

## **December 18, 1970**

### **Record of Conversation from [Chairman Mao Zedong's] Meeting with [Edgar] Snow**

#### **Citation:**

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#### **Summary:**

Mao Zedong talks to American journalist, Edgar Snow, about the Cultural Revolution and his thoughts about the Nixon administration. Mao expressed discontent towards China's pace of development compared to the United States. Mao emphasized the secretive nature on part of Nixon in setting up talks between the US and China. Mao and Edgar also discussed the US's intentions in the Asia-Pacific region. Mao consistently claims that he likes Nixon because Nixon's "reactionary" approach to foreign policy is an advantage to China. Mao admits to Edward Snow that the personality cult around Mao Zedong during that Cultural Revolution was necessary to oppose Liu Shaoqi. Mai discusses his increasingly suspicious view towards the Soviet Union.

#### **Original Language:**

Chinese

#### **Contents:**

Original Scan  
Translation - English

## 会见斯诺的谈话纪要<sup>〔1〕</sup>

（一九七〇年十二月十八日）

斯：我经常想给你写信，但我真正写信打扰你还只有这一次。

毛主席：怎么是打扰呢？上次，一九六五年，我就叫你找我嘛。你早找到我，骂人，我就早让你来看中国的文化大革命，看全面内战，all-round civil war，我也学了这句话了。到处打，分两派，每一个工厂分两派，每一个学校分两派，每一个省分两派，每一个县分两派，每一个部也是这样，外交部就是两派。你不搞这个东西也不行，一是有反革命，二是有走资派。外交部就闹得一塌糊涂。有一个半月失去了掌握，这个权掌握在反革命手里。

斯：是不是火烧英国代办处的时候？

毛主席：就是那个时期。一九六七年七月 July 和八月 August 两个月不行了，天下大乱了。这一来就好了，他就暴露了，不然谁知道啊？！多数还是好的，有少数人是坏人。这个敌人叫“五·一六”〔2〕。

斯：有一个问题我还不大清楚，即主席对我讲这些，是供公开发表用，还是作为介绍背景材料，还是朋友之间的交谈，还是三者兼而有之。

毛主席：不供发表。就是作为学者，研究者，研究社会情况，研究将来，研究历史嘛。我看你发表跟周恩来总理的谈话比较好，同我的不要发表。意大利杂志上的这一篇〔3〕我看了，我是看从外国文翻译成中文的。

斯：你看写得可以不可以？

毛主席：可以嘛。你的那些什么错误有什么要紧？比如，说我是个人崇拜。你们美国人才是个人崇拜多呢！你们的国都就叫作华盛顿。你们的华盛顿所在的那个地方就叫作哥伦比亚区。

斯：每个州里面还起码都有一个名为华盛顿的市镇。

毛主席：可讨厌了！科学上的发明我赞成，比如，达尔文、康德〔4〕，甚至还有你们美国的科学家，主要是那个研究原始社会的摩根〔5〕，他的书马克思、恩格斯都非常欢迎。从此才知道有原始社会。

总要有人崇拜嘛！你斯诺没有人崇拜你，你就高兴啦？你的文章、你的书写出来没有人读你就高兴啦？总要有点个人崇拜，你也有嘛。

你们美国每个州长、每个总统、每个部长没有一批人崇拜他怎么混得下去呢！

我是不喜欢民主党的，我比较喜欢共和党。我欢迎尼克松〔6〕上台。为什么呢？他的欺骗性也有，但比较地少一点，你信不信？他跟你来硬的多，来软的也有。他如果想到北京来，你就捎个信，叫他偷偷地，不要公开，坐上一架飞机就可以来嘛。谈不成也可以，谈得成也可以嘛。何

必那么僵着？但是你美国是没有秘密的，一个总统出国是不可能秘密的。他要到中国来，一定会大吹大擂，就会说其目的就是要拉中国整苏联，所以他现在还不敢这样做。整苏联，现在对美国不利；整中国，对于美国也不利。

你说，我的政策正确，五年之前就决定不出兵，所以尼克松不打中国。我说不是。我们在朝鲜出了一百万兵，名曰志愿军。麦克阿瑟〔7〕打定主意要轰炸满洲，就是东北，结果杜鲁门〔8〕就把他撤了。这个麦克阿瑟后头又变成了一个和平主义者，你看怪不怪。所以世界上的人就是这么变来变去的。也有不变的，比如我们两个就不变。

我看你这次来访问比较前几次要深。你接触了工厂、农村、学校，这就是研究社会。

斯：现在中国的农业情况很好。

毛主席：中国的农业还是靠两只手，靠锄头和牛耕种。

斯：这次来，我去看了一些我十年前参观过的公社。这些公社都取得了很大进步。

毛主席：现在有些进步了，但还很落后，识字的人还不多，女人节育的还不多。

斯：还是很不错，同十年前或五年前相比较。

毛主席：说有所进步，我赞成；“很大的”，不能讲。要谨慎。

斯：但是现在没有人反对节育了。

毛主席：你这个人受人欺骗哟！农村里的女人，头一个生了是个女孩，就想个男孩子。第二个生了，又是女孩，

又想要男孩子。第三个生了，还是女孩，还想要男孩子。……一共生了九个，都是女孩子，年龄也四十五岁了，只好算了。

斯：是啊，但是现在反对节育的人不多了，年轻人不反对了。

毛主席：重男轻女。这个风俗要改。我看你们美国可能也是重男轻女，要有一个时间才能改变。

斯：现在美国有一个妇女解放运动，规模很大，她们要求男女完全平等。

毛主席：你要完全平等，现在不可能。

今天是不分中国人、美国人。我是寄希望于这两国的人民的，寄大的希望于美国人民。第一是亚非拉啰，第二是欧洲、美洲和大洋洲。

单是美国这个国家就有两亿人口，如果苏联不行，我寄希望于美国人民。美国如果能出现一个领导的党来进行革命，我高兴。美国的产业高于世界各个国家，文化普及。

现在我们的一个政策是不让美国人到中国来，这是不是正确？外交部要研究一下。左、中、右都让来。为什么右派要让来？就是说尼克松，他是代表垄断资本家的。当然要让他来了，因为解决问题，中派、左派是不行的，在现时要跟尼克松解决。

他早就到处写信说要派代表来，我们没有发表，守秘密啊！他对于波兰华沙那个会谈〔9〕不感兴趣，要来当面谈。所以，我说如果尼克松愿意来，我愿意和他谈，谈得成也

行，谈不成也行，吵架也行，不吵架也行，当做旅行者来谈也行，当做总统来谈也行。总而言之，都行。我看我不会跟他吵架，批评是要批评他的。我们也要作自我批评，就是讲我们的错误、缺点了，比如，我们的生产水平比美国低，别的我们不作自我批评。

你说中国有很大的进步，我说不然，有所进步。美国革命有进步，我高兴。我对中国的进步不满意，历来不满意。当然，不是说没有进步。三十五年前同现在比较，总进步一点吧，三十五年啊！

那时落后得很，只有八千军队。那时候二方面军和四方面军都还没有汇合。汇合后招兵买马，在陕甘才闹了两万五千人。我说是走了两万五千里路，剩下两万五千人。但是比长征前的三十万人、几个根据地要强。政策改变了，王明〔10〕路线被批判了。

斯：有一两件事想跟你探讨一下。第一是尼克松来华的问题，是否可以作这样的理解：目前他来是不现实的，但尼克松来华被认为是理想的。

第二是关于美国人访华的问题，我能作为这个问题中的一个例外，感到格外高兴。

毛主席：但是你代表不了美国，你不是垄断资本家。

斯：当然，我也刚要这么说。

毛主席：尼克松要派代表来中国谈判，那是他自己提议的，有文件证明，说愿意在北京或者华盛顿当面谈，不要让我们外交部知道，也不要通过美国国务院。神秘得很，



又是提出不要公开，又是说这种消息非常机密。他选举是哪一年？

斯：一九七二年。

毛主席：一九七二年美国要大选，我看，这年的上半年尼克松可能派人来，他自己不来。要来谈是那个时候。他对那个台湾舍不得，蒋介石还没有死。台湾关他什么事？台湾是杜鲁门、艾奇逊〔11〕搞成这样的，然后又是一个总统〔12〕，那个里面他也有一份就是了。然后又是肯尼迪〔13〕。尼克松当过副总统〔14〕，他那时跑过台湾。他说台湾有一千多万人。我说亚洲有十几亿人，非洲有三亿人，都在那里造反。

这个世界你看怎么样？

斯：我同意主席说的，是一个控制的问题，一个美国要保持权利的问题。印度、巴基斯坦和中国的人口加起来有十五亿，再加上印尼、日本等，亚洲的人口恐怕超过了世界人口的半数了。日本正在迅速地成为一个工业大国，它现在已经是世界第三个工业大国了。拥有如此众多人口的中国，如果在生产能力方面能够赶上日本，那末中国同日本加起来，其生产能力会远远地超过美国和欧洲。

毛主席：这个要看政策。你们美国的华盛顿〔15〕一百九十多年前革命的时候，只有三百万人口，但能够打败拥有近三千万人口的世界第一大工业国大英帝国。只有几根烂枪，几个游击队，几个民团。华盛顿是个大地主。他生了气了，打游击。这个英国人找不到美国人，而美国人在这

个墙角里，那个墙角里，噍！噍！噍！从一七七五年起，打了一年以后，到一七七六年才开了一个十三个州的会议，才正式选举华盛顿为总司令。〔16〕兵也是稀稀拉拉的，没有多少，财政困难得很，发票子，但是打败了英国人。

你看我们呢？我们，你那时是看到的了。南方的根据地都丢了的嘛，只有三万人不到，一块一百五十万人口的地方。噢，还不到呢，因为那时候延安还没有占领呢。蒋介石可厉害了。以后马歇尔〔17〕帮助他，就是杜鲁门时代。

你看中国人那个时候，稀稀拉拉，只有两万多兵，保安为根据地。这次你又去看了，那时候只有二百户人家。谁想到我们能够占领大陆啊？

斯：你想到了。

毛主席：想是想啊，但能不能占领还不知道啊。要到占领的那一天才算数嘛。后头日本人又来了。所以我们说尼克松好就是这个道理。那些日本人实在好，中国革命没有日本人帮忙是不行的。这个话我跟一个日本人讲过，此人是个资本家，叫作南乡三郎。他总是说：“对不起，侵略你们了。”我说：不，你们帮了大忙了，日本的军国主义和日本天皇。你们占领大半个中国，中国人民全都起来跟你们作斗争，我们搞了一个百万军队，占领了一亿人口的地方，这不都是你们帮的忙吗？

你们美国有个记者叫卡诺，过去在香港，现在在苏联，他引了这段话，他说美国人很蠢，煽动全世界人民觉悟。

斯：我过去报道过这样一句话，许多人加以引用。



毛主席：就是要宣传这个。没有蒋介石，日本人，美国人帮助蒋介石，我们就不能胜利。

斯：前几天我见到西哈努克〔18〕时，西哈努克也曾对我说：尼克松是毛泽东的一位好的代理人。

毛主席：我喜欢这种人，喜欢世界上最反动的人。我不喜欢什么社会民主党，什么修正主义。修正主义有它欺骗的一面，西德现在的政府也有它的欺骗性。

斯：尼克松在南亚陷得越深，就越是发动人民起来反对他。

毛主席：好！尼克松好！我能跟他谈得来，不会吵架。

斯：我不认识尼克松，但如果我见到他的话，是否可以说……

毛主席：你只说，是好人啊！是世界上第一个好人！这个勃列日涅夫〔19〕不好，勃兰特〔20〕也不算怎么好。

斯：我记得你说过：“民族斗争，说到底，是一个阶级斗争问题。”

毛主席：就是啊。什么叫民族啊？包括两部分人。一部分是上层、剥削阶级、少数，这一部分人可以讲话，组织政府，但是不能打仗、耕田、在工厂做工。百分之九十以上是工人、农民、小资产阶级，没有这些人就不能组成民族。

斯：我想向你简单地介绍我的经历，作为背景材料，可能你会感兴趣。……〔21〕

我的经历在我的这一代人中间可以说是典型的，即一

边读书，一边工作。

毛主席：但是你的世界观还是资产阶级的世界观而不是无产阶级的世界观。我长期也是资产阶级世界观。开头相信孔夫子，后头相信康德的唯心论。什么马克思，根本不知道。我相信华盛顿，相信拿破仑。后头还是蒋介石帮了忙，一九二七年他杀人了。当然，还在一九二一年就搞了七十个〔22〕知识分子，组织了共产党。共产党组成的时候只有十二个代表，七十个人选举了十二个人当代表。这十二个人中间，牺牲了几个，死掉的几个，不干的几个，反革命的几个，现在只剩下两个，董必武〔23〕一个，毛泽东一个。

斯：我认为，你强调教育和生产劳动相结合是很重要的。

毛主席：我们没有大学教授、中学教员、小学教员啊，全部用国民党的，就是他们在那里统治。文化大革命就是从他们开刀。抛掉的就是百分之一、二、三，就让他们在那里，年纪老了，不能干事了，养起来了。其他的都保存，但要跟劳动相结合，逐步逐步来，不要忙，不要强迫，不要强加于人。

那个课堂上讲课的方法我不赞成。你先生写了讲义，发给学生看嘛。然后，不懂的再去课堂上问先生。学生往往是调皮得很。如果学生出一百个题目，先生能答出五十个就很不错了。剩下那五十个题目怎么办呢？就说：我不懂，跟你们一样。然后大家研究，你们研究，我也研究。然后

就说：“下课！”你看，多好啊！我讲课就是这样，不许记笔记。如果想睡觉就打瞌睡，想跑就退席。这个打瞌睡实在好。与其正正经经坐在那里，又听不进去，不如保养精神。

毛主席：你这个记者才不怎么样呢！何必当个记者呢？写个什么书，出个什么名呢？你那本《西行漫记》是出名的。还有一本什么人写的书可以和你那个《西行漫记》相比的，是一个海员写的，他那时候在广州上了岸，看到了日本人的侵略。他可能没有到解放区去，叫作什么 Belden（贝尔登〔24〕）。

斯：噢，对了，我知道那个人，他现在还在。

毛主席：那个拉提摩尔〔25〕怎么样了？

斯：他现在也还在，他原来在约翰·霍普金斯大学工作，在麦卡锡〔26〕时期及以后的时期受到了迫害，现在住在英国。

斯：前两年我到远东来，见到一些学者，中国问题专家，总是问他们中间是否有任何人曾经写过关于《海瑞罢官》〔27〕一文的分析文章，并指出过该文的双重含义。我没有发现其中有任何一个人当时曾经看出这篇文章有什么意义。因此他们就没有能够预见到要进行文化大革命，文化大革命开始后他们也没有能够理解它。

毛主席：就是关于《海瑞罢官》那篇文章〔28〕击中了我们的敌人的要害。那个时候在北京组织不出文章，说吴晗是个历史学家，碰不得！找了第一个人，不敢写；找了第

二个人，也不敢写；又找了第三个人，也是不敢写。后头在上海组织了一个班子，写作班子，以姚文元为首。文章出来了，北京不登。我那时候在上海，我说：出小册子，看他们怎么办！北京只有一家登了——《解放军报》。《人民日报》、《北京日报》不登。后头全国各地、各省、市都转载了，只有一个省没有登，就是我那个省——湖南。

斯：当时湖南报纸未登，是不是因为刘少奇〔29〕阻挠？

毛主席：那还不是。湖南省委的宣传部长右得很。什么宣传部、组织部、省委，统统打烂了。但是不能只看一样事就作结论，湖南省的人物也出来几个了。第一个是湖南省委现在的第一书记华国锋，是老人；第二个是现在陕西省革命委员会的第一把手李瑞山，原来也是湖南省的一个书记；第三个是甘肃省的第二把手胡继宗。

斯：你看中美会不会建交？

毛主席：中美两国总要建交的〔30〕。中国和美国难道就一百年不建交啊？我们又没有占领你们那个长岛。

斯：我有一个问题想提出来，即你什么时候明显地感觉到必须把刘少奇这个人从政治上搞掉？

毛主席：那就早啰。一九六五年一月，二十三条〔31〕发表。二十三条中间第一条就是说四清的目标是整党内走资本主义道路的当权派，当场刘少奇就反对。在那以前，他出的书黑《修养》〔32〕不触及帝国主义、封建主义、国民党。

斯：是新版吗？

毛主席：老版。说不要夺取政权，共产党不要夺取政

权的。当个共产党不夺取政权干啥啊?!

斯：那末，你是不是在那时感到必须进行一场革命的？

毛主席：嗯。一九六五年十月就批判《海瑞罢官》。一九六六年五月十六日中央政治局扩大会议就决定搞文化大革命，一九六六年八月召开了十一中全会，十六条〔33〕搞出来了。

斯：刘少奇是不是也反对十六条？

毛主席：他模模糊糊。因为那时候我已经出了那张大字报了，他就不得了了。他实际上是坚决反对。

斯：就是《炮打司令部》〔34〕那张大字报吗？

毛主席：就是那张。

斯：他也知道他是司令部了。

毛主席：那个时候的党权、宣传工作的权、各个省的党权、各个地方的权，比如北京市委的权，我也管不了了。所以那个时候我说无所谓个人崇拜，倒是需要一点个人崇拜。

现在就不同了，崇拜得过分了，搞许多形式主义。比如什么“四个伟大”，“Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, Great Helmsman”（伟大导师，伟大领袖，伟大统帅，伟大舵手），讨厌！总有一天要统统去掉，只剩下一个 Teacher，就是教员。因为我历来是当教员的，现在还是当教员。其他的一概辞去。

斯：过去是不是有必要这样搞啊？

毛主席：过去这几年有必要搞点个人崇拜。现在没有



必要，要降温了。

斯：我有时不知那些搞得很过分的人是不是真心诚意。

毛主席：有三种，一种是真的，第二种是随大流，“你们大家要叫万岁嘛”，第三种是假的。你才不要相信那一套呢。

斯：听说进城前夕开的一次中央全会<sup>[35]</sup>上，曾经通过一项决议，禁止用党的领导人的名字命名城市、街道、山村等。

毛主席：这个现在都没有，没有什么用人名来命名的街道、城市、地方，但是他搞另外一种形式，就是标语、画像、石膏像。就是这几年搞的，红卫兵一闹、一冲，他不搞不行，你不搞啊？说你反毛，anti-Mao！

你们的尼克松总统不是喜欢 Law and order（法律和秩序）吗？他是喜欢那个 law（法律），是喜欢那个 order（秩序）的。我们现在的宪法要有罢工这一条，“四大”的自由之外，还要加上罢工，这样可以整官僚主义，整官僚主义要用这一条。

斯：是不是新的宪法里要写上罢工？

毛主席：新宪法要写上。

所以我说中国很落后。两个东西，又很先进，又很落后，一个先进，一个落后，在进行斗争。

斯：对于人们所说的对毛泽东的个人崇拜，我的理解是：必须由一位个人把国家的力量人格化。在这个时期，在文化革命中间，必须由毛泽东和他的教导来作为这一切的

标志，直至斗争的终止。

毛主席：这是为了反对刘少奇。过去是为了反对蒋介石，后来是为了反对刘少奇。他们树立蒋介石。我们这边也总要树立一个人啊。树立陈独秀〔36〕，不行；树立瞿秋白〔37〕，不行；树立李立三〔38〕，不行；树立王明，也不行。那怎么办啊？总要树立一个人来打倒王明嘛。王明不打倒，中国革命不能胜利啊。多灾多难啊，我们这个党。

斯：你觉得党现在怎么样？

毛主席：不怎么样。

斯：是不是好一点了？

毛主席：好一点，你说好一点我赞成。你说中国怎么好，我不赞成。两个东西在斗，一个进步的，一个落后的。

这个文化大革命中有两个东西我很不赞成。一个是讲假话，口里说“要文斗不要武斗”，实际上下面又踢人家一脚，然后把脚收回来。人家说，你为什么踢我啊？他又说，我没有踢啊，你看，我的脚不是在这里吗？讲假话。后头就发展到打仗了，开始用长矛，后头用步枪、迫击炮。所以那个时候外国人讲中国大乱，不是假的，是真的，武斗。

第二条我很不高兴的，就是捉了俘虏虐待。红军、人民解放军不是这样的，他们优待俘虏。不打，不骂，不搜腰包，发路费回家，不枪毙，军官都不枪毙，将军那样大的军官都没有枪毙嘛。解除武装了嘛，不论是士兵还是军官，是大军官还是小军官，解除了武装嘛，你为什么还要

虐待啊？我们历来就立了这个规矩的。所以许多的兵士在我们的感化下，一个星期就过来了，一个星期就参加我们的队伍打仗了。

毛主席：你回美国去，我希望你作点社会调查研究。对于工人、农民、学生、知识分子、资本家、各个阶层作调查，看他们的生活，看他们的情绪。去调查一个工厂，我是说中等工厂，千把人的，用一个星期够了吧？

斯：够了。

毛主席：如果调查两个工厂也只有两个星期。调查一个农场，一个星期也够了吧？

斯：够了。

毛主席：调查两个农场也是两个星期。加起来四个星期，也只有一个月嘛。再调查两个学校，一所中学，一所大学，半个月时间。

调查一次也不一定能够真正认识的。第一，别人不一定讲真话。第二，自己对于了解来的情况不一定能够理解得好。这是我几十年搞调查研究的经验。当个知识分子，跟工人、农民谈话很不容易。谁跟你谈啊？他们怕你调查他的秘密。跟工人、农民交朋友很不容易。你们这些人跟知识分子、小官僚、小资产阶级交朋友比较容易，跟工人、农民交朋友不容易。不信，你试试看嘛。如果你有决心，你就试试看嘛！

毛主席：你到处跑跑嘛，在美国、欧洲、中国之间到处跑跑。以后你一年三分之一的时间住在美国，三分之一

的时间住在欧洲，三分之一的时间住在中国，到处都住住，四海为家嘛。

斯：不过我还得要工作呢。

毛主席：我看研究美国，研究中国，研究欧洲就是工作。

斯：我会努力的，但是结果如何还难说。

在中国发生的事情对美国有很大的影响。今天的美国处在更大的动荡之中，主要是因为越南战争引起了社会和政治的不稳定。因为今天的青年人受到了比他们的上一辈更为良好的教育，国家的科学也在发展，而行政机构所执行政策和他们的言谈之间的差距日益被人们所认识，以至于大多数公众对他们所认定的行政机构失去了信任。

毛主席：就是不讲真话。一个人不讲真话建立不起信任。谁信任你啊？朋友之间也是这样。比如我们三十五年前第一次见面到现在，总没有变嘛，还是没有变嘛，总是以朋友相待嘛。官僚主义是有一点，但是我自己作自我批评嘛。

斯：你们跟俄国的问题打算解决吗？

毛主席：俄国的问题总也要解决嘛。世界上各国的问题都总是要解决的呀！

斯：那是。

毛主席：总要双方都愿意才行，只一方愿意不行。

斯：俄国到底要干什么？

毛主席：不大懂，也搞不清。

斯：俄国是不是怕中国？

毛主席：中国有啥好怕？！中国的原子弹只有这么大（主席伸出小手指比划），俄国的原子弹有这么大（主席伸出大拇指比划），美国的原子弹有这么大（主席伸出另一只手的大拇指来比划），它们两个加起来有这么大（主席把两个大拇指并在一起），你看。

斯：如果从长远的角度来看怕不怕呢？

毛主席：听说是有点怕。一个人的房子里有几个老鼠，也有点怕，怕老鼠吃掉他的糖果。几个老鼠在房子里钻来钻去，他就睡不着觉，闹得不安宁。有些惊慌失措，比如中国挖防空洞，他们也害怕。这有什么好怕的呢？挖防空洞是防你来嘛，我钻洞嘛，又不打出去。中国批评他们的修正主义，他们也怕。那末是谁先批评我们的呢？这场战争是谁开始打第一枪的呢？他叫我们教条主义，我们叫他修正主义。我们不怕他叫我们教条主义。我们把他批评我们教条主义的文章在我们的报上发表。他们就不敢发表我们批评他的文章，他们就怕。你说我是教条主义，你总有一个理由嘛。教条主义就是反马克思列宁主义的嘛，反马克思列宁主义的东西就要批倒。可是他不。他后头又请古巴代表团来讲和，说是要求停止公开论战。又请罗马尼亚来讲和，要我们停止公开争论。我说不行，要争论一万年。后头柯西金〔39〕到北京，我见了。我说，你说我们是教条主义，好。但是这个发明者赫鲁晓夫〔40〕为什么要把他搞掉，要把他整掉呢？你决议上写了的，说他是“创造性地



发展了马克思列宁主义的赫鲁晓夫同志”。为什么这样一个发展了马克思列宁主义的人你们又不要了呢？我想不通。你们不要，我们请他来行不行？请他到北京大学当教授，教那个发展了的马克思列宁主义。他又不给。我又说，但是你是总理，你是苏联国家的总理，我们的争论是要进行一万年的，因为看你的面子，我让步。一让一大步，不减少犹可，一减少就是一千年，一让就是一千年啊！他对我说那次谈话的结果不错。

这些俄国人他看不起中国人，看不起许多国家的人，他以为只要他一句话，人家就都会听。谁知道，也有不听的，其中一个就是鄙人。

斯：为了澄清我自己的思想，我想简单地谈谈我对文化大革命的一些想法。……〔41〕

毛主席：你说的那个城乡人民冲突的问题不严重。基本上是修正主义跟反修正主义的问题。要搞修正主义就要跟苏联妥协。

至于城乡资本主义因素的发展，那是当然要发展的，现在还在发展。

中国是贫农多，占百分之六七十，还要加上中农，要团结中农。至于富裕中农，他们每日、每时、每刻都在产生资本主义。这是列宁说的话，不是我们创造的。中国是一个小资产阶级的汪洋大海，农民这么多啊。工人阶级人数不那么多，工人阶级也年轻。工人阶级好也在这里。在你们那些国家，搞革命也比较困难，垄断资本厉害得很，它

的宣传机器那么多。中国不同，比如宗教，真正信教的很少。几亿人口里面只有八九十万基督教徒，二三百万天主教徒，另外有近一千万的回教徒，穆斯林。其他的就信龙王，有病就信，无病就不信，没有小孩子就信，有了小孩子就不信了。

斯：关于文化革命的问题，今天你是不是回答完了呢？

毛主席：文化大革命的问题回答了一部分。你明年再来吧。你如果愿意的话，欢迎你来。

斯：粮食的问题基本上解决了？

毛主席：过去叫南粮北调，现在各省市逐步在解决。

再一个就是北煤南运，说是湖北、湖南、广东、福建、浙江，还有江苏的南部没有煤炭，所以要从北边运来。现在都有了。就是两个积极性，中央的积极性和地方的积极性，就是要有这两个积极性！让他自己去搞，中央不要包办，你自己去找嘛！结果到处去找，每个公社去找，每个县去找，每个省去找，七找八找都找出来了，找出煤和石油了。所以统统抓在我手里不行啊，我管不了那么多啊！要学你们美国的办法，分到五十个州去。

斯：我这次来，注意到有很大的变化。

毛主席：就是这个两个积极性，中央一个积极性，地方一个积极性！讲了十几年了，就是不听，有什么办法？现在听了。世界上的事情就是这样，要走弯路，就是S形。

斯：有时候还要走O形，然后再设法冲破这个圈，重新开始。

毛主席：总而言之，我跟你反复讲的一句话就是，三十五年前到现在，我们两个人的基本关系没有变。我对你不讲假话，我看你对我也是不讲假话的。

根据中共中央文件刊印。部分内容已节编入《毛泽东外交文选》。

## 注 释

〔1〕 这是毛泽东一九七〇年十二月十八日会见美国作家、友好人士埃德加·斯诺的谈话纪要。这个纪要曾送毛泽东审阅，毛泽东批示：“照发。”一九七一年五月三十一日，中共中央印发了这个谈话纪要，指出：“此件请印发党的基层党支部，口头传达至全体党员，并认真组织学习，正确领会主席谈话精神。”本篇根据中共中央文件刊印，编入本书时有个别文字删节。

〔2〕 “五·一六”，见本册第45页注〔1〕。

〔3〕 指斯诺一九七〇年十二月十三日在意大利《时代周刊》上发表的《同周恩来的谈话》（国际部分）。

〔4〕 达尔文，英国生物学家。他在《物种起源》等著作中，提出了进化论的学说，说明了生物的演变和人类的起源。康德，德国哲学家，德国古典唯心主义的创始人。他在《自然通史和天体论》等著作中，提出了关于太阳系起源的星云假说，把太阳系的形成看成是物质按其客观规律运动发展的过程。

〔5〕 摩根，今译摩尔根，美国民族学家，原始社会历史学家。他在《古代社会》中第一次论述了氏族是原始社会的基本组织，母系氏族和父系氏族存在与发展的规律以及婚姻、家庭形态的历史演变等，并把人类历史划分为蒙昧、野蛮与文明三个时代。马克思对该书作过详细摘录和批语。恩格斯也在《家庭、私有制和国家的起源》中引用其大量资料，阐述了摩尔根的研究成果，赞誉他“在原

始历史的研究方面开辟了一个新时代”。

〔6〕 尼克松，美国共和党人。当时任美国总统。一九七二年二月首次访问中国。访华期间就中美关系问题同中方举行谈判，在上海发表了中美联合公报，中美关系开始走向正常化。

〔7〕 麦克阿瑟，一九五〇年六月任“联合国军”总司令，指挥侵朝战争，并极力主张进攻中国。一九五一年四月被解除一切军职，仅保留五星上将军衔。

〔8〕 杜鲁门，一九四五年至一九五三年任美国总统。

〔9〕 指中美大使级会谈。一九五五年四月二十三日，周恩来在亚非会议八国代表团团长会议上声明：中国政府愿意同美国政府谈判，讨论和缓远东紧张局势问题，特别是和缓台湾地区紧张局势问题。同年七月二十五日，中美双方就大使级会谈达成协议，于八月一日在日内瓦举行首次会谈。此后由于美方缺乏诚意，会谈中断。一九五八年八月金门炮击开始后，美国政府公开表示准备恢复会谈，双方随即于九月十五日在波兰华沙复会。迄至一九七〇年二月二十日，中美大使级会谈共举行了一百三十六次。由于美方坚持干涉中国内政的立场，会谈在和缓和消除台湾地区紧张局势问题上未取得任何进展。

〔10〕 王明，即陈绍禹，一九三一年一月中共六届四中全会至一九三五年一月遵义会议期间，是中共党内“左”倾冒险主义错误的主要代表。在党内统治长达四年之久的这条王明路线，无视当时敌强我弱的实际情况，错误地估计革命形势，在政治、军事以及城市和农村工作中实行一整套“左”倾冒险主义的政策和策略；为了强制推行这条错误路线，在组织上以我为核心，对有不同意见的同志采取宗派主义手段，进行“残酷斗争”和“无情打击”。在这条错误路线的指导下，中央红军未能粉碎敌人的第五次“围剿”，被迫实

行战略转移。王明路线使党领导的革命根据地和白区工作都遭受十分严重的损失。

〔11〕 艾奇逊，一九四九年至一九五三年任美国国务卿，和杜鲁门一起制订了不承认中国和援助台湾国民党蒋介石的政策。

〔12〕 指艾森豪威尔，一九五三年至一九六一年任美国总统。

〔13〕 肯尼迪，一九六〇年十一月当选美国总统，一九六三年遇刺身亡。

〔14〕 尼克松在一九五三年至一九六一年期间连任两届美国副总统。

〔15〕 华盛顿，一七七五年北美独立战争爆发后被推选为大陆军总司令。一七八三年迫使英国签订《巴黎和约》，正式承认美国独立。一七八九年当选为美国第一任总统。

〔16〕 毛泽东这句话中所说的年份有不准确的地方。一七七五年北美独立战争爆发。同年五月，北美十三个州参加的第二届大陆会议通过了对英国进行武装革命的“宣言”，把北美民兵整编为大陆军，六月即一致推选华盛顿为大陆军总司令。

〔17〕 马歇尔，一九四五年十二月被美国总统杜鲁门派任驻华特使，以“调处”为名参与国共谈判，支持蒋介石发动内战。一九四六年八月宣布“调处”失败，不久返回美国。

〔18〕 西哈努克，一九六〇年当选为柬埔寨国家元首。一九七〇年朗诺发动政变后，西哈努克在北京组成柬埔寨民族统一阵线和王国民族团结政府，任民族统一阵线主席。

〔19〕 勃列日涅夫，当时任苏共中央总书记。

〔20〕 勃兰特，当时任德国社会民主党主席、联邦德国政府总理。

〔21〕 中共中央文件上原文如此。



〔22〕 中共一大召开的时候党员只有五十多人。

〔23〕 董必武，当时任中共中央政治局委员、中华人民共和国副主席。

〔24〕 贝尔登，美国进步记者。一九三三年以海员的身分来到中国，九年后回国。一九四六年十二月第二次访问中国，在华北解放区作了广泛深入的调查后，写了《中国震撼世界》一书，向世界人民介绍了中国革命。

〔25〕 拉提摩尔，又译拉铁摩尔，美国东方学家。一九四一年七月以美国总统罗斯福私人代表名义被派驻中国。一九四二年被召回国，任美国新闻处中国部主任。后任霍普金斯大学佩奇国际关系学院院长。一九五二年遭参议员麦卡锡弹劾。一九六三年赴英国，任利兹大学汉文教授。

〔26〕 麦卡锡，一九四六年起任美国参议员，以反共著名。一九五一至一九五四年，他操纵参议院常设调查小组委员会并利用其他机构，对许多人和组织机构进行所谓的“忠诚调查”，采取非法审讯手段，迫害民主和进步力量，在美国国内制造恐怖。

〔27〕 《海瑞罢官》，是历史学家、北京市副市长吴晗写的新编历史剧，一九六〇年底完成，一九六一年初开始上演。

〔28〕 指江青一九六五年初在上海同张春桥秘密策划，后由姚文元执笔写成的《评新编历史剧〈海瑞罢官〉》一文，发表在一九六五年十一月十日上海《文汇报》。北京各大报纸开始都没有转载。《人民日报》十一月三十日才予以转载，并加了经周恩来修改的按语，强调作为学术问题展开讨论。但是，在江青、张春桥、姚文元等的操纵下，将对《海瑞罢官》的学术批判，很快发展为政治批判运动。这场政治批判成为“文化大革命”的序幕和直接导火线。一九七九年三月二日，经中共中央批准，北京市委作出决定，为吴晗

等人平反。

〔29〕 刘少奇，见本册第 28 页注〔15〕。

〔30〕 一九七八年十二月十六日，中华人民共和国国务院总理华国锋和美国总统卡特分别在北京和华盛顿同时宣布两国决定自一九七九年一月一日起建立外交关系的联合公报。公报确定两国将在三月一日互派大使。

〔31〕 指毛泽东主持制订的、中共中央政治局扩大会议讨论通过的《农村社会主义教育运动中目前提出的一些问题》，共二十三条。中共中央一九六五年一月十四日印发了这个文件。

〔32〕 指《论共产党员的修养》，是刘少奇一九三九年七月在延安马列学院所作论共产党员的修养演讲的第一和第二部分，原载一九三九年中共中央机关刊物《解放》第八十一至八十四期，同年延安新华书店出版单行本。一九四九年经作者校阅并作了若干修改后，由解放社（人民出版社的前身）出修订第一版。一九六二年作者又校阅了一次，作了一些文字上的修改和内容上的补充，将原来的两部分调整为九节，在《红旗》杂志第十五、十六期合刊上重新发表，并由人民出版社出修订第二版。“文化大革命”期间，该书和它的作者一起遭到林彪、江青反革命集团的批判和攻击。一九八〇年三月，人民出版社重印一九六二年修订本，一九八一年收入人民出版社出版的《刘少奇选集》上卷。

〔33〕 指中共八届十一中全会一九六六年八月八日通过的《中国共产党中央委员会关于无产阶级文化大革命的決定》，共十六条。

〔34〕 见本书第十二册第 90 页。

〔35〕 指一九四九年三月五日至十三日在西柏坡召开的中共七届二中全会。

〔36〕 陈独秀，五四新文化运动的主要领导人之一。五四运动

后，接受和宣传马克思主义，是中国共产党的主要创建人之一。在党成立后的最初六年中是党的主要领导人。在第一次国内革命战争后期，犯了严重的右倾投降主义错误。大革命失败后，对于革命前途悲观失望，接受托派观点，在党内成立小组织，进行反党活动，一九二九年十一月被开除出党。后公开进行托派组织活动。一九三二年十月被国民党逮捕，一九三七年八月出狱。一九四二年病死在四川江津。

〔37〕 瞿秋白，参见本册第 27 页注〔13〕。

〔38〕 李立三，参见本册第 27 页注〔13〕。

〔39〕 柯西金，当时任苏共中央政治局委员、苏联部长会议主席。

〔40〕 赫鲁晓夫，原任苏共中央第一书记、苏联部长会议主席。一九六四年十月被解除领导职务。

〔41〕 中共中央文件上原文如此。

Record of Conversation from [Chairman Mao Zedong's] Meeting with [Edgar] Snow  
(December 18, 1970)

Snow: I have been meaning to write to you, and this time I finally got to write you, if I may bother you.

Mao: You did not bother me. [When I met you] last time in 1965, I asked you [if you wanted, you could] come to see me. If you had come earlier, I could have showed you what happened during the Cultural Revolution and the all-round civil war. During the allround civil war, people were divided into two groups and were fighting throughout the country. It happened in factories, schools, provinces, counties, and even in governmental departments such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, we had to do so because there were counter-revolutionaries and capitalist-roaders<sup>[1]</sup> in the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had lost control for one-and-a-half months because the counterrevolutionaries took power.

Snow: Did it happen while the office of the British Charge d'affaires was burned?<sup>[2]</sup>

Mao: Exactly. In July and August of 1967 especially, the whole country was in chaos; but it was good for us because our opponents eventually were exposed in this turmoil. A small number of people were the enemy. The enemy's name is "the May 16th [Movement]."<sup>[3]</sup>

Snow: I would like to ask a question. Should I consider what you have just told me as a source for formal publication, an introduction to the historical background, or as a conversation between friends or as all of the above?

Mao: This is not meant for publication but for your own social investigation, historical research, and research about the future. I read your published conversation with Premier Zhou; it was good, but do not publish this conversation. I have read the Chinese translation of the article you published in an Italian magazine.

Snow: What do you think about it?

Mao: Not bad. However, I think the erroneous opinions you mentioned are not important. For example, you indicated that I enjoyed the personality cult about myself. I think that you Americans have more examples of the personality cult. You named your capital after President Washington. You also named the district of Washington after Columbus.

Snow: And there is at least one town named Washington in every state.

Mao: Absolutely disgusting! There is no problem with admiring the scientists. For example, [Charles Robert] Darwin, [Immanuel] Kant and even the American scholar [Lewis Henry] Morgan, who defined the primitive society. Even [Karl] Marx and [Friedrich] Engels liked Morgan's works. We all adore someone. Would you be glad if nobody adored you? Would you be glad if nobody read your books and articles? We all need some personality cult, even you [need it] .

Every governor, every president, and every ministry head in the U.S. would not be able to work well without a group of people who adore them.

I don't like the Democratic Party; in comparison, I like the Republican Party better. We prefer the Nixon administration because he is more honest. Although he has more hard-line policies, he has soft-line policies too. If he wishes to visit Beijing, tell him to

come secretly and not to make it open. It does not matter if our negotiations do not go smoothly. Why should our relations always be deadlocked? But you Americans cannot make it secret because it is impossible for your president to leave the country secretly. If he comes to China, he must trumpet that he tries to play the China card for restraining the Soviet Union. And that is why he is not willing to do so right now. It will not bring America any advantages to restrain the Soviet Union right now; and it is not wise to restrain China, either.

You said that we made the right decisions; we decided five years ago not to dispatch our troops [to Vietnam?], and so Nixon decided not to attack China. I don't think so. We sent a million soldiers as "Chinese People's Volunteers" to Korea. General [Douglas] MacArthur tried to bomb Manchuria, that is, the Northeast of China, but [Harry S.] Truman dismissed him eventually. Then that MacArthur turned into a pacifist, can you believe that? People in the world just keep changing like that, but there are people like you and me who do not change.

This time you have had a chance to visit factories, rural areas and schools. It is good for your study of Chinese society. This visit is very different from your previous ones, and has deeper meanings.

Snow: The current agricultural situation in China is very good.

Mao: However, Chinese agriculture is still dependent on manual labor and uses cattle for plowing.

Snow: This time I re-visited some communes that I had been to ten years ago. They have made tremendous progress.

Mao: Now they have made some progress, but they are still underdeveloped. The literacy rate is still low and very few women are concerned about birth control.

Snow: I still think they are much better than five or ten years ago.

Mao: I agree that they have made some progress, but not "tremendous" progress.

Snow: At least there is nobody objecting to birth control any more.

Mao: Don't be misled. Women in the rural areas always want to have boys. If the first child is a girl, she will give birth to a second child due to desire for a boy child. If the second child is a girl again, she will give birth to child after child until she finally has a boy. And that is why one woman gave birth to nine girls by the time she was forty-five years old.

Snow: But the majority of people, especially the young ones, do not object to birth control any more.

Mao: People still think men are superior to women in China. It is not a good custom. Perhaps it is the same in the United States. It takes time for people to change their minds.

Snow: There is a large-scale women's liberation movement in the U.S. right now. They ask for absolute equality between men and women.

Mao: Absolute equality is still unfeasible nowadays.



It does not matter whether you are a Chinese or an American, I place my great hopes on both Chinese and American peoples, especially the American people; our first [priority] is Asia, Africa and Latin America, and our second [priority] is Europe, North America and Australia.

There are 200 million people living in the U.S. We would rather place our hopes on the Americans than the on Soviets. We will be very glad if there would be a leading party that could make revolution in the U.S., because America is a leading industrial country in the world, and its culture is well developed.

Currently one of our policies is not to allow Americans to visit China. Is it an appropriate policy? The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should think it over. We should invite the leftists, centrists and rightists, and let them all come. Why should we invite the rightists? Because Nixon is a rightist, and he represents the monopoly capitalists. We must let him come because only Nixon, not the leftists or the centrists, can solve the problems we are now facing.

He wrote to our friends and said that he had wished to send his representative to us a long time ago. We did not publicize the fact and kept it secret. Nixon was not interested in the Sino-American ambassadorial talks in Warsaw, Poland, but wished to come and talk to us directly. So that is why I said that if Nixon wished to come, I was willing to talk to him. It does not matter whether the talks go smoothly or not; he could come either as a tourist or as the president. Although I have to criticize him, I do not think our talks will not go well. Also, we have to criticize ourselves, that is to say, to reflect on our mistakes and faults or weaknesses, as well. For example, our productivity is lower than that of the United States.

You have said that China has made great strides in progress. I do not think so. We have made a little bit of progress. I am glad that the American revolution has made some progress. I am still not satisfied with China's development. Although it has progressed compared to thirty-five years ago. It took thirty-five years![\[4\]](#)

We were very backward and only had 8,000 soldiers thirty-five years ago. At that time, the [Chinese Red Army's] Second Front Army and Fourth Front Army had not been unified. After they joined together, we were able to eventually recruit 25,000 soldiers in Shaanxi and Gansu [provinces] We walked almost 25,000 !is, and only 25,000 soldiers were left. However, it was still better than the situation of 300,000 soldiers and several base areas before the Long March, because the Party's policies changed and Wang Ming's Line was criticized.[\[5\]](#)

Snow: I would like to have your opinions on a couple of issues. First, about Nixon's visit to China. Should we think that while right now this may not be practical, it is ideal for Nixon to visit China?

Second, about American people's visit to China. I am so glad that I was considered as an exception.

Mao: But you do not represent the United States because you are not a monopoly capitalist.

Snow: Exactly. I just want to say so.

Mao: We have documents to prove that Nixon said he had wished to send his representatives to China for negotiations, and he also wished that secret negotiations could be held in Beijing or Washington. However, he tried to keep it confidential from

our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and your Department of State. Why does he always want to keep it secret and not open? When is his next election year coming up?

Snow: 1972.

Mao: 1972 is America's election year. I think that Nixon might send his representatives here in the first half of the year instead of coming himself. If he wishes to talk with us, the first half of 1972 might be the time. However, he is not willing to give up Taiwan yet, and Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] is still alive. Why is he so concerned about Taiwan? The situation became so because of Truman and [Secretary of State Dean] Acheson. And the president after them [Dwight D. Eisenhower] had made some contribution [to making Taiwan like this]. And then there was [John F.] Kennedy. Nixon was once the Vice President, and, during his term, and he visited Taiwan. He said that Taiwan had a population of over ten million. And I say that there are over one billion people in Asia, and there are three hundred million people in Africa, and they are all making rebellions.

What do you think about this world?

Snow: I agree with what you have said. There is the question concerning control, and there is the question concerning how America will maintain its power. The total population of India, Pakistan and China, put together, has reached 1.5 billion. With the people of Indonesia, Japan and other countries, the population of Asia might be considered to be more than half of the population of the whole world. Japan is rapidly developing into a leading industrial country, and it is already the third industrial power in the world. With such a large population, if China's industrial productivity could catch up with Japan, the total productivity of China and Japan would be much higher than that of the U.S and Europe.

Mao: It depends on our strategies. More than 190 years ago, you had only three million people when Washington led the American Revolution and defeated Britain—the number one industrial power of the world with almost 30 million people. What you had were poor weapons and only some state militias. Washington was a planter. He became angry and decided to start a guerilla war. The Englishmen could not find any Americans, because the Americans hid themselves here and there in the corner. In 1776, one year after the beginning of the war in 1775, did the Congress of the thirteen states eventually meet and elect Washington as the Commander-in-chief. They had few troops and, with big financial difficulty, little money, and they had to issue war bonds. But still they defeated the English.

What about us? You saw what we had [thirty-five years ago]. We lost all our base areas in the south, and only had fewer than 30,000 troops and one base area with 1.5 million people. No, less than that because we even did not have Yanan<sup>[6]</sup> at the time. Jiang Jieshi was a redoubtable opponent. Later, during the Truman's time, he obtained help from [George] Marshall.<sup>[7]</sup>

At that time, we only had over 20,000 troops, with Baoan as our base area. There were only 200 families at that time. No one believed that we could eventually take the whole mainland.

Snow: But you thought of it.

Mao: Yes, I thought of it, but I was not very sure that whether we would succeed or not. We only knew that on the day we succeeded. And then, the Japanese came. That is why I say that Nixon is good. Those Japanese were really very good, because our revolution would not have succeeded without the help of the Japanese. I used to say this to a Japanese capitalist named Saburo Nango. He always apologized: "I am so

sorry for our invasion of China." I said to him: "No, you, the Japanese militarists and the Japanese emperor helped us a lot. The Chinese people united and fought together against you because you had conquered more than half of China. Also we were able to recruit one million troops and occupy areas with 100 million people. Aren't this all due your help?"

There is an American journalist named Kano [spelling and identification uncertain; possibly Stanley Karnow] who had been to Hong Kong, and he is now in the Soviet Union. He quoted this statement. He said that the Americans were stupid because they had instigated people all over the world to awake.

Snow: I reported your words before and many people have quoted you.

Mao: You have to report that we would not have succeeded without Jiang Jieshi, the Japanese invaders, and without America's help for Jiang Jieshi.

Snow: When I met Prince Sihanouk[\[8\]](#) a few days ago, he said that Nixon was a good deputy for Mao Zedong.

Mao: I like such kind of persons. I like the most reactionary people in the world. I do not like the Social Democratic Party; I do not like Revisionism. Revisionism has its fraudulent side, so does the current West German government.

Snow: The more Nixon intervenes in South Asia, the more he instigates South Asian people to fight against him.

Mao: Good! Nixon is good! I think we could have a wonderful discussion. I will not have a quarrel with him.

Snow: I do not know him, but if I do meet him, could I say ....

Mao: You need only to say: "You are a good person. The best person in the world." [Leonid] Brezhnev is not good, and [Willy] Brandt is not so good either.

Snow: I remember you said, "The question concerning national struggle is in essence one concerning class struggle."

Mao: That is right. What is "nation"? It includes two groups of people. One group is the people who belong to the higher, exploiting class. They are the minority. They can speak out, and they organize the government, but they cannot fight in a war, or work in the fields, or work in the factories. More than ninety percent are workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie. Without them a nation cannot be formed.

Snow: I would like to tell you my experience briefly. As background information, perhaps you would be interested in it. ... [\[9\]](#)

My experience is very typical for people of my generation. I studied and worked at the same time.

Mao: But your worldview remains capitalistic, not proletarian. My worldview was a capitalist one for a long time. I believed in Confucius first, and Kant's Idealism after that. I knew nothing about Marx. I believed in Washington and Napoleon. Jiang Jieshi helped me eventually because he killed people in 1927.[\[10\]](#) Of course, seventy intellectuals organized the Chinese Communist Party as early as in 1921. There were

only twelve of them elected as representatives when the CCP was first established. Of the twelve representatives, only two are still surviving, not counting people who died in the revolution, simply died, quit, or became reactionary. One is Dong Biwu,[\[11\]](#) and the other is myself, Mao Zedong.

Snow: I think it very important that you emphasize combining education with labor.

Mao: We did not have our own professors, or high school and elementary school teachers. We had to use those left over by the Guomindang. And that is why during the Cultural Revolution we made them the first targets of attack, but we only discarded no more than three percent of them. We let the rest of them stay. And when they become old and cannot work, we will feed them. They may maintain other things, but they have to combine [their life] with labor. This should be done gradually, and should not be in a hurry. We should not force them, and we should not impose things upon them.

I do not like their way of teaching in the classroom. You have written the lecture notes, why don't you simply give them to the students to read? If the students could not understand, then they could bring their questions to class to ask the teachers. However, the students were often quite cunning. The teachers could at best answer only fifty questions out of one hundred. How about the remaining fifty questions? The teacher should say: "Like you, I do not know the answers myself either." Then the teachers and the students could study together. Then, the class should be over. Don't you think it is so wonderful? I teach like this, and I do not let students take notes. If they want to sleep in class, I let them sleep; if they want to skip a class, I let them skip. It is really good to let them sleep. If they only sit there in a serious manner without any interest in the lecture, it is better for them to conserve their energy.

Mao: Not exactly are you a good journalist! Why did you choose to become a journalist? Why did you write books and try to become famous? Your book *Red Star* has made you famous. There is a book, which is as good as yours, written by a sailor. He had been ashore in Guangzhou and seen the Japanese invasion. His name might be Belden[\[12\]](#) and might have not been to the areas we had liberated.

Snow: I know him, he is still alive.

Mao: How about [Owen] Lattimore?

Snow: He is still alive, too. He used to teach at Johns Hopkins University, but was persecuted during the McCarthy era and afterwards. He is in Britain currently.

I met some China experts when I came to the Far East a couple of years ago. I always asked if one of them had written review essays about "On 'Hai Rei Was Dismissed from Office'"[\[13\]](#) and pointed out the article's double meaning. I did not find any of them had noticed the profound meaning of this article, and therefore they were unable to predict and understand the Cultural Revolution ...

Mao: As "On 'Hai Rei Was Dismissed from the Office'" was a great blow to our enemies, nobody would write anything about it in Beijing. They said that Wu Han[\[14\]](#) was a historian, so they could not attack him. We asked someone to write a review, he did not dare to write; we asked a second one, he did not dare to write, either; and nor the third one. Then, a writing group was organized in Shanghai led by Yao Wen Yuan.[\[15\]](#) Although they wrote a critical review, they were not allowed to publish it in Beijing. I was in Shanghai at that time and told them to "publish it in the form of a pamphlet, and see what the people in Beijing would do." Only the Liberation Army Daily published it in Beijing. People's Daily and Beijing Daily did not publish it. Afterwards, it was reprinted all over the country except for in one province-Hunan,

which is my home province.

Snow: Was that because Liu Shaoqi<sup>[16]</sup> stopped the papers in Hunan from publishing it?

Mao: No. The Propaganda Department chief of the Hunan Province Committee was a rightist. The Propaganda Department, Personnel Department, and the Provincial Party Committee were all crushed [during the Cultural Revolution]. However, we came to think that all of Hunan Province is like that because of this one issue, we also have several prominent figures from Hunan Province. One is the current First Secretary of the Hunan Province Committee, Hua Guofeng.<sup>[17]</sup> He is a veteran. Another is the current number one person of the Revolution Committee in Shaanxi Province, Li Ruishan. He was also a former secretary of Hunan province. A third is the second in command in Gansu Province, Hu Jizong.

Snow: Do you think it possible for China and the United States to establish diplomatic relations?

Mao: China and the United States will establish diplomatic relations sooner or later. Could China and the United States ignore each other for 100 years? After all we did not occupy your Long Island.

Snow: I would like to ask a question. When did you perceive that you must purge Liu Shaoqi from the political stage?

Mao: A long time ago. In January 1965, we issued the "Twenty-three Protocols."<sup>[18]</sup> The first of the Twenty-three Protocols was that "the purpose of the 'four clean-ups' is to clean up those in power within the party who were taking the capitalist road." Liu Shaoqi was against it at once. He had published his book On Accomplishment before that and did not mention anything about imperialism, feudalism and Guomindang.

Snow: Are you talking about the new edition?

Mao: No, the old edition. He said that we, the Communist Party, should not take power. As communists what are we going to do if we do not take the power?

Snow: Did you believe that you must have a revolution at that time?

Mao: Yes. We began critiquing "Hai Rui Was Dismissed from the Office" in October 1965, and had decided to start the Cultural Revolution at the Politburo's Enlarged Meeting on May 16, 1966. We held the Eleventh Plenum in August 1966 and passed the Sixteen Protocols.

Snow: Did Liu Shaoqi also oppose the Sixteen Provisions?

Mao: His attitude was not clear at that time, but he took it very seriously later when I issued the big-character poster. In fact, he became resolutely in opposition to the Sixteen Protocols.

Snow: Was that the big-character poster titled "Bombard the Headquarters"?

Mao: Yes.

Snow: So he knew that he was the "Headquarters"?



Mao: At that time, the power of the Party, propaganda power, the power of the Party in various provinces, and the power at local levels, such as in Beijing, were out of my control, and even I could not do anything with them. That is why I said that some type of personality cult was necessary at the time.

It is different now; the personality cult has gone too far. For example, people have used the "Four Greats" to describe me: "Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, and Great Helmsman."[\[19\]](#) Nonsense! I hope one day every title could be eliminated except for "Great Teacher," because I have been and always will remain a teacher. Everything else should be eliminated.

Snow: Was all of this necessary before?

Mao: While the personality cult was necessary for the past a few years, it is not necessary now. We should cool our enthusiasm about the personality cult.

Snow: Sometimes I do not know if those people who admire someone excessively are genuine or not.

Mao: There are three kinds of people. One kind are the people who admire in all sincerity. Another kind are those who drift with the tide. "Because you all shout 'long live,' so do I." A third kind are the people who pretend to admire you. But you should never trust them.

Snow: I heard that at the Central Plenum held on the eve of your entry into Beijing, a provision forbidding using party leaders' names to name cities, streets or villages was passed.

Mao: Things like that are not allowed even now. Nobody can use personal names to name streets, cities or places, but there are other ways to admire leaders such as using slogans, portraits and plaster statues. The Red Guards started those things a few years ago. If someone dared to oppose that, they would say that you were anti-Mao.

President Nixon likes law and order,[\[20\]](#) doesn't he? He likes that law, and he likes that order. We should have a provision allowing strikes in our current constitution. We should add the freedom to strike besides the "Four Freedoms", so that we could punish the bureaucrats. We need this provision to punish the bureaucrats.

Snow: Do you mean to add striking to the new constitution?

Mao: It should be added to the new constitution.

That is why I said that China was still underdeveloped. There are two contradictory factors here, one is advanced and the other is backwards, then: am struggles.

Snow: I think that the people's cult of Mao Zedong means that it was necessary to personify a nation's power with a single person. During the Cultural Revolution, it was necessary to use Mao Zedong and his teachings as symbols of everything good until the end of the revolution.

Mao: It was for the purpose of opposing Liu Shaoqi. We had to do it to oppose Jiang Jieshi before and Liu Shaoqi afterwards. We had to set an example for our side because they had set up Jiang Jieshi. We established Chen Duxiou, but he was not

good enough; then we set up Qu Qiubai, he was still not good enough; then Li Lisan and Wang Ming were not good, either. What should we do? We had to set up someone to shadow Wang Ming. The Chinese Revolution would not succeed if we could not overthrow Wang Ming.[\[21\]](#) Our party had a run of bad luck.

Snow: How is the Party now?

Mao: Not good.

Snow: Is it better than before?

Mao: It is better than before and I will agree with you if you say that it is becoming a little bit better, but I cannot agree that China is much better. There are two factors fighting with each other right now. One is progressive and the other is conservative.

I do not favor two of the tendencies that prevailed during the Cultural Revolution. One was not telling the truth. Although they said, "Fight with words and not by force," they in fact used coercion all the time. If they were asked, "Why did you use force?" then they would just deny that they had done so. They never told the truth. When the fighting escalated to conflict, they began using weapons. That is the reason foreigners described China as being in chaos at the time. It was true. We did have violence at the time.

The second tendency I do not favor is the maltreatment of captives. The Red Army and the People's Liberation Army never maltreated captives; they treated them well. They did not use force or search the captives' pockets. Our armies gave the captives money for going home and they never shot the captives, even the officers such as the generals. The captives should not be maltreated because they, whether soldiers or officers, low-ranking officers or high-ranking officers, were deprived of their weapons. We always had this rule, and that is why many captives converted and decided to join our armies after only a week.

When you go back to the U.S., I hope that you could do some social research. Study the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, capitalists and all the different classes. Observe their lives and their mood. Is one week enough to research a factory, say, an average factory with about a thousand people?

Snow: Yes.

Mao: Then it will only take two weeks even if you survey two factories. Will one week be enough to do research on a farm?

Snow: Yes.

Mao: So that will be two weeks for researching two farms. The total are four weeks, only a month, isn't it? Then survey two schools, a junior high school and a college; that will take half a month. However, it is difficult to discover the truth through one survey. First, they might not tell you the truth; second, you might not fully understand the information you get. That is my experience of researching for the last several decades. As an intellectual, you will find that it is a different experience to talk to workers and peasants. Why would they talk to you? They are afraid of you investigating their secrets. It is very difficult to become friends with workers and peasants. People like you would find it easier to become friends with intellectuals, petty bureaucrats, and petty bourgeoisie, but not as easy to be friends with workers and peasants. If you do not believe me, go ahead and try.

You should look around the U.S., Europe and China. Then you could live one third of the year in the U.S., another third of a year in Europe and the rest in China. Make the whole world your home.

Snow: But I have my job to do.

Mao: In my opinion, doing research in the U.S., Europe and China could be your job.

Snow: I will try, but I cannot promise what the outcome will be. What happens in China has a great influence on the U.S. Due to the social and political instability caused by the Vietnam War, the United States is in an even bigger upheaval currently. The administration has lost the confidence of the majority of the American people, because the young generation received a better education than their parents and the science of the country has been developing, so that the people have increasingly noticed the differences between the administration's policies and what they actually have done.

Mao: [The administration] did not tell the truth. One cannot ask people to trust him without telling the truth. Why would they trust you? It happens among friends, too. For example, we have not changed significantly since we have first met each other thirty-five years ago. We have always treated the other as friends. I am a little bit bureaucratic, but I criticize myself.

Snow: Do you wish to solve the problems between China and the Soviet Union?

Mao: We have to solve the problems between the Soviet Union and us. We have to solve all the problems between all the countries in the world.

Snow: You are right.

Mao: We have to wait until both sides agree to solve the problems; we could not do anything if only one side wishes to act.

Snow: What exactly will the Soviet Union do?

Mao: I do not know.

Snow: Is the Soviet Union afraid of China?

Mao: Why should they fear China?! China's atomic bomb is only this big (Mao shows his little finger), the Soviet Union's atomic bomb is about this big (Mao shows his thumb), and America's atomic bomb is this big (Mao shows another thumb). Look, two of them will be like this (Mao puts his two thumbs together).

Snow: Will they fear China in the long run?

Mao: I heard that they were a little bit afraid of China. One does fear the mice in his room eating his snacks. And he would not sleep well because the mice were playing around in his room. The Soviet Union was just a little bit panicked. For example, they were afraid of our digging air-raid shelters. Why should they fear? We were just digging the shelters to protect us from the Soviets, not [because we were] going to invade them. Then they were afraid again when we criticized their revisionism. We would like to ask them who had criticized whom first, and who had started the Sino-Soviet conflict. They called us dogmatic; we called them revisionist. We did not

fear being called dogmatic. We published the articles in which they criticized us for being dogmatic in our newspapers, but they did not dare to publish our articles in their newspapers. If they call us dogmatic, they should have a reason for doing so. Dogmatism is something against Marxism-Leninism; we have to criticize everything against Marxism-Leninism. However, they did not do so. Then they asked the Cuban delegation to come to make peace, and request us to stop the open debate. They also asked Romania to do the same thing. I said no and that we would continue debating for ten thousand years. Afterwards, Kosygin came to Beijing [in 1965] to meet me. I said: "We do not mind you calling us dogmatic, but then why did you overthrow Khrushchev-the person who started using this term? In the resolution you indicated that 'Comrade Khrushchev creatively developed Marxism-Leninism.' Why did you give up the person who developed Marxism-Leninism? I do not understand. If you do not need him, could we invite him here? We would like to invite him to lecture at Beijing University and teach the 'developed Marxism-Leninism.'" However, he would not allow me to do so. Then I said: "But you are the premier ... the premier of the Soviet Union. Although our debate will continue for ten thousand years, I will make a concession because of you. I will concede a thousand years for you." Afterwards, he told me that it was a wonderful discussion.

The Soviets despised the Chinese and the people in many countries. They thought that we would all listen to their orders, but they did not know that there were people who would not obey. I was one of them.

Snow: I would like to give you my opinions on the Cultural Revolution briefly in order to make myself clear ...[\[22\]](#)

Mao: The problem of the conflict between the people living in the city and in the countryside that you just mentioned is not so serious. It is basically a problem between revisionism and anti-revisionism. If we choose revisionism, we have to compromise with the Soviet Union.

About the issue of the capitalist factor developed in urban and rural China, my opinion is that it would be developed, and it is in fact still developing. We have a large number of poor peasants in China; they are about 60 to 70 percent among all the peasants. Also, we have to unite the middle-class peasants, too. However, the rich middle-class peasants are developing capitalism every minute. This is what Lenin had said, not us. China is like a sea of petty bourgeoisie; there are too many peasants here. There are not many workers in this country and the working class is still young. It is also to the advantage of the working class. In Western countries, it is different to create a revolution because the capitalists monopolize the markets strictly and have many propaganda machines working for them. However, China is different. For example the religions, we have few people who genuinely believe in. We have only approximately eight to nine hundred thousand Christians, two to three million Catholics and about ten million Muslims within several hundred million people. Others believe in the Dragon King when they are ill or do not have any children; but they do not pray to him when they get better or have children.

Snow: Have you answered all the questions about the Cultural Revolution?

Mao: I only answered a part of your questions about the Cultural Revolution. If you wish, please come again next year.

Snow: Have you solved the food problem basically?

Mao: In the past, we used to shift the surplus food from the south to the north; now the provinces and cities are gradually trying to solve the problems by themselves. The other problem is to shift the surplus fuel such as coal from the north to the south.

Due to the lack of fuel in Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang and the south of Jiangsu, we had to transport fuel to them from northern China. Fortunately, they do not currently have a fuel problem. Two initiatives - the initiative of the central government and the initiative of local governments - are important. The central government will not take charge of doing everything for the local governments any more, and will let the local governments to look for what they need by themselves. Eventually, the local governments will succeed in obtaining everything they need by their own efforts. That is why we should not centralize the power; I could not be in charge of everything. We have to learn that from you, move the power to the fifty states.

Snow: This time I noticed that there have been great changes in China.

Mao: That is all about the two initiatives I mentioned earlier - the initiative of the central government and the initiative of the local governments. I have been indicating that for over ten years, they do always not listen to me. Now they listen to me. Things happen in this world just like this; people do not always go straight but make detours.

Snow: Sometimes people also go around in a circle, and then try to break through the circle and have a new start.

Mao: In short, what I always try to tell you is, our relationship has not changed since thirty-five years ago. I tell you the truth; I think you tell me the truth, too.

[1] The so called "capitalist roaders" referred to the people in power within the party who, allegedly, supported the capitalism.

[2] This incident happened on August 22, 1967, when the Red Guards in Beijing, in protesting Britain's suppression of "revolutionary rebels" in Hong Kong, set fire to the office of British Charge d'affaires in Beijing.

[3] The existence of the "May 16th Movement," however, was never proven during the Cultural

Revolution and, after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese leadership acknowledged that the accusations against the "May 16th Movement" were completely groundless. In fact, the "Movement" never existed.

[4] Mao first met Edgar Snow in 1935, thirty-five years before this meeting.

[5] Wang Ming, also known as Chen Shaoyu, was the head of the "international section" within the Chinese Communist Party leadership.

[6] Yanan, located in northern Shaanxi province in China's Northwest, was the Chinese Communist Party's "Red Capital" from 1937 to 1947.

[7] In December 1945, President Harry S. Truman decided to dispatch General George C. Marshall to come to China to help mediate the conflict between the Chinese Communist and Nationalist parties. The scholarly consensus today, even among scholars in China, was that Marshall's mediation efforts, though did not succeed, were genuine and impartial.

[8] Prince Sihanouk was king of Cambodia 1941-1955, Prime Minister 1955-1960, and chief of state 1960-1970, when he was deposed in a coup led by General Lon Nol. He was then leading a government in exile in Beijing.

[9] The omission here is in the original documents.

[10] Mao here pointed to Jiang Jieshi's anti-Communist coup in April 1927.

[11] Dong Biwu was then a CCP Politburo member and Acting Chairman of the People's Republic of China.

[12] Mao here refers to Iark Belden, author of China Shakes the World.

[13] "Hai Rei Was Dismissed from Office," first published in a Shanghai-based newspaper in October 1965, was one of the most important articles leading to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.



[14] Wu Han, a historian and in the 1960s the vice-mayor of Beijing, was the author of the drama "Hai Rui Was Dismissed from Office" and the main target of criticism during the early stage of the Cultural Revolution. He committed suicide during the Cultural Revolution.

[15] Yao Wenyuan was a Cultural Revolution star, one of its "Gang of Four."

[16] Liu Shaoqi was the CCP's second-in-command for a many years and a main target of the Cultural Revolution.

[17] Hua Guofeng would become the CCP Central Committee chairman and China's premier after Mao's death in 1976. He stepped down from these positions in 1980.

[18] The "Twenty-Three Protocols" was an important CCP Central Committee document reflecting some of Mao's basic ideas about how to promote China's "continuous revolution."

[19] Mao said "Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, Great Helmsman" in English.

[20] Mao said these two words, "law" and "order," in English.

[21] Chen Duxiu, Qu Qiubai, Li Lisan, and Wang Ming were also prominent CCP leaders before Mao Zedong rose to the top of the Party's leadership.

[22] The omission here is in the original document.