support Cuba, Argentine people still held a big meeting in support [of the delegation]. Tomorrow, on 23 April, Havana will host a big meeting of Latin American countries supporting the Cuban revolution. Participants are mostly professors, intellectuals, students, union leaders, peasants, etc. They made a statement in advance. Those who signed the statement were all important figures. Our ambassador to Mexico was a relatively leftist party member. For the sake of the work, we have replaced him with another person, more suitable for the ambassadorship.

Chairman: You should talk a bit more about Latin America in the program. Because it goes beyond being Cuba's program, it is the first socialist program among Latin American countries. It will become the reference document for all Latin American communist parties.

Deng [Xiaoping]: In particular it should stress that Cuba must ally with other Latin American countries to fight against imperialism.

Roca: Not enough attention has been given to the problem of the national bourgeoisie, which was also mentioned by Latin American comrades. They told me: when reflecting on problems, one's mind should not dwell on domestic circumstances alone. One should ponder issues of other Latin American countries. Therefore, reasonable emphasis on the problem of the national bourgeoisie is necessary. The problem is that under the current circumstances, many of us couldn't agree with this, and some people's views differ from ours sharply.

Chairman: It is not easy to convince Cuban leftists.

Roca: Nor is it easy to convince the bourgeoisie. Their political representatives, such as [Roberto Daniel] Agramonte [y Pichardo] in the past, hold a hostile attitude towards us. We are left no choice but to suppress them.

Chairman: They were bound to oppose you. There are no bourgeoisie who would not oppose you. So you also should have two means at your disposal [yaoyou liangshou]: carrot and stick [youyao da, youyao la].

Roca: Guevara gathered industrialists for a meeting. The industrialists were very happy, saying that Guevara spoke particularly clearly. Guevara said that they could contribute to the economy but shall not set foot in heavy industry. He also showed them which sectors are open for their investment and which are not.

Chairman: Did the bourgeoisie read your party program? Had the program been put on record?

Roca: They read, and this is a published document, though only a draft so far. We need to explain this program to the bourgeoisie, peasants, workers, and people, and to ask for their comments.

Chairman: Good.

Roca: With respect to the suggestion that workers should not raise excessive demands, we will ponder it. [In fact,] we paid attention to this problem when drafting the program. For example, we chose not to mention the idea of subsidizing the unemployed, because Cuba has 600 thousand jobless workers, and the economy could not bear it anymore. The only way left to eliminate unemployment is to increase employment opportunities. During the course of program-drafting, union leaders advanced a proposal requesting that the minimum wage be stipulated. The situation facing Cuba is like this: because some sectors generate high profits, a few workers therefore earn more. For example, in the electricity sector, telephone companies, tobacco industry, and brewage industry, workers receive higher salaries and could live a decent petty bourgeois lifestyle. Their salaries could be over ten times more than that of sugar industry workers, hence the present inequality. We could not bring down the present wage levels, because this is expected to meet with tremendous resistance. But we must reduce the gap between different wage levels.

Chairman: Our policy is similar: don't reduce the higher wage levels, but increase the lower ones.

Roca: It also has to do with the development of production. Improvement in the living standard depends on an increase in production and production efficiency. Cuban people know this point only too well. They donate their income to purchase airplanes and to develop industry, also aware that excessive demands shall not be raised so as not to cause loss to the revolution. [They understand that] with revolution [developing], life will become better day by day; in order to obtain a better life, [one] has to defend revolution and prepare to sacrifice for it. This is acknowledged in the program.

As far as the 8-hour workday system is concerned, there are differences between urban and rural areas, between agriculture and industry, which should be taken into account. Although the 1933 revolution failed, the 8-hour workday system has become popular ever since. Before 1933, sugar industry workers had to work for nearly 12 hours [per day]; later an 8-hour workday system was implemented nation-wide. In 1964 [sic], between 8 thousand and 10 thousand workers in transportation followed a 6-hour workday system. When Batista assumed power, [he] demanded an increase in working hours regardless of the 8-hour workday system. Most workers did not obey him though. Therefore we must not retreat on this point [8-hour workday system]; instead, we shall go along with it, and be realistic. [After all, the] 8-hour workday system has been instituted for 26 years.

Chairman: Given that it has been instituted for 26 years, I agree that [you] do not abolish it. But does it have to be like this to all, be it a small firm or a big one, in agriculture or in the industry sector?

Roca: Normally it should be 8 hours. But it is not always the case for agricultural workers, who sometimes work 5 hours a day, sometimes 10 hours-in general, it is still 8 hours a day. Some workers work 9 hours which means providing 1 hour free labor to the government.

Chairman: The law stipulates an 8-hour workday system while workers voluntarily work one extra hour. This is good. Workers are willing to work for themselves. [You] must pay attention to the problem of consumption and accumulation. Let the people know the truth: production must surpass consumption.

Roca: The problem concerning the patriotic united front is a serious question. What form of political organization should be is under study. Castro's attitude is to oppose [holding] an election. He will embrace it only when social and economic reforms have reached an appropriate juncture but there is great pressure from Latin American countries.

Chairman: Will the election bring about disadvantages?

Roca: No, only advantages: we will win. Our party, the 26th of July Movement, and the Revolutionary Guidance Committee together could reap over 80 percent of the votes. Castro is not worried on this score. He only worries that the 26th of July Movement isn't quite an organized party, politically unconsolidated. Castro maintains that those bad elements in the revolution shall be eliminated first. Elections will become safer with the exposure of the bad elements. Castro told us to prepare the election. We will have further discussions on this problem. Castro's idea is that all leftist forces, including our party, the leftists of the 26th of July Movement, and the Revolution Guidance Committee, unite and establish a party. This is a question worth exploring. I have written articles in Cuba introducing China's Political Consultative Committee, with which Cuba is now familiar.

Chairman: Chinese democratic parties have no masses, be they workers, peasants, or students. The two organizations in your case are different: behind the Revolutionary Guidance Committee are students, and also the 26th of July Movement is backed by some people and the army. Our larger democratic parties have, at most, 20 or 30 thousand members, while smaller ones have only a few thousand. So we have an easy task here, but yours is difficult.

Roca: Ours is far more difficult. You made a very good point regarding the problem of peasants. The program is targeted against Batista, which is why all peasants are treated as part of the anti-Batista force. Yet there is a hierarchy within peasants, which was mentioned by Lenin. Our party, too, has noticed this problem; yet we didn't put it in an explicit manner in the program. This is my responsibility.

About [exercising] double ownership under the socialist system, this program is not yet a socialist program. It is only a program of transition to socialism, aiming at socialism, but its current tasks are national liberation and land reform. Its present tasks contains the seeds for the next stage, but it's again still in stage one.

Chairman: When you raise [the subject of] anti-individualism, you should have better tactics.

Roca: Naturally. We meant it to be against rural individual economy.

Chairman: Are there kulak households among the peasants?

Roca: Yes. But [we] won't touch the kulaks' properties, only the landlords'.

Chairman: Distributing land among peasants is a practice of bourgeois democratic revolution. Napoleon [Bonaparte] did this in the 18th century and gained support from peasants. Later the bourgeoisie did it again.

Roca: We didn't call the Cuban revolution a revolution of bourgeois democracy. But it could also be named this way.

Chairman: The enemies are: imperialism, feudalism, and comprador capitalists.

Roca: And a part of the bourgeoisie.

Chairman: The bourgeoisie that colluded with imperialism.

Roca: The bourgeoisie that colluded with imperialism and the tyrant.

Chairman: The tyrant is comprador government, a regime standing for imperialism and feudalism, while in the industry sector [the tyrant] is bureaucratic capital.

Roca: In China it is bureaucratic capital. For the sake of tactics, we prefer the Cuban revolution to be called a patriotic democratic revolution, national liberation revolution, or land revolution.

Chairman: Fine, just don't mention the word bourgeoisie.

Roca: [The Cuban revolution] should also be called a progressive revolution, not simply bourgeois revolution, because the vanguard [of the revolution] has never been the bourgeoisie. About putting on the top [Cuba's] relationship with Latin American countries, I have no objection. Yet when it comes to foreign trade, by no means should Latin American countries take the lead. Because, more or less, every Latin American country produces the same stuff. We don't need coffee from Brazil, sugar from Peru, copper from Chile, bananas from Columbia, or coconuts from Costa Rica, for we could produce them all ourselves. What we need is oil from Venezuela, but Venezuelan oil is controlled by the US.

Chairman: Putting trading countries ahead, [I can] agree.

Roca: The Soviet Union purchased 1 million tons of sugar, China purchased 80 thousand tons which is very important, for no one in Latin America bought 80 thousand tons from us.

Chairman: Well said.

Roca: As far as the bourgeoisie's profits are concerned, we agree that they take a certain percentage of profits, but extra profits must go to the State.

Chairman: Our views are for your reference only, and you may weigh and consider the reality when putting them into practice. There is only one problem left, i.e. the 700 million USD in American capital [in Cuba]. If it were all confiscated, the possibility of the [American] intervention would be greater. The Americans are pragmatic. We didn't confiscate their investment in China; instead, we only froze their 400 million USD worth of capital, which are electricity companies, water-supply companies, telephone companies, such as those in Shanghai that they cannot manage now, as we manage them. You have 700 million USD worth of [American] capital while we have only 400 million, which is a practical issue. Were the US a defeated country, like Germany, Italy, or Japan, it would be easy, because they were the defeated. But towards the US, Britain, France, Belgium, and Holland, it had to be different. [We] made ways to elbow them away, meaning that if they were unwilling to leave, they would begin losing money the moment they started to produce things. In the end, they were left no choice but to ask us to take over their factories. This is the practice

we followed with the British. We only requisitioned American properties, the ownership problem of which however is still pending.

Deng [Xiaoping]: The problem was in fact solved.

Chairman: Your country is small and there is 700 million USD in American capital. What can you do? To return it?-[you] can't afford it. Suppose [you decide to] confiscate them all; you have no reason for it, [because] it is not a defeated country.

Roca: During the land reform, it doesn't matter if the land belonged to a Cuban, an American, or a Briton, all lands are taken and redistributed. Therefore [the state has already got] a part of the 700 USD million [in] American properties. With regard to American power plants, and telephone companies, we hold down the prices, which makes the telephone companies feel they are running an unprofitable business. A representative has been sent by the government to see if they have really become unprofitable. Ten months since then, no conclusion has been reached as to whether the business is now profitable or not. The Cuban government is constructing power plants which will mount pressure on American power plants. All land and crossties, used by American-invested railway in Cuba, belong to Cuba, except they are registered under American names. The government has promulgated mining taxes. Some mines reported that they could barely pay the taxes, while not being allowed to suspend production, so they invited government representatives. The US has a huge nickel mine in Cuba but the nickel smelting is conducted in the US. A successful production depends on the cooperation of two sides. [So] Cuba is inviting the Soviet Union to help smelt the nickel, while still cooperating with the US in smelting which won't last though.

Chairman: The land of Cuba is good. Is Cuba a subtropical country?

Roca: South of the Tropic of Cancer, good climate, having sea wind, neither too hot nor too cold, two crops every year.

Chairman: The Americans fear you. They bully the weak and fear the strong.

Roca: At least hate us, if not fear.

Chairman: Because of your resolve, and your strategy.

Roca: China has been a great help for us. Before 1933 we had a very favorable situation. But we made a "leftist" mistake: we wanted to establish a Soviet right away. Not only did the Party make mistakes, but others did too. [All these mistakes] failed the revolution and isolated us.

Chairman: We, too, made mistakes between 1930 and 1934.

Roca: It was between 1933 and 1935 that we made mistakes.

Chairman: Wang Ming was then working in the Comintern. It is no good to draft a program for foreign communist parties. The Comintern imposed their program upon us which made us lose base-areas in the south [of China], caused us to run for 12.5 thousand kilometers, and cost nine-tenths of [our] revolutionary force with only one tenth left. But this is a good thing, for it taught us a lesson.

Roca: We lost one-tenth [of our force]. We made both "leftist" and rightist mistakes.

Chairman: An even better [lesson].

Roca: These mistakes promote the development of the Cuban revolution. In the end, I thank you in the name of the Cuban communist party and the Cuban people.

Chairman: Cheers for your victory and for Castro.

Roca: I shall tell Castro, after I return, that Chairman Mao toasted to him.

Chairman: This is because you got a job done which is of global significance.

[1] Ed. Note: After ruling South Korea since the end of World War II, Rhee was forced to resign on 26 April following student-led demonstrations, and flew into exile two days later, the same day Mao and Roca met.

[2] Ed. Note: On a trip to South America from 22 February-7 March 1960, Eisenhower visited Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.