

**May 13, 1966**

**Record of CCP Politburo Discussion related to Peng  
Zhen, with Corrections by Mao Zedong**

**Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/300027>

**Summary:**

A copy of a CCP CC Politburo discussion shared with the Albanian Labor Party.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

**Original Language:**

Albanian

**Contents:**

Original Scan  
Translation - English

Note:

This is a draft that was going to be presented to the Politburo from its upper leadership.

It relates to the issue of Peng Zhen, etc.

The document is top secret and was handed to us in a single copy (in Albanian).

Piro Bitu [signed]

[Dated by hand 13 May 1966]

Top Secret**Document of a Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the People's Republic of China**

Note: The sentences that have been underlined twice are corrections made several times personally by Chairman Mao; sentences that are underlined once are corrections made on 27 April 1966.

NOTICE

(Draft)

To all central Bureaus, Party Committees of the provinces, of cities under the direct authority of the center and of autonomous regions; departments of the commissions of the Central Committee, party groups and Party Committees of the state apparatus; the General Political Department of the Army.

The Central Committee decided to retract the "Theses of the report of the five-person group of the cultural revolution on the current academic discussion," to shut down the former five-person group of the cultural revolution and its work apparatus, to recreate the cultural revolution group, which answers to the Standing Committee of the Politburo. The theses of the report of the so-called five-person group are entirely wrong. They go against the line of the cultural socialist revolution presented by the Central Committee and comrade Mao Zedong, against the leading course approved by the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress, held in 1962, on the problem of classes and class war in socialist society. These theses adopt a hypocritical stance and vehemently oppose the great cultural revolution led and developed by comrade Mao Zedong himself, as well as comrade Mao Zedong's instruction at the work meeting of the Central Committee held in September-October 1965 (which is to say, in a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Central Committee, attended also by the corresponding comrades of the Central Bureaus) related to the criticism of Wu Han.

The theses of the report of the so-called five-person group are in reality theses of the report of comrade Peng Zhen himself, compiled by him according to his own personal opinions, behind the back of comrade Kang Sheng and the other comrades who are members of this five-person group. Comrade Peng Zhen did not discuss this document, which relates to such an important issue on all aspects of the socialist revolution, nor did he consult with the members of the five-person group, never asked for the opinion of any Provincial Party Committee, did not explain that these theses were presented to the Central Committee to be assessed as official documents of the Central Committee, and moreover he did not receive approval by comrade Mao Zedong, as Chairman of the Central Committee, thus behaving improperly, arbitrarily misusing his competences and the name of the Central Committee, rushing them to all party organs.

The main errors of these theses are as follows:

1. By adopting the position of the bourgeois class and a bourgeois worldview, these theses view and analyze the current situation and the character of criticisms in the academic field by entirely overthrowing the relations between the enemies and us. Our country stands on the eve of a massive cultural proletarian revolutionary burst. This action powerfully attacks all the rotten ideological and cultural stances that still preserve bourgeois and feudal remnants. These theses do not provide encouragement to the Party in the complete mobilization of the broad masses of workers, peasants, soldiers, and the proletarian fighters in the realms of culture, so that they can march forward without interruption, but they try to hold back this

movement from the right side. By using false, chaotic, contradictory, and demagogic phrases, these theses darken the harsh class struggle now taking place on the cultural and ideological fronts, and they especially darken the goal of this great struggle, of the criticism directed at Wu Han and a large number of other bourgeois representatives who are anti-socialist and anti-party elements. (There are also a number of these kinds of people, representatives of the bourgeoisie, at the Central Committee, in the other central organs, and in the provinces, in large cities, and in autonomous regions.) These theses do not mention the poison of the dismissal from office in Wu Han's play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, which comrade Mao Zedong has mentioned many times. These theses obscure the serious political character of this struggle.

2. These theses go against the fundamental Marxist-Leninist viewpoint that all class struggles are political struggles. As soon as the press touched on the political issues with the play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, written by Wu Han, the authors of these theses immediately raised the issue in the way of "let us not limit ourselves to the discussion of the political issues in the press, but let us touch on all different academic theories, which must be discussed thoroughly and widely." In many cases they have declared that in the criticism directed at Wu Han, it is not permitted to touch on the central issues of the dismissal from office of the right opportunistic elements at the Lushan Conference, in addition to Wu Han's struggle against the Party and against socialism, etc. Comrade Mao Zedong often teaches us that the struggle against the bourgeoisie in the ideological realm is a long class struggle, which cannot be resolved through some rushed political conclusion. Comrade Peng Zhen intentionally lies when he says to a lot of people that Chairman Mao supposedly thinks that, on the issue of the criticism directed at Wu Han, a political conclusion can be achieved after two months. He has also said let us discuss the political issues after two months. His goal is precisely to channel the political struggle in the realm of culture as simply an academic discussion, something often propagated by the bourgeoisie. So it is very clear that this goes against placing proletarian politics first and foremost, and that it seeks to place bourgeois politics first and foremost.

3. The theses emphasize in particular the phrase "open discussion"; but in a very hypocritical manner they fundamentally deform the orientation on "open discussion" as adopted by comrade Mao Zedong at the national conference on propaganda work in March 1957, ignoring entirely its class content. Precisely when he speaks about this issue, comrade Mao Zedong clarifies that "we will also engage in a long struggle against bourgeois and petite bourgeois ideology. It would be a mistake not to recognize this situation and to give up on the ideological struggle. All wrong ideas, all the bad weeds, all the monsters and demons must be subject to criticism, and under no circumstance must they be allowed to operate freely." He also says that "the open discussion means that everyone is allowed to express their opinion, that people speak with courage, that they criticize with courage and discuss with courage."<sup>[1]</sup> These theses, however, place the [open] discussion against the unmasking on the part of the proletariat of the reactionary and bourgeois positions. The so-called "open discussion" of the theses is bourgeois liberalism, which only allows the bourgeoisie to have open discussion, does not allow the proletariat to engage in open discussion, and does not allow the proletariat to strike against the bourgeoisie. This means defending the people who represent the reactionary bourgeoisie, like Wu Han and others.

The "open discussion" mentioned in these theses goes against the ideas of Mao Zedong and conforms to the needs of the bourgeoisie.

4. When we started to go on a counter-attack in the face of the bourgeoisie's rabid attacks, the authors of these theses advanced the abstract position that "in front of the truth we are all equal." This is a bourgeois slogan. With this slogan, they defend the bourgeoisie, go against the proletariat, against Marxism-Leninism and the ideas of Mao Zedong, thus fundamentally denying the class character of truth. In the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between Marxist-Leninist truth on the one side, and the absurdity of the bourgeoisie and all exploitative classes on the other, either eastern winds prevail over the western winds, or western winds prevail over eastern ones. There can absolutely be no discussion of equality in this. Can equality be allowed in these fundamental issues like the struggle of the

proletariat against the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the superstructure, including all cultural sectors; or, during the constant purging that the proletariat carries out among the elements who are representatives of the bourgeoisie and who have entered the Communist Party, who come out against the red flag while holding the red flag in their hands, etc.? The old social democratic parties of the last decades and the modern revisionism of more than a decade have never allowed there to be equality between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. They completely deny that humanity's history of several millennia is a history of class war, completely deny the proletariat's class war against the bourgeoisie, completely deny the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they are faithful servants of the bourgeoisie and imperialism, and together with the bourgeoisie and imperialism they continue on a path of the ideological system of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist social order through which the bourgeoisie oppresses and exploits the proletariat, fighting against Marxist-Leninist ideology and the socialist social order. They are a group of anticommunist counterrevolutionaries, anti-people; their struggle against us is for life or death and there can be no discussion whatsoever of being equal to them. This is why our struggle against them can only be a struggle for life or death, and our relations can never be equal relations, but they are relations of oppression of one class by another, which is to say that they reflect the application of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, and there can be no other relations like, for example, so-called equal relations, peaceful co-existence between the oppressed class and the oppressor class, or relations of some kind of morality of good will, etc.

5. The theses say: "Not only should we surpass the other side in the political sphere, but we should also surpass them in a much wider sphere and in the sphere of academic and professional achievement." This idea, which does not distinguish the class limits of science, is also very wrong. The truth absorbed by the proletariat in the sphere of science, the truth of Marxism-Leninism, the truth of the ideas of Mao Zedong, has long surpassed and defeated the bourgeoisie. The viewpoints expressed in these theses demonstrate that the authors hold forth and acclaim the so-called bourgeois academic "competence," [and] they detest and oppress our younger militant forces that represent the proletariat in the academic sphere.

6. Chairman Mao often says that what is new cannot rise without first destroying what is old. Destruction means criticism, means revolution. Destruction is precisely reasoned clarification, and reasoned clarification means to build; at first, there is destruction and the building is also part of it. Marxism-Leninism and the ideas of Mao Zedong have been created and developed without interruption precisely during the struggle to destroy the bourgeois ideological system. On the contrary, these theses emphasize that "without building, true and fundamental destruction cannot be carried out." In reality, this does not allow the destruction of bourgeois ideas, and it does not allow the inculcation of proletarian class ideas. This goes completely against the ideas of Chairman Mao, goes against our revolutionary war on the cultural front aimed at permanently destroying bourgeois consciousness, and it does not allow the proletarian revolution.

7. The theses say that "we must not oppress people with a brutal force, like 'monopolist scientists,'" and then they say "let us be vigilant so that leftist workers in the cultural realm do not go down the path of bourgeois specialists and monopolist scientists." But what does one mean with the monopolization of science? Who is a monopolist in the first place, and does the proletariat perhaps not need a dictatorship, and does it not want to defeat the bourgeoisie? Must proletarian science somehow not extinguish bourgeois science? Is the "monopolization of science" perhaps the defeat and extinction of bourgeois science by proletarian science? The arrows in these theses are pointed at the leftist proletariat, and the clear intention is to attach the epithet of "monopolist scientists" to Marxist-Leninists, so that they then in reality help the bourgeois monopolist scientists, thus preserving their monopolist position in the sciences, which is very unstable. In reality, those workers who hold party posts, and who support the bourgeois monopoly of science, those elements who represent the bourgeoisie who have infiltrated the party so as to defend the monopolization of science by the bourgeoisie, are great despots within the Party, who read neither books nor newspapers, who do not keep contacts with the masses of

people, and who have no knowledge whatsoever but only rely on arbitrary means and their own influence to exert pressure on others by misusing the Party's name.

8. Guided by dark intentions, the authors of the theses muddy the waters, confuse the class front line, divert the objective of the struggle, and raise the need to "correct the style" on the part of committed leftists. The central objective of the rushed presentation of these theses is to attack the left wing of the proletariat. They intentionally collect the materials of the leftists and find all kinds of pretexts to attack them. They want to put on the mask of improving the style so as to attack even further the leftists, aiming to break the ranks of the left forces. They openly object to the clear course presented by Chairman Mao to defend and support the left forces, in which he emphasizes the need to increase and widen the ranks of the left forces.

On the other hand, they refer to people who represent the bourgeoisie, revisionists and traitors who have infiltrated the Party's ranks as "committed left elements," and they defend them. Employing these tricks, they attempt to help the bourgeois right find more courage and hurt the prestige of the proletarian left forces. They are filled with hatred against the proletariat and with love for the bourgeoisie. These are the sentiments of bourgeois fraternity held by the authors of these theses.

9. Precisely at the time when the proletariat has just begun a new aggressive struggle on the cultural front against people who represent the bourgeoisie, and when the struggle has not yet begun on many fronts and in many places, or although the struggle may have begun, the issue of the guidance of this great struggle is still very unclear for the overwhelming majority of the party committees, where they have not seriously tackled this issue and when they are in a very weak state; these theses, on the contrary, more than once emphasize that a "leadership must exist" throughout the struggle, that we should be "measured," that one must act "carefully," that "approval from the corresponding leading organs" is necessary.

All of this is aimed at creating mechanical models and inflexible rules for the proletarian left forces, aimed at tying the hands of the left forces by way of creating many rules and laws, erecting barriers one after the other against the cultural revolution of the proletariat. In short, they aim at counter-attacking us and abruptly applying the breaks on the machine. The authors of the theses loathe the articles written by the left proletarian forces, aimed at counter-attacking reactionary bourgeois "competence", and so they keep the articles without publishing them. They let the monsters and the demons loose from their liars, having for years filled our newspaper ranks, radio, the press, books, school textbooks, speech, literary works, plays, variety shows, figurative arts, music, dance, cinematography, etc. etc. They have never been on the side of the proletariat leading in this area, and they have never wanted to obtain approval from anyone. On the basis of these comparisons, it becomes clear what the stances of these authors are.

10. The current struggle concerns the execution or opposition to the cultural revolutionary line laid out by comrade Mao Zedong. On the contrary, the theses say that "through this struggle, and led by the ideas of Mao Zedong, clear the path to the solution of this issue." (This refers to the complete purging of bourgeois ideology in the realm of science.) Comrade Mao Zedong's works "New Democracy," "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art", "Letter to the Yan'an Peking Opera Theatre After Seeing 'Driven to Join the Liangshan Mountain Rebels,'" "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," etc., have long cleared the path for the proletariat on the cultural and ideological fronts. Whereas the theses hold the view that Mao Zedong's theses have not yet cleared the path, and that a new path must be opened. By wearing the flag of "under the guidance of Mao Zedong's ideas," the theses attempt to clear a path entirely in opposition with the ideas of Mao Zedong, which is to say the path of modern revisionism or the path of the restoration of the bourgeoisie.

In short, these theses oppose the execution to the end of the socialist revolution, and they are against the line of the cultural revolution of the Central Committee of the Party, led by comrade Mao Zedong. They attack the proletarian left forces, defend the bourgeois right, and prepare the public opinion for the restoration of the bourgeoisie. These theses are a reflection of bourgeois ideology within the Party, and they are revisionist from top to bottom. The struggle against this revisionist line is not a small

thing at all, but it concerns big issues of the first order of importance, upon which the fate of our Party and State depend, as does the future of our Party and our State, of the future image of our Party and our State, and they also relate to the world revolution.

The party committees at all levels must immediately suspend the application of the "theses of the five-person group about the report of the current academic discussion on issues related to the cultural revolution." The entire party must adhere to the instruction of comrade Mao Zedong, to wave high the great flag of the cultural revolution of the proletariat, to fundamentally unmask the reactionary, bourgeois, anti-party and anti-socialist position on the so-called "academic competence," to severely criticize the reactionary ideas in the academic sphere, in education, the press, the arts, the publishing houses, to fight so as to achieve hegemony in these cultural spheres. To achieve this, the representatives of the bourgeoisie who have infiltrated into the various social classes in the Party, in Government, in the army, and in the cultural sphere, must be criticized at the same time and without fail. Let us purge these people and some of them we must remove from their posts. We especially cannot trust these people to lead the work of the cultural revolution. In the past and now there have been people among these who in reality have engaged with this kind of work, and this is extraordinarily dangerous.

The people who represent the bourgeoisie and who have entered the Party, the Government, the army, and the various cultural spheres, are a group of revisionist counterrevolutionary elements that will take over power if the conditions are ripe for doing so, and the dictatorship of the proletariat would be transformed into a bourgeois dictatorship. We have uncovered some of these people, and some of them have not yet been uncovered. Some are still enjoying our trust and are preparing to be our successors, like, for example, people like Khrushchev, who are sleeping close to us still, and so the party committees at all levels must keep this fully in mind.

This notice, along with the wrong-headed document sent on 12 February of this year by the Central Committee, should be sent to the Party Committees of the districts, the Party Committees of the cultural institutions and of the regiments, where they must discuss which document is the wrongheaded one and which is the correct one, how they understand the problem, what successes have they achieved, and what mistakes have they made.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1966

[1] Translator's note: This passage is circled by hand in the Albanian copy of the document.