

**Dates of Meeting:**

15-02-1954 - 25-02-1954

**Type of Meeting:**

A serie of 7 Symposia on Gao Gang and Rao Shushi

**Place of meeting:**

Beijing

**Attendance:**

37 members and alternate members of the Central Committee, forty important workers Zhou Enlai chaired the symposium on Gao Gang; Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yi, Liu Shaoqi and Tan Zhenlin chaired the one on Rao Shushi. At the end of the meeting, 66 people from all major administrative regions and central ministries were present.

**Major Agenda Items:**

Exposure and criticism of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi

**Speeches:**

**Zhou Enlai:** Outline of comrade zhou enlai's speech at the discussion meeting on the gao gang question

Mao revised Zhou's report and approved it in advance, adding, the development of Gao's dark side made him, from one step to another, a real representative of the bourgeoisie within our Party....This reflected the reality that the bourgeoisie attempt to split, to sabotage"

**Gao gang:** he admitted that he was against some leading comrades in the center, and that he carried out factional and illicit activities. A total of 43 people spoke, most of whom were harshly critical of Gao. Gao offered more self-criticisms and discussed his liberalism and sectarianism but refused to accept the charges of antiparty activities, saying his personal opinions toward Liu Shaoqi did not mean that he, Gao, was against the party

**Liu Shaoqi** conveyed the views of self-examination Gao Gang

**Decisions:**

Gao was put under house arrest

**Remarks:**

1. Under the leadership of the Politburo, the North China Bureau held a similar meeting in April
2. on the third day, Gao attempted suicide.

However, February 17 seems to be a turning point, when Gao tried to commit suicide and did not succeed. Before this, the tune at the forum remained mild. Gao made a self-criticism on February 15; Zhou relayed Liu Shaoqi's response to Gao's self-criticism to the forum participants the next day.<sup>119</sup> Forty-three people spoke at the entire forum, but it seemed that on the second day only Chen Yun's statement had substance. He revealed that Gao lobbied him to support the "one for you, one for me" proposition.<sup>xi9</sup> According to Zhao Jialiang, Gao was extremely angry at Chen's betrayal, but this was not the first time Gao felt angry at Chen and his betrayal; they had clashed since December 15, 1953.<sup>xii</sup> No evidence suggests that there was any heated face-to-face fact checking in the first two days of the forum, while the matter seemed to be between Gao and Liu. Remember that Liu went to Gao to make a self-criticism after the FEC. Now, in a small group setting, Gao made his self-criticism, and Liu responded through Zhou. This accorded with Mao's wishes to keep the forum peaceful. If the Plenum proceeding was so vague and the first two days of small-group forum remained a "peace meeting" why did Gao attempt to kill himself on February 17? The circumstances suggest that Gao was distraught by Mao's refusal to see him despite repeated requests. Teiwes may be right in concluding that Gao's distraught state of mind was "due to his dismay that, contrary to all his expectations, he did not have Mao's backing;" he felt a "sense of profound betrayal by Mao."<sup>w 122</sup> Gao's sense of betrayal by Mao was certainly justified,

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3. Letter from Liu to Mao on distributing outline. Liu Shaoqi asks for instructions before distributing the outline of Zhou Enlai's speech on Gao Gang to cadres throughout the Communist Party.
4. Mao answers To Comrade [Liu] Shaoqi, and the Comrades of the Secretariat:  
The outline of Comrade [Zhou] Enlai's speech from 25 February [1954] underwent some revisions from Comrades Hu Qiaomu and Chen Boda. I am in agreement with the revisions. Please consider [these revisions] and decide what to do [with them].

Mao Zedong

28 February 1954

On March 1, 1954, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yi, and Tan Zhenlin delivered a report concluding the Rao Shushi question. The report highlighted Rao's mistakes and especially targeted the quality of his

character. Rao was labeled as an “extremely individualistic bourgeois careerist” with ambitions “constantly on the ascendant.”

Comrade Rao Shushi had an unsavory personal style, which can be summed up as follows: (1) Rumormongering, hookwinking [sic] superiors and subordinates alike; (2) making promises of promotion to gain support alternating with attacks against those who would not toe his line, or using a combination of both attacking first then giving favors later; (3) grasping the “pigtails” of comrades—finding others’ weaknesses and faults to use as a handle for attack or blackmail; (4) deliberately planting “nails” to be used when necessary to launch sudden attacks against others; (5) when arriving at a new position, employing a series of stratagems to pressure and cow others, to establish “who’s boss”; (6) fabricating excuses to attack people he did not like—he admitted that he often used different occasions to launch his own attacks; (7) lying and denying what he had just said; (8) presenting a modest and respectful demeanor while actually boosting his own image.<sup>3</sup>

5. Subsequently, all central bureaus and sub-bureaus, as well as provinces and cities, held meetings one after another to convey and study the spirit of the Fourth Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee and the instructions on the "Gao Rao issue"
6. From March 13 to 24, the Southwest Bureau held its 12th enlarged meeting to discuss the documents of the Fourth Plenary Session of the Seventh CC.
7. From March 16 to 21, the North China Bureau held an enlarged meeting
8. From March 10 to 27, the Inner Mongolia Branch held an enlarged meeting
9. From March 25 to April 1, the Northwest Bureau held an enlarged meeting
10. On March 25, 1954, the Northeast Bureau held a meeting of senior party cadres in the region. On March 26 and 27, Zhou Enlai delivered a report. On March 28, Zhou Enlai returned to Beijing, and Luo Ruiqing stayed to guide the meeting.
11. This meeting quickly changed from an inspection by several secretaries of the Northeast Bureau to a review of all the mistakes made by everyone in the Northeast Bureau.
12. from April 1st to 15th, the East China Bureau held an enlarged meeting