

April 18, 1963
**Meeting of Mao Zedong and Brazilian Communist
Party (PCB) Delegation**

Citation:

"Meeting of Mao Zedong and Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) Delegation", April 18, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 111-00608-04. Translated by Sergey Radchenko <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123069>

Summary:

Chairman Mao and Telles discuss prospects for revolution, the 1927 revolution, and U.S. imperialism, among other shared concerns.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Meeting of Mao Zedong and Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) Delegation, Hangzhou, 18 April 1963

Conversation on the 18th.

Chairman: I spoke with you yesterday. Today I am very happy to eat a meal with you. Using the opportunity we can also talk about some questions. I see these very good conditions in your country: it has 8,500,000 sq km, a population of more than 70,000,000, very rich natural resources. Its prospects are very bright. The capitalist class cannot resolve your country's problems. One should rely on the leadership of the proletariat, rely on the extensive peasantry and the revolutionary intellectuals, rely on the policy direction that you independently determine in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and in accordance with your own concrete circumstances. In general, there will be a day when the revolution under the leadership of the proletariat will triumph.

As for copying foreign countries' experience, this process is hard to avoid. Our party also copied foreign countries for a long time, and committed rightist and leftist mistakes. I told you about these yesterday. It was only 14 years into the establishment of the party, during the Zunyi meeting in the course of the Long March, that some of these mistakes began to be criticized. The line was changed and the leadership organs independently considered their own problems. The policy that we adopted helped the comrades who were mistaken to rectify their mistakes. We adopted the attitude of helping, so we united the absolute majority of the party.

Other than a few people who ran over to the enemy, there were a few who would rather die than admit mistakes, such as Wang Ming. In Comintern he used to manage Latin American work. Wang Ming is very reckless. He formerly committed mistakes of dogmatism, causing the revolutionary forces to suffer losses of more than 90%. During the war of resistance against Japan, he committed the mistake of capitulationism, believing the GMD more than he believed the CCP. His line was criticized [but] we still elected him a member of the Central Committee.

By adopting these methods and measures against the comrades who committed mistakes we united the majority of those who were mistaken. Therefore, we were at the time quite united, and were moreover able to win victory in the war of resistance against Japan. After the end of the war of resistance against Japan, Jiang Jieshi betrayed us for the second time, opposing the CCP, but we were already prepared for that. The slogan of peaceful transition is welcomed by the capitalist class. It's very dangerous to regard it as a party line.

During the failure of the great 1927 revolution, although at the time the slogan of peaceful transition was not being advanced but there was also no resolve for taking political power. The first person responsible for that was the then-rightist deviationist leader Chen Duxiu. The party membership did not think to guard against the treachery of the capitalist class, did not understand that the capitalist class can betray, so they were not mentally prepared to counter the capitalist treachery.

Jiang Jieshi's treachery taught us [a lesson]. He resorted to white terror. Your country now does not have white terror. Capitalists have given you de facto legality. You must use this legality and freedom, it's moreover very useful, because you can develop the mass movement. I saw that your materials talked about the question of revolutionary leadership. What is revolutionary leadership? Lead who? First, lead the peasants. Peasants are semi-proletarians and small property owners.

The semi-proletarians are the poor peasants. The small property owners are the middle peasants. If the proletariat does not struggle for and does not unite with the

peasants who make up the majority of the population, then it will allow the capitalist class to struggle for them and unite with them. Second, one should lead the leftist faction of the national bourgeoisie. Not the rightist faction of the bourgeoisie – the rightist faction of the bourgeoisie is unable to accept the leadership of the proletariat.

The rightist faction of the national bourgeoisie often compromises with the imperialist and feudal forces. Third, one should lead the leftist and centrist factions of the intellectuals. The national bourgeoisie is an exploiter class but in the interest of seizing political power, in their own class interests [sic; meaning imprecise in original—trans.]. At a certain stage they also use the forces of the workers and the peasants. According to what you said yesterday, your country's labor party has a program of thorough land reform, isn't this the case?

T: Yes.

Chairman: It looks like for now you have not formulated a program for resolving the land question. But they already have one. In this question, they are ahead of you.

T: To be more correct, they are advancing a slogan of land reform. It does not really count as a land reform program. It's just one point among many in their program.

Chairman: They can't implement it. The national bourgeoisie say one thing and do another. They say a lot of pretty words, but do something else entirely. The working class, peasants, petit bourgeoisie plus the leftist faction of the national bourgeoisie, and all the national capitalists who can oppose imperialist and feudalism – although they make up the absolute majority of the population, they have to seize leadership, they must have a slogan and a program that is more revolutionary than that of the labor party. The program, the slogan, and the actions must all differ not only from those of the reactionaries but also differ from those of the centrists.

You know, there are many communist parties in Europe today that are no different from social democratic parties. There is some difference in detail but not any difference of principle. If it goes on like this, these parties will reveal before the masses that they have no reason for existence. For instance, England already has a labor party. France has a socialist party. Italy has a socialist party. There is also [Giuseppe] Saragat's [Italian] socialist democratic party. The masses can ask: if there are these parties, is there in the end any need for a communist party? England not only has a labor party but also a conservative party. There is also Kennedy's Democratic Party in the U.S. They have taken up lots of slogans, for instance they also want complete and thorough disarmament.

They not only want complete but also thorough.

In the past the U.S. government was against neutralism. Now they support neutralism. The problem is that everyone has their views about complete and thorough disarmament. Their complete and thorough disarmament is in fact complete and thorough militarization. Their so-called neutralism is in fact those who stand on their side holding the sign of neutralism.

They do not approve [sic, should be "they approve"—trans.] this kind of neutralism. This is a question of having a difference with imperialism.

The slogan of imperialism is that they want complete and thorough disarmament. They also approve neutralism. So there arises a problem of how to have a difference from them, and, similarly, to have a difference with the reactionaries of all countries,

and with the running dogs of the imperialists. One must even have difference from the labor party. If one does not have a rigorous difference with them, and, moreover, unites with them, there is bound to be a day when the labor party will say: why don't you join our party because we are about the same?

We cooperated with the Guomindang twice. They even put forward a question: since you believe our Three Principles of the People, and recognize that Communism is included within the Three Principles of the People, it is not necessary to have a separate Communist Party. You say that opposing the national bourgeoisie is quite difficult. Opposing reactionaries is quite easy. This view is correct.

It was the same in our history. When the national bourgeoisie established a united front with us, rightist opportunism in our party developed accordingly. In 1927 the rightist opportunists caused our revolution to suffer defeat.

In 1937, during the initial period of war of resistance against Japan, if we were unable to overcome rightist opportunism, the Chinese revolution would not have been able to win. During the Civil War, when the united front with the national bourgeoisie broke down, the national bourgeoisie betrayed [us]. At the time, there was an occurrence of leftist opportunism. It is worth paying attention to Iraq's recent experience. I don't know whether you have paid attention to this experience?

T: In the past we were not very clear about it. After we arrived here, we learned a little more.

Chairman: Iraq's situation was originally quite good.

Wu: When in 1958 [Abd Al-Karim] Qasim took political power, the Iraqi Communists were very strong.

Chairman: After the [June 1960] Bucharest meeting, every day the Iraqi Communists spoke about peaceful transition. Every day they opposed dogmatism, and [issued] several resolutions attacking China. They saw us as the main enemy, and saw real enemies as friends. Amid peaceful transition and anti-dogmatism the enemies have come to sort us out.

They did not know beforehand. Qasim's government also did not know. They did not know that their friends will kill them the next morning. One day [8 February 1963] the government was overthrown, Qasim was killed. The General Secretary of the Iraqi Communist Party [Husain al-Radi; Salam 'Adil] and some other leaders were killed, and many people were arrested.

Wu: 18,000 people were arrested, 4,000 were killed.

Chairman: Some of these circumstances are similar to China's white terror of 1927. What's different is that we learned the lesson from white terror, and struggled against the Guomindang. The Iraqi Communist Party did not do it. It looks like there is no great opposition.

Because of peaceful transition and anti-dogmatism, the masses were soft politically, the people gave up weapons, opening the way to counter-revolution. We tell many foreign comrades about the experiences of 1927 and the Iraqi [events]. As for which road each country takes, it's their decision. China's opinions are just for reference. Revolutionary practice will demonstrate and judge which ones are correct and which ones are incorrect.

What judges is the practice of revolution, the practice of socialism, and not some other people. Matters often develop in ways that do not accord with people's subjective wishes, do not accord with wishes of individuals or political parties, or even wishes of a class. Often they go against our wishes. For instance, the defeat of China's 1927 revolution was against our wishes. We wanted victory and the result was defeat, we had no experience of taking up weapons and fighting. (To Wu:) Did you first go to the USSR to study or did you first fight?

Wu: First I participated in the work and then went to the USSR to study.

Chairman: This forced us into a passive position. But passivity can turn to initiative. The enemy forced us to pursue military struggle. So we dared to have a military struggle. At the time we had no experience of fighting because we had never done it.

As Jiang Jieshi forced it on us, we did it, starting on the road of armed struggle. Once we started fighting, we fought for 22 years. It was only in 1949 that we established a people's republic. When the Second World War just ended in 1945, the people's wish, our wish, and the party wish was not to fight.

But events developed contrary to our wishes. Imperialism and Jiang Jieshi forced the war on us. But in 1945 we were different than we had been in 1927. We were prepared. I told you yesterday. Not only were we prepared politically but we were also prepared organizationally. On the one hand, we were preparing. On the other hand, we were hoping for a period of peace.

At the time imperialism and Jiang Jieshi both hoped for a temporary period of peace in order to make preparations for attack. So at the time they talked to us and came up with a very good proposal: peaceful reconstruction. That is, under the slogan of peaceful reconstruction, imperialism and Jiang Jieshi finished preparations for war. But even as they prepared, they still did not let up on small-scale attacks.

On the one hand, there were talks, on the other hand, they kept attacking us as before. The scale was not very big. Probably within 11 months of Japan's capitulation they attacked us fully. If we had not prepared beforehand, if we did not prepare to seize power after Japan's capitulation, to dare to win, we would have been defeated. But it was not the same as 1927. At the time we had no resolve to seize power, so we did not prepare. We only thought of the good scenario, and did not think of the bad scenario.

All of China's experiences are just for reference. Foreign experience in the end is foreign experience. You have your own experience. We, as Communists, only tell comrades opinions that must be told. I spoke for too long. Do you have any questions?

T: As for the Brazilian Labor Party, this party was created by Vargas. The aim was to lead workers away from revolution. It openly said that it wanted to free workers from the influence of the Communist Party. Today, the Labor Party is the party that is most capable of representing the interests of the national bourgeoisie. As for the program, Comrade Mao Zedong put said rightly, it does not go beyond paper.

They have influence among workers and the patriotic military. As for our policy towards the labor party, we hope to hear Comrade Mao Zedong's opinions. We advocate the implementation of a thorough land reform and for ridding foundational sectors of the economy of foreign capital, for establishment of a national democratic government, that is, a united front government.

At the same time, in order to struggle for the labor party's grassroots, we also point out that their leadership is not carrying out their program. If they carry out their program, we are willing to support them. Moreover, we pursue the tactics of struggling for the labor party's grassroots organizations.

Chairman: I can only speak in general terms, not in detail. The Labor Party, representing the national bourgeoisie, is more difficult to oppose than the sell-out faction, because the labor party, which represents the national bourgeoisie, has every kind of a deceptive slogan. It can make every concession allowed by the capitalist class system, such as freedoms of speech, assembly, and association. The purpose is to eliminate real communism.

This is what you yourselves have said. This opinion is very correct. Therefore, one cannot totally oppose such a party. You cannot oppose the party of the national bourgeoisie in the same way as opposing the party of the sell-out faction. Therefore, there are bound to be some things of theirs that you approve of. At the same time, you can still write a lot of articles arguing that they want to eliminate you and that they talk but do not do.

In a country like Brazil, in a revolution like this, the national bourgeoisie has not yet fulfilled its revolutionary duty. Your industry is still developing. Of course, this kind of industrial development mainly relies on foreign capital, or, as you say: two thirds foreign capital to one third national capital, and the relationship of two thirds - isn't it like this?

T: Two thirds is the national capital. The absolute amount of foreign capital in Brazil is increasing but its relative importance is decreasing. In accordance with this point, we believe that Brazil basically does not need foreign aid in its development. We say in our party documents that we have full strength to develop our own industry. Foreign capital, by contrast, impedes our development.

In the appendix to the book that I gave to comrades is a table, which has official numbers on top, showing that over 16 years, the inflow of foreign capital into Brazil was actually less than the outflow. This is one of the factors of contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism.

Chairman: I still don't know whether your steel industry is national capital or foreign capital.

T: Basically, national capital, including state capital, like the Rio de Janeiro's Volta Redonda Steel Factory, with the annual production of 2 million tons, which is state-owned.

Chairman: You have no foreign capital at all participating in the steel industry?

T: In Minas Gerais there is a Belgian steel company called Minas ["Usiminas"] but the production is a lot less than at Volta Redonda. In name, it is Belgian. In reality, it is U.S. capital.

Chairman: Is the main economic lifeline in the hands of national capital or in the hands of foreign capital?

T: Foreign capital controls the car industry, the production of electricity for the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and 80% of distribution, all of meat refrigeration and packing industry, and all of milling and flour processing. Now the state also runs the electricity industry. For instance, the Paulo Afonso hydropower plant and other

enterprises are state-owned.

In general, the absolute amount of foreign capital is increasing, its relative amount is decreasing, and the relative weight of national capital is increasing. Here, I would like to explain one question to comrade Mao Zedong. That is, currently the Alliance for Progress is planning to transfer imperialist enterprises to sectors that are not as prone to cause friction with the people. For instance, with electrical power, trams, and other public-use sectors, if they want to increase profits, they have to increase prices, which is in direct conflict with the people's interests. They demand transfer of funds.

The national bourgeoisie compromise with them, helping them transfer, paying out a high compensation, taking these enterprises into state ownership. This question is the same not only in Brazil but across all of Latin America. The Alliance for Progress also carries out activities in the countryside, attempting to establish its own base in the countryside. It pursues reform, e.g. by sending foodstuff to Northeastern Brazil. This is all from America's surplus.

Regardless of how it does it, it cannot change the basic system, it can only rely on the support of the kulaks in the countryside. Some people like the former governor of São Paulo [Carlos Alberto Alves de] Carvalho Pinto also help them do this. If one wants peasants to buy land from landlords at a high price, the result is that only the peasants who have the money can buy it, creating the kulak class.

Chairman: These questions cannot be resolved. The Russian Tsar emancipated peasants in 1861 and also cultivated kulaks. The result is that the feudal forces were not eliminated, but, on the contrast, new contradictions arose, the contradictions of new kulaks with the new poor peasants who lost the land. (Looks at the watch).

It's already quite late. Should we go and eat first?

The following is the conversation that took place at the table.

Chairman: Concerning foreign capital, can you say, on the basis of your materials, that because foreign debt has already reached 3 billion US dollars, although the relative weight of foreign direct investments is less than that of the domestic capital, when foreign debt is added, imperialist capital is still preponderant?

T: Yes. Foreign direct investments plus foreign debt plus the fact that in its foreign trade Brazil relies on one market, that is, the U.S. market, one can say that imperialist is the preponderant force.

Chairman: In this case, can one say that Brazil is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country?

T: It's a semi-feudal, semi-independent country.

Chairman: Is there a duty to oppose imperialism and feudalism?

T: Yes. It's the national democratic revolution.

Chairman: Is this point roughly the same across Latin America?

T: Yes, roughly the same. But the level of economic development is not the same.

Brazil is the most developed among the world's underdeveloped countries. Last year's steel production was more than 3 million ton.

Chairman: What level are Brazil's living standards in Latin America?

T: They are very uneven. The living standards in the South are about the same as in Argentina and Uruguay. The northern and the northeastern parts are very low, about the same as in Bolivia and Paraguay; the average is lower than Argentina and Paraguay.

Chairman: Is Argentina's industry fairly developed?

T: It has some industry but the relative weight of foreign capital is very large. Recently the government yielded oil to the United States, which was met with opposition inside the country.

Chairman: How is Venezuela's industry?

T: Venezuela has no industry other than oil.

Chairman: What about Columbia, I heard that its industry occupies the fourth place in Latin America.

T: Columbia's industry saw great development in recent years.

Chairman: Can Brazil be self-sufficient in food?

T: In wheat it can't. It has to import it. The flour mills are all in the hands of U.S. capital, they impede wheat production in Brazil. In recent years the production of wheat declined, from 1.2 million tons to 400 thousand tons. But in barley, corn, and cassava it is not only self-sufficient but there is a surplus, which can be exported.

Chairman: Does Brazil have a problem with droughts?

T: The northeast does. In the rest the distribution of rivers is fairly even. The northeast has a polygon-shaped area, which has no rivers. A little to the south, there is the São Francisco River, but it only goes as far north as [the state of] Sergipe before discharging into the ocean.

In the future one can try to make it change course, extend its flow to the north, to let it flow through the center of polygonal area of drought, and thereby solve this local drought question. However, this project is extremely vast, for now one cannot talk about it.

Chairman: I heard that the Amazon River is the world's largest river by discharge - is this so?

T: Yes. Some places are 40 kilometers wide during the dry season, and become more than 60 kilometers wide during the rainy season.

But there is also a place that is not even as wide as 100 feet. All of the river's water passes through these several tens of feet of width, the force is very strong, in the future one can establish a large hydropower station. But Amazon is not the world's

longest. The world's longest is the Mississippi River [sic, actually Mississippi is the third or fourth longest—trans.].

Chairman: Our Yangtze is the fourth in the world. The first is the Mississippi, the second is the Nile, the third is the Amazon, the fourth is the Yangtze. Now this place has drought, and the water in the Taihu Lake, which comes from the Yangtze, is used for irrigation.

T: Comrade Mao Zedong is already quite clear with regard to the aim of our visit this time. Regarding the split in the international communist movement, we saw the materials and heard the explanations of comrade Peng Zhen. It is already very clear to us. We know that this is not an appropriate place today to talk about these kinds of problems. However, if comrade Mao Zedong has anything to add we are very willing to hear.

Chairman: I have nothing to add. (Leaving the table and letting the guests sit on the sofa). Sit here.

The following conversation took place after the meal.

Chairman: If the proletariat, which has obtained political power, does not watch out for the restoration of the reactionary faction, it will not be able to preserve political power. Now our young people, who were just so small during the revolution, today's university students, who were no more than 18 years old at the time [of the revolution], do not know about the past difficulties, have not experienced the practice of revolutionary struggle, and have to rely on the older people to tell them about past experience.

(To the interpreter). How old are you? (The interpreter answers: 32 years old). During the liberation he was only 18 years old. (Again, asks Wu, Jiang, Li, Yang and others among the seated their ages). You can rely on these four to teach the youth, and not on this one (points to the interpreter).

The young people have not experienced intense class struggle and have to rely on the revolutionaries of their fathers' generation to explain the experience of class struggle to them.

Some of our young peasants today can't till the land, and also have to rely on the elders to teach them. (Looks at the watch.) I spoke for too long. That's enough for the talking. Thank you for coming such a long way.

T: Today I would like to express gratitude once again on behalf of our delegation for the reception the Chinese comrades have given us during this stay in China, especially for giving us the opportunity to see comrade Mao Zedong, we are very happy. I should say that we were selected by the Central Committee as a delegation to China with the aim of representing the Central Committee in the preparatory work for the next Central Committee plenum. Our next central committee plenum will discuss for the first time the split in the international communist movement.

Our last Central Committee plenum was not able to discuss these aspects because we only had one-sided information. After coming to China we learned that our previous information was not only one-sided but also wrong.

When we go back we will work hard to make the party depart from facts, to put the problem into the proper position, and have a principled discussion. Thank you, comrades, for providing us with valuable materials. I wish comrades ever greater

success in the construction of socialism, and I wish health and longevity for comrade Mao Zedong.

Chairman: Thank you!

(Guests arise to part, Chairman Mao follows them to the outside of the door.)