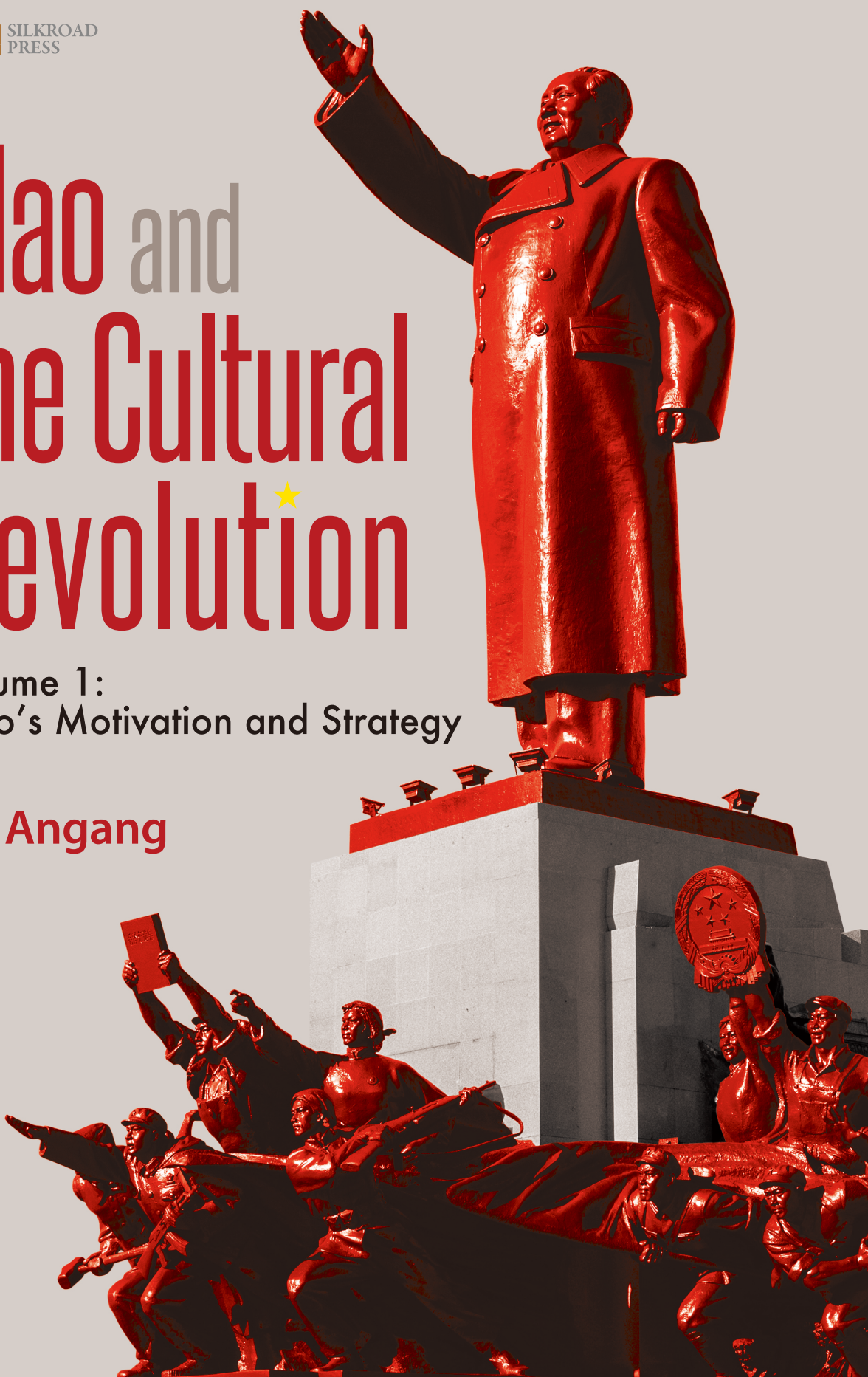


Mao and the Cultural Revolution[★]

Volume 1:
Mao's Motivation and Strategy

Hu Angang



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Chapter

Introduction: Historical Lessons of the Cultural Revolution

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a major political period in the history of the People's Republic of China. It was the decade in which the Communist Party of China, the country, and its people suffered the biggest frustration and loss since the founding of New China,¹ and also encapsulated the tragic historical direction taken by Mao Zedong in his later years. The Cultural Revolution directly inspired Deng Xiaoping to launch the Reform and Opening-up and also became the basic reason China subsequently sought "complete order throughout the country" and a steady political and social situation.

In 1981, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) conducted a specific historical appraisal and passed a political resolution regarding the Cultural Revolution.² Based on the political environment at the time, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun developed the principle of "maintaining a correct path without being distracted by minor details."³ The full text of this resolution consists of 34,000 characters, including over 6,500 characters dealing with the Cultural Revolution, and provides both a political basis and the main source of relevant opinions for our research on the mistakes made by Mao Zedong in relation to the Cultural Revolution.

Although it ended several decades ago and lasted only ten years, the Cultural Revolution should never be forgotten. This period of history needs to be well remembered, and valuable lessons drawn from the experience. As Engels said, "a large class, like a great nation, never learns better or quicker than by undergoing the consequences of its own mistakes."⁴ Lu Dingyi also expressed that, "The greater the historical mistake, the more deeply the historical lesson is learnt, and the better such mistakes can be prevented in future."⁵ Thus, it is important and necessary for us to continue to further our understanding of the Cultural Revolution.

In the production of this work, a huge and varied selection of historical literature was consulted, with carefully investigation and review of political trends and significant events during the Cultural Revolution. Detailed analysis and discussion

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1. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Compilation of Important Literature Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 808.
 2. Ibid., 788-846.
 3. Chen Yun told Deng Liqun, who was in charge of drafting the resolution: "I agree with [Deng] Xiaoping that any resolutions should be general and not too detailed." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Chen Yun* vol. 3, 283)
 4. Engels, "Preface to the English Edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*."
 5. Lu, "Reflections of Lu Dingyi in His Later Years."

of primary and secondary sources will be presented, helping to reconstruct the timeline of this seismic event and uncover the causes behind the tragedy, preserving access to this thought-provoking history for future generations.

Mao Zedong and the Significance of the Cultural Revolution

This work is titled “Mao Zedong and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” because Mao Zedong alone was the key to the launch and escalation of the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was not an inevitable historical development, but a movement carefully planned and orchestrated by Mao.⁶ During the decade of the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong was motivated by the desire to oppose and eliminate revisionism, prevent the return of capitalism, and stop corruption and bureaucratism within the party and government. However, despite these noble intentions, the Cultural Revolution became a large-scale political failure, dominating and distorting Chinese social and political life, and staining the historical legacy of Mao Zedong himself. Mao Zedong’s motivations were far removed from the social turmoil his actions caused.⁷ His campaign of the Cultural Revolution is thus a classic manifestation of the ancient proverb, “driving north to head south,” with the motives and objectives conflicting with the effects and results.

Lenin pointed out: “Frankly, admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analyzing the conditions which led to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it – that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class* and then the *masses*.”⁸ Mao quoted this passage of Lenin in 1956, remarking that communists must analyze mistakes, be them their own or of others. Mao cited Stalin as a specific example, and suggested that Stalin should be viewed in a historical context and his right and wrong actions comprehensively analyzed to learn useful lessons.⁹

6. Wang, *Failure of Charisma: the Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 53.

7. Meisner believes that history should focus on people’s behaviors instead of their words. The appraisal of Mao Zedong regarding the Cultural Revolution thus should also be based on the results of his behaviors instead of his words and motives, just as appraisals of other historical figures typically are. (Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, 274.)

8. Lenin, “Should We Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments?”

9. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works*

The events that have occurred in the history of New China show that getting strategic decisions right or wrong lead to the most critical success or failure of the state.¹⁰ Strategic decisions made by the leader of a ruling party and state will lead directly to positive or negative externalities. In China, where political power is heavily centralized, there is also a particularity: leadership decisions have an effect of scale on the massive population. The right strategic decisions will lead to great social progress; the wrong strategic decisions will lead to great social disaster. Furthermore, the longer the implementation of strategic decisions, the greater the scale of impact, leading to greater benefits or more severe damage to the welfare of the people of the country.

Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution in his final years was, in fact, a great strategic mistake, causing a huge disaster for society in the People's Republic of China. During the entire period of the Cultural Revolution, Mao remained the paramount leader and chief commander of the state,¹¹ and had the "final word" in all matters. This situation resulted from the highly centralized political system in China, which was then exploited to become a particularly autocratic rule by the individual. Mao was thus uniquely positioned either to do immense good or immense harm. Unfortunately, the latter was what transpired, and a tragedy for Mao's legacy, the party and state's politics, and China as a whole unfolded.¹²

The maturity of a political party lies not in whether it makes mistakes or not, but in whether it can face up to its mistakes and transform them into valuable historical wealth. The Cultural Revolution reflected the political mistakes made by

of Mao Zedong, vol. 7, 19–21.

10. Hu, *China's Political and Economic History (1949-1976)*.

11. Lin Biao said: "In this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao is the supreme commander and leader. We must follow the instructions of our great leader. We believe the Great Cultural Revolution will be successful!" (Lin, "Speech to a People's Meeting Celebrating the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.")

12. Meisner appraised the Cultural Revolution in this way: "The last revolutionary activity of Mao became the biggest tragedy of his long revolutionary career and also brought the Chinese people disaster. It was a big failure, dominating and distorting the social and political life of the People's Republic of China for ten years and leaving a stain on his historic image. Mao launched the 'Great Cultural Revolution', announced principles and ideals he was unable to maintain, and released uncontrollable social and political forces which caused huge casualties and social disasters. In the last ten years of Mao Zedong's government, the 'Great Cultural Revolution' plunged the whole country into turmoil and almost destroyed China." (Meisner: *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, 271.)

Mao in his later years. Although a historical failure, this event is also a source of historical wealth, and we must view Mao's later years and the Cultural Revolution in a practical, historical, and objective way, making full use of this historical wealth and comprehensively learning this historical lesson. Our assessment and appraisal of the Cultural Revolution will be based on its actual results, effects, and social consequences rather than the slogans, objectives, and motives of its leaders.

Basic Characteristics of the Cultural Revolution

What motivated Mao to launch the Cultural Revolution? According to Lin Biao's report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC, Chairman Mao had briefed him on the necessity of the Cultural Revolution: "It is absolutely necessary and timely to launch this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, prevent capitalist restoration, and construct socialism."¹³ The result was, on the contrary, a political disaster and a historical failure.

The 1981 resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC claimed that the Cultural Revolution was not and could never have become a revolution that achieved meaningful social progress; history has shown that the Cultural Revolution was a leadership mistake (Mao) exploited by the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing cliques that brought disastrous turmoil to the party, state, and the people.¹⁴

How should the Cultural Revolution, as it happened, be viewed from a historical perspective? How different was it from Mao's own subjective beliefs? How should we view the Cultural Revolution from a historical perspective? A good place to begin with would be to think in reverse about the ironically right perspective and principle expressed by Mao himself in the midst of the Cultural Revolution: the "Three Dos and Three Don'ts," which were "Do uphold Marxism, don't practice revisionism; Do uphold unity, don't create division; Do act fairly, don't plot conspiracies."¹⁵ Mao developed this principle after he suffered heavy blows politically and personally with the 1970 Lushan Conference and the 1971 Lin Biao affair. In 1973, the principle was officially written into the General Program of the Constitution of the CPC that was approved during the 10th National Congress

13. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969

14. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Compilation of Important Literature Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 811.

15. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 13, 224.

of the CPC. However, the events of the Cultural Revolution demonstrates that it was precisely what he advocated that he contravened, and it was precisely what he condemned that he practiced.¹⁶ The “Three Dos and Three Don’ts” principle thus, in fact, reveals three major characteristics of the Cultural Revolution.

First, Mao followed feudalism and opportunism instead of Marxism in the Cultural Revolution. For instance, he insisted on reversing the party’s critical view of the ‘burning of books and burying of scholars’ performed by the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, a representative of feudal absolutism.¹⁷ As Deng Xiaoping later remarked, “There was something feudal in him,”¹⁸ that “for a leader to pick his own successor is a feudal practice.”¹⁹ Mao displayed an opportunistic attitude towards the establishment of his personality cult that was unconnected to Marxism.²⁰

Second, Mao constantly created political divisions instead of unity. He maintained that “rebellion is reasonable,” insisted on a “philosophy of fighting,” stressed that “class struggle is the core,” and upheld his theory of “inevitable intraparty separation.”²¹ Political differences began to appear within the party before the Cultural Revolution, and eventually they split the party into factions.²²

16. Deng Xiaoping had strong feelings and a deep understanding of this matter, and said that Mao Zedong had begun to exhibit unhealthy thoughts in his old age. Mao Zedong’s work style developed in a direction that ran against his original thoughts and opinions. (Deng, “Answers to Questions from the Italian reporter Oriana Fallaci.”)

17. “Burning of books and burying Confucian scholars alive” refers to the events of 213–212 BC, when the first Emperor, Qin Shihuang, sought to unify and control thought and culture after subjugating the “warring states” to create a unified China.

18. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 347–348

19. Ibid.

20. Deng Xiaoping commented: “The democratic life of the party and the country was becoming abnormal, with patriarchal phenomena like acting arbitrarily, making significant decisions alone, personality cult, and acting above the organization appeared one by one.” (Ibid, 330.)

21. In 1971, Mao Zedong announced his theory of “inevitable intraparty separation.” He said: “Some people have already created 10 divisions. I think they may make another 10, 20, even 30 divisions. Do you believe me? Maybe you don’t believe, but I believe.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 13, 224.)

22. On November 10, 1968, Mao Zedong first admitted to foreign guests that political divisions had developed within the Communist Party of China. (Pang and Jin eds., *Mao Zedong Biography (1949-1976)*, vol. 2, 1539.)

The movement itself never realized real political unity or stability.

Third, instead of acting fairly, Mao often conspired against formerly close comrades, launching cruel struggles and ruthless attacks instead of allowing them to realign their politics with Mao. To realize his political goals, he placed Lin Biao and Jiang Qing in important positions, and conspiracies and relentless struggle became the mechanism of intraparty struggle and of the social movements of “overthrowing everything” and “full-scale domestic struggle,” which in turn produced a long list of cases involving fabricated and unjust charges.²³

What was the fundamental characteristic of the Cultural Revolution? In April 1969, Lin Biao gave a speech during the 9th National Congress of the CPC, describing the ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ as “a great political revolution personally initiated and led by our great leader, Chairman Mao, under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a great revolution in the realm of the superstructure.” He went on to detail it as “a great political revolution carried out by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes; it is a continuation of the prolonged struggle waged by the Chinese Communist Party and the masses of revolutionary people under its leadership against the Kuomintang reactionaries, a continuation of the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie.”²⁴ In fact, the Cultural Revolution turned out to be a series of political disasters, and even Lin himself would fall victim to Mao’s “struggles.”

Mao appraised his own political performance in leading the Cultural Revolution as “30% wrong and 70% right.”²⁵ The “30% wrong” refers to Mao’s own admission

23. Deng Xiaoping pointed out that while Mao Zedong was at fault for the increasingly intense persecutions that later occurred, he should not be held solely liable. There were occasions where Lin Biao and the Gang of Four acted on their own and reported to Mao Zedong only after the event, and sometimes they carried out such acts behind his back. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 301)

24. Lin, “Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC,” *People’s Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

25. Mao Zedong believed: “Generally speaking, the Cultural Revolution was right but had some basic deficiencies. Now we shall research the deficiencies. 30% percent of the movement was wrong, 70% was right. Maybe people will now see this movement differently. The Cultural Revolution made two mistakes: one, overthrowing everything; two, starting a full scale domestic struggle. As for the former, some actions were appropriate, such as purging the groups headed by Liu (Shaoqi) and Lin (Biao.) But some actions were inappropriate, like condemning certain senior officials. Of course, appropriate condemnation is okay because they themselves had also made mistakes. The last war ended over ten years ago, so ‘starting an full scale domestic struggle’ is

that “overthrowing everything” and “full scale domestic struggle” was wrong. Deng Xiaoping, however, thought that “overthrowing everything” and “full scale domestic struggle” was incompatible with the judgment of “70% right.”²⁶ Declining to endorse Mao’s appraisal of the Cultural Revolution, Deng underwent another purge by Mao.

Mao’s “30% wrong” narrative reveals precisely the two fundamental characteristics of the Cultural Revolution: One, it was a period of “overthrowing everything,” that is, ordinary politics of party and state was fractured and destroyed; two, it was a period of “full scale domestic struggle,” that is, society in China engaged in internal conflict and turmoil.²⁷ Indeed, Mao was the mastermind in these respects as well: the editorial “Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons,” published in the *People’s Daily* on June 1, 1966, was the origin of the concept of “overthrowing everything”; the editorial “Carrying the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Through to the End,” published in the *People’s Daily* and *Red Flag* on January 1, 1967, with its discussions concerning class struggle, was the origin of “full-scale domestic struggle.”

The Cultural Revolution was a period when ordinary politics of party and state was destroyed. Party and state institutions failed, left with only nominal power. The convention system of party and state leadership was severely damaged, with its main functions impaired and certain functions (e.g., judiciary and procuratorial) abolished. Local party committees at all levels were replaced by “core CPC leader groups,” and local government at all levels was substituted by revolutionary committees.

Party and state politics fractured as a result of the arbitrary suspension,

also a valuable drill. Of course, some people seized guns by force, but most guns were provided legally. However, it is very bad to allow people to be beaten to death and not intervene.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 13, 488.)

26. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 301.

27. The resolution passed by the Sixth Plenary Meeting of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 stated: “History shows that the Cultural Revolution did not achieve and could not have achieved any sort of revolutionary or social progress. It was a domestic turmoil launched mistakenly by the leader and exploited by counter-revolutionary groups, bringing serious disaster to the party, country and people both in China and abroad.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Compilation of Important Literature Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 811.)

dismissal and persecution of leaders, including members of the party leadership (mainly members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC) and members of the group of leaders of state agencies (leaders of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the CPPCC, and members of the State Council and National Defense Commission.) During the Cultural Revolution, five political splits within the party leadership occurred. In May 1966, the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC purged members of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, including Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun. In August 1966, the Eleventh Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC condemned members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, including Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. In February 1967, the Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC purged seven members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, including Tan Zhenlin. Between 1970 and 1971, two members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, including Chen Boda and Lin Biao, and five members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, were purged. In April 1976, the Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC purged Deng Xiaoping for a second time, and stripped Ye Jianying, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Li Xiannian, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, of their responsibilities.

Mao was the undisputed sole winner in all five intraparty political struggles during the Cultural Revolution. The Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC (August 1966,) the Communiqué of the Enlarged Twelfth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC (October 1968,) the Political Report of the 9th National Congress of the CPC (April 1969,) and the Political Report of the 10th National Congress of the Party (August 1973,) all fully affirmed and proclaimed Mao's personal success, while providing theoretical justification for the inevitability of line struggle and intraparty conflict. These political struggles, however, caused political divisions among the collective leadership of the party, organizational divisions within the party, and social divisions throughout the country. As Deng Xiaoping later remarked, the CPC suffered the greatest political setback, and the movement was a comprehensive and fatal mistake with serious consequences.²⁸

28. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works*

Analytical Framework

This book presents a history and a historical analysis of the Cultural Revolution. Creating an analytical framework, based on the available historical records, will help to provide clear historical context, analyze historical events, and appraise the performance of historical figures.

The Cultural Revolution was the inevitable result of the gradual slide of the central collective leadership from democracy, accord, and unity of the institution, to autocracy, conflict, and division. It also reflects the tortuous path towards the strategic failure of Mao. How did Mao's desire for political unity end up creating continuous political conflict?

The analytical framework of this study is based on decision-making theory, which holds that not all political differences cause political divisions, and that political divisions result from interaction between two factors. The first factor is the asymmetry and uncertainty of information, which is the information-related root of political differences; the second factor is the asymmetrical and uncertain power of members of a collective leadership, which causes the failure of democratic collective decision-making mechanisms and leads to individual arbitrary decision-making mechanisms, which is the root cause of political difference sliding into political conflict.

First, the asymmetry and uncertainty of the information and knowledge of members of a collective leadership directly influence the information structure and decisions of decision makers. Information is the major basis and reference for decision making. Information scattering, scarcity, and insufficiency, as well as costs and temporal lags in obtaining information, mean that decision makers face a problem of "misinformation": information is necessary in decision making, but at the same time, there is plenty of information that leads to decision mistakes. Obtaining information is costly and time consuming. There is loss of fidelity in transmitting information. Information selection is subject to personal bias. In China's political system, information is monopolized and kept classified, which leads to the creation of systematic misinformation. Thus, decision makers can be faced with information that is lagged, distorted, and biased. They also face the issue of "seen" and "unseen" information.²⁹ They may be aware of "seen benefits,"

of Deng Xiaoping vol. 2, 301.

29. This question was raised by the French economist Claude Frédéric Bastiat in his paper, "What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen." The paper examined the basis for the difference between economic thinking and other forms of thinking. Bastiat believes: "There is only one difference between a good economist and a bad economist: the bad economist

but not “unseen costs,” magnifying the former while overlooking the latter. Such information uncertainty and incompleteness means that it was impossible for Mao to have perfect information or to be perfectly correct. In fact, Mao was aware of the problem of information incompleteness as late as 1965.³⁰ At the time, he admitted that he had made mistakes, and that it was impossible for one to be absolutely right.³¹ Nonetheless, the idea of a “perfect Mao,” which contradicts both information economics and Marxist principles,³² was created and sustained by numerous leaders, including Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Wang Hongwen, and Zhang Chunqiao, all of whom served as members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the entire party, army, and country fell for this image.

From the perspective of members of the collective leadership, their diverse sources of information, differences in political preferences, and differences in information selection, led to greater asymmetry and uncertainty of information, which in turn causes greater political differences amongst themselves. In fact,

can only see visible consequences, while a good economist can simultaneously balance visible consequences and hypothesized consequences.” Any choice has an associated cost, or involves giving up another valuable opportunity. Therefore, one should not simply see the visible “gains,” but should also seek the “losses,” which are hard to see and may even be invisible. (Bastiat, “What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen.”)

30. Mao Zedong said: “Humans can never completely and objectively view the physical world, human society and human beings themselves. If someday anyone says they have seen the world and it has become perfect (as though they were a divinity making an announcement,) this would only inspire subjective spiritualism and metaphysical thought. Marxists do not view the world this way.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 499.)
31. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 38.
32. In 1960, Mao Zedong commented: “As Lenin said, nobody is infallible. A dedicated party identifies mistakes and the reasons behind them, analyzes their subjective and objective causes, and corrects them in public. Our party has a correct general roadmap and does a good job in practice. Maybe some mistakes are inevitable. Where can we see the perfect ‘man of god’ who can find truth at the first try? Truth cannot be identified easily, and appears only gradually. We are the epistemologists of dialectical materialism. We are not metaphysical epistemologists.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 9, 215–216.)

the members of the collective leadership could not easily predict the course and consequences of the Cultural Revolution, including Mao himself. Although Mao had said he wanted the Cultural Revolution to be concluded as early as possible, he ended up exploiting the movement opportunistically; once the Cultural Revolution was launched, Mao was unable to predict its course of development, much less control it like a “perfect” leader. An unprecedented scale of chaos occurred, including the illegal and undisciplined behavior, crimes against humanity, and destruction of cultural relics by the Red Guards, and the actions of the conspiratorial groups headed by Lin Biao and Jiang Qing in attacking political elites and persecuting officials, intellectuals, and the masses at all levels of society.

Second, asymmetry and lack of clarity in the power of the members of the collective leadership had a direct impact on the decision-making mechanisms, and in turn the extent of sharing of decision-making information and the decisions themselves. The asymmetry in power refers to the irregular and unequal power distribution among members of the collective leadership. This leads to two ways in which the mechanism of checks and balances is undermined and the structure and results of decision-making are impacted.

When the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC is equal in power to other committee members, he is merely the “head of a class” and the decision-making process is collective, conducted through “democratic discussion, one member one vote, and decision made by majority votes.” Given that information is asymmetrical and uncertain, a collective democratic decision-making mechanism allows all members to communicate, exchange, and share information, thus reducing information asymmetry and uncertainty. Even when political differences exist among collective leadership members, they can manage these differences, reach political agreement, and maintain political unity by following collective decision-making rules (such as the organizational rules regarding ‘majority decision making’ prescribed in the Party Constitution.) For instance, the Second Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the CPC, held in March 1949, approved the resolution “Methods of Work of Party Committees” to expressly prescribe that the secretary is merely the “head of a class” and their relationship with members (other classmates) is one in which the majority decision rules.³³ In the early period of New China (1949–1956), this structure underpinned the correct decisions of the Central Committee of the CPC.³⁴

When the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC has significantly

33. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 4, 1440.

34. Hu, *China’s Political and Economic History (1949–1976)*.

more power than other members, they become the “absolute head” and “feudal patriarch.” As Deng Xiaoping remarked: “Without limitations on power, absolute obedience from everyone is expected, occasionally going as far as personal servitude.”³⁵ In such circumstances, instead of being collective, decisions are made personally by the chairman, or are controlled by the “veto power” of the chairman, while the other members exercise a nominal voting right merely to express their obedience. Such personal decision-making mechanisms aggravate the problems of asymmetry and uncertainty of information. In such circumstances, any policy differences that exist within the collective leadership, especially differences between the chairman and members of the Central Committee of the CPC, can be abruptly exposed and escalate into conflict, resulting in inevitable political division.

At the time when the Cultural Revolution started, Mao’s personal powers already exceeded those of the Central Committee of the CPC and its collective leadership. In the *Notice on May 16* issued in 1966 by the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao modified the rule “the whole party must obey the Center [Central Leadership Collective]” to “the whole party must obey [the personal decisions of] Mao Zedong.”³⁶ Later, in August of the same year, Mao Zedong modified “700,000,000 Chinese people led by the CPC” in the draft of the Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC to “700,000,000 Chinese people led by Mao Zedong and the CPC.”³⁷ Naturally, the situation quickly turned into one filled with personal autarchy, personal despotism, personality cult, and non-democratic decisions centered on Mao. This not only prevented the Central Committee of the CPC from reaching political agreement, but also turned political differences into line rivalry and political struggle, eventually descending into further political division and fatal power struggles (such as the Lin Biao Affair in 1971.) Thus, an unbalanced political power structure leads to failure in strategic decision-making.

The power structure of the Central Committee of the CPC consists of three parts: the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. Among these, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC is the official leadership

35. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 330.

36. On April 14, 1966, Mao Zedong gave personal instructions on a draft of the *Notice on May 16*. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 12, 43.)

37. Ibid, 95.

and decision-making core. However, during the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong became the only real core of decision making, having the “final word” on all matters. This special decision-making system existed outside the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and its standing committee and was highly unstable, changing at least six times: Mao and his deputies Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping (1956 – August 1966); Mao and Lin Biao and their deputy Zhou (August 1966 – September 1971); Mao and his deputy Zhou (September 1971 – August 1973); Mao and his deputies Zhou and Wang Hongwen (August 1973 – June 1975); Mao and his deputies Zhou and Deng (June 1975 – February 1976); and Mao and his deputies Hua Guofeng and Wang. On the lines indicated above, an organizational structure was formed within the Central Committee of the CPC as follows: two leaders (generally including Zhou Enlai) directly reported to Mao and also organized the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and its standing committee. But Mao usually did not attend the meetings of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and its standing committee in person, and so failed to fully communicate and share information with other members of the collective leadership, or directly exchange opinions about decision making.

Thus, the mistakes of Mao during the course of the Cultural Revolution originated from the interrelated failures of information and decision-making structures. On the one hand, Mao became alienated from the Marxist epistemology he had once advocated³⁸ and from personal engagement in Marxist study and research. As a result, he cut himself off from both the masses³⁹ and the political

38. Mao Zedong stated: “Correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge.”(Mao, “Where do Correct Ideas Come From?”)

39. Deng Xiaoping believed that in his later years, Mao Zedong “spent less and less time in the real world.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 347–348.)

Hu Sheng believed that as his popularity with the Chinese people peaked, Mao Zedong became arrogant, and gradually grew increasingly detached from the masses and real life. (Hu, *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*, 468.)

Between January to July 1976, Mao Zedong commented personally on just 13 letters from common people (i.e., not from senior officials.) His comments basically ignored matters related to the lives of the common people; he also rarely investigated grass-roots units, visited common people in person, or traveled to poor and undeveloped rural areas, minority areas and remote areas. Only two of Mao’s letters during this period

situation in China. This only worsened the information failure surrounding him, and made his subjective judgments regarding Chinese society increasingly removed from reality.⁴⁰ On the other hand, political power became increasingly centralized

involve the people's livelihood. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works since the Founding of New China*, vol. 12 & 13.)

From the first letter, sent by Li Qinglin, a teacher at Xialin Elementary School, Chengjiao Township, Putian, Fujian, and dated April 25, 1973, Mao Zedong learnt that the educated city youth working in rural areas "spend their days eating grains from the black market at home because the grain ration provided by the production team is insufficient," that "they not only cannot get enough rationed grain, but also never see a dividend, and receive not one cent of income," and that "they have no homes of their own and live with local poor and lower-middle class peasants." Since the start of the sending of numerous educated city youth to rural areas at the end of 1968, this was the first time Mao Zedong had heard the truth about their situation. He decided to directly intervene and commented: "Please allow us to make a plan to solve this issue because this phenomenon is common all over the country." Therefore, during June and July of 1973, the State Council held a workshop on the settlement of nationwide educated youth in mountainous and rural areas, and organized a Central Committee Workshop to draft *Opinions on Solving Current Serious Problems Associated with the Settlement of Educated Youth in Mountainous and Rural Areas*. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works since the Founding of New China*, vol. 13, 349-350.)

From the second letter, sent by Bai Yuntao, a Secretary of the Political Department of the 38th Army, Mao Zedong learned that "there are poor households in affluent teams and also affluent households in poor teams." Mao Zedong appointed Li Xiannian to solve this problem, and on June 24, Li Xiannian submitted a report to Mao Zedong and the Central Committee of the CPC. The report said, "In 1973, 72 counties had grain production that was unchanged from the establishment of New China. Also, there were nearly one million production teams (approximately 20% of the total in China) with annual income per capita below CNY40. These teams basically had no cash distribution and some even had difficulty conducting simple reproduction." In response, Mao Zedong stopped insisting that experimental units offer two purchase prices to poor and rich production teams. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works since the Founding of New China*, vol. 13, 436-437; Editorial Committee of *Biography of Li Xiannian: Li Xiannian Biography (1942-1992)*, vol. 2, 856-859.)

40. Joseph believes that Mao Zedong's subjective judgment regarding the danger of revisionism developed through extended speculation into a political crankiness that

in Mao himself, as he enjoyed the “final word” on all matters. As Mao’s personal power peaked on the back of his personality cult and the concentration of political power in his hands, Mao also made the biggest political mistakes, contravening party and state constitutions, overriding the Central Committee of the CPC, using the Gang of Four to achieve his political goal,⁴¹ conducting “cruel struggle and ruthless beating,”⁴² stirring up political division within the party and social turmoil throughout the country.⁴³

The failures in information and decision-making structures fed off and intensified each other, leading to a circular mechanism through confirmation bias, a trap of the Cultural Revolution that Mao could not escape from. From the beginning, Mao was deeply resolute in the need for the Cultural Revolution, as well as the correctness of the theory of class struggle in socialist society and “continuing the revolution under proletarian dictatorship”. When implemented and proven to be wrong and cruel in practice, and widespread doubt and dissent appeared (for example, the “February Adverse Current” in 1967,) Mao would interpret the backlash as further evidence of the presence of more “class enemies” and the necessity of escalating the Cultural Revolution. Only towards his own end did he reluctantly admit that the campaign was “30% right and 70% wrong,” and that he had made two mistakes — “overthrowing everything” and “full scale domestic struggle,” although he remained adamant on the essential correctness of the Cultural Revolution.⁴⁴

The Cultural Revolution is a lesson in the importance of having a scientific, democratic, and institutionalized collective leadership decision mechanism. The biggest issue to be resolved is the asymmetry and uncertainty of information

enabled the launch of the Cultural Revolution. (Joseph, *The Critique of Ultra-leftism in China*.)

41. Deng Xiaoping said: “No doubt Chairman Mao made mistakes, including wrongly promoting those persons [the Gang of Four]. However, they cleverly built a clique of some size. Particularly, they made use of ignorant young people as a front. They also had a firm foundation for their actions. Jiang Qing did these evil things in the name of Chairman Mao, and Chairman Mao failed to intervene effectively. On this point, Chairman Mao had responsibility.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 347–348.)
42. In December 1972, Mao Zedong asked: “Who prescribed such fascist methods?” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 13, 334.)
43. In December 1970, Mao Zedong remarked that the Cultural Revolution had caused a full scale domestic turmoil. (Ibid, 176.)
44. Pang and Jin eds., *Mao Zedong Biography (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1781–1782.

during decision-making. First, information should be acquired from different channels, information asymmetry and uncertainty should be reduced, information transparency increased, information sources expanded, information analysis strengthened, and the consultation of information in decision making encouraged. In particular, collective leadership, democratic decision-making, full information sharing, timely communication of information, and honest information exchange should be implemented, and political decisions should be made according to majority opinion via a democratic process based on political consensus.

The core of China's democratization is intraparty democratization. In turn, the core of intraparty democratization is a strong institution. According to the provisions of Article 10 of the Party Constitution, all party organizations and members must abide by the National Congress and Central Committee of the CPC rather than the party leader personally. Through reforms of these two parts of the CPC and the construction of institutionalization, Deng Xiaoping gradually formed a practical and realistic information and decision-making mechanism based on "self-correction" that can not only avoid poor decisions, but also make appropriate adjustments in response to such decisions and prevent minor errors becoming significant, and short-term errors becoming long-term, ensuring that the future China will succeed by avoiding major errors while promptly correcting minor errors.

Taking the Cultural Revolution as the subject of study, examining the mechanism and process of Mao's decision-making in his late years, in particular understanding his thoughts, his information sources, and the figures behind Mao's decisions and actions, will help to build a good historical study for understanding of China's political democratization, especially the democratization of decision making, through the painful mistake of the Cultural Revolution.

Content and Organization

This work presents an in-depth analysis on the historical account of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution. The major questions to be asked are: How does one judge the Cultural Revolution? How do Mao's self-evaluation and an objective historical evaluation differ? Why and how did the Cultural Revolution happen and last for 10 years? What phases occurred within the Cultural Revolution? What was the main focus of the political struggle in each phase? Who were the representatives of the various factions? What were the symbolic political events? What characteristics did the political struggle have? What connections and political causalities existed between the political struggles during the different phases? How

did the Cultural Revolution end? Why did it ultimately fail? What were its social and political consequences? How does one historically and quantitatively evaluate the Cultural Revolution? How does one identify and analyze the institutional causes of the Cultural Revolution – was it simply a mistake made by Mao in his later years? What lessons should we learn from the Cultural Revolution? Why is the failure of the Cultural Revolution launched by Mao often considered essential to the success of the reform policy introduced by Deng Xiaoping? Why was the decade of “nationwide turmoil” so swiftly replaced by three decades or longer of complete order throughout the country?

This work is presented in three volumes. Volume 1 introduces the background to the Cultural Revolution: the domestic and international historical contexts, Mao’s preparations for the Cultural Revolution through building his Mao’s theory of class struggle and his manipulation of public opinion, the political reasons for Mao’s launch of the Cultural Revolution, and the failure of the intra-party democratic system. It will also look at the launch phase of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, when Mao used his supporters to attack the “rightist” faction in the Central Committee of the CPC.

Volume 2 continues with the development of the movement, as Mao, having taken down Liu Shaoqi’s allies and completely isolated him, completed his purge of his most powerful political rival. However, Mao continued to be increasingly antagonistic until he “bellowed down all his opponents at the Lushan Meeting” in 1970, and ultimately entered into a fierce political struggle with his appointed successor, Lin Biao.

Volume 3 looks at the final phases of the Cultural Revolution, as furious conflicts between the moderates within the party and the clique loyal to Mao led to a final political struggle, purging Deng Xiaoping for a second time. Mao’s passing not long after led to conflict breaking out between the moderate faction and the Gang of Four, with a bloodless coup finally ending the 10-year Cultural Revolution and the chaos in the country. The volume closes with historical appraisals of the Cultural Revolution, including self-appraisals by Mao Zedong, official appraisals by the Central Committee of the CPC during different periods, and analyses and quantitative evaluations of the Cultural Revolution by historians, including quantitative calculation of the accumulated economic and human-capital losses using the counter-fact method and statistics on incurred losses from the destruction of national institutions and legal rights.⁴⁵

45. This method involves making assumptions regarding hypothetical situations. It was adopted by Fogel in his research on American economic history. Fogel hypothesized the costs and benefits of replacing existing railways with canals, rivers, carriages, and

Introduction: Historical Lessons of the Cultural Revolution

Throughout the work, there will be analyses of the institutional defects behind the mistakes made by the aging Mao, including lifelong tenure of state leaders, failure of the official democratic decision system, and conversion of intra-party disagreements into class struggle. Additionally, this work looks at how the Cultural Revolution influenced China's reform, particularly how Deng Xiaoping viewed its historical lessons, and how its failure became crucial to the success of the reform policy initiated by Deng. The historical lessons of the Cultural Revolution have been far-reaching. No leader since Mao has been given the opportunity to copy his mistakes, and thus no incarnation of Mao in his late years will appear in the party's political decisions or institutional arrangements in future.

other alternative transport infrastructures. This method allowed Fogel to research counter-factual questions such as: What would American economic growth have been like without the railways? (Fogel, *Railroads and American Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History*.)

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Chapter

Mao Zedong's Preparations for the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution, launched and personally led by Mao Zedong in 1966, did not occur incidentally or on a whim. The movement was a long deliberated political response by Mao to a particular situation. Mao deemed the movement one of his two great accomplishments (the other being the founding of New China,) signifying its importance to him.¹

The direct cause of the Cultural Revolution lay in political differences between Mao Zedong and other state leaders — in particular, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and Peng Zhen — regarding China's political and economic condition at the end of the 1950s. Mao saw these leaders as representing "Rightist" forces within the party, while he himself was becoming a "Leftist." As Deng Xiaoping said, "After 1957, 'Leftist' thought began to rise and gradually took over"² and "[Mao Zedong's] mistakes appeared one after another."³

Here, it is necessary to discuss the following questions: What was the theoretical background against which Mao Zedong pursued class struggle? How did Mao judge the political situation of China (for example, in terms of domestic class conflicts?) How did the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) officially view Mao's political line? How did Mao conduct political drills to prepare for the Cultural Revolution? What political differences existed between Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping? Why did the differences among leaders turn into intense conflicts rather than peaceful resolution through the normal party system for managing debate (that is, the "Party Constitution" approved during the 8th National Congress of the CPC?) How did Mao prepare the public for the Cultural Revolution? What were his political objectives? Why did Mao employ 2,000 year old strategies of the tyrannical Qin Shi Huang? What commonality existed between Mao's policy and Stalin's cultural absolutism? What was the direct political trigger of Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution? How did Mao see the CPC and the government under his leadership? How did Mao react to the "peaceful evolution" that the Americans sought to promote in China at this time? What did Mao think about measures to prevent Khrushchevian revisionism from appearing in China? Why did Mao shift from opposing to advocating personality cults? What factors caused the increasingly extreme personality cults of other party leaders (like Lin Biao) that emerged before that of Mao Zedong? How did these personality cults relate to the Cultural Revolution? Why did the intra-party democratic system fail from the late 1950s? What responsibility should Mao assume for the Cultural

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1. Hu ed., *The 70 Years of the Communist Party of China*, 465.
 2. Deng, *Construction of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*, 102.
 3. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 295.

Revolution? What responsibility should the Central Committee of the CPC assume for the Cultural Revolution?

The Cultural Revolution resulted from the interaction of multiple domestic and international factors, and from Mao Zedong making impulsive decisions against the advice of others. The Cultural Revolution thus may be understood as a response by Mao to various internal and external political challenges. Mao's leadership was based on crisis response, and his style was to "challenge, stimulate, express, and react strongly (even excessively)." He made decisions based on his subjective opinions regarding domestic and international events. Mao was also highly sensitive to challenges and to the political attitudes of his colleagues. When he believed challenges represented serious political or even existential threats to the party and the state, he would experience "crisis hallucination." In this state of "crisis hallucination," Mao subjectively distorted and even aggrandized challenges and threats, causing him to misjudge and react mistakenly to crisis situations.⁴ Rather than containing these potential crises, Mao allowed small crises to grow, and intentionally created new crises. This reflects Mao's state of mind at the time, a culmination of his experiences, political beliefs and ideological preferences, information selection (the selection of information consistent with his political beliefs,) and physical and mental state (his age, constitution, physical strength, energy, health, and disease.) Mao wielded ultimate power in China, and the CPC leadership had little ability to influence Mao. His personal opinions determined the policies of the leadership and by extension the party.

In the following sections, we introduce and analyze how Mao Zedong subjectively perceived domestic and international challenges, and domestic challenges from within and outside the CPC, and how he made basic judgments regarding such challenges. Section 1 introduces the international background that led Mao to his socialist theory of class struggle, which provided the external driver of the Cultural Revolution; Section 2 outlines Mao's basic assessment of China's political situation, which became the internal driver of the Cultural Revolution; Section 3 presents how Mao prepared the public for the launch of the Cultural Revolution, matching his political belief that "Before you make a revolution, you must first create public opinion"; Section 4 explains the direct political causes of Mao's move and reveals the political differences and conflicts between Mao and

4. "Crisis hallucination" refers to subjective recognition being inconsistent with objective circumstance, causing an individual to distort the intensity of external stimulation; this phenomenon causes wrong judgments, such as extreme miscalculations. *See* Watkins and Bazerman, "Predictable Surprises: The Disasters You Should Have Seen Coming, and How to Prevent Them."

Liu Shaoqi; Section 5 then analyzes why Mao successfully launched the Cultural Revolution from the perspective of institutional failure; finally, Section 6 explains how the Cultural Revolution caused China to lose an opportunity for economic development, and led to it lagging behind Japan and the Four Asian Tigers.

International Background to Mao Zedong's Class Struggle Theory

The two big threats represented by America and the former Soviet Union were the two most important external influences on New China after its founding in 1949. Conflicts with these countries attracted the close attention of Mao, who reacted strongly and even excessively, displaying closed-minded and paranoid thinking.⁵

Mao's subjective thinking directly influenced his assessments of domestic situations. For example, he closely associated global and domestic class struggles instead of viewing them as distinct from each other. Consequently, when China simultaneously faced severe domestic challenges and peaceful pressure from the United States, Mao responded by focusing on resisting the American pressure.

In 1953, John Foster Dulles, then U.S. Secretary of State, presented the strategy of promoting peaceful evolution in socialist countries. He said that the "enslaved people" in socialist countries should be "liberated," but that "liberation can be achieved through means other than war" and "the means ought to be and can be peaceful."⁶ The Eisenhower government committed to this strategy and advocated a "strategy of peaceful conquest" through the pursuit of peaceful change within the Soviet bloc. Dulles later added that communism "will gradually give way to

5. On this point, Hu Qiaomu later argued that one of the reasons for the "leftist" mistake was the deterioration of the international situation from the 1950s to the 1970s and Mao Zedong's overreaction to this deterioration. American policy towards China, which included economic embargoes and military threats, forced China to maintain an extended state of war preparedness. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang's military attacks against the Chinese mainland sharpened the sense of crisis. In the late 1950s, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union worsened, and by the late 1960s, the Soviet Union had also adopted a threatening and militaristic stance toward China. The Chinese government (especially Mao Zedong) felt that almost the whole world was encircling and threatening "the last true bastion of the revolution," and naturally felt obligated to enter a state of high preparedness and perform various internationalist revolutionary obligations. (Hu, "Why did China make a Two-Decade 'Leftist' Mistake?")

6. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1138–1139.

a system that pays more attention to the welfare of the state and people," and that "Russian and Chinese Communists are not working for the welfare of their people" and "this kind of communism will change."

Mao was sensitive to this rhetoric and responded swiftly. In November 1958, Mao said that every word of Dulles's speech should be carefully reviewed.⁷ In November 1959, immediately after the Lushan Meeting, Mao ordered the distribution of Dulles's three speeches to central government leaders attending the Hangzhou Meeting. He also issued many instructions and stated that the Americans were deviously attempting to corrupt China through a peaceful policy that masked aggressive expansionism.⁸ In December, the Johnson government announced a new strategy of containment, embargo and peaceful evolution in China.⁹ Mao

7. Ibid, 1140.

8. Ibid, 1140–1143.

9. On December 13, 1963, Roger Hilsman, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs delivered a speech on American policy toward China at the San Francisco Commonwealth Club. This speech represented the first policy document released by an American official since Johnson entered the White House and the first comprehensive official presentation of American policy toward China in a long time. The American government made the following basic assessments:

- China was an "antagonistic power hostile to the West and threatening to neighboring countries," and was America's "biggest and most troubling issue" in the Far East.
- China was dangerously insistent on revolution, but did not take blind risks.
- The political power and leadership in China were consolidated and there was no sign of change in China's diplomatic policies and attitude toward the U.S.
- In the long run, potential existed for peaceful evolution in China.

The main items of American policy toward China were:

- The chief goal was to prevent "China from destabilizing or invading the free world and its neighboring countries," which meant establishing an "enclosure" around China to constrain Chinese ambitions and stabilize the Far East.
- Make the acceptance of "two Chinas" a condition for the improvement of the Sino-US relationship.
- Deny the legitimacy of the People's Republic of China and maintain a trade embargo against the Chinese mainland, while continuing Sino-US negotiations.
- Follow a long-term objective of "adopting a policy of maintaining strength with a firm, but negotiable attitude."

(Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's*

again paid close attention to this announcement and passed a report on the new American strategy to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping with special instructions for their reference.¹⁰

Mao was the first Chinese leader to stress the need to be wary of the American political strategy of promoting peaceful change. While this opinion was insightful, Mao also overestimated the threat and overreacted to it. Bo Yibo later commented that Mao exaggerated the danger of foreign powers manipulating peaceful change in China, and elevated it into the most serious political issue of the time.¹¹

Mao's views regarding world peace and the threat of war can be seen in an interview with a Japanese Communist Party delegation on October 18, 1959. Mao pointed out that while the international situation was improving, China had to consider how to respond if some extremist powers try to launch World War III. Shortly after, while speaking about a political economics textbook compiled by the Institute of Economics, Soviet Academy of Sciences, Mao pointed out: "We hope to avoid world war and we value peace. We agree to strive to prevent nuclear war and struggle for a mutual non-aggression accord. Our objective is to achieve peace in 10–20 years. The accomplishment of this objective would help the socialist camp and our own socialist construction."¹² Mao initially pursued long-term world peace through this strategic design, which demonstrated his agreement with the mutual non-aggression accord between the Soviets and Americans. However, the changing global situation, especially the American invasion of Vietnam and the Sino-Soviet split, disillusioned Mao, and turned him from pursuing world peace to preparing for war.

In 1961, America sent significant numbers of American military personnel to South Vietnam, threatening China with the prospect of a war on its southern

Works Since the Founding of New China, vol. 10, 467–468.)

10. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 10, 467.
11. On June 16, 1964, during the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the First Regional Secretary, Mao said, "The Imperialists have said they cannot pin their hopes on the first and second generations of the CPC, and perhaps must wait for [a softening of stance in] the third and the fourth generations. Can this work? I hope not, but it is possible. For instance, did Lenin and Stalin hope for the appearance of Khrushchev? Regardless, he still appeared!" (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1159.)
12. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee and The Academy of Military Science of the Chinese People's Liberation Army comp., *Mao Zedong's Military Manuscripts Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 2, 70.

border. This was followed in August 1964 by the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which gave America a pretext to bomb North Vietnam and initiated a dangerous extension of the Vietnam War. On August 6, the Chinese government officially released a statement to protest against the imminent American invasion of Vietnam. On reviewing the draft of the statement of protest, Mao commented, "I must reconsider my decision on the actions now because there is an imminent war."¹³

On August 12, reflecting Mao's concerns, the Combat Unit of the General Political Department drafted a report on how the state could prevent and prepare for a sudden enemy attack on its economic infrastructure. Mao reviewed and approved this report the same day, and gave instructions for careful research and gradual implementation.¹⁴ On August 19, with the approval of Mao, the State Council established a special team dedicated to this matter. This 13-member team was headed by Li Fuchun, assisted by Bo Yibo and Luo Ruiqing. Mao saw two future scenarios for world war: evitable war and inevitable war. He said, "Things always go this way in the world: if your preparation is poor, the enemy will come; if you are well prepared, the enemy will not dare to come."¹⁵ He therefore insisted on preparation for war as a means to avoid war. On April 10, 1965, Deng Xiaoping, speaking for the Central Committee of the CPC, announced that China should prepare for the worst,¹⁶ and developed a policy of "strengthening preparations for

13. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1349.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid, 1347.

16. On April 10, 1965, Deng Xiaoping, then Secretary General of the Central Committee of the CPC, sent the *Instructions of the CPC Central Committee on Strengthening Preparations for War* to the Committee for approval. It read: "American Imperialists are extending the war in Vietnam to directly infringe the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and seriously threaten the safety of our country. We have repeatedly clarified our position before the whole world: we will not ignore this development and are prepared to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Vietnam at any time. We are prepared to strongly resist the flames of war that American Imperialists are pushing toward our territory. The Central Committee believes that the current situation demands strengthened preparations for war. Officials of the Central Committee of the CPC at county levels and above should heighten their awareness of preparations for war and focus on the evolution of the war in Vietnam. We must consider the possibility that our enemies may do something rash. We should prepare mentally and practically to respond to a crisis, such as the bombing of our military facilities, industrial infrastructure, transport hubs and big cities by American imperialists, and should even be ready to repel an invasion." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central

war” that Mao Zedong officially approved.¹⁷

Regarding the American extension of the Vietnam War and its challenge to the core national security interests of China, Mao swiftly outlined guidelines on “preparation for war” and “preparation of the people for war and famine.”¹⁸ In a speech addressing the whole CPC, Mao stressed the imperialist threat to China’s sovereignty. He announced: “We shall prepare not only for the challenge of imperialism, but also the joint attack of imperialism and revisionism.”¹⁹ In fact, Mao overestimated the danger of world war and the possibility of associated worldwide revolution.²⁰ This error was later reflected in the Political Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC in 1969 and the Political Report to the 10th National Congress of the CPC in 1973. Believing in a constant external threat to national sovereignty, Mao was very concerned with controlling domestic reactions to various external influences and pushed for nationwide implementation of “taking class struggle as the core.”

China also faced pressure from its former ally, the Soviet Union. Mao believed that, like the U.S., the Soviet Union was also seeking peaceful change within China. Consequently, he issued the guidelines on “opposing and preventing revisionism” to prepare the theories backing the launch of the Cultural Revolution.²¹

Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 11, 359–360.)

17. Ibid. “We must take the situation seriously and prepare thoroughly for war. In particular, important military facilities, industrial bases, transport hubs and big cities must be prepared for enemy air attacks. We should also prepare for battles on different scales so as to exploit our natural advantages and minimize our natural disadvantages. Provided we have properly prepared, we will be invincible and victory will be assured regardless of how the situation develops.” Mao Zedong gave his written agreement to these sentiments.
18. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 20.
19. This speech was made on October 10, 1965, during the Meeting of the First Secretaries of the Central Bureaus. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 2, 328.
20. Bo Yibo later believed Mao Zedong overestimated the threat of war. (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1216.
21. “On Preparations for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” presented in the *Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC*, mentions: “...various leaders from Khrushchev to Brezhnev were ruling capitalist roaders hidden inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Once they took office, they immediately sought vainly to achieve a bourgeois restoration, usurped the power of the communist party which had been led

Immediately following its establishment, the People's Republic of China (PRC) had leaned towards the Soviet camp. The Soviet Union was also the first country to establish diplomatic relations with China, on October 3, 1949, and was followed by another 10 socialist countries. Following tough negotiations between Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai on one side, and Stalin on the other, on February 14, 1950, China and the Soviet Union officially entered into various accords, including the "Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance" and the "Soviet Union Loan to the PRC." According to the loan accord, the Soviet Union extended China a 5-year loan of USD 300 million with a favorable annual interest rate of 1%. China and the Soviet Union then entered a honeymoon period that was vital for the establishment and survival of New China. Besides receiving Soviet help, the alliance also placed China under the protection of the Soviet Union. Still, there were certain aspects of the Sino-Soviet accords that were unfavorable to China, and cooperation with the Soviet Union placed China in opposition to the capitalist camp led by the U.S.²²

After Khrushchev took office, Sino-Soviet relations briefly continued to flourish. Khrushchev gave China substantial assistance when he visited on the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the PRC in 1954. For instance, he returned Sino-Soviet joint ventures in Lüshunkou and Xinjiang to China, assisted in repairing and building railways linking Lanzhou with Almaty, loaned 500 million rubles to China, and helped China initiate 15 projects. Together with 141 projects that Stalin had previously committed to, this meant the Soviet Union was involved in 156 projects in China, all of which were core projects in the First Five-Year Plan. Khrushchev needed China's support after taking office, so he pulled the Sino-Soviet relationship closer and limited the chauvinism the Soviet Union had exhibited under Stalin.²³

by Lenin and Stalin, and peacefully transformed the first dictatorship of the proletariat into a fascist-controlled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Mao Zedong fought tit-for-tat against the modern revisionism of the renegade Soviet revisionist clique, and became the inheritor, champion and developer of Marxist and Leninist theory of proletarian revolution and dictatorship. Mao Zedong comprehensively concluded the historic experience of the proletariat on both sides and developed the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.)

22. Li, "Preface: The History of the Sino-Soviet Relationship and the Future of the Sino-Russian Relationship."
23. Mao Zedong's speech to the Enlarged Meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC on March 17, 1956. (Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-*

From the mid-1950s, significant events occurring in the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe began to worry Mao. After the anti-rightist struggle in 1957, these changes also formed the international background against which Mao directed the 8th National Congress of the CPC to resolve to “take class struggle as the core.”

In February 1956, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held its 20th National Congress. During the congress, Khrushchev made his famous “Secret Speech” denouncing Stalin. The CPC Delegation learned of this almost immediately, but had no opportunity to respond since they were informed via a draft report that was taken away after just one review. After the *New York Times* published excerpts from Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” on March 10, Mao immediately convened an enlarged meeting of the Secretariat and Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC to discuss the issues raised in the report and its international impact. Mao said, “On the one hand it was a good thing that Khrushchev’s anti-Stalin “Secret Speech” removed his [Stalin’s] mask; but on the other hand, it created disruption internationally.”²⁴ On April 5, through discussions with the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, the *People’s Daily* Editorial Board published an article titled “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” to express their unique opinions on material matters related to international communist movements. While emphasizing the essential correctness of the policies of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Stalin, the article also pointed out some minor mistakes. The next day, Mao interviewed Anastas Mikoyan, Head of the Soviet Government Delegation and Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Mao said, “While there exist some differences of opinion between the Chinese and Soviet governments, we believe Stalin’s feats are remarkable in comparison with his mistakes. We should analyze him concretely and evaluate him comprehensively.” The Soviet Union’s *Pravda* reprinted the article containing this interview.

In June and October of the same year, the Poznan Uprising in Poland and the Hungarian Revolution broke out. Mao Zedong believed the root cause of these events, and their fundamental lesson, was the failure of class struggle. Many counter-revolutionists remained, and the proletariat and other laboring classes had not been trained in class struggle to identify friends and enemies, right and wrong, and immaterialism and materialism. The socialist countries that had allowed this to occur were now facing the consequences and paying the price. Mao stressed that

Soviet Relations, 1956-1966, vol. 1, 6.)

24. Ibid.

it was dangerous to conduct class struggle without firm support from the masses and clear distinction between enemies and friends.²⁵ Mao further judged the Soviet Bloc countries to have abandoned Marxism and Leninism, and even believed that Russia itself had abandoned Stalinist and Leninist thought.²⁶ In February 1957, commenting on events in Hungary and Poland, Mao said that reactionary elements within socialist countries had colluded with imperialists and had attempted to “achieve their conspiratorial aims by taking advantage of contradictions among the people to foment dissension and stir up disorder.” Mao thus saw important lessons in the Hungarian Revolution.²⁷

In July 1958, Mao angrily rebuked the Soviet Union (particularly Stalin) for its actions in the “two spheres of influence” of Northeast China and Xinjiang during a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador to China. However, despite growing tensions, the two countries continued to present a united front to the world. In April 1959, in a conversation with Field Marshal Montgomery, Khrushchev said: “China is just like the hinterland of Soviet Union; both countries sit back to back, and each takes care of the home front of the other.” Zhou Enlai expressed the Chinese position in similar terms, saying: “If any country dares attack the Soviet Union, China will raise the hatchet against it immediately; if World War III broke out for some reason, China would fight on the side of Soviet Union.”²⁸ But soon after, this military alliance became a nominal one.

On August 26, 1959, a clash occurred on the Sino-Indian border. On September 9, a press release from the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union concerning the Sino-Indian border conflict blamed China and took the side of India. On December 4, when talking about the international situation, Mao said, “Khrushchev is not a good Marxist, but he is still not completely revisionist. His world view is based on pragmatism and his methodology is metaphysics, involving chauvinism and bourgeois liberalism.”

25. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 1, 606–607; Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956–1966*, vol. 1, 61.

26. Mao Zedong’s Speech on the Second Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC on November 15, 1956. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5, 321–322.

27. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 211.

28. While Zhou Enlai was communicating with British Field Marshal Montgomery and American journalists Edgar Snow and Anna Louise Strong, he stressed: “China will never let go if American Imperialists attack the Soviet Union or any other socialist country (Jin, *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1400.)

The 1960s saw Sino-Soviet relations turn from friendship to divergence, conflict and opposition. The ideological divergences and struggles between the two sides directly influenced the evolution of their relationship.²⁹ As Deng Xiaoping later said, “Now, looking back on more than 20 years of practice, we can see there was a lot of empty talk on both sides.” He also said, “We no longer think that everything we said at the time was right. The basic problem was that the Chinese were not treated as equals and was humiliated.”³⁰

In May 1960, Mao labeled Khrushchev a semi-revisionist. Mao said: “Now we have criticized him within the organization without mentioning him by name. We just want to make our case face to face. Someday we may criticize him in public, but we will never be the first to challenge him.”³¹

In June 1960, Khrushchev attacked the CPC at the Bucharest Conference. He said the CPC was “crazy,” blamed the CPC for launching a war against India, and accused it of “sectarianism” in the international communist movement. Peng Zhen, the head of the CPC Delegation, retaliated fiercely with criticisms of Khrushchev. On June 29, the *People’s Daily* published an editorial, containing revisions by Mao Zedong that criticized the Communiqué of the Bucharest Conference. One of Mao’s sharpest criticisms was the comment, “Who is the owner in this world?”³² This comment shamed Khrushchev into anger. In July, the Soviet Union unilaterally tore up 12 economic contracts, and by September it had cancelled more than 200 technological assistance contracts, and withdrawn 1,390 experts deployed to assist China. The Chinese government responded with a note asking that the Soviet Union reconsider this decision, but the Soviet Union would not relent. In other words, Khrushchev extended the ideological divergence between the two governments to a souring of the wider relationship between two countries. This

29. Li, “Preface: The History of the Sino-Soviet Relationship and the Future of the Sino-Russian Relationship.”

30. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 3, 294–295.

31. On May 22, 1960, during the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, held in Hangzhou, Mao Zedong said, “Based on the situation of the past two years, Khrushchev’s revisionist tendency has appeared in dealing with major problems. But we should not conclude he is a thorough revisionist or has a fully formed revisionist position. Generally speaking he is a half revisionist. Khrushchev is a capitalist politician, and not very smart” (Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966*, vol. 1, 270–273.)

32. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 9, 226–227.

period was a particularly difficult one for China, as its people were suffering from the Great Chinese Famine. Mao said: "There exists a rapidly growing anti-China trend. Behind this trend, there are not only American Imperialists and bourgeois reactionaries in nationalist countries, but also revisionists within the CPC."³³ In September, during the Summit of the CPC and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Deng said, "The CPC will never accept a relation of subordination with another political party or country. You withdrew your experts to damage and interrupt our development. But the Chinese people are ready to recover from this loss and build up our country with their own hands."³⁴

As the domestic economic situation deteriorated, the Central Committee of the CPC had to make substantial concessions to the Soviets during the Moscow Meeting (November 10–December 1, 1960.) Chinese leaders represented by Liu Shaoqi held discussions with Khrushchev and others to end their disagreements and restore bilateral relations. Both parties decided to continue their military and national defense technology cooperation. In February 1961, Khrushchev wrote to Mao to say the Soviet Union was willing to provide China with 1 million tons of food and 0.5 million tons of sugar. The Soviet Union provided this assistance to China later that same year.³⁵ During China's toughest days economically, the Soviet Union provided timely and crucial assistance.

In October, 1961 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held its 22nd National Congress. During the congress, Khrushchev unexpectedly announced the direction of "peaceful transition, peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition; a state of the entire people and a party of the entire people,"³⁶ causing confusion in the international communist movement and ripples in socialist countries. In September, just before the Congress, Mao opined during a meeting that Khrushchev was on the side of the high-income class.³⁷ In November, just after the congress,

33. Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966*, vol. 1, 234.

34. Xie ed., *China's Contemporary Diplomatic History (1949–2001)*, 203.

35. Shen ed., *A Historical Outline of Sino-Soviet Relations: 1917-1991*, 293–294.

36. The "peaceful transition, peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition; a state of the entire people and a party of the entire people" quote of Khrushchev refers to: first, the policies of peaceful co-existence, peaceful contest, and peaceful transition announced by the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; second, to "a state of the entire people and a party of the entire people" brought at the 22nd National Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

37. Mao Zedong said, "The question is this: which class is Khrushchev on the side of? The answer is the high-income class. The class he represents is the same in nature as that which imperialism represents. The high income class is inhumane compared with the

Mao observed: "Revisionists want to isolate China; however, who will really be isolated? Revisionists deviate from the masses and isolate themselves, while we (dogmatists) enjoy the support of the masses."³⁸

Tensions between China and the Soviet Union continued in the summer of 1962, as over 74,500 ethnic Kazakh residents from the counties of Tacheng, Yumin, and Huocheng of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region defected to the Soviet Union, along with over 230,000 livestock and 1,500 carts, in what is known as the Ili incident of 1962. In October, India sent troops across the McMahon Line and caused a large-scale military conflict with China. In November, Khrushchev made a series of anti-China speeches in support of the Indian government. These events influenced the opinions of the Central Committee of the CPC and Mao Zedong differently. Mao believed that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had become a revisionist party because of various forces manipulating a process of peaceful change; rather than being accidental, the changes were the products of the common actions of the new capitalist powers domestically and imperialism internationally. If China failed to fight against the manipulation of modern revisionists and imperialists exploiting peaceful change, the tragedy of the Soviet Union could occur in China too.

During this period, the Central Committee of the CPC reflected on the lesson from the failure of the Great Leap Forward and held the famous 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres in 1962 – so named because there were over 7,000 attendees. Mao had to perform self-criticism in front of the attendees and was on the defensive. He believed the suffering of the party during the previous three years was the result of the party having violated natural law. However, Mao said in August that those who disagreed with the "Three Red Flags" (the general line, the Great Leap Forward, and the people's commune) were holding back the progress of the country and the party.³⁹ Mao deemed self-reflection on policy errors inside the Central Committee of the CPC to be denial of the "Three Red Flags." Furthermore, Mao felt that the self-reflection of the Central Committee was a response to Khrushchev's self-criticism, and thus suspected it heralded the appearance of revisionism in China. During the Beidaihe Meeting and the 10th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong strongly rejected Peng Dehuai's personal letter appeal. Mao believed that Peng

low income class. Therefore, all of his opponents are low-income common workers and farmers."

38. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 9, 600.

39. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1073, 1077.

was reversing the established case by exploiting the current furious international class struggle, the difficult domestic economic situation, and the anti-China front of Kennedy, Khrushchev and Nehru.⁴⁰

On February 25, 1963, Liu Shaoqi submitted a report on the anti-revisionist struggle to the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, and announced his opinions on how China should prevent the development of revisionism. Liu concluded the following: "Never degenerate," "This is a life or death problem" and "This is a problem that concerns the very survival of the CPC and the state." Mao added: "Only two possibilities exist regarding degeneration: possible or impossible. Degeneration would transform the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeois." On February 28, Mao proposed, "Revisionists also exist domestically. We should oppose monsters and demons including the revisionists and bourgeois among us."⁴¹

On June 14, 1963 the Central Committee of the CPC released "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement." On July 14, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union published "A Letter to Party Organizations at All Levels and All Party Members in the Soviet Union." From September 1963 to July 1964, via the *People's Daily* and *Red Flag*, the Central Committee of the CPC published nine articles (the "Nine Reviews") commenting on this public letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.⁴² The Sino-Soviet public conflict reached a climax, and the Central Committee of the CPC replaced its 1950s diplomatic strategy of "hit with a fist" (meaning establishing a united anti-American front) with one of "hit with two fists" (meaning opposing both imperialism and revisionism).⁴³ A vicious circle developed, in which increasing numbers of international enemies led to a more radical diplomatic strategy, while increasing numbers of domestic class enemies led to a more radical domestic line. Each pair of trends interacted with and enhanced the other.

40. Ibid, 1090–1094.

41. Ibid, 1146.

42. The nine articles were: "The Origin and Evolution of the Divergence between the Leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the CPC"; "On Stalin's Mistakes"; "Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country? "; "The Defender of 'New' Colonialism"; "Two Lines on Opinions Regarding War and Peace"; "Two Fundamentally Opposite Policies on Peaceful Co-existence"; "The Leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are the Greatest Splitters of Our Times" "Proletariat Revolution and Khrushchev's Revisionism"; "On Khrushchev's Phony Communism and its Historical Lessons."

43. Shen ed., *A Historical Outline of Sino-Soviet Relations: 1917-1991*, 335.

On March 17, 1964, during the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao said, "For nearly the past year all my energy was devoted to the struggle with Khrushchev; now I should turn to domestic issues connected with the prevention and opposition of revisionism."⁴⁴ On June 8, at the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao talked about preventing revisionism and said there were two kinds of communist parties in the world: true and false. Liu Shaoqi added that both the October Revolution in the Soviet Union and the identification of revisionism were of international significance to the development of communism, and cautioned the CPC to guard against revisionism appearing within its ranks. Mao paused and said that revisionism had already appeared, in the form of the "Silver Factory Event" and the "Xiao Zhan Commune" founded by Chen Boda. Zhou Enlai and Peng Zhen then interrupted to stress that the enemy held power in many places, and Mao agreed, saying: "In my opinion, one third of power in this country is not held in our hands. It is held by our enemies." Liu Shaoqi had said that the current problem was the ignorance of the top leadership. Notably, the farmers of Funing County had said that support was necessary at the top and bottom, and everything would be easy with central government support. Furthermore, Liu said, "Once a 'Khrushchev' appears in China, I do not believe he will get support in all provinces," to which Mao responded, "I think this issue — what should we do if a 'Khrushchev' appears — should be circulated to each region of the country. We must resist the revisionist central government."⁴⁵ The above exchange indicates that the desire to prevent revisionism from appearing in China was not simply a personal opinion of Mao, but the political consensus of the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC. However, Mao was especially worried about the appearance within the party of someone like Khrushchev.

Mao also talked about his successor, and stressed that something unexpected could happen at any time. Therefore, official successors should be ready at the first, second and third frontiers. Once a leader dies, these successors should immediately take over. On June 11, 1964, during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao talked again about the appearance of revisionism in China, and outlined the same two possibilities as he had previously.⁴⁶ On June 16, Mao said

44. Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966*, vol. 2, 733.

45. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949-1976)*, vol. 2, 1345-1346.

46. Mao Zedong said during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC on June 11, 1964: "We cannot see many things before they happen. For instance we never predicted the appearance of revisionism in the Soviet Union, yet it happened. Certain things are inevitable and cannot be controlled by human will.... In my opinion, the

again that since the Soviet Union had experienced revisionism, China might experience the same.⁴⁷ This coarse logic ignored the enormous differences between the Soviet Union and China in terms of their respective states and ruling parties. However, at that time, nobody dared to doubt Mao, so it became accepted as the theoretical basis of the political line of the ruling party.

On July 14, the *People's Daily* and *Red Flag* jointly published "On Khrushchev's Phony Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World" (one of the "Nine Reviews.") In the article, Mao reaffirmed his theory of class struggle in socialist societies and added there exists a danger of the restoration of capitalism.⁴⁸ Mao believed a privileged bourgeoisie class had appeared in Soviet society, and that the irreconcilable contradiction between this class and the people was the main contradiction facing the Soviet Union. Mao worried that a similar class could appear in China, and directly applied class analysis of Soviet society to Chinese society. Two years after announcing his conclusions about Khrushchev, Mao extended those conclusions to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. In addition, in the "Nine Reviews," Mao clearly expressed that his biggest worry for the future of China concerned imperialists (e.g. then U.S. Secretary of State Dulles) and their hopes for a "peaceful evolution" in the third or fourth generation of the CPC leadership.⁴⁹ Mao

overall situation is optimistic, but we should be prepared. The weather is changeable, and can sometimes be sunny, and sometimes rainy, thundery or cloudy. Do you think this world is always clear cut? Absolutely not! An unclear world is reasonable, and the alternative would be contradictions. The unity along with opposition means unity on both sides. Do you just take one side? What is the real opposition and unity?" He also said: "Confidence is still a key. Will a Khrushchev appear in China? Maybe not. There are only two possibilities. But in my opinion, it does not matter even if a Khrushchev does appear in China. The Soviet Union has a Khrushchev now, but one day the Leninists will return. As the saying goes: the future is bright, the road is tortuous" (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1346.)

47. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 85.

48. The article stated, "Judging from the actual situation today, the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat are still far from accomplished in any of the socialist countries. In all socialist countries, without exception, there are classes and class struggle, the struggle between the socialist and capitalist roads, the question of carrying the socialist revolution through to the end, and the question of preventing the restoration of capitalism." (*People's Daily* Editorial Board and *Red Flag* Editorial Board, "On Khrushchev's Phony Communism and its Historical Lessons," *People's Daily*, July 14, 1964.

49. Regarding the "Nine Reviews," Mao Zedong commented, "Khrushchev's Revisionist

therefore paid close attention to cultivating successors to the current leadership to safeguard the destiny of the CPC and China, and his concern with this issue is crucial to understanding the Cultural Revolution. One of the political intentions behind Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution was to train a new generation of revolutionary successors through class struggle. However, Mao elected to rely on millions of Red Guards and insurrectionists to train future leaders rather than entrusting this task to the CPC and the Communist Youth League. As Mao pointed out, "We must especially watch careerists and schemers like Khrushchev and prevent such bad elements from seizing power from leaders at all levels of the CPC and the state."⁵⁰ Mao's political predictions demonstrated foresight, but he tended to adopt extreme views that only became magnified over time from lack of being challenged by external dissenting opinions.

On October 14, Soviet leaders led by Leonid Brezhnev launched a coup against Khrushchev. Brezhnev was subsequently elected First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union. Konstantin Chernenko, the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to China, notified the Central Committee of the CPC, under instructions from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Central Committee of the CPC immediately sent a congratulatory message to Brezhnev and other relevant leaders. The message was intended to signal a new and more positive direction in the Sino-Soviet relationship, and read: "The party takes pleasure in every forward step taken by the great Soviet Union, its communist party and its people." Mao immediately sent Zhou Enlai to the Soviet Union to attend the commemoration of the 47th anniversary of the October Revolution. During his stay, Zhou visited Brezhnev and several other leaders to begin the relationship on a positive note by expressing the desire for close contact and regular exchanges. During a party celebrating the October Revolution, Marshal Malinovsky, Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union, looked Marshal He Long in the eye and said: "We have pulled Khrushchev down. You should overthrow Mao Zedong too, so that we can further improve our friendship." He Long answered, "Our party is totally different from your party and they should not be mentioned in the same breath. What you think is wrong, impossible." He Long later reported the incident to Zhou, who formally raised the matter with Brezhnev and others, and treated Malinovsky's suggestion as a severe challenge to the leadership of

Group is launching a peaceful evolution in the Soviet Union, and this should be a warning to all socialist countries, including China, and all communist parties, including the CPC." (Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966*, vol. 2, 7781.)

50. *People's Daily* Editorial Board and *Red Flag* Editorial Board, "On Khrushchev's Phony Communism and its Historical Lessons" *People's Daily*, July 14, 1964.

the CPC. After an investigation, Brezhnev explained to Zhou, "That was not the opinion of the Central Committee and Malinovsky cannot speak on behalf of the Central Committee. Please, the Chinese Delegation should just ignore this." Zhou said, "This was never a slip of the tongue after drinking. He said exactly what he wanted to say." After the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC accepted the report of the CPC Delegation, Mao agreed with the opinions of his comrades. He ordered the delegation to protest to the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC and demand an official reply.

Mao saw the Malinovsky event as sufficiently serious that the two parties could not communicate further even if the new leader of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union apologized. However, the event also indicated that the leaders of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had no intention to change Khrushchev's policies.⁵¹ While Malinovsky's desire to see Mao removed attracted no support in the CPC, it placed extreme stress on Mao mentally and politically, and he found reasons to suspect the loyalty of his comrades. Later, the February Mutiny, February Adverse Current, and Yang Yufu Event of 1966 saw Mao take measures to suppress various marshals and generals he believed to be plotting against him, but in all cases, evidence suggests he was mistaken and targeted people who were not guilty.

Between March 11 and 18, 1965, Mao personally modified the "Review of the Separatist Meeting in Moscow" republished by the *People's Daily* and *Red Flag*. He stressed, "We must keep revealing the real face of the modern revisionists, isolate them as much as possible, and insist on fighting Khrushchev revisionism to the end."⁵² On March 23, the *People's Daily* republished the "Review on the March Moscow Meeting," which revealed the true direction of the new leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and accused them of "fake imperialism with real capitulationism, fake revolutionary socialism with real defection, and fake unity with real separation."⁵³

On August 3, when discussing the revisionism of the Soviet Union during an interview with Andre Malraux, special envoy of the French President, Mao said the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had adopted this position on behalf of a class instead of all people. This showed how the party changed. Plekhanov and the Mensheviks were Marxists who had broken away from the masses to oppose

51. Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966*, vol. 2, 861–864.

52. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 2, 345–350

53. *People's Daily*, March 23, 1965.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Now a change had occurred within the Bolsheviks. Mao extended the lessons of the Soviet Union to the future of China and said the nation faced two paths: one was the road of Marxism, Leninism, and Socialism, while the other was the road of revisionism. Mao said that while some social classes wanted to follow revisionism, the party could take measures to avoid this. However, nobody could be certain of the direction followed decades in the future. Malraux asked, "Are China's revisionist classes extensive?" to which Mao replied: "Yes. They are quiet but extensive. Their numbers are small, but their influence is considerable."⁵⁴ That was the basic judgment of Mao about the political situation in China. It was not based on personal investigation or reliable evidence. He simply made a bold assumption based on the "revisionism-oriented evolution" of the Soviet Union.

In 1966, the Sino-Soviet relationship was rapidly deteriorating. In March, the Soviet Union increased its military deployment on the Sino-Soviet border. On March 16, during the Meeting of the North China Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Zhou Enlai said that in the event of an incident: "North China would be the target of the main attack of the enemy [the Soviet Union,] and so would be a main battlefield...preparations for war and famine are essential."⁵⁵

On March 28, during an interview with Kenji Miyamoto, Secretary General of the Japanese Communist Party, Mao said: "American Imperialists threaten to intensify the Vietnam War and extend the war to China. The U.S. may conduct air raids and naval blockades on coastal areas such as Shanghai, Qingdao and Guangzhou. If the U.S. digs up the hatchet and goes to war with China, the Soviet Union will immediately invade. Actually, the Soviet Union has stationed two divisions on our border and also has A-bombs prepared. The Soviet Union previously invaded Northwest China by attacking Xinjiang. The plan is that the United States will invade from the South to the North, and the Soviet Union from the North to the South. Each of them wants to occupy half of China, taking the Yangtze River as the border." Mao continued: "One or two hundred million may die in this battle, but we don't care"; "Death is normal on the battlefield. Do not be afraid. We lost many lives in the Korean War, but now North Korea has completed its reconstruction and is better than before"; "The United States air attack on (North) Vietnam is not a big deal. In China, we were bombed by Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese but we still triumphed. The bombing by the United States is a good thing actually because it unifies the people of Vietnam."⁵⁶ Between March 28 and 30, Mao spoke many times

54. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1393.

55. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 21.

56. Fuwa, *Fighting Chinese Hegemonism*. According to "Records of Mao Zedong's

with Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, and Zhang Chunqiao, and finally decided to criticize Peng Zhen and Lu Dingyi.⁵⁷ These discussions took place simultaneously and were necessarily connected.

So far there has been no evidence uncovered to support Mao's belief in a United States or Soviet Union conspiracy to invade and occupy China, although the army of the Soviet Union naturally had plans associated with the Sino-Soviet boundary conflict that occurred in the spring of 1969. In retrospect, the worries expressed by Mao reflected serious misjudgments based on his subjective assumptions about the domestic and international situation, and his tendency to experience "crisis hallucination." Mao believed it was necessary to fight both external invasion and internal class struggle and naturally decided to promote a tough line to cope with a potential United States invasion while implementing the leftist line taking class struggle as the core domestically, but this would end up hurting more people.

On July 8, Mao talked about how most of the world's numerous political parties had given up Marxism and Leninism, and asked, "If Marxism and Leninism were crushed, what could we then do?"⁵⁸ On December 26, his 73rd birthday, Mao released a speech that laid out the necessity of the Cultural Revolution based on the example of the capitalist restoration of the Soviet Union. He emphasized the famous words of Lenin, "It's easiest to breach a fortress from within," and outlined the well-known "theory of intra-party agents."⁵⁹ At that time, Liu Shaoqi had been

Conversations with Kenji Miyamoto and others" (March 28, 1966,) Mao Zedong said: "Good preparations have been made to fight the American invaders on the east coast, including in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Qingdao, Tianjin and elsewhere. We should prepare to resist an attack of revisionism [i.e., an invasion by the Soviet Union] in Manchuria, specifically the three provinces of the Northeast, and Xinjiang, as well as being prepared for an attack on Beijing from Outer Mongolia." Mao Zedong further commented that the Soviet Union had established "A-bomb and H-bomb positions in Outer Mongolia involving two divisions. In Central Asia, the Soviet Union has enhanced its military strength in Kazakhstan on the border of Xinjiang. Troop numbers have also been increased in Khabarovsk, Vladivostok and north of Cita." Finally, he advised: "Prepare for American-Soviet cooperation to divide China, using the Huaihe and Longhai Railways as boundaries, with the Soviet Union occupying the North and America getting the South" (Shen, *A Historical Outline of Sino-Soviet Relations: 1917-1991*, 386-387.)

57. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949-1976)*, vol. 2, 1406.

58. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.

59. On December 26, 1966, Mao Zedong told Jiang Qing, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Wang Li, and others that the socialist revolution had developed into a new stage. In this stage,

purged as “China’s Khrushchev.”

The shift of the Soviet Union toward revisionism thus became the international background against which Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. Later, the Communiqué of the Third Plenary Meeting of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC in 1978 would report that the main reason for Mao launching the Cultural Revolution was the move of the Soviet Union toward revisionism, and so the Cultural Revolution started with the opposition to and prevention of revisionism.⁶⁰ Mao adopted a dual strategy that called for “anti-revisionism” internationally, and firmly opposed revisionism domestically. This strategy was most clearly expressed in the United Communiqué between the CPC and the Japanese Communist Party in March 1966, which Mao personally modified to read: “Oppose dangerous modern revisionism (internationally,) and above all firmly resist modern revisionist thought inside both parties. To ignore and fail to overcome such thought through appropriate measures will be extremely dangerous.”⁶¹

“Revisionism” entered the CPC lexicon as a borrowed word. According to Bo Yibo, the political conceptions of “opportunism” and the “wrong line” were frequently used in intra-party struggle, and “revisionism” was not used until the concept was introduced to the intra-party struggle of the CPC by the international communist movement after 1956. During the 10th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in 1962, the term rightist opportunism was officially changed to revisionism.⁶²

The question of how Mao defined “revisionism” naturally arises. Since Mao himself never gave a clear definition, revisionism became confusing, arbitrary, and changeable according to the situation. In February 1957, Mao said, “Revisionism, or right opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought that is even more dangerous

capitalism had been restored in the Soviet Union, and so the cradle of the October Revolution was no longer socialist. The lesson of this development in the Soviet Union was that the new central problem was whether the proletariat could maintain the new order and prevent the restoration of capitalism. Problems always appear first within the party, because it was easiest to breach a fortress from within. The class struggle had not finished, and the Cultural Revolution was an all-encompassing contest between the agents of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie within the party (Wang, *Reflections of Wang Li*, vol. 2, 880.)

60. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 1, 13.

61. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 32.

62. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1266.

than dogmatism.”⁶³ Mao officially accepted the “revisionism” in the international communist movement, but he also associated it with the “rightist opportunism” inside the CPC and believed both were the same. On May 15, 1957 Mao observed, “In previous months, the people universally repudiated dogmatism, but ignored revisionism.”⁶⁴ The Moscow Statement of 1960 then pointed out that revisionism remained the major danger.⁶⁵ This view was consistent with that of Mao. In the 1960s, Mao pointed out many times that revisionism was embodied in the “Three Concessions and One Reduction” (aimed at Wang Jiaxiang) internationally,⁶⁶ and the “new rural policy” (aimed at Deng Zihui) domestically.⁶⁷ Mao evaluated the “rightist opportunism” of certain leaders, represented by Peng Dehuai, saying, “I think it is better to rename it China’s revisionism.”⁶⁸

63. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 211.

64. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 6, 469.

65. *Statement of 81 Communist and Workers Parties Meeting in Moscow*, 1960.

66. In the spring of 1962, Wang Jiaxiang, then Director of the Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, proposed to the Central Committee: “To overcome difficulties as swiftly as possible and seize the chance to proceed with domestic construction, it is necessary to strive for a détente in international relationships. We should pay attention to strategy in the struggle against us by Soviet Union and India, and should provide [our allies] with external assistance as practical and realistic given our abilities.” However, during an interview on May 22, 1963 with Victor Wilcox, then Secretary General of the New Zealand Communist Party, Mao Zedong explained the proposal of Wang Jiaxiang as follows: “‘Three Concessions and One Reduction’ means making small concessions to the forces of Imperialism, opposition (Nehru) and revisionism (Khrushchev) and reducing the assistance offered to the struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American people.” Mao further condemned this as a “revisionist line.” (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1153–1154.)

67. In 1962, Deng Zihui, then Director of the Rural Work Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, suggested a new rural policy of giving farmers private plots, establishing a free market, letting farmers take individual responsibility for losses and profits, and fixing farm output quotas at the household level. Mao Zedong severely punished Deng, not only removing him from his position, but also dissolved the Rural Work Department of the Central Committee of the CPC.

68. Mao Zedong’s Speech on the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC on September 24, 1962. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1252.)

Mao talked constantly about how “poverty leads to revolution and affluence turns to revisionism.”⁶⁹ He even believed that “poverty is socialism” and “affluence is revisionism.”⁷⁰ His judgments about revisionism, however, was not supported by extensive investigation. Most of his judgments were subjective, unscientific, and based on simplistic and absurd logic. Mao developed his own political logic that was characterized by path dependence, closed-mindedness, and absolutism – “the only one representative of rightness.” Similarly, the Cultural Revolution’s objective of opposing and preventing revisionism also became confusing, arbitrary, and opportunist. Even Mao himself could not explain his objectives in the Cultural Revolution, not to mention the historical basis tested by social practices. As the top political leader of the CPC, Mao had sole power to define “revisionism” and determine what kinds of people were “revisionists.” During the Cultural Revolution, however, Mao simply labelled dissidents as revisionists. A single ill-considered word could result in political or actual death; such were the fates of Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, and Chen Boda.

In the 1960s, China’s national security faced a huge challenge from the two superpowers of the United States and Soviet Union. Mao first announced a policy of “Oppose American Imperialists and Modern Revisionists in the Soviet Union.” However, this policy had the potential to be a double-edged political sword aimed at both international and domestic struggles. Nobody within the Central Committee of the CPC anticipated that this policy would come to determine Mao’s basic judgments about the political situation in China.

Mao’s deep worry and sense of crisis are reflected in his poetry during this period. On November 17, 1961, Mao wrote “Reply to Comrade Guo Moruo,” which contained the phrase, “But the malignant demon must wreak havoc”; in December 1961, his poem “Ode to the Plum Blossom” referred to “On the ice-clad rock rising high and sheer”; on December 16, 1962, his “Winter Clouds” expressed “Winter clouds snow-laden, cotton fluff flying. None or few the unfallen flowers. Chill waves sweep through steep skies. Yet earth’s gentle breath grows warm.”⁷¹ These poems reflect Mao Zedong’s heavy mood and negative assessment of the international situation. He was very sensitive to changes in the international or domestic microclimate, and to how such changes could provoke drastic political responses. This sensitivity conforms to the mode “challenge-stimulation — reaction-response.” Mao’s basic judgments regarding the political situation in China, and his “philosophy of struggle” were reaffirmed as the informational and theoretical

69. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1154.

70. Ibid.

71. Mao, *Chairman Mao’s Poems*.

basis of his famous theory of “taking the class struggle as the core.” The Party Constitution approved by the 9th National Congress of the CPC in 1969 predicted that the socialist society in China would see a long period in which “the threat of overthrow and invasion by imperialism and modern revisionism will exist.”

As stated in the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981, the leadership of the Soviet Union had launched the Sino-Soviet split and extended an argument about principle between two political parties into a dispute between two states. Further, the Soviet Union had previously imposed enormous political, economic, and military pressure on China and forced China into a struggle against the big-power chauvinism of the Soviet Union. In this context, the “anti-revisionism” movement spread throughout China, class struggle erroneously spread throughout the CPC, and intra-party relationships became tense as normal disagreements among party members were treated as manifestations of “revisionism” or “line struggle.” The CPC found it impossible to resist the “leftist” opinions of Mao and others. The Sino-Soviet split thus provided the crucial international background to Mao Zedong’s launch of the Cultural Revolution.

Mao Zedong’s Basic Assessment of the Political Situation in China

In July 1945, in a response to a question from a group (including Huang Yanpei) that visited Yan’an, Mao Zedong described how the CPC could avoid the temporal limitations on power faced by previous feudal dynasties or contemporary governments in democratic countries. As Mao put it, “We have found a new way to overcome this limited life cycle. That new road is democracy. The grip of the government on power cannot be loosened if the government is under the supervision of the people. Transitions of power will be peaceful and the government will never be terminated abnormally provided the people assume responsibility for supervising the government.”⁷² The CPC was not yet in power at that time but Mao had already considered this vital future issue. However, Mao needed practical experience to determine the type of democracy best suited to China, the best way to achieve democracy, and how to realize his objectives for the CPC.

How did Mao judge the domestic political situation on the eve of the establishment of New China? In March 1949, in the Report of the Second Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao pointed out that after the proletariat had assumed control over the state, the main domestic contradiction

72. Huang, *A Trip to Yan’an; Visits of Mao Zedong*, 116.

was the “contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie.” Mao also reminded the CPC: “After the enemies with guns are destroyed, some enemies without guns will still exist and incite a life-and-death struggle. So we should never ignore these enemies. We will make serious mistakes if we cannot identify the problem as we can now.”⁷³ At that time, Mao had not clearly identified the “enemies without guns,” but his concern at their existence became the historical background for his policy of “taking class struggle as the core” and launching the Cultural Revolution.⁷⁴

After the founding of New China in 1949, Mao remained focused on how to maintain the CPC as a strong ruling party. On March 23, 1949, before the Central Committee of the CPC left Xibaipo, a mountain village in Hebei, to return to Beijing, Mao told other leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC, “We are to undergo ‘examination’ in Beijing today,” to which Zhou Enlai replied, “We shall pass the examination and will never return.” Mao immediately added: “Return means failure. We must not become another Li Zicheng.”⁷⁵ (Li Zicheng led a peasant rebellion that overthrew the Ming Dynasty and established the short-lived Shun Dynasty. Mao’s words show that he did not wish the CPC to become another weak and transient dynasty of the type founded by Li Zicheng, with its rule marred by corruption, fighting amongst the leadership, and separation from the masses.)

Mao thus had always been concerned with how to prevent the CPC from becoming corrupted once it achieved power. Once the CPC had spent a decade in power, Mao grew concerned with how to avoid a ‘Khrushchev’ appearing. One of the important political causes of the Cultural Revolution was that Mao saw potential for a ‘dark side’ to emerge within the CPC, particularly now it had become the government, and wanted to mobilize the masses (especially the most disenfranchised) to counteract this ‘dark side’ and clean up bureaucrats or privileged classes that had emerged within the CPC. His positive aims and

73. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 4, 1427, 1433.

74. In Section I of the Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC, titled “Preparation for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” after referencing the words of Mao Zedong, the report states: “Chairman Mao predicted the long-term and complex class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and thus considers that the entire CPC must struggle against Imperialist, Kuomintang and bourgeois forces in the political, ideological, economic, cultural and diplomatic fields.” (Lin, “Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC,” *People’s Daily*, 28 April, 1969.)

75. Chen, *Analyses of Mao Zedong’s Reading Notes*, vol. 2.

proactive spirit were admirable, but his rigid adherence to theory kept leading him away from objective reality. Mao Zedong controlling the collective, and replaced democracy with arbitrary rule, and rule of law with dictatorship. Following this course led to more failures than successes and more disasters than achievements.

Hu Yaobang later remarked: "After the CPC took the helm of the state and completed the socialist reconstruction of the ownership of production materials, it failed to solve the problem regarding what should be taken as the core between class struggle and socialist construction."⁷⁶ As a result, two lines formed in the CPC. Mao directed one line, a non-mainstream line. Meanwhile, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping directed the other line, a mainstream line. Mao would not have enjoyed the vast power that he did if he had not damaged the democratic decision-making system within the CPC and left autocratic despotism as the only workable tool for exerting control. However, even as Mao increasingly bypassed established party organs, his personal opinions still influenced the Central Committee of the CPC.

It is necessary to understand how Mao viewed the political situation of China, how his views changed, and how, as supreme leader of the CPC, he influenced the thinking of both the Central Committee of the CPC and the party as a whole regarding the shift from "taking economic construction as the core" to "taking class struggle as the core."

In April 1956, Mao said: "We should unite everyone who can be united to reduce the number of our enemies to the minimum possible. In this way, only the imperialists and their minor domestic followers — the capitalist and feudal classes closely connected with them — will be left for us to deal with. The more friends and fewer enemies we have, the better. Our party must fully utilize all the forces available to attain this goal. Taking unity as the core may be considered a guideline for governance."⁷⁷ On September 15th, in the Political Report of the Central Committee of the CPC to the 8th National Congress, Liu Shaoqi published basic judgments regarding the political situation of China. He pointed out that the tasks of socialist reconstruction had basically been completed: "The problem of the winner between socialism and capitalism in our country has been solved."⁷⁸ The 8th National Congress of the CPC correctly analyzed the domestic situation and accordingly made a major decision to alter the priority of the work of the CPC.⁷⁹

76. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 19.

77. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 62.

78. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 219.

79. The 8th National Congress of the CPC concluded that the major domestic contradiction

Table 2.1 Mao Zedong's Understanding of China's Political Situation (1956–1966)

Time / Venue	Mao's Assessment	Political Background	Source
November 1956 / Second Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee	Guarding against the emergence of an aristocracy that was divorced from the masses within the party	Events in Poland and Hungary; Mao advanced the policy of allowing the "hundred flowers to bloom" and the "hundred schools of thoughts" to contend	<i>Selected Works of Mao Zedong</i> , vol. 5, 325–326.
December 1956	Class conflicts had largely been resolved	Socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce basically complete	<i>Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China</i> , vol.6, 255.
January 1957 / Meeting for party secretaries at provincial, municipal, and autonomous region levels	Many social conflicts were classified as conflicts among the people	Consolidating the party and rectifying working style	<i>Selected Works of Mao Zedong</i> , vol. 5, 357.
May 15, 1957	Rightists accounted for 1%–10% of non-party intellectuals in society	Democrats invited to air opinions and put forward suggestions	<i>Selected Works of Mao Zedong</i> , vol. 5, 424–426.
October 13, 1957	10% of people disapproved of or opposed socialism; those who firmly opposed socialism accounted for 2%	Anti-rightist campaign	<i>Selected Works of Mao Zedong</i> , vol. 5, 482–483.

Mao Zedong's Preparations for the Cultural Revolution

(Cont'd)

Time / Venue	Mao's Assessment	Political Background	Source
August 1959 / Eighth Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee	The struggle at the Lushan Conference was the continuation of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat over the past 10 years. Rightist opportunism posed a major risk to the party.	Criticism of Peng Dehuai and other leaders at the Lushan Conference.	Mao, "The Origins of Guns and Mortars and Other Matters," August 1959; resolution approved the Eighth Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee.
January 1961 / Ninth Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee	Productivity of 30% of counties, communes, and production teams was high; 50% was intermediate, and 20% was low.	Terrible natural disasters.	Mao Zedong's speech delivered at the Ninth Plenary Session of 8th CPC Central Committee, January 1961
January 1962 / Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres	Within socialist society, there was emergence of new bourgeois elements and class enemies (landlords, affluent peasants, reactionary elements, evil people, and rightists,) who accounted for 4%–5% (26.92–33.65 million) of the population.	Chiang Kai-shek attacked mainland China; border conflicts between China and India.	<i>Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China</i> , vol.10, 71–72.
January 1964	If revisionists seized power, capitalist restoration would occur in China. If China emulated the Soviet Union, revisionism would one day appear in China.	Socialist Education Movement.	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1338.

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(Cont'd)

Time / Venue	Mao's Assessment	Political Background	Source
June 1964 / Central Working Conference	In China, 1/3 of the power rested in enemy hands, not party hands. Revisionism emerged in the CPC Central Committee and it had to be defeated.	Public debate between China and the Soviet Union.	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1345.
July 1964	In the light of dramatic changes in the Soviet Union, imperialists rested their hopes on peaceful evolution in the third and fourth generation of the central collective leadership.	Peaceful evolution in the Soviet Union.	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1303.
November 1964	At least 1/2 of the power in the area of culture was not controlled by the CPC.	Revolution in literature and the arts	<i>Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events</i> , vol. 2, 1227.
December 27, 1964	The CPC had at least two factions—socialist and capitalist factions.	Socialist Education Movement.	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1393.
January 15, 1965	The bureaucratic class and the working class along with poor peasants were two antagonistic classes: the working class was bound to overthrow the bureaucratic class.	Socialist Education Movement.	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1388–1389.
August 1965	Though few in number, Chinese revisionists had extensive influence and some social classes chose to follow revisionism.	The Soviet Union deployed military forces along the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian border.	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1393.

Mao Zedong's Preparations for the Cultural Revolution

(Cont'd)

Time / Venue	Mao's Assessment	Political Background	Source
September 1965	Guarding against revisionism within the CPC Central Committee, which posed the greatest danger.		<i>Red Flag</i> , issue 13, 1967.
February 1966	After the reactionary line is eliminated, other similar lines will appear in the future. It is therefore necessary to continue the struggle; otherwise, many positions will be occupied by reactionary lines.	Jiang Qing sought political support from Lin Biao and formed a political alliance with Lin.	<i>Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China</i> , vol. 12, 25.
March 1966 / Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau	Bourgeois intellectuals dominated academic and educational circles. With the furthering of the socialist revolution, they would increasingly revolt against socialism and reveal their anti-party and anti-socialist nature.	Criticism of Wu Han and Jian Bozan.	<i>Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 25.
April 14, 1966	In contrast to workers and peasants, intellectuals had no political consciousness and immersed themselves only in books and concepts. Therefore, they were an easy target for counter-revolutionaries, those wanting to restore capitalism, and revisionists.		<i>Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China</i> , vol. 12, 35.

(Cont'd)

Time / Venue	Mao's Assessment	Political Background	Source
April 16–26, 1966 / Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau	Revisionism emerged within the party, government, and army	Criticism of Peng Zhen for political errors; Report Outline of the Five-Member Cultural Revolution Group revoked; five-member Cultural Revolution Group dissolved	<i>Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)</i> , vol. 2, 1407–1408.
May 5, 1966 / Mao Zedong met with Mehmet Shehu	Millions of older intellectuals in China dominated the people's cultural education.	Launch of the Cultural Revolution	<i>Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance: The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"</i> , 109.
May 7, 1966	Bourgeois intellectuals had ruled China's schools for a long period	Cultural Revolution	Mao, "Letter to Lin Biao", <i>People's Daily</i> , August 5, 1966.
May 1966 / Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau	Power in cultural fields was usurped by the bourgeoisie; there were bourgeois representatives in the CPC Central Committee, central organizations, provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions. Some were unmasked by their actions; others won trust and were groomed as successors to party leadership, but were really Krushchevian revisionists	Continuing struggle against the Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dengyi, and Yang Shangkun anti-party clique.	"Notice on May 16," <i>People's Daily</i> , May 18, 1967

Mao Zedong's Preparations for the Cultural Revolution

(Cont'd)

Time / Venue	Mao's Assessment	Political Background	Source
August 1966 / Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee	Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping bourgeois faction attacked	Cultural Revolution.	Mao, "Bombarding the Headquarters", August 5, 1966.

Sources: Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5; Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 10–12; Bo, *Review of Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2; Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2; He, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2; Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 3; Xu, *Mao Zedong's Theories and Practices in His Later Years (1956–1966)*; Chen, *Analyses of Mao Zedong's Reading Notes*; Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance: The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*.

Although Mao is often said to have adopted the mainstream line, he actually represented a divergent path. Since the events in Poland and Hungary in 1956, Mao began to misjudge the political situation of China. He significantly altered the line of the revolutionary party to "taking the class struggle as the core." This marked the beginning of a significant divergence between Mao and other leaders such as Liu Shaoqi.⁸⁰

In February 1957, in the article "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," Mao said: "There are two kinds of class contradictions before

in China was between the people's demand for the construction of an advanced industrial nation and the reality of being an underdeveloped agricultural nation, as well as between the people's need for rapid economic and cultural development and the actual state of economic and cultural underdevelopment. This contradiction is essentially between having an advanced socialist system and underdevelopment in national productivity. Thus, the priority of the CPC and the nation was to concentrate their efforts to transform China from an underdeveloped agricultural country into an advanced industrial country and thus resolve this contradiction. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 9, 341.)

80. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

us – the contradiction between ourselves and enemies and the contradiction among the people. These are completely different kinds of contradictions.” Mao also believed that both antagonism and non-antagonism existed between the exploited and exploiting classes.⁸¹ This belief represented a significant theoretical innovation. Mao also stated: “In China, although socialist transformation has essentially been completed regarding ownership...there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remolding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started.” He maintained: “In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism and capitalism, is not really settled yet,” and “the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will be protracted, tortuous, and at times even very sharp.”⁸² These beliefs became the basis of Mao’s theory of class struggle in socialist society, signaling a shift in the guideline for governance from “unite all who can be united” to “take class struggle as the core.”⁸³ Lin Biao, in his *Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC* of 1969, praised Mao for correctly pointing out the error made by Liu Shaoqi in his 1956 opinion that “The problem about which is the winner between socialism and capitalism in our country has been solved.” Furthermore, Lin’s report strongly praised the theory of Mao: “For the first time in the theories and practices of international communist movements, the theory that the classes and class struggle still exist, and that the proletariat must continue the revolution even after completing the basic socialist reconstruction of the ownership of production materials, has been expressly presented.”⁸⁴

In April 1969, Liu Shaoqi made an observation regarding the political situation of China, namely that the major contradiction in the socialist stage of China’s development was that among the people, and most particularly that between the officials and the common people.⁸⁵ This judgment was objective and correct.

81. Mao Zedong believed that the contradictions among the people included contradictions among the working class, farmers, intellectuals; between the working class and farmers; between the working class and other laborers and the bourgeoisie; contradictions among the bourgeois; and so on. Mao then stressed that the contradictions among the working classes were non-antagonistic. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 211.)

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid, 62.

84. Lin, “Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC,” *People’s Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

85. On April 27, 1957, during the Shanghai Party Members and Officials Conference, Liu Shaoqi said: “The main contradiction in socialist society is the contradiction among the

Accordingly, the core focus of the CPC should be democracy and rule by law rather than class struggle, and the main task should be to educate CPC and government officials through constructive criticism and gentle self-criticism instead of periodic political movements. Liu announced that, to prevent special treatment of leaders, the party should criticize the privilege enjoyed by officials, as well as socialist chauvinist thought, subjectivist thought, and bureaucratist thought.⁸⁶ In this context, Mao's judgment that the contradiction between party officials and the common people was part of the contradiction among the people appears consistent and appropriate.

However, since June 1969, under instructions from Mao, the Central Committee of the CPC suddenly turned its focus from the rectification of the party and its working style to anti-rightist struggle.⁸⁷ Mao directed that the anti-rightist struggle should proceed in this manner: first, select targets and define them as "rightists." The identification of the targets as "rightists" would make them objects of struggle, or objects of the contradiction between the party and its enemies. Second, determine the proportion of targets of the total population involved in the struggle. According to Mao's arbitrary estimate, rightists accounted for 1–10% of non-party intellectuals. At that time, there were about 5 million intellectuals in China, which implied 50,000–500,000 rightists. Third, after determining the size of the target population, ensure the actual struggle extends slightly beyond the target size so that the task objectives are thoroughly completed. Thus, the campaign targeted 550,000 so-called "rightists." The directions Mao gave reflect the highly arbitrary way in which rightists were identified, class struggles were instigated, and struggle subjects increased at will, all of which had serious social consequences. As the

people, and the main contradiction among the people is the contradiction between the masses and the leaders, more precisely between bureaucratism and the masses." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 303)

86. Xu, *Theories and Practices of Mao Zedong in His Later Years (1956–1976)*, 75–76.

87. The relevant documents of the Central Committee of the CPC include: *Organize Our Strength to Resist the Furious Attacks of Rightists*, an internal instruction from the Central Committee of the CPC issued on June 18, 1957; *Things Are Changing*, released by the Central Policy Research Center on June 12, 1957; *Instruction on Purging and Isolating Bourgeois Rightists*, released by the Central Committee of the CPC on June 26, 1957; *Situation in the Summer of 1957*, published by Mao Zedong in July, 1957; and *Standards for the Classification of Rightists*, approved by the Third Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in October, 1957 to conclude the work-style rectification movement and anti-rightist struggle.

resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 noted, the anti-rightist struggle was greatly extended so that many intellectuals, patriots and officials within the CPC were mistakenly identified as “rightists,” with tragic results.⁸⁸

The direct political consequence of the anti-rightist struggle was that Mao denied the line of “taking economic construction as the core,” which had been party policy since the 8th National Congress of the CPC, and promoted the theory of “class struggle in socialist society.” This theory of class struggle then became the basis for a series of political movements. In September 1969, Mao announced that the main contradiction throughout the transitional period of a socialist society was that between socialism and capitalism — that is, a contradiction existed between the working class and the bourgeoisie. This judgment differed from that regarding the main domestic contradiction in the resolutions approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC. In October, at the Third Plenary Meeting of the Eighth CPC Central Committee, Mao reaffirmed this opinion,⁸⁹ changing the right judgment of the previous resolutions approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC on the situations in China.

In 1958, the Second Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC formally altered the CPC’s judgments of the resolutions approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC.⁹⁰ Mao also changed the nature of the contradiction that the CPC needed to overcome, from the “contradiction among the people” to the “contradiction between ourselves and our enemies.” During this period, Liu Shaoqi accepted Mao’s opinions on class struggle, but prioritized the struggle objectives differently. Notably, the plenary meeting saw the CPC accept that two exploiting classes existed.⁹¹

88. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 805.

89. Mao Zedong said, “The conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and the conflict between the socialist and capitalist roads, are undoubtedly the main conflicts in current Chinese society.” (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 657.)

90. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 1, 722.

91. The documents recording the Second Meeting of the 8th National Congress of the CPC described two exploiting classes: the first exploiting class included anti-socialist bourgeois rightists, suppressed comprador bourgeoisie, and other reactionaries; the bourgeois rightists comprised the agents of imperialism, residual feudal comprador forces, and Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang. The second exploiting class included national bourgeoisie and intellectuals who accepted gradual socialist reconstruction, most of whom were wavering between the socialist and capitalist roads. (Party

After the Lushan Meeting in 1959, Mao's class struggle theory aggressively expanded, with its application extended from outside the party to inside the party, and from lower levels to higher levels. Mao believed that the conflict between himself and Peng Dehuai reflected not simply a difference in opinion, but an extension of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the context of the ongoing socialist revolution.

On August 9, the Central Committee of the CPC formally launched the anti-rightist movement.⁹² The Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, held during May and June 1961, organized special discussions of the problems of rehabilitation and identification, and Mao performed self-criticism regarding the extension of the anti-rightist movement to grassroots units. According to statistics on the identification and rehabilitation of rightists, as of August 1962, some 6.95 million so-called "rightists" had been rehabilitated. Including their families, this meant over 20 million people were affected.⁹³ As pointed out by the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981, the struggle that began with the Lushan Meeting seriously damaged the democratic life of the CPC, from the central government to the grassroots units. It had interrupted the correct course of leftism, and led to mistakes persisting longer.⁹⁴

During the Great Chinese Famine, Mao focused on class enemies and pushed strongly for class struggle. These actions diverted attention from his mistakes. During this period, from 1959 to 1961, China experienced over 15 million deaths due to unnatural causes, and a reduction in births of over 16 million. The evidence that Mao is responsible for the events of this devastating period is compelling.⁹⁵

In January 1961, the Communiqué of the Ninth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC pointed out that the land owner and bourgeois

Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 11, 289.)

92. The main documents of the Central Committee of the CPC include: *Resolutions Regarding the Mistakes of the Anti-Party Group Led by Peng Dehuai and the Fight for the Protection of the General Line of the CPC and Opposition to Rightist Opportunism* approved by the Eighth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC on August 16, 1959; *Resolutions of the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Military Commission* approved on September 12; and *Instructions Regarding Anti-rightists* released by the Central Committee of the CPC on August 9, 1959.

93. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1258–1259.

94. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 806.

95. Hu, *The Political and Economic History of China (1949–1976)*, 390–394.

classes, despite accounting for just a few percent of the total population, had consistently tried to exploit natural disasters and defects in grassroots work to destroy the new society and restore the old order, just as had been said during the Moscow Declaration of 1957. According to this view, while over 90% of employees of the CPC and government were loyal servants of the people, the remainder were “bad elements” who infiltrated revolutionary teams and economic organizations to create trouble, or land owner and bourgeois classes who had not been reconstructed completely, or other sorts of reactionary forces.⁹⁶ The tragic failure of the Great Leap Forward represents a typical human-caused disaster, and resulted from poor decisions by Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC. While the Ninth Plenary Meeting involved some self-reflection and self-criticism, it also ascribed blame for the disaster to “several percentage points” of the total population. This judgment was subjective and without supporting evidence. Thus, Mao made ordinary people the scapegoats for the failure of the Great Leap Forward. This deflecting of blame onto the people also explains why Mao became increasingly fixated with class struggle following the Great Chinese Famine.

January 1962 saw the opening of the 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres, also known as the Enlarged Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC. Around the time of this meeting most of those who had been mistakenly identified as “rightists” in the anti-rightist movement were identified and rehabilitated, and many more were also rehabilitated at the meeting itself.⁹⁷ This was in order to correct mistakes made by Mao, who had extended intra-party political struggle and class struggle throughout society in an attempt to reduce their political consequences, relieve various domestic contradictions and respond to the crisis of the Great Chinese Famine. Further steps to right these wrongs were later made under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

During the conference, Mao was forced to undertake self-criticism, but on the other hand he advocated class struggle. In fact, this was a political ruse. Mao said, “In the socialist society, a new bourgeois class will appear. Throughout the socialist stage of social development, there will be classes and class struggle (the theory of ‘existence’.) Such class struggle will be protracted and sometimes furious.” Mao also introduced the theory of “95% and 5%,” where the 95% were the masses and the 5% were class enemies (meaning land owners, affluent peasants, reactionaries,

96. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 14, 86.

97. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 806.

bad elements and rightists.)⁹⁸ This theory was based on nothing more than a subjective guess Mao made about China's political situation, but he continued to use these same figures in later theories. For China, one of the most populated countries in the world, such percentages equate to a huge number of people. In terms of the total population of China in 1962 (672.95 million,) 4–5% represented 26.92–33.65 million individuals, or 100–150 million if their immediate families were included. These large numbers help us understand the arbitrary and subjective nature of the class divisions and contradictions drawn by Mao. Mao's theories made an extended class struggle with arbitrary objectives inevitable. He refused to learn lessons from the extension of the anti-rightist struggle. On the contrary, he extended the class struggle from urban to rural areas, from criticism and struggle against intellectuals to struggle against ordinary farmers (including peasants and land owners and their families.) Struggle was also extended to such issues as the spreading of rumors, and the private economy. Deng Xiaoping later commented on Mao's speech to the 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres, saying that: "Chairman Mao conducted self-criticism regarding these problems in 1962. However, his conclusions were too superficial to avoid the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution."⁹⁹ Deng's comments show that Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution was rooted in his failure to perform thorough self-criticism.

On August 13, 1962, during the Beidaihe Meeting, Mao talked about revisionism within the party. On September 24, he referred to a paragraph of the speech Lenin made after the success of the October Revolution to highlight the persistent risk of the restoration of capitalism. On September 26, he said: "In the history of the bourgeois revolutions in France and Britain, there were three or four feudal restorations." He also said, "Besides the contradictions between ourselves and the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries in the world, we also face domestic contradictions between the masses and revisionists."¹⁰⁰

During the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao made observations regarding the characteristics of society during the

98. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 10, 25–27.

99. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 347–348.

100. Mao Zedong said: "Will revisionism appear in China? I'm afraid it will. It may not appear in this generation, but it will in the next. But even if revisionism does appear, Marxism and Leninism will surely rise in subsequent generations. Things inevitably swing back and forth according to dialectics, and this applies to us too." (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1098–1100.)

historical socialist phase, and specifically identified two co-existent struggles: the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and the struggle between the socialist and capitalist roads. Mao concluded that class struggle had to be stressed continuously.¹⁰¹ The Communiqué of the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, which was modified and approved by Mao, formally approved Mao's theory of class struggle during the socialist phase of development, laying a theoretical basis for Mao's subsequent official launch of the Cultural Revolution.¹⁰² It expressed that: "Class struggle is very complex, tortuous and sometimes even furious. Such class struggle inevitably comes to be reflected within the party. The pressures from international imperialism and domestic bourgeois interests persist as the social source of revisionism inside the party. When conducting class struggle against international and domestic class enemies, we must firmly oppose various opportunistic tendencies within the party."

Subsequent events show that the opinions of Peng Dehuai and other leaders were correct and Mao's decision to undertake the Great Leap Forward was a mistake, which led to serious economic and political consequences. However, in the communiqué, Mao and the CPC leadership fully affirmed the criticism of "rightist opportunists" during the Lushan Meeting.¹⁰³ This amounted to relying on mistakes to select an incorrect path, thus allowing the mistakes to worsen rather

101. In the modified draft of the *Communiqué of the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee* of the CPC, Mao wrote: "Throughout the history of the proletariat and the dictatorship of proletariat, during the whole transition from capitalism to communism (a period that will last decades or even longer,) there will be class struggles between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and struggle between the socialist and capitalist roads." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 10, 196–197.)

102. On November 6, 1967, the *People's Daily*, *Red Flag* and *PLA Daily* jointly published "Advance Along the Road Opened by the October Socialist Revolution." The article refers to the conclusion voiced by Mao Zedong during the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee in 1962 and takes it to represent Mao's thinking regarding continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The article was drafted by Chen Boda and Yao Wenyan and reviewed by Mao Zedong.

103. Besides censure of Peng Dehuai, the meeting also forced Huang Kecheng, Zhang Wentian, Zhou Xiaozhou, Tan Zheng, Deng Hua, Gan Siqi, Hong Xuezhong, and other high officials to accept censure and conduct self-review. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 15, 654; Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 1, 1093.)

than be corrected — “repeated mistakes becomes bigger mistakes.”

Mao thus not only expanded the scope of the class struggle, but also used it to provide a political basis for extended intra-party struggle. In fact, the existence of different opinions within the party is normal, and reflects the different streams of thought that exist in society. However, Mao branded dissenting opinions within the party as reflections of revisionism or bourgeois thought, whether of domestic or international origin, which led to ruthless purges and the transformation of friends into enemies. The inclusion of this piece of Mao Zedong Theory in the Communiqué of the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC had direct and immediate negative effects. Thousands of people were driven to suicide during the Socialist Education Movement.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the political hazard of this incorrect theory was magnified during the Cultural Revolution itself. Kang Sheng later explained Mao's conception of the classes existing in socialist society, as follows: “Chairman Mao sees class problems comprehensively, not only economically, but also politically and ideologically. According to his view, classes and class struggle exist in socialist society, but they differ in nature from their manifestations in capitalist society. The existence of classes in capitalist society is especially reflected on economic exploitation relationships. The contradiction between classes in socialist society exists not only in the economy, but also in ideology and politics.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, Mao's concept of classes in socialist society extended arbitrarily from the economic field to the political and ideological fields, making the extension of class struggle inevitable.

Mao used his class struggle theory to prepare for struggle against other leaders of the CPC. This activity deviated from the line he himself presented during the 8th National Congress of the CPC, and only later did Deng Xiaoping and others become aware of the seriousness of this problem.¹⁰⁶ As highlighted by the revolution that occurred during the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981, Mao's

104. For instance, over 2,000 deaths occurred in the first group of Socialist Education pilot areas in Hubei; the pilot plan was then rolled out in Guangdong in the autumn and winter of 1963, causing 602 suicide attempts with 503 deaths. (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1114–1115.)

105. “Kang Sheng's Speech on the 9th National Congress of the CPC,” in Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1261–1262.

106. Deng Xiaoping later stated that the post-1957 anti-rightist struggle view that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie remained the main social contradiction in China was in fact a deviation from the line taken by the 8th National Congress of the CPC. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 3, 330.)

speech during the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC extended the “class struggle that exists in a certain part of socialist society.” He also explained his opinion that the “contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is still the main contradiction of our society,” and further alleged that the bourgeoisie would remain a reactionary force throughout the socialist phase, becoming a source of revisionism within the party.¹⁰⁷ As Bo Yibo concluded later, even if the proletariat is in power, theoretical errors will cause practical errors, tortuous national development, and serious social damage.¹⁰⁸

From the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in 1962, Mao began to establish the theory that supported the launch of the Cultural Revolution. The 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres and the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC failed to correct or terminate the class struggle line of Mao, and on the contrary fully affirmed his line and formally validated his actions. Both the theory and practice of class struggle in socialist society as introduced by Mao displayed “path dependence.” This path was continued until Mao’s death in September 1976.

After the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao was determined to carry out a large-scale class struggle movement in rural and urban areas across China. The movement began with a campaign against the “Five Evils” in urban areas, which was followed by a “Socialist Education Movement” in rural areas. Later, the entire movement was labeled the Social Education Movement. The movement lasted for four years, up until the launch of the Cultural Revolution in the second half of 1966. Rather than being the end of class struggle, the Social Education Movement was merely the start of a bigger class struggle.¹⁰⁹

In February 1963, during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Zhang Pinghua (then First Secretary of the Hunan Provincial Committee of the CPC) reported to Mao: “The current class struggle is furious; whether in rural or urban areas, class enemies are rampantly destroying everything. An anti-socialist ‘dark wind’ blows loudly.” Zhang’s report proposed defeating these enemies and suppressing the “dark wind” with an “east wind.” Mao issued special instructions in response to this report.¹¹⁰ The Hebei Provincial Committee of the CPC submitted a report similar to that of Zhang, and Mao transmitted both

107. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 807.

108. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1104.

109. Ibid, 1105.

110. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 10, 255–256.

reports to delegates attending the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC.¹¹¹ These reports catered to Mao's wish to extend class struggle through top-to-bottom interaction. Mao announced to delegates at the meeting: "There are two possibilities: the appearance of revisionism in China is either possible or impossible. Socialist education is the only way to prevent revisionism."¹¹² Here "class enemy" and "dark wind" became synonyms of "revisionism." However, Mao did not clarify how "revisionism" in China differed from that in the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia. Under Mao's instructions, the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC decided to carry out a movement against the "five evils" (corruption and embezzlement, speculation, waste, decentralism, and bureaucracy.) By the end of 1963, over 1,800 work units and 410,000 people had participated in the movement, which arrested 15,100 individuals engaged in "corruption, embezzlement or speculation," and punished 2,300 of those caught. This movement had no legal basis; all participating areas and work units treated the allegedly corrupt individuals identified according to the "policies of the CPC"; in fact, these individuals received no constitutional or legal protection against unjust treatment.

In April and May of 1963, Mao stressed that the bourgeoisie would continue to exist in socialist countries even hundreds of years in the future.¹¹³ Mao tried to solve these social problems by focusing on class struggle and defeating class enemies instead of democracy and rule of law. He failed to evolve from a revolutionary party leader into a ruling party leader and continued to insist on "rule by class struggle" instead of "rule by law."

In April, Mao received a report submitted by the Baoding Area of Hebei Province Committee of the CPC to the Hebei Provincial Committee of the CPC about work on socialist education. The report was the first to outline the tasks

111. Ibid, 257–258.

112. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1106–1107.

113. Mao Zedong stated: "In any socialist country, even decades or hundreds of years after socialist industrialization and agricultural collectivization, we cannot say that the groups attacked by Lenin, including bourgeois individuals, parasites, speculators, liars, idlers, rogues, and thieves of public money, will no longer exist; also, we cannot say any socialist country has accomplished or given up on Lenin's mission, namely 'Clearing out the infectious diseases, pestilence and abscesses left by capitalism on socialism.' The winner of the struggle between socialism and capitalism in a socialist country is a problem to be gradually resolved over a long historical period." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 10, 279–280.)

involved in “Socialist Education,” and described them as including “the cleaning up of accounts, warehouses, workplaces and finances.” The report reflected problems of widespread misappropriation of public funds, unclear accounting, and corruption involving officials in rural areas. According to the report, this phenomenon demonstrated the continued existence of classes and class struggle, and a fierce ongoing struggle about the path of future development. The report further argued that the implementation of socialist education in production teams could target the “five evils” in rural areas. Thus, another socialist revolutionary struggle was necessary to resist the attack of capitalism on the collective economy.¹¹⁴ Mao immediately affirmed this report, and commented, “How does one construct socialism without socialist education?” When Mao later passed through Jinan and Nanjing, he recommended this report to the leaders of the Shandong and Jiangsu Provincial Committees of the CPC.¹¹⁵

In May, Mao chaired a meeting in Hangzhou to discuss the *Decision on Certain Problems in the Present Rural Work (Draft)* (the *First 10-point Decision*.)¹¹⁶ Mao believed that a serious class struggle had appeared in Chinese society, and that the leadership of certain local communes and production teams had fallen into the hands of local kulaks whose agents had penetrated these organizations. According to Bo Yibo, Mao said over 90% of the population were united, which implied the remaining 10% were “class enemies.” Zhou Enlai immediately pointed out the consequences of attempting to implement such an extreme view through policy, and Mao agreed to adjust the proportion of the population he considered united to over 95%.¹¹⁷

114. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 16, 254.

115. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1313.

116. Mao Zedong designated Peng Zhen (and later appointed Chen Boda) to draw up the resolution. From May 2 to 12, Mao Zedong held a meeting in Hangzhou to discuss and modify the resolution. The meeting was attended by Peng Zhen and Chen Boda (then First Secretaries of the Central Bureaus,) Hu Yaobang (then First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist League,) and Jiang Hua (then First Secretary of Zhejiang CPC Committee.) After this meeting ended, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, presided over by Zhou Enlai, held another meeting on May 18. During this later meeting, the *Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party On Some Problems in the Current Rural Work (Draft)* was approved. The draft was officially released on May 20 and became a guiding document for the socialist education movement in rural areas across the country. (Pang and Jin, *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1314 and 1328.)

117. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1109–1110.

This change reflects the arbitrary and irresponsible quantitative estimates that Mao made. In the *First 10-point Decision*, Mao assessed the political situation of China as follows: "Current Chinese society is characterized by severe class struggle.¹¹⁸ Many characteristics of current society prove the correctness of the above judgment about class struggle (meaning Mao's judgment in the Communiqué of the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC about class struggle.)" Mao proved he was right using the documents issued by the Central Committee of the CPC. He also presented his famous argument in the "Former 10 Items," namely that all problems could be solved by understanding the theory of class struggle.¹¹⁹

On May 9, Mao issued an instruction that defined class enemies as "landowners, affluent peasants, reactionaries, bad elements and 'Monsters and Demons,'" and issued a warning to the entire CPC about the emergency arising from the need for nationwide counter-revolutionary restoration. He worried that eventually, "The party of Marxism and Leninism will become the party of revisionism and the whole of China will change."¹²⁰ Displaying his alarmist nature, Mao made up a political crisis to persuade everyone of the need to launch the Socialist Education Movement and the Cultural Revolution. His words were later published in

118. The draft resolution listed nine points to support this conclusion, including: "the overthrown landowners and affluent peasants are waiting for their chance to retaliate, restore the old order, and take revenge, and have managed to corrupt officials, seize power and conduct activities to restore the feudal patriarchal clan system; there is exploitation, usury, and trading of land; a new bourgeoisie has appeared and are growing rich through speculation and exploitation; corruption, embezzlement, speculation and degeneration have surfaced in some people working in state organs and in the collective economy."

119. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 10, 303–304.

120. Mao argued, "...When landowners, affluent peasants, reactionaries, bad elements and 'monsters and demons' come out together, yet our officials remain indifferent to them, or worse, cannot distinguish friend from foe and are thus corrupted by and collude with the enemy, while the enemy successfully uses all kinds of means to divide and demoralize our officials, workers, farmers, and intellectuals, then, within a short period — a few years, or a few decades at most — counter-revolutionaries will inevitably appear nationwide, and the party of Marxism and Leninism will become the party of revisionism or fascism. China will then change its color. Think, comrades, what a dangerous and critical situation this would be!" (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 10, 292–293.)

Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong (The Little Red Book,) and became the most notable “supreme instruction” issued during the Cultural Revolution. Bo Yibo commented that Mao took class struggle too seriously, and deviated from the real conditions of the CPC and society.¹²¹ However, the Central Committee of the CPC still accepted Mao’s basic judgment regarding the political situation of China and approved his proposal to launch this new political movement.

The rural Socialist Education Movement, at least initially, referred to the cleaning up of accounting, warehouses, financial institutions, and work units; the campaign against the “five evils” in urban areas referred to opposition against corruption and embezzlement, speculation, waste, decentralism and bureaucracy, and the cleaning up of accounting, warehouses, financial institutions, and work units. By the spring of 1964, the Socialist Education Movement had been promoted in about one sixth of northern China and about one fifth of central and southern China. By the end of the year, many work teams, totaling over one million members, had been sent to the countryside. The extension of the movement and the occurrence of illegal and undisciplined behaviors appeared shortly afterwards.¹²²

On June 8, Mao again stressed the problem of preventing capitalism during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC. Mao believed subjectively one third of the state regime had been lost. Early in January 1961, in a speech to the Ninth Plenary Meeting of the 8th National Congress of the CPC, Mao mentioned that agents of the landed class and bourgeoisie had appeared in the party and about 20% of local authorities had been corrupted through their leadership falling into the hands of the enemy.¹²³ Mao’s judgments during this period regarding the national situation were also highly subjective. Without being based on investigation and basic objective analysis, these judgments simply reflected his own unfounded beliefs. Wild guesses, confusing political conceptions, inconsistent words, and changing attitudes characterized Mao’s later years.

In January 1964, in response to a report submitted by Xu Bing (then Director of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the CPC,) Mao declared that the leadership at all levels were not real Marxists and revisionists had seized control. Consequently, Mao saw a risk that China might follow the road of

121. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1110.

122. At the very beginning of the Socialist Education Movement, struggle was extended and illegal and undisciplined behaviors appeared. In October of 1963, Deng Xiaoping suggested restraint was needed to avoid the movement involving too many people (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1111–1112.)

123. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1116.

capitalist restoration in the future.¹²⁴

In March, Mao proposed that the whole-party all-people socialist education movement of the CPC, starting from 1963, must be completed within the next several years. This movement was intended to free officials at all levels of the poisons of bureaucratism, revisionism and doctrinarism.¹²⁵

In September, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the *Provision of Certain Concrete Policies of the Central Committee of the CPC Concerning the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas (Draft)* (also known as the *Latter 10-point Decision*)¹²⁶ to officially communicate Mao's instruction to "take the class struggle as the key link."¹²⁷ This instruction became Mao's guiding principle of governance, substituting for the political line "taking economic construction as the key link" determined by the 8th National Congress of the CPC. This change transformed the ruling party, the CPC, back into a revolutionary party. Unfortunately, the Central Committee of the CPC approved Mao's guiding principle of governance.

On December 5, Mao questioned the report submitted by Xie Fuzhi (then Minister of Public Security) and asked: "What proportion of our industry has capitalist tendencies in operation and management? One third? A half? Maybe the figure is bigger."¹²⁸ The question of the definition of capitalist tendency thus

124. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 17.

125. Ibid, 43–44.

126. After the Central Committee of the CPC issued the *Decision on Certain Problems in the Present Rural Work (Draft)* (the "First 10-point Decision") in May 1963, local governments submitted a succession of materials to report problems and deviations from the correct line in rural socialist education, and asked that the Central Committee of the CPC draw clear policy boundaries. Therefore the Central Committee of the CPC designated Deng Xiaoping and Tan Zhenlin to draft the *Provision of Certain Concrete Policies of the Central Committee of the CPC Concerning the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas (Draft)* (the "Second 10-point Decision.") (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1329, Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2003.)

On August 5, 1964, the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC decided that Liu Shaoqi would be responsible for revising the "Second 10-point Decision," as well as leading the Socialist Education and Anti-Five Evils movements. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1352.)

127. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 16, 387.

128. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 256–257.

was crucial, and the report provided Mao with important relevant information.¹²⁹ In fact, capitalist tendencies were defined such that normal enterprise operations exhibited them. The definition of capitalist tendencies was also exaggerated and influenced by various principles and political lines. This reveals that many central government ministers knew nothing about capitalism, and lacked first-hand experience of capitalist countries. With limited actual knowledge of capitalism, leaders nevertheless sought evidence of capitalist restoration in grass-root units simply to comply with Mao's calls for class struggle.

Xie Fuzhi was a typical example of such a leader, and Mao showed his appreciation for his activities by promoting him. Xie's report became an important source that Mao used to understand the situation of capitalist operation and management and capitalist restoration in China. After reading this report, Mao immediately transmitted it to the leaders of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, all central government ministries and commissions, and to the provincial, municipal and autonomous region party committees, to offer them an example of what was meant by "capitalist tendencies." Mao influenced all these sectors of government in their views on the political situation of China. Consequently, they took capitalist restoration increasingly seriously and an imagined crisis based on Mao's "crisis hallucination" evolved into a real crisis.

129. According to Xie Fuzhi's report on his work at the Shenyang Metallurgical Plant, capitalist operational and management methods had eight characteristics: (1) falsification of documents to cheat the country; (2) benefitting the factory at the expense of the collective interest; (3) benefitting certain individuals at the expense of others and exploiting friends and neighbors; (4) profiteering from speculation; (5) manipulating the market through fictitious transactions; (6) stimulating employees with bonuses and other material inducements; (7) exploiting scientific knowledge to acquire fame and wealth; (8) wastage and abuse of resources. The report further identified three hazards associated with capitalist operation and management: (1) obstruction of technical innovation and development of production; (2) corruption of management teams and the working class; (3) destruction of unity and cooperation. Finally, the report identified the root causes of capitalist operation and management in the refinery as: (1) influence of existing structures of the Soviet enterprise and revisionism; (2) old capitalist forces (including feudalism); (3) certain influences from central government. On December 12, 1964, Mao Zedong commented in response to these final words on central government: "They are not irrelevant. They are the main sources of the problem." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 11, 256–257)

On December 12, Mao gave instructions on the report submitted by Chen Zhengren (then Minister of Agricultural Machinery.) The report listed seven major problems existing in enterprises and deemed them to represent contradictions between two classes and two roads. Particularly, the report expressed that bureaucratism was a serious danger,¹³⁰ a conclusion that shocked Mao. Mao believed that a "bureaucratic class" had formed within the CPC and was "in fierce confrontation" with the "working class and poor farmers." He further said that this bureaucratic class "has created or is creating a phenomenon of the bourgeoisie sucking the blood of workers" and should be "a target of struggle and revolution."¹³¹ Mao transferred this report to Liu Shaoqi and Bo Yibo with special instructions.

On December 14, Mao issued instructions regarding the report on the investigation by Zhang Pinghua (then First Secretary of the Hunan Provincial Committee of the CPC,) who then transmitted his report to other officials. The report said that the leadership of more than one third of the grass-roots units in Hunan had been seized by the enemy.¹³² On December 19, Mao issued instructions

130. Chen Zhengren's report listed seven serious problems and discussed them as follows: "(1) corruption and theft involving the leaders of the workshops; (2) waste of national resources; (3) serious violations of workers' political and economic democratic rights; (4) acceptance and promotion of malefactors, in serious violation of the class line of the party; (5) serious bourgeois ideology and lifestyle; (6) obvious influences of doctrinarism and revisionism in enterprise management; (7) well-established and active hidden enemies. Therefore we must settle not only the serious contradictions among the people, but also the contradiction between ourselves and our enemies. Both these contradictions are class struggles between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and contradictions between the socialist and capitalist roads. It is worth mentioning that, after the victory of the revolution, certain senior officials with access to power can easily escape the supervision of the masses. When such officials gain power over a unit, they tend to exploit their position to violate party policy and do whatever they like. However leaders like ourselves, facing serious problems of bureaucratism, cannot identify the sources of these problems in time. This has become an extremely serious risk since we assumed power. In the past we have monitored bureaucratism within the leadership. How serious is the danger of bureaucratism? Personally, I am gradually learning about the dangers from my investigation of production facilities." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 11, 267–269.)

131. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 265–266.

132. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's*

on the investigation report by Gao Yangwen (then Vice Minister of Metallurgy) and transmitted them to others. The report claimed that class struggle was the key link, which implied that the first priority was victory in the class struggle.¹³³

Between December 15 and 28, the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC finalised a resolution *Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in Rural Areas* (also known as *The 23-Article Document*) to decide whether the urban and rural socialist education movement should focus on political, economic, organizational and ideological cleanup, or “Socialist Education.”¹³⁴

A resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 noted that, from 1963–1965, the socialist education movement implemented in the grass-roots units of some of the rural areas and minor cities had helped to solve problems such as the work style of officials, and economic management. However, all these problems, despite their different natures, were believed to be rooted in class struggle or its manifestation within the party. Consequently, numerous officials in grass-roots units were wrongly targeted in the second half of 1964. Furthermore, in early 1965 the priority of the movement was determined to be purging “capitalist roaders within the party.”¹³⁵

This urban and rural socialist education movement personally launched and led by Mao can be deemed the “Quasi Cultural Revolution” or a rehearsal for the Cultural Revolution.¹³⁶ Mao used the movement to further develop and complete

Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China, vol. 11, 275–276.

133. Gao Yangwen's report contained the words: “During the past two years, we have spent enormous time and effort on class struggle. The climax of the class struggle resulted in a peak of production. As the spiritual becomes material, so does the success of class struggle become success in production.” Mao responded with the instruction: “It is correct that production can improve only after winning the class struggle.” (Ibid, 277–279.)

134. According to the Organization Department of the CPC, during this period about 1.5 to 1.6 million people participated in the “socialist education,” “anti-five evils,” and other movements through involvement in grassroots unit work teams that operated all over the country. In 1964, 130,000 employees in the transport industry alone participated in work teams within 1,800 state-owned enterprises throughout the country, while over 22,000 officials led by 45 ministers and vice ministers from 18 ministries and commissions were stationed in grassroots units. (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1120 and 1127.)

135. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 812.

136. Hu Qiaomu believed that the socialist education movement, which started from the

his theory of class struggle in socialist society.

Why did Mao Zedong insist on “taking class struggle as the key link”? The answer lies in his long-held “philosophy of struggle.”

First, after taking office, Mao re-advocated that “rebellion is right.” Earlier in 1939, he said that while there were millions of roads to Marxism, rebellion was ultimately the right road.¹³⁷ When Mao was the leader of a party that was not in power, rebellion was absolutely necessary, but he simultaneously universalized and simplified Marxist thought and principles.

On July 3, 1966, the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School displayed a big-character poster titled *Discussion on the Proletarian Revolutionary Rebel Spirit*. This was an early example of how Mao’s famous quotation advocating rebellion was a driver of the Cultural Revolution. On July 31, in his *Letter to the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School*, Mao Zedong expressed his passionate support for their activities. After a few days, the *Red Flag* and *People’s Daily* reprinted and distributed the big-character posters displayed by the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School.¹³⁸ From that point “Rebellion is right” became the loudest political slogan of the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution and also the battle cry that Jiang Qing relied on.¹³⁹ However, answers to essential questions remained unclear, including the objectives of the movement, the identities of the protagonists, the methods used, and whether the methods were

rural areas and eventually spread to the urban areas, served as an ideological and political preparation for the Cultural Revolution because it introduced the slogan, “Oppose capitalist roaders inside the CPC.” The movement involved every rural area, enterprise, and economic institution, and was finally upgraded to become the nationwide Cultural Revolution. (Hu, “Why Did China Make a Two-decade ‘Leftist’ Mistake?”)

137. Xu, *Theories and Practices of Mao Zedong in His Later Years (1956–1976)*, 386.

138. The Red Guards of the Tsinghua High school sent the posters “Long Live the Revolutionary Rebel Spirit” (created on June 24, 1966) and “Renew the discussion of Long Live the Revolutionary Rebel Spirit” (created on July 4, 1966) to Jiang Qing for review and asked her to send them to Mao Zedong for instruction. Both posters were published in Issue 11 of the *Red Flag* on August 21, 1966 and renamed “Long Live the Proletarian Revolutionary Rebel Spirit” and “Renew the discussion of Long Live the Proletarian Revolutionary Rebel Spirit” respectively.

139. On January, 1981, When the Special Court of the Supreme Court of the People’s Republic of China announced her crimes, Jiang Qing protested by crying: “Revolution is Innocent! Rebellion is Right!” (Tan and Lü eds., *Trial of China: Public Trial of Ten Principals in the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Counter-revolutionary Groups*, 182.)

right. Without answers to the above questions, a movement advocating rebellion naturally resulted in domestic turmoil.

Second, Mao always advocated: “The philosophy of the Communist Party is the philosophy of struggle.” He developed this thought in 1945, before the CPC gained power and as it faced political purges and suppression from the ruling Kuomintang. These circumstances made struggle essential for the CPC to survive and eventually assume power. However, once the CPC became the ruling party, its political program should have changed to become one of development and construction. In 1959, after the founding of New China, Mao reaffirmed his philosophy of struggle during the Lushan Meeting and announced that the struggle would last at least another 20 years and possibly another half century.¹⁴⁰

From 1950 onwards, the CPC regularly launched political movements under the influence of Mao’s philosophy of struggle. According to statistics of the author, by May 1966, the CPC had initiated thirty-eight such movements and struggles, harming hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people.¹⁴¹

Mao subjectively believed that Chinese society contained hundreds of thousands, millions, or even tens of millions of class enemies, and that the number was increasing. He kept creating new political conceptions, all of which were unclear and confusing, such as “rightists,” “firm antisocialists,” “emerging bourgeoisie,” “bourgeois intellectuals,” “capitalist roaders,” “proponents of independent fiefdoms,” and “two commands.”¹⁴² The enemy classes that Mao

140. On April, 1945, during the 7th National Congress of the CPC, Mao Zedong said: “Someone (meaning Deng Baoshan) said our philosophy was the philosophy of struggle. I said theirs was also the philosophy of struggle. The philosophy of the proletariat struggle was gentler than theirs.” On August 16, 1959, during the Lushan Meeting, Mao further said: “the bourgeois politician (again meaning Deng Baoshan) said, ‘The CPC’s philosophy is the philosophy of struggle,’ He was right. But the struggle has different forms at different times.” (Xu, *Theories and Practices of Mao Zedong in His Later Years (1956–1976)*, 348.) Mao pointed out, “In China, in our party, it seems the struggle will last for at least 20 years and maybe even for half a century. Anyway the struggle cannot stop until all classes have become history.” (“Peng Dehuai and His Backers Cannot Avoid Punishment,” *People’s Daily*, August 16, 1967.)

141. Hu, “Political Movements of the PRC (1949–1976).”

142. Deng Xiaoping said, when discussing the “Socialist Education” from the end of 1964 to the beginning of 1965: “[Mao Zedong] declared that not only were there capitalist roaders, but there were also two independent kingdoms in Beijing.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Deng Xiaoping’s Comments on the History of the CPC*, 97.)

invented were arbitrary rather than based on investigation. He exploited these labels to encourage mass anxiety about class enemies and class struggle. However, the political hallucinations Mao nurtured had a life of their own and naturally grew and became more extreme – as the ancient proverb goes, “the wind will not cease even if trees want to rest.”¹⁴³

At the time the Central Committee of the CPC and the party as a whole unreservedly accepted Mao’s baseless new conceptions, and cooperated to drive growing political paranoia and terror. The Central Committee of the CPC unanimously agreed that while the Soviet Union had restored capitalism, China should prevent its restoration. However, the question of how best to realize this goal remained unresolved, and different opinions co-existed within the Central Committee of the CPC.

In July 1965, Liu Shaoqi said: “To prevent the restoration of capitalism and avoid ‘peaceful evolution’ and revisionism, there are three essential measures: first, the socialist education movement; second, the work study system; and third, the participation of officials in grass-roots work.”¹⁴⁴ This view represented the mainstream line inside the Central Committee of the CPC. While this line was based on “taking class struggle as the key link,” it was relatively mild, and combined revolutionary spirit with denial that there was an urgent crisis. For instance, although Liu believed the education system was bourgeois, his proposed reform based on the “part-time study school” demonstrates that he saw innovation within existing institutions as an adequate solution.

However, Mao believed the problems could only be solved through drastic change. Mao worried that without drastic change China would slowly move in the wrong direction and it would eventually be too late to implement remedies.¹⁴⁵ Mao suggested shining a light on China’s dark side through comprehensive top-to-bottom implementation of a new form and way of struggle – cultural revolution.¹⁴⁶

143. “The trees want rest but the winds do not cease; the children wish to provide but the parents’ time do not wait.” (*Kongzi Jiayu*, 8.10)

144. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2,.

145. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1459.

146. On February 8, 1967, Mao Zedong said: “In the past, we have conducted struggles in rural areas, in factories, and in the cultural field. We have also launched a socialist education movement. But we cannot solve the underlying problems because there is no form or way via which we can reveal our dark side to the masses, comprehensively, from top to bottom.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 220.)

Third, Mao advocated “thorough revolution” and “continuous revolution.”¹⁴⁷ Early in his political career, in 1927, Mao defined “revolution” as rebellion, namely violent action by one class to overthrow another class.¹⁴⁸ In 1967, he said, “In the last 17 years (1949–1966) (the years since the founding of New China,) we were engaged in socialist revolution, but the revolution was not thorough because we failed to find a method of top-to-bottom implementation. This time we have finally found a method for implementing a cultural revolution from top to bottom.”¹⁴⁹ *Key Points on the Theory of Comrade Mao Zedong Regarding Continuous Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (the *Six Items*,) prepared by Chen Boda and Yao Wenyuan under the instructions of Mao over many years,¹⁵⁰ became the theoretical basis not only for launching and leading the Cultural Revolution, but also for the Enlarged 12th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, the report of the 9th National Congress of the CPC and the report of the 10th National Congress of the CPC. While launching and leading the Cultural Revolution, Mao kept developing theories like *Order in Universities Comes From Great Chaos* (July, 1966);¹⁵¹ *Smash the Four Olds* (August, 1966); *Complete Takeover* (January, 1967); and *20–30 Line struggles* (August–September, 1971.) As Meisner notes, countless political organizations and actors in the Cultural Revolution were using the version of class struggle theory that best matched their own political and social interests.

147. Hu Qiaomu believed that the most important aspect of China’s economic work after 1958 was revolution and the continuation of the revolution. After 1962, like other work, Hu Qiaomu believed that economic work should focus on opposing and preventing revisionism, criticizing the bourgeoisie and preventing its restoration. This opinion developed into the theory of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat during the Cultural Revolution. (Hu, “Why did China make a Two-decade ‘Leftist’ Mistake?”)

148. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 1, 17.

149. “Zhou Enlai’s Speech During the Army Corps Official Meeting,” March 13, 1967.

150. The Articles pointed out that “all the theories of Mao Zedong about continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat were creative breakthroughs that built on the opinions of Marxism and Leninism about the dictatorship of the proletariat. They demonstrated genius and established a third great milestone in the history of the development of Marxism.” (*People’s Daily*, *Red Flag* and *PLA Daily* Editorial Boards, “Advance Along the Road Opened up by the October Socialist Revolution — The 50th Anniversary of Great October Socialist Revolution,” November 6, 1967.)

151. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.

The confusion regarding class and class struggle helped the Cultural Revolution rapidly develop into domestic turmoil.¹⁵²

Fourth, once Mao chose the paths of class struggle and cultural revolution, he repeatedly launched revolutions and class struggles with the same pattern.¹⁵³ With Mao himself igniting the 'engine' of class struggle and intra-party line struggle, the machine kept dutifully identifying what were considered to be "political enemies." In response, Mao then needed to keep purging these political enemies and proving the correctness of his class struggle theory. Once established, the system became self-perpetuating, and the class struggle and Cultural Revolution could not have been terminated even had Mao wanted, but the engine naturally burnt itself out upon Mao's death.

The political struggle process of "attacking and defeating political enemies" was a process of continuously destroying the apparatus and systems of the modern state. The "anti-rightist struggle" in 1957 abolished "multi-party cooperation under the leadership of the CPC;" the Lushan Meeting in 1959 seriously damaged the democratic system of the party, caused political divisions within the party leadership, and laid a political foundation for the Cultural Revolution; during the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in 1962, Mao announced his theory of "taking class struggle as the key link" and subsequently implemented the ideological policies of "big criticism" and "urban and rural socialist education," which further damaged existing party and state systems and seriously violated the human rights of citizens.

Correct theory can be a powerful driver of social development, while incorrect theory can be a powerful force of social destruction. As the resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 pointed out: "The history of the cultural revolution has proved that Comrade Mao Zedong's principal theses for initiating this revolution conformed neither to Marxism, Leninism, nor to Chinese reality.

152. Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*.

153. Hu Qiaomu said: "Such beliefs are unimaginable now, but seemed normal at that time. These ideas had formed and been accepted by the majority of people, at least on the surface. This should be understood as demonstrating the influence of conventional thinking and behavior regarding the class struggle. Of course such conventional thinking had been intentionally extended through incorrect arguments. But the effect of the inertia was still undeniable." (Hu, "Why did China make a Two-decade 'Leftist' Mistake?")

Hu Sheng also pointed out that Mao Zedong believed excessively in the principle that "revolution is omnipotent," and continued to insist on revolution until his death ("Reflection of a Nation," April 7, 1988, *People's Daily*.)

They represent an entirely erroneous appraisal of the prevailing class relations and political situation in the Party and state.”¹⁵⁴ The theories and practices of the Cultural Revolution thus caused a huge political disaster.

Mao Zedong’s Basic Assessment of the Economic Situation in China

For Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution was a revolution unprecedented in human history, with both political and economic dimensions, both of which were strongly pushed. His behavior in launching the Cultural Revolution was based on his basic judgment regarding the economic situation of China; his economic objective was not merely to enable China, with its large population, lagging economy and imbalanced regional development to rid itself of the appearance of being a poor and undeveloped country, but also to establish a uniquely pure and ideal socialist society, effectively providing a communist school from which communists elsewhere could learn. In this sense, Mao, as a theorist and a thinker, was the most innovative and ambitious leader in China. However, as a politician and state leader, he was also the farthest removed from real life in China. His theories, no matter how innovative, all ended in failure when they were implemented. All of the innovations of the Cultural Revolution became flashes in the pan.

Early in 1958, Mao planned to establish politically oriented people’s communes with participation by all groups, including workers, farmers, businessmen, students and soldiers, and involving all sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, small-scale manufacturing, and fishery, “so as to include all the basic units of China.” He tried to establish “large scale and collective” communes as the only path to realize socialist ideals and a communist society.

In Mao’s eyes, the essential characteristic of socialist society was public ownership. He saw public ownership as the root from which an affluent and strong society would grow, and believed pure socialist ownership had to be realized before the country could become wealthy.¹⁵⁵ In this respect Mao was influenced by the “Moscow Declaration” (otherwise known as the *Declaration on the Meeting of Deputies of Communist and Workers’ Parties in Socialist Countries*) that was approved in Moscow on November 19, 1957. “The nine common rules universally applicable to all countries on the socialist road” were concluded based on the Soviet Union’s

154. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 809.

155. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949-1976)*, vol. 3, 152.

experience, and included: eliminate private ownership and establish public ownership; eliminate the private economy and carry out nationalization; eliminate the individual economy and carry out thorough collectivization; prohibit the free market economy, and implement a planned economy. Mao attached high importance to all nine of these rules and used them as standards to measure whether a country was socialist and whether a political party insisted on the principles of Marxism and Leninism.¹⁵⁶ Demonstrating his commitment to the nine rules, in 1958 Mao told Eugene, the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to China, "The Soviet Union's experience should be learned from and common truths followed."¹⁵⁷

In September 1962, Mao introduced his theory of "continuously stressing class struggle" at the 10th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. The meeting approved the "Decision on Further Consolidating the Collective Economy of the People's Commune and Developing Agricultural Production" and the "Regulations on Questions Concerning Commercial Works." The meeting also clearly stated that trade in rural markets passively impacted the planned economy and created room for market speculation, and therefore should be restricted or prevented. In March 1963, the State Council promulgated the "Interim Provisions on Policies to Beat Market Speculation and Ban Long-distance Private Transportation," which mandated that, except for state-owned businesses, permissible commercial activities could only be conducted locally; long-distance private transportation was banned because of its association with serious illegal speculation. The same month, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the "Instruction on Strictly Managing Market Trade in Large and Medium Cities and Preventing Speculation." This instruction restricted, or in some cases entirely prevented, market activities on the basis that they were a form of speculation. Between 1961 and 1965, 4,437 markets across China were closed, and market transaction volumes declined by 50%. Almost all market trade activity in large and medium cities was banned. In 1960 China had about 3.81 million small traders, but as they were merged by state-owned enterprises and cooperatives the number decreased to 0.58 million by 1965, and 0.48 million by the first half of 1966 (an 87.4% decrease from 1960).¹⁵⁸

Despite the frustrations encountered during the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune Movement, Mao never gave up on his dream of realizing

156. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 1, 743.

157. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 387.

158. Teng et al. ed., *History of Industrial and Commercial Administration in New China*, vol. 1, 37, 46.

Sidebar 2.1 Mao Zedong's Ideal Society (May 7, 1966)

In times of peace, the army should function as a big school. Even if WWII breaks out, the army can still serve as a big school – soldiers can perform various other work besides fighting. Did we not try this in the anti-Japanese bases during the eight years of WWII? This big school can provide not only knowledge of politics, military affairs and culture, but also an environment for small-scale production in rural areas and the operation of medium and small factories to manufacture products for self-use or for trade with the government. Besides, soldiers should be able to engage in mass work and participate in the social education movement in factories or rural areas. After undergoing “Socialist Education”, soldiers can perform periodic mass work to unite them with the people. They should continuously participate in the cultural revolutionary struggle to criticize the bourgeoisie. In this way, they will simultaneously act as soldiers, students, farmers, workers and common people. Of course, the specific arrangements for achieving this should be appropriate, and should prioritize the major works. Each military unit should involve itself in just one or two of the three kinds of work, namely the work of farmers, urban workers and the masses. This will allow our army, which is composed of millions of soldiers, to play a very important role.

Similar arrangements should apply to workers. They should treat industry as their main work while simultaneously learning military, political and cultural knowledge. They should also participate in “Socialist Education” and criticize the bourgeoisie. If conditions allow, they should also engage in small-scale agricultural production, following the example of workers at the Daqing Oil Field.

As for farmers, they should remain engaged in agriculture (including forestry, animal husbandry, small-scale manufacturing and fishery) while simultaneously gaining military, political and cultural knowledge. If conditions allow, collectives may run small factories, but they should not forget to criticize the bourgeoisie.

Students should follow a similar pattern. They should focus on academic study while simultaneously learning other knowledge. In other words, they should learn not only academic knowledge, but also the skills of workers, farmers and soldiers. Meanwhile, they too should not forget to criticize the bourgeoisie. We should shorten the length of schooling. The existing education system should be overthrown and steps taken to ensure schools are not controlled by bourgeois intellectuals.

Industrial and service workers, as well as party and government authorities, should also implement the above measures if conditions allow.

None of the above thoughts are new inventions or truly original. People have been doing these things for a long time, but previously their work was not publicized. Meanwhile, the army has implemented these measures for decades. Now we are simply further developing existing ideas.

Source: Mao, "Instructions on the Report of the General Logistics Department on Further Improving Agricultural Sideline Production."

an ideal and pure socialist society. In a letter to Lin Biao dated May 7, 1966, Mao boldly proposed the construction of revolutionary schools that would combine lessons in industry, agriculture, culture and military drills, and would be located in workplaces throughout the country. Mao's dream comprised four parts: urban workers would be engaged in industry while learning other skills; rural farmers would be engaged in agriculture while learning other skills; school students would be engaged in study while learning other skills; and military personnel would be engaged in military duties while learning other skills.

On May 15, the Central Committee of the CPC approved the instruction of Mao and the report of the General Logistics Department on the further enhancement of small-scale manufacturing in rural areas and offered the additional instruction: "The Central Committee of the CPC believes the letter of Comrade Mao Zedong to Lin Biao to be an extremely important historic document, an epoch-making new development of Marxism and Leninism."¹⁵⁹ On August 1, the *People's Daily* released an editorial personally approved by Mao titled "China Should Become a Big School for Mao Zedong Thought." Within the body of the editorial was the "May 7th Instruction" of Mao, which "called on the people of the whole country to turn China's factories, rural people's communes, schools, businesses, services and Party and governmental organizations into great schools for revolutionization like the Liberation Army." The editorial urged: "By acting in accordance with what Comrade Mao Zedong has said, it will be possible to elevate the proletarian ideology of our people considerably, push forward the revolutionization of people's thinking and help them to break away from all the old ideology, culture, customs and habits surviving from the old society. It will be possible to promote step-by-step narrowing of the gap between workers and peasants, town and countryside and mental and manual labor. In this way, the whole country will be a great school of Mao Zedong Thought, a great school of communism."¹⁶⁰ The sentiments of this

159. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 12, 56.

160. *People's Daily*, October 1, 1966.

editorial summarized the ideal socialist blueprint that Mao hoped to realize when he launched the Cultural Revolution to establish a “big communist school.” A subsequent article published by the Xinhua News Agency on August 3 said, “The Chairman’s words are the most useful authority. Chairman Mao’s instruction (the “May 7th Instruction”) is our golden bridge to a communist society.”

Mao thus created many new things. First, he created the educational revolution. He decided to abolish the high school entrance examination system in early June 1966 and later proposed a policy of “selecting (university) students from workers and farmers with practical experience” in July 1970.¹⁶¹ In September of that year the universities began to recruit students from workers, farmers and soldiers, and students were assigned the common task of “learning from colleges, managing colleges and reconstructing colleges.”¹⁶²

Second, Mao established schools to train new officials and transferred existing officials to practice lower level work. In September 1968, Mao announced, “Lower level work is a great opportunity for officials to re-learn and all officials should participate except the old and weak.”¹⁶³ Despite this, in February 1971, the Central Committee of the CPC chose to keep open the Schools for Central Government Officials. The Central Committee believed that the schools for officials were important to cultivate members of the proletariat so that they became capable officials able to boost the strength of the revolutionary authorities, accelerate the work of struggle, criticism and rectification, consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and construct a socialist society.¹⁶⁴

A large-scale movement was implemented in which the educated youth were sent to the countryside and remote mountain areas. On December 22, 1968, the *People’s Daily* published Mao’s instruction: “It is necessary for educated youth to go to rural areas to undergo re-education and study from poor farmers. Local authorities should mobilize officials and other groups in urban areas to send students who have graduated from junior schools, high schools and universities to rural areas.”¹⁶⁵ Mao considered “sending educated youth to the mountains and countryside” part of a long-term plan to oppose and prevent revisionism, and

161. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 505.

162. *People’s Daily*, September 5, 1970.

163. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 573.

164. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Time of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 3, 192–194.

165. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 616.

essential to cultivate a new generation of revolutionary proletariat.¹⁶⁶

Mao's new socialist initiatives took the form of compulsory changes to the system with a clear political purpose — to oppose and prevent revisionism, consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, and prevent the restoration of capitalism. However, none of these initiatives were lasting. They appeared with the Cultural Revolution and disappeared when it ended, ultimately becoming mere flashes in the history of the PRC.

Hu Qiaomu has pointed out that the pursuit of utopian goals was one reason for China's two-decades-long 'leftist mistake.' From the perspective of the evolution of production relationships, given the logical development of a series of social movements, such as the Great Leap Forward, people's communes and the anti-revisionism movement, the launch of the Cultural Revolution was inevitable historically. After 1963, the opposition and prevention of revisionism, criticism of the bourgeoisie and prevention of the restoration of the bourgeoisie became the core of all work. During the Cultural Revolution, this conception directly evolved into the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to this theory, the Chinese people should focus solely on pursuing revolution, rather than material life and social affluence, because affluence means revisionism. The main social goals thus changed from developing productivity to purifying production relations, state power and ideology. The pursuit of utopian goals thus ultimately provided the theoretical basis for the launch of the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶⁷

Fomenting Public Sentiment for the Launch of the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution was labeled "cultural" because it began from cultural criticism.¹⁶⁸ The cultural field was not only the first political target of the Cultural Revolution, but also a political position Mao used to prepare the public for the movement. He grasped that public opinion represented the final word in politics, and so individually attacked and undermined various elements of existing public opinion to prepare the ground for launching the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶⁹

166. Dong, *Economic History of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 1, 563.

167. Hu, "Why did China make a Two-decade 'Leftist' Mistake?"

168. Hu, *The 70 Years of the Communist Party of China*, 455.

169. One of the preliminary moves made was the publishing of Yao Wenyan's "Review on the Historical Opera *Hai Rui Dismissed*" in the Shanghai *Wenhui Daily* on November 10,

Mao's approach to problems in the scientific, cultural and artistic fields is an important question, as are the guidelines he followed to facilitate scientific progress, cultural prosperity and artistic innovation. As his uniquely Chinese-style policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" was a significant innovation, this will be discussed first.

On April 28, 1956, Mao announced the policy of "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" during the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC.¹⁷⁰ On February 27, 1957, in the report "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," he mentioned that people should not make hasty judgments regarding "right and wrong" in relation to problems in scientific and artistic fields, and should engage in free discussion and never draw conclusions rashly. Mao expressed his opposition to the use of administrative power to promote or prohibit any style or school of thought, saying that this would harm artistic and scientific development.¹⁷¹

However, although Mao developed the policy of "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend," it was never implemented. From the founding of New China, he regularly intervened directly in literary and artistic circles, and launched numerous major criticisms of movies, including *A Secret History of the Qing Imperial Palace*,¹⁷² *Legend of Wu Xun*,¹⁷³ *Hu Feng's Counter-revolutionary Group*,¹⁷⁴ and *Dream of the Red Chamber*.¹⁷⁵

1965, which set in motion a series of purges. (Hu, *The 70 Years of the Communist Party of China*, 456.)

170. Mao had said then, "'Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend' should become our guideline in my opinion. Let a hundred flowers bloom in the arts and let a hundred schools of thought contend in academia." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 54.)

171. Ibid, 211.

172. In 1950, Chairman Mao admonished that "*A Secret History of the Qing Imperial Palace* is a traitorous movie and must be punished." He also said, "Some people believe *A Secret History of the Qing Imperial Palace* is a patriotic movie, but I think it is a traitorous movie, a thoroughly traitorous movie." (Qi Benyu: "Patriotic or Traitorous? — Comments on the reactionary movie *A Secret History of the Qing Imperial Palace*," *Red Flag*, Issue 5, 1967.)

173. Mao, "Pay Attention to Discussion of the Movie *Legend of Wu Xun*," *People's Daily*, May, 1951.

174. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5, 160–167.

175. On October 16, 1954, Mao Zedong wrote the "Letter about Research (on the movie

After 1962, Mao launched a series of criticism movements that clearly contradicted his own guideline of cultural liberalism. "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" was replaced with the opposite extreme, cultural absolutism and the formation of an academic and cultural desert. Here we try to answer two questions: First, why did Mao turn to "big cultural criticism" and "big academic criticism"? Second, how did he prepare the public for the launch of the Cultural Revolution?

In 1962, under the direction of Kang Sheng, then Alternate Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, criticism was launched of the work *Liu Zhidan*¹⁷⁶ and of Xi Zhongxun, then Vice Premier of the State Council and Secretary General of the State Council. On September 24, during the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Kang gave Mao a note that read, "The use of the novel for anti-party activities is a big invention." Mao read the note aloud and commented that public opinion, or ideological works, are always be used prior to overthrowing a regime, whether for revolutionary or counter-revolutionary purposes.¹⁷⁷ The Report of the 9th National Congress of the CPC in 1969 commented: "The words of Chairman Mao struck at the revisionary group headed by Liu Shaoqi. This group used every chance to control ideology and superstructure. The departments under the control of this group have imposed a crazy counter-revolutionary dictatorship on the proletariat and poisoned the proletariat with evil and unhealthy thoughts. They have just one goal — preparing the public for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We must purge them politically and crush their counter-revolutionary public opinions with revolutionary public opinions."¹⁷⁸

Dream of the Red Chamber)" and transmitted it to members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the persons in charge of publicity and culture. The letter expressed Mao Zedong's belief that the criticism by Li Xifan and Lan Ling of Yu Pingbo's article was the "first serious attack on the wrong opinions of so called scholars regarding *Dream of the Red Chamber*." The letter also criticized "bigwigs" who ignored the problem and even discouraged criticism. These people talked about a united line with respect to bourgeois writers and felt happy to be bourgeois followers. Mao Zedong saw the uncritical acceptance by many scholars of *Dream of the Red Chamber* as analogous to their acceptance of *A Secret History of the Qing Imperial Palace* and *Legend of Wu Xun*.

176. Li, *Liu Zhidan*.

177. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 10, 194.

178. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

On September 27, the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC established a Special Case Committee headed by Kang Sheng to review certain leaders, such as Xi Zhongxun, Jia Tuofu (then Vice Director of the State Economic and Trade Commission,) and Liu Jingfan. This committee became a typical modern “literary inquisition.” Kang later became Mao’s political hatchet man, leading and participating in a number of major injustices during the Cultural Revolution.

Jiang Qing was politically ambitious and resentful of being excluded from politics. After Mao stressed the importance of ideological works during this plenary meeting, Jiang seized the opportunity and immediately informed Mao that serious problems existed in the literary and artistic fields. Jiang and Kang had collaborated before, and so easily reached agreement and became the initiators of the campaign of “Big Criticism in Literature and Art” and the Cultural Revolution.¹⁷⁹

In 1963, with the direct support and intervention of Mao, Jiang carried out criticism of the rewritten Kun Opera *Li Huiniang*. Her activities were later officially recognized by Mao as marking the start of the Cultural Revolution itself.¹⁸⁰ Jiang not only understood Mao’s strategic goals, but also was willing to do anything to help implement them.

In December of 1963, Ke Qingshi, then a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the First Secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the CPC, provided an important report, and Mao immediately provided Peng Zhen and Liu Ren with related instructions and materials. Mao harshly criticized many members of the CPC who showed enthusiasm for “feudalist” and “capitalist” art instead of “socialist” art.¹⁸¹ To show his discontent regarding current literary works in Beijing, Mao also criticized the Ministry of Culture for publicizing works dealing with feudal dynasties, love stories and

179. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1228.

180. On January 1, 1967, the *People’s Daily* and *Red Flag* published the editorial “Carry the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution through to the End,” which was reviewed and approved by Mao Zedong himself. The editorial said: “The literary and artistic revolution signaled by the drama reform under the instruction of Chairman Mao in China in 1963 was actually the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.” (*People’s Daily*, January 1, 1967.)

181. Mao Zedong pointed out, “It is absurd that many communists are enthusiastic about feudalist and capitalist arts rather than socialist arts. Many literary and artistic authorities remain under the control of ‘dead people’. The social economic base has changed, but the arts, one of the superstructures servicing this base remain a big problem” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 10, 436–437.)

historical foreign artists.¹⁸²

In February 1964, in a conversation about educational revolution, Mao said, “the old teaching system wrecks talents and youth.” He proposed an educational revolution and fewer years of schooling.¹⁸³ In July, he had a conversation with Mao Yuanxin and once again raised the need to reform the education system and make class struggle a major course in the nation’s colleges.¹⁸⁴ These two conversations laid a foundation for the educational revolution that later occurred during the Cultural Revolution.

In June, when receiving foreign guests, Mao praised the First Emperor, Qin Shi Huang, but denounced Confucius.¹⁸⁵ He praised the personal role Qin Shi Huang played in unifying China, but criticized the absolutism he displayed in the “burning of books and burying of scholars.” Mao commented to his guests that rehabilitation would have been better. However, in extending the anti-rightist struggle in 1957, Mao “buried the scholars” albeit without “burning the books.” On

182. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1226–1227

183. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 22–23.

184. Mao Zedong told Mao Yuanxin: “Class struggle is your main course. Your college should carry out socialist education in rural areas and take part in the movement against the ‘five evils’ in factories. How can you graduate from college without knowledge of class struggle? I disagree with the ‘filling’ teaching method. Bourgeois educators already identified this problem during the May 4 Movement. Why can we not make reforms? The key to educational reform is teachers.” Mao Zedong therefore criticized college students because they lacked knowledge of workers, farmers or class struggle (Ibid, 96–97.)

185. Mao Zedong expressed: “Qin Shi Huang was far greater than Confucius. Confucius liked empty talk, while Qin Shi Huang was the first person to unify China. He unified China not only politically, but also by standardizing systems such as writing and metrology. Some of the systems he created remain in use today. No other emperor among China’s feudal dynasties was greater than him. But he was cursed for thousands of years for two reasons: first, he killed 460 intellectuals; second, he burned some books.” On August 30, 1964, Mao made further comments: “Qin Shi Huang was a good emperor. In fact only 460 people were killed in the ‘burning of books and burying of scholars’ incident, and they were all followers of Mencius. Actually, he did not bury all schools of thought. For instance, Shusun Dao survived. We face many problems we cannot solve, just like Qin Shi Huang.” (Chen, *Analyses of Mao Zedong's Reading Notes*, vol. 2, 1155.)

February 8, 1958, he commented, "The CPC is far better than Qin Shi Huang."¹⁸⁶ Mao re-evaluated Qin Shi Huang's actions in the "burning of books and burying of scholars" to create a historical precedent for the analogous actions that were to occur in the coming Cultural Revolution.

Nobody predicted that the Cultural Revolution would see Mao become a modern incarnation of Qin Shi Huang. The fact was, Mao felt there were many things to learn from the Qin Shi Huang. Mao explained: "Like Qin Shi Huang, there are many things we cannot solve." In August 1974, Mao wrote a poem titled "Comments on the 'Discussion of Feudalism' - to Guo Moruo," commenting: "Please re-evaluate the First Emperor; we too should 'burn books and bury scholars'."¹⁸⁷ In September Mao told a foreign guest: "I am also Qin Shi Huang, and in fact Lin Biao referred to me in this way."¹⁸⁸

In fact, the scale of the "burning of books and burying of scholars" in the time of Mao far exceeded that in the time of Qin Shi Huang. The Cultural Revolution created a "big cultural desert" that had nothing to do with Mao's specific personal opinions on communist theory, including insisting on Marxism, opposing and preventing revisionism and preventing capitalist restoration, and was simply a return of feudal absolutism from 2,000 years previously.

From the summer of 1964, Mao led the biggest cultural criticism movement since the founding of New China, which ranged from the literary and artistic fields to the fields of philosophy, economics, history, and so on.¹⁸⁹ Mao personally

186. In February 1958, during the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong called for a re-evaluation of Qin Shi Huang. He explained: "Qin Shi Huang might have had a lot of flaws, such as a clubbed hand. His biggest crime was the 'burning of books and burying of scholars'. But in my opinion, the CPC is just like Qin Shi Huang. No. We are better than him." In the summer of 1959, Mao further commented that the evaluation of Qin Shi Huang should consider both sides. (Ibid.)

187. Ibid, 1156

188. In September 1974, Mao Zedong told foreign guests: "Qin Shi Huang was the first famous emperor during China's feudal period. I, too, am a 'Qin Shi Huang'; Lin Biao has called me so. Qin Shi Huang has traditionally been a divisive figure in China, some believe he was good and others believe he was bad. Personally, I support the Qin Shi Huang and oppose Confucius." (Ibid, 1161.)

189. Some scholars, like Pang Xianzhi, think that political criticisms in the form of academic discussion became integral to the "anti-revisionism" movement. For examples of such criticisms and their objectives, see Yang Xianzhen's "Two Unite Into One" theory in philosophy, Sun Yefang's "production price theory" and "view of enterprise profits" in

conducted political intervention and criticism, first by “burying scholars” and then by “burning books.”

On June 4, Mao requested that Jiang Qing talk with Lin Biao.¹⁹⁰ This may have marked the start of the political alliance between Lin and Jiang, and one that was approved by Mao, despite Jiang holding no position in the army and occupying a position unconnected with literary and artwork in the army.

On June 26, Mao issued an instruction strongly praising Jiang’s “Speech on Modern Beijing Opera Performance.”¹⁹¹ In the speech, Jiang said: “The stage has traditionally been dominated by emperors and their ministers, scholars and ladies and even ‘Monsters and Demons’. This phenomenon will destroy the economic basis of socialist society. Such a stage does not serve all working people, but rather is exploited by minorities such as landowners, affluent peasants, reactionaries, bad elements and the bourgeoisie.”¹⁹² Mao issued official instructions on behalf of Jiang (who at that time did not hold any office in the CPC) and transmitted them to the whole of the CPC. In doing this Mao violated the internal provisions of the CPC by directly giving the green light for Jiang’s political career. On July 1, Peng Zhen delivered another speech on the modern performance of Beijing Opera, and said: “The priority of performances should be the representation of living people, such as workers, farmers and soldiers, and heroes. As for dead people, feudal emperors and ministers, less is better.” On July 23, Mao issued an instruction supporting Peng’s speech.¹⁹³

On June 27, Mao harshly criticized the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art Circles and all attached associations. He said they were flirting with revisionism. He was worried about an association like Hungary’s Petofi Club appearing in China.¹⁹⁴ Through his criticism of the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art

economics, and Jian Bozhan’s “historicism” and “concession policy theory” in history (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, v 2, pp 1384–1385, Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2003.)

190. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 81.

191. *Ibid*, 89.

192. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1228–1229

193. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 89.

194. Mao Zedong believed that the previous 15 years had seen most of these associations and their associated publications refuse to cooperate with party policies. He felt they viewed themselves as standing above the masses, failed to reflect the goals of socialist revolution and construction, and were in danger of becoming revisionist. Should

Circles, Mao was also issuing a serious warning to the whole CPC.

In August, Mao sent Qi Benyu's article "Problems in the Evaluation of Li Xiucheng," published in the *Guangming Daily*, to Jiang Qing with special instructions.¹⁹⁵ Jiang then expressed her support for Qi's "historical revolution" and criticized Jian Boda (a professor of history at Peking University) without actually mentioning him by name. In December 1965, Qi's "Studying History for the Revolution" was published in Issue 13 of the *Red Flag*, and stated that "Marxists stand up and declare loudly to the crowd: Rebellion is right." Mao praised this article twice: "I read it three times. The only regret is that it did not mention names (meaning Jian Bozhan.)"¹⁹⁶

On August 27, Mao gave instructions on two articles provided by the Office of the Propaganda Department of the CPC: "Refutation of Yang Xianzhen (then Vice President of Central Senior Party School) and Others Who Deny Oneness of Thinking and Existence" and "Feng Youlan (then Philosophy professor at Peking University) and his Spreading of Bourgeois Educational Thoughts." Mao wrote: "We cannot triumph without concerning ourselves with philosophy." He then transferred the articles with instructions to Chen Boda.¹⁹⁷ The criticism on Yang's "Two things may become one" theory was reported to Mao and organized by Kang Sheng by himself.¹⁹⁸ Mao said: "'Everything has two sides' is dialectic, but I think

revisionism take hold, an association like Hungary's Petofi Club might appear in China. (Ibid, 91.)

195. Qi Benyu's "Comment on Li Xiucheng's Autobiography," published in Issue 4 of *Historic Research* in 1963, described how Li Xiucheng, an outstanding general of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, came to betray his kingdom. Luo Ergang, a historian, had different opinions, and so an argument developed between him and Qi. Jiang Qing submitted Qi's article to Mao, who agreed with its assessment of Li Xiucheng and issued the instruction: "According to historical literature and irrefutable evidence, the written accounts left behind by this traitor were untrue." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 130–131.) The *Guangming Daily* then published Qi's "Comment on Li Xiucheng's Autobiography" together with "Feedback on the Discussion of the Evaluation of Li Xiucheng" which was submitted by Jiang Qing to Mao Zedong. (*Guangming Daily*, July 25, 1964)

196. Mao Zedong: "Speech during the Hangzhou Meeting," December 21, 1965; "Discussions of Mao Zedong with Kang Sheng and Others," March 28, 1966.

197. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 148.

198. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1230.

'Two Unite into One' may be revisionist or display class conciliation!'"¹⁹⁹ Criticism of the economic opinions of Sun Yefang (President of the Institute of Economics, CAS) was also carried out at this time, and was reported to Mao by Kang and Chen.²⁰⁰

Peng Zhen (then member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC) expressed the opinion that "all people are equal before the truth," regardless of whether they were party or state leaders, literary workers, or common people.²⁰¹ Peng's statement apparently included Mao along with other leaders of the party and the state and it attracted his anger. In his *Notice on May 16*, Mao responded to the perceived challenge to his supreme authority by denouncing Peng's statement as "a bourgeois slogan."²⁰² In 1964, Mao asked Peng: "In your opinion, how should we conduct class struggle in the ideological and cultural fields? Beijing is the capital, the model for all other provinces and cities." Instructed by Mao, Jiang Qing frequently talked with Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi and Zhou Yang, but they disagreed on the matter of class struggle.²⁰³ Jiang had now become Mao's political agent, powerful enough to interfere in the work of the Central Committee of the CPC. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao appointed his grandniece, Wang Hairong, and his nephew, Mao Yuanxin, as his agents to transmit the "supreme instructions" of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. This arrangement was contrary to Marxism and resembled feudal absolutism. This habit of Mao's also set a bad precedent in the CPC that was imitated by others. For instance, Lin Biao let his wife, Ye Qun, act as his political agent.

In November, Mao evaluated the cultural system. He said: "What percentage of the cultural system is in our hands? 20%? 30%? 50%? Perhaps it is less than 50%? In my opinion, at least 50% is not in our hands." He even went so far as to say, "The whole Ministry of Culture has collapsed."²⁰⁴ On December 27, during the Central Working Meeting, Mao again said: "The whole Ministry of Culture has been corrupted. The whole unit is under the joint dictatorship of the bourgeois and feudal classes."²⁰⁵

199. Pang and Jin eds., "Records of Mao Zedong's Speech during the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC."

200. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2.

201. Peng, "Several Issues on Academic Discussion."

202. "Notice of the Central Committee of the CPC," *People's Daily*, May 16, 1967.

203. Xiaodi, *Secrets Buried with the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 5.

204. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1227.

205. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1372–1373.

Mao's estimates regarding China's cultural circles were very arbitrary. He made subjective judgments that violated his proclaimed principles of "no investigation, no right to speak," "being practical and realistic," and "prohibit cruel struggle and ruthless purges." This tendency showed that enjoying power for too long led Mao to deviate from the right path. The extension of the struggle objectives made his political hallucinations increasingly extreme and his political mistakes became magnified and he launched the all-encompassing Cultural Revolution.

On March 3, 1965, during the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, Peng Zhen expressed reservations about Mao's "big cultural criticism." He said: "We should be careful of this phenomenon. We should be aware that some people have become famous not for their academic contributions but simply for finding faults with others. The criticism should be under control." Bo Yibo later commented: "Peng Zhen's correct opinion was not adopted. Instead, the tide of criticism became furious."²⁰⁶

On December 12, Mao talked with Chen Boda and others in Hangzhou and said, "Some intellectuals like Wu Han and Jian Bozan are becoming weak." Referring to the ongoing campaign to criticize Wu Han's play on a Ming Dynasty official, Mao said, "The key to *Hai Rui Dismissed* is the 'Dismissed'. We dismissed Peng Dehuai in 1959."²⁰⁷ This statement clearly shows that Mao never reflected deeply on the wrong decisions made during the Great Leap Forward, which had caused numerous deaths during the Great Chinese Famine. On the contrary, he believed that *Hai Rui Dismissed* was politically dangerous since it could be interpreted as a call to reverse the political purge of Peng Dehuai. Mao thus used the debate surrounding this play as a direct motivation for the launch of the Cultural Revolution.

Mao constantly pursued rash policies. The mistakes he made in his later years were the inevitable results of the path dependence that had come to dominate his thinking. Mao's absolute power ultimately led him to become divorced from the

206. As a result, famous historian Fan Wenlan was forced to perform self-criticism, and Guo Moruo (historian and President of CAS) was forced to resign. (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1244.)

207. Mao Zedong said, "Yao Wenyuan wrote powerful articles, shaking the fields of drama, historiography and philosophy. But they still failed to hit the target. The target was 'dismissal from office'. Emperor Jiajing dismissed Hai Rui; in 1959 we dismissed Peng Dehuai, another 'Hai Rui'." Mao added: "In recent years some young people (referring Yao Wenyuan, Qi Benyu, and Yin Da) have made some progress. But some senior professors have made no progress. Wu Han has been [Beijing's Deputy] Mayor for so long, its about time he steps down to be a county governor." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1401, Beijing.)

rest of the party, and to travel in the opposite direction from the correct one.

In March 1966, at the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao said: "The deeper the socialist revolution goes, the more strongly they resist and the more their true anti-party and anti-socialist colors are revealed....The bourgeois intellectuals control real power in academia and education; local governments must watch those who control schools, newspapers, publications, and publishing houses; bourgeois academic authority must be criticized harshly."²⁰⁸ He further said: "Even today many of those university professors have only one type of learning: anti-party, anti-proletariat and anti-revolution. Besides counter-revolution, bourgeois restoration, and revisionist cultivation, they know nothing."²⁰⁹

Mao criticized the "concession policy" that Jian Bozan, professor of Peking University, proposed, which moved towards the feudal landed class. Simultaneously, he praised articles by Qi Benyu and various others. In 1966, "Criticisms of the Historical Views of Comrade Jian Bozan," co-authored by Qi and others, was published in Issue 4 of the *Red Flag*.²¹⁰

Mao said repeatedly: "More reading leads to more stupidity; dependence on intellectuals makes it easier for revisionism to appear."²¹¹ He fully reversed his previous judgments and opinions on Chinese intellectuals. In January 1956, during the intellectual affairs meeting held by the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao had said: "China's socialist construction cannot work without the participation of intellectuals. We cannot depend solely on the uneducated. China needs a large number of intellectuals." He called upon the whole CPC to strive to learn scientific knowledge and to cooperate with intellectuals within and outside the party to close the scientific gap between China and the rest of the world.²¹² In February 1958, Mao wrote to Lu Dengyi (then Alternate Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, head of Cultural Education Team of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Director of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC) to propose "persuading all the professors, lecturers, assistants and researchers we can to serve the cause of educating the proletariat, as well as

208. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1240.

209. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 35.

210. Chen, *Analyses of Mao Zedong's Reading Notes*, vol. 2, 1179.

211. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1154.

212. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Resolutions about Several Historical Issues of the CPC since the Founding of New China (with Remarks)*, 242.

engaging in cultural and scientific work.”²¹³ However, from 1957, Mao began to call intellectuals “bourgeois intellectuals,”²¹⁴ and said that bourgeois intellectuals should not be allowed to remain in control of schools.²¹⁵ This caused the party to make serious mistakes in its policy towards intellectuals, and was exploited and taken to an extreme by the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution.²¹⁶

All of the aforementioned large-scale criticism movements launched by Mao violated his own avowed basic guideline of “let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend,” and turned the literary and artistic fields from cultural liberalism to cultural absolutism. Most of these movements were led in the name of Mao Zedong, just as had occurred with Stalin in the 1930s. Mao viewed cultural problems as ideological, saw academic debate as political struggle, personally intervened in the cultural field, wildly suppressed cultural elites, directly purged intellectual elites, and indirectly attacked political elites to shape public opinion for the launch of the Cultural Revolution and seize absolute control of Chinese politics and culture. The 1981 resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC pointed out that Mao made ideological errors in his excessive responses to perceived political criticisms expressed in various literary and art works, or voiced by academics, writers, or artists. Mao became increasingly extreme in his treatment of intellectuals, education, science and culture, and his struggle to impose his will eventually sparked the Cultural Revolution.²¹⁷ These movements begun by Mao seriously suppressed China’s cultural life for a very long period.²¹⁸

213. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7.

214. Mao said: “Most of the intellectuals among us grew up in the old society and came from families that were not working class. Even those who came from the families of workers or farmers experienced a bourgeois education before the liberation and so generally gained a bourgeois view of the world. Therefore they remain bourgeois intellectuals.” (Ibid, 272.)

215. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 53–54.

216. Needham, “Rebirth of Science in China — The Rise and Fall of the Anti-intellectual ‘Gang of Four’”; Pan ed., *Collected Works of Joseph Needham*.

217. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 807.

218. Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1245.

Mao Zedong's Political Differences with Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping

The Cultural Revolution was an inevitable consequence of a series of political struggles that followed after the CPC gained power. After the anti-rightist struggle was launched in 1957, those outside the party no longer dared to judge the CPC, and multi-party political consultation under the leadership of the CPC turned to a one-party dictatorship. After the Lushan Meeting and its attacks on intra-party "right opportunists" in 1959, those within the party also no longer dared criticize Mao. From that point, collective leadership and democratic decision making was replaced by personal authoritarianism and arbitrariness. First Secretaries of the CPC Committees at all levels generally became "patriarchs," and Mao became the highest ranking "patriarch" in the CPC.²¹⁹

After the Lushan Meeting, Mao became increasingly isolated from other leaders of the CPC. Many supporters of the Great Leap Forward, especially Liu Shaoqi, began to reflect on the decisions of the Lushan Meeting. For example, they came to believe that while natural causes contributed to the Great Chinese Famine, the event was largely a man-made disaster. Deng Xiaoping began to distance himself from Mao, while Peng Zhen believed that Mao's refusal to review his own role in the mistakes made by the party would negatively impact the party.²²⁰ The failure of the Great Leap Forward depressed Mao, but he also became unhappy with the pressure he was facing from other factions within the leadership, and eventually retaliated by challenging Liu, Deng, Peng, and others after the Beidaihe Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.

During the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC held in January 1962, Mao stressed the problem of watching for revisionism. During the Beidaihe Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC in August 1962, and the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in September of the same year, Mao further completed the basic line of the CPC in the whole socialist phase. "This Marxism and Leninism line brought by Chairman Mao is the lifeline of our party."²²¹

Between May and July 1962, Deng Zihui (then Secretary of the Secretariat of the

219. Yang, *The Deng Xiaoping Era: A Record of the Two Decades of Reform and Opening in China*, vol. 1, 10.

220. Tong, *40 Years of Ups and Downs*, vol. 2, 393.

221. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

Central Committee of the CPC and Vice Premier of the State Council) introduced his policy of implementing “fixed farm output quotas for individual households” in rural areas. Chen Yun commented that it would be better to “allocate farmland to each household” than require households to fulfill production quotas. He communicated with various members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, successively approaching Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping, and Zhou Enlai. They all agreed with his proposal to allocate farmland to households. At the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC held on July 2, Deng Xiaoping appraised Chen’s proposal highly, saying: “Comrade Chen Yun performed some investigations, told some truths and provided some opinions. Contracting production to each household is the best among all the organizational modes for agriculture. During the transition period we should adopt whatever mode helps recover production.”²²²

During this period (as the country sought to recover from the Great Chinese Famine,) despite the central leadership group reaching agreement on rural reform, Mao used his veto power to reject their proposal. On June 6, Mao interviewed Chen Yun regarding why he advocated a policy of allocating farmland to individual households. Chen maintained that the policy would not cause polarization or lead to land requisition through purchase, and focused on its benefits, saying: “In this way we can recover in just four years. Otherwise, it will take much longer.” Mao became angry after hearing this.²²³ He harshly criticized the policy of allocating farmland to individual households as a form of revisionism that would destroy the rural collective economy and dissolve the people’s communes. To Mao this issue of farmland allocation became central to the line of the party.²²⁴ As for determining exactly what comprised revisionism, he alone had the final word.

On July 20, Mao talked with the First Secretaries of all the Central Bureaus and criticized the opinions of Chen Yun and Deng Zihui about “fixed farm output quotas for individual households” and “allocating farmland to individual households.” He said, “Now some people want to fix farm output quotas for households and even allocate farmland to households throughout the country. Someone (Chen Yun) said that we need eight years to restore agricultural production under current policies, but four years will be enough if we fix farm output quotas for individual households. All these words came from Beijingers (meaning the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC.)”²²⁵

222. Jin and Chen eds., *Biography of Chen Yun*, vol. 2, 1322.

223. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1230.

224. Zhou, “Before and After the Four Investigations of Comrade Chen Yun in Rural Areas.”

225. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1234.

On August 6, Mao chaired the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC and expressly declared: “‘Fixed farm output quotas for individual households’ and ‘allocating farmland to individual households’ are the way of capitalism.”²²⁶ Here, Mao equated revisionism with capitalism, showing his tendency towards vague definitions of political terms, and confusing and self-contradictory concepts. Regardless of his confused analysis, Mao clearly viewed the proposed policies as mortal dangers to China’s revolution. What worried him most was polarization between rich and poor in rural areas. On August 9, in a central team meeting, Li Jingquan, First Secretary of the Southwest Central Bureau, said, “If farmlands were allocated to individual households, the polarization between rich and poor would become obvious within two years.” Mao responded: “It will not take 2 years. Class polarization will appear in just over 1 year. On one hand, there will be some secretaries of the party branches who have been corrupted, have mistresses, give away money and buy land; on the other hand, poor farmers will be bankrupted, including families of officials, employees, teachers and soldiers and families composed of vulnerable groups. They constitute our social base.”²²⁷ Mao could see the potential negative aspects of rural reform, but failed to realize the importance of re-allocation of land to help farmers build a better life together. Mao’s limited knowledge of governing a modern country became a big obstacle to his understanding of socialism. He saw everything simply in terms of a struggle between socialism and capitalism. More importantly he stopped engaging in investigation and research of real life conditions, ignored the voices of farmers who simply wanted to feed themselves, and did not respect the desire of farmers for a better life. Despite Chen Yun offering pragmatic suggestions based on four field investigations, Mao Zedong believed only in his instincts, and showed no empathy for the real situation of farmers. This was an important reason for the divergences between Mao and other leaders of the CPC.

In August, during the Tenth Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao said: “There are two commands in Beijing (meaning the ideological divisions within the Central Committee of the CPC) and a fierce struggle exists between them.” He also referred to the words of Lin Daiyu in *Dream of the Red Chamber*: “Either the east wind prevails over the west wind, or the west wind prevails over the east wind.”²²⁸ Mao did not specifically identify who made up the ‘other command,’ but he had earlier labeled Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping as the “bourgeois command.” Later in 1966, Mao’s “Bombarding the Headquarters —

226. Ibid, 1241.

227. Ibid, 1242.

228. Chen, *Analyses of Mao Zedong's Reading Notes*, vol. 2, 1483.

My First Big-character Poster” heavily criticized the rightism introduced by Liu in 1962.²²⁹ The ‘other command’ thus referred to Liu.

In May 1963, Mao Zedong organized the preparation of the *First 10-point Decision* in Hangzhou. This period saw illegal and undisciplined behavior among grass-roots officials, including seeking special treatment, misappropriation, and corruption. These should have been punished according to normal party discipline and existing legal punishments. However, the *First 10-point Decision* framed the situation as a struggle between two lines, a manifestation of serious class struggle in Chinese society. Mao said that the Socialist Education and “Anti-Five Evils” movements were part of the socialist revolutionary struggle to “beat down and crush the furious attacks of capitalism.” Liu and Deng disagreed, and the *Latter 10-point Decision* was published in September 1963. This still sought to establish “taking the class struggle as the key link,” but unlike the wording and method used by Mao, this required determining a policy line to differentiate class enemies from individuals engaged in temporary behavior, and to distinguish speculation from normal market trades.

On May 11, 1964, during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao declared, “To prevent the success of the counter-revolutionary strategy of ‘peaceful evolution’ promoted by imperialists and revisionists and ensure the future of Marxism and Leninism, we should cultivate and train successors to continue the Proletariat Revolution.” Accordingly, Mao proposed the famous “Five Standards.”²³⁰ In the same month, he told Zhang Pinghua, Secretary of the Hunan Provincial Committee of the CPC, “It seems that the socialist education movement cannot solve all of our problems.” Internally, Mao was thus preparing for a large-scale revolution.²³¹ His subsequent direct conflict with Liu caused him to insist on “individual decision making.”

229. Mao, “Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster,” August 5, 1966, *People’s Daily*, August 5, 1967.

230. The ‘five standards’ include: follow Marxism instead of revisionism; serve the interests of the majority of people rather than a minority; pursue the unity of most of the people, including those who are mistakenly opponents; insist on democracy rather than autarchy; adopt a democratic rather than a paternalist work style; and conduct self-criticism of one’s own mistakes. Additionally, Mao Zedong said that he wanted to find a successor to ensure his policies were continued (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 85–87.)

231. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1391

On June 16, Mao talked again about revolutionary successors.²³² This was the first time he asked: "How should we respond if a 'Khrushchev' appears (in the Central Committee of the CPC)? What should we do if revisionism appears in China? Please transmit my words down to every county and tell the county committees to resist a revisionist Central Committee."²³³ These comments show that Mao sought to alert the Central Committee and local party organizations at all levels to the potential for revisionism.

In August, during the discussion and modification of the *Latter 10-point Decision* within the Central Committee of the CPC, conflict occurred between Mao and Liu regarding the problems of the social education movement.²³⁴ The report of the 9th National Congress of the CPC in 1969 pointed out: "In 1964, during the great socialist education movement, Liu Shaoqi began to cover up capitalists, and said in public that the Marxist scientific method of investigating social conditions, advocated by Chairman Mao, was not possible without implementing his line. It was necessary to restore capitalism."²³⁵

In September, Mao told a group of officials from Hunan that both the Central Committee and Provincial Committees should encourage people to supervise their superiors and criticize their work. He further urged that if the object of criticism was something more than a mere bureaucrat, people should draw attention to the criticism, even if this meant rebelling against the Central Committee of the CPC. The Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC himself thus mobilized local party organizations to rebel against the Central Committee of the CPC, and undermined the organizational principle that the entire CPC should follow the leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC.

On October 10, while issuing instructions about power seizure in relation to the socialist education movement to the Central Committee of the CPC, Liu Shaoqi released his opinion that "various conflicts and contradictions are intertwined."²³⁶

232. Mao Zedong said, "The Soviet Union encountered revisionism, so our country might experience the same. As for how to prevent the appearance of revisionism, we need to cultivate successors to the proletarian revolution." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 85–87.)

233. Xu, *Theories and Practices of Mao Zedong in His Later Years (1956–1976)*, 363.

234. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1352.

235. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

236. On October 24, 1964, Liu Shaoqi transmitted the "Report on the Power Struggle in the Xiaozhan Area," originally submitted by Tianjin Municipal Committee of the CPC. To transmit this report, he drafted the "Instruction on Matters Related to the Power

At the end of the year he put this opinion to the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, but was harshly and immediately criticized by Mao.

During the public censure of the Soviet Union's Khrushchev-led revisionism, Mao became worried that a "Khrushchev" would appear in the Central Committee of the CPC and implement revisionism. In fact, Mao was not so much worried as displeased that Liu Shaoqi was now rivaling himself in power and standing. The political conflict between Mao and Liu continued to display a similar pattern, with Mao always emerging as the dominant party.

From December 15 to 28, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC held the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC to discuss the problems appearing in the urban and rural Socialist Education Movement. Mao organized the implementation of the *23-Article Document* to further highlight that this movement was intended to solve the contradiction between socialism and capitalism, and above all to "purge capitalist roaders within the CPC." In particular, Mao believed that Liu was no longer a Marxist and instead had become bourgeois. However, the background to Mao's change of heart towards Liu was that he felt unhappy about Liu's power relative to his own.²³⁷ At that time, Mao and Liu enjoyed equal standing within the CPC, there being were two chairmen *de facto*: Mao was the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC, while Liu was the Chairman of the State. Demonstrating the equal standing the two enjoyed, a report to the Central Government by Chen Zhengren, Director of the Machinery Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, on November 25, 1964 was worded in a manner typical of the time to say that objectives would be achieved "only if we firmly implement instructions of the Central Committee of the CPC, Chairman Mao and Chairman Liu." This power sharing arrangement was inconsistent with

Struggle in the Socialist Education Movement" for the Central Committee of the CPC, based on the experience of Xiaozhan: "Currently, some of the contradictions between us and our enemies take the form of contradictions among the people and even within the CPC. The contradictions between ourselves and our enemies are interlaced with contradictions within the people and the CPC." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1357.)

237. During a meeting at the end of 1964, Mao Zedong said, "Liu Shaoqi still leads all work, including the Socialist Education Movement, the movement against the 'five evils,' and the economy. Something unexpected could happen at any time. If something happened, for example if I died, you would be unable to take power. You may take over power now and become Chairman and 'Qin Shi Huang'. I face something I cannot handle. My curses are useless now. If you're the best, you can act as the damn commander." (Cong, *Tortuous Years*, 602.)

the “no two kings in one state” principle of Chinese political tradition.

Mao naturally fell into the “successor trap.” On the one hand, he needed a successor, and had to enhance the power and reputation of that successor to make them effective; on the other hand, the expanded power and enhanced reputation of the successor might endanger Mao himself. Once Mao and his successor became political equals, a “successor crisis” would occur. Mao’s control over supreme power was naturally exclusive, and he never allowed his successor to be his equal. Under circumstances of mutual suspicion and lack of communication, the political successor naturally also became a political rival and potential victim of any political struggle. This is demonstrated by Mao’s relationships with Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao. Politically, the frequent political struggles launched by the older Mao were closely related to this “successor crisis.” From the perspective of the psychology of aging, these struggles were also related to Mao being suspicious of his successor.

In fact, Liu had remained loyal to Mao Zedong despite having different opinions on how to deal with the Socialist Education Movement. On November 10, during a meeting of the Standing Committee of Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC presided over by Mao, Liu said, “It is not easy for a party to elect its leader. The leader can emerge as a result of struggles and tests over a very long period. The history of our party also proves that the recognition of a leader within the party occurs only as a result of extended struggle, including fighting with class enemies, imperialists and opportunists in the party. Chairman Mao is a recognized leader within our party even though some have opinions about him. I am the first to promote Mao Zedong Thought and I feel Mao Zedong is our best leader. He is the best among our leaders and best represents the collective wisdom of our party.”²³⁸ Mao offered no response and shortly afterwards turned hostile toward him.

On December 20, during the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao and Liu had a disagreement about the main contradictions of the Socialist Education Movement. It developed into a face-to-face confrontation. Liu believed the main contradiction was between clean and dirty “political, economic, ideological, and organizational” elements; Mao denied this and claimed the main contradiction was capitalism. Liu said that the problem was that the “political, economic, ideological and organizational areas have not been cleaned up,” and contradictions between ourselves and the enemies existed, as did contradictions among the people. He also issued a special instruction: “Seize the lead wolf before controlling the foxes following the wolf — that is the key. You must start from the establishment.”²³⁹ The same day Mao gave a speech during the

238. Wu, *A Decade of Polemics—Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966*, vol. 2, 869–870.

239. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1390.

Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC. He quoted a poem by the famous Tang Dynasty poet Du Fu that read: "Shoot the horse before the horseman; Capture the chief to beat his force."²⁴⁰ The 'chief' that Mao referred to here was Liu. Mao intended to attack the "chief" to win the battle and "capture the chief to beat his force."

On December 27, during a plenary meeting, Mao said, "The CPC comprises two groups: socialists and capitalists. The latter have formed independent kingdoms during the past 15 years. Two independent kingdoms exist in Beijing besides the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee. You can take a guess as to what they are. I have no comment to make."²⁴¹ The two independent kingdoms referred to the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC led by Deng Xiaoping and the Station Planning Commission headed by Li Fuchun. This indicates that while Mao Zedong claimed unity and fairness existed within the CPC, he never undertook positive communication to reach mutual understanding and eliminate divergence. On the contrary, Mao launched political struggles and 'schemes'. He intentionally encouraged mutual suspicion, disclosure and struggle among the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC, and became the source of political divisions inside the CPC. Mao thus threw stones at the Central Committee of the CPC and the leading state institutions.²⁴²

On December 28, during the same plenary meeting, Mao spoke out against Liu's analysis of the Socialist Education Movement, arguing instead that the contradiction between socialism and capitalism was the main contradiction. Mao said that the key was to beat capitalist roaders within the CPC.²⁴³ Liu continued to insist on a more practical and realistic line. He believed, "The situation is complicated. We should focus on solving existing problems. Everything should be based on facts. We must not exaggerate everything into contradiction between ourselves and the enemy." The phenomenon of Liu working within the Central Committee of the CPC and presenting a different opinion to Mao should have been normal and consistent with the principle of intra-party democratic centralism. However, Mao could not tolerate dissent and ignored the opinions of Liu. He complained, "One (Deng) doesn't want me to attend the meeting and another (Liu) doesn't allow me to speak." Holding the texts of the Constitution and the Party Constitution in his hand, Mao asked the meeting: "Are we citizens of the People's Republic of China? Do we have free speech if we are? Can we talk with you? Do we have a

240. Jin, *Biography of Mao Zedong (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1617.

241. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1372–1373.

242. Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 32.

243. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1373–1374.

free press? Right now, the Ministry of Culture just gives those people a free press. I always support protests against our bureaucrats.”²⁴⁴ Mao was clearly very angry and wanted to display his strength to Liu and Deng. The incident also shows that an atmosphere of discussing decisions on a basis of political equity and using democratic mechanisms to eliminate political differences still prevailed inside the CPC Central Committee, as did the organizational principle of majority rule.

On the evening of January 3, 1965, Mao chaired the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and criticized some of Liu’s actions in directing the Socialist Education Movement without actually naming him.²⁴⁵ On the afternoon of January 5, Mao re-chaired the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and again harshly criticized Liu, still without naming him.²⁴⁶ The instructions of Mao Zedong on the documents of the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC indicated that he believed Liu to be “neither Marxist nor Leninist” and warned Liu’s supporters that “ignorance of basic theory and the basic practices of the CPC will take us in an incorrect direction,” but again did so without actually mentioning names.²⁴⁷

On January 14, the Central Committee of the CPC issued its *Summary of Discussions of the National Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC on “Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas”* (the 23-Article Document) together with an associated notice. The notice said, “We hereby issue this document to you. In case of any conflict between this document and previous documents on the Socialist Education Movement released by the Central Committee of the CPC, this document prevails.”²⁴⁸ Mao thus used his ultimate personal authority to deny the opinions of Liu.

Inexplicably, when Liu was re-elected as Chairman of the PRC during the First Meeting of the Third NPC, a political crisis broke out inside the Central Committee of the CPC, cracking the external display of political unity and worrying other leaders. During the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Zhou De, He Long, and other leaders talked with Liu and persuaded him to be prudent and respect Mao. After the meeting, Liu took the initiative and performed self-

244. Ibid, 1374–1375

245. Ibid.

246. Ibid, 1377–1378.

247. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 10, 281.

248. Ibid, 284.

criticism before Mao.²⁴⁹ This shows Liu was willing to obey the leadership of Mao Zedong to maintain political unity and eliminate the political crisis within the CPC.

Despite this, Mao still blamed Liu and sought to settle old scores. On January 17, 1956, when interviewing Chin Peng, the Secretary General of the Malaysian Communist Party, Mao talked about intra-party struggle and said that, with regard to the decisions on necessary guidelines and policies, the struggle with Liu dated back to the summer of 1964. In December 1970, when Mao was interviewed by Edgar Snow, Snow asked, "When did you clearly decide that you had to beat Liu Shaoqi politically?" Mao replied that this occurred after the release of the *23-Article Document* in January 1965. Mao explained that the first article of the *23-Article Document* specified that the goal of the Socialist Education Movement was to beat down the people in the CPC who were taking the capitalist road, but this was opposed by Liu.²⁵⁰ Mao felt he could neither cooperate with people with different political opinions, nor forgive their apologists. He followed personal absolutism by destroying groups he could not control. The conflict between Mao and Liu at the top level of the CPC thus became open and sharp, and was a direct cause of Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution.

While Mao had previously limited his criticisms of Liu to internal speeches and opinions, his hostility was later made public in 1969 with the Report on the 9th National Congress of the CPC, which stated: "At the end of 1964, Chairman Mao convened the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC and organized the preparation of *Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas* (the *23-Article Document*) to smash the bourgeois reactionary line of Liu Shaoqi, which was rightist while seeming leftist." This document was the first to expressly declare that "the key to this movement is to purge the capitalist roaders."²⁵¹ This Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1964 was the start of Mao's political purge of Liu, then also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and was also an important preparatory step towards the launch of the Cultural Revolution.²⁵²

249. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1379.

250. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 13, 173.

251. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

252. Some scholars like Pang Xianzhi believe that the exposure of divergence between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi was not accidental but resulted from the long accumulated divergences in serious matters such as assessments of the domestic situation, measures to overcome difficulties, and instructions regarding the Socialist Education Movement.

At the time, Mao was fairly isolated within the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. He no longer believed in collective leadership and had begun to act alone. He told Wu Xujun, his personal nurse: "I have given a lot of advice, but they (the leaders in charge of the front line work of the Central Committee of the CPC) did not accept it. I feel strong resistance and am worried about who will be a reliable successor. How dare they do this! I am still alive!"²⁵³ These words, and the way he confided in his nurse, indicate that he was unable to communicate information and opinions to other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC face to face and had already decided that "rebellion is right." To purge other leaders, especially Liu, he encouraged local and even military forces to rebel against the Central Committee of the CPC. His main strategy for orchestrating this was to warn local and military leaders that it could become necessary to agitate for a public rebellion.

On August 5, Mao received Dipa Nusantara Aidit, the Secretary General of the Indonesian Communist Party. Mao said: "Now Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping do 70–80% of the work. Deng Xiaoping is Secretary General and Zhou Enlai is Premier. They're better than me at practical work. I am a bureaucratist in a sense. This arrangement is necessary. For things to be otherwise would not be good." However, Mao continued to face a contradiction. He did not trust Liu, and was worried about the changes in the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. On August 11, Mao told Luo Ruiqing, "Revisionism was also a kind of pestilence. The leaders are now important. I have said, 'everyone had a head covered with skin that could resist the cold wind.' So, we must resist unhealthy trends by ourselves. Such trends appeared in 1962. The CPC would have changed its colors in just half a year if I and several other members had not resisted and won support. This need to resist negative changes applies to many things. The natural course of events can change if leaders change their minds. For instance, if I approve something, some members here might

The divergence between the two leaders that appeared during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC represented an eruption of these accumulated conflicts. During this Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong's discontent was directed toward leaders of the CPC at all levels, but especially the "capitalist roader." That caused the leftist advocating of the extension of class struggle to intensify, mentally and theoretically completing the preparations for the launch of the Cultural Revolution. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1383.)

253. Ibid, 1389–1390.

disagree and some might agree. There are a lot of positive or negative examples in this respect domestically and internationally.”²⁵⁴ These words indicate that Mao had disagreements with other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. Specifically, Mao perceived an unhealthy trend led by three members, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and Chen Yun, who had proposed “fixing farm output quotas for each household” and “allocating farmland to each household.” One year later, Mao released his “Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster” during the 11th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, once again referencing this “unhealthy trend.” Devoted to ideal socialism and people’s communes, Mao began to doubt the political line of the leadership of his own party.

On October 10, during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao spoke before the First Secretaries of all regions and said: “If there is anything wrong within the Central Committee of the CPC, anything could become a terrible ‘wrong’. If a person like Khrushchev appears, he could cause a rebellion on our home front. Chinese people tend to rebel historically. Are we just rebels like Song Jiang?”²⁵⁵ On October 12, during the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao said, “I am going to heaven to see the late Marx. What should I tell him about my work? If there is any revisionist here, I am his opponent!”²⁵⁶

In December, Mao formally instructed the General Office of the Central Committee to protect the secrets of the party, resist being used by revisionists, avoid revisionism appearing internally, and be on alert to destroy “Monsters and Demons” in case of war.²⁵⁷ However, exactly who the “revisionists” and the “Monsters and Demons” were was determined exclusively by Mao, and he was confusing the definitions of “revisionism” and “Monsters and Demons” just as he did those of “revisionism” and “capitalism.”

On January 12, 1966, speaking in front of Tao Zhu (then First Secretary of the Political Bureau of the Mid-South Regional Committee of the CPC,) Wang Renzhong (then Second Secretary of the Political Bureau of the Mid-South Regional Committee of the CPC and First Secretary of the Hubei Provincial Committee of the CPC,) Chen Yu (then Third Secretary of the Political Bureau of the Mid-South Regional Committee of the CPC and Governor of Guangdong Province,) and

254. Ibid, 1393–1394.

255. Ibid.

256. Ibid, 1395–1396.

257. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 489.

Zhang Pinghua (then First Secretary of the Political Bureau of the Hunan Provincial Committee of the CPC,) Mao said: "I said in Beijing last October, if revisionism appears in Beijing, what about your local governments? Will you follow the lead of Cai E to arise and attack Yuan Shikai? I feel something is wrong."²⁵⁸

On March 30, Mao spoke with Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, and Zhang Chunqiao in Shanghai and announced his concept of "Overcoming the king of hell and liberating the spirits." He said, "I always believe you should attack the Central Committee of the CPC if the Central Committee does evil. The 'Monkey King' is welcome locally."²⁵⁹ Kang later communicated the instructions of Mao to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC.

Encouraging a constant state of high alert was a tool used by Mao in political struggle. He encouraged opposition to the "heaven" — the Central Committee of the CPC and national institutions — as well as the rules and regulations specified in the constitutions of the party and the state. He not only encouraged local leaders to rebel, but also incited "Monkey Kings" like Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, Wang Li, Guan Feng, and Qi Benyu to attack the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council. These would later join the Central Cultural Revolution Group, established at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, as the commanders of China's insurrectionists, attacking targets like Liu and Deng.

Historically, the divergences, contradictions and conflicts between Mao and other leaders, including Liu and Deng, originated from their significantly different opinions regarding the political situation, development phase and guiding principles of governance in China. Two political lines existed and struggle occurred between them.²⁶⁰

258. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1398.

259. *Ibid*, 1406.

260. Hu Qiaomu also admitted that two lines existed within the CPC. He pointed out that after 1957, China had basically completed the tasks of the revolution, and thus the focus of realizing a socialist society should shift from revolutionary struggle to peaceful construction. During this period, the main trend within the CPC was to focus on the following: adapt to historic change, start from practice, and steadily develop the Chinese economy under the new systems while building the new socialist society. This trend represented the will of the majority in the CPC and the country. However, another trend existed that did not adapt to historic change and advocated following the previously established revolutionary track. Mao Zedong led or supported the correction of the 'leftist' mistake during the first half of 1959, 1961 and the first half of 1962, but in a sense was representative of the second trend (Hu, "Why did China make a Two-decade 'Leftist' Mistake?")

From the founding of New China, the small faction of idealists and radicals represented by Mao believed that even after establishing mass ownership of production materials, furious class struggle would persist and new class divisions would appear in society. Furthermore, the new privileged classes would find political agents within the party. The agents of the new privileged classes were the capitalist roaders within the party.

Within the CPC, most pragmatists or moderates, represented by Liu and Deng, believed that since socialist reconstruction had been mostly completed, domestic class enemies had perished and class struggle was over. Thus, they saw the main task of the CPC and the Chinese government under the leadership of the CPC as developing production and economic construction. The preface to the *Counter-revolutionary Utterances of China's Khrushchev — Liu Shaoqi*, written by Chen Boda and Jiang Qing and officially approved by Mao Zedong on October 9, 1967, provides the best account of this perspective, and reflects Mao's opinions of Liu:²⁶¹ "After the revolutionary victory in China, Liu Shaoqi strongly opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist revolution and pushed for capitalism in China on the pretext that it could solve the problem of lagging productivity. After the socialist reconstruction of the ownership of production materials was basically completed, he claimed 'classes have become history,' advocated class conciliation, viciously attacked the 'Three Red Flags,' called for rural reform and tried to restore capitalism. In the furious international class struggle, he pushed for a line based on capitulationism and featuring a 'crack down on revolutionary movements in all countries'."²⁶²

Although some leaders like Liu and Deng disagreed with Mao, they could not argue against him in public. Instead they used various means to resist implementing his policies. Of course, Mao was greatly angered by this, and so prepared to launch a large-scale social revolution to purge the party of the capitalist roaders represented by Liu and Deng.²⁶³

Mao's personality was such that although he was the supreme leader of the

261. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 422.

262. People's Publishing House Materials Room comp., *Counter-revolutionary Comments of China's Khrushchev — Liu Shaoqi*.

263. As Deng Rong recounted, Mao Zedong had become isolated and unhappy, and faced various dissenting opinions. Initially, he participated in policy and organization work, but eventually decided to use unusual measures to remove all obstacles to the promotion of the revolutionary line he believed in. (Deng, *My Father Deng Xiaoping — Days of the "Cultural Revolution"*, 4.)

ruling party, he still needed enemies. If he found himself without enemies, he would make them up, and his first act after destroying an enemy was typically to create a new one. This reflected not only the logic of Mao Zedong's class struggle theory, but also his personal political style. As he himself put it: "Fighting against others is a great joy!"²⁶⁴ Mao felt a continuous urge to seek and win conflicts, and these urges only grew as he approached the end of his life. He thus launched and led a final political revolution to eliminate thoroughly the residual influence of revisionism in the Central Committee of the CPC.

As recorded in the Report of the 9th National Congress of the CPC, "Looking back at this history, we will realize that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, involving hundreds of millions of the masses, was no accident. Instead it was the necessary result of the long-term struggle between two classes, two roads and two lines within socialist society. The proletariat, poor farmers, PLA, revolutionary officials and revolutionary intellectuals who resolved to follow the great leader Mao on the way of socialism can no longer stand the reactionary activities of Liu and his party. Therefore, a grand class struggle is inevitable."²⁶⁵ This shows Mao Zedong could no longer tolerate his opponents, and so a confrontation became unavoidable. Liu became Mao's enemy simply because Mao believed him to be. The same later applied to Lin Biao. Therefore the Cultural Revolution can be analyzed as entirely a man-made "grand class struggle."

How the Intraparty Democratic System Failed

Intraparty democracy was already broken by the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. As pointed out later in the *Several Rules about Intra-party Political Life* approved by the 5th Plenary Meeting of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC, unhealthy tendencies like separation from reality and the masses, subjectivism, bureaucratism, monopolization, and privileged thinking were deteriorating even before the Cultural Revolution occurred. Hu Sheng believed that for various historical reasons the democratization of the political life of the CPC and the state had failed to proceed smoothly since the founding of New China. Consequently the leadership and organization systems of the party and state remained incomplete in many respects. These defective systems failed to restrict Mao Zedong, the respected state leader, from allowing careerists like Lin Biao and Jiang Qing to

264. In 1917, Mao Zedong wrote the words "Fighting against heaven, fighting against earth, fighting against men — what great pleasure!" (*China Youth*, (24) (1954).)

265. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

seize power and run amok, and finally failed to stop the disaster of the Cultural Revolution.²⁶⁶ How did Mao, a mere human being, become a “god” before the Cultural Revolution? How could he overwhelm the Central Committee of the CPC? What role did Mao play in the Cultural Revolution? What about the roles of other leaders? The following seeks answers to these questions.

Personality cult and the Cultural Revolution

From the 1960s, among the CPC, PLA and the country, the personality cult around Mao Zedong became excessive, creating an important condition for his launch of the Cultural Revolution. Without this personality cult, there would have been no Cultural Revolution. Therefore, we should ask how the personality cult surrounding Mao emerged, and how it caused the Cultural Revolution.

Before the CPC became the ruling party, Mao Zedong opposed Chiang Kai-shek’s personal dictatorship outside the party and criticized his personality cult inside the party. Similarly, at this time Mao still opposed anything that could foster a personality cult involving himself. For example, on August 15, 1948, in a letter to Wu Yuzhang (then President of North China University,) he would not allow his name to be listed together with Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. He pointed out, “China’s revolutionary experience included handbooks written by Chinese communists (including Mao himself) based on the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and the documents of the provisions, lines and policies of the Central Committee of the CPC,” and concluded “therefore, it is nothing to do with ‘Maoism.’”²⁶⁷ Before the founding of New China in 1949, the Second Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the CPC, acting on a proposal of Mao, made a special resolution to prevent the emergence of any form of personality cult, and prohibited the praise of individual leaders, including through such actions as birthday congratulations, or the naming of cities, streets, factories and other objects after them.²⁶⁸

Mao’s opposition to personality cults continued after the founding of New China. In 1954, he said: “Some people said that the deletion of certain clauses in the draft of the Constitution reflected the opposition of a single individual (meaning himself.) This explanation is wrong. The reason is not opposition, but rather that those clauses are inappropriate, unreasonable, and unscientific. In a people’s democracy like China, such inappropriate clauses should not be considered.

266. Hu, *The 70 Years of the Communist Party of China*, 468–469.

267. Zhang, *Zhang Yaoci Memoirs — My Days with Chairman Mao*, 88.

268. Mao, “Methods of Work of the CPC Committees.”

Humility is nothing in science.”²⁶⁹ At that time Mao firmly maintained a scientific attitude. He also believed that nobody was perfect, and everyone had faults and could make mistakes. These beliefs were not aimed at others, but showed he was still analyzing himself with a clear mind. He allowed others to criticize him and did not accept his idolization.²⁷⁰

In December 1954, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC issued a notice: “Comrade Mao Zedong has instructed, stop using ‘Mao Zedong Thought’ from today to avoid material misunderstanding.” However, Mao did not explain why this could cause misunderstanding. In reality the confusion lay in the collective thinking of the Central Committee of the CPC versus the individual thinking of Mao. In April 1945, when drafting *Resolutions on Several Historical Issues*, Mao said, “You can describe me as a representative of the party, but I cannot represent the party alone.” This statement clarifies Mao’s concern, namely that he did not want Mao Zedong Thought to be misunderstood as his personal thoughts.

However, although Mao made important contributions to the party, he also undervalued and excluded the contributions of other leaders to claim credit for himself. He thus undermined the collective leadership of the party and substituted himself for the Central Committee of the CPC.

In March 1955, during the National Congress of the CPC, Mao said, “We have learned various historic lessons, and personal wisdom can help avoid work mistakes only if it is combined with collective wisdom. The Central Committee of the CPC and the party committees at all levels therefore must insist on the principle of collective leadership and keep opposing the two tendencies of individual autarchy and decentralism.”²⁷¹ That is the fundamental reason the CPC, the new ruling party, was able to create the first golden period (1949–1957,) with Mao a key factor in its success.²⁷²

269. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 6, 330.

270. Mao Zedong said, “I do not think there are any saints in this world. People have faults and make mistakes. The thing is not to make too many mistakes. We should be practical and realistic. We should analyze all things. We should affirm the good and criticize the bad. The ancient proverb goes, ‘Men are not sages; who can be without fault?’. These words should be modified in my opinion. Even saints make mistakes. But we should not care too much provided they correct their mistakes in time. As I have said myself, do not build idols.” (Ibid, 346–347)

271. Ibid, 391–392.

272. Hu, *China’s Political and Economic History (1949–1976)*.

On March 24, 1956, Mao chaired the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. When the discussion turned to personality cults, Deng Xiaoping, then Secretary General of the Central Committee said, “A personality cult is bad and our party always strives to avoid it. I remember that this problem was mentioned during the rectification movement in Yan’an. At that time Mao Zedong stressed the line to oppose personality cults when teaching the work methods of party leaders. The criticism and self-criticism called for during the 7th National Congress of the CPC also showed our opposition to personality cults. Mao Zedong wrote *Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership* in 1943 and *On Strengthening the Party Committee System* in 1948. Both these works are important pieces of literature with regards to carrying out the mass line and preventing the emergence of a personality cult. In 1949, the Second Plenary Meeting of the 7th National Congress of the CPC expressly required not assigning special importance to particular individuals, for example by prohibiting birthday congratulations, and the naming of cities, streets, factories and other objects after specific individuals. All these policies showed foresight and wisdom.”²⁷³

On April 5, Mao led the drafting of an article “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” published by the *People’s Daily* Editorial Board. The article described a personality cult as a corrupt historical heritage that remained influential and practiced by tens of millions of people. Mao wrote the following: “Stalin, in his later years, gradually became addicted to a personality cult. As a result, he broke the party rule of democratic centralism and the system of collective leadership combined with personal responsibility.” Mao believed that the CPC should learn from the experience of the Soviet Union and establish a complete political system featuring the mass line and collective leadership to prevent the appearance of individualism and a personality cult. The article also made the insightful point that the influence of a personality cult can be very persistent. Even when a personality cult is overcome, it may reappear, or transfer to another individual. Mao therefore stressed the need to be vigilant toward the emergence of a personality cult.²⁷⁴

In the same month, during the Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao reaffirmed: “Do not list Mao Zedong together with Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; insist on democratic centralism and collective leadership.” Thus, the political report of the 8th National Congress of the CPC did

273. Wu, *A Decade of Polemics — Memoirs of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956–1966*, vol. 1, 18–19.

274. This article was written by the *People’s Daily* Editorial Board based on the discussions of the Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC (*People’s Daily*, April 5, 1956.)

not mention “Mao Zedong Thought” as it had previously. It was a modification of the wording of the political report of the National Congress of the CPC, and represented historic progress and a significant political consensus within the party.

Thus, for a few years after the founding of New China, Mao knew himself well and remained humble and prudent. He merely sought to be the political equal of other members of collective leadership. This was the key both to his success and to the first golden period of economic development and social progress in China. However, after the Great Leap Forward, Mao turned to cultivating his own personality cult, which directly violated the resolution of the Second Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the CPC. A symbiotic relationship existed between Mao’s mistakes and this personality cult, and Mao himself ultimately became its biggest victim.

In March 1958, during the Chengdu Meeting, Mao changed his mind and said that a personality cult was necessary. He said there were two kinds of personality cult. The first type was the correct personality cult, which correctly worshipped figures such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, all of whom held the truth in their hands and so needed to be followed forever. The second type was the incorrect personality cult, which was based on blindly obeying a leader. During his speech Mao also identified two motivations for opposing personality cults: the first was based on simple opposition to incorrect personality cults and the second was based on the fear that people would worship Mao over anyone else. Mao also stated that he believed the class head at school needed to be worshipped by all the other students in the class to maintain order and prevent mistakes occurring.²⁷⁵

The Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the CPC not only prohibited the emergence of a personality cult, but also said that it signified feudal absolutism, and that the so called ‘proper personality cult’ damaged both the individual and the party. This was political and a consequence of the mistakes made by Mao in his later years. Personality cults make humans into ‘gods,’ and so Mao made himself the supreme ‘god’ in China. Notably, in the 1960s, Mao encouraged his own personality cult and repeatedly used important articles or central documents, which will be discussed in subsequent sections, to build it up.

In November 1963, Mao added a self-assessment to Zhou Yang’s “The Fighting Task Confronting Workers in Philosophy and the Social Sciences,” as follows: “In China, Comrade Mao Zedong is making furious argumentations against various opportunist lines within the party in spite of ‘Parochial Experience’ imposed on him. He integrated the common truths of Marxism in practices of the Chinese revolution

275. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 369.

and creatively developed Marxism and Leninism in new conditions.”²⁷⁶ Mao thus said that he “creatively developed Marxism and Leninism” and proclaimed himself the representative of the correct line within the party. These actions were typically self-centered and exclusive. Further, Mao labeled those who opposed his opinions representative of various opportunist lines. Support for Mao personally became the main basis of struggle between the two lines in the party and the only measurement of allegiance (to the correct line versus the wrong line) during the Cultural Revolution. It was also inconsistent with the principle of “social practice is the only standard for testing truth” advocated by Mao himself.²⁷⁷ Therefore, Mao exhibited typical contradictions not only between his words and deeds, but also between different speeches given in the same period.

On September 29, 1964, Mao added the words “Comrade Mao Zedong always tells us” and “All the nationalities in China are armed with Mao Zedong Thought” to Peng Zhen’s “Speech on the Ceremony to Mark the 15th Anniversary of New China.” Mao Zedong also invited Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Peng Zhen to read this modified speech draft.²⁷⁸ This shows that Mao himself was beginning to encourage his personality cult. The usage of the term “Mao Zedong Thought” was inconsistent with the official resolution of the 8th National Congress of the CPC, and thus with the official party line at the time, but Liu, Zhou, and Peng did not object. Indeed, “Mao Zedong Thought” was officially used in Peng Zhen’s speech. Two years later, the 11th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC officially approved the usage of the term “Mao Zedong Thought.”²⁷⁹ This

276. Based on the article published in the *People’s Daily*, December 27, 1963. See also Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 10, 403.

277. Editorial Boards of the *People’s Daily* and *Red Flag*, “Two Different Lines on the Question of War and Peace — Five Reviews of a Public Letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” November 19, 1963, *People’s Daily*. See also Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 10, 414.

278. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 174–176.

279. Section 3 of the Communiqué of the 11th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC discussed “Hold High the Great Red Flag of Mao Zedong Thought.” This document defined “Mao Zedong Thought” as “Marxism-Leninism for the era of the collapse of imperialism and worldwide victory of socialism.” The communiqué expressly declared, “Mao Zedong Thought is the guideline for all the work of the CPC and the state.” (“Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central

was a typical example of Mao willfully changing resolutions approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC.

Meanwhile, the upper levels of the party began to change “Mao Zedong Thought” to “Mao Zedong’s Personal Thought.” Mao not only did not stop this, but actually introduced the new term to the highest levels of party discourse. In the records submitted by Chen Boda to Mao Zedong regarding conversations between Chen Boda and Yu Qiuli on December 31, 1964, Yu Qiuli (then Minister of the Petroleum Industry) said, “We should obey the Chairman’s thinking,” where the “Chairman’s thinking” meant “Mao Zedong Thought.” Mao transmitted this document on the same day to the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Vice Premiers of the State Council for review.²⁸⁰

On January 3, 1965, Mao made additions to the draft of the speech of He Long (then Vice Chairman of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC, Director of the National Defense Industry Commission, and Vice Premier of the State Council) titled “On the First Meeting of the 3rd National Congress of the CPC.” Specifically, Mao added: “Our people and army possess the revolutionary spirit cultivated under the instructions of the party and Chairman Mao.” On the same day, He Long delivered another speech during the meeting titled “The Great Thinking of Comrade Mao Zedong about the People’s War Pointing the Way for National Defense Construction in Our Country.”²⁸¹ Here, “Mao Zedong Thought,” the collective outcomes and collective thinking combining Marxist common truth with practices of China’s revolution, become Mao’s exclusive personal outcomes and personal thoughts, which was “great (personal) thinking” according to Mao.

During an interview with Edgar Snow, Mao admitted that a personality cult existed in China.²⁸² However, he maintained that people needed personality cults, and in December 1970, he expressly told Snow that he encouraged his own personality cult as a tool for defeating Liu Shaoqi.²⁸³ Mao had been clear

Committee of the CPC,” approved on August 12, 1966.)

280. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 290–291.

281. Ibid, 299–300.

282. Snow suggested: “Some Russians say there is a personality cult in China,” to which Mao Zedong responded, “I am afraid so. It is said people created a personality cult for Stalin, but not for Khrushchev. Chinese people have also developed a personality cult. This makes sense. Maybe Khrushchev was overthrown because people created no personality cult for him.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 8, 408.)

283. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s*

that personality cults were not Marxist, and there was no such thing as a correct personality cult. In fact, personality cults simply reflected feudal absolutism and individual authoritarianism by suggesting that history was created by individuals.²⁸⁴ However, Mao followed an opportunist path influenced by the demands of political struggle. He encouraged his own personality cult and gradually intensified it, editing important documents to include references to "Mao Zedong Thought," and also rephrased "Mao Zedong (collective) thought" to read "Mao Zedong (personal) thought" to complete the political course whereby individuals substitute for the collective and the self excludes others. Mao even proclaimed that "Mao Zedong Thought" was "great thought." The personality cult surrounding Mao that emerged during the 1960s thus developed because Mao himself felt he needed to be a 'god'. Mao's own desire thus was the major driver behind the emergence of his personality cult.

Meanwhile, a group represented by Lin Biao sought favor with Mao by actively encouraging his personality cult. Lin gave a classic evaluation of Mao: "self-worship, superstition, narcissism, claiming credit and blaming others."²⁸⁵ He saw through Mao's fatal weaknesses and exploited them for his own ends.

In the summer of 1958, Kang Sheng, alternate Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and leader of the Central Theory Team, introduced the "peak" theory, which maintained that "Mao Zedong Thought is the peak of Marxism and Leninism." At the end of 1959, he went further, adding: "Mao Zedong Thought is the supreme and ultimate standard of Marxism and Leninism."²⁸⁶

During the Chengdu Meeting in 1958, Shi Qingke, First Secretary of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee vociferously praised Mao saying: "Believe in Mao Zedong superstitiously; believe in Mao Zedong blindly." In the same year the Second Meeting of the 8th National Congress of the CPC elected him the Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. After Lin Biao replaced Peng Dehuai as Minister of National Defense responsible for the work of the Military Commission of the Central Committee during the Lushan Meeting in 1959, he began a large-scale campaign to deify Mao Zedong. In early 1960, Chen Boda announced that "Comrade Mao Zedong successfully championed

Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China, vol. 13, 174.

284. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 330.

285. Xu, *Theories and Practices of Mao Zedong in His Later Years (1956–1976)*, 408.

286. Xi and Jin, *A Brief History of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 29.

and developed Marxism and Leninism.”²⁸⁷

At the beginning of 1962, Mao was forced to perform self-criticism during the 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres regarding the Great Leap Forward. However, Lin tried to relieve Mao of this responsibility, stating: “In a sense, these difficulties are just the result of our ignorance of instructions, warnings, and the thinking of Mao Zedong. If we listened to Chairman Mao and fully understood his spirit, we would have had fewer misinterpretations and would face fewer difficulties today. I am convinced that we can do a good job only if we successfully carry out and eliminate interference in Chairman Mao’s thinking. Things will go wrong if Chairman Mao’s opinions are not respected or are interfered with. The recent history of the CPC proves my words. Therefore, our party needs to work together by rallying behind Chairman Mao in his time of difficulty.”²⁸⁸ Mao was extremely satisfied with Lin’s speech. After the meeting, he asked Luo Ruiqing, the Chief of Staff: “Lin Biao is an excellent orator. Are you able to give such a speech?” Luo replied, “We cannot.” On March 30, Mao wrote to Tian Jiaying and Luo Ruiqing about modifying Lin’s speech. The letter said: “I read this speech and generally it is a high-quality piece. I feel happy after reading it.” The Central Committee of the CPC later officially published Lin’s speech.

Pushed by Lin, the General Political Department of the PLA compiled *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* and *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Zedong*. Later, based on Chen Boda’s evaluation of Mao, Lin said in the preface to the reprinted *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*, “Comrade Mao Zedong is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era. He has inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism creatively and comprehensively and has brought it to a higher and completely new stage.”²⁸⁹ In 1965, 1.14 million volumes of *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Zedong* and over 5 million volumes of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* were printed and distributed. Various activities, such as daily reading, frequent reading, daily work style rectification, teaching and application workshops, political classes, half-day official training and collective training were organized,²⁹⁰ triggering an unprecedented climax of the personality cult surrounding Mao throughout the PLA. Instead of criticizing or restricting these

287. Ye, *Biography of Chen Boda*, 250.

288. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 15, 107

289. Lin, “Preface to the 2nd edition of *Quotations from Chairman Mao*.”

290. People’s Liberation Army General Political Department, “Conditions and Suggestions on Emphasizing Politics, Carrying out Four Good Practices and Enhancing Preparations for War (Draft.)”

activities, Mao praised them. In an instruction to Lin, Mao said simply, “perfect.”²⁹¹

In November, Lin brought out the “Five Principles to Guide PLA Work in 1966.” The first principle was “flexibly learn and use Chairman Mao’s works, make special efforts in their ‘use’ and take the Chairman’s works as the supreme instructions of all work within our army.”²⁹² Lin invented the “supreme instructions” that came to guide all work within the CPC and PLA.

In the instructions for the PLA political working meeting dated January 24, 1966, Lin said: “Mao Zedong Thought is the peak of modern Marxism and Leninism, the supreme and most flexible expression of Marxism and Leninism.” Lin in similar instructions the next year stated that, “Chairman Mao’s works are the supreme instructions for all the work of the PLA; Chairman Mao’s words display the highest level, the greatest authority and the strongest force. Every one of his words is truth, and carry greater weight than 10,000 empty words.”²⁹³ Deng Xiaoping later said: “Lin Biao was beating the drums for ‘peak’ theory and claimed Chairman Mao’s words were the supreme instructions. Such thinking was popular throughout the CPC and the PLA.”²⁹⁴

In “A letter about Flexible Learning and the Application of Chairman Mao’s Work to the Battlefronts of Industry and Transportation” dated March 11, 1966, Lin said, “China is a great socialist country under the dictatorship of the proletariat, with a population of 700 million. It needed unified, revolutionary and correct thinking — Mao Zedong Thought. Mao Zedong Thought was not the spontaneous result of the working people, but rather was created by Chairman Mao based on his excellent revolutionary practice and his genius in inheriting and developing the thoughts of Marxism and Leninism and combining new experiences of the international communist movement to build up Marxism and Leninism to a new stage.” Lin thus ignored the important contribution of other leaders to Mao Zedong Thought and instead assigned it entirely to Mao. On March 22, in a letter to the Standing Committee of the Central Military Commission, Lin officially proposed: “We must hold the great red flag of Mao Zedong Thought high.” That same year, the Communiqué of the 11th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC announced, “Comrade Lin Biao called on the whole army to carry out a mass

291. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 472.

292. Lin, *Five Principles for PLA Work in 1966*.

293. Lin, “Important Instructions in the Report on the PLA Political Working Meeting,” *People’s Daily*, January 24, 1966.

294. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 330.

movement of learning Mao Zedong Thought to set a model for the CPC and the country.”²⁹⁵ That was the first public political evaluation of Lin made by the Central Committee of the CPC and the reason Lin became the political successor of Mao. These events show that Mao and Lin had reached a political deal whereby Mao would promote Lin, while Lin would help establish Mao Zedong Thought.

Thus, on the eve of the launch of the Cultural Revolution, Mao’s personality cult had reached a unprecedented climax within the rank and file and leadership of the CPC, a development that contradicted official resolutions previously made by the 2nd Plenary Meeting of the 7th National Congress of the CPC and the 8th National Congress of the CPC to stop the promotion of Mao Zedong Thought. This development also laid a foundation of public opinions that allowed Mao to replace the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC with his personal authority (in politics, thought and theory.) With everything in place, Mao formally finished his plan at the 11th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in August 1966.

The failure of the intra-party democratic system and the Cultural Revolution

The Party Constitution of the CPC approved in 1956 established an appropriate institutional arrangement for intra-party democratic life and collective decision making on major issues. However, this fundamental system was not rigorously implemented, and ultimately came to be seriously compromised.

The Nanning Meeting in 1958,²⁹⁶ the Lushan Meeting in 1959, the Tenth Plenary

295. “Communique of the 11th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC,” *People’s Daily*, August 14, 1966.

296. The Nanning Meeting refers to the meeting that took place from January 11 to 22, 1958 in Nanning, Guangxi attended by central and local government leaders. The priority of the meeting was to conclude the first Five-year Plan and discuss the economic development plan for 1958, the national budget, second Five-year Plan and long-term planning. For this meeting Mao Zedong drafted “Six Points on Working Methods” to stress his philosophy of “continuous revolution.” During the meeting Mao Zedong criticized the slogan “Anti-bold Advance” that had been introduced in 1956. Mao said, “Do not use the term ‘Anti-bold Advance’ ... it is a political problem. Attacks by rightists have caused some comrades to become ideologically close to rightists. Some people say ‘The past was better’ and ‘Losses caused by bold-advance are bigger than those caused by conservatism’. We should therefore study why some people wrote an editorial on anti-bold advance (this was a reference to ‘Anti-conservatism is Necessary, but Anti-

Sidebar 2.2. How Did the Intra-party Democratic System Fail? (1956–1965)

Before Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, the formal organizational system of the CPC had already been seriously damaged and existed in name only. The National Congresses of the CPC and the Plenary Meetings of the Central Committee of the CPC during 1956–1965 provide examples:

First, the actual term of the 8th National Congress of the CPC and the 8th Central Committee of the CPC was 13 years (from 1956–1969,) equivalent to two and a half standard terms of the Central Committee of the CPC and thus violating the specific provisions of Articles 31 and 33 of the Party Constitution. In this sense the 8th Central Committee of the CPC was unconstitutional from 1962 onward.

Second, during 1957–1966, there were two National Congresses of the CPC (the 8th National Congress of the CPC in 1956 and the Second Meeting of the 8th National Congress of the CPC in 1958) in violation of Article 31 of the Party Constitution.

Third, except for the Plenary Meetings of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1958 (namely the Fifth and Sixth Plenary Meetings of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC,) only one Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC took place each year, and there were 5 years (1960, 1963, 1964 and 1965) in which no meetings were held. This violated Article 36 of the Party Constitution.

Meeting of the National Congress of the CPC in 1962, and the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1964 were important meetings in the years just prior to the introduction of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. These years represented a period when the democratic life and institution of the CPC were destroyed through the dismantling of party institutions and the move from central collective leadership to personal leadership by Mao Zedong. The longer Mao held office, the more arbitrary his work style became and the more damage he did to the democratic system of the CPC. Eventually the intra-party democratic system disintegrated as Mao grasped complete control over the party by simply going

bold Advance is also Important’ published in the *People’s Daily* on June 20, 1956.) I issued an instruction noting that I would not read this editorial because it blames me.” Mao harshly criticized the “Anti-bold Advance” slogan introduced by Zhou Enlai, Lian Xiannian, and Bo Yibo in 1956 and also criticized Chen Yun. Because of the absence of Chen Yun at this meeting, Zhou Enlai had to perform self-criticism and took full responsibility for the errors Mao perceived. (Jin and Chen eds., *Biography of Chen Yun*, vol. 2, 1122; Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 31.)

around the Central Committee.

First, Mao violated the specific provisions of the Party Constitution dealing with the five-year term of the National Congress of the CPC and the Central Committee, and the requirement for plenary meetings at least semi-annually. Article 31 of the Party Constitution approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC in 1956 mandates a five-year term for each National Congress of the CPC. The Central Committee of the CPC holds annual meetings of the National Congress of the CPC and can postpone these meetings or hold them early in special circumstances. According to Article 36, the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC should be held by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC at least semi-annually. However, the National Congress of the CPC and the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC failed to occur as scheduled (Sidebar 2.2.) Article 33 mandates that the term of the Central Committee of the CPC should be five years, so the term of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC headed by Mao should have expired in 1961. However, that year coincided with the Three-year Famine that affected the whole of China from 1959 to 1961. If the 9th National Congress of the CPC had been held as scheduled to elect the 9th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao would have faced extreme difficulty in continuing to hold office. The documents of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC contain no resolution on the postponement of the 9th National Congress of the CPC, nor any explanation of why it was postponed. The term of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC thus was improperly postponed for thirteen years until the 9th National Congress of the CPC elected the new Central Committee in 1969. In other words, Mao and the other leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau remained in their positions after 1961 in violation of the Party Constitution. This was a serious blow to the democratic and organizational system of the CPC, and this systemic failure contributed to Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution and the accompanying decade of nationwide turmoil.

Besides the failure to rotate the leadership as scheduled, the unofficial internal system of supreme leaders "having the last word" replaced the official system of collective decision-making stipulated in the Party Constitution. Article 19 of the Party Constitution stipulates that decisions regarding major problems should be made collectively. In 1980, Deng Xiaoping evaluated this provision: "From the Zunyi Meeting to the Socialist Reconstruction Period, the Central Committee of the CPC and Comrade Mao Zedong stressed collective leadership and carrying out democratic centralism, and therefore intraparty democracy remained normal."²⁹⁷

297. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works*

However, from 1957, many major issues were decided by Mao personally, and the importance of the Central Committee of the CPC became nominal. After the Nanning Meeting in 1958, Mao did not regularly attend the meetings of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. Instead he would raise discussion topics prior to those meetings. These topics would then be discussed during the meeting and a report made to Mao for his approval.²⁹⁸ Since Mao spent much of 1965 away from Beijing, he was absent from the Meetings of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Political Bureau. However, he continued to control these meetings remotely, and received regular reports. Other Standing Committee Members would see Mao in other cities even when Mao wanted to be involved in the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC. Regarding the decisions being made at the top level of the CPC, Mao made arbitrary decisions personally instead of discussing matters with other leaders. With party institutions undermined and Mao's arbitrary decision-making relied on, Mao was able to launch the Cultural Revolution, demonstrating the complete failure of the CPC's mechanism of collective and democratic decision making. According to Pang, Kang Sheng's communication to the Meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC in April 1966 that Mao had requested Peng Zhen and Lu Dengyi be placed under special observation was a crucial event that shows how the collective leadership of the CPC had been replaced by the individual leadership of Mao.²⁹⁹ None of the leaders of the CPC were able to criticize Mao, and none of the systems of the CPC were able to provide checks and balances to his activities.

This failure of existing party mechanisms had historical roots. During the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC held in March 1943, it was decided to officially change the supreme leader of the Central Committee of the CPC from the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the CPC to Chairman. Mao was elected Chairman of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and Chairman of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. According to an unwritten rule, the Chairman had the final word on the resolutions made by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC.³⁰⁰ This

of Deng Xiaoping vol. 2, 330.

298. Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 32

299. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1406.

300. On March 20, 1943, the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC approved the "Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC about the Adjustment and Simplification of the Central Institutions." This move established a Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC composed of "three comrades, namely

rule was never written into the records of the 7th National Congress of the CPC and the Party Constitution of the 8th National Congress of the CPC, but nevertheless was implemented continuously for a long period and replaced the official system of collective decision-making regarding major affairs.³⁰¹

In February 1958, during the Nanning Meeting, Mao proposed changes to the rules governing the leadership of the CPC, saying: "Major power is centralized and minor power is decentralized; the party committee makes decisions that are implemented by all parties; everything should have a solution that conforms to principles; the party committee is responsible for work inspection." He explained, "Regarding centralism, power can only be centralized in the CPC Committee, the Political Bureau, the Secretariat, and the Standing Committee. Only the core is to be allowed power."³⁰² Since Mao had positioned himself as the core of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and its Standing Committee, this was an attempt to achieve personal autocracy.³⁰³

Unlike collective decisions, the high levels of information asymmetry and

Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi and Ren Bishi." The meeting also elected Mao Zedong as the Chairman of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and determined that he would concurrently serve as Chairman of the Secretariat. The decision stated that the "Chairman has the final word on all problems discussed in the meetings" of the Secretariat (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Mao Zedong (1893–1949)*, vol. 2, 430–431.)

301. Li Donglang believed the personality cult around Mao Zedong within the CPC was reflected in the concept of the "final word," and its influence on Mao seriously and negatively impacted intraparty democracy. The "final word" was not formally recognized by the 7th National Congress of the CPC, but still exerted a strong effect on relations between Mao Zedong and other leaders. These effects were mutual, and definitely facilitated paternalism and damaged the principle of democratic centralism of the CPC. (Li, "An Analysis of the Issue of the 'Final Word' Enjoyed by Mao Zedong.")

302. Mao, "Talks at the Nanning Meeting."

303. Qian Liqun explained, "'Autocracy' here means that Mao Zedong seized complete power. First, the CPC had absolute leadership and control over all aspects of national affairs and social life. Second, the First Secretary had absolute leadership and control over all affairs inside and outside the CPC. 'Absolute leadership' means centralization of absolute power, i.e., 'only one core is allowed'. With regard to the 'core,' the state takes the CPC as the core, embodied in the core roles of the First Secretaries of CPC Committees at all levels, while the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC (i.e. Mao Zedong) was the core among the cores" (Qian, "The Anti-rightism System Characteristic to China.")

incompleteness in personal decisions make the correction of errors difficult. The failure of the CPC to either implement its existing systems or stop and correct the mistakes of its leader demonstrated a failure to establish mature politics, complete systems, and democratic decision-making mechanisms. While Mao bears much responsibility for the mistakes made during this period, the leaders sitting on the Central Committee of the CPC at the time should also be accorded some responsibility.³⁰⁴ Notably, earlier in the 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres, Liu Shaoqi had said: “Recent years have seen numerous unusual phenomena appear in the political work of the CPC. This is not because there is anything wrong with existing party structures and systems, but rather because they have sometimes been ignored, distorted or broken.” On behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC, Liu reaffirmed that the Party Constitution approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC represented the laws and regulations applicable to the whole party, and its working rules. He further requested that all organizations and party members follow the Party Constitution unconditionally, uncompromisingly and unyieldingly.³⁰⁵ In fact, once Mao, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC, took the lead in breaking the provisions of the Party Constitution, the leadership group of the Central Committee of the CPC was unable to take corrective action.

Confusingly, at the very start of the Cultural Revolution, Mao appeared to be pushing for democratic centralism. On February 6, 1966, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the *Circular Concerning Printing and Circulating Mao Zedong’s ‘Speech during the Enlarged Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC,’* which officially communicated the latest instructions of Mao: “Real democratic centralism can be realized only through serious, long-term, repeated education, experiment and promotion. Otherwise it will remain meaningless among most of our comrades.”³⁰⁶ But Mao never took this seriously. The large-scale personality cult made Mao a “sage,” and the failure of intraparty democracy enabled him to

304. Resolutions approved by the Sixth Plenary Meeting of the 11th National Congress of the CPC in 1981 stated that during the period between 1956 and 1966, the Central Committee of the CPC should also assume responsibility for work mistakes, even if Mao Zedong should assume the main responsibility. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 808.)

305. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 413

306. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 9.

override the Central Committee of the CPC. Even though Liu and Deng disagreed with his opinions and behaviors, they were unable to influence him, with the formal institutions of democratic centralism incapacitated. Subsequently, their political disagreement with Mao grew until it evolved into public struggle and criticism in the Cultural Revolution.

Mao led the design and construction of the institutions of the CPC and the new Chinese state, but all the political movements he launched in the Cultural Revolution attacked party and government officials as “capitalist roaders,” challenging and breaking institutions such as the systems regulating party meetings, the system of democratic centralism that elected and dismissed party leaders and the Central Committee of the CPC, collective decision-making regarding significant affairs, the National Congress of the CPC and the legislature, the system for electing and dismissing state leaders, the administrative and judicial systems, the military, and the structure protecting the rights of citizens. Mao advocated “destroying the old and establishing the new,” but in fact his actions were purely destructive.

In 1980, Deng Xiaoping remarked on the leadership system of the CPC and the state during this period: “After the ‘anti-bold advance’ and ‘anti-rightist’ movements were launched in 1958, the democratic life of the party and the state became abnormal and phenomena appeared such as arbitrary decision making, individuals making decisions regarding significant matters, the emergence of a personality cult and individuals using their personal authority to override party organizational structures.”³⁰⁷ The “individual” refers to Mao, the only powerful individual among the collective leadership of the CPC, as well as Jiang Qing, a ‘semi-powerful individual’ at the time. These two individuals occupied a special position in the CPC, beyond the control of the law.³⁰⁸ As an important member of the collective leadership led by Mao, Deng engaged in deep reflection from the

307. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping vol. 2*, 330.

308. In 1971, Zhou Enlai told the American writer William Hinton, “Chairman Mao told Edgar Snow: ‘I am just like a “monk with an umbrella.”’ Zhou Enlai explained that this was a pun. [It plays on the words *wufa* 無髮 (a monk literally has no hair) and *wutian* 無天 (carrying an umbrella, one does not see the sky,) which is homophonic with a Chinese phrase 無法無天 for having no regard for both law (of Men) and (law of) Heaven.] He explained that Mao was a rebel, like the Monkey King in Chinese mythology, and thus not bound by established rules or practices, both human or divine. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Zhou Enlai in His Own Words*.) On December 24, 1980, during her trial, Jiang Qing echoed Mao's words: “That’s right, I am a monk holding an umbrella; I have no regard for law and Heaven.”

failure of the collective leadership of the CPC in this period and the change of direction initiated by Mao. Indeed, Deng's success was built on Mao's failure, and this was why Deng rather than Mao abolished the lifelong tenure of the CPC and state leaders.

By 1966, politically, Mao had completely set himself above the Central Committee of the CPC; theoretically, he had finished developing the theory of class struggle under socialist conditions; organizationally, he had secured the support of Lin Biao, Chen Boda, and Kang Sheng and arranged for Jiang Qing to participate in the decision making of the Central Committee of the CPC; and in public opinion, he had secured the support necessary to insist on having the final word on all major decisions and other arbitrary rights. He had thus completed all preparations for the launch of the Cultural Revolution. By centralizing and monopolizing political resources,³⁰⁹ he pushed the Cultural Revolution to a climax in order to oppose and prevent revisionism in China.³¹⁰

How China Missed Development Opportunities

After the founding of New China, the CPC transformed from a revolutionary party to a ruling party. Completing this significant change required the CPC to lead the completion of two basic constructions: economic construction, including large-scale industrialization and modernization; and institutional construction, including establishing the basic systems necessary for a modern country. These two forms of modernization and construction were mutually complementary, and were determined as the key focus for China during the 8th National Congress of the CPC in 1956, but China subsequently suffered severe economic blows from

309. The 1981 *Resolutions of the CPC Central Committee Concerning Several Historical Problems of the Party since the Founding of New China* stated: "During this period, Comrade Mao Zedong's mistakes in the class struggle in socialist society worsened in both theory and practice. Mao's arbitrary work style slowly damaged the democratic centralism of the CPC and his personality cult worsened by the day. Unfortunately the Central Committee of the CPC failed to correct these mistakes in time. Worst of all, schemers like Lin Biao, Jiang Qing, and Kang Sheng used and extended these mistakes. As a result, the Great Cultural Revolution was launched." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 808.)

310. On June 1, 1966, the *People's Daily* released the famous editorial "Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons," compiled under the direction of Chen Boda, which drove the Cultural Revolution toward its climax.

Mao launching the Anti-rightist Struggle, Great Leap Forward, and People's Commune Movement. Still, China's economy rapidly recovered through economic adjustment and reconstruction, and became poised for growth from 1963 onwards.

Early in the summer of 1963, Mao introduced the strategic objective of building China into a powerful socialist country with modern agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology by the end of the century.³¹¹

On September 9, led by Deng Xiaoping, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC approved "Concerning Industrial Development (First Draft)," which proposed a strategic plan for industrial development comprising "two steps."³¹²

At the end of 1964, during the First Meeting of the Third NPC, Zhou Enlai officially proposed the goal of "four modernizations" and the strategy of completing "two steps" by the end of the 20th century.³¹³ This meant the Chinese

311. Mao Zedong proposed treating the three years from 1963 to 1965 as a transition phase.

During this phase, China would continue to follow the national economic plan of adjustment, consolidation, enrichment, and enhancement. After this period, a primary independent national economic system or industrial system should be established within 15 years, followed after another 15 years by a strong socialist country with modernized agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. (Pang and Jin ed, *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1358.)

312. Between August 13 and 14, 1963, the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC established a Drafting Commission for Industrial Development Matters that comprised Zhou Enlai, Peng Zhen, Li Fuchun, Li Xiannian, and various other leaders. Subsequently the internal document *About Industrial Development Matters* was produced. This document announced the following goal: "Build our country into a great socialist country through the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology, and achieve this within a limited timeframe." The document also assumed: "Industrial development can be performed in two steps after a three year transition period: the first step will be to build up an independent industrial system over 15 years to bring China's industry to the level of that in advanced countries; the next step will be to bring China's industry close to an advanced level internationally over another 15 years" (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1359.)

313. In December 1964, the First Meeting of the Third NPC approved the *Government Work Report* of Premier Zhou Enlai. This report announced that the task of adjusting the national economy was basically complete and the national economy was about to enter a new development phase. Instructed by Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai proposed to build China rapidly into a powerful country through "four modernizations" that would allow it to swiftly close the gap with and surpass the advanced nations. The Third

government once again began to implement the CPC line determined during the 8th National Congress of the CPC and took economic construction as the core and the “four modernizations” as the goal. This was not only the political consensus of the Central Committee of the CPC, but also supported by Chinese society generally. Such agreement would have provided favorable conditions for economic construction. Mario Monteforte Toledo, then a journalist for the Mexican weekly *Siempre!*, admired the three advantages of China: “an efficient government, a wise plan, and confident people.”³¹⁴ These were unique political advantages, and China’s economy appeared ready to take off.

On September 30, 1965, Zhou announced to the world: “China’s industrial and agricultural production have entered a new phase of steady growth, and the national economy has entered a new era.” At that time, the Chinese people were confidently anticipating the third Five-year Plan Period starting in 1966,³¹⁵ which would have signaled a new stage in China’s economic development. However, the launch of the Cultural Revolution by Mao prevented this from happening.³¹⁶

Mao was constantly changing, and whenever things settled and began to improve, he would launch a new struggle. First he launched an economic struggle, in the form of the Great Leap Forward, and subsequently launched a political struggle in the form of the Cultural Revolution.³¹⁷ These two destructive events

Five-year Plan should be completed in two steps: first, establish an independent and relatively complete industrial system and national economic system; second, by the end of the century, realize comprehensive modernization in agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology, and thus transform the Chinese economy into a world leader (*People’s Daily*, October 1, 1965.) Unfortunately this was not implemented due to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 808.)

314. Toledo, “A View of China,” *Reference News*, July 20, 1964.

315. *People’s Daily*, October 1, 1965.

316. As a resolution by the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 pointed out, the 3rd National People’s Congress from December 1964 to January 1965 announced that the task of adjusting the national economy was basically complete, and the national economy had entered a new development period of building China into a large socialist country with modern agriculture, national defense, and science and technology. Unfortunately, this was not implemented due to the launch of the Cultural Revolution. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 812.)

317. “Two struggles” was how Li Xiannian summarized this historical period in September

were connected. The former was the root of the latter and the latter was the continuation of the former; without deep reflection on the lessons of the former, the latter became inevitable.

The tasks of both economic and institutional construction were challenging and urgent. Domestically, China had the basic conditions of high domestic investment, expanded market demand, enhanced human capital, greatly improved infrastructure, rapid economic growth, a stable society, excellent potential of the CPC and the state in mass mobilization, and a population with a remarkable enthusiasm and talent for economic construction. China had the potential to take off economically and enter a new golden age.

Internationally, there were also precious historic opportunities and favorable external conditions for China. The period from the 1950s to 1970s was deemed by international economists to be the second golden period of global economic development since 1820.³¹⁸ During this period, China faced economic competition from its neighbors Japan and South Korea. From 1965 to 1975, both South Korea and Singapore entered the stage of economic takeoff and enjoyed double-digit economic growth rates of 11.6% and 11.2% respectively. Meanwhile, Japan maintained consistently high economic growth (with annual GDP growth of 8.0%,) and in 1967 its aggregate GDP exceeded that of Germany, making it the third largest economy in the world (trailing only the U.S. and the Soviet Union.) Comparing aggregate GDPs between China and Japan, Japan's GDP was 1.17 times that of China in 1965, and this figure increased to 1.59 times by 1975.³¹⁹ However, Chinese leaders at the time, especially Mao, seemed unaware of this situation and did not respond. Meanwhile, there was also competition from Taiwan under the governance of Chiang Kai-shek, and Hong Kong under British governance. This form of competition was both political and economic. Between 1965 and 1975, annual average GDP growth rate was just 2.2% in mainland China, compared with 6.8% in Taiwan. The relative gap in GDP per capita between Taiwan and mainland China was 2.9 times in 1965 and 4.5 times in 1975 (the year of Chiang's death,) while the absolute gap grew from USD1,350 to USD3,084 over the same period. Clearly, the Cultural Revolution caused China to lag behind its competitors.

1981 (Li, "Determining a Practical and Realistic Economic Growth Rate.")

318. Angus Maddison divided the history of economic growth in the modern world from 1820 into five periods, where 1870 to 1913 was the first golden period for world prosperity. 1950 to 1973 was the second golden period and was focused on accelerated technological advancement and economic development (Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy: 1820–1992*; Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective*.)

319. Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*.

Table 2.2. Global Comparison of Per Capita GDP and Growth Rates (1965–1975)

Country / Region	Rate of GDP Growth, 1965–1975 (%)	GDP per capita (USD)		Rate of GDP per capita growth, 1965–1975 (%)
		1965	1975	
Mainland China	4.7	706	874	2.2
Hong Kong	5.9	1,804	2,648	3.9
Taiwan	9.1	2,056	3,958	6.8
India	3.8	771	897	1.5
Indonesia	6.6	990	1,505	4.3
Japan	8.0	5,934	11,344	6.7
Philippines	5.2	1,633	2,033	2.2
Korea	11.6	1,295	3,162	9.3
Thailand	7.0	1,308	1,959	4.1
Malaysia	6.4	1,804	2,648	3.9
Singapore	11.2	2,667	6,430	9.2

Source: Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*, Table 5b and Table 5c.

While Mao Zedong was preparing to launch the Cultural Revolution, his old rival Chiang Kai-shek was driving economic development and opening the Taiwan area up to investment and trade. Besides the political competition between the two, there was also economic competition - for example, driving and facilitating various modernizations. However, Mao ignored this new theatre of battle with his old rival, and instead focused his energies on manipulating the class struggle to purge those who had once been his comrades in arms and friends, costing China precious time and valuable opportunities for economic development. Mao's manuscripts and other relevant literature during the Cultural Revolution show that he offered no instructions or comments regarding the rapid economic growth occurring in Taiwan and neighboring countries and perhaps was entirely blind to it.³²⁰

In the mid-1960s, China enjoyed great opportunities and geographical advantages which could have facilitated economic takeoff. Had there been united collective leadership, China would have joined Japan and the other four emerging countries in Asia in entering a period of rapid economic growth, and its economic development would not have been delayed until after the death of Mao in 1978.

According to the arrangement of the Central Committee of the CPC, the main task of 1966, the first year of the Third Five-year Plan, was economic construction.

320. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Works Since the Founding of New China*, vol. 12 (January 1966 – December 1968) and vol. 13 (January 1969 – July 1976.)

On January 1, the *People's Daily* published a New Year Editorial on "Welcoming the First Year of the Third Five-year Plan Period." This editorial encouraged party members to "strive to construct a group of new enterprises, enhance national defense construction, intensify basic industry, strengthen the transportation industry and further change the national industrial layout while developing light industry and gradually improving the life of the people based on the development of production."³²¹ However, Mao quickly gave up the economic creed of implementing the four modernizations that he had just developed and instead insisted on "taking class struggle as the key link." Despite opposition from other leaders, Mao launched a large-scale political revolution and organized a grand political movement to oppose revisionism, surprising other Chinese leaders.³²² Economic globalization drew countries into fierce economic competition, and failure to advance meant regression. The gap between China and other countries and regions rapidly grew as China languished economically. However, Mao showed almost no awareness of or response to these issues, failing to grasp the strategic opportunity.

The isolationism of Mao led to the isolationism of China, which in turn caused the nation to lag behind its neighbours. After 1957, Mao never visited other countries or attended international meetings. While he opened the door between China and the U.S. politically, China remained a closed state in domestic turmoil for another decade until 1978. By then, the politically rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping became aware that there existed a gap of about 20 years between China and developed capitalist countries in terms of industrial, scientific, and technological modernization. In all these areas, China remained at the level of the 1950s,³²³ and the gap between China and the rest of the world was steadily growing. Deng remarked that while the Cultural Revolution had postponed China's development

321. *People's Daily*, February 1, 1966.

322. MacFarquhar and Fei described the situation: "At that point, the country appeared to have recovered from the disaster of the Great Leap Forward in 1965, and the regime was ready to launch its postponed 3rd Five-Year Plan. Despite the earlier break with the Soviet Union, China once again looked like simply a variation of a Stalinist-type state. Virtually all Chinese, including most top leaders, and all foreign observers were unaware that Mao Zedong was about to launch a new campaign to transform that image, a movement that in every respect except loss of life would be more damaging than any that had gone before." (MacFarquhar and Fei, "Preface to Volume 15.")

323. A speech made by Deng Xiaoping during a meeting with the Nigerian Press Delegation on August 28, 1973. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1979.)

by a decade, the economic gap with developed countries was two to five decades.³²⁴ Deng visited Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia, and then the U.S. and Japan in January 1979. He became determined to reopen China to the world and integrate its economy into the global economy by prioritizing economic construction.

From the perspective of state-building, the state systems (the centrally planned economic system and centralized policy system) of New China were established step-by-step through normal operations between 1949 and 1956. This period also saw the establishment of state capabilities to mobilize and configure various social resources, including the integration and deployment of social forces, and the establishment of equal political relations among all nationalities.

Mao launched the “anti-rightist” struggle in 1957 to directly attack 550,000 social and intellectual elites through class struggle.³²⁵ However, the CPC and the state maintained effective control and leadership over society. The debate between Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai about economic policy during the Lushan Meeting in 1959 turned into a large-scale political movement within the CPC and PLA, involving the purge of over 3 million political and military elites.³²⁶ The Cultural

324. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 132.

325. In the attack on the “Rightist Alliance” of Luo Longji and Zhang Bojun, 550,000 people were identified as rightists. (*Muster Our Forces to Repulse the Rightists’ Wild Attacks*, released by the Central Committee of the CPC on June 18, 1957; *Things Are Changing* released by the Central Policy Research Center on June 12, 1957; *Instruction on Purging and Isolating Bourgeois Rightists* issued by the Central Committee of the CPC on June 26, 1957; *The Situation in the Summer of 1957* published by Mao Zedong in July 1957; *Standards for the Classification of Rightists* issued during the Third Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.) A similar ideological movement to the “Work Style Rectification Movement,” the anti-rightist struggle concluded with most ‘rightists’ being rehabilitated between 1959 and 1962.

326. This purge included Peng Dehuai (Marshal, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, Vice Premier of the State Council, Minister of National Defense, and Vice Chairman of the Central Military,) Huang Kecheng (Senior General, Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, Vice Minister of National Defense, and Chief of Staff of the General Staff Department of the PLA,) Zhang Wentian (Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs,) Zhou Xiaozhou, (First Secretary of the Hunan Provincial Committee of the CPC,) Tan Zheng (General, Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Director of the General Political Department of the PLA,) Hong Xuezhi (General, Director of the General Logistics Department of the PLA,) and

Revolution damaged the basic institutional structure of the CPC and the state, but China still maintained strong state capacities and public service abilities. Whether measured in educational indicators or health indicators,³²⁷ China was better positioned after the Cultural Revolution than in 1949.

However, such systems of the CPC and the state were imperfect, and contained various malpractices and serious defects. For instance, political centralization and monopolization were prevalent, as were ideological control, cultural monopolization, bureaucratism and privilege among officials. Various forms of corruption appeared among officials, and there was furious conflict between officials and the masses. Two factors were the main causes of these phenomena. The first factor was China's long-standing tradition of feudal absolutism, which meant that society had neither experienced a complete phase of capitalist evolution, nor fully developed the institutional systems, concepts of value and cultural traditions necessary to capitalist democracy. Meanwhile, Mao Zedong, as the founder of New China, resembled Qin Shi Huang more than someone like George Washington. This was the major source of the contradiction and the major problem. Feudal absolutism would result if Mao acted unilaterally to oppose capitalism, and would also result if capitalism returned. The Cultural Revolution highlighted this contradiction of Mao's approach to government. The second factor was the external influence from the high centralization of political and economic power in the Soviet Union. In

Deng Hua (General, Vice Chief of Staff of The General Staff Department of the PLA and Commander of the Shenyang Military Region.) From mid-September to mid-October in 1959, 847 People's Liberation Army officers were punished; by November 1959, about 1,848 officers had been labeled as "rightist opportunists," including about 195 senior officers; between 1959 and 1960, 17,212 officers were labeled as "rightist opportunists" or politically questionable (Zhen, *Party vs State in Post 1949 China: The Institutional Dilemma*, 125.)

On August 9, 1959, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the "Anti-rightist Instruction." According to statistics on the identification and rehabilitation of rightists, as of 1962, over 3 million officials and party members had faced serious criticism or were identified as rightist opportunists.

327. Compared with figures before 1949, in 1964 (the Second National Census) literacy rates in China increased from 20% to 61.9%, length of education per capita increased from 1.0 years to 2.4 years, and the population with a college education increased from 185,000 to 2.87 million. The average life expectancy of the Chinese population increased from 35 years to nearly 50 years, while infant mortality decreased from 19% to 12% (Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*.)

particular, while the personality cult and personal authoritarianism of Stalin had nothing to do with Marxism, they did reflect the politics, culture and tradition of the feudal absolutism with which the Chinese were familiar, and so were easily accepted and imitated by Mao. The combination of both factors resulted in the phenomenon of Mao himself coming to embody the “Marxist Qin Shi Huang.”³²⁸ In fact, the “Stalinist Qin Shi Huang” may be more appropriate because Marx never wielded power in government, much less ran a dictatorship.

After the founding of New China in 1949, the party and state leaders had various different assessments of Chinese society and understandings of China’s political situation. Two basic paths existed to reconstruct Chinese society and the state system:³²⁹ the first was that taken by Mao Zedong, which included political revolution and class struggle. This path mobilized the masses through the “all-round power takeover” movement, and used radical methods to crush and destroy existing machines and state systems so that new ones could be established;³³⁰

328. On August 19, 1958, Mao Zedong convened an Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau in Beidaihe, and discussed the policy of mass industrialization: “It is not feasible for us to simply focus on decentralism without autarchy. If we want to see fast results, the Wuhan Steel and Iron Base may work quickly. However, if we rely on a single production base, then it is impossible for all counties and communes to show their enthusiasm. Control is necessary because democracy is not the only useful thing. Marxism and Qin Shi Huang should be combined.”

329. The resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 pointed out: “There are some dark sides within the organs of the party and the state. Of course, we should make appropriate estimates and implement suitable measures to solve these problems and comply with the State Constitution, laws, and the CPC Constitution. However, the theories and methods used in the Cultural Revolution should not be used to solve problems within the party and state. The political revolution through which ‘one class overthrows another class’ under socialist conditions cannot have any economic foundation or political basis, and cannot lead to any constructive creeds. On the contrary, it can only cause serious chaos, destruction and retrogression.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 2, 811.)

330. On December 26, 1966, Mao Zedong made a speech to mark his 73rd birthday. The core of the speech was that the old machines (of the state) should be replaced by new machines, the old ways by new ways, the old (social) order by a new order, the old systems (regulations) by new systems and the old discipline by new discipline. Mao Zedong believed: “Our old stuff was similar to the stuff used by capitalism, feudalism and the Soviet Union.” (Wang, *Reflections of Wang Li*, vol. 2, 698.)

the “Cultural Revolution Committee” and “Revolution Committee” were also established without any legal basis or democratic elections.”³³¹ These developments caused serious social turbulence, institutional destruction, human rights abuses and backsliding on democracy. Mao thus jeopardized the socialist society he founded, and damaged the CPC-led government he had established. However, he soon found he could only destroy the old society, and could not establish a new society as intended. This created a situation where there was no old society, and also no new society. The new society had to originate from, replace, and be built on the old society. This could be achieved only through economic reform rather than a political resolution. Deng then advocated the second path of “gradual reform” and “institutional construction.” This path enabled the improvement, enhancement, and reform of existing systems to be realized step-by-step through democracy and rule of law to further improve the systems of the state and establish an era of self-reform, self-opening and institutional self-improvement.

Once Mao Zedong passed away, the Cultural Revolution ended, and China soon replaced class struggle with economic construction, and institutional destruction with institutional construction. This period marked the transition between two connected but distinct historical periods: the Cultural Revolution and the Reform and Opening-up. The former was a time of national chaos, and the latter one of good governance. In the larger historical context, the Cultural Revolution is an unfortunate but brief period in the historic course of China’s socialist modernization.

We should reflect on this abnormal history. We must understand the details of how the Cultural Revolution happened, how it evolved and how it ended in failure.

331. Mao Zedong renamed the “Revolutionary Committee” the “Guizhou Revolutionary Committee Following Mao Zedong Thought” (Mao, “Instruction to the Press about the Establishment of the Guizhou Revolutionary Committee.”)

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Chapter

The First Salvo of the Cultural Revolution

In April 1981, the *Resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC on Certain Questions in Our Party's History since the Founding of the People's Republic of China* was approved at the Sixth Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC. It summarized the Cultural Revolution in three stages. The period from May 1966 to April 1969 comprised the first stage. This phase began with the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC in May 1966, followed in August by the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, and ended with the 9th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.¹ On August 14, 1967, an editorial published in the *Red Flag* and *People's Daily*, reviewed and approved by Mao Zedong, proclaimed that the proletarian headquarters, headed by Chairman Mao, had attacked the "bourgeoisie roaders" at two meetings.² Specifically, the editorial announced that Mao had purged four members of the Central Secretariat, namely Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun, at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, and had destroyed the "bourgeoisie headquarters" and purged two members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, namely Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, thus splitting the central collective leadership elected at the 8th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

February Outline and February Minutes

Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi had divergent views as a result of the failure of the Great Leap Forward and the political struggle at the Lushan Conference. Events clearly showed that Mao should assume primary responsibility for the Great Leap Forward. Nevertheless, he did not consider undertaking serious self-reflection and

1. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Compilation of Important Documents since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 811–814.
2. The article "Should We Choose to Follow the Socialist Line or the Capitalist Line" was published by the editorial office of the *Red Flag* and *People's Daily*. Chen Boda, Leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, and Jiang Qing, Deputy Leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, submitted this article to Mao Zedong on August 11, 1967, and Mao Zedong immediately gave feedback as follows: "This is a good article. Nevertheless, it is unconvincing since it contains only condemnations and lacks arguments. Please reconsider its publication." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 397.)

self-criticism. Instead, he resented Peng Dehuai and suspected Liu Shaoqi, Peng Zhen, and other leaders of having ulterior political motives. Without collective discussion to involve the CPC Central Committee, he secretly instructed Jiang Qing to criticize the new Peking opera *Hai Rui Dismissed* as a prelude to the purge of Liu Shaoqi and other party leaders.³

During the Seventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC In April 1959, Mao had suggested that there was much to learn from the historical figure Hai Rui, a Ming dynasty official famous for being upright and daring in admonishing the emperor. Mao sent copies of the “Biography of Hai Rui” from the *History of Ming* to Peng Dehuai and Zhou Enlai, and instructed Hu Qiaomu to form a research group with historians to study the perspectives and methods to best promote the “Spirit of Hai Rui.” Hu passed Mao’s instructions to Wu Han, a recognized expert in Ming history, and it was decided that Wu would write a play on Hai Rui. *Hai Rui Dismissed* was completed in late 1960, and opened by the Beijing Peking Opera Company in February 1961.

After viewing the play, Jiang Qing considered it problematic and banned further performances. Her initial attempts at having the play criticized was unsuccessful. According to Jiang, Mao acknowledged that the play was “toxic,” but was also aware that Peng Zhen was doing his utmost to protect his subordinate Wu Han.⁴ Only in early 1965, when Mao resolved to act against Liu Shaoqi, did he gave approval to Jiang to organize criticism of *Hai Rui Dismissed*. Mao would later reveal that he intentionally kept this decision secret from the Central Committee of the CPC.⁵ To do so, Jiang went to Shanghai in February 1962, where she sought the help of Ke Qingshi, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan, and Zhu Yongjia to compose the criticism.⁶ Mao further implied that Jiang had to operate in Shanghai because it

3. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 16.

4. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1182–1188.

5. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1397, 1399.

6. On April 12, Jiang Qing delivered a speech at the enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the CPC, saying: “Comrade Ke Qingshi expressed support for the criticism directed at the new historical play titled *Hai Rui Dismissed* and Comrades Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyan took big risks and kept the preparation of this criticism secret. Peng Zhen spared no effort to protect and defend Wu Han, and Chairman Mao concealed his dissatisfaction with Peng Zhen’s actions. Since Chairman Mao allowed me to express reservations concerning the play, I organized the writing of the article, keep it secret from others for seven or eight months, and make numerous modifications to the original during that period.” (Yan and Wang, *Reflections on History*,

had been impossible to conduct the work in Beijing.⁷

On November 10, 1965, Yao Wenyuan published the article titled “Commentary on the New Historical Play *Hai Rui Dismissed*” in Shanghai’s *Wen Hui Daily* to criticize the play’s writer Wu Han,⁸ who was then the deputy mayor of Beijing. In the article, Yao alleged: “The real significance of the play must be understood in the context of its production background in 1961, when China faced the after-effects of the Three Years of Natural Disasters, as well as a new wave of anti-China movement forged by imperialist, counter-revolutionist, and modern revisionist forces. ‘Monsters and demons’ advocated ‘allocation of farmland to individual households’ and ‘reversal of past verdicts,’ exaggerated the superiority of the system of land allocation to households, and sought the restoration of the individualistic economic system and the return of farmland to farmers; they ultimately wished to dismantle the people’s communes and restore the oppressive rule of landlords and rich peasants. Meanwhile, imperialists, landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, and rightists who had fabricated numerous wrong and unjust cases against laborers in the old society clamored to reverse historical verdicts and relied on proxies to safeguard their interests, attack the proletariat, reverse historical verdicts, and return themselves to positions of power. The bourgeoisie revolted against the dictatorship of the proletariat by requesting the reversal of past verdicts and the return of farmland to farmers. In this environment, the ideological class struggle was expressed in various forms, including in the works of certain authors. The new historical play *Hai Rui Dismissed* was an example.”⁹ Thus, in criticizing this new

276–277.)

7. In May 1967, Mao Zedong introduced the political background to the Albanian Military Delegation as follows: “Since some of our departments and local authorities were dominated by revisionism, I suggested that Jiang Qing organize the writing of an article to criticize *Hai Rui Dismissed* and had to instruct her to do this in Shanghai since the “red city” of Beijing refused to obey my orders. After the article was finished, I reviewed it three times and asked Jiang Qing to publish it. In addition, I suggested Jiang Qing circulate it to other leaders for review. Nevertheless, Jiang Qing feared opposition from Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, and Lu Deingyi, and proposed keeping the article secret from Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng until publication. In the end I accepted Jiang Qing’s suggestion.” (Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1233.)
8. The article was written by Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao and modified nine times by Yao Wenyuan before it was published in the *Wen Hui Daily* on November 10, 1965, and then republished in the *People’s Daily* on November 30, 1965.
9. Yao, “Commentary on the New Historical Play *Hai Rui Dismissed*,” *Wen Hui Daily*,

work, Yao was in fact criticizing the policies of land allocation and the contracting of production to the household level that had been shaped by Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and Deng Zihui in the 1960s, and was conducting a political struggle against them on behalf of Mao Zedong.¹⁰

After reading Yao's article, Peng Zhen was furious that public criticism had been conducted against the Deputy Mayor of Beijing, his subordinate, without approval from the Central Committee of the CPC; nonetheless, he adopted a cautious attitude. Peng was already aware of Mao's intention to criticize Wu since September of the previous year, when Mao raised the question in the Extended Meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC.¹¹

At the same time, various members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, specifically Liu, Zhou, and Deng, all disapproved of Yao Wenyan's article,¹² and Peng Zhen forbade all Beijing newspapers from republishing it. This deepened Mao's dissatisfaction with the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC and the central leadership. He also suspected that Peng was backing Wu behind the scenes, and had established an independent kingdom that he could not politically influence.¹³ A furious Mao, who was then in Shanghai, ordered the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee to publish an offprint of the article and distribute it nationwide. He then asked Zhou to pressure the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee and force Beijing newspapers to publish Yao's article.

November 10, 1965.

10. Hu Sheng believes that Yao Wenyan's article revealed that the Central Collective Leadership held divergent political views on major policies, and that the target of the article was not limited to Wu Han. (Hu ed., *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*, 456.)
11. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1188–1189.
12. Deng Xiaoping spoke to Peng Zhen: "Some people enjoy stepping over others for their own fame and I despise them. Please tell Professor Wu Han, 'Don't worry about this matter. We should treat academic errors and political errors differently. Confusing them is dangerous and will stifle criticism and suggestions.'" Additionally, he comforted Wu Han personally, saying: "Professor, try to be optimistic instead of pessimistic. I am 61 years old and have survived hard times since joining the revolution. Based on my experiences I have learned the following: one, don't be afraid of anything; two, try to be optimistic and look to the future. You can be confident that we will back you." Deng thus demonstrated his disapproval of the criticism Mao Zedong directed at Wu Han. (Deng, *My Father Deng Xiaoping — Days of the "Cultural Revolution"*, 5–6.)
13. Hu ed., *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*, 456–457.

Directed by Zhou, Peng convened a meeting with the editors of all newspapers in Beijing to discuss the publication of Yao's article. During the meeting, Deng Tuo, then Secretary of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee, mentioned that Wu was afraid because he knew the criticism had been ordered from a "power." Peng responded: "We should seek truth from facts, and everyone is equal before truth." He ordered that the newspapers should publish the article on separate days to relief the political pressure. Zhou and Peng then personally modified and reviewed the *People's Daily* editorial.¹⁴ Deng Tuo also published an article "From the New Historical Play *Hai Rui Dismissed* to the Theory of Inheriting Old Ethics" under the pen name "Xiang Yang Sheng" in the *Beijing Daily* on December 12. Jiang Qing and her clique then understood that the criticism of Wu Han was being steered towards academic discussion in order to protect Wu.

On December 21, Mao spoke with Chen Boda, commenting that while Yao's article was well-written, it did not hit the vital point, which was the "dismissal" aspect of the play. Mao drew a historical parallel between the Ming emperor's dismissal of Hai Rui and his 1959 dismissal of Peng Dehuai. He thus interpreted Hai Rui as an allegory of Peng.¹⁵ Interestingly, Mao had read an article in the *Guangming Daily* prior, where Wu had defended himself against Yao's attack: "Yao Wen yuan alleges that *Hai Rui Dismissed* was produced against the backdrop of the land allocation trend and verdict reversal trend in 1961. This is false. *Hai Rui Dismissed* was written in 1960. I am not so capable as to have clairvoyance to have

14. The editor of the *People's Daily* commented: "Yao Wen yuan has published an article in the *Wen Hui Daily* to criticize the historical character Hai Rui and the new historical play *Hai Rui Dismissed*, and these comments on Hai Rui and the play reflect our attitudes towards historical characters and plays, our study of history, and our artistic creativity in the portrayal of historical characters and events. Party members hold different political views on this issue, and in the absence of systematic debate have failed to reach a consensus and resolve these issues.

"The *People's Daily* has also published Wu Han's *Hai Rui Criticizing the Emperor* under the pen name Liu Mianzhi on June 16, 1959, followed by *Comments on Hai Rui* on September 21, 1959, and other commentary articles on historical characters. We will debate *Hai Rui Dismissed* and related issues, and readers who have interests in the fields of history, philosophy, literature and arts are welcome to participate in our debate.

"We hope everybody can remain open to mutual criticism and mutual debate, and can stick to the guidelines of allowing others freedom to make and respond to criticism, as well as convincing people with rational arguments." (*The People's Daily*, November 30, 1965.)

15. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1401.

foreseen what would happen in 1961. Such farfetched criticism and unreasonable labelling breeds an unhealthy culture. Who would still dare to write? Who would still dare to work on history?" Mao had commented in response, "I could not sleep after reading it."¹⁶

The next day, Peng Zhen and Kang Sheng met with Mao in Hangzhou. Mao repeated his judgment that the crux of *Hai Rui Dismissed* is the "dismissal," and that Peng Dehuai was another Hai Rui. Peng Zhen responded that investigations conducted showed no organizational link between Wu Han and Peng Dehuai.¹⁷

In a sense, this affair reveals that the root of Cultural Revolution lay in the Lushan Conference of 1959. Subsequent history proved that Mao made a fatal economic mistake in launching the Great Leap Forward. Peng Dehuai had presented suggestions on how to prevent the Great Leap Forward from escalating into a great famine, but Mao ignored his advice and compounded the error by dismissing him from office.¹⁸ Mao not only refused to reflect, but further exploited this to settle old scores, thus moving from a fatal economic error to a fatal political error. Yao's article lighted the fuse for Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution, using the criticism of *Hai Rui Dismissed* to directly attack Peng Zhen and the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee.¹⁹

On December 27, the *Beijing Daily* published Wu Han's self-criticism on *Hai Rui Dismissed*. Wu confessed that he had forgotten about class struggle, and had taken a formalist approach in presenting a one-sided, plain, and subjective narrative of Hai Rui and the peasant masses; this, he said, was a serious error concerning thought and class. Yao commented that Wu would have been better off not writing this piece, since it was bound to provoke anger, and Wu was sure to fall.²⁰ Yao's words indicate that his political backing was not just Jiang Qing but also Mao himself.

Indeed, the attempts by Peng and Wu to steer the criticism of the play in the direction of academic discussion rather than political criticism only further angered

16. Ibid, 1398–1399.

17. Ibid, 1401.

18. See Hu, "From the 'Great Leap Forward' to 'Economic Reconstruction'" for detailed analysis.

19. Pang concluded that Mao Zedong ordered the publication of the article to break the silence that then existed, which he found dissatisfactory, and provide a prelude to the Cultural Revolution. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1397.)

20. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1195–1196.

Mao.²¹ On February 3, 1967, Mao announced to foreign guests that a struggle was in progress in relation to Yao's article and denounced the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC for its refusal to obey his orders.²² Mao saw the publication of Yao's article as a first salvo, targetting his struggle not just at Peng Zhen, but also Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. In fact, Zhou Enlai was also opposed to the article's publication because he was a long acquaintance of Wu Han, and he also attempted to steer the criticism of Wu such that it was academic rather than political.²³

At the insistence of Peng, Mao had reluctantly agreed to postpone making a political verdict of the Wu Han question for two months. On February 3, Peng convened the enlarged meeting of the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group.²⁴ Xu Ligu (then Executive Deputy Director of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC,) Yao Qin (then Vice Director of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC,) Wang Li (then Deputy Editor in Chief of *Red Flag Magazine*), Hu Sheng, Fan Ruoyu, Liu Ren (then Second Secretary of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee,) Zheng Tianxiang (then Secretary of the Secretariat of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC,) and four other leaders joined the meeting to discuss issues arising from academic criticism. During the meeting, Peng Zhen advocated not mentioning the Lushan Conference, noting that

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21. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1234–1235.
 22. Mao Zedong remarked, "After the article was published, when I was in Shanghai, all the provincial newspapers republished it, and only those in Beijing refused. Subsequently, I ordered the production of pamphlets but the Beijing presses refused. The Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC had established an independent kingdom." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1397, 1399.)
 23. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1655.
 24. Following a motion by Mao Zedong, the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group was set up in July 1964, which comprised Peng Zhen (member of the Central Politburo of the CPC and Secretary of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee,) Lu Dingyi (alternate member of the Central Politburo of the CPC, Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Minister of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC,) Kang Sheng (alternate member of the Central Politburo of the CPC and Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC,) Zhou Yang (Deputy Minister of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC,) and Wu Lengxi (President of Xinhua News Agency and editor in chief of the *People's Daily*), with Peng Zhen appointed as Chairman, and leader in charge of implementing the directives on literature, arts, philosophy and social sciences of the Central Committee of the CPC. (Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1236.)

the findings of the investigation on the political controversy surrounding Wu Han proved he was not an ally of Peng Dehuai. Peng Zhen commented that even highly respected academics such as Guo Moruo was now unnerved; Guo had handed in his resignation as President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences after hearing that “someone” was about to criticize his past poetry on the historical figures Wu Zetian, Cai Wenji, and Hai Rui. Peng said that the leadership had to adhere to the direction Mao proposed in the 1957 National Conference on Propaganda Work, to “let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend,” using facts and reason to convince people. He also suggested that the “Leftists” had to rectify their culture and avoid forming a clique.²⁵ In contrast, Kang Sheng advocated highlighting the political controversies surrounding Wu and continuing the struggle against him.²⁶ This disagreement sparked a serious political dispute. Although Kang was extremely isolated and Peng came out on top of the dispute, he would later find another opportunity to defeat Peng.

Peng proposed a motion that Yu Liquan and Yao Qin undertake the editorial work for the *Report Outline of the Current Academic Discussion* (the *February Outline*),²⁷ which he later personally modified and finalized. It proposed an adherence to the principles of seeking truth from facts and justice from truth, and to convince others with reason instead of forming cliques and using power to suppress dissent.²⁸

25. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1201–1202.

26. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1236–1237.

27. Wang, *Wang Li's Reflection on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 580.

28. “The Outline calls for applying the guidelines proposed by Mao Zedong at the National Publicity Work Conference. That is, the Party should allow members to air different political views, including opposing Marxism-Leninism, to struggle and perform analysis and criticism, and to refute reactionary and incorrect ideology with rational arguments. Complex academic debate requires adherence to the principles of seeking truth from facts, and all being equal in the face of truth. To address academic issues requires convincing others with rational arguments instead of suppressing them like a scholar tyrant, advocating upholding the truth, timely rectification of errors, correcting incorrect guidelines, devising correct guidelines, studying Mao Zedong Thought, carrying out academic research to obtain sufficient data, conducting scientific analysis, and promoting academic causes. Additionally, those who have committed errors and come to hold reactionary academic views should be given a chance to rectify their errors. We should treat them seriously but leniently instead of making compromises, and should be cautious in openly criticizing some comrades in newspapers. Please note that criticism directed at specific individuals is subject to approval by the relevant

Earlier in September 1965, Peng had set out the guidelines for differentiating political issues from academic and artistic issues, and pointed out that all men should seek truth from facts and remedy errors, and that everyone was equal in the face of the truth.²⁹ Ten years later, he regularly explained that it was Mao who first proposed that practice is the sole criterion for testing truth, and that everyone was equal in the face of truth, having proposed these ideas in his *Theory of New Democracy*.³⁰ At this point, though, Mao was no longer aware that he authored this principle.

Peng presided over the compilation of the *February Outline*, and this report was then presented to members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC to help discuss and settle the political dispute under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee, in the spirit of “letting a hundred schools of thought to compete.”³¹

On February 5, Liu Shaoqi organized a discussion for members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC on the *February Outline*. Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, Kang Sheng, Wu Lengxi, Wang Li, and Yao Qin attended the meeting to hear the presentation by the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group headed by Peng.³² During the meeting, participants approved Peng’s proposal, particularly with regards to the Wu Han question, and passed the *February Outline*, reflecting a collective decision by the majority of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. Meanwhile, the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC requested that the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group report to Mao in Wuhan for a final decision on the *February Outline*.³³ Mao’s absence in this and other meetings of the Politburo Standing Committee at the time reflects his inability to communicate and reach mutual understandings with other leaders, nor make collective political decisions.

On February 8, Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, and Xu Liqun went to Wuhan to report on the *February Outline* to Mao Zedong, who offered neither opposition nor approval, and instead turned the topic of conversation to Wu Han. He simply asked whether

authorities, and actors or actresses who performed in the historical play *Hai Rui Dismissed* will be dealt with by the relevant authorities instead of being required to make self-criticisms in the newspaper.” (*The February Outline Presented by the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group to the CPC Central Committee*, February 7, 1966.)

29. Peng, “Several Issues on Academic Discussion.”

30. Meng, “Peng Zhen, a Pursuer of the Truth.”

31. Wu, *Remembering Chairman Mao*, 150.

32. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1656.

33. Wu, *Remembering Chairman Mao*, 150.

Wu Han had revolted against the Communist Party of China and socialism, while alleging that “Wu Han would be relieved if he could retain his position of Deputy Mayor of Beijing.” Mao then asked whether *Hai Rui Dismissed* was linked to verdict reversal of the dismissal of Peng Dehuai. Peng Zhen replied that an investigation had found Wu Han was not an ally of Peng Dehuai, to which Mao responded that it was Kang Sheng who first pointed out to him that the crux of Wu Han’s play was in the “dismissal.”³⁴ Peng also spoke of correcting the prevalent culture in the “Leftist” camp; Mao responded that such problems should be resolved at a future time, since ideological struggle with capitalists is a long-term class struggle that cannot be resolved with a hurried political verdict.³⁵

Based on this rather ambiguous meeting, Peng and other leaders mistakenly concluded that Mao approved of the *February Outline*.³⁶ Even though Xu Liqun and Hu Sheng witnessed Mao personally agreeing to the *Outline*,³⁷ Mao would later “self-deny” and denounce Peng for his actions.³⁸

After returning to Beijing, Peng asked Xu Liqun to draft an instruction on behalf of the CPC Central Committee. On February 12, Deng Xiaoping approved the issuance of the *Notice of the Central Committee of the CPC Forwarding the Report Outline of Current Academic Discussion of the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group*,³⁹ which was cosigned by Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Li Fuchun. The notice was issued on the same day. This deepened Mao’s dissatisfaction with Peng and other central leaders in office such as Liu.⁴⁰

In line with the *February Outline*, the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC denied the publication of an article co-authored by Guan Feng and Qi Benyu to criticize *Hai Rui Dismissed*.⁴¹ They did not realize that the article was a directive from Mao himself. On April 2 and 5, the *People’s Daily*, *Red Flag*, and *Guangming Daily* published the article and claimed that Wu Han wrote *Hai Rui Dismissed* with the ulterior motive of celebrating Peng Denghuai and

34. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People’s Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 47.

35. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1204–1205.

36. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1402.

37. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1205.

38. Wang, *Wang Li’s Reflection on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 589.

39. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1237.

40. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1403.

41. Hu, *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*, 457.

his grievance, and ultimately returning him to power. This shows clearly Mao's political intentions behind his organization of criticism of *Hai Rui Dismissed*.

From March 17 to 20, Mao convened the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, attended by himself, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, with Zhu De, Chen Yun, Lin Biao, and Deng Xiaoping absent.⁴² During this meeting, Mao vetoed the decision of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC to send a party delegation to attend the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.⁴³ Mao then criticized the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC for not supporting the "Leftist" faction and suppressing the publication Guan and Qi's article criticizing *Hai Rui Dismissed*. He warned the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC against emulating the Rural Work Department of the Central Committee of the

42. From March 17 to 20, 1966, Mao Zedong held an Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau in Hangzhou attended by just three members of the Standing Committee, namely himself, Liu Shaoqi, and Zhou Enlai, with the other four committee members absent. The absent members included Deng Xiaoping, who had asked for leave to conduct investigation on the third front in Northwest China. The First Secretaries of the central bureaus of each region and the relevant leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC were present at the meeting. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1404.) Regarding the other absent members of the committee, Chen Yun and Lin Biao had not attended the Standing Committee Meeting or the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC for a long time, while Zhu De attended irregularly.

43. In March 1966, the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC met to discuss whether they should attend the 23rd National Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Standing Committee had requested Mao Zedong's opinion in advance, and rather than expressing a view he simply said that the committee members could discuss the matter in his absence and then report to him. Liu Shaoqi chaired the Standing Committee Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, in which Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, Kang Sheng, and Liu Ningyi were participants, while Wu Lengxi, Yao Qin, and Wang Li were non-participating attendees. The meeting unanimously agreed to send a CPC delegation to the National Congress and telegraphed Mao Zedong accordingly. However, Mao Zedong responded by prohibiting such a delegation. (Wang, *Wang Li's Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 581–582.) At the Enlarged Standing Committee Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, Mao Zedong proposed that the Party should not attend the 23rd National Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1404.)

CPC.⁴⁴ Mao fully exploited this meeting to exert his political will and dominance. He even openly accused Peng Zhen of forming an “independent kingdom,” which Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping denied.⁴⁵ Mao then denounced the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee, the *Front* magazine, Wu Han, Liao Mosha, and Deng Tuo as anti-party and anti-socialist counter-revolutionaries, and that Wu Han and Jian Bozan were anti-communist, underground Kuomintang members.⁴⁶ Mao proposed initiating a Cultural Revolution in the fields of literature, history, philosophy, law, and economics.⁴⁷ He believed that the bourgeois and petty bourgeois (intellectuals) dominated Chinese academic and educational circles, and that they had collaborated with landlords and rich peasants to dictate education in universities, middle schools and primary schools. He judged this to be a serious class struggle that was necessary to prevent these parties from establishing revisionism in future. In fact, Mao’s beliefs were unsubstantiated, and he was arbitrarily fabricating unjust political cases. Mao’s erroneous appraisal of the domestic class struggle situation led to his erroneous decision regarding the overall work direction.⁴⁸

Under Mao’s personal directive, publications directly controlled by the Central Committee successively published articles to criticize Wu Han and Jian Bozan.⁴⁹

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44. In 1962, Mao Zedong disbanded the Central Rural Work Department headed by Deng Zihui for having implemented policies of “reserving land for individual use, permitting free markets, encouraging individual responsibility for profits and losses, and fixing farm output quotas at the household level.” In taking this action, Mao Zedong implied that the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee should not be dissolved for making “errors” like those of the Rural Work Department. (Bo, *Review of Several Important Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1240.)
 45. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1658.
 46. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People’s Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 72; Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1404–1405.
 47. “Kang Sheng’s Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC,” May 25, 1966.
 48. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1045.
 49. Guan and Wu, “Comments on Wu Han’s Moral Theory”; Qi et al., “Jian Bozan’s Historical Views Should be Criticized,” *People’s Daily*, March 25, 1966; Qi, “The Reactionist Nature of *Hai Rui Condemns the Emperor* and *Hai Rui Dismissed*,” *People’s Daily*, April 2, 1966; Guan and Lin, “Two Poisons to the CPC and Socialism — *Hai Rui Condemns the Emperor* and *Hai Rui Dismissed*,” *People’s Daily*, April 5, 1966; *People’s Daily* editorial: “What was the Intention of Wu Han in Writing *Hai Rui Dismissed*?,” *People’s Daily*, April 8, 1966.

Guan Feng and Qi Benyu served as the vanguard of political criticism, gaining the favor of Mao and were swiftly promoted to leading positions in the Central Cultural Revolution Group. Ironically, even the ruthless Chiang Kai-shek had not dared to harm Wu and Jian during the Nationalist regime, and these two eminent scholars were persecuted to death during Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution.⁵⁰ Subsequent events would prove, as pointed out later in the 1981 resolutions, that the Cultural Revolution was staged precisely to persecute and purge intellectuals as reactionary academics, with Wu and Jian being the first victims.⁵¹

On March 28, Kang Sheng met with Mao Zedong in Shanghai to report on the meeting with the Japanese Communist Party. Kang seized the opportunity to act against Peng Zhen. He relayed to Mao an incident that had taken earlier in March, when Zhang Chunqiao had dispatched Yang Yongzhi, Minister of the Publicity Department of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the CPC, to Beijing to gather information. Through Xu Liqun, Peng had supplied a number of curt answers to Yang's questions. Yang asked if the "clique" in the *February Outline* had any target in particular. Peng replied that there were no specific targets; whoever was "Ah Q" [a fictional character in the eponymous novel of the writer Lu Xun] was the target. Yang then asked if important articles of criticisms should be sent to the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC for approval. Peng lashed out at the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the CPC for the Shanghai *Wenhui Daily's* publication of Yao's article without notifying either the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC or the Cultural Revolution Five-man Group. Yang immediately reported back to Zhang Chunqiao and Jiang Qing.⁵² Kang remarked, "He's hit the Chairman's head now." Hearing about the incident, Mao raged: "The Tenth Plenary of the Eighth Central Committee passed the resolution on class struggle, yet the Publicity Department makes no notification in allowing the publication of Wu Han's numerous reactionary articles, while demanding notification for the publication of Yao's criticism? Does the resolution of the Central Committee not matter?"⁵³

On March 28 and 29, Mao told Kang, "The *February Outline* erroneously took

50. Wu Han died tragically in Qincheng Prison on October 11, 1969; Jian Bozan and his wife committed suicide at Peking University on the night of December 18, 1968.

51. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Compilation of Important Literature since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee*, vol. 2, 810.

52. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1212.

53. Ibid, 1215.

the wrong political line, and failed to distinguish right from wrong. I did not point this out earlier because the *February Outline* had already been discussed by members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC.”⁵⁴ On the one hand, Mao had to consider the opinions of the majority of members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, while on the other hand, on major issues he arbitrarily wielded sole power via his right of veto.

Why was Mao so unhappy with the *February Outline*? One important reason was that he considered Peng Zhen to be using it to mount a political challenge against him. This shows how Mao bore grudges against his comrades. At the Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres in 1962, Peng boldly pointed out: “The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, Chairman Mao, Liu Shaoqi, and members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC should assume responsibility for the Great Leap Forward. It is impossible for Chairman Mao never to commit errors that affect his prestige. There is currently a tendency within the Party that members dare not air opinions and undertake self-criticism for fear of removal from office, and Chairman Mao’s refusal to undertake self-criticism for his occasional errors (which represent no more than 1–10% of his decisions) will adversely influence the Communist Party of China.”⁵⁵ In September 1965, Peng delivered a speech at the Meeting for the Directors of the Provincial Department of Culture, convened by the Ministry of Culture, at which he stressed that “Everyone, no matter who, is equal before the truth.”

Peng was the only party leader who dared criticize Mao, and did so only to safeguard the interests of the Party and Mao himself. Nevertheless, Mao always bore grudges against dissidents, refused to accept objections, and viewed the slogan “everyone is equal before the truth” as a challenge to his personal authority. Hence, he denounced Peng as a “political clique leader” who failed to read books and newspapers, be in contact with the populace, and acquire practical knowledge, and denounced Peng’s constructive criticism as repeatedly assaulting Mao.⁵⁶ Years later, Mao would also denounce Lin Biao as a “military clique leader” for failing to consult him before issuing the *No.1 Central Document*.⁵⁷ In fact, Mao was the

54. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1238.

55. Tong, *Four Decades of Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, 393.

56. “Notification of the Central Committee of the CPC,” May 16, 1966, *People’s Daily*, May 17, 1967.

57. Mao Zedong denounced Lin Biao as an ignorant clique leader and warlord who did not read books or papers. Jiang Qing delivered a speech and relayed Mao Zedong’s remarks on Lin Biao. (“The Speeches of Zhou Enlai, Jiang Qing, Chi Qun, Xie Jingyi and Yao Wenyan at the Meeting for Central Government and State Organs to Mobilize the

greatest “clique leader,” with the power to take down other “clique leaders,” and overturn the collective decisions of the members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, thus creating a modern version of feudal autocracy. Peng Zhen’s predictions in 1962 regarding Mao turned out to be unfortunately true, creating a hugely negative impact on the Party. Mao dictated the power of rhetoric, calling himself “struggling against this revisionist line” instead of reflecting on his past errors.⁵⁸

When he first received reports on the *February Outline* in early February, Mao did not reject it openly. Instead, he bypassed the Central Committee of the CPC, asking Jiang to organize the creation of the *February Minutes* as a counter to Peng. Later in March 1967, Chen Boda would explain that Mao wanted to initiate a conflict between himself, representing the proletariat, and Liu and Peng, representing the bourgeoisie.⁵⁹ In October 1968, Lin Biao spoke at the enlarged Twelfth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, and said: “Comrade Jiang Qing wrote the *February Minutes* to oppose the *February Outline* advocated by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.”⁶⁰ More recent scholarship has also speculated on the motives of Mao.⁶¹ The fact is, even though Mao served as the leader of the Central Committee

Masses to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius,” January 25, 1974.)

58. The *Notice on May 16* claimed that the *February Outline* opposed socialist revolution and the cultural and revolutionary line of the Central Committee of the CPC headed by Mao Zedong, resisted proletarian leftists, plotted with bourgeois rightists, and paved the way for the restoration of capitalism. Thus, the *February Outline* reflected bourgeois ideology within the Party and advocated revisionism. The notice stressed the importance of the struggle against revisionism, which endangered the Party and country, as well as the global revolution.
59. In March 1967, Chen Boda said, “Peng Zhen prepared a Report Outline last February in a bourgeois attempt to overthrow the proletariat in the cultural and ideological fields. During the same period Comrade Lin Biao authorized Comrade Jiang Qing to prepare another document to defend the proletariat. Human will cannot influence the course of class struggle. The two documents thus are contradictory: one supports the bourgeoisie and the other supports the proletariat.” (Chen, “Speech at the meeting for Offices at the Army Corps and Higher Levels.”)
60. Lin Biao, “Speech at the Second Meeting of the Enlarged Twelfth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.”
61. Yan Changgui believed that Mao Zedong initially considered the launch of the criticism against “Hai Rui Dismissed from Office” would easily attract support, but instead the movement was strongly rejected. This frustration was a big blow to Mao Zedong, who was typically prudent when starting in a new direction and so was unprepared for this

of the CPC, he had become isolated from what he believed to be numerous “private kingdoms” within the Party’s frontline and backline.⁶² Mao thus went to Lin, Kang, and Chen for support, promoting Jiang as the new center of Chinese politics, and using the breach in the cultural sector to launch an attack on Liu, Deng, and Peng, the mainstream figures wielding real political power.⁶³

Earlier on January 20, Jiang had traveled from Shanghai to Suzhou to visit Lin and proposed holding the Forum on Military Literary and Artistic Work, to which military officers would be invited. Lin supported the proposal. The next day, Lin announced to various military officers that “Comrade Jiang Qing not only excelled in the arts but brought a positive political stance to literary and artistic work,” and further instructed them to heed and act on her valuable advice.⁶⁴ Before the forum on February 2, Ye Qun, Lin’s wife and director of his office, repeated Lin’s instruction to Liu Zhijian (Deputy Director of the PLA General Political Department,) Xie Tangzhong (Minister of Culture,) Chen Yading (Deputy Minister of Culture,) and Li Mancun (from the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC.) Liu Zhijian relayed Lin’s directive to Jiang in Shanghai. This marked the first collaboration between Lin and Jiang.⁶⁵ It was also a political trade between Lin and Mao, with Lin looking for Mao’s support amidst the ongoing purge of Luo Ruiqing, and Mao’s request for Lin’s support was naturally answered with enthusiasm.

From February 2 to February 20, Lin approved Jiang to preside over the Forum on Military Literary and Artistic Work and the publication of the *February Minutes*. Subsequently, Mao formally denounced the incorrect line being followed in literary and artistic circles and called for “a socialist revolution to root out the wrong line,” as well as calling for party members to be alert to and struggle against future wrong lines. Additionally, he stressed: “the struggle will be complex, fierce,

type of difficulty. Mao thus came up with a new idea and instructed Jiang Qing to seek help from the capable Lin Biao. (Yan and Wang, *Reflections on History*, 278–279.)

62. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 143

63. Consistent with the beliefs of certain scholars, including Hu Sheng, the political criticism was directed at some officials in positions of cultural authority and some leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC. (Hu ed., *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*.)

64. Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the Cultural Revolution*, 74.

65. Xi Xuan and Jin Chongming believed that the preparation of this “Summary” marked the start of the counter-revolutionary collusion of Lin Biao and Jiang Qing to take advantage of the Cultural Revolution. (Ibid.)

and long-lasting, and might take dozens or even hundreds of years to conclude.”⁶⁶

On February 22, Liu Zhijian reported to Lin on the *February Minutes*. Lin praised the document and ordered it to be relayed more widely and used to carry forward the concluded forum’s spirit of following the right line. On February 28, Chen Boda and Zhang Chunqiao jointly modified the document according to Mao’s advice, and Mao later personally made further modifications.

On March 19, Mao reviewed the *February Minutes* and modified the title so that rather than stating the forum was convened by Jiang acting independently, it instead stated that Lin had entrusted Jiang to do so.⁶⁷ Jiang asked Chen Yading to write to Lin to inform him of Mao’s instruction and proposed circulating the *February Minutes* to leaders of the Central Military Commission of the CPC and the Central Committee of the CPC for suggestions and modifications. In fact, strictly speaking, Lin could not entrust Jiang Qing with tasks because Jiang was not his subordinate. After Mao modified the *February Minutes*, it was he rather than Lin who entrusted Jiang with the task of convening the forum. Mao also officially approved Lin’s involvement in non-military affairs, and encouraged him to become involved in the literary and artistic matters that formed an important front in the Cultural Revolution. Lin took the hint from Mao and organized a political response by completing the formalities associated with the *February Minutes* following Jiang’s advice.

The *February Minutes* relayed Mao’s directive: “We acted late to root out wrong lines and we draw painful lessons from this. After passing the resolution in support of nationwide class struggle, we should have conducted such struggle to foster

66. In March 1966, Jiang Qing submitted the *Summary of the Army Literary and Artistic Work Seminar Organized by Comrade Jiang Qing Entrusted by Comrade Lin Biao* to Mao Zedong, who later made three related instructions and modifications. The *Summary* claimed that: “Since the founding of New China, the literary and artistic field has been dominated by an anti-CPC, anti-socialist ‘black line’ that runs opposite to Mao Zedong Thought. This ‘black line’ combines bourgeois literary and artistic thought, contemporary revisionist literary and artistic thought, and so-called ‘1930s’ literary and artistic thought.”

On May 3, 1979, on the request of the General Political Department of the Central Military Commission, the Central Committee of the CPC approved the cancellation of this summary, and identified and rehabilitated the persons and artistic works that had been wrongly treated. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 23–28.)

67. The original title was *Summary of the Army Literary and Artistic Work Seminar Organized by Comrade Jiang Qing*, and Mao Zedong modified it during his review. (Ibid.)

proletarian ideology and eliminate bourgeois ideology.”⁶⁸ This directive suggested that Mao firmly believed a wrong line existed within the Party, and nationwide class struggle was necessary. When party members and members of the Central Committee of the CPC opposed his thoughts, Mao resorted to the army and Jiang to carry on the struggle within the Party, and took advantage of students and the Red Guards to carry out the Cultural Revolution.

On March 22, Lin wrote to He Long and other leaders who presided over the day-to-day work of the Central Military Commission of the CPC and praised the *February Minutes* for having used Mao Zedong Thought to address important issues related to the Cultural Revolution, and for being of great practical and historical significance. Lin noted that a fierce class struggle has been ongoing between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in literary and artistic circles since 1949, and pointed out that if the proletariat did not occupy this battleground, it was sure to be taken by the bourgeoisie. Should the ideological battles be lost, revisionism would prevail. To that end, Lin stressed that the Chinese people must uphold Mao Zedong Thought and resolutely carry out the Cultural Revolution. On March 30, the Central Military Commission of the CPC approved the *February Minutes* and submitted it to the Central Committee of the CPC as directed by Mao Zedong. On April 10, the Central Committee of the CPC officially issued the *February Minutes* as a clear counter to the *February Outline*, signalling Mao’s intent to escalate the movement.⁶⁹

On April 18, the *PLA Daily* published the editorial “Uphold Mao Zedong Thought and Carry out the Socialist Cultural Revolution” and officially proposed the concept of the Socialist Cultural Revolution in accordance with the notification from the Central Committee of the CPC.⁷⁰ Additionally, the paper released the main contents of the *February Minutes* and stressed the leading role of the army in the Socialist Cultural Revolution. The following day, the *People’s Daily* republished the full editorial.

When plotting the Cultural Revolution, Mao obtained political support from Lin through the collaboration with Jiang to organize the *February Minutes*. This political support was demonstrated when Lin ordered the publication of an

68. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 25.

69. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1239.

70. Before this, on April 14, the Xinhua News Agency officially broadcast the report by Shi Ximin, Vice Minister of Culture on the Standing Committee of the CPC, titled “Holding the Great Red Flag of Mao Zedong Thought High and Carrying out the Socialist Great Cultural Revolution to the End.”

editorial in the *PLA Daily* that supported the Cultural Revolution. The following year, Jiang noted at the enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the CPC on April 12 that the political background and significance of the *February Minutes* lay in winning the support from Lin.⁷¹ Later that year on August 9, Lin remarked that the success of the Cultural Revolution depended on Mao Zedong Thought, the prestige of Chairman Mao, and the PLA.⁷² Lin obviously understood Mao's political intentions, and thus actively engaged in the political struggle within the Party and took the initiative to support Mao in staging the Cultural Revolution. Having forged a political alliance between the writers who supported him and the armed forces, Mao felt secure enough to launch the Cultural Revolution.

It can be seen that in every intraparty conflict, Mao would first notify military leaders and obtain their support, and once the military joins the conflict, Mao would emerge victorious over his opponents. This of course contravenes the principle that the party should command the army, substituting the party's position for the individual leader, and turning the army into a tool for political conflict.⁷³ Mao's

71. On April 12, 1967, during the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Military Commission, Jiang Qing said, "The army has done a good job during this Great Cultural Revolution. From the very beginning, represented by Comrade Lin Biao, the army has been positively involved in the intra-party political struggle, and has supported a leftist position." She also introduced the political background of the *February Minutes*, saying: "Last February (1966,) Lin Biao entrusted me to hold an army literary and artistic seminar. In the summary of this seminar, I asked your 'god', namely the 'god' of proletariat dictatorship, to attack those representatives of the bourgeoisie hidden in the CPC and cause them to throw in the towel. Why did this work? Because we have the support of the army and they fear the people's army." ("Make a New Contribution to the People — Jiang Qing's Speech at the Enlarged Military Committee," April 12, 1967.)

On April 15, Jiang Qing submitted the draft speech to Mao Zedong, who made four modifications and instructions. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 310–313.)

72. "Records of Lin Biao's Speech during Interviews with Ze Siyu and Liu Feng," August 9, 1967. Mao Zedong modified the draft speech many times. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 414–416.)

73. Jin Chunming believes that Mao Zedong's reputation in China and among the PLA allowed him to make the PLA a personal political tool that he used to launch the Cultural Revolution. The PLA thus came to unquestioningly obey the personal commands of Mao Zedong. (Jin ed., *Comments on 'The Cambridge History of China'*, 392–393.)

arrangement lasted until May 3, 1979, when the PLA General Political Department requested instructions and the Central Military Commission of the CPC approved the revocation of the *February Minutes*.

The *February Outline* contradicted the *February Minutes*, and these opposing central documents reveal publicly the division among the party leadership that had been ongoing for a long time.⁷⁴ From March 28 to March 30, Mao spoke with Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, and Zhang Chunqiao, as noted earlier. During these conversations, he criticized the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group and the *February Outline*, denounced the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC as the “Palace of Hell” and called for “purging Hell and liberating the little demons,”⁷⁵ as well as encouraging rebellion against the Central Committee of the CPC. Additionally, he declared: “The older generation of proletarian revolutionaries has become senile and it is hard for the next generation to resist revisionism. This means we must carry out the Cultural Revolution for a long period, a hard task that I lack the time to complete.”⁷⁶ Mao’s private conversations show that he was determined to criticize Peng Zhen and Lu Dingyi and take strong action concerning the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Five-member Group, so as to set the stage for the Cultural Revolution.⁷⁷ Mao threatened that the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, and the Five-member Group would be disbanded if they insisted on sheltering “bad elements.”⁷⁸

Instead of consulting with members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee and the Central Politburo of the CPC, Mao made these crucial political decisions after secret discussions with Kang, Jiang, and Zhang, who were not even members

74. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1403–1404.

75. On March 30, 1966, in a speech on academic criticism in Shanghai, Mao Zedong said: “Don’t submit academic criticism-related articles for review. Ghosts do not want to see hell, so we must overthrow hell and liberate the ghosts. I always insist that the local masses have the right to attack the central government if the central government does wrong. During the central meeting last September (in 1965), I specifically discussed this issue, namely that the appearance of revisionism in the central government might lead the local masses to rebel.” (Mao, “Overthrow Hades to Liberate Ghosts.”) Mao Zedong’s instruction “Overthrow Hades to Liberate Ghosts” was officially published by the *People’s Daily* on August 13, 1966 in the form of a direct quotation.

76. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1406.

77. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1153.

78. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1658.

of the Central Committee of the CPC at the time. Mao thus purged Peng Zhen in violation of the Party's constitution and organizational procedures. Based on secret discussions, Mao plotted to dominate the Central Committee of the CPC and manipulate the mass media to support the Cultural Revolution, and established relationships whereby members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC became "ministers" to his "emperor," which allowed him to "issue edicts" to purge leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC. The Cultural Revolution was thus a practice of feudal autocracy.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the Central Committee of the CPC failed to detect this trend, and all Central Committee members, including Zhou and Deng, led by example in obeying Mao's "imperial edicts." On March 31, Kang returned to Beijing and relayed Mao's instructions to Zhou and Peng.⁸⁰ Since Mao's directives were revered as "imperial edicts," both Zhou Enlai and Peng Zhen had to obey.

From April 9 to 12, Deng presided over the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. Deng had been urgently recalled to Beijing. At the meeting, Kang relayed the contents of his conversations with Mao, and Chen and Kang criticized Peng for his serious faults. Peng had to conduct self-criticism, saying that he had made serious mistakes in not following Chairman Mao for the academic struggle, and that he will never oppose Chairman Mao ever.⁸¹ This shows that an unwritten law had been established within the Party: Mao's criticism must be accepted, with no room for doubt or opposition.⁸² Zhou, Deng, and Peng were compelled to investigate the Central Committee for "failing in its duties," and expressed their unanimous acceptance of Mao Zedong's criticisms and instructions.⁸³ The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC passed a resolution on drafting the notification of the criticism and revocation of the wrong *Report Outline of the Five-member Group* (the *February Outline*), and the establishment of a Cultural Revolution Drafting Group headed by Chen Boda.⁸⁴ This indicated

79. In 1981, the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC pointed out that China had a long history of feudalism. The residual influence of centuries of feudal autocracy could not be easily eradicated from the ideological and political fields, leading to overcentralization of power in individuals, as well as authoritarianism and worship of individuals.

80. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1241.

81. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Peng Zhen*, 1219.

82. Ibid, 1217.

83. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1660.

84. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1241.

that democratic centralism had been severely damaged. Internal political life of the Party had been transformed from egalitarianism to feudal absolutism, with Mao's personal control having succeeded the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC.⁸⁵

On April 14, Mao personally modified the notification for the resolution and added instructions on dissolving the "Cultural Revolution Five-member Group" and setting up the "Cultural Revolution Drafting Group" under the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC.⁸⁶ Chen Boda was appointed leader of the Cultural Revolution Drafting Group, Jiang Qing and Liu Zhijian were appointed deputy leaders, and Kang Sheng was appointed as a consultant to the group. This signaled Mao's establishment of his own group of writers to promote his personal agenda. The group was officially renamed the Central Cultural Revolution Group later on May 28, publishing under Mao's direction a total of 58 articles from June 1966 to March 1971, including seven published from June 1966 to December 1966.⁸⁷ The Central Cultural Revolution Group served as Mao's spokesperson and political tool through which he personally led the Cultural Revolution.

The same day, Mao reiterated that the Central Committee of the CPC should be alert to the restoration of the bourgeoisie, which had first been proposed at the First Session of the 1st CPPCC National Committee, held on September 29, 1949. Additionally, he stressed that imperialists and domestic reactionaries refused to admit defeat and had destroyed and disrupted society in an attempt to restore capitalism. Mao maintained this situation necessitated continued vigilance. Mao's assessment of China's political situation might have been correct in 1949, but he was wrong to reiterate this assessment in 1966 after he had ruled the country for 17 years. By arbitrarily suspecting class enemies and manufacturing a crisis, Mao began to struggle against his own comrades rather than against "imperialists" (i.e. the United States) or "reactionaries" (i.e. Chiang Kai-shek,) and persisted on this path because of his inflexibility and growing distance from others in the Party.⁸⁸ As the Central Resolution of 1981 pointed out, Mao was incorrect in his assessment of China's class struggle and of the political situation of the Party and country.⁸⁹

85. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1046.

86. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1241.

87. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12 and vol. 13.

88. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 37.

89. "Resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC on Certain Questions in Our Party's History since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," unanimously approved

Mao overemphasized class struggle, created political tensions and illusions of revisionism within the Party,⁹⁰ and thus misrepresented the truth.

Notice on May 16 and the First Purge of Veteran Cadres

Purge of Yang Shangkun and Luo Ruiqing

On November 10, 1965, the same day that *Wenhui Daily* published Yao's criticism on *Hai Rui Dismissed*, Yang Shangkun, Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and Director of the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC, was dismissed from office. Yang was accused of secretly installing wiretaps and allowing unauthorized access to numerous confidential documents and archives. Subsequently, Wang Dongxing was appointed Director of the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC and Chief of the Guard and Protection Bureau, thus serving as Mao's loyal proxy and bodyguard. He would also play a vital role as Mao's secret enforcer during the Cultural Revolution.

On November 30, Lin Biao sent Ye Qun to submit a letter and eleven pieces of materials to Mao, accusing Luo Ruiqing (former Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, Deputy Premier of the State Council, Standing Commissioner, and Secretary-general of the Central Military Commission of the CPC) of seizing military power, opposing military involvement in politics, revolting against Mao Zedong Thought, and overstressing military technology.⁹¹ Ye's report lasted nearly 5 hours. In his memoir, Zhang Yaoci recounts Ye Qun's attack on Luo Ruiqing during the meeting with Mao: "Luo Ruiqing opposed Lin Biao's involvement in politics and had declared that Lin Biao was chronically ill and should resign from his post. Our Party would sustain massive losses should the ambitious Luo Ruiqing gain power over the army and public security. Luo Ruiqing was plotting to succeed Lin Biao as Minister of National Defense." Mao was uncertain about Ye's report, but his attitude towards Luo had changed. On November 2, he spoke with Yang Chengwu (then Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the PLA) for over an hour to go through the situation.⁹²

Mao decided to purge Luo without giving him the chance to respond to the

during the Sixth Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC on June 27, 1981.

90. Hu ed., *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*, 458.

91. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1399.

92. Zhang, *Memories of Zhang Yaoci-Those Days with Chairman Mao*, 76–77.

accusations against him in a face-to-face meeting, and without discussing the matter with other members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. From December 8 to 15, Luo was criticized at an enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC held in Shanghai.⁹³ This was a secret meeting presided over by Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping in turn, and the members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee, namely Liu, Zhou, and Deng, were not informed of the agenda prior to the meeting. Mao and Lin were absent from the meeting.⁹⁴ Ye denounced Luo on behalf of Lin and won support from Wu Faxian (Commander of the Air Force,) Li Zuopeng (Political Commissar of the Navy,) and Yang Chengwu (Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the PLA.) She also presented Lin's letter and the materials that supported the accusations.⁹⁵ Mao's directive criticizing Luo was also circulated at the meeting.⁹⁶ On the last day of the meeting, Zhou presided over the meeting and Deng gave a summary.⁹⁷ Just

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93. From December 8–15, 1965, the Central Committee of the CPC held a meeting in Shanghai to criticize the errors made by Luo Ruiqing and carry out a struggle against him. After the meeting, the Central Committee designated comrades such as Zhou Enlai to help Luo Ruiqing through patient education. However, Luo Ruiqing refused to conduct self-criticism, protested that he considered himself wronged, and attempted to defend himself. Following the spirit of the Central Meeting of the CPC in Shanghai, during the army political working meeting, some senior party and army officials denounced other serious errors committed by Luo Ruiqing. (Central Work Group, "Report on the Errors of Luo Ruiqing," April 13, 1966.)
94. During the meeting, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai asked Wu Faxian (then Commander of Air Force) about the condition of Luo Ruiqing. The details of the meeting can be found in Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 558–562.
95. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 27.
96. Mao Zedong denounced Luo Ruiqing as follows: "People should watch those who oppose putting politics first, particularly those who express oral agreement while secretly harboring disagreement simply to spread opportunism." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1400.)
97. Deng Xiaoping's summary comprised five points: "1. This meeting disclosed problems involving Luo Ruiqing and further meetings should be suspended for some days; 2. The main mistake of Luo Ruiqing was that he failed to implement the instruction of Comrade Mao concerning the prioritizing of politics and made an error of eclecticism. 3. Some of Luo's errors were brought up at the meeting and will be presented to him at an appropriate time so he can undertake self-criticism. 4. The errors of Luo should not be made public and discussion should be limited to attendees of the meeting. 5. Relevant measures shall be subject to the discussion and instructions of the Central

as it had been at the enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the CPC following the Lushan Conference in 1959, this meeting created a huge stir in the PLA, marking the second time a major split occurred in the PLA. The critical point was that Mao, as Chairman of both the Central Committee and the Central Military Commission of the CPC, only believed Lin's statements and did not allow Luo to defend himself. He issued the directive on criticizing Liu Ruiqing, then serving as Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, without convening meetings of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC or the Central Politburo of the CPC, sharing information, or exchanging views.⁹⁸ This contravened established party procedures and set a precedence for persecution by individuals. On January 8, the Central Committee of the CPC issued a notice announcing that Luo Ruiqing was relieved of his posts of Standing Commissioner and Secretary-General of the Central Military Commission of the CPC, while appointing Chen Yi, Liu Bocheng, Xu Xiangqian, and Ye Jianying as vice chairmen of the Central Military Commission of the CPC.

On March 4, the Central Committee of the CPC convened a group meeting to discuss the Luo Ruiqing question, in accordance with Mao Zedong's directive and the decision of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC.⁹⁹ Before the meeting was convened, Deng Xiaoping proposed that the meeting resolutely abide by the guiding principles of seeking truth, helping and saving comrades, and allowing self-revolution.¹⁰⁰ The first phase of the meeting lasted from March 4 to 11, involving 42 participants. The meeting was enlarged to 53 participants on March 17. Only Peng Zhen, leader of the Central Working Group, spoke fairly on Luo.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Yang Chengwu accused Luo of opposing study of the works of Mao Zedong, denigrating Mao Zedong Thought, and rejecting the recognition of Mao Zedong's genius.¹⁰² Additionally, he relayed Mao's directive, "As an important

Committee of the CPC after its members return to Beijing." (Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 561–562.)

98. Zhang, *Memories of Zhang Yaoci — Days with Chairman Mao*, 78.

99. The Central Committee of the CPC designated a three-member work team, comprising Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen and Ye Jianying, to manage the investigation into the errors of Luo Ruiqing. Ye Jianying chaired the team.

100. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1898.

101. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 12.

102. Yang Chengwu said that Luo Ruiqing disagreed with taking Mao Zedong's works as the supreme instruction of all works in the army. After Lin Biao introduced the five principles of emphasizing politics in November 1965, on November 28, 1965, Luo

tool of the proletarian dictatorship, the army is strictly prohibited, regardless of circumstances, from revolting against the Central Committee of the CPC and destroying the unity of the Party.”

Shortly after this meeting, Yang succeeded Luo’s positions. Ironically, Yang himself would fall victim to political struggle later in March 1968. This would be the pattern for the political struggles to follow, whereby individuals would persecute others, and then become the persecuted; this soon extended from the party’s central leadership to the rest of society in China. For the members of the Eighth Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, who purged Luo in obeying Mao’s directive and were not conscious of Mao’s political logic, they would successively fall victim to the Cultural Revolution themselves. Liu, Deng, and Lin were later purged, while Zhou became the political target of Mao’s campaigns in the late years of the Cultural Revolution. Zhu De and Chen Yun were marginalized, barely escaping Mao’s campaigns by withdrawing from active participation in the political struggles.

On March 18, Luo attempted suicide by self defenestration in protest of his

Ruiqing told him in Suzhou that “Taking Comrade Mao’s works as the supreme instruction for all army activities conflicts with our country’s political system.”

Luo Ruiqing disagreed with praising Mao Zedong Thought as the peak of modern Marxism and Leninism. On June 29, 1965, when discussing the foreword of the republished “Quotations of Chairman Mao,” to which the General Political Department of the PLA added a foreword saying “Mao Zedong Thought is the supreme and most flexible form of Marxism and Leninism in existence,” Luo Ruiqing said, “Can we say that? Are there further heights to be reached? Can we climb higher? Is there a way to be more flexible? We can say these things internally, but never to the outside.” Luo Ruiqing thus deleted the above phrase from the foreword. While discussing this matter he also said: “The phrase ‘Mao Zedong Thought is the peak of modern Marxism and Leninism’ is inappropriate and may lead to a bad impression internationally.” In 1965, the phrase “Mao Zedong Thought is the supreme and most flexible form of Marxism and Leninism in existence,” which had appeared in an editorial in the *PLA Daily*, was also deleted by Luo Ruiqing.

Luo Ruiqing also disagreed with any mention of the formation of Mao Zedong Thought, including the idea that it derived from Mao Zedong’s “personal talent.” In December 1961, when discussing Lin Biao’s speech at the Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres, Ye Qun proposed adding the words “individual talent” to the phrase “Mao Zedong Thought formed through the collective struggle of the Party and the people.” Luo Ruiqing strongly disagreed, saying “Nobody dares mention individual talent these days!”

treatment. He had left a suicide note to his wife.¹⁰³ He was the first of party and state leaders to turn to suicide in protest at being framed. Luo survived, but this provoked Mao further to denounce Luo's suicide attempt merely a strategy to alienate the Party and the people.¹⁰⁴

From March 22 to April 8, the meeting entered the second stage, during which 95 participants criticized Luo Ruiqing in his absence. On April 12, Zhou, Deng, and Peng jointly submitted the *Report on Luo Ruiqing's Faults and the Comments on the Report (Draft)* by the Central Committee of the CPC to Mao, who was in Hangzhou.¹⁰⁵ On April 13, the Central Working Group submitted the same report to the Central Committee of the CPC. This report listed Luo's major faults as follows: "1. Revolting against Mao Zedong Thought and slandering and attacking Comrade Mao Zedong; 2. Following the bourgeois military line, opposing Chairman Mao's military line, boldly organizing contests of armed force and resisting the prioritization of politics; 3. Breaching discipline, establishing an independent powerbase and destroying the democratic centralism of the Party; 4. Having moral faults, selfishly speculating, defending the exploiting class, and advocating bourgeois individualism; 5. Plotting to succeed Lin Biao and organizing conspiracies to usurp the power of the army and Party."¹⁰⁶ In fact, Lin had simply framed Luo and used Mao's support to purge him. Years later in 1973, Mao acknowledged at the meeting of the Central Military Commission of the CPC that he had wrongly purged Luo at Lin's instigation.¹⁰⁷

103. In the suicide note he wrote to his wife Hao Zhiping, Luo Ruiqing said: "I didn't tell you about the things that occurred at the meeting to maintain Party discipline [this refers to the internal meeting in which Mao Zedong criticized Luo Ruiqing to his face.] This is the end. Tell our children to heed the Party and Chairman Mao forever. Our party will be always glorious, right and great. You should keep improving yourself and conducting revolution!"

104. On May 16, 1966, the *Transmission of the "Report on the Errors of Luo Ruiqing" Submitted by the Central Working Group to the Central Committee of the CPC* pointed out that not only had Luo Ruiqing not reviewed his errors but, on the contrary, he had attempted suicide to alienate himself from the party and the people.

105. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1908.

106. Central Work Group, "Report on the Errors of Luo Ruiqing," April 13, 1966.

107. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1677. On November 15, 1973, Luo Ruiqing wrote to Mao Zedong: "I have diseases throughout my body and two injured legs. I ask the Chairman and the Party to release me from jail and give me some limited freedom." Mao Zedong responded: "I think he should be released. Will the Central Committee please make a decision according to the situation." Luo Ruiqing

On May 16, the Central Committee of the CPC circulated the *Report on Luo Ruiqing's Faults* and summarized his faults as "five revolts," including revolting against Mao and Lin, and imposing political despotism. The report said that the Central Committee of the CPC had decided to relieve Luo of his posts as Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and Deputy Premier of the State Council owing to his serious faults, and this decision had subsequently been approved by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPC.¹⁰⁸ The unjust persecution of Luo was the first such case of political injustice to occur in the Cultural Revolution, and led to his wrongful imprisonment for seven years. In August 1978, Deng remarked that the case of Luo demonstrated the conspiracies and fierce political struggles waged among the Party leadership prevailed during the Cultural Revolution"¹⁰⁹.

was released from jail soon after Mao Zedong gave this instruction. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 13, 366.)

108. The Central Committee believed that Luo Ruiqing's error was that he used the bourgeois military line to oppose the proletarian military line, exploited revisionism to oppose Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought, opposed the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong and Lin Biao, and plotted to seize control over the army and oppose the CPC." ("Remarks of the Central Committee of the CPC on the *Report on the Errors of Luo Ruiqing*," May 16, 1966.)
109. Deng Xiaoping said: "Comrade Luo Ruiqing was a well-known and fearless fighter against the anti-CPC group led by Lin Biao, and thus was persecuted cruelly by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four during the Party's internal two-line struggle. Luo Ruiqing held firm in the struggle against Lin Biao's revisionist line and the bourgeois military line, and insisted on Mao Zedong Thought and systematic learning of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Chairman Mao. He maintained the revolutionary learning style of our Party that was continuously advocated by Mao, and resisted and struggled against disingenuous wordings of Lin Biao like "peak" and "the supreme and the most flexible." He steadfastly defended the comity and unity of the CPC and the army, and hated Lin Biao's formation of a clique to pursue selfish interest and separate the Party and army. He struggled against crimes of Lin Biao such as separating the army from political organizations, canceling military technical training, and damaging the nation's war readiness. He was fair, upright, and clearly distinguished between right and wrong. He had a noble moral character and revolutionary sentiments. Lin Biao regarded Luo Ruiqing as the obstacle to his seizure of power over the CPC and cruelly framed him, making him the target of psychological and physical torture." (Deng, "Regrets Expressed to the Memorial Meeting for Luo Ruiqing," 12 August, 1978.)

Purge of Peng Zhen and His Allies

On April 15, the *Beijing Daily* and *Frontline* published articles and editorials criticizing Deng Tuo, Wu Han, and Liao Mosha. The month before, Mao had directed criticism at *Reading Notes of Sanjiacun* and *Evening Chats at Yanshan*, which the three had coauthored. However, the publishing of the criticism of the three were deemed to be a tactical maneuver “sacrificing the chariots to save the marshall (referring to their superior, Peng Zhen.)” All other media outlets were forbidden from republishing the criticism.

From April 16 to 26, Mao Zedong presided over the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC in Hangzhou.¹¹⁰ Of the Standing Committee, only Mao, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping was present. Mao took advantage of Liu Shaoqi’s month-long visit to Pakistan, Myanmar, and Afghanistan; Liu, failing to foresee the unprecedented political storm to come, returned on April 20 to attend the meeting when Mao had already set his agenda in motion.¹¹¹ Also attending the meeting were Peng Zhen, Chen Yi (then Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC, Deputy Premier of the State Council, and Minister of Foreign Affairs,) Ye Jianying (then Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the CPC, Vice Chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, and President and Political Commissar of the PLA Academy of Military Science,) Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, and the secretaries of the central bureaus Li Xuefeng, Li Jingquan, Tao Zhu, Song Renqiong, Wei Wenbo, and Liu Lantao.¹¹²

On the afternoon of April 22, Mao declared his personal belief that the “problem” was not limited to Wu Han, but was a widespread spiritual and ideological struggle; the severity of the “Wu Han Problem” was because there were supporters and revisionists in the “court” (implying Peng Zhen) and the PLA (implying Luo Ruiqing and Yang Shangkun.) Mao then threatened to “comprehensively and systematically” identify the revisionists, revealing his intention to return to the frontline of the leadership. When discussing the *February Outline* that had been officially issued by the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao rebuked Peng for overturning the resolution urgently passed by the Central Committee of the CPC.¹¹³ In accordance with Mao’s directive, the Cultural Revolution Five-member Group was dissolved, and the Central Cultural Revolution Group was established

110. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 37.

111. Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, and Chen Yun were absent from the meeting.

112. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1007.

113. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1407–1408.

to draw up the *Notification of the Central Committee of the CPC (draft)* (which became the *Notice on May 16*.)¹¹⁴ However, the notice was not submitted to members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC for review and approval. Instead, Mao Zedong alone modified, reviewed,¹¹⁵ and decided the final version of the document,¹¹⁶ rendering the Central Committee of the CPC a “rubber stamp.”

During the meeting, Peng Zhen was criticized and Kang Sheng denounced the *February Outline*. Kang claimed that he had not seen the *February outline* before it was issued, and that it was approved by Peng alone. Peng refuted that the document had been sent to Kang for approval before it was issued, and to have not read it before its issuance. Controversially, Peng Zhen denied the document had been submitted to Kang Sheng for approval and then officially issued after discussion and modification. Eventually, Mao officially declared that the *February Outline* was revoked.¹¹⁷ Peng was dismissed from office, and Mao removed Peng’s name from some party documents.¹¹⁸ Lu Dingyi, alternate member of the Central Politburo of the CPC, Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, Minister of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Deputy Premier of the State Council, was also dismissed from office.

From April 28 to 29, Mao delivered several speeches in which he stressed that “class struggle observes the law of nature rather than bending to human will, and we must purge enemies through class struggle.” “Class struggle” thus became a political tool Mao Zedong deployed to take out his rivals. Bo Yibo later recalled that it was at this point that the purge of Peng Zhen and the launch of the Cultural Revolution became inevitable.¹¹⁹

On April 24, the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC was held to discuss and endorse the *Notice on May 16*, which had been drafted by Chen Boda on April 12 and submitted to Mao by Zhou the same day,

114. The group was established on April 16, 1966, and was also known as the Cultural Revolution Document Drafting Group. Chen Boda led the group, which consisted of members Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Wu Lengxi, Wang Li, Yin Da, Chen Yading, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu and Mu Xin. (Wang, *Wang Li’s Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 585–586.) Mao Zedong personally reviewed and approved the list of team members.

115. Wang, *Wang Li’s Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 587; Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1660.

116. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1008.

117. Zhang, *Memories of Zhang Yaoci — Those Days with Chairman Mao*, 79–80.

118. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1660.

119. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1242.

and was resubmitted by Kang on April 18. Mao Zedong modified the report eight times on April 14 and 18. The *Notice on May 16* was scheduled to be passed at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC held in May.¹²⁰ This document laid the first guidelines for the Cultural Revolution and ten years of turmoil.¹²¹

Mao declared that the struggle involved the very soul of the Party, claimed Peng Zhen was behind the Wu Han Case, and warned against revisionism.¹²² Between April 28 and 29, he delivered speeches in which he said: "The Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC disobeyed my directives and Peng Zhen boldly sought to reform our Party. However, the effect was precisely opposite to that intended and Peng Zhen was doomed to failure, just as predicted by the law of class struggle. I will call for the attack of anyone who organizes conspiracy within the Central Committee of the CPC. Peng Zhen sneaked into our Party and I could purge him blindfolded. Our comrades have no need to worry about him."¹²³ This speech shows the extent to which Mao dominated the Party during the Cultural Revolution, and his readiness to purge Party leaders. When he was modifying the *Notice on May 16*, Mao denounced Peng and his allies as clique leaders who failed to learn from books and newspapers, or connect with the masses,¹²⁴ and who oppressed the people by force.¹²⁵

On May 4, Peng proposed to Liu and Deng that he stop presiding over the day-to-day work of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC. Deng wrote and circulated the *Notification of the Central Committee of the CPC on Appointing Comrade Li Xuefeng as the First Acting Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC* to the North Central Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Beijing

120. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 38–45.

121. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1153.

122. Mao Zedong said, "Revisionists are not just active in cultural circles. They will also appear inside the CPC, government, and army, in which case they will become even more dangerous. However, the earlier they appear, the more easily they can be eliminated." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1407–1408.)

123. "Kang Sheng's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 25, 1966.

124. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 38–45.

125. Marx wrote, "Despotism's sole idea is contempt for man, the dehumanised man, and this idea has the advantage over many others of being at the same time a fact. The despot always sees degraded people." *Marx, Letter to Arnold Ruge (May 1843)*.

Municipal Committee of the CPC.¹²⁶ Peng Zhen was officially purged, with Liu and Deng's tacit acknowledgement in obeying Mao's "imperial edict."

Mao's criticism of high-ranking Party leaders shocked other Party leaders, and even Liu and Deng had no warning of his intentions. His actions contravened the Party Constitution and the National Constitution. Without authorization by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPC or allowing individuals the right of appeal, members of the Central Politburo of the CPC, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Central Committee of the CPC were relieved of their posts.¹²⁷ This contravened Article 16 of the Constitution of the Party.¹²⁸ Without convening the National People's Congress and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, vice chairmen of the National People's Congress and deputy premiers of the State Council were dismissed from office. This contravened Articles 28, 31, and 33 of the National Constitution.¹²⁹ The disruption to the official

126. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1911–1912.

127. Peng Zhen served as Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC and Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC; Lu Dingyi served as Alternate Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC and Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC; Luo Ruiqing served as Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC; and Yang Shangkun served as Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. All of them were members of the Central Committee of the CPC.

128. According to Article 16 of the Party Constitution approved by the 8th National Congress of the CPC in 1956, only the National Congress of the CPC had the power to dismiss members and alternate members of the Central Committee of the CPC, or punish them by placing them on probation within the Party. In an emergency, this was to be decided by the majority (i.e., over two thirds of the votes of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPC,) in which case the decision would then be subject to confirmation by the next meeting of the National Congress of the CPC. (Museum of the Chinese Revolution comp., *Compilation of the Constitutions of the Communist Party of China*, 155.)

129. According to Article 28 of the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1954)*, the National People's Congress has the right to dismiss the premier and vice premiers of the State Council, ministers of all ministries, and directors and secretary-generals of all commissions. According to Article 31, the Standing Meeting of the National People's Congress performs the following duties when the NPC is not sitting: appointing and dismissing vice premiers of the State Council, ministers of all ministries, and directors and secretary-generals of all commissions. Article 33 gives the NPC the right to dismiss

party system caused differences within the Party to grow into allegations of line struggle and class struggle, and even to life-and-death struggle.

The unconstitutional purge of Peng Zhen and another three members of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Central Committee of the CPC set a dangerous precedent that opened the way for further ruthless persecution of party leaders during the Cultural Revolution. However, Liu, Zhou, and Deng, all members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, accepted and tolerated Mao's unconstitutional practices.

On May 5, Mao proposed formal policies on purging veteran cadres. The target was the frontline of the collective central leadership, particularly Liu. When he met with the Albanian Government Delegation, Mao discussed China's political situation and the need to purge veteran cadres via a Cultural Revolution, and expressed his resolution to even purge members of the Central Committee of the CPC,¹³⁰ naming Peng Dehuai, Luo Ruiqing, and Peng Zhen. The policies to purge veteran cadres were expressed in the *Notice on May 16*, and by October 1968 had resulted in the purging of 47 members of the Central Committee, more than the total

members of the Standing Committee of the NPC. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee*, vol. 5, 527–529.)

130. In an interview with the Albanian government delegation headed by Shehu in Hangzhou on May 5, 1966, Mao Zedong said: "We should keep two 'possibilities' in mind. The first is counter-revolutionary dictatorship and counter-revolutionary restoration. Lenin said that the defeated exploiting class would remain stronger than the triumphant proletariat for a long period. He also said that capitalism was continuously growing amongst farmers and petty bourgeoisie. China's national bourgeoisie and their intellectuals are all lurking in our team, as are the offspring of the landed class. In the past, most of our college students came from the bourgeoisie and the landed class. We currently still have millions of old-style intellectuals. Some old intellectuals have infiltrated our party and are awaiting their opportunity." (Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 109.)

Mao Zedong later continued: "The second possibility is that 'evil people of all kinds are unmasked'. In the past 45 years (since the founding of the CPC in 1921,) scores of members of the Central Committee of the CPC have been peeled away from the healthy core of our Party and discarded, but some bad apples (incompetent members of the Central Committee of the CPC) still remain to be discovered." (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1839–1841.) Zhou Enlai, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping, and Wu Xiuquan all attended this interview.

number of cadres purged between 1949 and 1965. By this measure, the Cultural Revolution was the most serious split in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. The enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC held in May was a prelude to the Cultural Revolution, and Mao's schemes forced the Central Committee of the CPC to officially approve his decisions. During the meeting with Mehmet Shehu, Mao praised Deng (present at the meeting) for his outstanding military talent in commanding the Nanjing campaign. This exchange occurred in front of Zhou Enlai, Lin Biao, and Li Fuchun,¹³¹ and demonstrates that Mao still trusted Deng even though he had begun to move against Liu.

From May 4 to 26, Liu presided over the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC in Beijing, attended by 76 members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and related Party leaders. Jiang Qing officially attended the meeting for the first time, together with Zhang Chunqiao, Guan Feng, and Qi Benyu. The meeting thus marked the official start of Jiang's participation in government and political affairs. Mao deliberately arranged for Jiang to assume leadership of the Party. The collective leadership, including the Central Committee of the CPC, failed to realize that his actions had violated Party systems and policies and would have numerous serious political consequences.

Although he was absent from the meeting, Mao remotely controlled the Central Committee of the CPC through Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, and Zhang Chunqiao. Kang relayed to the meeting Mao's speeches regarding revisionism, delivered in Hangzhou at the end of March, as well as his directive on the purging of Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun.¹³² Participants were shocked and confused by the contents of Mao Zedong's speeches, but by continuing to support him they allowed him to continue to dominate the Central Committee of the CPC.

At a meeting held on May 6, Zhang Chunqiao, Secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the CPC, denounced Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, and their allies for revolting against Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution line after the Tenth Plenum of the Tenth Central Committee of the CPC in 1962. Chen Boda proposed that Peng should be persecuted for his current and past mistakes. The actions of Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, and Zhang Chunqiao, serving as Mao's agents, further exacerbated Mao's unconstitutional practices previously set with Jiang, Mao's nephew Mao Yuanxin, and Mao's grandniece Wang Hairong.

In fact, Mao's actions were deliberately planned to undermine the state and party constitutions. The leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC held various

131. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1913.

132. Wang, *Wang Li's Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 591.

different views on critical domestic issues, particularly on class struggle, and despite the respect for Mao and his views, Mao had become politically isolated since 1962, and he could no longer find support for his politics through ordinary means of collective discussion, voting, and decision-making. Thus, Mao had to lead his own campaign to not just undermine but destroy the rules according to the state and party constitutions, in order to launch his Cultural Revolution and achieve his political ideals. Mao expressed outright disdain for rules and his preference for struggles, which allowed him to control the initiative in conducting political struggles. Mao actively promoted regional rebellion against the central authority, and then tried to claim that going against the established trend is a critical principle in Marxism-Leninism.¹³³

During the meeting, the major newspapers published a series of articles that criticized Deng Tuo (former member of the Secretariat of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC,) Wu Han, and Liao Mosha (former director of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the CPC.) In fact, the real intention was to criticize Peng Zhen and other leaders of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC.¹³⁴ On May 8, the editorial office of the *PLA Daily* published the article “Counterattacking the Anti-party and Anti-socialist Reactionary Line,” while Guan Feng published the article “Increase Vigilance and Distinguish Truth from Falsehood” in the *Guangming Daily* under the pseudonym “He Ming.”¹³⁵ On

133. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 13, 138.

134. The opening of the article delivers Mao Zedong's instruction: “After the armed enemies were destroyed, unarmed enemies still remained. These enemies will definitely start a life-and-death struggle with us, and so we should never treat them lightly.” The article considered the anti-CPC and anti-socialist activities of a minority of people like Deng Tuo to be symptomatic of a real problem rather than merely isolated phenomena. Such activities were related to the Lushan Meeting in 1959, and temporary economic difficulties during 1959 to 1962. Deng Tuo and his faction were said to be impatient and to have been encouraged to take action due to China's difficulties. The article also said: “Deng Tuo was a leader of the evil ‘Three-household Village’, established by himself together with Wu Han and Liao Mosha. He was also the leader of the minority faction of anti-CPC and anti-socialist activists. This faction used the *Frontline*, *Beijing Daily*, and *Beijing Evening* as anti-CPC tools, and furiously attacked socialism with their poisonous arrows.” (*PLA Daily*, May 8, 1966; *People's Daily*, May 9, 1966; Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1015.)

135. The article criticized the group represented by Deng Tuo, Liao Mosha and Wu Han as activists opposed to the CPC and socialism. (*Guangming Daily*, May 8, 1966; *People's*

May 9, Lin Jie, Ma Zemin, and Yan Changgui published the article “Deng Tuo’s *Evening Chats at Yanshan* Revolts against the Party and Socialism” in the *People’s Daily*.¹³⁶ On May 10, Yao Wenyuan published the article “Commentary on the Reactionary Nature of *Sanjiacun*, *Evening Chats at Yanshan*, and *Reading Notes of Sanjiacun*” in the *PLA Daily* and the *Wen Hui Daily* and directed criticism at Peng Zhen as the figure behind Deng Tuo, Liao Mosha, and Wu Han.¹³⁷ On May 11, Qi Benyu published the article “Remarks on the Bourgeois Stance of *Frontline* and *Beijing Daily*” targeting Peng Zhen.¹³⁸ On May 16, the *People’s Daily* republished

Daily, May 9, 1966; Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1015.)

136. The article stated: “Since 1961, Deng Tuo has released a series of articles opposing the CPC and socialism in newspapers such as the *Frontline*, *Beijing Daily*, and *Beijing Evening*. He has furiously attacked the CPC and socialism. Deng Tuo’s *Evening Chats at Yanshan* is full of criminal attacks on the CPC and socialism. The article has five criminal faults: first, it viciously attacks our great CPC; second, it opposes the general line of socialist construction, the Great Leap Forward, and the dictatorship of the proletariat; third, it airs the grievances of dismissed rightist opportunists, gives moral weight to their anti-CPC positions, and encourages them to ‘defend Li Sancai, the dismissed Minister of Revenue’ [Li Sancai was an honest and frank Ming Dynasty official who suffered persecution]; fourth, it absurdly suggests that the Party ‘rest’ from its work; fifth, the article uses the pretext of introducing ‘knowledge’ to attack the CPC and socialism.”
137. The article claimed that Deng Tuo acted as the editor in chief of *Frontline*, and held and monopolized the leadership of ideological and cultural work in Beijing. Together with his co-conspirators in the ‘Three-household Village’, he used the *Frontline*, *Beijing Daily* and *Beijing Evening*...as tools to oppose the CPC and socialism. He followed a rightist opportunist road, or the revisionist road, and acted as the tool of the counter-revolutionary class and the rightist opportunists. The article also claimed that “even if the ‘Three-household Village’ grew to a ‘Four-household Village’, regardless of the prominence of its leaders, and no matter who supported or manipulated its actions, the conspirators behind the plot will be identified, criticized, and defeated.” (*Liberation Daily* and *Wenhui Daily*, May 10, 1966; *People’s Daily*, May 11, 1966.)
138. The article also stated: “It is time to unequivocally refute the articles published by the *Frontline*, *Beijing Daily*, and *Beijing Evening*. When class enemies at home and abroad stirred up evil winds, who were the supporters of the anti-CPC and anti-socialism activities of Deng Tuo, Wu Han, and Liao Mosha? When the revolutionary masses opposed the anti-CPC and anti-socialism activities of Deng Tuo, Wu Han, and Liao Mosha, who defended them? When their crimes could no longer be covered up, who instigated fake criticism that ‘attacked minor scapegoats to protect the chief plotters?’” *Red Flag*, issue 7, 1966; republished by the *People’s Daily*, May 16, 1966.

the above articles. On May 14, Lin Jie published the article “Unmask Deng Tuo as a Rebel against the Party and Socialism” and claimed that Deng Tuo, Liao Mosha, Wu Han, and their allies had recently conspired to attack socialism and the Central Committee of the CPC led by Mao.¹³⁹ These politically ambitious writers served as Mao’s hatchet men, and attacked his political rivals by publishing criticisms and stirring up sentiments.¹⁴⁰ Mao hailed his new assistants as a new proletarian force and as proletarian leftists.¹⁴¹

The political struggle became an open season of political terror. On the night of May 17, Deng Tuo committed suicide to protest his vilification and political framing, writing in his suicide note: “Of my 171 works in *Evening Chats at Yanshan* and *Reading Notes of Sanjiacun*, how many are actually problematic? what precisely is the problem? I believe the objective truth will eventually be found....I am willing to suffer torture and make sacrifices to contribute to our Party and revolutionary cause. I revere our Party and Chairman Mao. As I leave you, I wish a long life to our great, correct, and glorious Chinese Communist Party, and to our Chairman Mao.”¹⁴² Back in July 1944, Deng Tuo had presided over the compilation and publication of five volumes of *Mao Zedong Anthology*, and had penned its preface praising Mao’s vital role in Chinese revolutionary history and presenting Mao Zedong Thought as the very essence of Chinese Communist Party Thought which combines Marxism with the Chinese revolution.¹⁴³ He would never have imagined that, 22 years later, he would be part of the first purges personally conducted by

139. *People’s Daily*, May 14, 1966.

140. Qi Benyu and Yao Wenyan became political hatchet men attacking Liu Shaoqi and Tao Zhu, and republished important articles to politically eliminate Liu Shaoqi and Tao Zhu under the instructions of Mao Zedong. See Qi, “Patriotism or National Betrayal? Comments on the Reactionary Movie *A Secret History of the Qing Imperial Palace*,” *Red Flag*, issue 5, March 30, 1967, republished in *People’s Daily*, April 1, 1967; and Yao, “Comments on Tao Zhu’s Two Works,” *People’s Daily*, September 8, 1967. Mao Zedong made many instructions on and modifications to the articles. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 292–294.)

141. “Notice of the Central Committee of the CPC,” *People’s Daily*, May 17, 1967.

142. Yang ed., *Museum of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)*, vol. 2, 320.

143. In the foreword of his compilation, Deng Tuo wrote: “The experience of past revolutionary struggles teaches us that all members of the CPC must be united by Mao Zedong Thought.” He also said: “All officials and party members must seriously learn Mao Zedong Thought, open their minds to it, and take it as a weapon with which to arm themselves...this is an urgent task.”

Mao through a “cultural revolution.”

In an even more shocking event, Tian Jiaying, Mao’s political secretary and Deputy Director of the Policy Research Office of the Central Committee of the CPC, hanged himself at Zhongnanhai, the location of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council, on the morning of May 23, aged 44,¹⁴⁴ in reaction to being blamed for falsifying accounts of Mao’s conversations. In his suicide note, Tian expressed his belief that the Party would exonerate him, but instead the Party denounced his suicide as further evidence of anti-CPC plotting.¹⁴⁵

Deng Tuo and Tian Jiaying were senior party cadres, and as delegates to the Third National People’s Congress were supposed to be protected by Article 37 of the National Constitution.¹⁴⁶ On suffering political persecution during the Cultural

144. From 1948, Tian Jiaying acted as Mao Zedong’s secretary, and from 1949 he successively became Director of the Secretary Office of the Central General Office, Secretary of the Chairman of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee (Mao Zedong,) Vice Director of the General office of the Chairman of the PRC (Mao Zedong,) Vice Director of the Political Research Center of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Vice Director of the Central General Office. Additionally, he was Deputy of the 3rd and 8th National Congresses of the CPC. He oversaw the editing, commenting and publishing of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (volumes 1–4,) an ambitious task, and helped draft the documents of the Central Committee of the CPC.

145. On May 22, 1966, An Ziwen, Director of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, as well as Wang Li and Qi Benyu, Vice Directors of the External Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, announced the following decision of the Central Committee of the CPC addressed to Tian Jiaying: “First, the Central Committee of the CPC believes an unusual relationship exists between you and Yang Shangkun. Yang Shangkun has been identified as an opponent of the CPC and of socialism, so you should engage in self-criticism on this matter; Second, the Central Committee of the CPC believes you to be a rightist, so on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC, you must immediately stop your activities and undertake self-criticism. Additionally, you must surrender all your personal documents, accept that you are barred from Zhongnanhai, and hand the work of the Secretary Office over to Qi Benyu.” That night Tian Jiaying told his wife Dong Bian, “Jiang Qing and Chen Boda have framed me. Look after yourself. I do not believe the people behind this will have a good end!” The next day he committed suicide in Zhongnanhai. He was not rehabilitated until March 1980. (Ye, *Mao Zedong’s Secretaries*.)

146. Article 37 of the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* (1954) exempts deputies of the NPC, outside of the meeting times of the NPC, from arrest or trial except with the authorization of the Standing Committee of the NPC.

Revolution, both elected suicide to protest against feudal autocracy. Their deaths demonstrate the illegitimacy and cruelty of the Cultural Revolution.

The negligence of the Central Committee of the CPC in tolerating Mao's faults and unanimously accepting and approving his wrong theories and decisions during the Cultural Revolution enabled the fabrication of the unjust cases against Luo Ruiqing, Deng Tuo, and Tian Jiaying, setting a model for the later fabrication of cases against Liu Shaoqi, Tao Zhu, and He Long. The national and party constitutions should have protected the victims, but the central leadership allowed the law to be ignored.

How did Mao come to dominate the Central Committee of the CPC? Who were key to this coup? Mao's manuscripts reveal that he personally ordered the Party to obey his directives, with the *Notice on May 16* specifically stating: "The party committees at all levels are required to cease enforcing the *Outline Report on Current Academic discussion* prepared by the Central Cultural Revolution Five-member Group, and the Party is required to obey Comrade Mao Zedong's Directives." On May 16, the *Notice on May 16* was unanimously approved without modifications at the second enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, presided over by Liu Shaoqi. Liu remarked: "The enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC was held to discuss the *Notice*, but it was proposed that no modifications be made. Is this not authoritarian and undemocratic? I had actually planned minor modifications, but Chen Boda and Kang Sheng disagreed and said that nothing could be better than a report revised by Chairman Mao himself."¹⁴⁷ From the outset of the Cultural Revolution, then, Mao changed the old order of "the Party obeying the Central Committee of the CPC" for a new order of "the Party obeying Mao Zedong," rejecting the collective leadership of the Central Committee (specifically the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC.) Mao intimidated the Central Committee of the CPC into officially approving the new rule, and Liu found himself without the support he desired for a response, resulting in Mao dominating the Central Committee of the CPC.

At the meeting, Zhou Enlai remarked that the purge of Peng Zhen and his allies was conducted in the same way as the CPC's policy against the Kuomintang in the past.¹⁴⁸ That is, Mao was employing the same tactics in fighting against the

147. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1010.

148. Zhou Enlai said: "It is important to purge revisionists. Revisionists will definitely appear, but 'purging' can avoid their restoration. This is the policy used by the CPC against the Kuomintang. After 1927, the Kuomintang separated into leftist, centrist and rightist factions, and the centrist faction became the target of a 'purge' by the rightists,

Kuomintang to fight against the CPC itself. Zhou's summary of Mao's policy is excellent, and he further spoke to Party leaders of self-preservation through unconditionally following Mao; any disloyalty against Mao would wipe away all past merits.¹⁴⁹ But it was precisely this attitude perpetrated by Zhou that prompted the entire party to unconditionally obey Mao, enabling Mao to launch and conduct the Cultural Revolution for a decade.

Who would be the chief target in the Cultural Revolution? The *Notice on May 16* expressed that the current struggle was a question of executing or opposing the Cultural Revolution line of Comrade Mao Zedong. Clearly, Peng was purged by Mao for his differing opinions, which Mao denounced as a problem of lines; this also shows that Peng merely opposed Mao's line rather than the Party line. But the *Notice* also published Mao's own words criticizing the presence of the bourgeoisie and Chinese Khrushchevians within the Party, government, PLA, and the cultural sector, "sleeping right next to us."¹⁵⁰ (Sidebar 3.1.) This turned an international rivalry of ideology between the CPC and the CPSU into an intraparty conflict

although that ended in failure. China is now under the dictatorship of the proletariat until the realization of communism. Since the founding of New China, the first purge of counter-revolutionary elements was the Gao (Gang)-Rao (Shushi) event, the second was the Peng (Dehuai)-Huang (Kecheng)-Zhang (Wendian) event, and the third was the 'four families' event. In these instances we must adopt a policy of 'peeling' away undesirable elements to protect the healthy core and thus prevent revisionism from infiltrating our country. As Chairman Mao said, 'They have bronchitis, 50 pills can destroy all the bacteria.' This situation has only two possible resolutions: the first is that we are beaten by them and the second is that we purge them. The first resolution sees them get their way, and the second sees them purged." At this point Lin Biao interrupted and said: "Either they peel us or we peel them, such is the life-and-death struggle throughout the socialist revolution." Zhou Enlai then continued: "You should consider the consequences should we not purge them all. The very future of our country and party would be cast into doubt. If we consider these three purges of counter-revolutionary elements together, we can see that the Peng (Dehuai) and Gao (Gang) events originated from conflicts of interest among individuals. The danger was that had these conflicts been left unresolved they would have grown. This was the danger. Unmasking the 'four families' and wresting away their power represented the victory of the 'peeling' policy and of Mao Zedong Thought." ("Zhou Enlai's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 21, 1966.)

149. Ibid.

150. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 38–45.

Sidebar 3.1 Notice on May 16 (May 16, 1966)

We should carry out the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to unmask academic authorities who have revolted against our Party and against socialism, and who support the bourgeoisie. We should also do this to criticize the bourgeois reactionary ideology prevalent in academic, educational, journalistic, literary, artistic, and publishing circles, and should seize power in these cultural fields. We therefore must criticize, purge or permanently transfer bourgeois representatives who have infiltrated our Party, government, army and cultural circles. Particularly, we should avoid appointing these people as leaders of the Cultural Revolution. That such reactionary elements have already infiltrated the Party and elsewhere is already very dangerous.

The bourgeois representatives who have infiltrated our Party, government, army and cultural circles are counter-revolutionary revisionists. When they judge the time to be right they will seize power and transform the proletarian dictatorship into a bourgeois dictatorship. While we have unmasked some of them, we also mistakenly trusted others or trained them to be our successors. Party committees at all levels should be alert to the Chinese Khrushchev within our Party.

within the CPC. The *Notice* was Mao's declaration of war against Liu Shaoqi.

At the time, party leaders, including Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping, all took the references to 'China's Khrushchev' to mean Peng Zhen and his allies, and had nothing to do with them. The deceptively powerful and lethal aspects of Mao's masterful writing in the *Notice on May 16* had escaped their notice. On May 18, when meeting with the Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping were all convinced that 'China's Khrushchev' had been unmasked with the purge of Peng Zhen and his allies.¹⁵¹ Even as veteran politicians, they fail to detect Mao's conspiracy; even Zhou could not have imagined that it was Liu whom Mao had designated as "China's Khrushchev."¹⁵²

On May 19, the meeting pressed on with criticism of Peng Zhen and Lu Dingyi. Peng conducted self-criticism and stated, "I have never plotted to stage a coup or overthrow the Central Committee of the CPC, and nor have I colluded with foreign countries. Please have the Central Committee of the CPC investigate whether I, Luo Ruiqing and Lu Dingyi, conspired to topple the Party." In response to these

151. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1841.

152. Ibid.

pleas, Lin Biao and Kang Sheng only reprimanded Peng Zhen. Kang rebuked him: "This means that you reject the *Notice on May 16* and oppose the Party, Chairman Mao, and Comrade Lin Biao." Lin added further accusations, saying: "You have upheld revisionism all along." Peng's self-criticism was judged insincere, and so was taken as further evidence of his defiance toward the Central Committee of the CPC.¹⁵³ This followed the same pattern as the persecution of Peng Dehuai after the Lushan Conference of 1959, who was also unjustly denounced for establishing a military faction and colluding with foreign countries.¹⁵⁴ Years later, Mao would use the same tactics in handling the Lin Biao Affair.

On May 23, the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC relieved Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun of their positions as secretaries of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, with the decision submitted to the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC for confirmation. Peng was dismissed from his post as First Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC and Mayor of Beijing, and Lu was removed as Minister of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC. Tao Zhu was appointed Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and Minister of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, and Ye Jianying was named Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and General Secretary of the Central Military Commission of the CPC. All these appointments and dismissals were submitted to the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC for confirmation, and Li Xuefeng was appointed as the First Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC.¹⁵⁵ The decision was announced by Deng Xiaoping and unanimously passed by the participants present. Subsequently, the decision was submitted to the Eleventh

153. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 14–15; Wang, *Wang Li's Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 593.

154. During the 1962 Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres, Liu Shaoqi said, "There are two problems with Peng Dehuai. One, as Chairman Mao said, Peng colluded with Gao Gang and escaped during the purge of the Gao-Rao group. Two, as our comrades have uncovered, Peng colluded with foreign countries. Therefore, while others can be rehabilitated, Peng Dehuai cannot." Mao Zedong interrupted: "Those colluding with other countries can never be rehabilitated, especially Peng Dehuai who wanted to overthrow the government." On August 5, when visiting Wuhan, Mao Zedong said to Tao Zhu, Zhang Pinghua, and Wang Renzhong, "I know Peng Dehuai well. We cannot rehabilitate him. Ever."

155. "Resolutions of the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 23, 1966.

Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC for confirmation. On May 24, the Central Committee of the CPC issued *Explanation Regarding Comrade Lu Dingyi and Comrade Yang Shangkun's Faults*, which listed the faults and offences of these two officials.¹⁵⁶

Mao used the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC held in May to officially launch the Cultural Revolution, with the aim of taking down and guarding against revisionism. This reflects the impact of the appearance of Khrushchev in the Soviet Union. Consequently, class struggle philosophy prevailed in the senior party leadership, and even ordinary differences in opinion came to be viewed in terms of revisionism and line struggle, which resulted in paranoia and attacks on political rivals, and plots to frame members of the Central Committee of the CPC as revisionists. This further fuelled Mao's belief in his own misjudgments, and the Party fell under the same illusion.¹⁵⁷ Mao then

156. "The Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC decided that the Central Committee of the CPC shall establish a case investigation committee to further investigate the anti-party activities of and unusual relationships among four comrades, namely Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, Luo Ruiqing, and Yang Shangkun.

"During this period, Lu Dingyi took whatever chances he could get to furiously oppose Mao Zedong Thought, and alleged that the flexible learning and application of Mao Zedong Thought, considered by his contemporaries as the peak of Marxism and Leninism, was "pragmatism," "philistinism," and "simplification." He slandered Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought in the tone of a bourgeois reactionary. He also opposed Stalin, as well as so-called "dogmatism," and sought to establish his own faction in opposition to the Central Committee of the CPC and Chairman Mao. Regarding the Cultural Revolution, Lu Dingyi's position and opinions were identical to those of Peng Zhen. Lu Dingyi also dictated the Propaganda Department of the CPC, and used this power to attack leftists, protect rightists, and prepare public opinion for the capitalist restoration.

Comrade Yang Shangkun has committed the following major errors: (1) Despite the Central Committee of the CPC repeatedly stressing that the installation of bugs was strictly forbidden, he used bugs to record Chairman Mao's conversations with standing committee members and steal party secrets; (2) He allowed others unauthorized access to numerous confidential documents and records and so leaked core party secrets. (3) He maintained unusual connections with Luo Ruiqing, and actively engaged in anti-CPC activities. (4) He also committed other serious errors." ("Explanation of the Central Committee of the CPC about the Errors of Comrade Lu Dingyi and Comrade Yang Shangkun," May 24, 1966.)

157. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 16, 27.

further suspected Liu Shaoqi of being a political rival and plotted to purge him.

Mao never attended the meeting, remotely controlling and dominating the Central Committee of the CPC. The *Notice on May 16* was passed with Liu presiding over the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, with Zhou and Deng also participating, and they remained oblivious to the fact that they had just approved the instrument that would be used to purge Liu and Deng.¹⁵⁸ Even Mao's trusted subordinate, Zhang Chunqiao, knew nothing of Mao's intentions in advance.¹⁵⁹

The meeting established the struggle pattern whereby everyone purged one another and was purged by others in turn. Zhu De, Member of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC, opposed criticism of Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun, arguing for the preservation of political unity. Earlier in December 1965, Zhu De had argued in a central emergency meeting held in Shanghai that Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought would develop further, and that it was improper to say it had reached a pinnacle since this implied it could develop no further. On May 23, Liu Shaoqi presided over the meeting to criticize Zhu, and Lin Biao mentioned Zhu's opposition to the pinnacle theory at the December 1965 meeting held in Shanghai, denouncing him for harboring political ambition and revolting against Chairman Mao in the name of Marxism.¹⁶⁰ Chen Yi accused

158. On August 5, 1967, an editorial in the *People's Daily* claimed: "Chairman Mao researched and concluded the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in China and the rest of the world, and especially learned the painful historical lessons of the Soviet Union, where the Khrushchev counter-revolutionary revisionist group had restored capitalism, and he launched and led this unprecedented Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution alone and mobilized hundreds of millions of the masses from the bottom to the top to unmask and attack the intra-party bourgeois command headed by China's Khrushchev [meaning Liu Shaoqi]." (Editorial Board of the *People's Daily*, "Bombard the Bourgeois Command," *People's Daily*, August 5, 1967.)

159. On May 19, 1967, during the Enlarged Standing Committee of the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee, Zhang Chunqiao said: "At the time, I did not understand the significance of the segment 'Political figures like Khrushchev...' and simply thought of Peng Zhen. I overlooked Liu Shaoqi." Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 13.

160. On May 23, 1966, Lin Biao criticized Zhu De during the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, saying: "You harbor ambitions and make insufficient self-criticism. After the Luo Ruiqing event last year (1965,) during the Shanghai Meeting he (Zhu De) also said, 'We cannot say Mao Zedong Thought is the peak of Marxism and Leninism. Can the peak continue to rise?' Probably the 'peak' here is not Chairman

Zhu of intending to seize power and become emperor himself, and for eulogizing Khrushchev. Kang Sheng attacked Zhu for seeking to outshine Chairman Mao and being a Party member only in name.¹⁶¹ Zhou Enlai relayed Mao's insult that Zhu was a mere "extra" who goes around talking nonsense. Zhu De defended himself, saying that he merely hoped to preserve the unity of the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC and prevent a split.¹⁶² This event further demonstrates the severe damage done to the democratic centralism of the Party.¹⁶³

Mao became a cult figure at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC held in May and his personal leadership replaced the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC.¹⁶⁴ Lin and Zhou, both members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, played a leading role in making this happen, as did Chen Boda and Kang Sheng, both alternate members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. Mao became increasingly reliant on these allies, all of whom served as leaders of the Cultural Revolution.

On May 18, Lin delivered a speech: "Marx died at the age of 64, Engels died at 75 and Lenin died at 54. Now in his 70s, our Chairman Mao looks very healthy and may become a centenarian. Our great leader Mao Zedong has gained unrivalled revolutionary experience and can even be compared with Marx, Engels, Lenin and

Mao, but yourself or Khrushchev." ("Lin Biao's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 23, 1966.)

161. "Kang Sheng's Speech at the Panel Meeting of the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 24–25, 1966; Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Zhu De*, 907.

162. Zhu De rebutted the criticisms from Lin Biao and others, "As for whether or not I have ambition today, I am 80 years old and need help simply to climb stairs or walk, not to mention doing anything significant. I can hardly manage anything, and certainly cannot act as emperor. But regardless, I care for our group and hope it can hang in there forever."

163. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 21, 31–32.

164. The resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 pointed out that the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, held in May 1966 and the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, held in August of the same year, signaled the full scale launch of the Cultural Revolution. The leftist individual leadership of Mao Zedong replaced the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC and the personality cult of Mao Zedong grew extreme. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literatures since the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 818.)

Stalin. Chairman Mao enjoys a reputation as a great leader. He enjoys prestige in China and elsewhere, and is renowned as a genius based on his utterances, articles and revolutionary practice. When someone negates such genius in violation of Marxism we should respond by revering that genius. In the nineteenth century, Marx and Engels were hailed as great geniuses. In the twentieth century, Lenin and Comrade Mao Zedong have similarly become regarded as geniuses. Every word uttered by Chairman Mao reveals the truth and carries more weight than ten thousand words by someone more ordinary. The Chairman is our great and permanent leader and his directives are our guidelines. The whole Party and country are subject to attack those who oppose him.”¹⁶⁵ Despite this flattery, Mao still became suspicious that Lin was using him as a tool to purge his own political rivals.¹⁶⁶ This reflects Mao’s general mistrust and ostracizing of other Party leaders.

On May 21, Zhou said in a speech: “Mao Zedong Thought represents the pinnacle of Marxism and ushers in a new era in which imperialism and capitalism are doomed and socialism and communism will be victorious. Both our Chairman Mao and Lenin are gifted world leaders.”¹⁶⁷ Besides Lin, Zhou also flattered Mao Zedong as a genius, and followed and supported Mao in defeating his political rivals and prolonging the Cultural Revolution. Zhou thus also committed mistakes during the Cultural Revolution that outweighed his earlier contributions, and was second only to Mao in this regard.

On May 24, Chen Boda delivered a speech titled “Mao Zedong Thought represents the pinnacle of Marxism and is the truth based on the three major parts of Marxism.”¹⁶⁸ On May 25, Kang Sheng noted: “Why is Mao Zedong Thought

165. “Lin Biao’s Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC,” May 18, 1966.

166. Mao Zedong wrote: “People should know their distance. During the Hangzhou Meeting (the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee) held this April I expressed my disagreement with the wording [this refers to the phrase “Mao Zedong Thought”] of my friend [Lin Biao]. But what can I do? He continued to use the phrase during the May Meeting in Beijing and the media treated me as a god. I have no choice but to follow this same road. I guess their intention is to create a new Zhong Kui to beat down devils [Zhong Kui was a character from a folk story who was renowned for catching ghosts]. So I have become the CPC’s ‘Zhong Kui’ in the 1960s.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.)

167. “Zhou Enlai’s Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC,” May 21, 1966.

168. “Chen Boda’s Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC,”

hailed as representing the pinnacle of contemporary Marxism-Leninism? The contemporary era is divided into three periods: (1) The Marxist period, during which capitalism persisted and socialism was not yet established; (2) The Leninist period, during which imperialism went into decline; and (3) The period of Mao Zedong Thought, or the Maoist period, during which Mao Zedong Thought outshone Marxism. Therefore, we can conclude that Mao Zedong Thought outshone both Marxism and Leninism, and became the greatest masterpiece of Marxist and Leninist thought."¹⁶⁹

Mao knew of the contents of these speeches and did not express opposition or remark that such flattery ran contrary to Marxism. Instead, he opportunistically took advantage of this useful flattery. During the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, committee members Lin and Zhou resolutely supported Mao, and their support carried weight since Lin presided over the work of the Central Military Commission of the CPC and Zhou presided over the work of the State Council. Mao swiftly reciprocated, and at the Eleventh Plenum of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC Lin became the sole Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC, and thus rose to second place in the party hierarchy, while Zhou maintained third place. Meanwhile, Kang and Chen were promoted from alternate members to full members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC.

Bizarrely, in his May 18 speech, Lin also spoke on the subject of counter-revolutionary coups: "Our unmasking and purging of Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun is a historic event that has foiled a counter-revolutionary coup against the Party and government. We have successfully carried out a revolution to seize power, and the proletariat and laboring classes have become the masters of the country. In recent months, Chairman Mao has taken various actions to foil counter-revolutionary coups. After the Luo Ruiqing Case, Chairman Mao focused on this area. After Peng Zhen was purged, Chairman Mao communicated with other Party leaders and deployed troops to foil counter-revolutionary coups and prevent their occupation of key sectors, such as transmitter receivers and radio stations. We made military and public security system deployments and Chairman Mao suffered some sleepless nights. It is imperative for us to foil coups." Lin went on to list dozens of examples of domestic and international coups.¹⁷⁰

May 24, 1966.

169. "Kang Sheng's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 25, 1966.

170. Lin Biao said: "Coups have been launched all over the world. There are two ways to change political power. The first possibility is revolution, in which the people seize

Why did Lin deliver a speech on this topic? It was rare for high-ranking Party leaders to speak of coups, and for such a speech to occur reflected Mao's intense anxiety regarding the matter. As early as 1962, Mao had responded to the possibility of counter-revolutionary restoration by dispatching military officers to various key sectors.¹⁷¹ During their previous time as party leaders, Lin Biao and Chen Yun seldom attended the meetings of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and were not engaged in high-level political struggle within the Party. However, around the time Lin delivered this speech, he shifted his political attitude

power. Examples include Chen Sheng and Wu Guang, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and our CPC. The second possibility is a counter-revolutionary coup. Most counter-revolutionary coups are palace coups. Some result from collusion between different classes; some result from domestic force, or perhaps an armed invasion from overseas; some are opportunistic, perhaps precipitated by natural disasters. In recent years, and especially last year (1965,) Chairman Mao has become concerned with the problem of revisionism and warned that revisionists may be exposed both inside and outside the CPC, on all frontlines, and at all levels. In recent months, Chairman Mao has turned his attention to the prevention of counter-revolutionary coups, and has undertaken numerous measures in this regard. Over the past decade, especially before the founding of New China, we only considered the seizure of power. After the victory of the revolution, many comrades failed to consider the problem of political power itself. Instead they focused on construction, education, and the confrontation with Chiang Kai-shek and the U.S. They never considered the possibility that we might lose the power we had seized, and the dictatorship of the proletariat might become a bourgeois dictatorship. Certainly, I did not consider these issues. We were all focused on war. However, numerous examples highlight the need to prevent counter-revolutionary coups, whether internal or otherwise. These days there are many abnormal phenomena to be watched, and there exists a real risk of a counter-revolutionary coup intended to murder, seize power, restore capitalism, and overthrow socialism. You (addressing the central leaders attending the meeting) may see some signs of what is occurring through the struggles against Luo Ruiqing, Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi and his wife (Yan Weibing,) and Yang Shangkun. Representatives of the bourgeois have entered our party organizations and have seized power in an attempt to control the mechanisms of the state, namely political power, military power, and ideological power. These people have colluded to overthrow the Party and create trouble. They hide in the cultural and military fields, plotting to obtain the support of public opinion or the army, which are necessary for a counter-revolutionary coup." ("Lin Biao's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 18, 1966.)

171. Wang, *Wang Li's Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 592.

from non-intervention to active intervention, and went on to provide behind-the-scenes support to Mao and Jiang in issuing the *February Minutes*.

On May 21, Zhou expressed his complete agreement with Lin's speech and again stressed the danger of a coup.¹⁷² On May 24, Chen Boda delivered a speech that not only affirmed Lin's speech at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC but eulogized it as the most important speech in recent years. He also remarked that Mao had made a wise decision in purging Peng, Luo, Lu, and Yang.¹⁷³ On June 1, the *People's Daily* published an editorial, "Purging Evil People of all Kinds," and relayed Lin's views on the regime.¹⁷⁴ Although

172. Zhou Enlai said: "The first concern currently is to prevent a revisionist seizure of power. Peng (Zhen,) Luo (Ruiqing,) Lu (Dingyi,) and Yang (Shangkun) have tried to seize our positions one by one, from culture, to the army, and the CPC. The second concern is to prevent a revisionist political coup, and the third concern is to prevent a revisionist military coup. As for the risk of the army launching a coup, I agree with the speech of Comrade Lin Biao that the central committee is a higher priority than the local committees, the domestic situation is a higher priority than the overseas situation, internal party matters are a higher priority than matters outside the CPC, and the upper levels are a higher priority than the lower levels. The priority is the high levels within the CPC. The Chairman said that revisionism may also appear in socialism, and that two possibilities exist. The appearance of revisionism thus is inevitable. The revisionist coup involves two bases: culture and the army. When they have seized power in these two fields, they will take action. But the power of the CPC is most important and Peng Zheng is actually a 'warlord' inside the CPC. To prevent revisionists from stealing the power of our party, we should focus on the domestic situation at high levels inside the central committee of the CPC. Regarding the history mentioned by Comrade Lin Biao, we should remember that coups are common and should also believe that we always have our party, state leaders and army to beat down any counter-revolutionists should a coup be mounted in Beijing." ("Zhou Enlai's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 21, 1966.)

173. Chen Boda claimed: "Comrade Lin Biao's speech is the most important speech in recent years. Political power lies at the core of all class struggles. The struggle against the four families (Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun) is important to prevent a counter-revolutionary restoration and coup. The four families are landholders and bourgeois engaged in counter-revolutionary restoration." ("Chen Boda's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 24, 1966.)

174. The editorial claimed: "The key to the revolution is the political power that comprises the core of all fields, including ideology, religion, arts, law and political power. If you grasp political power, you have everything. If you lose political power, you lose

Lin's speech expressed his thoughts and he personally approved its circulation, Mao nevertheless wrote to Jiang, "I feel uneasy about Lin Biao's speech."¹⁷⁵ This foreshadowed the subsequent political struggle between Mao and Lin. Mao's guideline centered on class struggle eventually prompted Lin (through his son Lin Ligu) to plot a coup. With Mao's approval, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the *Notification of the Circulation of Comrade Lin Biao's Speech* on September 22, praising the speech as an important Marxist-Leninist document.¹⁷⁶

As the saying goes, it is lonely and dangerous at the top. Both Mao and Lin

everything. The Khrushchev revisionist group seized the powers of the communist party, the army, and the government in the Soviet Union." (*People's Daily*, June 1, 1966.)

175. Mao Zedong wrote: "The Central Committee of the CPC urged the publication of the speech by my friend (Lin Biao) and I also support publication because his speech on coups was a good one. Until Lin Biao raised this issue none dared to talk about it. However, some of the wordings he used make me feel uncomfortable." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.)

176. The notice stated: "Comrade Lin Biao's speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC on May 18, 1966 is an extremely important Marxist and Leninist document. Comrade Lin Biao has provided systematic and precious illustrations of how to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent a counter-revolutionary coup, and has done so using the theory of Comrade Mao Zedong on class and class struggle during the socialist period in accordance with the serious reality of struggle between different roads within the party and historic lessons regarding international proletarian dictatorship, especially the lesson of the revisionist group inspired by the Soviet Union's Khrushchev, which tried to seize control of the party, government and army. Comrade Lin Biao pointed out that seized political power might be lost, and said that no matter how complicated things become, the priority should always be maintaining political power and adhering to the fundamentals of Marxist thought. Comrade Lin Biao held the flag of Mao Zedong Thought highest. His speech contained comprehensive, correct and scientific evaluations of Mao Zedong Thought. Comrade Lin Biao said, 'Chairman Mao is the supreme leader of our party and his thinking is forever true. Anyone who is opposed to Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought will be unanimously condemned by the Party and the people.' Comrade Lin Biao's speech is the model of the flexible learning and application of Mao Zedong Thought, and an important document guiding the Proletariat Great Cultural Revolution. The army and Party should discuss Mao Zedong thought in depth and apply it in the Cultural Revolution and all other actions." (*Notice of the Central Committee of the CPC on the Circulation of Lin Biao's Speech*, September 20, 1966.)

feared a coup during the high-level struggle within the Party, and Mao issued a directive on strengthening the security in the capital. During the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, the Central Committee of the CPC made a decision on work to strengthen the defense of the capital.¹⁷⁷ On May 26, the decision to report to Deng Xiaoping for instructions on the deployment of the Beijing Garrison should an emergency arise during Zhou's absence was made at the first meeting of the Capital Working Group. The Capital Working Group also made three further decisions: One, to restructure the Beijing Garrison by making Fu Chongbi commander and Huang Zuozhen political commissar, and by bolstering the garrison's forces with two main divisions of the field army; Two, to restructure the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC by relieving Peng Zhen of his concurrent posts as First Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC and Mayor, appointing Li Xuefeng (former first secretary of the North China Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC) to the post of First Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, and appointing Wu De (former First Secretary of the Jilin Provincial Committee of the CPC) to the concurrent posts of Second Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, acting mayor, and first political commissar of the Beijing Garrison. The list of new members of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC was released on June 4; Three, to restructure the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau.¹⁷⁸ The above decisions demonstrate that even though Mao staged the Cultural Revolution and waged class struggle, thus creating tension within the Party, he also felt unsafe and maintained high vigilance.

On May 26, Zhou Enlai presided over the last enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC during the Cultural Revolution. Liu Shaoqi acknowledged that he had failed to understand the Cultural Revolution and treat it with sufficient seriousness, and criticized his own pessimistic view of the economic difficulties

177. The Central Committee of the CPC was determined to strengthen security work in the capital, and established a capital working group headed by Ye Jianying (Vice Chairman & Secretary General of the CPC Military Commission) in support of Yang Chengwu (Deputy General Chief-of-Staff of the PLA) and Xie Fuzhi (Ministry of the Public Security) to assume responsibility for the security of the capital and report directly to the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo. On the day Lin Biao made the speech (May 18,) Mao Zedong approved the above preparatory measures. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 31–33.)

178. Zhu et al. eds., *Wu De's Dictations: The Unusual Ten Years — My Experiences in Beijing*, 4–5.

faced during 1962, and of the problems caused by capitalist roaders during discussions of the 23-Article Document in 1964. Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and Deng Xiaoping made self-criticisms of their past failure to keep pace with Mao Zedong Thought and Mao Zedong's work.¹⁷⁹ On May 25, Deng undertook self-criticism at the request of Mao, denouncing the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC as an independent kingdom, and criticized his own failure to understand the Cultural Revolution and treat it with sufficient seriousness.¹⁸⁰ These events demonstrate that the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC approved of and supported the actions of Mao in staging the Cultural Revolution. However, different members of the collective leadership had different aims. Liu supported Mao because he hoped to root out the bureaucracy of senior cadres who were divorced from the masses. Mao in contrast viewed senior cadres as capitalist roaders who needed to be purged, and Liu became the main target of this purging.¹⁸¹ The other members of the collective leadership also differed from Mao in their approach to the Cultural Revolution. Mao was a typical radical and rebel whereas others were more gradualist and conservative. Since Mao was dissatisfied with their self-criticism, he caused the split at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in the August of that year.

On May 28, the Central Committee of the CPC announced the establishment of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, with the leading members including Chen Boda, Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan,¹⁸² all

179. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1012–1013.

180. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1915.

181. Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the Cultural Revolution*, 328.

182. The members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group were: Group Leader, Chen Boda; Consultant, Kang Sheng; First Deputy Head, Jiang Qing; Deputy Heads, Wang Renzhong (Second Secretary of the Central Middle South Bureau and First Secretary of the Hubei Provincial Committee of the CPC,) Liu Zhijian (Vice Director of the General Political Department) and Zhang Chunqiao; ordinary members, Xie Tangzhong (Director of the Cultural Section of the General Political Department,) Yin Da (Vice President of the Historic Institute, CAS,) Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu, Mu Xin (Editor in Chief of the *Guangming Daily*, and Vice Editor in Chief of the *Red Flag*), and Yao Wenyuan. A further four members later joined the team, including Guo Yingqiu (Secretary of Cultural Education of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, and Representative of the Central Northeast Bureau,) Zheng Jiqiao (Representative of the Central Northeast Bureau,) Yang Zhilin (Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Northwest Bureau, and Representative of the Central Committee of the CPC,) and

of whom were supporters of Mao's theory of the Cultural Revolution and were promoted to membership of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. The Party leaders failed to alert themselves to Mao conferring considerable power to the Central Cultural Revolution Group, which comprised his favorite writers,¹⁸³ and the group quickly substituted or supplemented the functions of the Central Politburo Standing Committee, the Central Politburo Standing Committee, and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC.¹⁸⁴ Mao set a particularly dangerous precedent when he appointed Jiang as Deputy Leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, a

Liu Wenzhen (Representative of the Central Southwest Bureau.) Meanwhile, the representatives of the Central South Bureau and North China Bureau were Wang Renzhong and Zhang Chunqiao, respectively. (Lin ed., *Spring and Autumn Annals of the People's Republic of China*, 691.) In mid-July the Central Cultural Revolution Group Office was established, headed by Mu Xin, Qi Benyu, and Cao Yi'ou (Kang Sheng's wife.) On August 2, the Central Committee of the CPC issued a notice. Tao Zhu then acted as consultant to the Central Cultural Revolution Group until he became the target of political attack on January 4, 1967. (Yin, "Establishment of Mao Zedong and the Central Cultural Revolution Group.")

183. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literatures since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 812.
184. According to public provisions, the Central Cultural Revolution Group was led by the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, but still responded directly to the personal instructions of Mao Zedong, unsupervised by other members of the Standing Committee, including Zhou Enlai. Zhou Enlai was later authorized to participate in and chair the "Central Cultural Revolution Briefing Meeting." This institution played the roles of the Standing Committee, Political Bureau and Secretariat until the 9th National Congress of the CPC. As late as March 15, 1969, Mao Zedong continued to convene a "Central Cultural Revolution Brief Meeting." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1541.) Hu believes that this group was actually a special institution beyond the control of the Central Politburo of the CPC, and was a command center during the Cultural Revolution. (Hu, *Seven Decades of the Communist Party of China*, 460.) Meisner believes that the newly established "Cultural Revolution Group" was a vehicle through which Mao Zedong and his followers controlled the main publicity authorities in Beijing and throughout China, which in many ways allowed them to wield an equivalent level of authority to the Central Committee of the CPC and the Central Politburo of the CPC during the Cultural Revolution. (Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, 293.)

post that ranked her above Wang Renzhong, who was an Alternate Member of the Central Committee of the CPC.¹⁸⁵ This clearly violated the Constitution of the Party passed at the Eighth Congress of the CPC, and also reflects that he used the Central Cultural Revolution Group to displace the power of the Central Committee of the CPC.

The *Notice on May 16* was Mao's political guideline in conducting the Cultural Revolution. It openly espoused the theory that the proletariat exercises dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, as well as over the government, including various cultural fields. Another aspect of this theory was the existence of a relationship between proletarian despotism and proletarian dictatorship. In fact, Mao was effectively advocating feudalism in the name of following the proletarian guideline. Zhang Chunqiao, who participated in drafting the *Notice on May 16*, would later further develop Mao's theory into the comprehensive dictatorship theory.¹⁸⁶

Mao's economic guideline for the Cultural Revolution was the May 7 Directive. In this he proposed the establishment of revolutionary labor schools (also known as Mao Zedong Thought schools and communist labor schools) for workers, peasants, intellectuals and soldiers.¹⁸⁷ Such schools were based on the vision of a society characterized by a small peasant economy, utopian socialism, and military communism.¹⁸⁸

The *Notice on May 16* also revealed Mao's tactics in conducting the Cultural Revolution, which is Mao's theory of destroying "Olds" and establishing "News,"¹⁸⁹ which he had formulated as early as 1949. Back then, at the Seventh Session of the Second Plenary Session of the CPC, Mao had proposed to destroy "Olds" and establish "News,"¹⁹⁰ with emphasis on the establishment aspect, and the destruction aspect being a means to establishment. Now in 1966, however, Mao's theory only

185. Yan and Wang, *Reflections on History*, 279.

186. Zhang, "Discussion on Absolute Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie." *Red Flag*, issue 4, 1975.

187. "The Whole Country Shall Become a Big School of Mao Zedong Thought — Celebrating the 39th Anniversary of the Founding of the PLA," *People's Daily*, August 1, 1966. This editorial was reviewed and approved by Mao Zedong.

188. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 3–4.

189. As written in the *Notice of May 16*, Chairman Mao constantly said: "Without destruction there can be no construction. Destruction is criticism and revolution; destruction means argumentation, which itself implies construction; destruction leads to construction."

190. In 1949, Mao Zedong said, "We are not only good at destroying the old world, but also at constructing a new world." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 4, 1439).

focused on the destruction aspect, assuming that destruction of “Olds” would be followed naturally by establishment of “News.” In fact, Chen Boda, who was in charge of drafting the *Notice on May 16*, further developed Mao’s theory into the theory of destroying the “four olds,” namely the Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits and Old Ideas, through which the exploiting class oppressed the masses.¹⁹¹ All “Olds” belonged to the exploiting class, and the entirety of thousands of years of traditional Chinese culture and history must be broken off with.

The Big-character Poster at Peking University and “Letter to Jiang Qing”

The approval of the *Notice on May 16* by the Central Committee of the CPC was a coup engineered by Mao Zedong to fully launch the Cultural Revolution by introducing it to the top echelons of the Party. The launch of the Cultural Revolution would have taken longer to complete had it continued along the previous path of gradual transmission, implementation and enforcement via individual layers. Being impatient, Mao Zedong sought a new method that would allow him to launch the Cultural Revolution throughout the whole of society, and sought appropriate major measures and areas where political breakthroughs were necessary.

On June 1, 1966, the *People’s Daily* published the editorial, “Sweep Away all Monsters and Demons.” This editorial, including the title, was dictated and modified by Chen Boda, and was not reported to the Central Committee of the

191. The *People’s Daily* published an editorial by Chen Boda titled “Sweeping away All ‘Monsters and Demons,’” in which he wrote: “Proletarian Cultural Revolution involves breaking with all old thoughts, cultures, customs, and habits that poison the people and have been created by the exploiting classes over thousands of years, and creating and forming new proletarian thoughts, cultures, customs, and habits among the masses. This undertaking is unprecedented, and involves transforming the social traditions that are part of human history. We must adopt a proletarian perspective to criticize all feudalist and bourgeois legacies, customs, and habits.” (Chen, “Sweeping away All ‘Monsters and Demons,’” *People’s Daily*, June 1, 1966). Chen also drafted a speech for Lin Biao: “We should destroy all the old thoughts, cultures, customs and habits of the exploiting class, and should reform all superstructures unsuited for the economic foundation of socialism. We should drive out all pests and remove all obstacles! We should establish the authority of the proletariat and create new thoughts, cultures, customs, and habits on a proletarian foundation.” (“Lin Biao’s Speech at the Mass Meeting to Celebrate the Proletariat Great Cultural Revolution,” August 18, 1966.)

CPC before publication.¹⁹² On May 29, 1966, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping had convened a conference involving the relevant departments of the Central Committee of the CPC, which resolved that Chen Boda, leader of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee, should lead a working group to be dispatched to the *People's Daily* and there learn about the newspaper's layout and guide the news published by Xinhua News Agency and the Central People's Broadcasting Station. The next day, Liu, Zhou, and Deng jointly reported this to Mao, and the same evening Mao indicated his support.¹⁹³ Chen Boda thus acted as Mao Zedong's spokesman, and his editorial became the political mobilization order with which Mao publicly launched the Cultural Revolution and actively attacked his opponents.¹⁹⁴ The phrase "monsters and demons" comes from the

192. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1017.

193. Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi's 20 Years since the Founding of New China*, 351–352.

194. The editorial began by claiming: "The climax of the Proletarian Great Cultural Revolution is emerging in socialist China, home to one quarter of the world's people. In just a few short months, directed by the Central Committee of the CPC and Chairman Mao, hundreds of millions of workers, farmers and soldiers and other masses, together with revolutionary officials and intellectuals, have taken Mao Zedong Thought as a weapon to unmask and purge numerous 'monsters and demons' that dominate important ideological and cultural positions within our Party. Acting swiftly and furiously, they have broken the spiritual chains long imposed on them by the exploiting class, and have beaten down numerous bourgeois experts, scholars, authorities and masters. The defeated bourgeois representatives, scholars and authorities are dreaming of the restoration of capitalism. Their political rule was overthrown, but they still attempted to maintain their academic 'authority' and manipulate it to generate support for restoration and influence the masses who support our Party, including both the youth and future generations. The Proletariat Cultural Revolution involves thoroughly destroying all old thoughts, cultures, customs and habits that poison the people and have been created by the exploiting classes over thousands of years, and creating proletarian new thoughts, cultures, customs and habits among the masses. This is an unprecedented undertaking that involves a transformation of the social traditions in human history. For all feudalist and bourgeois legacies, customs and habits, we must thoroughly criticize the proletarian view of the world." The editorial concluded: "The launch and victory of the Proletariat Great Cultural Revolution, which is unprecedented in human history, marks the end for the remaining capitalist forces in China, and the end for all reactionaries, including both imperialists and contemporary revisionists. The end of your world is coming. The victory of this Cultural Revolution will further consolidate the proletarian dictatorship in China and ensure a thorough

Preface to Li He's Poems, written by the Tang poet Du Mu, and it alludes to all sorts of evil people. It had previously been used by Mao in March 1955, when he said: "All wrong thoughts, all poisonous weeds, and all types of monsters and demons shall be criticized and we must not let them run wild."¹⁹⁵ On May 9, 1963, Mao associated the phrase "all monsters and demons" with landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, and other "bad elements," thus officially making it a political term.¹⁹⁶ The *People's Daily* editorial of June 1 gave an extended list of what was meant by this new political term, including the bourgeois "experts," "scholars," "authorities," and "creators of Chinese traditional life," and the large and small reactionary lines opposed to the Party and socialism centered in the "Three-family Village." Specifically, "sweeping away all monsters and demons" came to mean "overthrowing everything" and was referenced in the political mobilization order Mao issued personally on January 1, 1967 that formally announced the slogan, "Carry out comprehensive class struggle across the country." This slogan in turn became the source of the call for "full-scale civil strife."

Once the directive to "sweep away all monsters and demons" had been given, there arose the question of how this should be achieved. Based on the "Breaking and Building Theory" of Mao Zedong, Chen Boda proposed the theory of "Abandoning the Four Olds" (namely, Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits and Old Ideas.) This initiated an era during which there was "no rule of law and justice" and "culture was revolutionized."

However, why did Mao Zedong feel China needed the Cultural Revolution? The June 1 editorial pointed out that the proletarian revolution was a revolution that ended all the old exploitative systems, and thus eliminated the illusion that the exploiting classes would quietly allow the proletariat to take away their privileges and would not want to restore their rule. The exploitative class remained alive and intended to retain its old privileges. Therefore, just as Lenin said, they would undoubtedly make redoubled attempts to restore their lost privilege. The Khrushchev revisionist group's usurping of the party, army and government in the Soviet Union thus was a serious lesson for the proletariat all over the world.¹⁹⁷ This editorial showed that from the very beginning of the Cultural Revolution, those

socialist revolution on all battlefronts and the smooth transition from socialism to the greatness of communism!" (*People's Daily*, June 1, 1966.)

195. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5, 417.

196. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 10, 293.

197. *People's Daily*, June 1, 1966.

who directed the movement engaged in “self-evaluation” and “self-flattery.”¹⁹⁸

That evening, Mao ordered the nationwide distribution of the big-character poster *What Did Song Shuo, Lu Ping, and Peng Peiyun Really Do in the Great Cultural Revolution?* This poster had been written by seven people including Nie Yuanzi (then Party Secretary of Peking University’s Department of Philosophy,) but was initially developed by Kang Sheng.¹⁹⁹ The full text of the poster was published the next day,²⁰⁰ and on May 17 Kang sent his wife, Cao Yi’ou, to Peking University, to instigate Nie and others to write further big-character posters to attract the attention of their superiors. On May 25, Nie’s poster was suddenly displayed on campus.²⁰¹ That night, after receiving news of the poster, Zhou Enlai sent a group of his supporters to Peking University to observe the situation there. Zhou’s party harshly criticized the conduct of Nie and others, saying that it did not accord with the provision of the Central Committee and violated party discipline. Meanwhile, Kang secretly sent the text of Nie’s big-character poster to Mao, who was then in Hangzhou.²⁰² Without conducting any investigation in person, Mao denounced the Party Committee of Peking University as “a reactionary fortress.”²⁰³ He intended

198. The editorial claimed: “Currently, the scale and influence of China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is unprecedented in human history. The big force, powerful influence and endless wisdom of the masses during this movement far exceed the imagination of the bourgeois officials. History proves that once Mao Zedong Thought influences the masses it will become a mighty spiritual A-bomb. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is driving the advance of the socialist undertaking of the Chinese people and will definitely have an immeasurable and far-reaching influence on the present and future world.” (*People’s Daily*, June 1, 1966.)

199. Song Shuo was Vice Director of University Department of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC; Lu Ping was President of Peking University and Secretary of the Committee of the CPC; Peng Peiyun was Vice Secretary of the Peking University Committee of the CPC. Shortly thereafter all three were dismissed.

200. Nie et al., *What are Song Shuo, Lu Ping and Peng Peiyun really doing in the Great Cultural Revolution?* The poster was reprinted in the *People’s Daily*, June 2, 1966.

201. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1016.

202. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1662–1663.

203. Mao Zedong issued the following instruction on June 1, 1966: “Comrade Kang Sheng and Comrade Boda: This article may be broadcast by Xinhua News Agency and published in the media throughout the country. I think it is necessary. From today, the reactionary fortress in Peking University should be broken. Please implement according to the conditions.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of*

to strike first in the education sector, first sending Peking University into disorder and then letting the whole country follow.

In fact, before Nie and others posted the big-character poster, Zhou Enlai explicitly instructed Lu Ping: "International students from dozens of countries study at Peking University, so we must be careful in carrying out the movement." Having received the news, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai sent their agents to Peking University to observe the situation there the evening after the big-character poster was posted.²⁰⁴ Li Xuefeng went to Peking University and gave a speech, saying: "The Party has its discipline and the state has its laws, so we should observe this discipline and carry out policies that differentiate between insiders and outsiders. Big-character and small-character posters should be separated, as should posters targeting party insiders and outsiders." The next day, Zhou Enlai sent Zhang Yan to Peking University to emphasize that the principle of applying policies differently to insiders and outsiders should be observed in displaying big-character posters. Meanwhile, Cao Yi'ou sent someone to seize the manuscript of the big-character poster prior to publication, an intervention that Kang Sheng secretly reported to Mao Zedong. Kang Sheng also notified Zhou Enlai of the poster by telephone, but did so only just before it was published.²⁰⁵ The big-character poster incident shows that Mao Zedong made personal and arbitrary decisions regarding major matters without considering the opinions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and its Standing Committee.

Mao Zedong became determined to publicly broadcast the big-character poster written by Nie and others from Peking University after realizing that "Socialist Democracy" was the best method of carrying out the Cultural Revolution. Specifically, he sought to use the "Four Major Ways": "speaking out freely, airing one's views fully, writing big-character posters, and holding great debates," directly breaking from and even dismantling Party organizations and mobilizing the masses via the newspapers and periodicals controlled by the Central Committee. On the surface, the "Four Major Ways" aimed to mobilize the masses, promote democracy and expose enemies. In fact, they became a weapon for the leadership to make personal attacks, destroy the legal system, violate human rights, and torture one another, and thus had enormous negative effects. However, Mao believed that the "Four Major Ways" were an innovative means of directing the masses to carry out the Cultural Revolution. He thus firmly snatched the Central Committee's monopoly powers over the formation of public opinion and transformed them

China, vol. 12, 62–63.)

204. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1016.

205. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 24–25.

into his personal powers.

The displaying of the big-character poster by Nie and others that evening caused huge reverberations at Peking University. Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping convened a meeting, and ordered Zhang Chengxian, then Secretary of the Hebei Provincial Secretariat of the CPC, to lead the working group of the North China Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC to take up stations in Peking University and direct the Cultural Revolution.²⁰⁶ The Working Group thus took over control of the university from the Party Committee, and attempted to curb the rising student movement.

On June 2, in accordance with Mao's instructions, the *People's Daily* published a commentary written by Wang Li, Guan Feng, and Cao Yi'ou, titled "Celebrating the Big-character Poster of Peking University." The article read: "Whoever opposes Chairman Mao, opposes Mao Zedong Thought, or opposes the instructions of Chairman Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC, actually represents the interests of the overthrown exploiting class. This holds true regardless of the flag they claim to act under, or their seniority. People all over the country thus must rise up against them, overthrow them, and eliminate their reactionary gangs, illegal organizations, and illegal disciplines. The so-called 'Three-family Village' (referring to Deng Tuo, Wu Han, and Liao Moshu) and the 'Four-family Village' are nothing but paper tigers, and so their 'general' (referring to Peng Zhen) will not be preserved, and nor will their "chariots and horses" (referring to Song Shuo, Lu Ping, and Peng Peiyun.)"²⁰⁷ The article further proposed that overthrowing "reactionary gangs, illegal organizations, and illegal disciplines" is to overthrow those in charge of the Party and government, overthrow the party organization and discipline, and defy all party laws and regulations.

Mao praised the big-character poster as the "first big-character poster of Marxism-Leninism to be displayed across the country," and the "1960s equivalent of the Paris Commune Proclamation" that exceeded the original in significance.²⁰⁸ In fact, the big-character poster did not discuss the principles of Marxism-Leninism or even mention Marx or Lenin, but merely criticized three leaders by name. It was devoid of any clear "Marxism-Leninism" and instead was simply rebellious, denouncing the Party Committee of Peking University and the Beijing Municipal

206. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1016–1018.

207. "Celebrating the Big-character Poster of Peking University," *People's Daily*, February 2, 1966.

208. Mao Zedong made his comments in a speech before the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC on July 21, 1966. (Xu, *Theories and Practices of Mao Zedong in His Later Years (1956–1976)*, 378.)

Party Committee, saying “What kinds of people are you and what conspiracy are you plotting? Surely the answer is clear? You are ‘sticking to your posts’ in a last-ditch struggle to destroy the Cultural Revolution.” This was possibly Mao’s own perspective. His intention was to send a message to the people, using the big-character posters, that it was acceptable to attack local party leaders.²⁰⁹ On August 5, Mao reviewed “Celebrating the Big-character Poster of Peking University” with the following comment: “Wrong leadership harming the revolution shall not be accepted unconditionally, and shall be firmly resisted.”²¹⁰

By now Mao not only wielded supreme political power, but also supreme and exclusive ideological power, and so he alone judged whether something belonged to Marxism-Leninism, whether it was revisionist, or whether it represented correct leadership. His high appraisal of the big-character poster of Peking University later came to be seen as a joke for many years.²¹¹ Ten years later, Mao would reverse his attitude and denounce Nie as an anarchist.²¹² From a theoretical perspective, Mao saw Marxism-Leninism and anarchism as interchangeable, which revealed his typical theoretical opportunism. From a political perspective, a mere word from Mao could send Nie or any person to either “heaven” or “hell.”²¹³ This gave him enormous scope to indulge in the political opportunism he favored. Throughout the Cultural Revolution, Mao’s opportunism was clearly displayed as at different times he contradicted himself as expedient according to the circumstances of political struggle.

The event on June 1 is considered the official beginning of the Cultural

209. Wang, *Frustrations of a Transcendent Leader*, 53.

210. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, p 93.

211. In 1965, Mao Zedong wrote, “What is Marxism on earth? At that time the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC (meaning the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC who had made leftist dogmatist errors during the period from early 1931 to late 1934) knew little or nothing, and so they continued these errors for years.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 11, 499.)

212. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 13, 488–489.

213. In March 1973, Nie Yuanzi was dismissed from the Party in the name of the May 16 counter-revolutionist movement and forced to work under supervision; in April 1978, he was arrested, and in 1983 he was jailed for 17 years on charges of counter-revolutionary activities. Tu Guangqun: “Nie Yuanzi-from Rebellion to Purgatory,” *Tastes of Life*, Beijing: China Workers Publishing House.

Revolution.²¹⁴ Mao said: “Once broadcast (publicly,) this big-character poster caused a nation-wide stir.”²¹⁵ Nie later described events as follows: “On that day, a blast occurred in Peking University, in Beijing, and across the country! A great proletarian cultural revolution reached its climax.”²¹⁶ The publication of the big-character poster caused an immediate and strong response across the country. Chaos instantly engulfed every university, college, junior college and technical secondary school in Beijing and paralyzed their party organizations. After Peking University denounced Lu Ping and Peng Peiyun, Nanjing University denounced its president Kuang Yaming, Wuhan University denounced its president Li Da, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music denounced its president He Lüting, and Tsinghua University not only denounced its president Jiang Nanxiang but also suspended him from duties on June 10 pending the results of an investigation into his conduct. This response exceeded the expectations Mao, and took Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping by surprise.²¹⁷ However, they had different ideas about how best to deal with the explosive student movements and so responded differently. These different ideas became the roots of fundamental political divisions. The central collective leadership (that is, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee) formed since the 8th National Congress of the CPC in 1965 thus disintegrated.

Liu’s party considered maintaining social stability as fundamental to the interest of the CPC. Mao, on the other hand, was a revolutionary leader with a naturally rebellious spirit. Mao and Liu parted in opposite directions at the start of the Cultural Revolution, respectively leading the struggle between the rebels and conservatives both within the Party (where the rebels were represented by the “Cultural Revolution Group”) and within society (where the rebels were

214. Wang, *Frustrations of a Transcendent Leader*, 53.

215. On October 25, 1966, Mao Zedong recalled, “I never expected that things would change so swiftly. Simply broadcasting a big-character poster created a nation-wide stir.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 413.)

216. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 27.

217. Jin Chongji reflected the views of many scholars: “Just like the *Wenhui Daily* incident with Yao Wenyan’s article, the Central Committee members, including Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping were completely unprepared for the public broadcasting of the big-character posters by Nie Yuanzi and others. Chen Yi asked Zhou Enlai, ‘Why didn’t you say anything about a big thing like this?’, to which Zhou Enlai replied, ‘I had no advance warning either, and learned of it only when Kang Sheng told me just before publication.’ (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1663.)

represented by the colleges and universities.) The political struggle and related social movement suddenly came together, exploding into the launch of the Cultural Revolution.

Mao's ruling philosophy was that of struggle, and the launch of the Cultural Revolution fully expressed this. On June 2, the *People's Daily* published an editorial, "A Revolution Touching the People's Soul — further developing Mao's 'philosophy of struggle.'" The article read: "Chairman Mao often quotes, 'The tree craves calm but the wind will not drop', by which he means to tell us: class struggle exists objectively and is independent of human will. Struggle is life. If you do not fight you will face attack. If you do not hit, you will be hit. If you do not destroy, you will be destroyed. This is a life-and-death class struggle in which it is crucial to maintain vigilance."²¹⁸ This editorial restored the historical memory and collective memory of the Party and nation of the revolution and struggle, and stirred their passion to continue the revolutionary struggle.

Young students full of revolutionary passion immediately responded strongly to the political mobilization by Mao. On the same day, Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School posted a big-character poster written by Red Guards, *Fight to the Death to Defend the Dictatorship of the Proletariat! Fight to the Death to Defend Mao Zedong Thought!* The poster read: "We will resolutely follow all instructions from Chairman Mao and show determination to cope with all difficulties! We will smash whomever opposes Mao Zedong Thought no matter who they are, what name they use, or what high position they occupy!" This poster fully expressed the political passion and excitement of young students, and expressed unprecedented social resonance with Mao's own political slogans and objectives. As a result, the first Red Guard organization was established on May 29, 1966, and the date came to be known as "Red Guard Day." Over 100 students including Pu Dahua openly joined. Students from every middle school in Beijing flocked to the Tsinghua University High School to imitate such so-called revolutionary action; Red Guard organizations appeared on the campuses of every Beijing college and university in succession. This was what Mao had hoped for, and his political excitement grew in response.

On June 3, the Central Committee of the CPC formally decided to reorganize the Beijing Municipal Party Committee.²¹⁹ The next day, the new Beijing Municipal

218. *People's Daily*, June 2, 1966.

219. The Central Committee of the CPC announced their decisions: "Li Xuefeng, First Secretary of the North China Central Bureau, is to concurrently serve as First Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC; Wu De, First Secretary of the Jilin Provincial Committee of the CPC, is transferred to the Beijing Municipal Committee of

Party Committee decided to reorganize the Party Committee of Peking University and send a working group to lead schools paralyzed by leadership void.²²⁰

The same day, Liu, Zhou, and Deng presided over the enlarged session of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and formulated the Eight Provisions: implement policies in a way that differentiates insiders and outsiders; pay attention to keeping secrets and do not post big-character posters on the streets; do not organize demonstrations; do not discuss revolutionary experiences; do not engage in large-scale meetings to politically denounce others; do not surround the residences of “reactionary gangs”; do not hit people, insult people, or similarly abuse people.²²¹ The core aim of the Eight Provisions was to uphold the Party’s leadership and maintain social stability, but these instructions were conveyed verbally rather than being distributed in written form. Specifically, Beijing sent nearly 10,000 working group members successively to verbally relay these provisions and other instructions. With a few exceptions, all major cities across the country sent working groups which acted as “temporary Party committees” or “temporary Party branches.” The Eight Provisions apparently were designed to control the young student movement, and Liu and others made similar interventions intended to control the movement. This differed from Mao’s original intention, which was to launch an uncontrolled mass movement. Liu repeatedly sought instructions from and reported by telephone to Mao, who was then in Hangzhou, but failed to receive clear responses.

After listening to the report on the Cultural Revolution in the Beijing region, the enlarged session of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee agreed with the proposal of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee to send working groups to universities and high schools in an attempt to control the

the CPC as Second Secretary, and will reform the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC. The work of the socialist Great Cultural Revolution in Beijing will be under the direct leadership of the reformed municipal committee.” (*People’s Daily*, June 4, 1966.)

220. The reformed Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC made the following decisions: (1) designate a work team headed by Zhang Chengxian to lead the Socialist Great Cultural Revolution in Peking University; (2) Dismiss Lu Ping and Peng Peiyun, the Secretary and Vice Secretary of the Peking University Committee of the CPC respectively, from all their positions and reorganize the Peking University Committee of the CPC; (3) authorize the work team to exercise the duties of the Committee of the CPC during the reorganization of the Peking University Committee of the CPC.

221. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 35.

chaos.²²² From June 5, the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC accelerated the dispatch of working groups. By the middle of June working groups successively entered and were stationed in most of the colleges and universities in Beijing, as well as in some high schools. However, the Central Committee of the CPC under the leadership of Liu Shaoqi actually did not make any (formal) decision to send working groups, and did not even issue any documents regarding this matter.²²³ The fact is, the first working group dispatched was a collective decision made by the Party Central Committee, sending Chen Boda's group to the *People's Daily*. On May 30, Liu, Zhou, and Deng wrote to Mao, saying: "For the past two months, the prestige of the *People's Daily* has greatly decreased, which has adversely affected the Party and state. The Editorial Committee cannot change the present situation, so many people support the Central Committee's sending a working group there. We will hold a meeting today to discuss this and intend to organize a temporary working group under the direct leadership of Chen Boda, to manage the newspaper's daily layout, and to direct the press releases of the Xinhua News Agency and the broadcasting station. The members of the working group who are in Beijing intend to enter the newspaper office to commence work on May 31." The same day, Mao officially responded: "Agreed."²²⁴ The decision to send the second working group to Peking university was jointly discussed and made by Liu, Zhou, and Deng, members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, as well as other relevant leaders, and was also reported to Mao.²²⁵

On June 3, Kuai Dafu, a third-year student from Tsinghua University's Department of Chemical Engineering, posted a big-character poster, *Long Live "Suspecting Everything."* A few days later, Ye Lin, leader of the university's working

222. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1415. According to Wu De, when Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping heard the reports of Li Xuefeng and Wu De, Li discussed how to solve the problem that university management was paralyzed in the absence of leadership, so Deng Xiaoping suggested the Beijing Committee of the CPC designate a work team, but Chen Boda disagreed. Liu and Deng decided to designate a work team anyway to understand the situation and lead the movement in the school. (Zhu et al. eds., *Wu De's Dictations: The Unusual Ten Years — My Experiences in Beijing*, 8.)

223. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1020.

224. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 61.

225. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 173.

group, judged this comment a “rightist view.”²²⁶ Wang Shaoguang believed that from June to July leaders at all levels, from the Central Committee to the grassroots, considered the Cultural Revolution movement another anti-Rightist movement. According to this interpretation, any unauthorized attack against the party branches or the officials of party committees was considered an attack against the Party itself, and hence was unforgivable.²²⁷

On June 4, the *People's Daily* published the editorial, “Tear off the Bourgeois Fig Leaf of ‘Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity,’” written under the auspices of Chen Boda and in accordance with the *Notice on May 16*. The article said: “Any monster or demon, conspirator or ambitious schemer is sure to bump their head until it is broken and bleeding, lose all standing and reputation, and see their schemes end in complete failure, if they attempt to seize our fortress from within and restage Khrushchev’s usurping of the Party, army and government in China.”²²⁸

226. On the Tsinghua University Staff and Students Meeting, Ye Lin said, “The situation of Tsinghua University during the Great Cultural Revolution is good, but we should prevent bad elements from profiting from this situation. There is a Kuai Dafu who has sought to create doubt and overthrow the existing order with a big-character poster. Did he want to overthrow socialism? That would be a rightist desire.”

227. Wang, *Frustration of a Transcendent Leader: the Great Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 53–54.

228. The editorial claimed: “Several bourgeois representatives (Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, etc.) entered our party organization through deceit and covered the class nature of the struggle with ulterior motives. They insisted the serious political struggle was a ‘pure academic issue’ and involved ‘discussion of different opinions,’ and held illegal opinions regarding bourgeois ‘freedom, equity, and fraternity’ while opposing the line of the proletarian Cultural Revolution of the Central Committee of the CPC headed by Mao Zedong. They spouted crazy slogans like ‘express all different opinions (including anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist thoughts),’ ‘everyone is equal before the truth,’ ‘never arbitrarily suppress others like a clique,’ ‘be cautious and tolerant in struggling against the anti-CPC and anti-socialist monsters and demons,’ and so on, and thus deceived the masses, muddled the waters, blurred lines between classes, and change struggle targets. Their goal was to encourage the bourgeois rightists and erode the authority of the proletarian leftists, and to protect the former while attacking the latter. They advocate bourgeois liberalization and revisionism, and await an opportunity to destroy the proletarian world, and to seize political power from the proletariat and implement capitalist restoration. These years you, the bourgeois authorities, have allowed monsters and demons to cooperate with the anti-China forces of imperialists, contemporary revisionists, and reactionaries in different countries around the world in releasing toxic thoughts. Your toxic thoughts have spread throughout our country, via

This article thus fabricated a false sense of danger from a “Chinese Khrushchev,” and the false threat of “usurping the Party, army and government.” On the same day, the *People’s Daily* published an editorial, “New Victory for Mao Zedong Thought,” saying: “The leadership of the former Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC is advocating an anti-Party and anti-socialist reactionary line. Some main persons in charge of the former Beijing Municipal Party Committee (referring to Peng Zhen, Liu Ren, etc.) are not Marxists, but revisionists. The decisions by the Central Committee of the CPC and the new Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC are very wise and correct, which represents a new victory for Mao Zedong Thought.”²²⁹ On July 1, *Red Flag* published an editorial, “Thoroughly Criticize the Revisionist Line of Some Main Persons in Charge of the Former Beijing Municipal Party Committee.” Without mentioning names, this article described Peng Zhen and others as “promoting an anti-Party and anti-socialist reactionary line.” The main point of this reactionary line was presented as being: “to oppose the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the correct line of the Central Party Committee and Comrade Mao Zedong, and to carry out the counter-revolutionary revisionist line.” The article also listed 10 charges, saying: “a handful of anti-Party insurgents of the former Beijing Municipal Party Committee regard Beijing as an ‘independent kingdom’; no one can meddle in or criticize it, and it is an untouchable tiger. However, they have reached out and stirred up trouble, and belong to a group of conspirators or ambitious schemers.”²³⁰

newspapers, broadcasts, publications, books, textbooks, speeches, literary and artistic works, movies, dramas, folk operas, fine arts, music, and dance. What you want is the freedom to have a ‘Three-household Village’, an illegal group that spreads illegal speeches, and that performs or shows reactionary operas and movies like *Xie Yaohuan*, *Li Huiniang*, *Hai Rui Dismissed*, and *City Under Siege*. This group airs the grievances of rightist opportunists and encourages their return, while suppressing the passion of the workers, farmers, soldiers, and masses for the flexible learning and application of the works of Chairman Mao, and advocating for the corruptive decline of the bourgeois thought of the landholder class, as well as for revisionism and preparation for the capitalist restoration. You worship bourgeois ‘experts’ and ‘scholars,’ regard them as your deities and strive to advocate for them. Your slogan ‘everyone is equal before the truth’ is really calling to oppose Mao Zedong Thought and substitute it with reactive bourgeois thoughts and revisionism.” (*People’s Daily*, June 4, 1966.)

229. *People’s Daily*, June 4, 1966.

230. “The main errors of some leaders of the Beijing Municipal Committee are as follows: first, resisting the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Second, opposing the urban and rural socialist education movement. Third, ignoring class struggle and seeking

In June, acting on the instruction of Mao, the Central Committee reorganized the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Department of Culture. Tao Zhu, then First Secretary of the Central South Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, was instructed to work in the Central Committee of the CPC and act as Administrative Secretary of the CCCPC Secretariat and Minister of the CCCPC Propaganda Department. Tao thus formally filled the political positions vacated by Peng Zhen and Lu Dingyi, and began his political life in the Party Central Committee. On June 6, Zhang Pinghua, then First Secretary of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee, was transferred to work in the Central Committee of the CPC and act as the Administrative Vice Minister of the CCCPC Propaganda Department. On the same day, the session of the CCCPC Secretariat decided to send the working group to the CCCPC Propaganda Department. In August 2, the Central Committee of the CPC decided to send Tao to act concurrently as a consultant to the CCCPC Cultural Revolution Group. On December 27 and 28 of the same year, Tao was denounced as “the biggest royalist in China” by Jiang Qing and her allies,²³¹ and thus became the shortest-serving member of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau, fully demonstrating the unpredictable political situation and ruthlessness of the political struggle during the Cultural Revolution.

On June 10, in Hangzhou, Mao convened the persons in charge of each region for a discussion, saying: “Dare to go all out and do not be afraid of chaos. Go all out to mobilize the masses, and make great efforts, and we will expose all monsters and demons. It is not necessary to send working groups and we should not fear even if the rightists make trouble. A big-character poster at Peking University ignited the Great Cultural Revolution! This is a revolutionary storm that none can suppress. The characteristics of this movement are: it has come ferociously, the leftists are very active, and while the rightists are stubbornly resisting and doing

‘peaceful evolution’. Fourth, trying to replace the proletarian dictatorship with bourgeois dictatorship. Fifth, preparing public opinion for capitalist restoration and the overthrow of proletarian political power. Sixth, disagreeing with the educational guidelines of Chairman Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC and implementing bourgeois revisionist education guidelines. Seventh, opposing flexible learning and the use of Mao Zedong Thought. Eighth, summoning traitors to surrender and form a clique to pursue selfish interests. Ninth, enforcing a ‘blockade’ around the Central Committee of the CPC. Tenth, superficially praising the ‘red flag’ while secretly opposing it.” (*Red Flag*, issue 9, July 1, 1966; *People’s Daily*, July 3, 1966.)

231. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Mao Zedong (1893–1949)*, vol. 2, 105..

some damage they are not dominant.”²³² Mao himself lit the fire of the Cultural Revolution, and would not permit anyone (particularly Liu Shaoqi and other members of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau) to “put out the fire.”

Mao encountered information asymmetry and uncertainty throughout the Cultural Revolution. It was unclear who were leftists, who were rightists, and who were “monsters and demons.” Equally it was unclear who could distinguish these various actors and how, who should provide the necessary information, and who should verify that information. Mao Zedong never solved any of these information problems, and acted “like a blind man feeling an elephant, where everywhere he felt he found a target.” Nie Yuanzi was one of the first targets Mao felt.

The same day, while meeting Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh, Mao talked about the “Necessity of a Split within the Party,” saying: “It is impossible for a party not to split. Everything is divided into two.” Mao always advocated that the Party “unite and not split,” yet he himself contradicted this. Based on the theory of “dividing one into two,” he believed that a party split was inevitable. From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution to his death, Mao’s theories and practices became the roots for a lasting political split within the Party. However, the Party failed to realize the severe negative political consequences of Mao’s actions.

Mao also talked to Ho about the sensitive issue of leadership succession. He said: “We are both over 70.”²³³ One day, we will be invited to join Marx, but who will succeed us? Bernstein, Kautsky or Khrushchev, we do not know. We should prepare for this and still have time to do so.”²³⁴ Mao enjoyed revealing to foreign leaders

232. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1417.

233. In 1966, Mao Zedong was 73 years old while Ho Chi Minh was 76.

234. Mao Zedong said to Ho Chi Minh, “Now China has revisionists too. Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun, all are our friends. You may ask, why did we not find these revisionists earlier. Actually, we knew. Peng Zhen has made many errors and I have wanted to replace him for years, but the Beijing Municipal Committee was an independent kingdom out of our control....This struggle started in November of last year and has lasted over seven months. At first Yao Wen Yuan stirred up criticism against the revisionists. Yao is a young man with a passion for discussing how to ensure officials are clean. Do you admire clean officials? You have claimed there are clean officials in the world, but I have never seen them. All officials have problems to different degrees, and in reality there is no such thing as a clean official....Now we have abandoned the debate over clean or corrupt officials, and are focused on the Great Cultural Revolution in the fields of education, literature and art, philosophy, historiography, and the mass media. This time hundreds or even thousands of people

thoughts that he would not discuss openly with other party leaders. At this time, he was both ready to seek a successor and prepared for the Chinese Communist Party to split once more. He regarded Liu Shaoqi as akin to Khrushchev, and felt there was still time to replace or overthrow him. The question was how to achieve this. Mao did not reveal the answer to Ho, and Liu was equally in the dark. Simultaneously, Mao was very suspicious of Lin Biao's political motives. As he commented to Ho: "Everyone wishes that you 'live long'. Here is some advice. Not everyone is loyal to you. Most may be loyal, but a minority may merely verbally wish that you 'live long' while privately thinking other thoughts. When he (referring to Lin Biao) wishes that you 'live long', you should be careful, and should stop to analyze. The more a person flatters you, the less reliable that person is."²³⁵ One month later, in "A Letter to Jiang Qing," Mao again expressed his suspicion of Lin's political motives.

Mao had complex relationships with other leaders (Liu and Lin for example,) and under the highly centralized political system these relationships came to display a "paradox of gerontocracy." On the one hand, he chose his successor based on loyalty, and judged the loyalty of others based on whether they agreed with his personal opinions. On the other hand, he distrusted those who flattered him (such as Lin) and suspected their political motives. In his later years, Mao Zedong rarely communicated and lacked mutual political trust with the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC. In most cases, this distrust developed because Mao first doubted the political motives of others, which caused distrust within the collective leadership and a consequent split.

At this time, divergent opinions existed on whether working groups should be sent to colleges and universities. Since the issue was very important, Mao was asked to make the final decision. However, Mao imperiously refused to return to Beijing. Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Tao Zhu, Chen Boda, and Kang Sheng thus went to Hangzhou from June 9 to 12 to report to Mao on the condition of the Cultural Revolution. Liu asked: "What methods should schools adopt in pursuing the Cultural Revolution? Some simply seize power, others criticize the academic authorities and then seek to reform teaching systems, or to solve problems such as those of exams and teaching materials. Should the Cultural Revolution movements in urban factories and the countryside be combined with the Four Clean-ups movement?" Mao did not clearly answer these questions. The meeting in Hangzhou did not specifically discuss the issue of sending working

may be the targets of attack." (Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 126.)

235. Bo, *Reviews on Several Major Decisions and Events*, vol. 2, 1167.

groups to schools but Mao was already suspicious of the practice, and said: “It is not good to send working groups quickly and without preparation. Why not delay sending a working group to a place in extended turmoil until after the situation is clarified?”²³⁶ At this time, Mao was not merely unafraid of national disorder, but actually needed it. However, Liu and other leaders did fear disorder, and hoped to obtain political support from Mao. When Liu and other leaders asked Mao to return to Beijing²³⁷ to preside over the work of the Central Committee of the CPC, Mao refused, but “authorized” Liu and other leaders to watch for opportunities to deal with the problems arising in the movement. The reality was that Mao deliberately sent out conflicting signals to lure Liu into a political trap.

At the meeting in Hangzhou, Mao Zedong first mentioned the assumption that the Cultural Revolution movement “might last for half a year.” He said: “I think, during the next half year, reading books will be unnecessary, and newspapers will be more relevant to real life.”²³⁸ In fact, since June 1, almost all students of colleges, universities and secondary schools (534 thousand college and university students and 12.97 million secondary school students) had essentially stopped attending classes in response to Mao’s calls to pursue Cultural Revolution. However, the initially proposed half year during which these students would stop reading books to pursue the Cultural Revolution extended to several years. Following this directive, on June 13, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council decided to reform the college entrance examination and postpone college enrollment preparations for half a year.²³⁹ In fact, colleges and universities

236. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1021.

237. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *In Memory of Liu Shaoqi*, 343; Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1663–1664.

238. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1422; Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1022.

239. The notice read: “The Great Cultural Revolution is gathering force in junior colleges and high schools, and it is time to deepen the movement. The high school entrance examination has been somewhat improved since the founding of New China, but remains influenced by the bourgeois exemption system, and contradicts the educational guidelines of the Central Committee of the CPC and Chairman Mao. This weakness of the entrance examination prevents revolutionary youth, including workers, farmers, and soldiers, from entering high schools. The examination system must be thoroughly reformed, and so time is needed to research and implement new enrollment methods. Considering the above conditions, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council decided in 1966 to postpone enrollment in higher education for half a year.” (*Notice of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council on the Reform of Entrance*

across the country were allowed to suspend classes for half a year to carry out the Cultural Revolution movement. On June 27, the Ministry of Higher Education announced the suspension of graduate enrollment in 1966 and 1967. On June 18, the *People's Daily* published the decision of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council together with the editorial, "Strive to Implement the Great Cultural Revolution and Thoroughly Reform the Education System."²⁴⁰ On July 12, the *People's Daily* published the *Letter to the Central Committee of the CPC and Mao Zedong*, written by seven students including Li Yusheng from Renmin University, advocating that the old educational system be resolutely, thoroughly, and quickly smashed, and suggesting the implementation of a brand new educational system based on liberal arts colleges and universities.²⁴¹ These events reflected the manner

Examination Methods for Higher Education and the Postponement of Enrollment for Half a Year in 1966, June 13, 1966.)

240. The editorial claimed: "The existing entrance examination system has become an obstacle to socialist education and the proletarian Cultural Revolution movement. The thorough revolution of the education system will destroy the influence of the old educational thinking of the exploiting class, which has been implemented for thousands of years since Confucius, and will overthrow a key position of the bourgeois authorities and scholar-tyrants. It is suggested that primary school students in lower grades can learn some Chairman Mao quotations, and those in higher grades can learn more quotations and read three representative articles by Chairman Mao. Meanwhile, middle school students can read *Selected Readings of the Works of Mao Zedong* and relevant articles, and those in university can read the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. Whether in primary school, middle school, or high school, Chairman Mao's works shall be a required course." *People's Daily*, June 18, 1966.
241. The letter suggested: "First, once this Great Cultural Revolution is over, all students who have studied in liberal arts universities must be graduated early and dispatched to the three major revolutionary movements to join the workers, farmers and soldiers unconditionally and for a long period. Second, Chairman Mao's works must be used as teaching materials in liberal arts universities, and class struggle shall be a main course. Third, from now on the period of study at liberal art universities shall become 1–3 years as instructed by Chairman Mao and the state, and there shall be daily education on industrial and agricultural work, military learning and class struggle. Fourth, self-study and discussion shall become the main form of teaching, with teachers to adjust their instruction as appropriate; moreover, schools shall teach democratically, and shall abolish teaching based on cramming and rote learning. Fifth, in the future universities shall absorb those young people who have undergone testing in the three major revolutionary movements and have enlightened political consciousness

in which Mao interacted with young students at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Young students responded positively whenever Mao called for action, and he in turn reacted positively and issued another call for them to rally behind. On July 24, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the *Notice on the Reform of Enrollment Work for Colleges and Universities*, which cancelled entrance exams and replaced them with a combined system of recommendation and selection.²⁴² College and university enrollment work in 1966 started on January 1 and ended at the end of the month.

At the time, students of colleges, universities and secondary schools, as well as their parents, remained unaware that the Chinese college enrollment system had been abolished and college enrollment had stopped. China thus entered a disruptive period during which human capital was destroyed, and a record was

and a certain cultural level even if they may not have graduated from high school. In this way the elites among workers, poor farmers and demobilized soldiers can enter higher education." *People's Daily* published an editorial to accompany the letter, which read: "This letter is an application of red thought by those revolutionary youth who have grown up under the red flag of Mao Zedong Thought, and who wish to devote themselves to the three fiery-hot revolutionary mass movements, and challenge the old educational system and the bourgeois authorities. We absolutely support their revolutionary proposal that students undergo practical tests and join with the workers, farmers, and soldiers to ardently pursue practical revolution and early graduation." *People's Daily*, July 12, 1966.

242. The *Notice* read: "Since the founding of New China, the entrance examination method of higher schools has gradually improved, but remains bound by the bourgeois framework, and does not yet reflect the educational guideline of the Central Committee of the CPC and Chairman Mao. This situation prevents more revolutionary youth, including workers, farmers, and soldiers, from entering higher education. This examination system must be thoroughly reformed. From this year, a combination of recommendation and selection rather than examination shall be adopted to manage enrollment in higher education. The system of recommendation and selection for enrollment in higher education shall follow the mass line under the leadership of local committees of the CPC. Selection of freshmen for enrollment in higher education must follow the principle 'politics first'. The class line of the CPC must be carried out, and eligible children of workers, poor farmers, revolutionary officials, soldiers and martyrs, and other laborers shall enjoy priority enrollment in higher education. Current high school graduates from the exploiting class shall be subject to rigorous review, with an appropriate number who have good political performance being allowed to enter higher education."

set as no students were enrolled in colleges and universities for four consecutive years. Only in 1970 did colleges and universities restore enrollment, and enrollment that year totaled only 42,000, just a quarter of the figure in 1965.²⁴³ The number of students enrolled in general colleges and universities in China during 1970 was 48,000, compared to 117,000 in 1949. The educational revolution thus became a tragic historical farce, with its biggest victims being college and university students.

What was Mao's political purpose in ordering schools to suspend classes to carry out revolution? On June 15, Mao Zedong told those in charge of the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee: "The Great Cultural Revolution is an exercise to combat and prevent revisionism. I want to use this movement to train young people."²⁴⁴ Thus, Mao's most important aim in launching the Cultural Revolution was to train the youth. In fact, from the very beginning, the Cultural Revolution was not a movement to combat and prevent revisionism, but a negative movement that destroyed education and fostered a cultural desert.

On June 14, Liu and Deng convened the enlarged session of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau to convey the spirit of the Hangzhou Conference. Regarding working groups, Mao merely said, "It is not good to send working groups quickly," but also did not request the withdrawal of the working groups that had been dispatched. Liu said: "The working groups dispatched to middle schools were sent by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League. Some of them are good and those that are not shall be withdrawn." He also said: "Some working groups were sent out only to be driven back. Does this mean they lacked ability? Is disorder good?" Wang Dongxing attended this conference in his capacity as Mao Zedong's deputy.²⁴⁵ Mao knew what Liu was thinking. Disorderly criticism, denouncement, and other forms of upheaval were common in most schools at the time. Schools also witnessed conflicts between or among opposing factions. Occasionally these conflicts led to suicides, or saw people beaten to death. As the frontline of leadership, Liu repeatedly held briefings on events at the universities, and personally visited Peking University and Tsinghua

243. National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China comp., *50 Years of New China (1949–1999)*, 577.

244. Mao Zedong said, "This movement is an anti-revisionist drill. Our young people have no opportunity to experience the test of revolutionary war and thus lack political experience. The movement will allow them to weather storms, gain first-hand experience, and become worthy successors to the proletarian revolution. I want to train them in the movement." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1418.)

245. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1022–1023.

University to read big-character posters and understand the situation.²⁴⁶

On June 18, Nie Yuanzi wrote a big-character poster publicly opposing the *Eight Instructions* of the Central Committee of the CPC. Some students also arbitrarily decided to criticize and denounce 40 “reactionary gangsters” including Lu Ping. On receiving this news, Zhang Chengxian, leader of the working group stationed at Peking University, made a personal appearance to seriously criticize these behaviors, and the same afternoon he reported this event to the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC. The Municipal Committee immediately transmitted his report to Liu and other members of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau. The next day students drove out the working group at Tsinghua University, and Liu then dispatched Wang Guangmei as advisor to the university working group to learn about and report on the situation.

On June 20, the Central Committee of the CPC transmitted its *Brief Report on the Cultural Revolution at Peking University* (No. 9), briefing the situation: “On June 18, the students of Peking University criticized and denounced more than 40 persons, including Lu Ping, by smearing their faces black, making them wear tall hats, ordering them to kneel, and, in a few cases, assaulting them. The working group promptly discovered these behaviors and put a stop to them.” Liu added the instruction: “The methods used by the working group of Peking University in dealing with confused criticisms and denouncements are correct and timely. If such phenomena occur, all units can apply the methods of Peking University to deal with them.” This demonstrates Liu’s opposition to the criticism and denouncement of leaders and teachers. However, Mao publicly supported these practices and considered Liu to be “suppressing the student movement,” which created a divergence between them and became the direct cause of Liu’s downfall. On August 5, Mao directed the Central Committee of the CPC to cancel the transmission of the report, calling the release of the report to be an error.

The same day, Liu learned about the situation from the working group of the No.1 High School Attached to Beijing Normal University, and said: “They have taken the offensive against you. This is good. The enemy have revealed themselves. With the snake now emerged from his hole it becomes easier to wipe him out. Have a good criticism of this big-character poster and struggle again.”

The development of the Cultural Revolution in the Beijing region became increasingly extreme, and the situation risked spiralling out of control. While Liu attempted to bring the situation under control, Mao thought it not sufficiently disordered and decided to further publicize “big-character posters,” doing so at the expense of the more routine publication of documents of the Central Committee

246. Ibid.

of the CPC. On June 20, the *People's Daily* published the editorial, "Revolutionary Big-character Posters are a Monster-revealing Mirror Exposing All Monsters and Demons," which publicly conveyed Mao Zedong's instruction: "The big-character poster is a useful new weapon and can be used wherever the masses are, for example in the cities, the countryside, factories, cooperatives, shops, governmental organs, schools, the army, and streets. This weapon has been used widely and will be used forever."²⁴⁷ The editorial also said: "The attitude to revolutionary big-character posters is an important sign that distinguishes between proletarian revolutionaries and bourgeois royalists, as well as between real and false revolution. Are you a revolutionary? If your answer is 'yes', then you will welcome and uphold big-character posters, and support letting the masses freely write such posters and expose problems."²⁴⁸ Thus, the "big-character poster" formally became the main tool for pursuing the Cultural Revolution, and numerous revolutionary enemies were artificially created. Liu realized that this marked the beginnings of a nationwide schism, supported by some senior leaders.²⁴⁹

After June 20, the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC, including Liu, Deng, and the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC, became increasingly disunited with regard to the working group issue. On June 20, the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC presented a written proposal to the Central Committee of the CPC, saying: "It is suggested that the colleges, universities, middle schools and educational authorities set up Cultural Revolution leading groups at appropriate times to lead the Cultural Revolution," and "Working groups can be dispatched by higher authorities as and when necessary."²⁵⁰

On the evening of June 21, Liu and Deng convened the enlarged session of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau to study the problems that had arisen in the movement. Liu proposed: "A line should be drawn short of describing people as reactionary gangs. The movement shall restore the organizational lives of the Party and the League, and the working group can assume the functions and powers of party committees that fail to perform. However, seizure of power should not be permitted. Inadequate working groups can be disbanded, but casting aside party leaders is destructive since most party committee members are good. Take the Cultural Revolution as the focus, but do not overthrow everything. In pursuing the movement, attach importance to production, work, and living. Use Sunday as

247. Mao, "Introduction to a Cooperative," *People's Daily*, April 15, 1958.

248. *People's Daily*, June 20, 1966.

249. Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi's 20 Years after the Founding of New China*, 354.

250. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 175–176.

a day for rest, and pay attention to combining work and rest. Additionally, pay attention to the fact that some counter-revolutionaries appear to be 'leftists' while others appear to be 'rightists'. While we make use of big-character posters, so too do counter-revolutionaries. Based on the spirit of the 23-Article Document, we should prohibit attacking and insulting people, and punishing them under the guise of administering justice."²⁵¹ Liu and Deng strongly refuted Chen Boda's suggestion to cancel the working groups. The session proposed: "Further strengthen the leadership of the Great Cultural Revolution," and emphasized: "Arresting, seizing and denouncing people without reason is not allowed. It is forbidden to beat and insult people, and to punish them under the guise of administering justice. Willfully seizing power and overthrowing the existing order is not allowed. It is necessary to restore the organizational life of the Party and the League, do well in production, work, and living, and safeguard the normal social order."²⁵² Liu, Deng, and others tried to put the Cultural Revolution under the leadership of the Party, curb anarchism, maintain the integrity of the legal system, protect personal safety, and maintain social order. Their approach thus differed markedly from Mao's idea of "great national disorder," making conflict inevitable sooner or later. From this perspective, Liu was the biggest "conservative" in terms of maintaining the Party's leadership, while Mao was the biggest "rebel."²⁵³ The next question is, why did thousands of young students spontaneously and actively responded to Mao's call that "rebellion is justified"?

On the same day, Kuai Dafu of Tsinghua University wrote a note on a big-character poster, saying: "The first question of the revolution is to seize power. In the past, power was monopolized by the University Party Committee, so we fought them and took power. Now, power is in the hands of the working group. As leftists, we should consider whether this power is wielded such that it represents us. If it does, we should uphold it, while if it does not, we should seize it back." Wang Guangmei, who joined the working group of Tsinghua University, analyzed the situation and warned: "Kuai Dafu is going to seize power." Bo Yibo thus phoned the working group and instructed them to strike back against Kuai.

251. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1025.

252. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1920.

253. Meisner believes that the Cultural Revolution is the historical highlight of post-1949 China because the call for the overthrow of and struggle against the political order came precisely from those who had created it, particularly Mao; having created the party and state institutions, they now considered them obstacles to realizing revolutionary social change. (Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, 298.)

On June 24, the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School posted a big-character poster, *Long Live the Proletarian Revolutionary Rebel Spirit!*²⁵⁴ Apparently, the young Red Guards had been informed of Mao's evaluations regarding education, and his opinion on "Wreaking the Celestial Palace," and enthusiastically responded with a big-character poster. A month later, following recommendation by Jiang Qing, Mao vigorously praised and supported this poster and the Red Guards rapidly became a "rebel" organization that swept across the country.

In June, Mao wrote the poem "Seven-character Regulated Verse On Some Thoughts."²⁵⁵ This poem compared the launching of the Cultural Revolution to "a pine tree showing its anger towards heaven," "a gust of a tempest shocking the world, and crowds wearing green clothes and red armbands, and walking with banners." He passionately hoped the "people of the motherland could be inspired to new thoughts," and that people could fully and timely appreciate his purpose and good intentions in launching this movement.²⁵⁶

On June 26, Mao told those in charge of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee and the Xiangtan Prefectural and County Party Committees: "In the past, I led you on the Long March. Now, I will lead you on a new Long March."²⁵⁷ Mao took class struggle as his lifelong philosophy, maintained a revolutionary and rebellious spirit from beginning to end, and derived endless satisfaction from doing battle with others. He ignored the reality that China in the mid-1960s was vastly different from China in the mid-1930s. A modernizing China needed order, not

254. The big-character poster claimed: "Revolution is rebellion and Mao Zedong Thought is rebellion in nature. The courage to devote one's thoughts, words, and actions to revolution is the most basic and most precious character of the proletarian revolutionary, and the basic principle of the spirit of a proletarian political party! To refuse rebellion is to implement revisionism! Revisionism has ruled our schools for 17 years, and now is the best time to rebel! To uphold the invincibility of Mao Zedong Thought we will show our ability to overthrow the old world and destroy the old order! We will launch a proletarian revolution and create a proletarian new world!"

255. The full poem read, "As the Chinese capital experiences a political movement, I arrive at the south to see the spring. The green pines soar to the sky, and the leaves fall away in the water. A storm shakes the world and flags are found everywhere on the street; I listen to rain on the railings, and sense the concerns of the people in their homelands." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 67.)

256. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 41.

257. Gong et al. ed., *Mao Zedong Back in Hunan (1953–1975)*, 165.

chaos; economic development, not class struggle; and the construction of national systems, not their wholesale destruction. Mao's "new Long March" thus became historical retrogression.

The same day, the Central Committee of the CPC commented on and transmitted the *Instruction Request Report of the Ministry of Culture on Struggling to Thoroughly Eliminate the Reactionary Line against the Party, Socialism and Mao Zedong Thought*, written by Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao, which required thoroughly criticizing the anti-Party and anti-socialist reactionary line headed by Zhou Yang.²⁵⁸ Subsequently, Zhou Yang was publicly criticized in the *People's Daily* and elsewhere.²⁵⁹ This marked the public implementation of cultural despotism in literary and artistic circles across the country, and that of the proletarian dictatorship to crack down on cultural elites, in a "burning of books and burying of scholars" event.

On June 27, Deng presided over a democratic forum convened by the Central Committee of the CPC, and Liu notified the meeting of the problem of Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, and Yang Shangkun. Liu said: "This is a serious incident that opposes the Party, socialism, and Mao Zedong Thought. Its impacts go beyond the Party. It has influenced our country and people." He further explained:

258. The reply of the Central Committee of the CPC said: "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which is developing vigorously across the country is the top priority in the destiny and future of the Party and the state, and also the main event related to the destiny and future of the world. We must win this struggle and thoroughly solve the problem of the cultural and educational sectors which have fallen out of the control of the proletariat. Since national liberation, the cultural authorities have mainly been under the control of the illegal anti-CPC and anti-socialist line led by Zhou Yang, against the cultural work line of the Central Committee of the CPC and Comrade Mao Zedong. As a result, the majority of cultural authorities have been seized by this illegal anti-CPC and anti-socialist line and used to conduct dictatorship against the proletariat. The 'national defense literature' advocated by Zhou Yang is the slogan of Wang Ming's rightist opportunist road, and so shall be thoroughly criticized and sterilized." Zhou Yang was the Vice Director of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, Vice Chairman of the National Literature Federation, and Vice Chairman of the Chinese Writers Association. (Central Committee of the CPC, *Report of the Ministry of Culture Asking for Instructions on the Struggle to Thoroughly Destroy the Illegal Anti-CPC, Anti-Socialist, Anti-Mao Line*.)

259. Even Yin Chengzong, pianist with the Central Philharmonic Orchestra, wrote the article "Accusing Zhou Yang's Gang of Conducting Peaceful Evolution on Me," published in the *People's Daily*, July 18, 1966.

“Recently, has there not been a global phenomenon of frequent coups? Since 1960, there have been over 60 coups in Asia, Africa and Latin America, over 50 of which have succeeded. Some national leaders have been killed, some have been exiled, some have been deposed, and some have become puppets. In the Socialist countries, Khrushchev came to power through a coup, and coups also occurred in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. The Peng, Luo, Lu, and Yang Incident could have escalated into a coup, reflecting the fierce international and domestic class struggle in the leading organs of our Party. Had this coup succeeded, our country would have changed power.” Talking about the Cultural Revolution, Liu commented: “This Great Cultural Revolution is historically unprecedented. It is very fierce and strongly impacts the bourgeois and feudal cultures. This great revolutionary movement can transform our Party.”²⁶⁰ Finally, Deng said: “To expose the problem of Peng, Luo, Lu and Yang is a major matter, and in a sense it is more serious than the Gao Gang and Rao Shushi Event, or the Peng Dehuai, Huang Kecheng, and Zhang Wentian Event.”²⁶¹

Liu and Deng agreed to uphold the major decision of Mao to launch the Cultural Revolution, and also supported the application of the policy of purging political rivals such as Peng Zhen and other suspected revisionists. However, they never imagined that Mao would continue to purge political rivals, and that eventually they themselves would be purged. This was the inevitable political logic of taking class struggle as the key issue, and even they could not escape the political phenomenon whereby those who victimized others ultimately fell victim themselves.

On June 28, Liu and Deng convened the enlarged meeting of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau and proposed that the movement should proceed in steps, and concrete policies should be formulated that were suitable for easy mastery and implementation. On June 30, Mao wrote to Liu and Deng, refusing their request to formally publish his “Address to the 7000-Cadres Meeting” made in 1962.²⁶² Wang Renzhong also expressed his disapproval of the request for publication.²⁶³ Since this address marked the first time that Mao

260. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1022.

261. Deng Xiaoping’s Speech at the Democratic Representatives Seminar Held by the Central Committee of the CPC, June 27, 1966.

262. See Mao Zedong’s speech at the Enlarged Central Work Conference of the 7,000 Cadres on January 30, 1962 about democratic centralism and other issues. In this speech, Mao Zedong first conducted self-criticism regarding his incorrect decisions during the Great Leap Forward and assumed major responsibility.

263. Mao Zedong wrote: “Your letter has been received. After consideration, I think this

Zedong had conducted self-criticism, the publication of the address would have undermined the personality cult that Mao Zedong was trying to bolster.

Since Mao remained outside Beijing, Liu, Zhou, Deng, and all members of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee requested instructions from Mao Zedong on major issues.²⁶⁴ The same day (June 30,) they dispatched their letter to Mao Zedong together with the *Notice by the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council on How Industrial and Transportation Enterprises and Basic Construction Units Should Conduct the Great Cultural Revolution (Draft)* enclosed for his examination. Liu and Deng reported to Mao the severe impact of the Cultural Revolution on industry, transportation, and infrastructure construction. The report expressed their fears that the national economy would suffer from “decreased production” and “poor execution of the economic plan,”²⁶⁵ and proposed that industry, enterprises,

is not the right time to release the speech. After the Great Cultural Revolution is over we will have a lot of new experiences based on which the speech can be modified. We should reconsider its release at that time. Wang Renzhong also disagrees with releasing the speech right now.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 65.)

264. Zhou Enlai left to visit Romania and Albania on June 15, returning to Beijing on July 1.

265. On June 30, 1966, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping wrote to Mao Zedong, who was staying in Hangzhou. Their letter read: “The Great Cultural Revolution is being carried out in the fields of culture and education. If cultural revolution is launched in industrial and mining enterprises simultaneously with basic construction entities, errors may result from leaders being too busy to supervise. In recent years the revolutionary program was not always well implemented in the fields of industry, transport, and basic construction, output of crude steel, processed steel, and coal has declined, and there have been additional problems such as falling quality, increased rate of accidents, and basic construction tasks that have not been achieved. After discussions, some comrades in Beijing believe the priorities in the deployment of the Great Cultural Revolution shall be the cultural and educational authorities, as well as party and political institutions. For grass-roots entities involved in the industry, traffic, basic construction, commercial, hospital, and other sectors, the original “Socialist Education” deployment and the “23 Items” (i.e., the document of the Central Committee of the CPC titled “Some Issues in the Current Rural Socialist Education Movement”) shall be implemented in the Great Cultural Revolution. The draft of the notice submitted by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping pointed out: “Currently the party committees of all areas must strive to lead the revolutionary movements in culture and education. We should also note the requirements of industrial and mining enterprises, as well as basic construction

and infrastructure construction units should continue to carry out the Cultural Revolution in accordance with the *23-Article Document*. Liu and Deng had also found that only 35.6% of the capital construction tasks for 1966 were completed in the first half of the year, which was well below expectations. They then spoke with Bo Yibo, Tao Lujia, and other leaders. They made a final decision to report the situation to Mao and propose practical suggestions.²⁶⁶ In fact, Mao already knew about the severe impact of the Cultural Revolution. On July 2, he replied his agreement, saying the notice should be issued quickly.²⁶⁷ The same day, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the *Notice of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council Concerning How Industrial and Transport Enterprises and Capital Construction Entities Carry out the Great Cultural Revolution*. On July 22, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the *Supplementary Notice on How Industrial and Transportation Enterprises and Basic Construction Units Should Conduct the Great Cultural Revolution*.²⁶⁸ Liu and others intended to uphold the Party's leadership, carry out the Cultural Revolution in a guided, planned, and systematic way, and strictly limit the cultural and educational departments. Their

entities, which must ensure the completion of the tasks of national construction. The Central Committee of the CPC believes that the 'Great Cultural Revolution' involving industrial and transport enterprises and basic construction entities (including design and construction entities) shall be progressed by the leadership step by step and in accordance with the "23 Items" as well as the 'Socialist Education' movement. This notice requires that the party committees of all areas stress revolution and ensure production to achieve win-win outcomes in these two key areas. The entities participating in the Great Cultural Revolution and the 'Socialist Education' movement must focus on revolution, while a dedicated team will simultaneously ensure production and construction." On July 2, 1966, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the "Notice of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council Concerning How Industrial and Transport Enterprises and Capital Construction Entities Carry out the Great Cultural Revolution."

266. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1026.

267. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 69..

268. The two notices came from the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council, respectively, to prevent the recently launched Cultural Revolution from negatively impacting the economy. The basic spirit of both notices was that the Cultural Revolution should be carried out according to the schedule of the party organizations at all levels, and should "further boost production and construction and seek win-win outcomes in terms of revolution, production, and construction."

ideas thus were completely different from, and even opposed to, the idea of “great national disorder” advocated by Mao.

On July 1, the Editorial Office of the *People's Daily* published the editorial, “Long Live Mao Zedong Thought: Commemorating the 45th Anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese Communist Party.” This editorial pointed out: “Throughout the 45 years of our Party’s history, under the leadership of Marxism and Leninism, the Central Committee of the CPC headed by Mao Zedong has engaged in three big struggles against the anti-Party and revisionist cliques. The first struggle was that against the Gao Gang and Rao Shushi Anti-party Alliance. The second struggle was that against another handful of right opportunists, that is, the Revisionist Anti-Party Clique. The third big struggle was that against the recently exposed Reactionary Clique that sought to attack the Party, socialism and Mao Zedong Thought.”²⁶⁹ The editorial further defined the nature of these three struggles as: “The struggle between Mao Zedong Thought and its enemies, the struggle between the Marxist and Leninist Line and the Revisionist Line, the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and between socialism and capitalism.”²⁷⁰ The editorial said: “The villainous activities conducted by those anti-Party cliques are intended to launch reactionary coups and substitute the dictatorship of the proletariat for that of the bourgeoisie. If their villainous plots were not exposed, they would undoubtedly lay their murderous hands on the people. If their plots succeeded, the power of the proletariat and the people seized through decades of bloodshed and sacrifice would immediately be lost. The people of our country would once again be oppressed and exploited, and would live like dogs. The imperialists would stage a comeback, Khrushchev Revisionism would bully us, and our country would be reduced once more to a colony or semi-colony.”²⁷¹ The claims made in this editorial were fabricated. Gao Gang and Rao Shushi had never planned to launch a coup, and it was simply a political lie manufactured by Mao Zedong to crack down on political enemies. Chen Boda was its main writer, and he would fall victim to similar political lies later, at the Lushan Conference in 1970

The editorial praised Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought, and not only quoted the “Genius Theory” proposed by Liu at the 7th National Congress of

269. Here the “reactionary clique” refers to Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, Luo Ruiqing, and Yang Shangkun.

270. *People's Daily* editorial board, “Long Live, Mao Zedong Thought — In Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese Communist Party,” (*People's Daily*, July 1, 1966.)

271. Ibid.

the CPC in 1945,²⁷² but also the “Peak Theory” and “Highest and Most Flexible Theory” of Lin Biao. However, the editorial did not mention Lin Biao’s name.²⁷³ While Liu had originally developed the “Genius Theory” regarding Mao, it was Lin who inherited and further developed the theory according to the new political situation. The personality cult of Mao Zedong helped Liu and Lin to win Mao’s political trust and political support, but it would later cause them to suffer his political persecution and retaliation. Simply put, they became subject to Mao’s political demands and political purposes. Mao did not hesitate to use whatever means were necessary to achieve his political goals, and in this sense was a typical political opportunist.

On the same day, *Red Flag* published the editorial “Believing in the Masses and Relying on the Masses,” which conveyed Mao’s latest instruction on organizing and developing the proletarian leftist team.²⁷⁴ At this time, Mao still wished to rely

272. According to the editorial, during the 7th National Congress of the CPC, Liu Shaoqi said: “Comrade Mao Zedong is a ‘gifted Marxist with creativity’. The birth and development of Mao Zedong Thought ‘are the greatest achievements and glories of our Party and people in the long-term struggle, and will benefit our nation for generations to come.’” He further said that Mao Zedong “has significantly contributed to the revolutionary undertakings of people of all countries, especially all nationals in Asia.” (Ibid.)

273. The editorial said: Revolutionary leaders like Mao Zedong, who have gone through extended, complex, furious, and all-round struggles, are historical rarities—just like Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Comrade Mao Zedong is good at drawing conclusions from new experiences of various revolutionary struggles, and at incorporating the dialectic and historic materialism of Marxism and Leninism, and so Mao Zedong Thought is the only correct guide for all stages of the revolution in China, as well as being a powerful ideological weapon with which suppressed people and nations can oppose imperialists, contemporary revisionists, and reactionaries. Mao Zedong Thought is to giftedly, creatively, comprehensively inherit and develop Marxism and Leninism during a time when Imperialism faces collapse and socialism is victorious. Mao Zedong Thought is the peak of Marxism and Leninism, and is their supreme and most flexible form. Comrade Mao Zedong is the greatest Marxist and Leninist of the present age.” (Ibid.)

274. Mao Zedong instructed: “In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we must organize and develop a proletarian leftist group and use it to mobilize, solidify and educate the masses.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 68.)

The editorial claimed: “The majority of communists and league members are

on party and league members, and regarded them as the core of the “leftists in the proletarian revolution.” However, he soon abandoned the two political groups and organizations and switched to the Red Guards organization. When Mao failed to solve the problem of who to rely on, the Cultural Revolution became destined to evolve into a messy political struggle.

On July 5, Liu and Deng convened the enlarged session of the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau to study the problems that had arisen during the Cultural Revolution. Liu proposed formulating plans for further implementing the Cultural Revolution. The implementation plan for middle schools was to be drafted by the League Central Committee, while that for colleges and universities was to be drafted by the Beijing Municipal Party Committee, and would be finished within a week and forwarded to the enlarged session of the Standing Committee for discussion.²⁷⁵ In situations where production in certain places was impacted, Deng proposed completing at least two thirds of scheduled production by the end of August.²⁷⁶ That Deng needed to make such a suggestion shows the impact of the Cultural Revolution on normal production. Both Liu and Deng tried to minimize the loss and impact of the Cultural Revolution, but had limited ability to do so, hampered by Mao’s idea of “great national disorder.”

On July 7, the Thirty-third Session of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress held a joint conference with the Fifth Session of the Standing Committee of the Fourth CPPCC National Committee. Chairman Zhu De presided over the conference, and Vice Chairman Kang Sheng explained the decision to extend the National People’s Congress and the National Congress of the Political Consultative Conference. On August 30, the CPPCC National Committee renamed itself a “united front” and “political consultative conference.” The reality was different though. Previously, on June 27, Liu Shaoqi had already proposed that since the National People’s Congress had already been postponed once before (in 1965,) and since the Cultural Revolution meant there was simply no time to hold it, it should be postponed once again.²⁷⁷ Liu realized that Mao’s Cultural Revolution was a deliberate means to postpone the National People’s Congress, the basic political institution of the state. In contrast, Kang Sheng described the Cultural

reliable, as are the core of the proletarian revolutionary leftists when correctly led by the CPC.” (*Red Flag*, issue 9, July 1, 1966.)

275. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1026.

276. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1923.

277. “Liu Shaoqi’s Speech at the Democratic Representatives Seminar Held by the Central Committee of the CPC,” June 27, 1966.

Revolution as a great expression of national democracy. Kang thus used the so-called democracy of the Cultural Revolution to substitute for that of the National People's Congress. From this point, the Third National People's Congress system (which included the sessions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress) was terminated. This violated the express provision of Article 25 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, namely: "The session of the National People's Congress is to be held annually and convened by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress." This showed that Mao had formally abandoned rule of law in favor of direct personal rule, namely controlling the state through personally issued "supreme instructions," and governance via the newspapers and periodicals controlled by the Central Committee of the CPC. This phenomenon resulted from the practical demand to mobilize the broad masses to participate in the Cultural Revolution, and the political need for Mao Zedong to overthrow his political opponents. Once Mao Zedong had destroyed the basic system of the party and the state, it was inevitable that China would fall into disorder. At the time, no party or state leaders knew that the decision announced by Kang on behalf of Mao would mark the beginning mob rule in defiance of rule of law, and Mao himself openly described the defiance of laws as though it were a positive.²⁷⁸

Precisely when Mao made the final decision to follow the route of the Cultural Revolution is uncertain, as were the circumstances that drove him to do so.²⁷⁹ According to Zhao Yaoci, on June 17 Mao entered Dishui Cave in Changsha, Hunan, and he did not emerge until June 28. Zhang described this as a period in which Mao experienced complex emotions and "cut himself off from the rest of the world." In fact, Mao pored over documents, materials, and newspapers day and night, including the address by Lin Biao at the enlarged session of the CCCPC Political Bureau on May 18.²⁸⁰ This episode shows how Mao and the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau (both Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao) were not building up mutual trust and mutual communication, but rather were becoming suspicious of and defensive towards each other. Zhang believes that it was during the eleven days in the Dishui Cave that Mao decided to launch the

278. On December 8, 1970, in a conversation with Edgar Snow, Mao Zedong said: "I am just like a 'monk with an umbrella.'" This is a pun on the words *wufa* 無髮 (a monk literally has no hair) and *wutian* 無天 (carrying an umbrella, one does not see the sky,) which is homophonic with a Chinese phrase 無法無天 for having no regard for both law (of Men) and (law of) Heaven. This quote expresses his anarchic nature. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Zhou Enlai in His Own Words*.)

279. Zhang, *Memories of Zhang Yaoci — Those Days with Chairman Mao*, 73.

280. Ibid, 87.

Great Cultural Revolution on his own, and there he formed its objectives, guiding principles, policies, guiding ideologies, methods, scale, and time.²⁸¹

Mao's thoughts during these 11 days are reflected in his "Letter to Comrade Jiang Qing on July 8."²⁸² This was the second in just his four representative works produced in the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution.²⁸³ In this letter Mao summarized his core ideas to Jiang on how to manage state affairs during the Cultural Revolution, namely the so-called "Theory of Great National Disorder."²⁸⁴ In his opinion, "great national disorder" was actually positive because it could confuse "enemies" (meaning his political opponents) and mobilize the masses. Since Mao saw "disorder" and "order" as parts of the same political cycle, he welcomed the former as a means to realize the latter. He considered the Cultural Revolution a "nationwide exercise" to prevent rightists from assuming power via a coup after his death. Just one year before the Cultural Revolution, Mao had said: "It is good if the country is at peace, but it is not necessarily bad if the country is in disorder. Disorder (referring to the civil war) has great merits. For example, our Party has experienced 25 years of war and we have always emerged victorious."²⁸⁵

Having selected his political strategy, Mao still faced the problem of how to create "great national disorder." The top levels of the Party included only a few on whom Mao could truly rely. Besides Lin Biao, Chen Boda and Kang Sheng, Mao

281. Ibid, 90.

282. On July 8, 1966, Mao Zedong wrote to Jiang Qing. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.) Mao's letter was circulated during the Meeting on Criticizing Lin Biao and Rectifying Work Style in May 1972. On October 1, 1972, September 2, 1973, and March 1, 1975, the *People's Daily* released the contents of this letter in installments. Zhang Yaoci later commented: "Mao Zedong obviously thought about the core of this letter while in the Dishui Cave." (Ibid, 97–98.)

283. The four works, in chronological order, were: *Instruction on the Report of the General Logistics Department of the PLA Concerning Further Agricultural and Sideline Production in the Army (May 7 Instruction)* in May 1966, "A Letter to Jiang Qing" in July 1966, "Bombarding the Headquarters—My First Big-character Poster" in August 1967, and "My Views" in August 1970.

284. Mao Zedong wrote, "Chaos in the universe leads to order. The cycle lasts for 7–8 years. 'Monsters and demons' jumped out by themselves, and their class nature determined their actions." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.)

285. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 11, 389.

Zedong had difficulty forging political alliances or attracting political supporters in the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC (Zhou Enlai later provided support and alleviated this problem.) Mao thus wrote his letter to Jiang, one because he had no other political choices, and two to pass her his political project and give her the “green light” to assume power in future as the vanguard of the Cultural Revolution. Based on partial records of Jiang’s speeches from late 1966 to July 1974, as many as 172 leaders were accused by name, including 28 members and alternate members of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.²⁸⁶

Mao’s “Theory of Great National Disorder” proved hugely destructive. First, it severely damaged China’s economic construction and disrupted the process of economic growth. Second, it severely damaged China’s state systems and sent the country into disorder. Third, it severely violated the civic and human rights of Chinese citizens, and eroded the basis of state rule. Mao’s “Theory of Order and Disorder” was inseparably interconnected with the theory of “Continuing the Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” created by Chen Boda and Yao Wenyuan in November 1967. While the former was more popular and vivid, the latter was more theoretical and logical. Since Mao, as supreme leader, constantly sought to provoke “great national disorder,” the unprecedented Cultural Revolution was doomed to involve unprecedented civil political strife.²⁸⁷

During the later leadership of Deng, he too faced the same political problem, whereby party officials, having been in power for a long period, formed a privileged class that was increasingly cut off from the people. However, he and Mao held opposing ideas on state governance. Based on his personal experiences in the Cultural Revolution, Deng opposed the Theory of Great National Disorder, and instead insisted on his own theory of Making Stability the Top Priority,²⁸⁸ as

286. Tan and Lü, *Trial of China: the Public Trial against Ten Principals in the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Counter-revolutionary Groups*, 114 and 160.

287. The Resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1981 pointed out: “The Cultural Revolution created trouble for our people, instead of the enemy, making it impossible for order to replace chaos in the universe.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literatures Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 811.)

288. On February 26, 1989, Deng Xiaoping told visiting U.S. President Bush: “Stability is the top priority of China. Without a stable environment there can be no progress, and even if progress were achieved it would soon be lost. Failure to achieve stability will mean the absence of democracy and economic development, divisions in public opinion, and national chaos. We have experience on this point because we have experienced

the means for pursuing China's development and rejuvenation and establishing a stable social order.²⁸⁹ Through democracy and the rule of law, Deng reformed the leadership systems of the Party and the state and managed the contradiction between the government officials and the people using a moderate and gradual approach.

Mao's "Letter to Jiang Qing" reflected the political guiding principles of the Cultural Revolution, and clearly expressed his short-term political purposes, strategies and measures. Mao's direct political purpose in launching the Cultural Revolution was to overthrow the so-called capitalist roaders headed by Liu and Deng, and to this end he used the political support and associated personality cult provided by the Lin Biao Clique. Simultaneously, Mao was very sensitive and paranoid, and explicitly noted that Lin's real political intention in flattering him was to "exorcise ghosts with the aid of the Heavenly Ghost Catcher" (that is, purge his political rivals using the power of Mao),²⁹⁰ and in doing this he foreshadowed his own future intention to depose Lin. On a prior occasion, speaking on Lin's formulation of Mao Zedong Thought, Mao said, "Do not say 'the highest or the best', and do not say 'the peak', either."²⁹¹ Mao thus was clearly aware that the "Peak Theory" contradicted Marxism. However, Lin later used these phrases and theories even more intensively, and Mao gained reason to begin to suspect his

the Cultural Revolution and seen its bitter consequences." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping vol. 3*, 284.)

289. MacFarquhar analyzed the political divergence between Mao and Deng: Mao liked chaos, while Deng loathed it, especially after having experienced first-hand the nationwide turmoil and the individual tragedies caused by the Cultural Revolution. In the mold of a traditional Chinese politician and philosopher, Deng pursued order, and considered state unity necessary to progress. (MacFarquhar, "Postscript — Missions after Unity."

290. In his letter to Jiang, Mao said: "During the Hangzhou Meeting held in April (the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC in Hangzhou on April 16, 1966,) I disagreed with the wordings used by my friends. But what could I do? At the meeting in Beijing in May of this year (the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC in Beijing between May 4 to 26, 1966,) he (Lin Biao) continued to use these phrases, as did the newspapers. So I have to simply accept it. I know their intention is to use me like a present-day Zhong Kui to hunt ghosts for them. So I had to take up the role." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.)

291. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1404.

political motivations.

At that time, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao, members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, had all read Mao Zedong's "Letter to Jiang Qing" or been informed of its content. Wang Renzhong had also read this letter.²⁹² This letter was not only an expression of the political struggle between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi but also an important root of the cut-throat struggle between Mao Zedong and Lin Biao, because Lin clearly understood that Mao had long seen through his political purpose. Six years later, in 1972, Mao decided to publish this letter, surprising the whole Party, as well as the army and the nation.²⁹³

Interestingly, Mao's letter made bold forecasts about the future political development of China: "After my death, the rightists will return to power and restore capitalism." He further asserted that the rightists would be restless and their rule likely short-lived because the leftists would reorganize themselves around Mao's legacy.²⁹⁴ Indeed, Deng led the "Rightist" faction back to power after

292. Mao Zedong showed this letter to Zhou Enlai and Wang Renzhong (First Secretary of Hubei Provincial Committee of the CPC) who were staying in Wuhan, and entrusted Zhou with transmitting the letter to Jiang Qing in Shanghai. He also ordered Zhou to visit Dalian on July 4 to deliver to Lin Biao the opinions he had expressed about him in the letter. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1419–1420.) As instructed by Mao, Zhou was to deliver his opinions that Lin should be practical and realistic, and should use scientific, accurate, and appropriate wording in his appraisal of Mao. Lin said he would accept Mao's opinion and agreed to modify his speech. On July 15, Zhou returned to Beijing and reported to Liu Shaoqi. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 40.) According to Zhang Yaoci, after writing the letter, Mao told his Secretary Xu Yafu to take a copy for his records and to post the original to Jiang. (Zhang, *Memories of Zhang Yaoci—Those Days with Chairman Mao*, 101.)

293. After the Lin Biao incident in May 1972, the Central Committee of the CPC circulated a copy of Mao's "Letter to Jiang Qing" throughout the Party as part of the documents from the "Criticizing Lin Biao and Rectifying the Work Style Report Meeting," and presented it as evidence that Mao had long ago identified the political ambition of Lin. Zhang Yaoci believes that Mao's letter could be considered a "prediction." Indeed, the move made Mao's letter appear to show his "foresight" and people believed that Mao had a firm grasp of Lin's movements. (Zhang, *Memories of Zhang Yaoci—Those Days with Chairman Mao*, 101.) In reality, Mao's suspicions of Lin were the direct cause for latter's flight, and Mao's "prediction" was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

294. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 71.

Mao's death, but instead of a Leftist comeback, Deng led China through a period of reform and opening up to the outside world, enabling it to thrive and prosper. Meanwhile, Jiang and other leftists (the hardliners of the Cultural Revolution) were condemned by history.²⁹⁵

On July 12, Mao issued written instructions on a letter from seven members of the Communist Youth League and young students of Beijing Language Institute that was received on June 28.²⁹⁶ Mao paid great attention to the problems they raised, believing they were important and the Cultural Revolution should prioritize their solution.²⁹⁷ This shows that the young students supported Mao's assessment that a bureaucratic class had formed in the Party. However, to solve the contradictions between the officials and the people and to prevent degeneration, these young students proposed reform instead of revolution, and governance according to law instead of rebellion and seizure of power. Although this letter, together with Mao's comments and instructions, was once printed and distributed as the third document of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, the instructions on the letter were eventually replaced by radical revolution and violence that undermined the rule of law.

295. From November 23, 1980 to January 23, 1981, the Special Court of the Supreme People's Court completed the public trials of the case of the counter-revolutionary groups headed by Lin Biao and Jiang Qing and issued the "Judgment of the Special Court of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literatures since the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 654–680.).

296. The letter said: "Our parents are revolutionary officials and CPC members. They are heroes who have undergone the test of class struggles and wars. However, their revolutionary consciousness has weakened since they became officials, with positions of political importance and a privileged life. Should they continue on this course they will lose their 'freedom' with regard to revolution and gradually become a special revisionist class. Therefore we believe we should conduct thorough reform in the following aspects: 1. Reduce salaries and eliminate special treatments for officials; 2. Revolutionary officials should always participate in work; 3. Anyone who violates the discipline of the CPC or the law of the state, or who impairs the interests of the people, should be punished; 4. An education system for part-time students should be implemented across the country as early as possible; 5. During holiday periods, organize for students to work in factories or rural areas, or to serve in the army." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 77–78.)

297. Ibid.

After the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution on June 1, there were serious confrontations within the leadership of the Party Central Committee regarding the disorderly criticism and denouncements occurring in colleges and universities, and whether to maintain or withdraw the working groups: Liu, Zhou and, Deng insisted that the movement should be led by the Party and carried out in an orderly manner, and that it was necessary to dispatch working groups if the Party committees of some schools failed to work. However, Mao disagreed with sending working groups and demanded an all-out effort to mobilize the masses to carry out the revolution. Chen Boda, in his role as Mao's representative, repeatedly opposed the opinions of Liu and others.

On July 13, Liu presided over the debriefing convened by the members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee, and Chen presented his opinion on sending working groups. Liu and Deng also expressed some of their criticisms on the working groups, but disagreed with their immediate withdrawal. Liu said: "The present working groups need to be educated. They are ignorant and have not learned the policies. Unsatisfactory working groups should be rectified and cleared." Deng said: "We shall organize the students, clear those in positions of authority, and then abandon the working groups and working teams." Chen's opinion was thus rejected.²⁹⁸

On July 18, Mao Zedong finally returned to Beijing after an eight-month absence. His return to Beijing this time was of unusual political significance, as he decided to discard an important internal system advocated by himself, namely that Liu presided over the routine work of the Central Committee of the CPC. Mao was determined to become the undisputed absolute leader, to personally lead and launch the Cultural Revolution, and to eliminate "China's Khrushchev" (meaning Liu.) He thus replaced the top leaders.²⁹⁹ Liu was not immediately aware that Mao

298. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 176.

299. On October 25, 1966, in a speech at the Central Working Meeting, Mao Zedong said: "We all want the security of the state. Because of the death of Stalin and the incompetence of Georgy Malenkov, we encountered problems, particularly from revisionism. Accordingly, we set a first line and a second line. But the situation is not so good today. I am in the second line and others are the first line, so power is decentralized. Power cannot be centralized now that we occupy the cities. The existence of a first line and a second line contributed to the rise of many independent kingdoms. Therefore the Eleventh Plenary Session changed the deployment of the first and second lines. Before this meeting I was in the second line, distant from daily work, and allowed others to do that work and establish their reputation among the masses to ensure national stability on my death. This was my original thinking, and others agreed with this deployment.

had made any systemic changes, or what his political intentions were. Only later, on October 23, did Liu realize that July 18 had been a key turning point.³⁰⁰ The system that Mao targeted was an internal system that divided work between main leaders and secondary leaders. Since the system was internal and informal, Mao was easily able to abolish it without informing Liu or obtaining the approval of the Party Central Committee. Mao's actions destroyed the basic system whereby major decisions were made by collective leadership.

At that time, there had been "great disorder" in the colleges and universities of China's major cities. However, Mao discovered that politics continued to follow the old top-down approach, and thus the situation resembled "a pool of stagnant water." Mao later labeled this period of more than 50 days after the turmoil in the schools and universities in large cities a "white terror."³⁰¹ Mao was determined to "go against the tide."

On arriving in Beijing, Mao refused to allow Liu to report to him and instead listened to reports from Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, and others. After hearing their report, he felt unhappy that some wanted to suppress the student movement. He asked: "Who suppresses student movements? Only the Northern warlords. For the Communist Party to be afraid of student movements is against Marxism. Some people are always talking about carrying out the mass line and serving the people, but instead take the bourgeois line and serve the bourgeoisie. This shows they are afraid of the revolution, and adopt different policies for 'insiders and outsiders.' This is a mistaken direction and must be quickly reversed as part of the movement to break down all conventions."³⁰² When he read the comment and instruction forwarded by Liu on the No. 9 Briefing on the Cultural Revolution, Mao said to Zhang Chunqiao: "No wonder the masses are suppressed everywhere. Only now

However, the comrades in the first line did not do well, so the coexistence of the first and second lines has changed." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 143.)

300. On October 23, 1966, in a self-criticism at the Central Working Meeting, Liu Shaoqi said, "Before July 18 this year (1966,) I organized the daily works of the Central Committee of the CPC because Chairman Mao was not in Beijing." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969)*, vol. 2, 651.)

301. Wang, *Frustration of a Transcendent Leader: The Great Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 54.

302. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1845; Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 134–135.

do I finally realize that there is a bourgeois headquarters!”³⁰³ This statement built on the *Notice on May 16*, in which Liu, Deng, and others were labeled “Chinese Khrushchevs,” and further built up the significance of the threat. Mao described his real political intention to the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee, and required them to become the “daring vanguard” in the overthrow of Liu.

On July 19, Liu and Deng listened to the report by Li Xuefeng, Wu De, and Hu Keshi (then Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League) on the situation in Beijing. Li said: “The administrative organizations of each school are paralyzed and the leadership cannot be informed if working groups are not dispatched.” Chen Boda immediately expressed his opposition to sending working groups, believing they would be no wiser than the students, that they would all declare themselves to be sent by the Party Central Committee and Mao, and that some working groups would bully the students. Deng said: “In the case of certain organs and schools, we should not send working groups, but in some other cases where power has been seized, we should send working groups. The working groups mainly play an administrative role and are led by the Party Committee. Therefore, shall we consider all matters? We should carefully monitor and correctly assess the working groups. We have no experience of such a movement and nor do they. Bad working groups can be withdrawn while good ones can stay in the field to perform the work of the Party Committee.” Liu said: “Some working groups are good and some are bad. They work on the front line and suffer unique hardships, so we cannot ask too much of them. What we should do is consider how to help them, educate them and summarize their experiences for the benefit of others.”³⁰⁴ Chen criticized the leaders of the Central Committee in Beijing for being afraid of the masses, but Deng refuted his criticisms and unequivocally stated: “I do not agree with the withdrawal of all the working groups.” Chen’s opinion thus was rejected again. In fact, Chen was serving as Mao’s representative and his opinions represented that of Mao’s.

On the same day, the Central Committee of the CPC decided to establish the Editing Committee of Mao Zedong’s Works with Liu Shaoqi as director.³⁰⁵ This decision was issued throughout the whole Party. However, no one expected that China’s political structure would change dramatically 10 days later. This reflected

303. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1422.

304. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1027.

305. The Editing Committee of Mao Zedong’s Works consisted of Liu Shaoqi as chairman; Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, and Tao Zhu as deputies; and Li Jingquan, Li Xuefeng, Liu Lantao, Song Renqiong, Wang Renzhong, Wei Wenbo, Hu Qiaomu, Xiaohua, Liu Zhijian, Zhang Pinghua, Xiong Fu, Wang Li, Qi Benyu, and Liu Han as members.

the suddenness and drama of Chinese politics. Even Liu himself was taken by surprise, much less to say foreign observers. This course of political events was typical of personal despotism, even if it only became clearly apparent some 40 years later.

On July 22, Liu and Deng chaired the enlarged session of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee to discuss the Preliminary Planning of the Great Cultural Revolution in Beijing's Colleges and Universities. The key point of contention in the session remained on working groups. Liu said: "The working groups are not well led, but most of them are good. They still need to be educated and helped to correct their mistakes. As for driving away the working groups, not all of them should be driven away." Deng said: "We should teach the working groups how to work. I am afraid that some schools cannot do without a working group."³⁰⁶ Chen and Jiang proposed canceling the working groups, but most leaders in the Central Committee of the CPC resisted this.³⁰⁷ Later, in a group speech delivered at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Jiang said: "Our group leader (referring to Chen) and consultant (referring to Kang) had no chance to speak, never managing past his first sentence before being interrupted."³⁰⁸ The sharp debate in this session directly influenced Mao, despite him not actually being in attendance, and he concluded that the working groups "played a negative role and hindered the movement." In accordance with Mao's instructions, Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda and Jiang Qing repeatedly represented Mao to visit the college students and support them in opposing the working groups. The slogan "kicking away the party committees to carry out the revolution" became "kicking away the working groups to carry out the revolution."³⁰⁹

On July 23, Mao still agreed with the issue of the *Instruction Request on Dispatching Army Cadres to Assist in the Local Great Cultural Revolution* submitted by the General Political Department and circulated by the Central Committee of the CPC. This notice proposed the organization of working teams by transferring cadres to participate in the Socialist Education Movement (Four Clean-ups Movement,) with the intention being to support the Cultural Revolution in local places. At this stage, Mao had not yet proposed the cancellation of the working groups.³¹⁰ On the same day, Mao changed his attitude. While listening to the reports of Li Xuefeng and Qu De, the First Secretary and the Second Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee

306. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 176.

307. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1028.

308. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 176.

309. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 38–40.

310. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 177.

of the CPC respectively, he stated: "It is wrong for the Central Committee of the CPC to send working groups. Now, some people are overcautious, and are always afraid of disorder, counter-revolution, and taking up arms." Mao believed that the working groups would adopt a bourgeois stand and suppress the masses, and thus decided to immediately cancel them.³¹¹ On July 24, Mao talked with the members of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC. In view of Liu's opinion, he insisted: "Working groups should not be sent and instead observers should be sent for investigation. Do not issue orders. The leftists among the students and teachers shall form cultural revolutionary committees to carry out the Cultural Revolution themselves." He also made pointed references to criticizing Liu and the others, saying: "Now, some of our comrades are afraid of the masses. Isn't it terrible for the communists to be afraid of the masses?" He also seriously noted: "This is not only a problem of Peking University but a nationwide problem. If it were carried out with the methods used by some persons (referring to Liu and his associates,) the movement would not accomplish anything."³¹²

Mao regarded the Theory of Great National Disorder as the basic idea that guided the Cultural Revolution, and as fundamentally different from Liu and Deng's philosophy of "safeguarding social stability under the leadership of the Party committees." The former was radical while the latter was conservative. Just as water and oil do not mix, so too was it with Mao versus Liu and Deng. Even if they had not differed on whether to send working groups, they would eventually have differed on other issues. The purpose of Mao in returning to Beijing was to remove these political opponents and clear these political obstacles. However, the question of who to remove these opponents remained. Reliance on the writers in the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC was impractical. Zhou Enlai was the most suitable person for the job since he was the core figure and occupied a strong position in the Party. Facts proved that the change in Zhou's political attitude crucially influenced the change in the political power structure.

During the Cultural Revolution, Zhou played a complex and self-contradictory role. On the one hand, from a strategic perspective, he spared no effort to support Mao's major decisions, and, in his own words, "closely followed Chairman Mao." Without the support of Zhou it would have been very difficult for Mao to carry out the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, from a tactical perspective, Zhou spared no effort to deal with various problems caused by the Cultural Revolution, and if he had not, the social disorder in China would have been even greater. In

311. Zhu et al. eds., *Wu De's Dictations: The Unusual Ten Years — My Experiences in Beijing*, 10–11.

312. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1422–1423.

fact, Zhou mostly played the role of assisting Mao Zedong, but people saw more of his actions in the latter role of limiting the negative fallout from Mao Zedong's actions. Thus Zhou, like Mao Zedong, made more mistakes than correct decisions during the Cultural Revolution. The following section looks at how Zhou assisted Mao to unseat Liu.

On July 20, Zhou attended a meeting at Mao's residence.³¹³ The pair formed a political alliance that decided Liu's political fate. On the evening of July 23, Zhou attended a meeting at Liu's residence to discuss the issue of working groups. Deng also attended this meeting.³¹⁴ During the meeting Zhou expressed different opinions to Liu and Deng on the issue of the working groups, despite having previously supported the decision to dispatch working groups, signalling his defection to the Mao camp. The next day, Zhou sent a letter to Liu and Deng to explain the differences of opinion on the sending of working groups.³¹⁵ This letter shows that Zhou wanted to mediate the political differences between Mao and Liu, but failed because Mao never made concessions on so-called principle and line issues.

On July 24, Mao convened the members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC to attend a joint meeting and listen to the Liu's report. This in itself marked a departure from the usual practice: one, by listening to the report of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC; and two, by letting the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC attend the session of the members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the

313. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 41.

314. Ibid, 42.

315. On July 24, 1966, Zhou Enlai wrote to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping: "With regard to the talk last night, based on careful consideration and review of the relevant literature, I believe that divergences mainly reflect different estimations of the situation, and different understandings of the problems, rather than anything else. This means we should not talk about irrelevant reasons, and also that we have not reached an agreement. In Beijing, the dispatch of working teams was universal and necessary, but each working team in the unit has particular circumstances that need on-site investigation and analysis. The work relations must be clarified to ensure the work progresses well. This morning I visited Beijing Foreign Studies University to see the big-character posters for myself to understand the actual situation." (Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 137.)

CPC. The Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC wrote to the Central Committee of the CPC, saying: "Presently, those who carry out the movement have several theories and guiding principles: First, they are absolutely determined to go all out to mobilize the masses against the Party's leadership and believe that going all out to mobilize the masses means discarding the Party's leadership. Second, they publicly state that we should have absolute belief in the working groups, and that opposing them means opposing the revolution. Third, clearing obstructions only incites the masses to make political denunciations. Given the above, Mao Zedong has harshly criticized Liu Shaoqi and others for their dispatch of working groups: During the past month, working groups have hindered the mass movement. Hindering the revolution undoubtedly helps the counter-revolutionaries and the reactionary gangs. But why do we want them given the trouble they have caused?"³¹⁶ Mao also ordered the Central Committee of the CPC not to dispatch working groups or issue instructions, and decided personally to cancel the working groups.³¹⁷ He said: "The Central Committee of the CPC has quite a few departments, but they have not done a good job. However, the Cultural Revolution Groups (of the Central Committee of the CPC) have done quite a few good things." He also criticized Bo Yibo (then Alternate Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC, Vice Premier of the State Council, and Director of the State Economic and Trade Commission,) along with others, for not notifying the Cultural Revolution Groups of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC for becoming the object of their attack.³¹⁸

This was a key meeting in Mao's plot to take down Liu. This meeting also reflected that the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau could not discuss decisions on major issues equally and democratically in a manner "determined by the majority, based on the principle of one person one vote," and personal decision making had replaced collective decision making. Most importantly, Mao never allowed others to challenge his political authority and decision-making power.

From the system perspective, this meeting replaced the sessions of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC and the Standing Committee Political Bureau,

316. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969)*, vol. 2, 651.

317. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 42.

318. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 136–137.

being the embryonic form of the earliest so-called brief meeting of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC, and also an indicator of the serious damage Mao caused to the meeting system of the Central Committee of the CPC. Besides the National Congress, the National Representatives Meeting, and the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Party's major conferences also included the enlarged meeting of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee, and the enlarged meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau. This was according to provision Article 37 of the Party Constitution passed at the 8th National Congress of the CPC: "When the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPC is not in session, the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC shall exercise the powers of the Central Committee of the CPC."³¹⁹ The July 24 meeting that Mao convened violated the provisions of the Party Constitution, and arbitrarily allowed the members of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC to enter the core of the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC and participate in major decisions. In fact, under the political structure of that time, only by continuously disrupting the normal system of the Party could Mao maintain his personal and arbitrary control. From this meeting on, there emerged a political trend whereby the Central Committee of the CPC grew weaker as Mao grew stronger, until he finally dominated the Central Committee, forcing it to pass whatever decisions he required; it became a mere rubber stamp legitimizing his personal control.

On July 25, without the knowledge of most members of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee and the Standing Committee of Politburo of the CPC Central Committee, Mao Zedong held talks with the first secretaries of each region and the members of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC. He said: "During the past month, the working groups have hindered the mass movement and the revolutionary forces and helped the counter-revolutionaries and reactionary groups." He thus proposed abandoning the policy of sending working groups, and instead having the revolutionary teachers and students themselves carry out the revolution, and establishing the (Cultural) Revolution Committee. He also issued a severe warning to Liu, Deng, and the others, saying: "Some of us have stopped carrying out the revolution. If you stop carrying out the revolution, then one day you will surely be overturned."³²⁰ By saying this, Mao revealed his real political intentions toward the leaders of the local authorities and the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC. Just

319. Museum of the Chinese Revolution comp., *Compilation of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China*, 159.

320. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1423.

eleven days later, Mao Zedong wrote “Bombarding the Headquarters—My First Big-character Poster, overturning Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.” The same day, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, and Jiang Qing spoke during the conference of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute and announced that “all powers belong to the Cultural Revolution Committee,” thus transferring power outside the existing leadership structures of the CPC.

When Mao resolved to cancel the working groups, Liu and Deng were obedient and voiced no objections.³²¹ This meant Mao firmly controlled the leadership of the Cultural Revolution, and no leaders in the Party could oppose either him personally or the Cultural Revolution launched and led by him.

On the same day, Mao issued an explicit instruction that terms such as “the peak” and “the supreme instruction” should not be used to describe his philosophies. On August 4, he reiterated this view.³²² Mao was very clear that such words were exaggerated, typical of a personal cult, and incompatible with Marxism. On July 29, in the report to the Central Committee of the CPC and Mao, Tao Zhu proposed according to Mao’s instruction: “Such language shall not be used in the speeches and documents of the leading organs of the Party and government. However, such language can be retained for a period in manuscripts written by the masses.” On August 4, the Central Committee of the CPC merely issued Tao’s report to the provincial and corps level as a confidential report and document, and did not announce it publicly. When Mao Zedong himself proposed limitations on the personality cult that was growing around him, this marked a historical opportunity for the Central Committee of the CPC to cease all personal worship of Mao, but the chance was missed. Eliminating all personal worship of Mao was naturally a difficult goal, but instead of subsiding, the personality cult associated with Mao only climaxed with the Cultural Revolution. The more Mao Zedong desired the Cultural Revolution, the more he needed the personality cult to support it. The discussion below examines how the newspapers and periodicals of the Central Committee of the CPC contributed to the Mao Zedong personality cult.

On August 4, Xinhua News Agency published a news release titled “Chairman Mao Swims in the Yangtze River,” saying: “On July 16, our beloved Chairman Mao cut through the rolling waves of the Yangtze River once more and swam for 1 hour and 5 minutes, covering nearly 15 kilometers. Cheers of ‘Long Live Chairman Mao’ continued for more than 4 hours along both banks of the river. This touching scene expressed the infinite love and admiration of the Chinese people for our

321. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1028.

322. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 85–86..

great leader Chairman Mao. Under the guidance of the brilliant Mao Zedong Thought, seven hundred million people have opened their eyes to see the world and ridden forward on the wind and waves!"³²³ The next day, the *People's Daily* published the editorial, "Following Chairman Mao to Advance in Strong Winds and Big Waves,"³²⁴ which read: "In a mood of extraordinary affection and great excitement, hundreds of millions of people simultaneously and sincerely wished Chairman Mao health and a long life. Chairman Mao is so healthy and energetic! This is happy news for the Chinese people, and for revolutionary people all around the world!"³²⁵ Xinhua News Agency also said: "Mao Zedong enjoying a swim in the Yangtze River is like the golden sun rising in the east and an auspicious rainbow appearing in the sky."³²⁶ Even Guo Moruo, Vice Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, and President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, joined the flattery of Mao Zedong.³²⁷ These developments represented a large-scale and open deification movement that stressed not only Mao's political superiority, but also his unrivalled physical strength.³²⁸ The slogans used were remarkably similar to those used to worship feudal emperors. The editorial of the *People's Daily* even referred to Mao's instructions as "supreme instructions to guide all conduct,"³²⁹

323. *People's Daily*, July 25, 1966.

324. *People's Daily*, July 26, 1966.

325. The Xinhua News Agency press release also referred to the words of an African friend: "It is remarkable that Chairman Mao has swum in the Yangtze River at his age. We wish Chairman Mao health and a long life. Chairman Mao's good health represents the good fortune of the oppressed, and the happiness of people everywhere!" *People's Daily*, July 25, 1966.

326. Xinhua News Agency: July 29, 1966, *People's Daily*, July 30, 1966.

327. A poem by Guo Moruo: "With passionate battle songs we recall the martyrs before a bridge. The passionate people cry 'Long May He Live!' When looking back at the masses lining the bank with colorful flowers, the drums on the Yangtze River suppress the thunder. He smiles after crossing the Yangtze River." (Feng, *Guo Moruo's Later Years*, 92–93.)

328. Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, 296.

329. The editorial claimed: "Comrade Mao Zedong experienced a rare storm of class struggles. He has learned and summarized the experience of revolutionary struggle of the people of our country and of the rest of the world. He has shown talent in comprehensively and creatively developing Marxism and Leninism. Mao Zedong Thought, the most vital and dynamic form of Marxism and Leninism, is the only guide for the socialist revolution and construction, and is a powerful ideological weapon for opposing imperialism and contemporary revisionism, and for providing supreme

which again was stylistically reminiscent of the decrees issued by feudal emperors. This showed that the Cultural Revolution embodied feudal autocracy rather than Marxism. The editorial further claimed that Mao Zedong Thought was a philosophy of struggle.³³⁰ The swim in the Yangtze River and associated publicity was a political mobilization order issued by Mao Zedong to the nation directly through the newspapers and periodicals of the Central Committee of the CPC, and a means by which he retained his control over the state even as the Cultural Revolution raged. During this period, Mao directly commanded the largest people's war in the world, but it took the form of a proletarian cultural revolution rather than the Anti-Japanese War or the revolutionary civil war.

However, while Mao Zedong successfully launched the Cultural Revolution, he failed to control this anarchic movement, which deviated from his own political guiding line.³³¹ Mao Zedong remained full of self-belief though, and never expected that the Cultural Revolution would end in failure.³³²

On July 26, during the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, Tao Zhu transmitted the contents of Mao's two talks.³³³ Normally, Mao did not participate in the sessions of the Central Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC or the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC, and his instructions were transmitted by representatives. On this occasion his representative was Tao Zhu, the Administrative Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee. When Mao made the personal decision to cancel the working groups, Liu, Deng, and other leaders obeyed Mao Zedong's decision rather than airing different views.³³⁴ The meeting thus finally decided to cancel the working groups.³³⁵

On July 27, Zhou attended a meeting at Mao's residence. He then visited Liu to request talks with him and Tao.³³⁶ At that time, severe political differences had

instruction for all our actions." *People's Daily*, July 26, 1966.

330. Editorial board of the *People's Daily*: "Following Chairman Mao to Advance in Strong Winds and Big Waves," *People's Daily*, July 26, 1966.

331. Wang, *Frustrations of a Transcendent Leader: the Great Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 1.

332. Wang Shaoguang noted that: "In 1976, immediately after Mao Zedong's death, the active leaders of the Cultural Revolution were jailed. Thus the political line of Mao Zedong was thoroughly discarded soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution. It seems that the Great Cultural Revolution was a great failure." (Ibid.)

333. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 178.

334. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1028.

335. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 178.

336. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of*

appeared in the top level of the Party. During this critical period, Zhou represented Mao and used soft tactics to win over Liu and Deng. His subjective desire in doing so may have been to prevent political division within the Party, but in reality he helped Mao to create political divisions. From this point until 1976, Zhou became an important figure through which Mao directed the Cultural Revolution.

On July 28, after being drafted by the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC and personally revised by Mao, the *Decision on the Cancellation of the Working Groups Dispatched to Colleges and Universities* was issued in the name of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, and simultaneously each college and university was allowed to elect and establish mass organizations to pursue cultural revolution at all levels.³³⁷ This notice was accompanied by the following special note: "Also applies to each secondary school."³³⁸ This was a "legal" document whereby individual colleges, universities and secondary schools established spontaneous organizations during the initial stage of the Cultural Revolution, and also became a systemic arrangement that entailed sectarian strife among mass organizations because the Party organizations of the colleges, universities and secondary schools had collapsed or become paralyzed and the working groups had withdrawn.

The day before, Chen, Kang, and Jiang went to Beijing Normal University to preside over the conference criticizing the working groups. Kang then created the so-called "February Adverse Current" event and fabricated a lie to overthrow He Long, then Member of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and

Zhou Enlai (1949–1976), vol. 2, 42.

337. "Under the instruction of the Central Committee of the CPC, to better mobilize the masses, further attack the capitalist roaders, criticize reactionary academic authorities, reform the educational system and teaching guidelines and methods based on the strong revolutionary passion and consciousness of the revolutionary students, we have found that, based on our experience, the current method of designating work teams in junior colleges and middle schools cannot meet the above revolutionary requirements. Therefore we have decided to withdraw the work teams from junior colleges and middle schools. After the withdrawal of the work teams, with regard to the work of the cultural revolutionaries in the junior colleges, grass-roots Cultural Revolution organizations at different levels shall be established through elections involving the students and teachers of the relevant schools." ("Resolutions of the Beijing Municipal Central Committee of the CPC Concerning the Withdrawal of Work Teams from Junior Colleges," July 28, 1966.)

338. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 178.

Vice Premier of the State Council.³³⁹

On July 29, Liu gave a speech in the conference convened by the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC and attended by teachers and students from the colleges, universities and secondary schools in the city that were actively involved in the Cultural Revolution. He represented the Central Committee of the CPC in accepting responsibility for the problem of dispatching working groups to the city's schools and universities, and said: "It was the Central Committee of the CPC that decided to send the working groups. Now, it has been found that the approach of sending working groups does not suit the present needs of the great proletarian revolutionary movement, and thus the Central Committee has decided to withdraw the working groups." In their speeches, Deng, Zhou, and Liu successively accepted that they did not know how to carry out the Cultural Revolution, and their being veteran revolutionaries did not mean they knew how to deal with every new problem they encountered.³⁴⁰ On July 30 and 31, in

339. In 1980, based on the investigation of the Central Committee of the CPC, it was found that the "February Adverse Current" event that shocked Beijing when Peng Zhen and He Long were denounced in July 1966 was a lie made up by Kang Sheng.

340. Deng Xiaoping said: "After the establishment of the new Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, I announced the decision to dispatch a work team to each junior college and middle school in the name of the new Municipal Committee, as proposed by the Central Committee of the CPC. We decided to use work teams to deal with the new issues we faced. But I now have to admit that this decision was harebrained. As some comrades have said, old revolutionaries do always have the best responses to new issues. Our comrades in the Central Committee and Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC are inexperienced in this unprecedented movement, and so could not always adequately support the work teams. As for the errors made by the work teams, most of these errors involved the ideological and work aspects, and some should be assumed by their supervisors." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1926.)

In the meeting, Zhou Enlai said, "Our leaders (whether in the Central Committee of the CPC, the local authorities, or in government) have wrongly assessed the situation in some respects, and have deficiently evaluated the revolutionary enthusiasm, vision, and creativity of the masses; secondly, they have adopted wrong solutions. In this respect, Beijing is the best example. Some leaders feared turmoil because the boundaries of argument and struggle can easily be blurred if young people disagree. Anyway, the movement is a new one, and is strange for those of us whose experiences lie far in the past, especially for older cadres. This is a new issue for old revolutionaries." (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1666–1667.)

accordance with Mao's instructions, Zhou twice listened to the reports of Kuai Dafu, a student of Tsinghua University, and supported his revolutionary actions. Surprised by the attention, Kuai commented that he "had never dreamed of this," but the ever changing whims of Mao Zedong meant that he was later dispatched to "hell" just as swiftly as he had been called to "heaven."

At that time, the Cultural Revolution suffered all kinds of restrictions from the Party and the faction of Liu Shaoqi within the collective leadership. However, outside the Party and at the grassroots of society, the Cultural Revolution attracted warm support among the vast masses of young students. Mao Zedong perceived this sharp contrast and immediately formed an enlarged interactive process. On July 28, Jiang Qing received two big-character posters written by the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School, namely "Long Live the Spirit of the Revolutionary Rebellion on June 24" and "Review the Sentiment of Long Live the Spirit of the Revolutionary Rebellion on July 4" which quoted Mao Zedong's slogan "rebellion is justified," coined in 1939.³⁴¹ On July 8, the Red Flag Combat

Liu Shaoqi said: "You may not be clear about how to conduct the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. If you ask me, honestly, I also do not know, and do not think others in the Central Committee of the CPC know either. Now is the time for you, the students and faculties from different schools, to learn the practice of revolution. How to conduct revolution? I have just one word: mobilize the masses, depend on the masses, rely on revolutionary students and faculties, unify the masses, and let them conduct revolution fearlessly. Perhaps you are unsure of how to do this, and to be honest so am I. The schools in Beijing have now devoted themselves to the Great Cultural Revolution for two months. You know more than I do about this, and so I must learn from you. You should not worry about academic learning and regular school life, since the Central Committee of the CPC has suspended classes for half a year. What should you do during this period? Pursue revolution! You may make great progress during this half year and we can also learn from you. Honestly, we, including myself, can only learn from and listen to you. We cannot offer you any helpful opinions because we do not understand the situation. We have previously designated working groups with the approval of the Central Committee. But we have now found that working groups cannot meet the demands of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and so the Central Committee of the CPC has decided to withdraw the working groups." (People's Publishing House Materials Room comp., *Counter-revolutionary Comments of China's Khrushchev—Liu Shaoqi*, 702–703.)

341. Mao Zedong said: "Marxism tells numerous truths, but in the final analysis it boils down to a single slogan: rebellion is right. So, we strived, we fought, and we will follow the path of socialism." (Mao, "Speech at the Meeting of All the Circles in Yan'an to

Brigade from the High School Attached to Beijing University published the big-character poster “The Fire Cannot Be Kept under the Lid,” which proposed: “Be a proletarian revolutionary Monkey King (a reference to the fictional character Sun Wukong) and create proletarian havoc in heaven.”³⁴² Clearly, the Red Guards had learned that Mao was advocating a policy of “create havoc,” in accordance with his intentions as expressed to Jiang. On August 1, Mao personally wrote to the young Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School, in support of their so-called “revolutionary actions,” and praised their slogan “Rebellion is Justified.”³⁴³ This letter was printed and distributed to the delegates to the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. In its eleventh issue of 1966, *Red Flag* published Mao’s letter and the Red Guards’ big-character poster. “Revolution is innocent and rebellion is justified” became the fashionable political slogan. Every university, secondary school and high school immediately responded to Mao’s call, and Red Guard organizations representing various factions were established across the country. On January 1, 1967, after Mao’s personal review and approval, the *People’s Daily* and *Red Flag* published the editorial, “Carry the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Through to the End,” which spoke highly of the Red Guard movement and called it “a new development to emerge in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.” Mao immediately saw the enormous vitality of the Cultural Revolution movement.³⁴⁴

In fact, since 1965, Mao had repeatedly advocated the spirit that “rebellion

Celebrate Stalin’s 60th Birthday,” December 21, 1939.)

342. The article claimed: “We want to be the ‘Monkey King’ in the proletarian revolution and rebel against all representatives of the exploiting classes. We will pursue rebellion in heaven, and among the people, and will continue to rebel even after we gain power. We will rebel against all counter-revolutionists and loyalists! We will rebel against all counter-revolutionary actions! We will rebel against all the gods and create a proletarian world!”

343. On August 1, 1966, in his “Letter to the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School,” Mao Zedong said: “Your big-character posters show your anger and open condemnation of the landholder class, bourgeoisie, imperialists, revisionists, and their followers who are exploiting and oppressing the workers, farmers, revolutionary intellectuals, and revolutionary parties, and prove that rebellion is right. I here express my ardent support for you. Whether in Beijing or in the rest of the country, during the Great Cultural Revolution, we will support those who display your revolutionary attitude.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 87–89.)

344. *People’s Daily*, January 1, 1967.

is justified.” Even as Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC, he had demanded the local authorities rebel against the Central Committee.³⁴⁵ To Mao’s disappointment, neither the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC or the leaders of local authorities clearly understood the political objectives of the “rebellion” he advocated (which was to attack Liu Shaoqi and other leaders,) and so they did not rebel against the Central Committee of the CPC as Mao desired. Mao had not expected the young Red Guards to wave the flag of the proletarian revolutionary spirit as fervently as they did, and this fervor was exactly what he wanted.

Mao used the young Red Guards to attack and destroy the normal order of the Party and the State he had created himself,³⁴⁶ ushering in an era of “national systemic destruction.”³⁴⁷ Mao openly supported the young Red Guards rebelling to “create national disorder.”³⁴⁸ This explained why from the very beginning Mao opposed Liu and the others in dispatching working groups to maintain normality, and overrode objections by expressing his absolute support for the young Red Guards in implementing “proletarian democracy.” However, Mao was also gambling politically, and created a situation with numerous uncertainties. Mao did not know what “proletarian democracy” would result in, and had even less certainty of what the young Red Guards would do. He simply blindly believed that the mass movement would yield positive results. Even as Mao sharply criticized

345. In 1965 Mao Zedong told the leaders of the major regions: “The rebels will rise up if revisionism appears in the Central Committee of the CPC. Chinese people tend to rebel historically. Are we rebels just like Song Jiang?” (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1395.)

Mao Zedong told Tao Zhu and Wang Renzhong: “I asked in Beijing last October: if revisionism appears in Beijing, how about your local governments? Will you follow the lead of Cai E who rose up against Yuan Shikai? I feel something is wrong. Since I made that speech I have conducted tours of inspection in many areas, from Tianjin to Nanchang, but I have not noticed any response.” (Ibid, 1396.)

346. Zheng, *Party versus State in Post-1949 China: The Institutional Dilemma*, 142.

347. Harding believed that the Cultural Revolution was special because it was a crisis launched by an absolute leader (i.e. Mao Zedong.) By casting into doubt the validity of the political power of the CPC, Mao mobilized social forces to fight the political power he himself had created, and also provided the political and ideological slogans to drown out his opponents. Thus, the man who had led a revolution to overthrow the old political order, once again launched a revolution against the political institution of his own creation. (Harding, “Chinese State in Crisis.”)

348. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 42.

Liu and Deng for their “blind belief in their wisdom,”³⁴⁹ he, too, held absolute faith in his own wisdom. He regarded the Great Revolution he had personally launched and led as “unprecedented,” saw himself as completely correct, and was convinced he would succeed. Nevertheless, the political process he led deviated from his chosen “correct line.” When the Cultural Revolution grew too large, like a genie escaped from the bottle, Mao Zedong found he lacked the power to direct or contain it. The Cultural Revolution proceeded as a doomed ship, nominally commanded by its charismatic captain, but set to fail regardless.³⁵⁰

Notably, all kinds of political movements and class struggles were called “mass movements,” and were carried out in accordance with the Party’s documents (e.g. the *23-Article Document*, *Notice on May 16*,) but were not approved by the National People’s Congress or authorized by following proper constitutional and legal procedures. Since these mass movements were not legally authorized in the first place, their development was not restricted by national laws, and as the class struggle grew they eventually evolved into political persecution that trampled on democracy and human rights and destroyed the democratic and legal systems.

The Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC and “Bombarding the Headquarters”

On July 29, Mao Zedong proposed a plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPC to make a formal decision on the Cultural Revolution. The Party Constitution stipulated: “Each Central Committee of the CPC has a term of five years. Two Plenums are convened each year. Meetings of the Party’s National

349. During the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong said, “It is simply blind worship of our wisdom while doubting the wisdom of the masses. Actually we are not wise, and the workers, farmers, and revolutionary intellectuals are far wiser than us. I know nothing and we depend on them.” (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1426.)

On August 10, *Red Flag* published an editorial: “Chairman Mao always taught us that ‘The masses are the real heroes, while we are sometimes mere children. We cannot learn basic knowledge without accepting this truth.’ We can teach the masses only if we learn from them. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution some of our comrades forget this and believe their own wisdom is superior to that of the masses. In fact, the masses are the only people with wisdom.” (*Red Flag*, issue 10, 1996.).

350. Wang, *Frustrations of a Transcendent Leader: the Great Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 20.

Representatives are held once a year.” The Eighth Central Committee should have ended in 1961, and the Tenth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC had been held four years previously. Therefore, Mao’s decision to convene the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC was completely arbitrary, had no institutional basis, and was based solely on the needs of political struggle. The Party’s conference system thus became the political tool for the struggles in the Party, and specifically became his personal political tool. The Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC became the occasion for Mao to take formal control of the Central Committee of the CPC, making unprecedented civil and political strife inevitable.³⁵¹

What was Mao’s purpose in convening the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC?³⁵² Mao fully realized that his pursuit of the Cultural Revolution was controversial, had encountered great resistance in the Party, particularly the Central Committee of the CPC, and should go through proper legal procedures, and so he proposed that the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC make a formal decision regarding the Cultural Revolution (the *16-Article Document*) He called for a decision to be made “by the Central Committee of the CPC.” Once made, such a decision could not be reversed until the next plenary session.³⁵³ In February 1967, Mao bitterly denounced Tan Zhenlin and the other six members of the Central Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC, saying “You want to deny the Great Cultural Revolution. Impossible!”³⁵⁴ On

351. Pang believed that the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC was held to approve the resolutions (the *16-Article Document*) as basic guidelines, policy guides, and organizational measures so that the Great Cultural Revolution could be launched across the country with a suitable legal foundation. The tide was irreversible and the outburst of an unprecedented domestic political turmoil was inevitable. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1432.)

352. According to Jin, Mao Zedong was dissatisfied with the progress of the Cultural Revolution. He believed that during the previous phase the Cultural Revolution had made errors in response to instructions from Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and particularly that the working groups had committed errors in direction and line and thus had hindered the Cultural Revolution. Therefore he decided to hold the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC and issue the *16-Article Document* to eliminate resistance and invigorate the movement. (Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1030.)

353. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1426.

354. CChen and Du eds., *Documents of the People’s Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 243.

May of the same year, when he met with the military delegation from Albania, Mao said: “The *Notice on May 16* has obviously proposed both the line issue and the two line issue. In August during the enlarged meeting of the Central Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC, most members of the Central Committee disagreed with me, and sometimes I was the lone supporter of my view. They said my opinion was out of date, so I had to take my opinion to the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC for discussion. Through the debate, only a little more than half of them agreed and many did not come round.”³⁵⁵

The other political purpose of Mao in convening the plenary session was to topple Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, reorganize the Central Committee of the CPC, solidify the core leadership of the Cultural Revolution, and guarantee the organizational implementation of the *16-Article Document*. In October 1968, in his speech to the enlarged Twelfth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Lin Biao best explained the political purpose of Mao, saying that it was: “to solve the problem of Liu Shaoqi and the power of Deng Xiaoping.”³⁵⁶ Hu Qiaomu commented in 1980: “This Plenum reorganized the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC for no reason and made the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC superior to all higher institutions in the hierarchy, which contravened the Party Constitution.”³⁵⁷ Mao did this intentionally because he could only launch the Cultural Revolution if the provisions of the Party Constitution were destroyed.

From August 1 to 12, Mao chaired the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. Compared with previous plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the CPC, the structure of the attendees at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC differed significantly. The formal delegates comprised 74 members of the Central Committee of the CPC and 67 alternate members of the Central Committee of the CPC, for a total of 141

355. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1013; Ye, *Biography of Chen Boda*, 361.

356. Lin Biao said: “Chairman Mao chaired the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC and rectified the errors of Liu and Deng. Chairman Mao published the big-character poster ‘Bombarding the Headquarters’ to suggest the existence of a bourgeois command hidden within the CPC, and to reveal the reality of struggle between two rival commands. This big-character poster of Chairman Mao shocked the whole CPC and encouraged people throughout the country. Since then the spectacular struggle of the ‘command’ that involves hundreds of millions of the masses has begun across the country.” (Lin, “Speech at the Enlarged Twelfth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC,” October 26, 1968.)

357. Hu, “Summarizing the ‘Great Cultural Revolution’: from History to Logistics.”

delegates. The non-voting delegates included persons in charge of each department of the Central Committee of the CPC, as well as each Party committee of the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, the members of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the persons in charge of the relevant departments of the Central Committee of the CPC. Additionally, for the first time, Nie Yuanzi and other representatives of the Cultural Revolution from colleges and universities in Beijing were invited to attend as non-voting delegates. There were 47 non-voting delegates, comprising a quarter of the total attendees. This was the first time in the history of the Party that representatives of revolutionary teachers and students had been invited to attend such a plenary session, and their presence violated the relevant provision of the Party Constitution. This episode demonstrates how Mao sought new political forces to support his launch of the Cultural Revolution.

Speaking for the Central Committee of the CPC, Deng announced the session was scheduled to last for five days, with the main agenda including: one, pass the *Decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by the Central Committee of the CPC* (the 16-Article Document); second, discuss and approve the main domestic and international measures of the Central Committee of the CPC since the Tenth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC; third, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Party Constitution, formalize the decision on personnel changes of the enlarged meeting of the Central Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC last May. However, according to Mao's personal suggestion, on August 5, the Plenary Session of the Central Committee made a last minute change to the timing and agenda of the original session, and extended the session period to twelve days.

Why did Mao decide to change the original session agenda? The immediate reason was because two face-to-face confrontations had occurred between Liu and himself. The first occurred during the opening ceremony of the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC on August 1. As the individual presiding over the routine work of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC, Liu reported to the plenary session. The first half of his report dealt with the work of the Central Committee of the CPC since the Tenth Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, while the second half mainly dealt with the work since the Cultural Revolution. He volunteered to take responsibility for the faults in the Cultural Revolution and misguided deployment of the working groups.³⁵⁸ However,

358. Liu Shaoqi said, "During the Cultural Revolution, conditions in Beijing were reported to the Chairman weekly. I was staying in Beijing during this period. Some errors were committed during the Cultural Revolution, especially in the matter of working groups,

Mao was dissatisfied with Liu's self-criticism.³⁵⁹ He harshly criticized Liu, saying Liu and the others had dispatched the working groups to suppress the youthful enthusiasm of the students and others for the Cultural Revolution, and that they blindly believed they alone were wise and ignored the wisdom of the masses.³⁶⁰ He expressed his belief that the working groups had suppressed and hindered the masses, and that fewer than 10 percent of the working groups were good while the remainder were incorrect and actually causing damage through their work.³⁶¹ Mao sternly rebuked the line followed by Liu in dispatching the working groups as supporting the bourgeoisie and opposing the proletarian revolution.³⁶²

The political differences between Mao and Liu caused great concern among the leadership. The previous day, Zhou Enlai and He Long had accompanied Mao and Liu to meet scientists from various countries participating in the Beijing Physics Seminar. He Long said worriedly to Zhou: "We must be careful in dealing with Liu Shaoqi and must consider the unity of the Party."³⁶³ He Long knew Mao well and feared he would suddenly turn on Liu and thus cause political division within the

and I should assume the main responsibility for this....For three years, Chen Boda has proposed ceasing the dispatch of work teams or even withdrawing existing teams.... There was no discussion of this possibility when it was first raised, and Chen Boda later presented two opinions in writing. However, most comrades agreed on the dispatch of working groups, and so did I in my speech on the issue. I thought working groups could be dispatched and withdrawn as required." Mao interrupted to note that the question at the time was only to dispatch or not. Liu responded: "It was already when there was a question to withdraw the work teams or not. I said that this was easy to do, and we simply needed an order." Mao rebuked: "Chen Boda had suggested withdrawal, but you did not withdraw." (Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi's 20 Years after the Founding of New China*, 358.)

359. Liu Shaoqi reflected: "Initially the Chairman was not in Beijing and I presided over the work of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee. After returning, the Chairman assessed that the dispatch of work teams was inappropriate. I must assume the main responsibility for what happened. Initially I perceived a risk that some college organizations in Beijing could fail to properly implement the movement, and that any interruption of its smooth implementation could negatively impact the leadership of the CPC." In response to this, Mao Zedong commented: "How could work be interrupted?" (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1426.)

360. Ibid.

361. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1667.

362. Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi's 20 Years after the Founding of New China*, 359.

363. Feng, *Guo Moruo's Later Years*, 96.

Party. Most of the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC shared this concern. Unfortunately, He Long's fears immediately materialized.

On August 2, Zhou gave a speech at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. He clarified that he supported Mao's decision to personally launch the Cultural Revolution, and also volunteered to assume responsibility for the dispatch of working groups. However, he sharply criticized Liu and Deng for their insistence on not withdrawing the working groups after July 18, and called this decision a "serious error."³⁶⁴ Among the six members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, Zhou was strongest in his declarations of support for Mao. He also said: "We need to maintain our integrity in our later years, and so should closely follow Mao Zedong. By following Mao Zedong we will never be left behind, and will never be tested in the Great Cultural Revolution."³⁶⁵ This declaration of support was extremely important to Mao. Zhou became the quintessential political chameleon during the Cultural Revolution. On the one hand, he unconditionally and fully supported every decision of Mao in the Cultural Revolution, while on the other hand, he tried to minimize the movement's damage. Arguably, the negative aspects of the former were greater

364. Zhou Enlai said: "Since 1962, when the Tenth Plenary of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC was held, until today, all important decisions were made by Chairman Mao personally. During the Cultural Revolution, the big-character poster of the seven-person group that included Nie Yuanzi was published in the *People's Daily* with the approval of Chairman Mao, and its publication started the movement. The withdrawal of the working teams was also the decision of Chairman Mao after returning to Beijing. The Cultural Revolution is unprecedented. With regard to the mistaken dispatch of working teams, all of the members of the standing committee (meaning the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC,) especially those presiding over work in Beijing (meaning Liu, Zhou, and Deng) should assume liability. Even after the return of the Chairman, we (meaning Liu and Deng) still insisted on not withdrawing the working teams when we reported to Chairman Mao. This was a serious error." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Mao Zedong (1893–1949)*, vol. 2, 45; Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1033–1034.)

Zhou Enlai said: "The Chairman said on the first (of August,) 90% of working groups had made directional errors. Even after the Chairman returned to Beijing and we reported to him, we continued to insist on not withdrawing the working groups. We should hear different opinions and compare those of different parties; if our thoughts are wrong, we should learn from the masses, the Chairman, and the Central Committee of the CPC." (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1668.)

365. Ibid, 1673.

than the positive aspects of the latter. Zhou served on the Standing Committee of the CCCPC Political Bureau throughout the Cultural Revolution and was always Mao Zedong's most important assistant; as Mao made mistakes, so did Zhou.

On the afternoon of August 4, at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, Mao and Liu had a second face-to-face confrontation. Mao expressed resolute opposition to Liu and his allies, saying that they had suppressed the student movement and disobeyed their own orders. He also criticized the Central Committee of the CPC (another way of criticizing Liu and his supporters.) This friction within the Party created a problem of direction and line, and hence was very dangerous. Mao said: "The big-character poster written by Nie Yuanzi's seven-person group is like the Declaration of the Paris Commune." Mao believed that Liu and his allies were opposing the Cultural Revolution by supporting the bourgeoisie.³⁶⁶ By saying this, Mao exaggerated the errors of Liu.

366. On August 4, 1966, at the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, Mao Zedong said: "Student movements were suppressed under the reign of the Manchus, the Northern Warlords, and the Kuomintang. Now it is the Party suppressing student movements. The Central Committee of the CPC is violating its own orders. The Central Committee of the CPC issued the order to suspend classes for a half a year so students could pursue the Great Cultural Revolution, but now it is intervening to suppress the rising movement. The Central Committee of the CPC is ignoring the opinions of others. We can say this is an incorrect direction. In fact this incorrect direction and line violates Marxism and Leninism. This meeting needs to solve this issue to prevent a dangerous situation.

"The words of the Central Committee of the CPC about taking the mass line, believing in the masses, and following Marxism and Leninism are simply rubbish. They have been lying for years. Their real position will be exposed as events take their course. Apparently they oppose the proletariat and support a bourgeois position. If opposing the new Municipal Committee means opposing the CPC, why can we not oppose the new municipal committee! The key is the class you represent and the class you are struggling against.

"I have never worked in grassroots units, but for some people, the longer they stay there, the more they oppose the proletariat. Any attempt of the Central Committee of the CPC to prevent communication between classes, departments and schools is meant to suppress and terrorize! Some disagreed and doubted the instruction of the Central Committee of the CPC of June 18. The big-character poster released by Nie Yuanzi's seven-man group resembles the Declaration of the Paris Commune and calls for a Beijing Commune. The big-character poster is good and should be publicized around the world. But the report submitted by (Li) Xuefeng said that a party or

However, Liu still volunteered to conduct self-criticism. He said: "During that period, the Chairman was not at home. I presided over the work in Beijing, so I bear the main responsibility." However, Mao was dissatisfied with Liu Shaoqi's self-criticism, and sternly rebuked him again: "You carried out a dictatorship in Beijing and did it very well! Putting it politely, you committed a mistake of direction, but in fact you opposed the proletarian revolution and adopted a bourgeois stand."³⁶⁷ Unable to endure this, Liu said: "I do not fear losing power. In fact, there are five things I do not fear."³⁶⁸ Wang Guangmei said: "During this session, when Mao criticized his implementation of dictatorship in Beijing, Liu said: 'How can this be called dictatorship? The Central Committee collectively decided to dispatch the working groups.'" When Mao asked why he was afraid of the masses, Liu said: "I have served the revolution for decades, so I am not afraid of death. Why would I fear the masses? I fear the masses no more than I fear losing power."³⁶⁹ This instantly infuriated Mao, who turned openly hostile and indignantly denounced Liu as "a monster and demon."³⁷⁰

What were the "five things" that Liu did not fear, and who had first proposed this concept? Why did Mao suddenly turn on Liu? In 1962, during the "7000 Cadres Rally," Liu recounted: "Comrade Mao Zedong once said: 'To stick to the truth, to seek the truth from facts, and to tell the truth, we must be fearless toward five things: dismissal from our posts, expulsion from the Party, divorce, imprisonment, and execution. If you prepare yourself and do not fear these five things, you will dare to say everything, dare to seek truth from facts, and dare to uphold the truth.'"³⁷¹

country requires discipline and law, and that domestic and international affairs should be differentiated. If the Central Communist Youth League (Hu Yaobang and others) suppresses the student movements instead of supporting them, strict measures should be taken in response."

(Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1427; Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1035–1036; Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi's 20 Years after the Founding of New China*, 361–362.)

367. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1668.

368. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1427–1428.

369. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 183–184.

370. When Ye Jianying said: "We have millions of soldiers and should never be afraid of 'Monsters and Demons'," Mao Zedong responded, "The 'Monsters and Demons' are among your people." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1427–1428.)

371. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 439.

Liu adopted Mao's concept of "five things not to be feared" both to express his own views, and to protect himself by taking the precautionary measure of referencing the words of Mao Zedong himself. By referencing the "five things not to be feared" Liu demonstrated that work could no longer be discussed normally, equally, and collectively in the meetings of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC.³⁷² Subsequently, Liu was dismissed from his post, expelled from the Party, imprisoned and persecuted to death.

The two face-to-face confrontations with Liu infuriated Mao, who regarded these incidents as major challenges to his personal authority and power. His response was immediate and excessive, and comprised two parts. First, he required that his speeches be circulated throughout the Party. On August 6, the Central Committee of the CPC distributed Mao's speech during the enlarged meeting of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC. As requested by Mao, the scheduled meeting agenda was revised and the session extended.³⁷³ Mao had already shown his paternalism, and the extension of this session was just another example of his making unilateral decisions and ignoring the democratic decision-making procedures of collective leadership. Mao's own reason for this was: "If this Plenum had not been convened and we still insisted on refusing to rectify our errors for several more months, I believe things would be much worse. So I think this meeting achieved some positive results." Mao further explained the change in the session agenda as "the (temporary) adjustment of the members and alternate members of the Politburo of the CPC, the Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC, which guaranteed the implementation of the resolution and communiqué of the Central Committee of the CPC."³⁷⁴ Zhou and other leaders helped him to realize this political purpose.

Second, using the special form of the big-character poster, Mao wrote "Bombarding the Headquarters—My First Big-character Poster," which was published in the *Beijing Daily*.³⁷⁵ By writing a "big-character poster," Mao,

372. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2.

373. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1668.

374. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 101.

375. Mao Zedong's big-character poster was printed in the margin of the front page of the *Beijing Daily* (June 2, 1966.) On the same page, the big-character post written by Nie Yuanzi's seven-man group and the *People's Daily* editorial "Purge All 'Monsters and Demons'" were republished. Mao Zedong's secretary Xu Fuye later made copies and Mao Zedong made two further modifications before issuing a final version. In this way,

actively led this type of rebel activity, giving it his seal of approval as the main weapon and tool of the Cultural Revolution. This shows that Mao had not only abandoned his formula of “unity-criticism-unity,”³⁷⁶ but also the formal system of collective decision-making he had created to resolve political differences among the leadership. Hence, political division would be inevitable. The “big-character poster” targeted Liu and Deng and cast them as representing the “wrong line” in opposing the Cultural Revolution. Mao created the impression of a political division within the Party, but in fact this split was entirely his own creation. The same day, in printing and issuing the documents of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, after the sentence “As for the proletarian revolutionaries, what we abide by is the discipline of the Chinese Communist Party and what we accept unconditionally is the leadership of the CPC Central Committee led by Chairman Mao,” Mao wrote the comment: “Wrong leadership that damages the revolution shall not be accepted unconditionally and must be firmly resisted. In the Cultural Revolution, the vast masses of revolutionary teachers and students and revolutionary cadres have fiercely resisted wrong leadership.”³⁷⁷ This comment was aimed directly at Liu. In fact, Mao faced a basic problem of how to distinguish “right” and “wrong” leadership, something that should be based on objective results rather than relying on his subjective judgment. However, he always managed to avoid this problem by controlling the discussion on what was correct and what was not, which was the fundamental reason he led himself astray during the Cultural Revolution and drove himself into a corner with catastrophic results. His big-character poster and this comment were important signs of the gathering storm.

Mao’s extraordinary big-character poster also aimed to further expose and criticize the “historical mistake” of Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, and Deng Xiaoping in supporting the rural reform during the early 1960s.³⁷⁸ Mao had bided his time

Mao Zedong’s instruction was released as a big-character poster. (Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 184–185.)

376. Mao Zedong said: “In 1942, we concluded the democratic solution to contradictions among the people using a formula of ‘unity-criticism-unity’. Specifically, solve contradictions through criticism, or struggle to start from the will to unite opinion to create a new union with a new basis. According to our experience, this is a good way to resolve the contradiction among the people.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 7, 210.)

377. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 93

378. In “Bombarding the Headquarters—My First Big-character Poster,” Mao said: “The

and waited until after others had made their move before settling old scores with the three members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. He cracked down hard on Liu and Deng, while making Chen Yun the target of verbal attacks. On August 6, Chen Yun wrote to Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC, expressing his support for the policy adopted by Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC.³⁷⁹ Kang Sheng said: “Comrade Chen Yun’s thinking has long opposed that of the Chairman. He only considers the economy and neglects politics.” During the subsequent Working Conference of the Central Committee of the CPC held in October, all three of Mao’s opponents were forced to conduct self-criticism.³⁸⁰

Mao’s purpose in personally writing a big-character poster merits close examination. His big-character poster revealed political differences between him and Liu and Deng. These differences were both long-standing and severe. Furthermore, Mao’s nature was to be impulsive and reactive.³⁸¹ He subjectively assessed his differences with Liu and Deng to be irreconcilable, and so decided on an open political showdown to reveal and resolve the struggles in the Party and break the collective leadership of the Central Committee.³⁸² Mao genuinely

first Marxist and Leninist big-character poster in China (the big-character poster written by Nie Yuanzi’s seven-man group) and the comment in the *People’s Daily* (by Wang Li, Guan Feng, and Cao Yi’ou) are excellent! Please re-read them. However during the past 50 days or more, from the Central Committee of the CPC to local governments, besides these good opinions, some leaders have conducted bourgeois dictatorship and sided with the bourgeoisie. They attacked the passionate proletarian Cultural Revolution movement and confused right and wrong. They persecuted the revolutionists, suppressed different opinions, and conducted white terror. They even encouraged the bourgeoisie and attacked the proletariat! Given the wrong trends of the rightists in 1962 (mainly Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, and Deng Xiaoping) and the rightism in the name of leftism in 1964 (mainly Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping,) surely we need to be vigilant?” (*People’s Daily*, August 5, 1967.)

379. Jin and Chen ed., *Biography of Chen Yun*, vol. 2, 1358–1360.

380. On October 23, 1966, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping conducted self-criticisms on the Central Working Meeting. on October 30, Chen Yun submitted a written self-criticism. (Jin and Chen ed., *Biography of Chen Yun*, vol. 2, 1359–1360.)

381. Editorial Committee of Hu Qiaomu’s *Biography*, *Hu Qiaomu on the History of the CPC*, 117.

382. Jin commented: “Through this unusual big-character poster, Mao Zedong made public his discontent with the frontline work of the Central Committee of the CPC (and specifically his unhappiness with other leaders) and stoked the problem of working

believed that Liu and Deng were taking a capitalist road, and unable to tolerate this, he attacked them. This was the direct political reason and objective of Mao Zedong in launching the Cultural Revolution. Lin Biao later said in the 1969 Political Report to the 9th Congress of the Party: "Mao Zedong published the big-character poster, 'Bombarding the Headquarters', which revealed Liu Shaoqi as the leader of the bourgeois headquarters."³⁸³ In reality, the framing of Liu was the result of Mao's subjective imagination and political miscalculation. As the 1981 resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC put it: "The so-called bourgeois headquarters headed by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping did not exist."³⁸⁴ Similarly, Hu Qiaomu commented: "Mao Zedong said he was 'bombarding the headquarters', but actually he was bombarding the Central Politburo of the CPC."³⁸⁵ Mao's basic motivation in launching the Cultural Revolution was to expose the "dark sides" within the Party,³⁸⁶ but this did not mean he could solve these "dark problems," nor that Liu and Deng actually represented the problems. Actually, at that time, the greatest problem facing Chinese society was not the so-called capitalist roaders, but the fact that over 60% of the population lived in absolute poverty, and the

teams into a major issue by labeling them a manifestation of "bourgeois dictatorship." Only now did Zhou Enlai come to understand who Mao Zedong had referred to with the term 'proxies of the bourgeoisie' in the *Notice on May 16*." (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1669.)

383. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

384. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literatures Since the Third Plenum of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee*, vol. 2, 810.

385. In September 1980, when talking about the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Hu Qiaomu said: "During the meeting, Mao Zedong presented 'Bombing the Command Post' without any warning. The so-called 'command post' was the Central Politburo of the CPC. Mao Zedong had been in Hangzhou and had authorized Liu Shaoqi to preside over the daily work of the Central Committee. Suddenly Liu became an anti-revolutionary and the target of attack. Mao Zedong fabricated two 'command posts', led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, respectively, and later added a third led by Tao Zhu. Mao Zedong had no evidence or witnesses, and his word alone created two 'command posts'. The plenary meeting approved Mao Zedong's decision in violation of the party constitution, and groundlessly created a 'bourgeois command'. These events changed intra-party life and influenced daily life throughout the country. The Chairman of the State lost his freedom of action, as did the Secretary General." (Editorial Committee of Biography of Hu Qiaomu comp., *Hu Qiaomu on the History of the CPC*, 113.)

386. Lin, "Report to the 9th National Congress of the CPC," *People's Daily*, 28 April, 1969.

Engel coefficients of both urban and rural residents exceeded 60%. The Cultural Revolution only exacerbated these serious economic and societal problems, but Mao was so obsessed with politics that he neglected the basic condition of the country.

Zhou Enlai played a key role in this plenary session and became Mao's important ally. On August 5, Mao met with Zhou to arrange the circulation of the big-character poster 'Bombarding the Headquarters.'³⁸⁷ According to Wu Faxian, then commander of the PLA Air Force, Zhou told him that during this meeting Mao also discussed the issue of his successor with him. Specifically, Mao said: "Liu Shaoqi seems unsuitable. I have observed him for 21 years (referring to 1945–1966) and feel completely disappointed. I have also observed Deng Xiaoping for seven years (referring to 1959–1966) and feel disappointed. I have decided to remove Liu Shaoqi from office, so how should I do this?" Zhou suggested that Lin Biao would be the most suitable replacement for Liu. Mao nodded and said: "All right. Summon Lin Biao (then recuperating in Dalian) to Beijing."³⁸⁸ This exchange demonstrated three things. First, Zhou recommended that Lin take over Liu's political posts, a decision subsequently formally approved by the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC. Second, Mao selected Lin to replace Liu as his successor not as the result of long-term observation of Lin and recognition of his achievements, but simply as a temporary expedient in response to the needs of political struggle. The appointment thus was a great surprise to Lin himself. Third, Zhou played a key role in the overthrow of Liu. On this critical issue, Zhou ignored the Party's basic organizational principles and hatched a political conspiracy with Mao.

On the evening of that day, without convening the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC to make a collective decision, Zhou notified Liu by phone not to appear in public or meet foreign guests in the near future.³⁸⁹ Only with this phone call did Liu learn the content of Mao's big-character poster and clearly understand that Mao had ordered him to leave. The relationship between Mao and the members of Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC evolved into one between a ruler and his ministers, whereby ministers had to die if the emperor so commanded. This marked a historical regression whereby the Party assumed characteristics of the old feudal society.

On August 5 and 6, Zhou acted for Mao and made two appointments to meet the leaders of the Central Military Commission and senior army generals and convey

387. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1669.

388. Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 597.

389. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 46.

Mao's decisions regarding the reorganization of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC and his successor.³⁹⁰ In the political struggles within the Party, Mao needed the support and loyalty of the army, and this important

390. Specifically, on August 5, 1966, after calling on Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai made an appointment with He Long (Marshal,) Nie Rongzhen (Marshal,) Chen Yi (Marshal,) Xu Xiangqian (Marshal,) Ye Jianying (Marshal,) Yang Chengwu (General,) and Liu Zhijian (Lieutenant General.) (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Mao Zedong (1893–1949)*, vol. 2, 46.)

Liao Hansheng, then Alternate Member of the Central Committee of the CPC and Political Member of the Beijing Military Area, recalled: "At 12 p.m. on August 6, 1966, Premier Zhou Enlai convened a meeting attended by the heads of each department of the army, the chiefs of the navy and air force, and the principal of the Beijing Military Area to give them advance warning of Mao Zedong's decisions. Zhou Enlai said: 'Chairman Mao has made some decisions and hence written "My Big-character Poster." He summoned me to his place at night and authorized me to deliver the poster he was preparing before he retired for the night. The next night he summoned me again and gave me a copy of "My Big-character Poster." Chairman Mao has determined to reorganize the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau.' Zhou Enlai later convened another meeting for the same purpose, this time attended by leaders of the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions." (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1849–1850.)

Wu Faxian, then Commander of the PLA Air Force, recalled: "On August 8 (actually August 6,) Zhou Enlai chaired a meeting attended by Yang Chengwu (Deputy Chief of Staff of General Staff,) Xiao Hua (Director of the General Political Department, General,) Xu Guangda (Senior General, Chief of Staff of the PLA Armored Corps,) Zhang Aiping (Vice Chief of Staff of General Staff, General,) Xiao Jinguang (Senior General, Chief of Staff of the PLA Navy,) Su Zhenhua (General, First Commissar of the PLA Navy,) Wu Faxian, and the heads of each department under the Central Committee to introduce Mao Zedong's 'My Big-character Poster'. During this meeting Zhou said: 'Past facts show that Liu Shaoqi is incompetent to carry out the daily work of the Central Committee of the CPC. Chairman Mao hoped to develop Liu Shaoqi into his successor, but apparently Liu is not a proper candidate. He has let Chairman Mao down. You are hereby notified that the Central Committee of the CPC has determined to transfer Comrade Lin Biao to Beijing to replace Liu Shaoqi as the First Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC.'" (Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 596.) The *Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC* in fact was unauthorized and made solely by Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Therefore, although Lin Biao was nominally in charge of the daily work of the Central Military Commission, in fact Zhou Enlai, on behalf of Mao Zedong, controlled the Central Military Commission until 1973.

matter was personally arranged by Zhou.

On August 6, Mao decided to change the agenda of the plenary session and came to a preliminary agreement with Zhou on the adjusted list of leaders of the Central Committee and its meeting schedule.³⁹¹ That night, while submitting the list of candidate members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC to Mao for examination and approval, Zhou added the following postscript: "The (draft) list decided through evening consultation at the Chairman's place is as follows, and has been reported to Comrade Lin Biao."³⁹² Clearly, the other members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC had been excluded from the major decisions of the plenary session, not to mention the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC.

Mao wanted to take down Liu, but could not have succeeded by relying solely on the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC. Critically, he had to seek political allies on the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Central Committee. Besides Zhou, who had volunteered to become his ally, Mao also chose Lin Biao, fourteen years his junior, to formally replace Liu as successor. On the evening of the same day, Mao asked his secretary Xu Yefu to notify Lin by phone that he should immediately come to Beijing to attend the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. Lin was unwilling to take up the position and tried to avoid coming to Beijing. To fulfill Mao Zedong's instruction, Zhou personally phoned Lin and arranged for Wu Faxian to meet Lin in Dalian, from where they flew to Beijing to attend the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC. After returning to Beijing, a meeting between Lin and Mao was arranged by Wang Dongxing in the Zhejiang Hall of the Great Hall of the People. Mao talked to Lin separately and asked him to act as his successor, but Lin refused. On August 13, during the Working Conference of the Central Committee of the CPC, Lin said: "The Central Committee of the CPC (referring to Mao Zedong) has presented me with tasks that I know I lack the ability to fulfill, so I have made several pleas to quit." Lin refused to accept his new posts until after the reorganization of the leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC.

After August 6, the plenary session temporarily added three substantive items to its agenda: First, the holding of several democratic meetings of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC to criticize Liu, Deng, and their associates.³⁹³ Second, the radical reorganization of the three main leadership

391. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1429.

392. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 187.

393. In the outline of the self-criticism made at the Plenum, Liu Shaoqi said: "I should

institutions (the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC.) Third, the creation of the political conditions for Lin to become Mao's successor.³⁹⁴ From this point on, Mao firmly controlled the Central Committee of the CPC and was well positioned both politically and organizationally to continue the Cultural Revolution.

On August 7, the plenary session printed and distributed Mao's big-character poster.³⁹⁵ Although this big-character poster did not identify Liu and Deng by name, all the senior cadres of the Party, government and army attending the session understood who it referred to and were greatly shocked. During the discussion of the document, many cadres merely exchanged their understandings of the situation and avoided expressing their support. This reflected that a few leaders had reservations about this sudden and unforeseen political event. Only five attendees strongly supported Mao and attacked Liu: Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan.³⁹⁶ Mao's political power was demonstrated by the ease with which he took down Liu and Deng with a big-character poster. Mao enjoyed supreme status and power within the Party, none could challenge him, and with a word he could get whatever he wished. Guo Moruo (Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress,) who attended the session as a non-voting delegate, wrote a poem praising Mao Zedong's big-character poster and sincerely referred to him as "the Red Sun in the Heart!"³⁹⁷

Within a short period (from the Working Conference of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1964 to the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in 1966,) Mao shrewdly outmaneuvered his political opponents and

assume primary responsibility for the line error committed by the Central Committee of the CPC during the Great Cultural Revolution when the Chairman was away from Beijing. I assume all responsibility for all I said and did. As for errors made by others, I assume responsibility for those too." (Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1038.)

394. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 44.

395. The big-character poster circulated at the plenary session was signed by all members of Nie Yuanzi's seven-man group from Peking University.

396. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 187–188.

397. In his "Comments on Chairman Mao's First Big-character Poster 'Bombarding the Headquarters,'" Guo Moruo said the poster showed: "The CPC is divided into two factions, and the rightists must be criticized even if they are powerful. We must identify the enemies of the masses and take up weapons to attack them. Those who wish to seize power are stirring up a storm. Despite these dangers, our champion Chairman Mao fills our hearts with sunshine!" (Feng, *Guo Moruo's Later Years*, 114–115.)

won the support and recognition of the majority of the senior leaders of the Party. However, in the long term, Mao's personal decisions and political methods caused the Party to suffer major political divisions and pay large political costs. Mao's machinations broke the existing rules governing the resolution of intra-party divisions and struggles, ushering in a period of uncertainty, opaqueness, unpredictability, intensity, complexity, and cruelty. All the leaders besides Mao lacked any sense of political security as it became apparent that Mao could simply brush opponents aside with his fingers.³⁹⁸

Mao felt no need to consider the Party Constitution. He simply attacked, and worried about formalities either as an afterthought or not at all (examples of his victims included Tao Zhu in 1966, Chen Boda in 1970, Lin Biao in 1971, and Deng Xiaoping in 1976.) Intra-party political struggles, in various forms, became normal within the CPC, with political games that created only losers and no winners. However, the members and alternate members of the Central Committee of the CPC attending the session were both powerless to fix the politically damaging situation and also had no inkling that the Cultural Revolution would continue for a decade. Motivated by self-preservation they all unconditionally and consistently passed each decision proposed by Mao. Most of them soon became the objects of revolutionary criticism and political persecution and suffered the same political fate as Liu and Deng. This was the price of their support for Mao's decision.

On August 8, Zhou presided over the plenary session and Lin attended for the first time. The session passed the *Decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by the Central Committee of the CPC*. That evening, Lin met alone with the members of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC. Lin began to deify Mao and cast him as the supreme commander of the Cultural Revolution. He said: "The Cultural Revolution Group comprises the combat personnel who will pursue the Cultural Revolution. It is not temporary and will exist for a long time."³⁹⁹ The 1981 resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC pointed out that

398. Kang Sheng delivered Mao Zedong's instruction in his speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC, May 25, 1966.

399. On August 8, 1966, when Lin Biao received the Central Cultural Revolution Group, he said: "Chairman Mao was the supreme commander and the captain of this Cultural Revolution and you are all his associates. The Cultural Revolution Group and Cultural Revolution Committee are permanent organizations instead of being temporary. You achieved much in recent months and will achieve even more in the future. You should beat down the bourgeois reactionary authorities and stir up a big storm to warn the bourgeoisie and inspire the proletariat. Chairman Mao is the greatest proletarian leader and talent that currently exists, holds supreme responsibility for the revolution, and

the personality cult of Mao was advocated to frenzied extremes.⁴⁰⁰ Lin was not only the leader of this unprecedented deification movement but also the most important supporter of Mao's launch of the Cultural Revolution, and became the biggest winner in the struggle between Mao and Liu. Moreover, Lin yielded to political temptation and participated in conspiracies and plots. Although he knew Mao well, he could not have expected that becoming Mao's successor would ultimately see him become his biggest political rival, just as had happened to Liu. This outcome was the political logic of Mao's struggle philosophy during the Cultural Revolution, and for both Mao and Lin, their struggle was independent of their will.

The same day, the *People's Daily* reported: "The Central Committee of the CPC has decided to accelerate the publication of the *Works of Chairman Mao*. The committee has therefore ordered the mobilization of the cadres, staff and workers of the publishing, printing and distributing departments, to fully devote themselves to the publication and distribution of this book. In accordance with the instruction of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Ministry of Culture has decided to print and distribute 35 million volumes of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* this year and next. It has been reported: 'Chairman Mao's books are the best, most revolutionary, and most scientific books. Every word in Chairman Mao's books is gold and every sentence is truth.'"⁴⁰¹ Meanwhile, the *People's Daily* published the editorial titled "A Great and Happy Event for the Whole Nation" which said: "The primary need in the political life of the Chinese people is to read Chairman Mao's books. If our country, occupying a quarter of the world's population, becomes a big school for learning Mao Zedong Thought and popularizing Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought more deeply and widely, our socialist proletarian dictatorship

possesses the most realistic revolutionary spirit. Mao Zedong Thought has passed the test of long-term revolutionary struggle and is the supreme theory of the proletariat and the ultimate proletarian work, as well as being one of the greatest achievements in the history in our country." He also criticized: "Some members of the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC (referring to Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and Chen Yun) have ignored this point, and thus are really misguided, just as the Soviets were misguided when they abandoned Leninism." On August 16 of the same year, Mao Zedong officially approved the transmission of the draft of Lin Biao's speech. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 23–28.)

400. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Documents Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 812.

401. *People's Daily*, August 8, 1966.

will remain forever red, and will contribute to revolutionary movements elsewhere in the world.”⁴⁰²

On the same day, the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC formally passed the *Decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (the *16-Article Document*,) drafted by the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC and examined and approved by Mao.⁴⁰³ Mao decided to implement the *16-Article Document* to overcome problems of information asymmetry, incompleteness, and uncertainty. Mao believed the *Notice on May 16* was insufficient because it dealt only with political and ideological issues. The practicalities of carrying out a movement demanded the implementation of regulations and restrictions. Limits should be established, what was permitted versus forbidden should be clarified, and the most necessary actions should be clarified.⁴⁰⁴ The reality of China was that it had an enormous population, complex society, and pronounced differences among regions, and hence the *16-Article Document* could not clearly and adequately cover all of the unexpected situations thrown up by the Cultural Revolution. Having bypassed the hierarchical Party organizations and state institutions and mobilized hundreds of millions of the masses, Mao could not realistically draw clear boundaries, and in any case was too far removed from the masses and from reality to do so. However, Mao naively believed that the mobilized masses loved, respected, and worshipped him, and hence would do whatever he said.

Article 1 of the *16-Article Document* defined the movement as “a great revolution

402. *People's Daily*, August 8, 1966.

403. Chen Boda successively submitted it to Mao Zedong on July 26, August 3, and August 7 1966, and Mao made five instructions and modifications. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 82.)

Mao Zedong issued instructions on and modifications to this draft many times between July and August 1966. In early July, on instructions from Mao Zedong, Chen Boda, Wang Li, and others began drafting this document and made 31 modifications. Mao entrusted Tao Zhu, Wang Renzhong, and Zhang Pinghua with the modification work, and Zhou Enlai made suggestions regarding the modifications. The draft was finally approved by Mao on August 7. (Xu ed., *Storms of Fulu Residence: Struggles of Liu Shaoqi During the Cultural Revolution*, 124.) According to Zhou Enlai, some leaders, including Tao Zhu and Wang Renzhong, suggested that terms like ‘sinister gang’ and ‘illegal line’ be deleted from the draft, and that the draft contain careful analysis and affirm that most officials were competent. (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1667.)

404. Wang, *Wang Li's Reflection on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 614.

that touches the soul and marks a new stage, deeper and broader than anything that has come before, in the development of our country's socialist revolution." The Cultural Revolution reinstated the spirit of struggle that Mao Zedong had called for in 1927, when he said "do not be elegant, gentle, refined, modest and courteous in carrying out revolution."⁴⁰⁵ The Cultural Revolution reflected the refusal of Mao, as leader of the CPC, to voluntarily become a ruling party politician rather than a revolutionary leader, and to abandon revolutionary struggle for modern state governance, even when the Party had been in power for seventeen years. Thus, reform was inevitable after the Cultural Revolution, substituting radical revolution for progressive reform and peaceful construction for violent destruction. However, at that time, Article 1 of this supreme instruction became the most resounding battle cry of the Red Guards in "Destroy the Four Olds," a popular reference in revolutionary political slogans, and a main source of legitimization for a violent social movement that destroyed the rule of law and violated human rights.

Article 1 also proposed that the goals of the Cultural Revolution were "to purge capitalist roaders, criticize the reactionary bourgeois academic 'authorities', criticize the ideologies of the bourgeoisie and all the other exploiting classes, and reform education, literature, art, and all the superstructures that cannot adapt to the socialist economic foundation to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system."⁴⁰⁶ This emphasized that the priority of the Cultural Revolution was to foil attempts by the establishment to take the capitalist road. However, as Wang Shaoguang commented, nobody, not even Mao, ever clearly defined what was meant by the term "capitalist roader." The meaning of the term was so confused that "one explanation might be opposite to another, causing great confusion in the movement."⁴⁰⁷ The *16-Article Document* also held that the main

405. In 1927, Mao Zedong said: "A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 1, 18.)

406. "This refers to attacking capitalist roaders, criticizing reactionary bourgeois academics, and critiquing the ideologies of the bourgeoisie and the exploiting classes, as well as the reforms of education, literature and art, and all the superstructures not adaptable to the economic foundations of socialism, in order to consolidate and develop the socialist system." ("Resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPC on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," *People's Daily*, August 9, 1966.)

407. Wang, *Frustrations of a Transcendent Leader: the Great Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*.

obstacles to the Cultural Revolution arose from the Party's infiltration by members of the establishment taking the capitalist road and the social force of old habits.⁴⁰⁸

Regarding the state system implemented in the Cultural Revolution, as well as its political blueprint, Article 9 of *16-Article Document* stipulated that a comprehensive elective system should be implemented to choose representatives of various organizations, as had been done in the Paris Commune.⁴⁰⁹ This reflected Mao's desire to replace the hierarchical Party and governmental bureaucracy based on the appointment system with the democratic system of the Paris Commune produced through the general election system in the Cultural Revolution. Subsequent developments showed that although Mao never implemented a comprehensive elective system, he did implement a peculiar "revolutionary committee system" that contradicted the *Organizational Law of Local People's Congresses and People's Committees at Various Levels* of 1954.

Article 5 sheds some light on the political objectives of the Cultural Revolution, saying that the movement aimed to unite over 95% of the cadres and 95% of the masses. This figure of 95% became the political consensus of the Central Committee of the CPC, and nobody voiced reservations or disagreement. At that time, China had more than 15 million cadres, and the total national population exceeded 700 million, which meant 750,000 cadres and 35 million ordinary citizens were at risk of political persecution, equivalent to the entire population of a large country. Not only did the Cultural Revolution plan political persecution on a vast scale, but the mechanisms were unconstitutional. Ultimately it was Mao's subjective judgments that determined who suffered. Only in 1979 did Hu Yaobang, Director of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, recognize the serious negative consequences of the wordings of Article 5.⁴¹⁰

408. "Resolutions of the CPC Central Committee on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," *People's Daily*, August 9, 1966.

409. Wang Li believed that Article 9 was very important and represented the core of Mao Zedong's thought, saying: "Mao Zedong intended to replace the existing state apparatus with an alternative modeled on the Paris Commune. In the Paris Commune, officials were elected rather than appointed, and were regularly subject to dismissal or replacement." (Wang, *Wang Li's Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 615.)

410. In January 1979, Hu Yaobang said: "Since the launch of the Great Cultural Revolution, but especially after I started organizational work last year, two questions have always been in my mind: first, what is the quantitative meaning of 'purge' in a big country like China? Comrade Mao Zedong always told us that most officials were competent, and only a minority should be beaten down. But we now have 17 million full-time officials, which may reach 19 million by the end of the year. That figure is almost the

Sidebar 3.2 The 16-Article Document (August 8, 1966)

What is the nature of the Great Cultural Revolution and what does it seek to achieve? The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution currently in progress is a great revolution that touches the soul and marks a new stage, deeper and broader than anything that has come before, in the development of our country's socialist revolution. Our immediate goals are to purge capitalist roaders, criticize the reactionary bourgeois academic "authorities", criticize the ideologies of the bourgeoisie and all the other exploiting classes, and reform education, literature, art, and all the superstructures that cannot adapt to the socialist economic foundation to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system. (Article 1)

What are the obstacles facing the Great Cultural Revolution? The obstacles are mainly from the Establishment who have infiltrated our Party and are taking the capitalist road, as well as the forces of old social habits. Presently, these remain significant obstructions. (Article 2)

How to carry out the Great Cultural Revolution? Be daring and resolute, and go all out to mobilize the masses. (Article 3) Fear nothing, and do not be afraid of getting into trouble. Chairman Mao often tells us that in revolution we should not be elegant, gentle, refined, modest, or courteous. Let the masses educate themselves, and distinguish right and wrong conduct in pursuing this great revolutionary movement. The vast masses of workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary intellectuals are the main forces of this great cultural revolution. Numerous unknown revolutionary youth have become courageous and daring generals, and have shown enormous courage and wisdom. They have resolutely attacked the visible and hidden bourgeois representatives through big-character posters and debate, and through openly exposing and criticizing these enemies. (Article 4)

What are the main policies of the Great Cultural Revolution? To firmly implement the Party's class line, pay attention to carefully distinguishing anti-Party and anti-socialist rightists from those who support the Party and socialism but have made incorrect statements, made mistakes, or written articles expressing incorrect views. Also, to distinguish carefully reactionary bourgeois scholar-tyrants and reactionary authorities from those who merely have general bourgeois academic ideas. (Article 5) Two contradictions must be strictly distinguished: contradictions among the people, and contradictions between the enemy and ourselves. Do not mistake internal contradictions among the people for contradictions between the enemy and ourselves, or vice versa. (Article 6)

What are the main organizational forms of the Great Cultural Revolution?

The cultural revolution groups, commissions and other organizational forms created by the masses in many schools and units are both new and historically significant. They are the best organizational forms through which the masses can educate themselves under the leadership of the Communist Party. They are the best bridges for our Party to closely connect with the masses. They are the power institutions for the proletarian cultural revolution, and should be long-term and permanent mass organizations rather than temporary. The members of the cultural revolution groups and commissions, as well as the representatives of the cultural revolution representative conferences, should be chosen through a comprehensive elective system just like in the Paris Commune. The list of candidates should be proposed by the revolutionary masses after consideration and discussion, and then elected after repeated discussion. The elected members of the cultural revolution groups and commissions, and the representatives of the cultural revolution conferences, may be criticized by the masses at any time, and if unqualified can be reelected and replaced after discussion. (Article 9)

During this plenary session, Mao completed the concentration of his personal power. He transformed himself into the supreme leader, grasped absolute and decisive power, and replaced the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC. His actions represented a historical retrogression and undermined the institutionalization of the Party.⁴¹¹ The plenary session became a vehicle of Mao's formal launch of the Cultural Revolution because of failures by the members of the collective leadership. The Central Committee only formally recognized this in 1981, when Hu Yaobang noted that the members of the Central Committee of the CPC of the time should take responsibility for allowing the organ to be taken

population of Romania. One percent of these officials means 190,000 individuals, 2% means 380,000. To persecute such a population is a major undertaking. The question thus arises: what does 'the majority of officials are competent' mean? 98%, 99%, or over 99%?" (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literature Since the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 1, 54.)

411. The 1981 Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC pointed out that during this plenary meeting the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the CPC was replaced by the incorrect leftist personal leadership of Mao Zedong. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literature Since the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 812.)

over and used to pursue the Cultural Revolution.⁴¹² As Hu Qiaomu admitted: “There were many members of the Central Committee of the CPC in the Eleventh Plenary Session (of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC,) but no one opposed what was happening, including myself.”⁴¹³ Among the members of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, the Central Politburo of the CPC and the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, Zhou Enlai stands out as particularly responsible, and bore secondary responsibility after Mao Zedong for what transpired.

The Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC initiated a struggle against the so-called “headquarters of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping” and greatly reorganized the leadership institution of the Central Committee. At that time, although Jiang Qing was not a member of the Central Committee of the CPC, she not only attended meetings as a non-voting delegate but also officially explained the article “Bombarding the Headquarters” to the Central Committee, saying: “There are two headquarters in Beijing, and one represents the bourgeoisie while the other represents the proletariat.” During the Plenary Session, Yao Wenyuan also wrote a big-character poster, titled “Follow Chairman Mao to Continuously Progress.” Yao explained Mao’s big-character poster as follows: “What does it refer to? It refers to using Mao Zedong Thought as a bomb to attack and destroy all bourgeois reactionary thoughts and reactionary lines at the headquarters.”⁴¹⁴

On August 10, Mao visited the Public Reception Center in Zhongnanhai to meet

412. On July 1, 1981, Hu Yaobang analyzed the causes of the errors of Mao Zedong during his later years, doing so in his official capacity as Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC. He said: “Mao developed excessive self-belief due to his long-standing high reputation in the CPC and throughout the country. This caused his behavior to gradually depart from established practice, and especially from the collective leadership of the CPC. He sometimes refused and even suppressed the correct opinions of others, and so failed to avoid errors and even committed blunders like the Cultural Revolution, which impacted the national situation over a long period and caused tragedy for our Party and people. Prior to and at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution the CPC not only failed to stop Mao Zedong making errors but actually accepted and agreed with some of his wrong opinions. Other members of the Central Committee of the CPC (including Mao Zedong’s comrades in arms and subsequent followers) bear responsibility for this and should learn from it.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Important Literature Since the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC*, vol. 2, 858.)

413. Editorial Committee of Biography of Hu Qiaomu comp., *Hu Qiaomu on the History of the CPC*, 113.

414. Ye, *Biography of Chen Boda*, 33.

the masses from the capital and celebrate the Decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the Central Committee of the CPC (the *16-Article Document*.) During this meeting he proclaimed: "You should concern yourselves with state affairs and carry the Great Cultural Revolution through to the end!"⁴¹⁵ With this action Mao Zedong issued a political mobilization order to the nation.

On August 11, the *People's Daily* published the editorial, "Grasp the Ideological Weapon of the Great Cultural Revolution," which said: "There are two opposite guiding principles, two opposite policies and two opposite paths. One path is to trust the masses, rely on the masses, mobilize the masses, believe the masses can liberate and educate themselves, and enthusiastically support their revolutionary spirit and actions. The other path is to stand against the masses and suppress them at the critical moment of the revolution. The former path is to carry out the revolutionary lines of Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. The latter path is to carry out the wrong lines of opposing Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought."⁴¹⁶ While it did not mention Liu by name, this editorial clearly presented him as representing the latter wrong line.

On August 12, the plenary session formally removed Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, Luo Ruiqing and Yang Shangkun from their posts as secretaries and Alternate Secretaries of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, thus implementing the decision made by the Enlarged Session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC in May.⁴¹⁷ This marked another example of the typical behavioral pattern of "acting first and reporting later" and reflected the failure of the basic system for personnel adjustment in the Party's leadership institutions. This was highlighted by the fact that, in accordance with Mao's proposal and arrangements, the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC temporarily added the reorganization of the leadership institutions of the Central Committee. Zhou explained the organizational and personnel changes. The plenary session

415. *People's Daily*, August 12, 1966.

416. *People's Daily*, August 11, 1966.

417. The Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC approved the decisions on the removal of the Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC and the election of a successor; the resolution of the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC held in May on the suspension of Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, and Luo Ruiqing from the Central Secretariat, and of Yang Shangkun as Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC; and the decision of the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC held in May to appoint Tao Zhu Executive Secretary of the Central Secretariat and Ye Jianying as Secretary of the Central Secretariat.

significantly adjusted the membership of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC, enlarging the committee from seven to eleven members.⁴¹⁸ Prior to this (on August 6,) Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai had approved the draft list of the reorganized leadership.⁴¹⁹ Thus, the reorganization of the leadership institutions was not approved through collective democratic decision making in accordance with the Party Constitution. Specifically, this decision was made without being proposed, discussed, or approved by the seven members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, or the Central Committee of the CPC. Mao thus actively destroyed the internal party electoral system.⁴²⁰ Meanwhile, rather

418. The Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC elected eleven members of the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC: Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu, Chen Boda, Deng Xiaoping, Kang Sheng, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Li Fuchun, and Chen Yun; elected six members of the Central Politburo of the CPC: Tao Zhu, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen, and Ye Jianying; co-opted three alternate members of the Central Politburo of the CPC: Li Xuefeng, Song Renqiong, and Xie Fuzhi; and elected two secretaries of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC: Xie Fuzhi and Liu Ningyi. (Li, *From the 1st to the 16th National Congress of the CPC*, vol. 2, 978.)

419. On August 6, 1966, Mao Zedong summoned Zhou Enlai to discuss the list of current elected members and alternate members of the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC, and secretaries and alternate secretaries of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. After the meeting, a draft list based on the discussion at the meeting was submitted to Mao Zedong and Lin Biao. When reviewing the list, Mao ranked the standing committee members of the Political Bureau and promoted Tao Zhu from seventh to fourth in the hierarchy. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 46.)

According to Wang Li, the list of the members of the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC was drawn up by Mao Zedong personally as follows: Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Chen Yun, Li Fuchun and Tao Zhu. Zhou sought the opinions of Lin and Jiang. Jiang responded: 'Why was Deng Xiaoping, who made errors, promoted from seventh to fourth in the leadership hierarchy? How can this be explained?' She believed Chen Boda should rank ahead of Deng, and also commented: 'Chen Boda cannot surpass Deng Xiaoping, but Tao Zhu can.' Consequently, Tao was ranked fourth, followed by Chen Boda and Deng Xiaoping. Mao agreed with Jiang. (Wang, *Reflections of Wang Li*, vol. 2, 617.)

420. According to Jin, prior to the closing of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central

than cautioning Mao regarding his improper conduct or seeking to prevent it, Zhou faithfully carried out Mao's instructions, and thus should bear secondary responsibility for these political mistakes.

Mao's "Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster" condemned Liu politically, and the subsequent reorganization of the Central Committee of the CPC was a soft means of removing him, demonstrating Mao's political arithmetic of starting with "addition," namely to reorganize the leadership hierarchy, then "subtraction," meaning to politically marginalize those with different views, and to conclude with a "final cancellation," in which his opponents were expelled from the Party. The case of Liu Shaoqi demonstrates that the Cultural Revolution was characterized by feudal despotism, political division, and schemes and intrigues.

The adjustment of the members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC saw Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Chen Yun removed as vice chairmen, while Deng Xiaoping was relieved of the post of General Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. Additionally, Liu was demoted to eighth in the party hierarchy, and Deng was promoted from seventh to sixth place. Lin leapt to become the number two leader in the Party, and was the only vice chairman of the Central Committee.⁴²¹ He also became Mao's designated successor. On August 18, demonstrating Lin's new position as sole vice chairman, Mao annotated a report with the following comment and instruction: "Send to Vice Chairman Lin (Biao) and the members of the Standing Committee (of the Political Bureau) for reading."⁴²² On October 23, while conducting self-criticism during the Working Conference of the Central Committee, Liu explained

Committee of the CPC, Mao proposed the reorganization of the central institutions. Since this proposal was not in the original agenda, it had not been prepared for or discussed among the Political Bureau and Standing Committee, and the Central Committee of the CPC had not been asked to provide opinions. (Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1039.)

421. According to Wu Faxian, at this time Mao Zedong made a list of the vice chairmen of the Central Committee of the CPC, namely Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai. But Zhou Enlai then deleted his own name, so Lin Biao became the only Vice Chairman. (Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 597.)

422. During the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Lin Biao was re-elected as Member of the Standing Committee of the Central Politburo of the CPC. Shortly after, Mao Zedong appointed him Vice Chairman of the Central Committee. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 106.)

the following: “It was unanimously decided in the Plenary Session that Comrade Lin Biao holds the great red flag of Mao Zedong Thought the highest, and studies and applies the Works of Chairman Mao most creatively. Therefore he was chosen as Chairman Mao’s leading assistant and successor.”⁴²³ This was proposed to the Plenary Session and passed unanimously. During the meeting Lin deliberately proposed not publicly announcing the result of the election, and accordingly the bulletin of the Plenary Session did not formally report the result. The decision to make Lin the leading assistant and successor to Mao thus became the formal and “unanimous” decision of the Central Committee of the CPC.

Regarding the reasons Mao chose Lin as his successor, Pang believes Lin’s relatively young age (14 years younger than Mao and 9 years younger than Liu and Zhou) was less important than his politics. Since starting to preside over the work of the Central Military Commission, Lin displayed consistency with the ideas of Mao, for example by preaching “stressing political work” and the “four firsts.”⁴²⁴ As Deng later said, it was a feudal practice for a leader to choose his own successor.⁴²⁵ In his later years Mao focused heavily on the succession problem, and hoped to transfer power to someone he trusted.⁴²⁶ However, he invariably became suspicious of his chosen successor and played political games with them. Lin was deeply aware that “he who rides a tiger finds it difficult to dismount,” but having been forced by Mao to be his successor, he had little option but to continue his dangerous political life. External circumstances eventually sealed Lin’s fate.

Four people were newly appointed as members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, namely Tao Zhu, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, and Li Fuchun. Chen and Kang had previously been alternate members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. These four people strongly supported Mao’s Cultural Revolution, and not only contributed to the “Great Cultural Revolution” theory, but also organized associated practices, and in recognition of this support Mao fast-tracked their promotion, making them members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC, and part of the core

423. People’s Publishing House Materials Room comp., *Counter-revolutionary Comments of China’s Khrushchev—Liu Shaoqi*, 730.

424. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1429.

425. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 347–348.

426. Bai Gang pointed out: “In the history of China, every emperor prioritized the selection of his successor to guard against power being seized by non-royals. This concern with the succession reflects the nature of China’s imperial system—“nepotism.” (Bai, *Emperors in the History of China*, 176.)

leadership of the Central Committee. Tao was directly promoted to the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC, having previously merely been a member the Central Committee. Additionally, responding to his nomination by Mao, the Central Committee of the CPC appointed Tao a consultant to the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee of the CPC. Soon afterward, the Central Committee of the CPC further appointed Tao Vice Premier of the State Council. Finally, Mao Zedong directly nominated Tao to become Administrative Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, in which post he replaced Peng Zhen and was groomed to take over from Deng Xiaoping.

Deng commented in May 1989: “In the history of our Party, the truly mature collective leadership comprised the generation of Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu De.”⁴²⁷ This collective leadership group actually comprised seven people, as the younger leaders Chen Yun, Deng Xiaoping, and Lin Biao served alongside the above four senior leaders. However, the seven-person collective leadership split during the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC and was replaced by a new eleven-person collective leadership, which itself soon disintegrated. Liu and Deng stopped participating in the routine leadership work of the Central Committee of the CPC after Mao accused them of line mistakes.⁴²⁸ During the plenary session, Zhu De and Chen Yun were also criticized and became members of the Standing Committee in name only. Soon after, Mao also attacked Tao Zhu and Li Fuchun.⁴²⁹ At the beginning of January 1967, Mao criticized Tao before formally removing him from office, meaning he became the shortest serving member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC. On January 11, Liu and Deng were formally removed from the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau.⁴³⁰ Zhu De, Chen Yun, and Li Fuchun were successively marginalized and excluded from the decision making of the Central Committee of the CPC. By February 1967, only five members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC remained, namely Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, and Kang Sheng. This series of leadership changes saw the leaders of the Cultural Revolution either capture the organs of the Party or render

427. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 3, 298.

428. After the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Liu Shaoqi remained a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau in name, but was not notified of the organization’s daily working meetings. (Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 188.)

429. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1039–1040.

430. Deng, *My Father Deng Xiaoping — Days of the “Cultural Revolution”*, 40.

them impotent, and the two main leadership institutions (the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC) were formally replaced by the so-called “brief meeting of the Central Cultural Revolution Group” presided over by Zhou Enlai.

During the plenary session, Tao Zhu, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen, and Ye Jianying became members of the Central Politburo of the CPC. Additionally, Xie Fuzhi, Minister of Public Security, became Alternate Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC, and Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, replacing Luo Ruiqing and assuming an important place in the Jiang Qing Group, the hardliners who supported the Cultural Revolution. This “political reshuffle” was Mao’s organizational plan to ensure that the Cultural Revolution would be conducted to completion. In the final sitting of the plenary session, Mao said: “This time, some changes have been made in the organization. The adjustment of the members of the Political Bureau, the alternate members of the Political Bureau, and the Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC guarantees the implementation of the Central Committee of the CPC’s resolutions and bulletins.”⁴³¹ He also said: “If this Plenary Session had not been convened and we had not rectified errors for several more months, in my opinion things would be much worse.”⁴³² In fact, after the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC was convened, China entered an era of great national disorder. Unprecedented civil and political strife became inevitable and the situation was far worse than Mao Zedong imagined.

In the final sitting of the plenary session, Mao proposed the “Theory of Factions within the Party” as the theoretical basis for his pursuit of the internal party struggle. He said: “We cannot say there are no parties outside our Party. In my opinion, there are parties outside our Party and factions inside our Party. This has been always so and is normal. Someone once said: ‘Only an emperor would believe there were no parties outside the Party, and it would be exceedingly strange for there to be no factions inside the Party.’ Thus it is for our Communist Party.”⁴³³

Mao also specifically mentioned the decision of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, saying: “Whether the decision is right or not right depends on subsequent practice.” He also warned the members of the Party: “Never assume that the party committees and comrades will reliably and without exception implement what is written in this decision. There are always persons

431. Jin ed., *Biography of Chen Yun*, vol. 2, 1350.

432. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1670.

433. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 101.

unwilling to implement decisions.”⁴³⁴ Clearly, at that time, the Central Committee of the CPC and party organizations at all levels contained many persons who did not understand Mao’s decision to launch the Cultural Revolution and were unwilling to implement it, and Mao regarded these people as obstructing the movement.⁴³⁵ Mao was well aware that some people had opposed the Cultural Revolution from the very start. Indeed, it can be said that his decision to pursue the Cultural Revolution ran against the tide of opinion within the Party. Nevertheless, Mao overrode all objections and proceeded without hesitation, intending to let the obedient thrive and destroy those who resisted. The struggle within the Party between the supporters and opponents of the Cultural Revolution became a main focus of the movement. At the start of the movement, Mao needed to demonstrate the movement’s theoretical correctness. When practice failed to demonstrate this and doubts were voiced, Mao Zedong regarded these doubters as hostile political forces opposing the movement and aggressively turned on them, further intensifying the political persecution that was already an inherent part of the movement. As the political persecution spread, the misguided nature of the Cultural Revolution only became more evident, prompting new doubts and questions, and forcing Mao onto a path of endless Cultural Revolution. The movement became self-perpetuating, and the longer it continued the greater the political costs it incurred.

However, Mao did not sense the danger of this “Great Cultural Revolution Trap” and envisioned a swift end to the movement. During the plenary session, he proposed convening the 9th National Congress of the CPC at a suitable time in 1967, and advised the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC to make the necessary preparations.⁴³⁶ This demonstrates that Mao intended to end the Cultural Revolution before the convention of the 9th National Congress of the CPC. He envisioned that the 9th National Congress of the CPC would become an important symbol of the movement’s success, and an important chance to build the Central Committee of the CPC into a new leadership institution. However, human planning cannot account for the unforeseen, and Mao was no exception in this regard. From the perspective of the formal Party

434. Ibid.

435. The *Red Flag* published an editorial titled “Framework Document of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” in issue 10 of 1966, which stated: “We must admit that there exists some strong resistance to the movement. Many areas and institutions remain in a state of preparation or passivity, and the class struggle failed to be completed. Complexities and setbacks have appeared in some areas and institutions” (*People’s Daily*, August 11, 1966.)

436. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 3, 125.

systems, the term of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC had been extended to ten years, and Mao had served as Chairman of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC for the same period, twice the maximum five-year term stipulated in the Party Constitution. Mao offered the Central Committee no explanation for this anomaly. In fact, he postponed the convention of the 9th National Congress of the CPC until April 1969. Mao showed no regard for internal party systems and rules, and claimed for himself the authority to “openly challenge the law.” His flagrant disregard for party rules was the most outstanding behavior of his later years, and also the fundamental cause of his political mistakes during this period.

Lin also spoke during the final sitting of the plenary session, and said: “This session has been led by the Chairman personally from beginning to end. In the process of this large-scale and great Cultural Revolution, a serious line mistake has been committed, which has almost throttled the revolution, brought it to a halt, suspended revolutionary activity, and even caused it to go backwards. In this time of danger, the Chairman came out and reversed the tide, rallying the forces of the Cultural Revolution, and leading them to continue to attack and defeat all the monsters and demons.”⁴³⁷ On August 16, Mao formally authorized the distribution of Lin’s speech.⁴³⁸

On the same day, acting on Mao’s instructions, the plenary session issued four documents: Mao’s “Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster” (August 5, 1966); “Long Live the Proletarian Revolutionary Rebel Spirit,” a big-character poster by the Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School (June 24, 1966); Lin’s “Speech at the Enlarged Session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC” (May 18, 1966); and the “Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.”

The Communiqué of the Plenary Session was immediately published and read: “The Plenary Session has formally approved the wise decisions personally proposed by Mao Zedong since the Tenth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.”⁴³⁹ Specifically, the plenary session approved and praised

437. Lin, “Speech at the Closing Meeting of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.”

438. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 106.

439. “The plenary session completely agreed with a series of wise decisions by Comrade Mao Zedong in the past four years (1962–1966) including:

- The decision to implement the principle of democratic centralism and promote the mass line;
- The decision to cultivate and train successors to the revolutionary undertakings of

Mao's instructions on the Cultural Revolution,⁴⁴⁰ and also praised Mao himself for "ingeniously, creatively and comprehensively inheriting, defending, and developing Marxism and Leninism."⁴⁴¹ Mao made several comments on and revisions to this communiqué submitted by Kang Sheng,⁴⁴² showing his approval

the proletariat;

- The decision on the call to learn from Daqing in industry, from Dazhai in agriculture, and from the PLA, to enhance political and ideological work throughout the country;
- The decision regarding the strategic guideline to prepare for war and famine and to serve the people;
- The decision to eliminate western influence and follow our own path of industrial development;
- The decision about the system and layout of economic construction and national defense construction
- The decision about the call to stress military work in the CPC and involve all of the people in military drills;
- The decision to gradually plan and deploy agricultural mechanization;
- The decision that the PLA, factories, rural areas, schools, service and other industries, and the Party and governmental authorities shall work together as a big revolutionary school."

("Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC," *People's Daily*, August 14, 1966.)

440. The plenary session stressed: "Comrade Mao Zedong's series of instructions on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution served as the guide to the current actions of the Cultural Revolution in our country and represented a big development in Marxism and Leninism." (Ibid.)
441. The Communiqué of the Plenary Session pointed out: "Comrade Mao Zedong is the greatest living Marxist and Leninist. He has inherited, championed, and developed Marxism and Leninism in a manner that demonstrates his talent, creativity, and comprehensiveness, and has introduced Marxism and Leninism to a brand-new stage. Mao Zedong Thought is Marxism and Leninism at a time when imperialism is progressing toward complete collapse and socialism is progressing toward worldwide victory. Mao Zedong Thought is the guideline of all the work of the Party and the country." (Ibid.)
442. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 95. Mao Zedong deleted the phrase "The Plenary Session strongly supports the statement released by Comrade Liu Shaoqi on behalf of our country" from the draft communiqué. The statement referred to here is that released by Liu Shaoqi, in his capacity as Chairman of

for the wordings the Communiqué used to praise him.

The Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC appraised Lin and criticized Liu. The communiqué of the plenary session praised Lin's efforts to promote the learning of Mao's works, emphasized that the session was historically significant for the Party, and that the whole nation should enthusiastically learn the works of Mao. According to the communiqué, Lin set a brilliant example for the Party and nation in calling on the People's Liberation Army to implement a mass movement throughout its ranks to learn Mao's works.⁴⁴³ On August 13, Xinhua News Agency broadcast the following information: "The communiqué has made the most comprehensive, scientific and profound statement on the current domestic and international situation and has issued the most correct, wise, and timely struggle call to the whole nation."⁴⁴⁴ On August 15, the *People's Daily* published the editorial, "Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman," saying: "In the new stage of our country's socialist revolution and at the critical moment for the development of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong personally chaired the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. This session was a milestone marking a new stage in our country's socialist revolution." The editorial stressed: "A voyage depends on the helmsman! The great helmsman of our country's revolution is Comrade Mao Zedong, who has very correctly explained the enormous importance of Mao Zedong Thought to the national revolution and the future of our country."⁴⁴⁵ One year later, on August 17, 1967, *Red Flag* published an editorial, saying: "The greatest historical significance of the Eleventh Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC was that it further solidified the absolute authority of Mao Zedong Thought and established the position of Comrade Lin Biao, who had always held high the great flag of Mao Zedong Thought and loyally, resolutely, and thoroughly carried out Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line as the Party's deputy commander, further consolidated the proletarian headquarters headed by Chairman Mao, and defeated the bourgeois headquarters headed by the Establishment taking the capitalist road (referring to Liu Shaoqi.) This session was extremely significant to the fate of our Party and nation, and also to the fate of the international communist movement."⁴⁴⁶

Liu did not confront Mao during the plenary session. Instead, he focused on

the PRC, on the policy of assisting Vietnam and resisting the U.S.

443. "Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC," *People's Daily*, August 14, 1966.

444. *People's Daily*, August 14, 1966.

445. *People's Daily*, August 15, 1966.

446. *Red Flag*, issue 13, 1967.

the greater good, adopted an open attitude, assumed personal responsibility and blame, and volunteered to withdraw politically. He offered to undertake self-criticism during the plenary session, saying: "I bear primary responsibility for the line mistake made by the Central Committee of the CPC during the Cultural Revolution while the Chairman was not in Beijing. I bear responsibility for everything I have said and done, and will never evade that responsibility. I should also bear responsibility for the mistakes made by other comrades." He also said: "I guarantee to obey the Party's decisions, strive to recognize my own mistakes, do nothing to disadvantage the Party, obey the Party's basic discipline, be honest in my dealings, engage in no underground activities, and openly express my differing opinions."⁴⁴⁷ Liu acted justly and volunteered to step down politically without waiting for others to attack him. The plenary session did not continue to criticize Liu, and he was re-elected to the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC. Many people, including Liu himself, thus thought he had survived the crisis unscathed.⁴⁴⁸ However, the political struggles within the Party that had become intertwined with the Cultural Revolution had their own political logic, which was more complex than Liu Shaoqi imagined or expected. Despite his election to the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, his political life was in jeopardy, and far from letting him go, Mao's real intention was to "beat the drowning dog."

During the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao achieved great personal political success, establishing his own absolute political authority and the absolute authority of his political philosophy. Additionally, Mao formally made the Cultural Revolution part of the Party's political line with the *16-Article Document*, and reorganized the membership of the Political Bureau and Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC. Having made Lin his deputy, Mao obtained the political and organizational resources to launch the Cultural Revolution, strengthening his control over the Party. However, his personal political success came at great political cost to the CPC, and caused unprecedented political and civil strife. As Mao's personal political victory grew, so too did the political cost to the Party, though this was not fully apparent at the time.

China's international strategy and guiding principle of foreign policy at this time were determined by Mao's "Philosophy of struggle," according to which he opposed the United States and the Soviet Union, and established an international united front with China as its core. The communiqué of the plenary session stated: "The Plenary Session believes: American imperialism is the most ferocious common enemy of the world's people. To isolate and attack American imperialism,

447. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1038–1039.

448. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 195.

an extensive international united front must be established to oppose American imperialism and its lackeys. The Soviet revisionist leadership group follows U.S.-Soviet cooperation to dominate the world, carries out divisive, destructive and subversive activities in the international Communist and national liberation movements, and actively serves American imperialism. Therefore, they are not included in this united front."⁴⁴⁹ The Plenary Session believed that China had to prepare for war, and stated: "We must remain alert against surprise attacks from American imperialism and its accessories. If they dare force us into war, then the 700 hundred million Chinese will unite, and we will break the spines of the invaders. We will resolutely, thoroughly, cleanly and entirely eliminate them under the leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China."⁴⁵⁰ This communiqué represented a serious misreading of the international situation and was based on Mao's typical habit of crisis hallucination. Subsequent history has proven that the U.S. never occupied North Vietnam or invaded China. When China actively supported and volunteered to participate in the Vietnamese War against American aggression,⁴⁵¹ it was isolated and cut off from the global economy and markets, becoming the most marginalized country in the globalized world. More importantly, the domestic political line of "taking class struggle as the focus" was strengthened by opposing both the United States and the Soviet Union. At that time, China formally entered an era of "opposing the United States and the Soviet Union internationally and opposing and preventing Revisionism domestically" with the former being a policy of "struggling against others" and the latter being "struggling against itself." Notably, the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC formally approved Mao Zedong's decision to pursue a policy of "great struggle," despite the negatives of this policy exceeding its benefits, both domestically and internationally. However, the communiqué of the plenary session

449. "Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Session the 8th Central Committee of the CPC," *People's Daily*, August 14, 1966.

450. Ibid.

451. The Communiqué pointed out: "The Plenary Session supports the *Appeal to the People of the Whole Country* released by Comrade Ho Chi Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Plenary Session ardently, uncompromisingly, and resolutely supports the continued resistance of the Vietnamese until they achieve victory in their war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation. The Plenary Session completely agrees with all relevant measures of the Central Committee of the CPC, whether already implemented or planned, and the government of the PRC will assist Vietnam and resist the U.S. in ways to be determined through negotiation with the government of Vietnam." (Ibid.).

firmly said: “We must uphold the great and lofty aspirations of the proletariat, dare to follow the road our predecessors have never trod, and dare to climb the peak our predecessors have never climbed. We must carefully construct a socialist China, which has one quarter of the world’s population, and make it an iron cast proletarian power that will never change its color.”⁴⁵²

The “Destroy Four Olds” Movement and Nationwide Chaos

Eight months after the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, the Cultural Revolution reached a zenith, Mao Zedong had become a cult figure, and the Red Guards had begun the campaign to “Destroy the Four Olds” throughout the country. During the Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, and other members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC continued to flatter Mao Zedong and create a personality cult around him, leading the masses, especially young students, to revere Mao. Mao Zedong, Lin Biao and Chen Boda urged the Red Guards to “destroy the four olds,” and thus incited widespread violence and disorder. Meanwhile, Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu and Li Fuchun attempted to curb the movement. As the situation became chaotic, Mao was initially firm on non-intervention, and thus several months of havoc ensued. Although he later called for “non-violent struggle instead of violence,” he did so too late to avert nationwide tumult.

On August 13, 1966, the Central Working Conference was convened, at which Lin Biao put forward a motion to adjust the overall organizational structure by appointing new cadres, while replacing some existing cadres and retaining others. With the approval of Mao, he developed three methods for identifying, selecting, and appointing cadres, based on five principles for the selection of successors to the proletarian revolutionary cause proposed by Mao.⁴⁵³ Additionally, Lin expressed

452. Ibid.

453. Lin Biao proposed three new standards, saying: “First, supporting Mao Zedong Thought. Leaders who oppose Mao Zedong Thought should be dismissed. Second, performing political and ideological work. Leaders who create obstacles to political and ideological work and the ‘Great Cultural Revolution’ should be dismissed. Third, being passionate in revolution. Those who are not passionate should be dismissed. These three items are consistent with the five principles proposed by Chairman Mao. We should follow Mao’s five principles and these three items, especially the first item, as standards to identify, select and appoint officials.” (Lin, “Speech to the Central

that he felt burdened and anxious, concerned about making mistakes, and he could not perform his job competently. Nevertheless, he strove to minimize his mistakes, worked under the leadership of Mao, and opposed the two guiding principles and the two headquarters. He followed Mao's orders to the letter, and relied on his support, and that of the standing commissioners of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group. Lin concluded: "It is well-known that Chairman Mao is the greatest genius in the world and there exists a big gap between Chairman Mao and us. Thus, we should rectify our mistakes as soon as possible." He also remarked: "I was incompetent to perform the job assigned to me by the Central Government and tried several times to resign. Since Chairman Mao and the Central Government offered me my position, I will try to do a good job as ordered by Chairman Mao and the Party, but am also ready to hand over my job to a more suitable successor."⁴⁵⁴ The above statements implied that Mao's decision to designate Lin as his successor was a surprise to the latter. Lin thus did not intend to become the successor of Mao, but rather was cautious and simply wished to work for the Party. Meanwhile, Lin also learned from Liu Shaoqi and stressed he would follow Mao's orders to the letter. From this point, Mao and Lin became close comrades-in-arms, and Lin supported Mao in staging the Cultural Revolution.

On August 14, the Central Government notified the party committees at the provincial, municipal and prefectural levels, the ministries and commissions of the Central Committee of the CPC, state organs, mass organizations, party committees, party organizations, and the PLA General Political Department of the Central Organ Member By-election of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC.

On August 17, when the Central Committee of the CPC forwarded Mao Zedong's "Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster," senior Party cadres were shocked by the Central Committee's discernable radicalization. Subsequently, Liu and Deng were subjected to harsh criticism and relieved of their posts. Additionally, the Secretariat of the Central Committee, which had been in charge of central day-to-day affairs, ceased to perform its functions and instead Zhou presided over central day-to-day affairs.⁴⁵⁵ In place of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, the Central Cultural Revolution Group began to exercise official power. In fact, the Central Cultural Revolution Group enjoyed special

Cultural Revolution Group in Zhongnanhai.")

454. Li ed, *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Twists and Development — Trailblazing a Socialist Path*, vol. 1, 147–148.

455. Fang and Jin eds., *Biography of Li Fuchun*, 655.

privilege, resulting in a situation where two central top decision-making organs existed. In response to a motion proposed by Zhou with the approval of Mao, the enlarged brief meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC was convened to discuss party and government work, and the Cultural Revolution and all members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group retained the right to attend this meeting from late August. Gradually, the enlarged meeting usually presided over by Zhou⁴⁵⁶ succeeded the Central Politburo of the CPC and the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, and the central power structure changed from “Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping” to “Mao Zedong, Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai.” This personnel structure lasted until Lin’s September 13 Incident in 1971. Mao and Zhou thus boldly changed the decision-making mechanism of the Central Committee of the CPC, and bestowed decision-making powers on the Central Cultural Revolution Group, thus allowing non-formal organizations to succeed formal organizations, and non-formal systems to replace formal systems.

On August 18 1966, a mass rally was held in Beijing to celebrate the Cultural Revolution. For the first time, Mao attended such an event dressed in green military uniform, implying he was the supreme commander of the PLA.⁴⁵⁷ At 5:00am, Mao granted students and Red Guards an audience on the rostrum overlooking Tiananmen Square, an action that Zhou later said broke existent protocols.⁴⁵⁸ Xinhua News Agency reported that Red Guards present for the meeting rejoiced in being granted this audience, and said: “Chairman Mao is the commander in chief and we are his red soldiers.”⁴⁵⁹ Notably, the significant changes made to the central leadership during the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC were announced at the mass rally and Jiang appeared on the Tiananmen gate tower as part of the central leadership. Xinhua also reported that Mao, Lin, Zhou, and Jiang had granted Red Guards a series of group audiences.⁴⁶⁰ By listing Jiang

456. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1671.

457. Yan and Wang, *Reflections on History*, 291.

458. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1675.

459. Xinhua News Agency, August 18, 1966.

460. An article titled “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the Great Pioneering Work of the Communist Movement and the Socialist Revolution; Chairman Mao Celebrates the Great Cultural Revolution Together with Millions of the Masses” reported: “1,500 student representatives ascended the Tiananmen gate tower and attended the meeting together with CPC and state leaders. State leaders including Chairman Mao, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai and Jiang Qing received the students in groups, talked with them, and took group photos.” (Xinhua News Agency, August 18, 1966;

as fourth in the leadership hierarchy, Xinhua presented her as a bright and rising political star, second only to Lin. Around this time an updated list of the central leadership was released⁴⁶¹ in which Lin rose to second place while Liu Shaoqi dropped to eighth place,⁴⁶² shocking both China and the world. Chen Boda, who ranked fifth in the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, presided over the rally and praised Mao as “our great leader, mentor and helmsman.”⁴⁶³

Lin Biao stated: “Mao Zedong is the supreme commander of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the commander in chief, the greatest leader of the contemporary proletariat, and the greatest genius of our time. Under the wise leadership of Chairman Mao and armed with the powerful weapon of Mao Zedong Thought, we will become invincible and win victory in the great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!” Regarding the “Four News” (new ideas, new culture, new customs, and new habits,) Lin concluded “We should spare no efforts to spread Mao Zedong Thought.”⁴⁶⁴

People's Daily, August 19, 1966.)

461. The same article reported that other leaders in different sectors attended the mass meeting with the Red Guards. The attendees were: Tao Zhu, Deng Xiaoping, Kang Sheng, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Li Fuchun, and Chen Yun (members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau); Dong Biwu, Chen Yi, He Long, Li Xiannian, Tan Zhenlin, Xu Xiangqian, and Ye Jianying (members of the Central Politburo of the CPC); Bo Yibo, Li Xuefeng, and Xie Fuzhi (alternate members of the Central Politburo of the CPC); Liu Ningyi (Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC); Xiao Hua, Yang Chengwu, and Wang Renzhong (members and alternate members of the Central Committee of the CPC,) and Jiang Qing (Deputy Head of the Central Cultural Revolution Group.) Additionally, Zhang Chunqiao, Xie Tangzong, Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu, Mu Xin, and Yao Wenyuan (members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group) also attended the meeting. (Ibid.)

462. According to a report by Xinhua News Agency titled “State Leaders including Chairman Mao, Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai Receive Student Representatives and Inspect a Parade of Cultural Revolution Troops,” leaders who also attended the mass meeting included: Tao Zhu, (Chen Boda,) Deng Xiaoping, Kang Sheng, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Li Fuchun, Chen Yun, Dong Biwu, Chen Yi, He Long, Li Xiannian, Tan Zhenlin, Xu Xiangqian, Ye Jianying, Bo Yibo, Li Xuefeng, Xie Fuzhi, Liu Ningyi, Xiao Hua, Yang Chengwu, Jiang Qing, and Wang Renzhong. (Ibid.)

463. “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the great pioneering work of the communist movement and the socialist revolution: Chairman Mao celebrates the Great Cultural Revolution together with millions of the masses,” (Ibid.)

464. Lin, “On the Mass Meeting to Celebrate the Proletarian Cultural Revolution.”

Notably, Lin encouraged and supported the students in destroying the “Four Olds” (old ideas, old culture, old customs, old habits) and developing the “Four News.”⁴⁶⁵ However, he did not explain what the “Four Olds” were at this time. In 1964, while talking to the French Minister for Cultural Affairs, Andre Malraux, Mao had said that China would destroy the old ideas, culture, and customs that had existed before the founding of the People’s Republic of China, and would establish new proletarian ideas, culture, and customs.⁴⁶⁶ Mao clearly advocated the destruction of traditional Chinese culture rather than its preservation, and wished to dismantle rather than continue to build the Chinese civilization that had existed for several thousand years. Mao intended to break with history and start afresh. Lin’s speech at the rally therefore relayed the substance of Mao’s directive, and proposed the replacement of Chinese culture and civilization with Mao Zedong Thought, a suggestion characterized by both cultural exclusivity and monopoly. The speech was drafted by Chen Boda and revised by Mao and Lin.

Mao announced that the Cultural Revolution aimed to destroy the “Four Olds” and develop the “Four News.” How did he plan to achieve it? In the rally, Zhou formally transmitted Mao’s directive: “We must rely on ourselves to carry out the Cultural Revolution,⁴⁶⁷ educate ourselves, liberate ourselves, and stage revolution by ourselves.”⁴⁶⁸ Additionally, he remarked on Mao’s visionary leadership, “It is well-known that the helmsman is pivotal in any ocean voyage, and Chairman Mao is our greatest helmsman.” Zhou led a chant of: “Long live our great leader,

465. On August 8, 1966, on the Tiananmen gate tower, Lin Biao made the following speech: “We should break all old thoughts, old cultures, old customs and old habits of the exploiting class, and should reform all superstructures unsuited for a socialist economy. We should sweep out all pests and remove all obstacles! We should establish the authority of the proletariat and form new proletarian thoughts, cultures, customs, and habits. In a word, we should establish Mao Zedong Thought.” He continued: “We support your proletariat revolutionary spirit of daring to devote yourselves to revolution and rebellion,” and “We will attack all capitalist roaders, bourgeois reactionary authorities, and bourgeois loyalists, oppose all counter-revolutionary behaviors, and eliminate all ‘Monsters and Demons.’” (Lin, “Speech at the Mass Meeting to Celebrate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” *People’s Daily*, August 19, 1966.)

466. Malraux, *Anti-Memoirs*, 373–374; Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, 278.

467. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 108.

468. Zhou, “Speech at the Mass Meeting to Celebrate the Proletarian Cultural Revolution.”

Chairman Mao!"⁴⁶⁹ Finally, Lin took the fervent adoration even further, and concluded his speech with "long live, long live, long live our great leader Chairman Mao!"⁴⁷⁰ Ironically, these shouts outdid even the fervent adoration of earlier feudal dynasties. They reinforced the personality cult of Mao Zedong so much so that it outshone even that of Stalin.

Mao was satisfied with this personality cult. Reporting on the rally of Red Guards in Tiananmen Square, Xinhua said that Mao and Lin stood shoulder to shoulder on the Tiananmen gate tower to review the parade, and the former said excitedly to Lin: "This large-scale movement has motivated the masses and is extremely significant to the development of national revolutionary ideology among the masses."⁴⁷¹ Mao told the Red Guards from the Tsinghua University High School, "I resolutely support you."⁴⁷²

Xinhua News Agency called for the masses to support the Cultural Revolution, and said "Chairman Mao is the reddest sun in our hearts," but why was Mao himself so excited?⁴⁷³ As Mao explained to his staff: "The masses involved in the Cultural Revolution are mainly young people and students, the young generation Dulles hopes will promote peaceful evolution in China. I have created a chance to let them experience the fierceness of struggle and pass this experience and knowledge on to future generations, and thus I have made it difficult for the prediction of Dulles to be fulfilled. I have mobilized the masses to undertake criticism so they can receive

469. Ibid. Before this, on August 15, the *People's Daily* published an editorial titled: "A Voyage Depends on the Helmsman." This article claimed that in past decades, the Party and the masses were fortunate to have had a talented helmsman like Mao Zedong who had guided them in the right direction even amidst thick fog and through critical times, thus enabling the ship of the revolution to safely negotiate countless dangerous shoals and reefs, borne forward by the revolutionary tide of Marxism and Leninism. (*People's Daily*, August 15, 1966.)

470. Lin, "On the Mass Meeting to Celebrate the Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

471. Xinhua News Agency, August 18, 1966.

472. The Red Guards shouted excitedly before Chairman Mao: "We will faithfully follow you forever," and "We want to pursue revolution! We will rebel to the end!" Chairman Mao responded by saying "I support you!" (*People's Daily*, August 21, 1966.)

473. The report claimed: "We sincerely wish a long life to our dearest and greatest leader Chairman Mao. We will listen to Chairman Mao's words, concern ourselves with state affairs, and conduct the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the end. We will obey Chairman Mao's instructions and suffer storms and other tests to become the most reliable successors of the proletarian revolution." (Xinhua News Agency, August 18, 1966.)

education and increase their capabilities during the movement. As a result they will be able to find the path to revolution. These were my aims and I was ready for failure. I am delighted that the masses mobilized and acted on my instructions.”⁴⁷⁴ On discovering that party members did not support the Cultural Revolution, Mao had to mobilize and rely on young students to achieve his objectives. However, these movements would turn in directions Mao Zedong did not expect.

Mao’s meetings with young students and Red Guards were personally satisfying to him. Meanwhile, the young students and Red Guards who met with Mao were inspired by the experience, and began an unprecedented and uncontrollable wave of social interaction and mutual aggrandizement. Subsequently, Mao held seven consecutive meetings with young students, but despite these regular meetings the Red Guards nevertheless violated laws and statutes, infringed human rights, and destroyed China’s ancient civilization and culture.

Mao had misread the passion of the masses. As Wang Shaoguang wrote: “From the outset of the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong planned to manipulate the movement by exploiting the personality cult created by the masses. However, despite his allure as leader, the masses were in fact engaged in pursuing private interests,⁴⁷⁵ a trait that became a renowned characteristic of the Cultural Revolution and the root cause of its failure.”

With encouragement by four members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC (Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, and Chen Boda,) the country responded enthusiastically, and hundreds of thousands of Red Guard organizations were founded overnight in urban and rural regions. Red Guards rushed from school and university campuses to parade in the streets.⁴⁷⁶ The national movement against the “Four Olds” was rampant and the Red Guards in Beijing took initiatives to destroy the “Four Olds.” For instance, they renamed Chang’an Avenue as Dongfanghong Avenue, smashed the signboard of Quanjude (a famous roast duck restaurant,) destroyed Yong Bao Zai and renamed it Zhongguancun Revolution Village, and renamed Yangwei Road, located in front of the Soviet Embassy, as Anti-revisionist Road. Students proposed renaming Beijing as Dongfanghong City, setting up the Dongfanghong Preparatory Committee. Notably, the central-controlled mainstream media coverage of the actions of the Red Guards in Beijing actually praised their destructive deeds.⁴⁷⁷ The Red Guard

474. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1433–1434.

475. Wang, *Failure of Charisma: the Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 253.

476. Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1657.

477. A comment published in *Red Flag* on August 21, 1966 claimed: “Tens of millions of Red Guards have left their classrooms for the streets, and form an irresistible revolutionary

movement became a large-scale, complicated, and multi-factional youth revolution, whose participants had varied motivations and objectives.⁴⁷⁸

On May 24, 1966, Chen Boda proposed the concept of proletarian cultural revolution and defined the nature of the revolution as follows: "The Proletarian Cultural Revolution is to be carried out after the seizure of power, and differs in nature from the Bourgeois Cultural Revolution. The Bourgeois Cultural Revolution refers to an exploiting class succeeding another exploiting class, whereas the Proletarian Cultural Revolution aims to eliminate exploiting classes."⁴⁷⁹ However, both Mao Zedong and Chen Boda failed to clarify fundamental concepts such as the make up of the exploiting class, its size relative to the total population, and exactly how it should be eliminated.

After Mao granted young students an audience on August 18, Red Guards from large and medium cities (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin) illegally searched houses and confiscated property, humiliating and beating their victims. A wave of inhuman social violence accompanied the destruction of the Four Olds,⁴⁸⁰ and

tide to cleanse the dirt left by the old society, waste that has accumulated over thousands of years. These Red Guards are the pioneers of the revolution and a new global phenomenon. They call people to 'beat the drums, clean the way and carry out reform'." On August 23, all major newspapers in China published the report "The tide of Proletarian Cultural Revolution Sweeps the Streets of the Capital, and the Red Guards Attack Bourgeois Customs." The *People's Daily* also published the two editorials "It is Good" and "Workers, Farmers and Soldiers Should Support the Revolutionary Students." On August 29, the editorial "Greeting Our Red Guards" was published in the *People's Daily* and said: "The Red Guards have become the pioneers of this mass movement," and "The Red Guards fought for days, and really shocked society and the world. They won every battle, swept out the old customs and habits of the exploiting classes, and identified all the crafty old easy riders hiding in the corners." (Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 3, 50–51.

478. Meisner: *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, 294.

479. "Chen Boda's Speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC," May 24, 1966.

480. "Revolutionary Students and Commercial Employees in Shanghai and Tianjin Launch a Broad Attack on the Exploiting Classes and Sweep Away All Old Customs with Revolutionary Weapons," Xinhua News Agency, August 24, 1966, *People's Daily*, August 25, 1966; "Reform Society with Mao Zedong Thought: the Revolutionary Rebel Spirit of the Red Guards Encourages the Revolutionary Masses Throughout the Country, and Revolutionary Students in ALL Areas Will Launch a Broad Attack on the Old Thought, Cultures, Customs and Habits of All the Exploiting Classes," Xinhua

became known as “China’s Red Terror.”⁴⁸¹ Once the Pandora’s box was opened, it was hard to bring the Red Guards under control.⁴⁸²

At that time, only Liu Shaoqi realized that the campaign to destroy the “Four Olds” violated the national constitution and would ultimately destroy the legal system.⁴⁸³ Nevertheless, he could do nothing.⁴⁸⁴ In fact, on hearing reports of the violence committed by the Red Guards, Mao not only allowed this activity to continue but even encouraged it. On August 20, when reports of the violence first emerged, Mao did not deem Red Guards destroying the “Four Olds” to be illegal, and continued to insist that destroying the “Four Olds,” no matter how it was achieved, was a good deed that could unmask evil people of all kinds.⁴⁸⁵

News Agency, August 25, 1966, *People’s Daily*, August 26, 1966; “Chairman Mao is Our Supreme Commander and the ‘16 Points’ is Our Action Guide: the Red Guards and Revolutionary Masses must Seriously and Flexibly Learn and Apply the Revolution of the Central Committee of the CPC,” Xinhua News Agency, August 27, 1966, *People’s Daily*, August 28, 1966.

481. MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*.

482. Wang, *Failure of Charisma: the Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 69.

483. According to Article 89 of the Constitution, the citizens of the People’s Republic of China were titled to freedom, and arrest was strictly prohibited unless adjudicated by the People’s Court and approved by the People’s Procuratorate. Additionally, Article 90 stated that the residences of the citizens of the People’s Republic of China were inviolable, and privacy of correspondence should be protected by laws and statutes.

484. Liu Pingping recalled that when he notified Liu Shaoqi that the Red Guard organization of the Tsinghua University High School had searched the houses and confiscated the properties of some criticized officials, Liu Shaoqi immediately stopped him. Holding a copy of *The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* in his hand, Liu said: “I have no objection to ‘destroying the four olds’, but you should not illegally search people’s houses, confiscate their property, or beat them. Through my position as chairman I am responsible for the country. Many democratic people who have worked with our party for decades are valuable to our united front work. You should not destroy these people overnight. I cannot stop you, just as you cannot stop others. However I must tell the truth and be responsible for you.” (Liu et al., “Presenting Flowers for You: In Memory of Our Father Liu Shaoqi,” *Workers’ Daily*, December 5, 1980.)

485. On August 20, 1966, Mao Zedong issued an instruction on the brief report circulated by Lin Biao to detail specific actions of the Red Guards in destroying “the four olds,” and said: “I have read the report. It is a good thing that the monsters and demons will be thoroughly unveiled, and is not strange. By following this road we can help the masses.” (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 143.)

On August 21, Li Fuchun, serving as a member of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, wrote a report to Mao, Lin, Zhou, and the Central Cultural Revolution Group and presented ten ideas on how the organs of the State Council could carry out the Cultural Revolution. On August 28, Mao circulated the report to other leaders. On August 29, Mao delivered a speech at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, and said “We do not need even one idea, let alone ten ideas. The most important thing is the ‘16 Articles.’ Leave it alone.”⁴⁸⁶ Mao thus called for non-intervention and allowed the nationwide turmoil to continue for several months.⁴⁸⁷

On the same day, the *People’s Daily* published the editorial titled “Chairman Mao Resolutely Backs Up the Masses,” which pointed out: “Some Party members have tended to enslave or suppress the masses by imposing restrictions on them, and have confused right and wrong. In contrast, Chairman Mao loves the masses, cares for them, best understands their needs, desires and emotions, and is their bosom friend. The close-knit link between Mao Zedong Thought and the masses will ensure the victory of our Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.”⁴⁸⁸ The first secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, Li Xuefeng, repeated Mao Zedong’s directive advocating non-intervention in the violence and thus encouraged continued beatings and violence. The supreme directive from Mao Zedong thus “legitimized” the violence.

Although the destruction of the Four Olds became violent, Mao ordered the PLA and the police not to intervene in the violence committed by young students. With approval from Mao and Lin, the PLA General Staff Headquarters and General Political Department jointly issued the *Rules and Regulations Regarding the Prohibition of the Army from Suppressing the Revolutionary Student Movement*,⁴⁸⁹ which stated that

486. Mao Zedong: “Instructions on Li Fuchun’s Report on the Problems Existing in the Great Cultural Revolution Among the Eight Authorities under the State Council,” August 28, 1966, *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, v 12, p 112, Beijing: CCCPC Party Literature Publishing House, 1998.

487. On August 21, 1966, during the Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, Mao Zedong said: “Is Beijing a city of gangsters? Impossible! I believe most people are good and there are only a few bad people. How did our city become a world of gangsters?” He continued: “Anyway, we cannot intervene, and should allow the movement to continue for months.” Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1438.

488. *People’s Daily*, August 20, 1966.

489. Article 1 of these regulations read: “All army units are absolutely forbidden to use armed force to suppress the student movement, and even the use of blank rounds to

suppression of the revolutionary student movement was illegal.⁴⁹⁰ This document was issued to encourage social violence and protect the Red Guards. The Central Committee of the CPC forwarded the document on August 22.

Why did Mao prevent army and police suppression of the revolutionary student movement? In October 1968, Lin Biao explained this controversial matter at the enlarged meeting of the Twelfth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, saying: "There are two distinct lines of proletarian cultural revolution: one, Mao Zedong's mobilization of the masses; two, suppression of the masses. Chairman Mao told us before that 'The reasons the Communist Party differs from the Nationalist Party, the Proletariat differs from the Bourgeoisie, and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat differs from the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, lie in the protection versus the suppression of the masses.'"⁴⁹¹ However, Mao unexpectedly ordered the army to suppress rebel organizations several times during July 1967 to July 1968.⁴⁹² This use of state force to control social violence resulted in the heaviest casualties of the Cultural Revolution.

On August 23, Mao pointed out at the Central Working Conference, "The manner in which local authorities address the chaotic situation is vital. In my opinion, we should firmly believe that most of the recently launched movements are well intentioned, and should allow the country to remain in tumult for several months. Even if the provincial party committees do not intervene, there are still the prefecture and county committees to maintain order!"⁴⁹³ Mao clearly wanted the country to remain in turmoil for several months, but the turmoil ultimately

disperse the students is a serious political error that will be subject to strict disciplinary action." Article 4 read: "The army must not intervene in conflicts between student groups, or between students and the masses."

490. The contents of the regulations included: 1. Police should in no circumstances be dispatched to intervene in and suppress the revolutionary student movement. 2. Army units should not shoot at the revolutionary students or teachers, nor should they disperse them by firing blanks. 3. Except for active counter-revolutionists committing the crimes of murder, arson, poisoning, destruction, and stealing state secrets, who shall be legally punished, participants in the revolutionary movement should enjoy freedom from arrest. 4. Police should not enter schools. 5. Police should merely seek to maintain order in the streets and use persuasion to resolve fights and other conflicts, and police attacked by revolutionary students must not fight back.

491. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 493.

492. Ibid, 370, 502, 506, 510.

493. Jiang et al. ed., *Summaries of Important Meetings of the CPC (1921–2001)*, 356.

exceeded his expectations and the situation spiraled out of control.

Large-scale killing occurred in Beijing during this period. From late August to late September Red Guards illegally searched 33,695 houses and caused 1,772 deaths (including suicides) in Beijing.⁴⁹⁴ From August 27 to September 1, a series of appalling massacres occurred in Daxing County, located in the southern outskirts of Beijing.⁴⁹⁵ However, Mao still remarked that Beijing was too civilized in carrying out the Cultural Revolution and had failed to create utter chaos. After Mao and Lin heard the report delivered by Wu De on the destruction of the “Four Olds,”⁴⁹⁶ Mao commented that feudal diehards of several dynasties had been successfully suppressed, and Lin instructed: “This is a great movement and only needs to follow the principle of not beating people to death.”⁴⁹⁷

On August 21, the *Red Flag* published a commentary titled “Pay Homage to Revolutionary Youth,” and rejoiced that “many unknown revolutionary youth had become brave path-breakers who understood they were engaged in revolution and that Mao Zedong supported them. The Cultural Revolution staged by Mao had changed their outlook, and they suddenly realized that their mission was to stage revolution and rebellion against the bourgeoisie, imperialism, revisionism, and evil people of all kinds, and to exploit class ideology by destroying the ‘Four Olds.’”⁴⁹⁸ The following day, Xinhua News Agency broadcast a news report titled “The Proletarian Cultural Revolution Spread through the Capital of Beijing, Red Guards Criticized Bourgeois Customs, and the Masses Overwhelmingly Supported the Revolutionary and Rebellious Spirit of the Red Guards,” and announced that the Red Guards were dedicated to transforming Beijing into a revolutionary city

494. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 154.

495. From August 27 to September 1, 1966, the victims totaled 325 “landowners, affluent peasants, reactionaries, and bad elements, and their 48 production teams, in 13 communes in Daxing County, Beijing.” (Ibid.) On September 2, 1966, the Beijing Municipal Committee issued the *Emergency Notice on Stopping All Violent Deaths*, which threatened punishment to perpetrators if the violent deaths continued, and ordered that the perpetrators of violence stop drawing up lists of “gangsters,” with such lists to be limited in future to active criminals and five specific kinds of bad elements.

496. On August 23, 1966, at the Central Working Meeting, Mao said, “I do not think Beijing has struggled effectively, though it did hold a meeting attended by 100,000 students.... Beijing is so civilized.” (Jiang et al. ed., *Summaries of Important Meetings of the CPC (1921–2006)*, 356.)

497. Zhu et al. eds., *Wu De's Dictations: The Unusual Ten Years — My Experiences in Beijing*, 27.

498. *Red Flag*, issue 11, 1966; republished by the *People's Daily*, August 24, 1966.

for the proletariat.⁴⁹⁹

On August 23, the *People's Daily* published an editorial titled "Mao Zedong Directs the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers to Resolutely Support the Revolutionary Students" and declared that the various revolutionary student organizations were legitimate organizations under the dictatorship of the Proletariat.⁵⁰⁰ On the same day, the *People's Daily* published an editorial titled simply "Congratulations" that praised the revolutionary and rebellious spirit of the Red Guards.⁵⁰¹ On August 29, the *People's Daily* published the editorial "Pay Homage to Our Red Guards," which claimed that all revolutions in history had hinged on the masses daring to speak, act, and try to enact change, and the Proletarian Cultural Revolution was simply the most recent example. The article said: "Although the Red Guards carried out revolution only briefly, they shocked society and transformed the old world. Well-done!"⁵⁰² The same day, at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing

499. Xinhua News Agency reported: "Since August 20, the Red Guards of the capital have taken to the streets, where they have posted revolutionary fliers and big-character posters. They are assembling and making speeches everywhere. They are launching furious attacks on all old thoughts, old cultures, old customs and old habits. Some businesses whose names suggest feudalism, capitalism and revisionism have voluntarily renamed themselves following persuasion and assistance from the Red Guards. The Red Guards have suggested that revolutionary students and teachers in all schools change politically meaningless school names. They call for revolutionary employees in the service industry to refuse haircuts to strangers, and for the sale of unhealthy publications to be suspended. They are reconstructing Beijing into a proletarian and revolutionary city. The rebellious spirit and revolutionary actions of the Red Guards have attracted the ardent and firm support of all revolutionary students and teachers, as well as employees and residents of different streets." (Xinhua News Agency, August 22, 1966; *People's Daily*, August 23, 1966.)

500. The editorial praised the actions of the Red Guards as follows: "It is a good thing for all revolutionary students to rise up and oppose the capitalist roaders. It is a good thing for them to post big-character posters. It is also a good thing for them to stir up controversy. They have the right to demonstrate on the streets, assemble, organize, and speak. The revolutionary organizations of the revolutionary students, such as the 'Red Guards' and the 'red-flag battle team', are legal organizations under the dictatorship of proletariat. Their actions are legal and revolutionary actions. Those who oppose the revolutionary actions of the revolutionary students violate the teachings of Chairman Mao and the decisions of the Central Committee of the CPC." (*People's Daily*, August 23, 1966.)

501. Ibid.

502. *People's Daily*, August 29, 1966.

Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong called for non-intervention in the Red Guard Movement and gave consent to the dissolving of certain national central bureaus, as well as provincial and municipal party committees.⁵⁰³

On August 30, Zhou submitted the *Notification on Some Specific Issues Concerning the Cultural Revolution*, issued by the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council, which proposed strongly protecting key and confidential departments and units of the Party and state, and the imposition of lawful punishments on counter-revolutionaries and evildoers who attempted to destroy these institutions. However, on September 1, Mao instructed, "The notification is not to be issued."⁵⁰⁴

On August 31, Lin accompanied Mao to meet with revolutionary teachers and students outside Beijing who eulogized him as a great mentor, leader, commander and helmsman.⁵⁰⁵ The same day, Mao issued instructions on Lin's speech,⁵⁰⁶ thus indicating his consent and official approval of Lin's choice of words.

Zhou also praised Mao and the Cultural Revolution with his proposal of the "four greats."⁵⁰⁷ The following day, after Zhou proposed a related motion, Xinhua News Agency officially broadcast the news that Lin was both Vice Chairman of the CCP and Mao's close comrade-in-arms. Subsequently, Zhou addressed Lin as "deputy commander."⁵⁰⁸ Later in December, while reviewing a document, Mao crossed out the "four greats" for the first time, and Zhou saw the reason.⁵⁰⁹

Lin delivered a speech, and said: "Red Guards and other revolutionary youth organizations from universities and schools are the vanguard of the Cultural

503. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1440.

504. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 119.

505. Lin, "Speech at the meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities."

506. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 118.

507. Zhou Enlai said: "Our great leader Chairman Mao is the great commander of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Chairman Mao is our great tutor and helmsman, and is like a sun in our hearts." (Zhou, "Speech at the meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities.")

508. Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 608.

509. On December 1, 1966, Zhou Enlai submitted Mao Zedong's *Supplementary Notice of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council Concerning the Joint Actions of Revolutionary Students and Teachers* to Mao Zedong. When Mao Zedong reviewed this notice on December 12, he deleted the words "our great teacher, great leader, great commander, and great helmsman" from before "Chairman Mao."

Revolution and the powerful reserve force of the PLA.” He also praised the proletarian revolutionary spirit of the Red Guards who dared to speak, act, try to enact change, and carry out revolution, saying: “You have engaged in brave deeds and proposed good advice, and we are satisfied with your actions and fervently support you! We are resolutely opposed to any attempts to suppress you! You have successfully carried out revolution!”⁵¹⁰ Meanwhile, Zhou also delivered a speech and affirmed the movement to destroy the Four Olds.⁵¹¹

Considerable delay occurred before Mao intervened to stop the illegal violence that was being committed by the Red Guards. On August 28, Mao gave instructions on the report concerning the Cultural Revolution in Beijing submitted by Guan Feng and Qi Benyu, members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group. According to the report, the core of the Red Guard Movement was healthy, but the movement had both faults and side effects.⁵¹² Mao issued the instruction: “We need to organize discussion on this matter.”⁵¹³

On August 29, Mao delivered a speech at the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, saying: “The Cultural Revolution has developed into a struggle, criticism and social transformation. However, we call

510. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 118.

511. Zhou Enlai said, “Our Red Guards broke the ‘Four Olds’ and established the ‘Four News’, and became the pioneers of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Your spirit of daring to think, act, attack, and devote yourselves to revolution and rebellion is supported by all workers, farmers, soldiers and revolutionary officials throughout the country. We are cheering for our heroic workers, farmers and soldiers, and paying respects to our Red Guards and all the revolutionary youth!” (Zhou, “Speech at the meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities.”)

512. The report was submitted by Guan Feng and Qi Benyu, members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, to Jiang Qing, Deputy Head of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, on August 26. The report claimed: “The Red Guard organizations of Beijing have developed remarkably since the rally of one million people on August 18 this year, and have become common in all universities and middle schools. The general trend of the current movement is healthy, but it still has shortcomings and side effects. For instance, many people have been detained or beaten, including both some good people and some from the neutral masses. Also, searches of houses and confiscations of property are a little too frequent, as is intervention in the daily life of the masses.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 113–114.)

513. Ibid.

for non-violent rather than violent struggle.”⁵¹⁴ On August 31, Lin repeated Mao’s instructions while meeting teachers, students, and Red Guards outside Beijing, saying: “We call for non-violent struggle rather than violent struggle, because violent struggle can only touch the flesh whereas non-violent struggle can touch the soul.”⁵¹⁵ On September 5, the *People’s Daily* published an editorial titled “We Call for Non-violent Struggle Rather than Violent Struggle” and repeated Mao’s instructions as party policies.⁵¹⁶ However, serious violence continued to spread across the country and human right infringements actually worsened. While Mao believed his supreme directive would quell national violence, he found that the Cultural Revolution had spun out of control.⁵¹⁷ The effect thus was exactly the opposite of what he intended.

On August 28, Mao spoke with Tao Pingzhu and Hu Chi, head of the *People’s Daily*, saying: “We have noted how the students have deviated from pursuing struggle, criticism and transformation. Thus, we should guide them back to the correct path of struggle, criticism and transformation through newspaper publicity, and should reverse the incorrect direction of the student movement.” At that time, students in Beijing were traveling the country to publicize Mao Zedong Thought, and many students from outside Beijing had come to Beijing to do likewise. Mao supported this travel since he believed it would spread the Cultural Revolution throughout the country.⁵¹⁸

On August 31, Zhou announced the decision of the Central Government to allow

514. Ibid, 115.

515. Lin, “Speech at the meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities.”

516. Mao Zedong’s specific instructions were: “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a great revolution that touches people’s souls,” and “This great revolution shall depend on verbal struggle instead of armed struggle.” The editorial elaborated as follows: “Verbal struggle rather than armed struggle is an important policy of the CPC during the proletarian Great Cultural Revolution. We must insist on and implement this policy.” (*People’s Daily*, September 5, 1966.)

517. Pang believes that Mao did not see the armed struggle within the Red Guard movement as a big deal, and believed it would eventually be brought under control. However, subsequent facts showed that a *laissez-faire* attitude simply let various complex social contradictions develop into conflicts under the guise of various causes, and also let ambitious people at different levels act with impunity to pursue private interests. Mao’s directive was like opening Pandora’s box, and the associated evil consequences exceeded his imagination. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1440.)

518. Ibid, 1439.

all university students, as well as some high school student representatives, to visit Beijing in groups at different times, and affirmed that such national revolutionary travel would help spread the Cultural Revolution.⁵¹⁹

On September 5, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council jointly issued the *Notification on the Organization of Revolutionary University Students, High School Student Representatives and Teacher Representatives to Witness the Cultural Revolution Movement in Beijing*, which stipulated that the state would fund the train travel of revolutionary students and provide them a living allowance during their travels.⁵²⁰ National revolutionary travel subsequently peaked and tens of millions of students traveled the country, straining transportation infrastructure and causing social chaos. This free revolutionary travel continued for four months.

On September 7, Mao wrote to Lin and other leaders, pointing out that it was wrong to organize workers, peasants, and soldiers to intervene in student movements in Qingdao, Changsha, Xi'an, and elsewhere. Additionally, he requested that the Central Government issue instructions to forbid such interventions by local authorities, and write an editorial to dissuade workers and peasants from intervening in the student movement.⁵²¹ On September 11, the Central Government issued instructions against inciting or organizing workers, peasants, and citizens to protest against student movements, regardless of the reasons for such protest or the methods used. Meanwhile, the *People's Daily* carried the editorial titled "Workers, Peasants, and Students Should Unite Under the Guidance of Mao Zedong Thought" and affirmed that the direction of the student movements was mainstream and benign.⁵²²

On September 15, Mao and Lin met for the third time with young students and Red Guards from across China. Lin addressed the students and said: "Your general struggle direction is right and Chairman Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC overwhelmingly support you! Your revolutionary movements have

519. Zhou, "Speech at the Meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities."

520. In August 1966, at the Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Chen Boda said: "The joint action was supported by Mao, who proposed pushing for such a revolutionary mass movement." (Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the Cultural Revolution*, 105.)

521. Mao, "Instructions on Forbidding Intervention in Student Movements by Mobilizing Workers and Farmers."

522. The editorial stated: "During the Proletarian Great Cultural Revolution, the workers, farmers, masses, and revolutionary students share a common struggle aim and revolutionary direction." (*People's Daily*, September 11, 1966.)

Table 3.1 Partial report of seizures in major regions

Region	Households subjected to seizure	Real estate seized	Valuables seized	Notes
Beijing	23,695	529,999 properties	10,313 taels of gold 345,232 taels of silver CNY85,459,919 of cash 833,618 pieces of artifacts	1,700 people beaten to death, over 785,000 people denounced as “five blacks” exiled.
Shanghai	84,222	1,230,000m ²		
Wuhan	21,000		17,845 taels of gold 28,936 taels of silver 267,000 pieces of silver coins CNY440,000,000 of cash	32 people beaten to death, 112 suicide attempts with 62 deaths.
Suzhou	64,056		Over 170,000 books, works of art and calligraphy, and cultural artifacts	

Sources: Yang ed., *Cultural Revolution Museum (1966–1976)*, vol. 1, 187; Wang ed., *Failure of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 70.

shocked society, especially the diehards of the old society. You have accomplished great feats in the battle against the “Four Olds” and the development of the “Four News,” and have done a good job in attacking reactionary bourgeois authorities, vampires, and parasites.”⁵²³ Mao later commented on and modified Lin’s speech.⁵²⁴

On September 7, *Red Flag* published an editorial from a commentator titled “Eulogy to the Red Guards” that praised the revolutionary initiative of the Red Guards as a novel feature of the Cultural Revolution. The editorial also described the relationship between Mao Zedong and the Red Guards by saying “Chairman Mao is our red commander in chief and we are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards.”⁵²⁵

523. Lin, “Speech at the meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities.”

524. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 118.

525. On September 17, 1966, *Red Flag* published a call to action in the form of the “Song of the Red Guards.” The article enthused: “The revolutionary and pioneering work of the Red Guards has shocked the world. Red Guards are a new phenomenon that

Table 3.2 **Statistics of Red Guard “Victories”**

Dictatorship over enemies	Hidden enemies unmasked (Five Black Categories)	16,623
	Counter-revolutionary cases	1,788
	Banished “monsters and demons”	287,450
Possessions seized	Gold	11,580,000 taels
	Silver	303,000 taels
	Silver yuan	9,789,000 coins
	Foreign currency	CNY7,297,000
	Savings and bonds	CNY42,880,000,000
	Jewelry	1,719,000 pieces
	Artifacts	10,000,000 pieces

Source: Yang ed., *Cultural Revolution Museum (1966–1976)*, vol. 1, 187.

The above speeches and editorials, by not mentioning the violence and cultural destruction committed by the Red Guards, deliberately covered up the truth and encouraged the Red Guards to continue their activities. Mao seemed to support the Red Guards’ destruction of the “Four Olds” with the intention of mobilizing and relying on the masses, but he failed to control the Red Guard Movement.

has emerged during the Proletarian Great Cultural Revolution. Having been born and brought up in the Proletarian Great Cultural Revolution, Red Guards are products of Mao Zedong Thought. The Red Guards say, ‘Chairman Mao is our red commander and we are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards’. The Red Guards have done a good job. The Red Guards are the pioneers of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The revolutionary actions of these revolutionary young people are useful. Proletarian revolutionary history will forever remember the feats of these Red Guards in the Great Cultural Revolution. The imperialists, reactionaries, contemporary revisionists, and followers of Chiang Kai-shek curse our Red Guards with the most evil language. They call our Red Guards wild young men, and attack their revolutionary actions as ‘destroying human dignity’, ‘breaking social tradition’, and so on. Chairman Mao has taught us that opposition by the enemy is a good thing rather than a bad thing. It is better if the enemy strongly opposes us and describes us using awful terms. It is a great honor for the Red Guards to be opposed by class enemies at home and abroad.” (*Red Flag*, issue 12, 1966; *People’s Daily*, September 19, 1966.)

Sidebar 3.3 Incidents Involving Red Guards Destroying the Four Olds (August 1966–December 1966)

On August 18, 1966, Mao Zedong and Lin Biao gave the Red Guards an audience. Around this time the Red Guards were planning a nighttime attack on the Forbidden City in the name of destroying the “Four Olds”, which Zhou Enlai prevented by ordering that the gates be secured.

On August 20, Red Guards from Beijing No. 2 Middle School issued the *Declaration of War on the Old World* and called for destroying the “Four Olds” and developing the “Four News”.

On August 23, Red Guards ransacked art treasures and artifacts from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture, and Red Guards from Beijing Sports University smashed the Buddha image at the Pavilion of the Fragrance of Buddha of the Summer Palace.

On August 24, Red Guards from Beijing Middle School issued an ultimatum to various democratic parties and central organizations, demanding they voluntarily disband and announce their dissolution in the newspapers. Failure to comply would see forceful dissolution at the hands of the Red Guards. The same day, Lao She, who held the official title of People’s Artist, committed suicide in Lake Taiping after being humiliated by Red Guards, and Li Da, Member of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress and President of Wuhan University, was persecuted to death.

On August 25, Red Guards barged into Quanjude, a long-established roast duck restaurant, where they smashed the existing sign and replaced it with a new one reading simply “Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant”. The same day, various democratic parties and organizations were ordered to close their offices.

On August 26, the Red Guard Contact Center for Beijing University and its Affiliated High School was set up; students from universities and colleges in Qingdao attacked the Qingdao Municipal Committee of the CPC and beat cadres; Red Guards from the Department of Automation of Tsinghua University put up the big-character poster “We Must Plunge Tsinghua University into Turmoil”; Red Guards from Beijing No.2 Middle School republished the *Declaration of War on the Old World* and claimed they would rebel against the old world and destroy all the barber shops, tailor shops, studios, and bookstalls that provided services for the bourgeoisie; Red Guards from Luoyang, Henan Province destroyed the head of the Buddha statue in the Longman Grottoes; and in Hangzhou the Lake under Autumn Moon Stele, Tiger Statue of the Spring of Hupao, and the Yue Fei and Qin Hui statues, were all destroyed or vandalized.

On August 27, Capital University and College Red Guard Command (No. 1 Command) was set up and large-scale slaughter occurred in Daxing County on the outskirts of Beijing.

On August 28, the leading party group of the Ministry of Public Security reported to the Central Committee of the CPC that students and masses were punishing criminals at prisons and reform-through-labor factories and farms, beating police, and attacking local police stations. A total of 140,000 students were said to have arrived in Beijing.

On August 29, Red Guards from a middle school in Beijing proposed renaming Yangwei Road, located in front of the Soviet Embassy, as Anti-revisionist Road. The group held a naming conference attended by 200,000 people, as well as a large celebration parade. From August 29 to August 30, 400,000 people participated in the parade. Zhou Enlai intervened to order that embassies should not be attacked.

In late August, Red Guards abducted religious leader Panchen Erdini Choky Gyaltsen, officially recognized as a 'Living Buddha', and detained him at Minzu University.

At the end of August, Red Guards attacked the Temple of Soul's Retreat in Hangzhou (a major historical and cultural site protected at the national level) and Zhou Enlai ordered that the temple be temporarily closed down. The Hengshan Temple, built in the Tang Dynasty, was also destroyed around this time.

On September 3, thousands of students from Urumqi, Xinjiang laid siege to the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Party Committee of the CPC and protested through a sit-in and hunger strike.

On September 5, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council jointly issued the *Notification on the Organization of Revolutionary University and College Students, Revolutionary High School Student Representatives and Revolutionary Faculty Representatives to Witness the Cultural Revolution Movement in Beijing*. Additionally, the Capital University and College Red Guards Command (No.2 Command) was established. From September 1 to September 5, a total of 420,000 students left Beijing (including Red Guards who had recently arrived and were returning home) and 390,000 students arrived in Beijing (including Red Guards who had been traveling elsewhere and were simply returning).

On September 6, the Capital University and College Red Guards Revolutionary Rebellion General Command (No.3 Command) was set up under the leadership of Kuai Dafu. A total of 340,000 students were in Beijing.

On September 22, Zhou Enlai reported a total of 36 ministers and deputy ministers had been relieved from their posts for self-examination.

On September 24, Red Guards from Beijing travelling in Shanghai proposed

forcing hundreds of bourgeois capitalists to parade through the streets, and abandoned the plan only after intervention from Zhou Enlai.

On September 26, Red Guards from 34 middle schools in Beijing together with students from outside the city proposed renaming Beijing as Dongfanghong City. The next day, Red Guards held a naming conference and only intervention from Zhou Enlai stopped them renaming Beijing.

On September 27, Red Guards from Heilongjiang Hejiang Reform-through-Labor Sub-bureau held a conference with the theme Bombarding the Headquarters.

In September, nearly 100 members and alternate members of the Central Committee of the CPC from democratic parties in Beijing were accused and denounced and their households illegally searched.

From late August to late September, Red Guards in Beijing announced that 33,695 households had been searched and 1,772 people beaten to death.

In October, the national turmoil intensified prior to the work conference of the Central Committee of the CPC and the leadership organizations of many public transport enterprises became paralyzed or semi-paralyzed, causing failures in production and command, as well as the stagnation of economic construction.

On October 7, a Red Guard telephone operator from Helongjiang eavesdropped on long-distance telephone calls made by the Heilongjiang Provincial Committee of the CPC and the Public Security Department of Helongjiang Province to the Central Committee of the CPC, and students from Xinjiang attacked the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation.

On October 9, Jiang Qing and Ye Qun ordered Jiang Tengjiao to illegally search the households of Zheng Junli, Zhao Dan, Gu Erji, Tong Zhiling and Chen Liting and burned materials related to Jiang Qing obtained during these searches. On the same day, thousands of workers and students from the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps laid siege to the Kun Lun Hotel and proposed the detention and denunciation of the leaders of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

On October 26, Zhou Enlai proposed restricting the numbers of students travelling the country to promote Mao Zedong Thought to approximately 1.5 million. However, Mao Zedong protested and stressed that the number should be increased to more than 2 million or even 3 million.

On October 28, students from Zhengzhou University attacked Zhongnanhai.

On October 30, two factions fought at the Great Hall of the People until Zhou Enlai stopped the confrontation.

At the end of October, Red Guards forced their way into the office of the deputy director of the National Economic Council.

In early November, local Red Guards abducted the secretary of the Shandong Provincial Committee of the CPC, Tan Qilong, took him to Beijing, and proposed holding a denunciation parade and rally to be attended by 100,000 people. Only intervention by Zhou Enlai stopped the rally.

On November 7, the Beijing Normal University Mao Zedong Thought Red Guard Jinggangshan Combat Regiment published the Declaration of the Crusade against Confucianism and the Burning of Confucian Temples. The document outlined plans to destroy Confucian Temples, burn portraits of Confucius, and desecrate his grave. Over the next month, until December 7, this campaign saw the destruction of 6,618 artifacts, 2,700 ancient books, over 900 ancient calligraphic inscriptions and paintings, and more than 1,000 ancient tablets.

On November 9, Shanghai Workers Revolutionary General Command was set up under the leadership of Wang Hongwen. Early on the morning of November 10, rebels lay on the railway tracks at Anting Station on the outskirts of Shanghai for 31 hours to stop freight trains.

On November 14, a rebel mob in Anhui Province accused and denounced Li Baohua and Li Renzhi, the leaders of the Anhui Provincial Committee of the CPC.

On November 20, the Beijing Normal University Mao Zedong Thought Red Guard Jinggangshan Combat Regiment published the Ten Proposals for Destroying Confucian Temples and Establishing the Absolute Authority of Mao Zedong Thought, and requested permission to establish the National Liaison Committee for Crusading against Confucianism.

On December 4, Peng Zhen, Liu Ren, Wan Li, Lin Mohan, Xia Yan, Tian Han, and Xu Liqun were abducted by Red Guards.

On December 6, Lin Biao proposed that the Cultural Revolution should be spread across the country, including the countryside. Lin Biao, Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, and Wang Li condemned Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu, Li Fuchun, Yu Qiuli, and Gu Mu for the *Outline Report for Industrial and Mining Enterprises Carrying out the Cultural Revolution*. After the meeting, the Central Committee of the CPC issued two documents drafted by Chen Boda on the conduct of cultural revolution by industrial and mining enterprises, and the Cultural Revolution was thus officially carried out in fields such as industry, transportation, finance, trade, agriculture, and scientific research.

In late December, students from Beihang University reached Chengdu to escort Peng Dehuai to Beijing, and Zhou Enlai ordered that Peng Dehuai be sent to Beijing under protection.

On December 25, Kai Dafu and 5,000 students from Tsinghua University held an oath-taking rally in Tiananmen Square with the theme of overthrowing the

bourgeois reactionary lines led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.

On December 27, over 100,000 rebels from universities and colleges in Beijing rallied at Worker's Stadium to support the overthrow of the bourgeois reactionary lines led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.

On December 30, rebels from State Economic Commission accused and denounced Bo Yibo, and Zhou Enlai ordered that he be sent to Beijing under protection.

On December 31, students from military academies criticized Chen Yi and Ye Jianying. Zhou Enlai protested their criticism.

During 1966, 120 tombs at Beijing's Babaoshan Cemetery were destroyed, accounting for 22% of the total.

Sources: Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 50–115; Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1852–1894, 1910; Yang ed., *Cultural Revolution Museum (1966–1976)*, vol. 1, vol. 2; Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*.

He not only allowed but actively supported large-scale violence, illegalities, and disruptions, and thus caused numerous casualties. It is difficult to describe the true social effects of the anarchy, and only a few historical facts can be presented here.

In Beijing, an archeological survey conducted in 1958 reported that 6,843 cultural relics were still preserved. 4,922 of these were subsequently destroyed, with the majority destroyed between August 1966 and September 1966.⁵²⁶ From August 23 to September 8, Red Guards illegally searched 84,202 households in Shanghai, the largest city in China, including 1,231 households of senior intellectuals and teachers. From late August to early September, Red Guards illegally searched households in Tianjin and confiscated 13,000 cars, CNY5.56 million in cash, CNY40.5 million in deposits, CNY2.61 million in bonds, over 40,000 taels of gold, over 60,000 pieces of gold and silver jewelry, and over 600,000 silver dollars.⁵²⁷

In August, Hangzhou suffered the destruction of important cultural relics such as the Lake under the Autumn Moon Stele, the Tiger Statue of the Dream Spring of Hupao, and the Yue Fei and Qin Hui statues at the Tomb of Yue Fei.⁵²⁸ Suzhou

526. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 150.

527. Ibid, 166.

528. Ibid, 154.

saw 64,056 households illegally searched, and the confiscation of 170,000 books, calligraphic inscriptions, paintings, and other artifacts.⁵²⁹

According to incomplete statistics, 397,000 people variously designated as bad elements were banished from cities and sent to rural areas before October 14, 1966.⁵³⁰ Beijing alone saw 85,000 landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionists, and other evildoers banished.⁵³¹ The revolutionary movement suppressed alleged evil persons of all kinds.

From October 9 to October 28, Mao presided over the working committee of the Central Committee of the CPC and distributed to attendees statistics such as those above (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2) as evidence of the effectiveness of the Red Guard Movement and the nationwide destruction of the “Four Olds.” In fact, the materials Mao presented were only the tip of the iceberg.

Incited by Lin and the Central Cultural Revolution Group, the Red Guards were irrational in their destruction of the “Four Olds,” and attacked schools, cultural organizations, government organs, and all of society, resulting in unprecedented destruction of Chinese cultural heritage, congestion of national transport infrastructure, stockpiling of supplies, disruption of postal services and communications, industrial stoppages, underproduction and disrupted production, attacks on numerous party and government organs and consequent functional failures. China was instantly plunged from order into turmoil (Sidebar 3.3.) Later in 1970, Mao Zedong acknowledged the truth to Edgar Snow, “China was plunged into turmoil by violent struggle.”⁵³² Obviously, Mao recognized the state of turmoil, which was apparent to the world despite China being restricted and closed at the time.⁵³³

529. Yang ed., *Great Cultural Revolution Museum (1966–1976)*, vol. 2, 175.

530. Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the Cultural Revolution*, 316.

531. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 154.

532. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 13, 176.

533. Meisner described the situation: “In the chaos of late 1966, millions of Red Guards, holding pictures of Mao, singing ‘Chairman Mao is the red sun in our heart’, waving *Mao's Quotations for Rural Areas*, were travelling the country. They were taking action in the streets and rural areas to launch a movement intended to eliminate all symbols of historical feudalism and the influence of modern capitalism. They smashed the museums and took valuable cultural relics away, searched private residences, and burned classical texts and artworks. They seized everything from Confucian classics to Beethoven records and discarded them. They replaced existing names of streets

Sidebar 3.4 Activities of Zhou Enlai and His Allies to Contain Social Unrest (August 1966–January 1967)

On August 23, 1966, Zhou Enlai drew up a draft of *Ten Ideas on How the Organs of the State Council Can Carry Out Cultural Revolution* but failed to obtain Mao Zedong's approval. Mao Zedong remarked that the "16 Articles" was all that mattered, and hence there was no need for even one idea, let alone ten.

On August 29, Red Guards illegally searched Zhang Shizhao's residence and confiscated some of his possessions. Zhang Shizhao wrote a letter to Mao Zedong reporting what had happened, and on August 30, Mao Zedong instructed that future incidents of this type should be prevented. Zhou Enlai then drew up a "Protection List" that included Song Qingling and other celebrities.

On August 31, Tao Zhu drafted the *Notification on Certain Specific Issues Involving the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council during the Cultural Revolution* under the instruction of Zhou Enlai and requested protection for key and confidential departments and units of the Party and state. Zhou Enlai submitted the notification to Mao Zedong, but on September 1 the latter instructed that the notification should not be issued.

On September 3, Zhou Enlai presided over the brief enlarged conference of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and discussed the *Opinion on Red Guards (Draft)*. Tao Zhu and Chen Yi approved the document while Kang Sheng and Yao Wenyuan opposed it, and thus it ultimately failed to pass review and get approval.

On September 9, Zhou Enlai conversed with the hunger striking student representatives from Xi'an Technological University. He persuaded them to end their hunger strike and urgently seek medical treatment.

On September 14, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the *Notification on Carrying Out Revolution and Boosting Production* and requested that the industrial, agricultural, transportation, and financial sectors guarantee the maintenance of normal production, construction, research, design, market, and acquisition activities. On the same day, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the *Decision on the Cultural Revolution in Rural Areas at County Level or Below* and required that students in Beijing and elsewhere not interfere with organs at county level or below, people's communes, or production teams.

On September 15, Zhou Enlai met with revolutionary teachers and students across China and delivered a speech, requesting that the Red Guards and revolutionary students from universities and schools not visit factories, enterprises and organs at county level or below, or people's communes.

On September 22, Zhou Enlai analyzed the arbitrary dismissals of numerous party and government cadres and announced that 36 ministers and deputy ministers from the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council were to be temporarily relieved of their posts for self-examination.

From September 24 to September 26, Zhou Enlai and Tao Zhu jointly wrote to Mao Zedong and Lin Biao several times to report Red Guard violations of policies in Shanghai and elsewhere.

On September 25, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the “Decision Forbidding Rural Areas, Enterprises, Public Institutions, Party and Government Organs, and Mass Organizations from Setting up Red Guard Organizations”.

In September, Jiang Qing criticized Zhou Enlai for not sticking rigidly to Mao Zedong thought, and instructed the *Red Flag* to publish the editorial “Forge ahead under the Guidance of Mao Zedong Thought”.

On October 5, the Central Military Commission of the CPC and the General Political Department issued the *Urgent Instructions on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in Military Academies*, which requested that military academies follow local non-military universities and colleges in carrying out the Cultural Revolution and quashed the *Decision of the Party Committee Serving as the Leader of the Movement*. The same day, the Central Committee of the CPC forwarded the *Urgent Instructions* and requested they be implemented in all universities and schools at country level or above.

On October 9, Zhou Enlai met with eight organizational representatives from Tsinghua University and stopped Red Guards from denouncing Wang Guangmei, the wife of Liu Shaoqi.

In late October, Zhou Enlai proposed that Red Guards be forbidden from attacking key government agencies such as the Ministry of Defense, the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense, and the Ministry of Public Security.

On October 31, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the *Urgent Notification on Maintaining the Order of Railway Transportation*, reviewed by Zhou Enlai. This pointed out the need for organizational planning of the students traveling around Beijing, including controlling student numbers, forbidding the interception or stopping of trains, and forbidding the forcing of railways nationwide to extend or change the direction in which their trains were running.

On November 2, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council jointly issued the *Urgent Notification Requesting Revolutionary Teachers, Students and Red Guards to Leave Beijing in an Orderly Manner*.

On November 4, Zhou Enlai drafted a document on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC that prohibited the revolutionary masses from interfering with important government agencies, news broadcast media, or the organs and bureaus of the Central Committee of the CPC.

On November 16, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council jointly issued the *Notification on Issues Concerning Revolutionary Teachers and Students Traveling the Country to Publicize Mao Zedong Thought* and the *Decision Concerning the Suspension of Travel to Beijing or Around China by Revolutionary Teachers, Students, and Red Guards and the Persuasion of Those Awaiting Transportation to Continue Such Travel to Return Home*.

On November 17, Zhou Enlai approved the deployment of 100,000 to 110,000 officers and veteran soldiers by the Beijing Military Region Command to provide military training to the Red Guards.

Acting to the instructions of Zhou Enlai, Gu Mu drafted the *Decision On How Public Transportation Enterprises Can Carry out the Cultural Revolution*, which proposed forbidding production stoppages for the sake of revolution, and a prohibition on students from interfering in factories. Chen Boda and the Central Cultural Revolution Group condemned the Decision and Mao Zedong instructed that industrial and mining enterprises should still wage cultural revolution, but should do so in a scheduled fashion so as to maintain continued production.

On November 20, Zhou Enlai ordered the Central Committee of the CPC to forward instructions from the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC that all factories, mines, schools, organs and other units were forbidden from setting up detention centers and tribunals, making arrests, and inflicting torture in breach of national laws and party discipline.

In November, students and the masses jointly attacked public security organs and injured police in Zhejiang, Fujian, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Jilin, Hebei, and other provinces and autonomous regions. On November 24, Zhou Enlai approved sending telegrams to central bureaus and provincial, municipal and autonomous regional party committees to remind them that public security organs must always remain able to carry out their work, and that those masses that had entered public security organs must immediately leave.

On November 26, Zhou Enlai issued instructions and requested that the Central Military Commission of the CPC recover the weapons in the hands of the Dongfanghong Commune and the PLA Red Flag Combat Bridge of the Chengdu College of Geology.

On December 1, Zhou Enlai reviewed the *Supplementary Notification on Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Different Universities and Schools Traveling*

the Country to Publicize Mao Zedong Thought and requested that all traveling teachers, students and Red Guards return home before December 20.

On December 2, Zhou Enlai wrote to Mao Zedong and proposed caution in publishing the Xinhua News Agency news story titled “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution General Assembly of Literary and Artistic Circles Was Held in the Capital Beijing”, despite it having originally been approved by the Central Cultural Revolution Group and Lin Biao. The reason was that this story criticized by name many leaders of the Beijing Municipal Committee involved in the cultural sector, including Peng Zhen and Lu Dingyi. On receiving this letter, Mao Zedong crossed out the names from the news story.

On December 6, officials from Shanghai reported large-scale mass violence and casualties in Shanghai, and Zhou Enlai spoke with students from the city.

On December 14, Zhou Enlai held discussions with the representatives of the Chengdu Workers Rebel Group and said that their organization should consider national and public interests instead of individual interests.

On January 11, 1967, Zhu De, Ye Jianying, and Xu Xiangqian unanimously stressed the importance of maintaining the stability of the army at the meeting of the Politburo and the Central Committee of the CPC, and the State Council and Central Military Commission of the CPC jointly issued the Notification on Protecting Banks, which permitted the use of military force to protect important local authorities. The PLA and public security departments became responsible for protecting local banks.

On January 14, the Central Committee of the CPC issued the Notification on the Prohibition of Struggle against the Army, which prohibited revolutionary students and associated organizations from attacking the PLA.

On January 21, Mao Zedong gave Lin Biao instructions on deploying the army to support the leftist masses, contradicting his avowed policy of non-intervention. In fact, the army had intervened in the Cultural Revolution before.

On January 23, the Central Committee of the CPC, the State Council, the Central Military Commission of the CPC and the Central Cultural Revolution Group jointly issued the *Decision on the Overwhelming Support of the PLA for the Revolutionary Leftist Masses* and repeated Mao Zedong’s instructions that the PLA should support the leftist masses and comply with requests for assistance from real revolutionary groups. The outcome of the social struggle rested on which groups the army would ultimately support, and so it was vital that the PLA fully supported the leftist revolutionary groups.

On January 24, Zhou Enlai met with the representatives of military academies and announced that revolutionaries and associated groups were prohibited

from attacking military academies, but could post big-character posters at these academies.

On January 25, Zhou Enlai met with cultural revolutionary representatives from the finance and trade sectors and reaffirmed that they were allowed to seize control of businesses to achieve the goals of the Cultural Revolution. Xu Xiangqian wrote to Lin Biao and proposed maintaining the stability of the army. The same day, Lin Biao, Xu Xiangqian, Chen Boda, Nie Rongzhen, Ye Jianying, and Yang Chengwu drafted the *Orders from the Central Military Committee of the CPC* (the so called *Seven Point Order*.)

On January 26, Zhou Enlai met with rebel representatives from Xinjiang Province and criticized the Tianjin rebels for having kidnapped municipal leaders. The State Council and the Central Military Commission of the CPC then issued the *Notification of Military Control over Civil Aviation*. After the army took over the civil aviation system, various revolutionary organizations were prohibited from traveling the country to publicize Mao Zedong Thought.

On January 28, Zhou Enlai presided over a brief meeting of members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and the Central Cultural Revolution Group to discuss the *Eight Point Order* issued by the Central Military Commission of the CPC. (Mao had added an extra point to the *Seven Point Order*.)

On January 30, Zhou Enlai requested that the masses led by the Zhejiang Revolutionary Rebel Joint Headquarters of the Zhejiang Military Region Command leave the military compounds they had occupied.

In January 1967, according to statistical data, Zhou Enlai met with Red Guards and mass organization representatives of the movement over 160 times.

Sources: Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 51–120; Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1910.

Desperate violent struggle took place among the Red Guards, and social and

and buildings with new revolutionary names. They stuck pictures and quotations of Chairman Mao in prominent places. If a citizen wore a suit or had a Hong Kong-style haircut, Red Guards armed with scissors would stop him or her and beat them, confiscate their clothes, or shave their head. Buddhist and Taoist temples and relics faced the same fate. The Great Cultural Revolution simultaneously destroyed living humans and China's ancient culture. As the target of the Red Guards changed from the 'Four Olds' to 'capitalist roaders,' many party and government officials were seized and forced to parade through the streets wearing conical hats, and recount their 'crimes' during mass

political splits occurred during the Red Guard Movement. Over time, the splits deepened and became more serious and the movement entered a vicious cycle of repeated violence and revenge by different factions.⁵³⁴ On October 25, Mao Zedong admitted at the Working Conference of the Central Committee of the CPC that he had created trouble by staging the Cultural Revolution.⁵³⁵

Wang Shaoguang believed the emergence of the Red Guards and the movement to destroy the “Four Olds” had two serious implications: one, a precedent was set for people with common interests to set up independent mass organizations to promote those interests at the expense of others; two, a precedent was set for organizing those with common interests to form alliances among work and other units to pursue common interests. These precedents created the conditions for the spawning of spontaneous mass movements.⁵³⁶ Two different views and practices existed in this respect within the Central Committee of the CPC.

First, Mao, Lin, and the Central Cultural Revolution Group called to mobilize the masses and establish a great proletariat democracy to cause turmoil. At the time, only a few local leaders positively responded to the call of Mao and Lin and supported the rebellion of the Red Guards. For instance, on August 18, Pan Fusheng, First Secretary of the Helongjiang Provincial Committee of the CPC, openly supported the Red Guards from Harbin Engineering University in bombarding the Provincial Party Committee of the CPC, and paraded in a Red Guard armband. On August 19, Liu Jianxun, First Secretary of the Henan Provincial Committee of the CPC, acted on his own initiative to display Mao’s “My First Big-character Poster” and thus openly support the rebels from Zhengzhou University in attacking the Provincial Party Committee of the CPC.

Second, members of the Standing Committee of Political Bureau, namely Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu, and Li Fuchun,⁵³⁷ as well as other leaders from the State Council and

criticism and struggle meetings. They were tortured physically and mentally. Some were killed and some committed suicide, especially the most vulnerable intellectuals.” (Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, 299.)

534. Ibid, 300.

535. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 143.

536. Wang, *Failure of Charisma: the Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*.

537. In mid-July of 1966, on the recommendation of Zhou Enlai and with the approval of the Central Committee of the CPC, Li Fuchun was appointed Zhou Enlai’s economic assistant. At the time Li Fuchun had not been in charge of the daily work of the State Planning Economy Commission for over a year. Zhou Enlai also made it clear that Li Fuchun’s duty was to encourage and coordinate the work of all departments on behalf

Military Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC, advocated maintaining normal social order and normal production. They sought to prevent drastic actions by Red Guards, forbid them from attacking important organs and troops, and ban factories and mines, schools, organs and other units from establishing detention centers and tribunals, making arrests, and inflicting secret torture. In the face of sudden social unrest, they took a series of actions to quell this unrest, but these failed to achieve the desired effects (Sidebar 3.4.)

Figuratively speaking, Mao, Lin, and the Central Cultural Revolution Group were the “arsonists,” while Zhou and his allies were the “firefighters.”⁵³⁸ However, it was hard for the latter to end the social unrest and stem the rising tide of the Cultural Revolution. The larger the scale of the chaotic and illegal mass movements, the more they damaged society. Mao Zedong’s political revolution was anarchic,⁵³⁹ and Mao Zedong himself lost control of the revolutionary violence. Although the Cultural Revolution successfully achieved Mao Zedong’s goals of dissolving old authorities and destroying mechanisms for social control,⁵⁴⁰ it also caused excessive social unrest.⁵⁴¹

of the State Council. (Fang and Jin eds., *Biography of Li Fuchun*, 653.)

538. Zhou Enlai said: “We failed to anticipate the speed, width, and depth of the Great Cultural Revolution. We lack sufficient mental preparation or prediction for this. Even after the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, we still cannot correctly forecast the evolution of this movement.” (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 2, 1871.

539. In November 1979, when recalling this history, Deng Xiaoping offered the following appraisal: “Actually the Gang of Four were the anarchists. (Economic) construction is impossible under anarchy.” (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 2, 232–233.)

540. Wang Shaoguang commented: “The old authority cannot be immediately replaced by a new authority. The personal reputation of Mao Zedong was all that remained of the old authority, and in fact had been strengthened in the Cultural Revolution. The personality cult of Chairman Mao had become a tool to mobilize the masses. No matter how the hundreds of millions of masses expressed their loyalty for Chairman Mao, the personality cult could not help people to understand the will of Mao Zedong because he had destroyed the mechanisms of social control. This control was necessary for him to command and coordinate the masses.” (Wang, *Failure of Charisma: the Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, 83.)

541. According to Harding, “Mao’s second revolution was a failure compared with his successful first revolution. The second revolution had no clear guiding principles, nor did it have a unified organization competent to implement the new guidelines and

On August 30, the Central Committee of the CPC issued a notification and announced that Deputy Group Leader Jiang Qing had taken over from Chen Boda. She had previously served as leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group when Chen took sick leave or left Beijing to carry out revolutionary work. Since Jiang was neither a member of the Central Committee of the CPC nor a party leader at the Eleventh Plenum of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, this notification was taken to formally indicate that Jiang was the political nucleus of the Central Cultural Revolution Group.

On September 2, Chen asked Lin via Ye Qun to submit a written request to Mao asking that Jiang be permitted to attend the meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee.⁵⁴² With Mao's approval, Jiang was allowed to participate in framing the decisions of the central government, and to serve as the leader of the Cultural Revolution.

After the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao proposed a motion to let Lin preside over the work of the Central Committee. However, Lin unexpectedly resigned, and so Zhou took over. Zhou usually reported directly to Mao and Lin, while Mao, Lin, and other members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC seldom attended meetings. The collective leadership thus began to break down. For example, Tao Zhu, Kang Sheng, Li Fuchun (Members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee,) Xie Fuzhi (Alternate Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC,) Ye Jianying (Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC,) Chen Yi (Member of the Central Politburo of the CPC,) Wang Dongxing (Director of the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC) and Zhou Rongxin (Secretary General of the State Council) attended the brief meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC presided over by Zhou Enlai on September 6.⁵⁴³ However, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Deng Xiaoping, and Chen Yun (Members of the Central Politburo Standing Committee) were excluded from attending the brief meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC and were gradually marginalized. The Central Cultural Revolution Group began to officially participate in decision making, serving as the political proxy of Mao Zedong, and participated in making and enforcing decisions. This was a deliberate contravention of the Party Constitution, and Mao was primarily responsible for this, while Zhou directly assisted him.

policies. It destroyed existing political power, but what remained was only chaos." Harding, "Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution."

542. Wang, *Those Turbulent Years*, 21.

543. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 59.

Criticism of the Bourgeois Counter-revolutionary Line and the Convention of the Central Work Conference in October

From October to December, the Cultural Revolution surged to another high point. The Central Committee of the CPC openly criticized the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line and convened the Central Work Conference to condemn Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping for their wrong political line. After Liu and Deng were singled out for self-criticism, the Cultural Revolution spread through the army, public security organs, industry, media organizations, and to certain rural areas.

At the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Lin Biao had taken over from Liu Shaoqi, who was removed from office, demoted to eighth in the party hierarchy, and compelled to undertake self-criticism and respond to the accusations in Mao's "Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster." From the end of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC to August 24, the democratic meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau was convened three times to criticize Liu and his allies, and was attended by all members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group. However, Liu failed to pass the examination of his self-criticism.⁵⁴⁴

On August 29, Mao announced at the enlarged meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau that the headquarters led by Liu had adopted incorrect ideology, and should assume responsibility for dispatching the working groups. Liu and Deng were asked to submit a written self-criticism to the Beijing Working Group Leader Conference.⁵⁴⁵

On September 10, Liu submitted a draft of his self-criticism to Mao for review at the Beijing Working Group Leader Conference.⁵⁴⁶ First, he criticized himself for his incorrect political direction after June 1, and thus accepted the criticisms made in Mao's big-character poster and assumed primary responsibility for his mistakes. Second, he undertook self-criticism for his mistakes with regard to political principles and line, such as that at the Xilou Meeting on February 1962, his support of Deng Zihui's allocation of farmland by contract, and at the Central Working Meeting at the end of 1964. In the draft, he analyzed the reasons for his faults, and

544. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 189.

545. Jin ed., *Biography of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2, 1042.

546. After modification, the draft of this self-criticism became the self-criticism submitted to the Central Working Meeting held the same year. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969)*, vol. 2, 650.

stated reluctantly that Lin and other party members surpassed him in political and ideological consciousness.⁵⁴⁷

On September 14, Mao wrote to Liu and praised his drafted self-criticism. Particularly, he strongly commended the second half of the document, in which Liu analyzed specific cases where he had committed mistakes.⁵⁴⁸ On September 19, Zhou circulated Liu's written self-criticism and Mao's comments to the members of the Central Politburo of the CPC, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Central Cultural Revolution Group. Nevertheless, Mao did not deem Liu's power adequately weakened following his self-criticism, and so continued to call for attacks on Liu.

On September 15, Lin announced Mao's decision at the national rally of teachers and students: "The movement will focus on struggling against capitalist roaders within the Party, and bombarding the headquarters means attacking a handful of capitalist roaders."⁵⁴⁹ On September 16, Kang Sheng wrote a report to Mao to frame Liu.⁵⁵⁰ Without the approval of the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the

547. The reason is that at the opening ceremony of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, Mao Zedong harshly criticized Liu Shaoqi (without mentioning him by name) for believing himself to be greater than others. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1426.)

548. Mao Zedong suggested the documents be circulated in draft form to the Political Bureau, Secretariat, Work Teams (officials,) Beijing Municipal Committee and Central Cultural Group (Central Cultural Revolution Group) for discussion. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 134.)

549. Lin Biao said: "Chairman Mao has taught us that the essential contradiction to be solved in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and between the socialist and capitalist roads. The key to this movement is the struggle against the capitalist roaders within the CPC. To bombard the headquarters is to attack a small number of capitalist roaders. Our country is a socialist country under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and so the proletariat controls the leadership of our country. The destruction of a small number of capitalist roaders consolidates and strengthens our proletarian dictatorship." (Lin, "Speech at the meeting to Interview Revolutionary Teachers and Students from Other Cities"; Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 118.)

550. In a letter to Mao Zedong, Kang Sheng said: "I have long suspected Liu Shaoqi's decision regarding the matter whereby An Ziwen, Bo Yibo, and some others 'confessed to win release from jail'. Some people betrayed, or tried to betray, the Party to gain

CPC or the National Congress of the CPC, Mao, Lin, and Kang openly criticized and secretly investigated Liu, deliberately contravening both the national and party constitutions, even after Liu Shaoqi had already undertaken self-criticism.

On September 18, Lin delivered a speech when meeting the leaders of the army and praised Mao as a great genius, saying: “Among the classic works of Marxism-Leninism, we should immerse ourselves especially in studying those of Chairman Mao, for they are revolutionary textbooks. Mao Zedong outshines Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and no one surpasses Mao Zedong, who is a great genius of the type who is born only once every few centuries, or even every few millennia.”⁵⁵¹

When Ye Jianying (Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the CPC and Secretary-General,) Qi Benyu (Member of the Central Cultural Revolution Group,) and Xie Tangzhong (Member of the PLA Cultural Revolution Group) met with the teacher and student representatives from the PLA art academies and troupes on September 25, Ye introduced the backdrop to — and significance of — appointing Lin as successor to Mao, saying: “Recently, we were delighted by Chairman Mao’s selection of his successor. Chairman Mao has selected his successor for the next several decades. Lin Biao, who is hailed as a great politician and strategist with abundant revolutionary struggle experience and strong leadership, and who has withstood the test of four decades of revolutionary struggle, is the most suitable successor to Mao Zedong.”⁵⁵² Chairman Mao’s appointment of Lin Biao as his successor will help realize victory in the Cultural Revolution, and thus will help achieve revolutionary victory in China and the world. Lin Biao is healthier than all of us. We are convinced that Lin Biao will follow Chairman Mao to lead China forward for the next 20 or even 30 years. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao and Lin Biao, our revolution will be invincible, and we will devote ourselves confidently to our great revolutionary cause.” Ye’s words show that Mao had appointed Lin as his first successor at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. The speech quickly spread across China. On October 9, Xinhua News Agency reported Xiao Hua (Director of the General Political Department of the PLA) declaring that Lin showed loyalty and resolution in his promotion of Mao Zedong Thought and in his following of Mao’s correct political line. He hailed Lin as the closest comrade-in-arms and best student of Mao,

personal benefit. The decision of Shaoqi legalized this traitorous behavior.” Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969)*, vol. 2, 650.

551. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People’s Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 163–164.

552. Yan and Wang, *Reflections on History*, 422–423.

and a model example of the study and application of Mao's works.⁵⁵³ On November 5, Ye said at a meeting of air force officers: "Vice Chairman Lin Biao is the best student of the Chairman, and sets an example of upholding Mao Zedong Thought through profound and flexible study and thorough and resolute implementation. Therefore, our old cadres should learn from vice chairman Lin Biao."

On October 1, Lin spoke at the General Meeting to Celebrate the Seventeenth Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and announced there were two competing lines in the Cultural Revolution, namely the proletarian revolutionary line led by Mao and the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line. In this speech, Lin denounced the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line led by Liu and Deng and predicted its inevitable failure.⁵⁵⁴ The same evening, Mao spoke with Ted Hill, leader of the Communist Party of Australia, on the rostrum at the Tiananmen gate tower. He pointed to the students assembled in Tiananmen Square, and said: "Imperialism and Revisionism are afraid of these students, and so are some of our cadres. Our revolutionary environment is less perfect than you imagine. Some Chinese cadres, including members of the Central Committee and Central Politburo of the CPC, as well as secretaries of the provincial committees, prefectural committees, and county committees of the CPC, no longer embrace revolution."⁵⁵⁵ Mao thus declared his purpose in mobilizing the Red Guards and rebel factions and staging the Cultural Revolution to struggle against cadres in power. The same day, Guo Moruo composed a poem that praised the Red Guards for embarking on a new Long March and eulogized Mao Zedong as a brilliant red sun.⁵⁵⁶

553. *People's Daily*, October 10, 1966.

554. Lin Biao said, "On behalf of our great leader Chairman Mao and the Central Committee of the CPC....During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the struggle between the proletarian revolutionary line advocated by Chairman Mao and the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line continues. Only a small minority insist on the wrong line. They abandon the people, and oppose both Mao Zedong Thought and the people's interests. Thus they are predestined to failure." (Lin, "Speech at the meeting to celebrate the Seventeenth Anniversary of New China.") At this stage, Mao Zedong had adopted the "bourgeois counter-revolutionary line," and finalized its form, but Tao Zhu said the word "counter-revolutionary" was too politically serious, and should be revised to "bourgeois opposition to the revolutionary line." However, Lin Biao agreed with Mao Zedong. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1446.)

555. *Ibid*, 1444–1445.

556. The poem describing this event went as follows: "Travelling to Beijing over two thousand miles; those inspired people from the Dalian coast learned from our red army's long march; with valuable quotations of Mao, they promoted Mao Zedong

On October 2, 1966, the *People's Daily* republished the editorial of *Red Flag*⁵⁵⁷ and called for public criticism of the bourgeois reactionary line.⁵⁵⁸

On October 6, Jiang attended the National Oath-Taking Rally of Teachers and Students to Bombard the Bourgeois Reactionary Line, held by Capital Red Guard No. 3 Command, and openly supported the Red Guards in criticizing the bourgeois reactionary line.

On October 9, the Central Work Conference was convened to criticize the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line and attack Liu and Deng. Mao held this meeting because he deemed the line of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC had not been followed within the Party. Specifically, although the top leadership and grass roots obeyed this line, middle-ranking officials ignored it. Additionally, there was no consensus within the senior party leadership about attacking Liu and Deng, but those who disagreed hid their opposition and did not dare protest against Mao. In particular, Mao was dissatisfied that party cadres questioned the Cultural Revolution and the mass movements. The meeting

Thought in practice and picked up real experiences on their way. They are students today and will become teachers tomorrow. Finally they saw the great leaders on the Tiananmen gate tower. They showed no fear in the face of evil. They fearlessly confronted any challenge!" (Feng, *Guo Moruo's Later Years*, 116–117.)

557. An editorial in *Red Flag* stated: "The bourgeois reactionary line must be criticized thoroughly," and "If we keep taking the wrong line, repeating the error of suppressing the masses, provoking students to struggle against other students, and ignoring the liberation of the revolutionary masses who have been wrongly attacked in the past, then how can we conduct proper struggle, criticism, and rectification?" The editorial continued: "The criticism of the bourgeois reactionary line is the key to the implementation of the 16-Article Document about the Cultural Revolution, as well as extensive struggle, criticism, and rectification. Eclecticism cannot be applied here." (*Red Flag*, issue 13, 1966.) This article was drafted by Zhang Chunqiao and reviewed and approved by Mao Zedong. The wording "bourgeois reactionary line" was developed by Mao Zedong, who told Zhang Chunqiao that, "The bourgeois reactionary line should be thoroughly criticized in the next step." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1446.)

558. On the night of October 1, 1966, Zhang Chunqiao told Mao Zedong, "the bourgeois line opposed to revolution is a questionable phrase," and suggested the alternative wording "the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line." Mao Zedong said: "Do not change again. In future works we will use the phrase 'thoroughly criticizing the bourgeois reactionary line.'" The editorial of *Red Flag* reflected Mao Zedong's wishes. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1446.)

was originally scheduled to last three days, and Mao requested it be prolonged to seven days. The meeting ultimately lasted 28 days.⁵⁵⁹

On October 12, Lin summarized the achievements of the Cultural Revolution at the group meeting of the Central Working Conference: “1. Study of Mao Zedong’s works are at a high. 2. We unmasked numerous anti-Party counter-revolutionaries. 3. We attacked capitalist roaders and people who follow incorrect political lines. 4. We cracked down on four types of enemies. 5. We revoked officials’ privileges. 6. We fought for proletarian democracy. 7. We purged the Party of anti-party counter-revolutionaries. 8. We performed a readiness exercise. 9. We promoted ideological revolution, production and work. 10. We trained numerous brave revolutionary successors who grew up in the struggle. Nevertheless, some people neglected the mainstream of the Cultural Revolution and publicized and even exaggerated rare negative phenomena to derogate and even resist the Cultural Revolution owing to reluctance to reform themselves.” Lin’s words show that the attitudes of the leaders towards the Cultural Revolution varied, and that Lin himself resolutely defended it. On October 25, Lin also delivered a speech that defended the Cultural Revolution.

On October 16, Chen Boda delivered a speech titled “Two Lines in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” as the theme of the Central Working Meeting that systematically analyzed the wrong line led by Liu and Deng.⁵⁶⁰ Chen claimed that since Liu and Deng led the wrong political line, they should assume primary responsibility for it. He also stated that party line struggle reflected social class struggle, and the wrong line led by Liu and Deng was based primarily on the interests of the bourgeoisie. The wrong line grew in popularity within the Party with the support of a handful of capitalist roaders and others who had failed to transform their outlook. Some cadres, including Liu and Deng, unrepentantly defied Mao Zedong’s criticisms in “Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster” because they were influenced by capitalist ideology. They were afraid of the masses and revolution, and suppressed the former and resisted the latter. The Cultural Revolution was hailed as the supreme international proletarian

559. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 139.

560. This speech comprised four parts: (1) “The Situation is Favorable”; (2) “The Extension of the Struggle between Two Lines”; (3) “Do Not be Afraid and Mobilize the Mass”; (4) “Insist on the Class Line brought by Chairman Mao and Unite the Majority of the People.” On October 16, 1966, under instructions from Mao Zedong, this speech was circulated as one of the documents of the Central Working Meeting and Chen Boda delivered the speech at the meeting.

revolutionary movement, and was said to have outshone the Paris Commune, October Revolution and several other large-scale mass movements in China. Chen also proposed holding exhibitions to demonstrate the revolutionary victories of the Red Guards and “unmask open and hidden evil people of all kinds.” According to his proposal, documents such as *Resolutely Destroy the Old World* and *Briefing to the State Council Culture and Education Departments on Red Guards Illegally Searching the Households of Five Types of Disgraced People* were circulated at the meeting (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.)

As instructed by Mao, Chen’s speech was circulated the same day as one of the central work conference documents. Mao praised and modified the speech several times and proposed printing it in pamphlet form and distributing at least two copies to each party branch and Red Guard squad.⁵⁶¹ The speech quoted the full text of Mao’s “Bombarding the Headquarters,” officially announced the contents of this poster, and directed nationwide criticism at Liu.⁵⁶² Chen voiced Mao’s thoughts, and Mao highly praised his speech. Mao called for all party branches and Red Guards to study the speech, and gave Chen preferential political treatment. Chen then supported Mao’s attack on Liu even more enthusiastically, and provided important support at the critical moment in the high-level political struggle within the Party.

At the Central Working Conference, Xie Fuzhi, Alternate Member of the Central Politburo, Deputy Premier of the State Council, and Minister of Public Security, a former subordinate of Deng Xiaoping, took the lead in accusing and denouncing Deng, saying: “After Deng Xiaoping was assigned to work in Beijing, he insisted on a wrong political line, rejected Mao Zedong’s leadership, resisted Mao Zedong Thought, and slandered the study of Chairman Mao’s works as formalism and vulgarization.”⁵⁶³ Thus, the Cultural Revolution became a typical internal conflict in which various leaders fought while their subordinates accused and denounced their superiors.

Zhou acknowledged at the fifth group meeting: “It is true that we have not prepared sufficiently for the Cultural Revolution and lack relevant experience. However, Mao Zedong can detect new movements and trends and we should

561. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 140–142.

562. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 193.

563. Xie Fuzhi said: “In people’s minds, Deng (Xiaoping) was correct for three decades and wielded enormous influence in the CPC. The big resistance to criticism of the bourgeois reactionary line is somewhat related to this influence.” (Deng, *My Father Deng Xiaoping* — *Days of the “Cultural Revolution”*, 33.)

follow Chairman Mao and be sure not to fall behind. After the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, I made an effort to follow Chairman Mao and Comrade Lin Biao, and kept close contact with the Central Cultural Revolution Group, but even so I was still sometimes in danger of falling behind.”⁵⁶⁴ These words expressed Zhou’s political philosophy of survival by unconditionally following Mao regardless of whether he was right or wrong.

After learning that Liu had been attacked at the Central Working Meeting, the Red Guards began to openly criticize him. On October 10, rebels from Tsinghua University who were dissatisfied with the written self-criticism of revolutionary teachers by Wang Guangmei ordered him to attend the denunciation rally at Tsinghua University.⁵⁶⁵ The same day, Zhou requested that the Central Cultural Revolution Group send messages to Chen, Kang, and Jiang, asking them to refrain from asking Wang to attend the rally.

On October 18, Mao met for a fifth time with some of the approximately 1.5 million teachers, students and Red Guards who were visiting Beijing. Before the audience, Red Guards from other cities and provinces posted the slogan “Bombarding Liu Shaoqi” on the reviewing stand in front of Tiananmen Square, and displayed the poster “Bombarding Revisionist Liu Shaoqi” at Tsinghua University. Although the Red Guards followed his call to bombard the headquarters,⁵⁶⁶ Mao was still surprised at their radical actions.

On October 20, Mao entrusted Zhou with personally notifying Liu and Deng that they should prepare to undertake self-criticism at the Central Working Conference. On October 21, Deng wrote to Mao requesting instructions regarding his self-criticism. Mao responded as follows: “You should make some positive comments after promising to correct your faults and start afresh, as stated in the first row on page nine. For example, you could write ‘I believe I will correct my

564. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 77.

565. During the self-criticism, Wang Guangmei said: “I joined the Tsinghua University Work Team designated by the new Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC on June 20, and left Tsinghua University as instructed by the leaders on August 3. For over 40 days I committed very big errors and heavily damaged the work of the CPC. I failed to live up to the expectations of the Party and Chairman Mao, and betrayed the trust and support of the revolutionary students, teachers and faculties at Tsinghua University. I am so sorry.”

566. On October 25, Mao Zedong said: “It is inappropriate to allow the big-character posters about Liu and Deng onto the streets. We should allow people to make errors.” (Jin ed., *Biography of Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)*, vol. 4, 1883–1885.)

faults and start afresh through my own efforts and with help from comrades.' A veteran revolutionary can learn from failure." On October 22, Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu, and Li Fuchen spoke with Deng and negotiated the details of his self-criticism at the Central Work Conference.⁵⁶⁷

Mao helped Deng modify his written self-criticism, because from the outset of the Cultural Revolution his plan had been to take down Liu but moderating the attack on Deng. Mao was convinced that Liu had fundamental faults and followed wrong lines and would be hard to correct.⁵⁶⁸ Furthermore, while Deng adopted a willing attitude to undertake self-criticism, Liu contradicted Mao right in his face. Strategically, it was also advantageous to treat Liu and Deng unequally. Mao thus helped Deng to pass the examination for his self-criticism.

On October 23, Liu and Deng were compelled to undertake self-criticism at the Central Work Conference, and Liu admitted that he had "committed an error in insisting on the rightist opportunistic line, causing widespread damage and adverse influences over 50 days." Liu assumed ultimate responsibility for the alleged wrong line and direction.⁵⁶⁹ Following Mao's instructions, Liu had

567. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1932–1933.

568. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 13, 244.

569. During his self-criticism, Liu Shaoqi pointed out: "For more than 50 days after June 1 this year (1966,) I committed errors of line and direction during the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution. I should assume the main responsibility for this. Some leaders of the new Beijing Municipal Committee, work teams, and local governments also bear some responsibility, but the principal responsibility is mine. Before July 18 this year, Chairman Mao was not in Beijing, so I organized the daily work of the Central Committee of the CPC. All aspects of the conditions of the Great Cultural Revolution were reported during the Central Meetings I usually chaired. These reporting meetings made some wrong decisions and approved of or agreed to some wrong opinions.... For over 50 days after designating the work teams, I firmly supported the work teams and so increased the number and seriousness of their errors. Some work teams could not be maintained, and so were withdrawn and replaced by new teams. Most of the heads of the work teams lacked a deep understanding of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution and the importance of remaining open minded and learning from the masses. Initially, they required the masses to act according to the plan, and subjectively take steps designed by ourselves and the work teams. In this way they compromised the development of a revolutionary mass movement, strengthened the position of the reactionary bourgeois, engaged in bourgeois dictatorship, suppressed the vigorous

previously engaged in self-criticism of his political faults. For example, he accepted fault for supporting a “rightist opportunist line” in 1962 and 1964. Finally, he identified four reasons for his faults.⁵⁷⁰

Deng volunteered to assume personal responsibility during the self-criticism, saying: “In the movement that lasted for over two months (June and July) in Beijing, Liu Shaoqi and I presided over work when the Chairman left Beijing. At the Eleventh Plenary Session, Chairman Mao put up the first big-character poster to attack the headquarters led by Liu Shaoqi and myself, who were alone among the central leadership in following the bourgeois reactionary line during the Cultural Revolution.” Deng acknowledged that he had insisted on a rightist line and criticized himself as a major cause of the errors. He specially noted that as a central leader he was in a position to harm the Party and the interests of the people with his ideology, and thus should undertake rigorous self-examination.⁵⁷¹

proletarian Cultural Revolution movement, blurred right and wrong, and helped the bourgeoisie oppress the proletariat.” (People’s Publishing House Materials Room comp., *Counter-revolutionary Comments of China’s Khrushchev—Liu Shaoqi*, 721-725; Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969)*, vol. 2, 651; Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi in the 20 Years after the Founding of New China*, 365–366.)

570. In his “Draft Self-criticism,” Liu Shaoqi wrote: “These errors were made for four reasons. The first reason was misunderstanding of the Great Cultural Revolution. ‘We are afraid of turmoil, democracy, mass revolution against us, and counter-revolutionary restoration’. The second reason was ‘incorrect estimation of the situation of the Great Cultural Revolution at the time’. The third reason was that ideologically ‘we have not thoroughly changed our bourgeois view of the world’. The fourth reason was ‘we have not learnt and grasped Mao Zedong Thought’, and this last was the most essential reason.” (People’s Publishing House Materials Room comp., *Counter-revolutionary Comments of China’s Khrushchev—Liu Shaoqi*, 731–732.)

571. During the self-criticism, Deng Xiaoping said: “I am a kind of rightist when it comes to the class struggle and intra-party struggle. I should assume some liability for the rightist error of 1962 referred to by Chairman Mao in his big-character poster ‘Bombarding the Headquarters’. Regarding the rightist error of 1964, although I disagreed with this error, my thoughts did not conform to Mao Zedong Thought and I did not completely follow the right road of Mao Zedong Thought.” Deng Xiaoping admitted he might have made a mistake of deviating from the masses or from practice, saying of the rightists: “They stood high above the masses and rarely communicated with the masses, common officials, and people in charge. They were not diligent enough in work, and did not carefully monitor the masses. Additionally, they applied simplistic and inflexible

Neither Liu nor Deng wished to expand the political struggle by exploiting the Cultural Revolution to push other personal interests, and sought to restrict the struggle to political matters. Additionally, they believed that most of their comrades involved in working groups were not at fault, and thus that they rather than other comrades should assume primary responsibility for the conflict within the Party.⁵⁷² To preserve party unity, Liu assured the Central Committee of the CPC and Mao that he would resolutely abide by all the decisions of the Eleventh Plenary Session and Mao, submit to party discipline, and would not engage in double-dealing.⁵⁷³ Liu and Deng thus volunteered to renounce power. However, Mao still decided to attack the “bourgeois headquarters” of Liu, and advocated Lu Xun’s spirit of “beating a drowning dog.”⁵⁷⁴

On October 24, the Central Work Conference Group Meeting was convened to discuss the self-criticisms of Liu and Deng. Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Xie Fuzhi, and other leaders criticized Liu and Deng at the meeting. That evening, Mao held a meeting to hear reports.⁵⁷⁵ Mao sought to settle old scores with Liu, claiming that

solutions in daily work. Therefore they became isolated, and became subjectivists and bureaucrats. Importantly, my thoughts and style do not conform to Mao Zedong Thought. I am not Chairman Mao’s good student, and so should be kept away from important leading positions. I am disclosing my own error in taking the wrong path, showing that I am merely a petty bourgeois intellectual whose bourgeois view of the world has not been thoroughly reconstructed. Therefore I am not a qualified socialist.” (“Deng Xiaoping’s Self-criticism at the Central Working Meeting,” October 23, 1966.)

572. Zheng and Zhang, *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 21, 55.

573. People’s Publishing House Materials Room comp., *Counter-revolutionary Comments of China’s Khrushchev—Liu Shaoqi*, 730–731.

574. The editorial “In Memory of Lu Xun—Pioneer of Our Cultural Revolution” pointed out: “We commemorate Lu Xun by learning his spirit of fearlessly fighting, and thorough revolution under the instructions of Chairman Mao. ‘Beating dogs even when they are in the water’ represents the thorough revolutionary spirit of Lu Xun. Lu Xun opposed ‘tolerance’ to the enemy and bitterly attacked the fallacy that ‘beating a drowning dog’ is excessive. Lu Xun pointed out, the nature of a dog can never change. If we allow it go to the bank and rest, it will one day bite many good people. Those people who say we are extreme should listen: Should we tolerate the class enemies at home and abroad, the counter-revolutionary revisionists, and the small number of capitalist roaders in the Party? Should we allow them to one day return and ‘kill’ our revolutionaries? No. We should learn from the thorough revolutionary spirit of Lu Xun and beat them down forever.” (*Red Flag*, issue 14, 1966.)

575. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of*

the political divergence between him and Liu stemmed from Liu making decisions without first consulting with him, such as the Land Reform conference (1947,) the Tianjin Speech (1949,) the Shanxi Cooperatives, Lauding Wang Guangmei, and the Beijing Conference (1965.) Additionally, Mao criticized Deng for ignoring him, sitting far from him during meetings. He complained: "For six years since 1959, Deng Xiaoping never reported to me on work, only contacting Peng Zhen to carry out the work of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC." Mao denounced Gao Gang, Rao Shushi, and Peng Dehuai for being double-dealers and colluding with each other, and also criticized Peng Dehuai for his recklessness in waging the One Hundred Regiment Campaign (during the Sino-Japanese war) without consulting him, thus establishing his own personal kingdom within the Party.⁵⁷⁶ It can thus be seen that Mao harbored long and bitter resentments, and on hindsight it is no surprise that the Eighth Standing Committee of the Political Bureau disintegrated.

Mao then said: "We should give Liu Shaoqi a chance to repent and start afresh. Since Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping resisted the Cultural Revolution openly instead of secretly, we should allow them to conduct self-revolution and correct their faults." Kang interjected: "The report of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC had proposed that class struggle was finished." Mao responded: "The report was reviewed and approved by all; Liu and Deng were not the only ones responsible.⁵⁷⁷ Stalin too proposed that class struggle was over in 1936; was not the 1939 campaign to eliminate counter-revolutionaries also class struggle? The four categories of (rightist) cadres only account for 1%, 2% or 3% of the total."

Chen Boda pointed out that the purpose of the meeting was to condemn Liu and Deng for their wrong political line. He noted that Mao's "correct line" dominated the party line, and thus questioned why the line led by Liu and Deng could have been implemented throughout the country. He accused Liu and Deng of abusing their power to tamper with Mao's line, collaborating and proposing their wrong line when Mao was absent from Beijing.⁵⁷⁸ Chen denounced Deng in particular, describing him as the vanguard of the incorrect line, warning that no one had questioned his wrong line as he acted as if he was a walking encyclopedia, making decisions without investigation and study. He carried the same flag as Liu, and hence it was dangerous not to unmask him.

From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, even though Mao had forced the

Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974), vol. 2, 1933.

576. Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 636.

577. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1449.

578. "Chen Boda's Speech at the Central Working Meeting," October 25, 1966.

passage of the *Notice of May 16* and the *16-Article Document* through the enlarged meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC and the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC, central and local officials had held different views towards the mass movement, questioning the correctness and necessity of the Cultural Revolution. Mao knew and chose to confront this by convening the Central Work Conference to unify ideology and reach a consensus within the Central Committee of the CPC. Mao understood that the events of the Cultural Revolution thus far needed justification, and that Chen Boda's speech was not convincing enough.

Mao then announced his own review of the past five months of the Cultural Revolution, saying: "I staged the Cultural Revolution hastily. Compared with the Bourgeois-democratic Revolution (1921–1949) and the socialist revolution (1949–1966,) the Cultural Revolution has lasted less than half a year (from June to October.) It is understandable that you resisted it." Mao added frankly: "I caused trouble. First, I put up a big-character poster.⁵⁷⁹ Second, I wrote to the Red Guards from the Tsinghua University High School.⁵⁸⁰ Third, I wrote a big-character poster.⁵⁸¹...The Cultural Revolution has only existed for a short period and our comrades do not understand it....I, too, did not expect that a big-character poster displayed at Peking University would cause a great nationwide sensation....So it is only the impact of the big-character poster and the Red Guards that can capture your attention!" Mao also explained that he staged the Cultural Revolution because he trusted others too much, particularly in proposing a central leadership that featured both a frontline (Liu and Deng presiding over day-to-day work) and a backline (Mao,) which resulted in independent kingdoms (Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, and Lu Dingyi) that blocked the implementation of his instructions. Indeed, the dual power structure had meant that Mao was unable to share decision-making information and directly exchange decision-making suggestions, resulting in mutual suspicion and distrust. But Mao never resolved this problem as the supreme leader, when it had been proven that if he were to issue "edicts," they were always carried out.

On the same day, Lin delivered a speech at the Central Work Conference and expounded on the need for the Cultural Revolution and the methods for its implementation. Additionally, he praised the Cultural Revolution as an unprecedented example of resisting revisionism, and defended violent struggle

579. Referring to the big-character poster "What were Song Shuo, Lu Ping and Peng Peiyun Doing in the Great Cultural Revolution?" written by Nie Yuanzi's seven-man group.

580. Referring to the letter Mao wrote on August 1, 1966 to Red Guards from the Tsinghua University High School.

581. Referring to "Bombarding the Headquarters — My First Big-character Poster."

as necessary to successful mass movements.⁵⁸² He pointed out two lines for national construction: “One line is to superficially focus on supplies, machinery, mechanization, and material stimulus like the Soviet Union; the alternative is to follow the correct line led by Chairman Mao.” He also denounced the wrong line led by Liu and Deng, and rebuked the pair for planning this opposing line that was implemented across China before the Cultural Revolution and almost became the party line.⁵⁸³ Mao noted Lin’s attack, issuing instructions on Lin’s speech and making six rounds of modifications to it. On November 9, the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC circulated the speech to party branches at the county and regiment levels.⁵⁸⁴

Liu and Deng faced direct criticism at the Central Work Conference, while Chen Yun and other leaders who were also members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau came to be indirectly criticized. The written self-criticism of Liu implicated Chen Yun in a situation appraisal in 1962 where land had been allocated on a household basis,⁵⁸⁵ Deng Zihui, former minister of the Rural Work Department

582. Lin Biao said: “The revolutionary mass movement is reasonable in nature. Some individuals within the masses may be slightly leftist or rightist, but the main current of the mass movement always conforms to social development and is reasonable.... Many people are afraid of trouble, but actually we are creating trouble for our enemies instead of ourselves, and sometimes trouble amongst ourselves is necessary. As Chairman Mao has said, trouble can have double meanings. Everything has two sides and we must see both of them. The bad side may also turn good. Big trouble is generally avoidable. Our army is loyal and our productivity is rising. How can the students and young people cause real trouble through the Cultural Revolution? I do not believe we have big problems. That is my opinion on the chaos.” (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1451–1452.)

583. Xi and Jin, *A Short History of the Cultural Revolution*, 111.

584. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 154–155.

585. In the self-criticism, Liu Shaoqi said: “I was too trusting of Comrade Chen Yun at that time. Based on listening to his opinions, plus our common ideology, I recommended him to both the Central Committee of the CPC and Chairman Mao for the post of head of the Central Financial Group. At that time, Chairman Mao was not in Beijing. Together with some other comrades in the Central Committee of the CPC, I reported some conditions discussed in Beijing to Chairman Mao and submitted Chen Yun’s speech circulated by the Central Committee of the CPC to Chairman Mao for circulation. Only later did I learn Chairman Mao totally opposed our appraisals of the situation, as well as some of our work methods.” (People’s Publishing House Materials Room comp.,

of the Central Committee of the CPC and Deputy Premier of the State Council, in supporting the household responsibility system; and Wang Jiaxiang, former secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, in proposals to use peaceful diplomatic policies to counter imperialists, revisionists, and counter-revolutionaries, and to reduce international revolutionary aid.⁵⁸⁶ On October 30, Chen Yun conducted self-criticism for his mistakes to Mao Zedong, including rightist mistakes committed in 1962.⁵⁸⁷ These show that Mao's motivation for launching the Cultural Revolution had its roots in the failure of the Great Leap Forward. When Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yun had corrected Mao Zedong's mistakes in the Great Leap Forward, Mao became resentful and plotted revenge. Mao regularly attacked his political rivals, such as Peng Dehuai, Liu Shaoqi, and Lin Biao, accusing them of historical faults or collusion with foreign countries, and in doing so reflected his nature as a modern day feudal despot. Since Chen Yun rejected party struggle and strongly resisted the Cultural Revolution, Mao also planned to marginalize him.

On October 28, Zhou delivered a speech on carrying forward the spirit of the Central Work Conference, saying: "The written self-criticism was circulated to the party branches at the county and regiment levels with the approval of Chairman Mao and Comrade Lin Biao, and we were thinking of expanding this criticism. Additionally, we should review the written self-criticisms of these two comrades to check whether they need modification, and should circulate them after any necessary modification."⁵⁸⁸ On October 31, Zhou wrote to Mao and Lin, proposing

Counter-revolutionary Comments of China's Khrushchev—Liu Shaoqi, 727.)

586. During the self-criticism, Liu Shaoqi said: "Deng Zihui mentioned the benefits of 'contracted farmland' in Anhui during a central meeting in February of that year (1962.) I did not refute his opinions and this legitimized his advocacy. Since then, he has advocated the 'fixing of farm output quotas on a household basis' during official meetings. Another comrade in the central committee (Chen Yun) has advocated a policy of 'allocating farmland on an individual household basis'. Another comrade in the Central Committee (Wang Jiaxiang) has drafted the 'Detente for Relations with Imperialists, Revisionists and India and Reactionaries in Other Countries, and the Reduction of Assistance to the International National Liberation Movement'. All these were opinions based on wrong estimates of the international and domestic situations, and direct rejection of the socialist revolution and general line of socialist construction. I have heard about 'allocating farmland on an individual household basis', but I did not refute him (Chen Yun.) This was an error. However, once I understood the seriousness of the situation, I urged Chairman Mao to return to Beijing." (Ibid, pp 727–728.)

587. Jin and Chen ed., *Biography of Chen Yun*, vol. 2, 1360.

588. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 192–193.

to circulate the written self-criticisms of Liu and Deng to the party branches at the county and regiment levels. Mao responded with the instruction “Please act accordingly.”⁵⁸⁹

During his speech, Zhou also proposed ending state-sponsored travel by Red Guards before the New Year Festival. He explained: “I feel I cannot keep pace with Chairman Mao, who has conferred unprecedented democratic rights on Red Guards, who enjoy four democratic rights and six privileges (free speech, rallying, association, publication, demonstration, and parading,) and who further enjoy the right to suspend classes, take holidays, carry out revolution, go hiking, and travel for free.” Zhou also proposed prohibiting Red Guards from dismissing party and government cadres, detaining people, illegally searching households, administering beatings, and imposing physical punishments.⁵⁹⁰ The Red Guards were clearly adversely impacting society, and Zhou was frustrated by his failure to win support for curtailing their activities.

After the Central Work Conference, Mao had two choices: he could immediately end the Cultural Revolution, or he could ‘beat the drowning dog’ and continue the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁹¹ The opportunity existed because Liu and Deng had undertaken self-criticism, and had volunteered to assume responsibility for previous errors and thus relieved their power. Furthermore, Mao himself had earlier proposed ending the Cultural Revolution within ten months.⁵⁹² At the time

589. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1934.

590. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the “Great Cultural Revolution”*, 172–173.

591. On October 31, 1966, Yao Wenyuan delivered a speech titled “Conduct Revolution to the End in Memory of Lu Xun” during the Meeting of All Circles in the Capital to Mark the Thirtieth Anniversary of Lu Xun’s Death. He said: “We will carry forward Lu Xun’s fighting spirit of ‘beating dogs even after they are in the water’, and will maintain a strong revolutionary and communist spirit. For the rest of our lives we will spare no effort to pursue revolution. We will conduct the Great Cultural Revolution to the end, eliminate the causes of revisionism step-by-step and undertake the great historic mission of thoroughly destroying the bourgeoisie and realizing communism.” *People’s Daily*, November 1, 1966.

592. According to Mao Zedong’s plan, the Cultural Revolution movement thus far had only lasted for five months, and potentially only needed another two to five months, but perhaps even longer. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 143.)

most participants expected the Cultural Revolution to end quickly, either before the New Year Festival or by March 1967. However, Mao chose to take the second course. As a result, the Cultural Revolution surged again instead of ending as expected.⁵⁹³

The Central Working Conference was pivotal to the spread of the Cultural Revolution, and in its wake the Cultural Revolution entered a third phase.⁵⁹⁴ The Cultural Revolution and associated political civil strife subsequently spread across China and destroyed cultural and educational fields, party and governmental organs, and the agricultural and industrial sectors related to the national economy and people's livelihood. Party political struggle evolved into national political revolution and caused severe damage and loss. Deng was deeply aware of the catastrophic side-effects of the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁹⁵

The reason the Cultural Revolution failed to end as Mao had expected lay in the intrinsic political logic based on which it was staged and carried out. The more fiercely the class struggle was carried on, the more "class enemies" were unmasked, which then required further class struggle. New "class enemies" were unmasked as soon as old ones were eliminated, allowing an endless cycle of struggle. This

593. Pang believes that, in terms of the impact on party and governmental authorities at all levels after the closing of the Central Working Meeting, besides the existing policy of 'attacking capitalist roaders', the additional policy of 'thoroughly criticizing the bourgeois reactionary line' was introduced, and had a large impact that was free of restrictions. Party and governmental authorities were regularly attacked and robbed, and officials were humiliated or kidnapped. The team of rebels was rapidly expanding, and dissatisfied sectors of society joined the rebels and caused social disruption. The social order deteriorated and local party and governmental authority collapsed. Even the four-level official meeting called by Mao Zedong could not take place. Officials at all levels naturally resented the 'Great Cultural Revolution', and Mao Zedong similarly felt discontented with these officials. (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1452.)

594. The first two launches refer to the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Politburo of the CPC in May and the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC in August. (Zheng and Zhang: *China in the Era of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 3, 58–59.)

595. On April 30, 1987, Deng Xiaoping said: "The 'Great Cultural Revolution' started in 1966 and lasted 10 years. It was a catastrophe, and during that period, many senior officials were persecuted, including myself. I was the number two capitalist roader after Liu Shaoqi. Liu was the 'commander' and I was the 'deputy commander.'" (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* vol. 3, 227–228.)

was the logic of Mao's insistence on class struggle theory, path dependence, and sticking to a single path. Although Mao had proposed a timetable for ending the Cultural Revolution and made several calls for party unity, he found himself compelled to continue the Cultural Revolution to deal with the political split he himself had caused. Thus, no timetable was set for ending the Cultural Revolution, which ultimately ended naturally. Right up until his death, Mao continued to insist on class struggle as the guideline and never acknowledged his faults.

After the Central Working Conference, Liu and Deng remained members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, but ceased party and state leader work.⁵⁹⁶ Additionally, they were classified as representatives of the bourgeois reactionary line. Nie Yuanzi and ten Red Guards from Beijing University openly put up the big-character poster "Deng Xiaoping is a Capitalist Roader Within the Party" on November 8 and claimed capitalist roaders within the Party were its most treacherous enemies, especially those in high positions. Liu was named as the number one capitalist roader, while Deng was number two.

When Mao held the five meetings in October with the young students and Red Guards that had flooded into Beijing, they caused traffic congestion and shortages of food and accommodation. Zhou sought an instruction to restrict the numbers of Red Guards traveling the country to publicize Mao Zedong Thought, but Mao refused, saying: "I have met with six or seven million Red Guards and plan to meet double that number. We must ensure food, accommodation and travel."⁵⁹⁷ Zhou carried out Mao's instruction to continue assisting Red Guards wishing to travel to Beijing, and Mao had soon granted audiences to 11 million Red Guards.

On October 29, the deputy leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group claimed when meeting the Accusation Group from Jinhua, Zhejiang: "Almost all the provincial and municipal party committees came under siege in September and rebellion and revolt against superiors were the themes of August and September."⁵⁹⁸

596. Article 39 of "The Constitution of the People's Republic of China" states that the Chairman of the PRC should serve a four year term. Article 45 states that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the PRC exercise their functions and powers until replacements elected by the succeeding National People's Congress assume office. Finally, Article 46 states that should the Chairman of the PRC be unable to perform their role for an extended period for health reasons, the Vice Chairman shall act as their replacement to exercise the functions and powers of the Chairman. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Compilation of Important Manuscripts since the Founding of New China*, vol. 5, 530–531.)

597. Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian's Memoir*, 610–611.

598. Yang ed., *Cultural Revolution Museum (1966–1976)*, vol. 1, 179.

Red Guards accused and denounced capitalist roaders and revolted against party organizations at all levels from the outset of the Cultural Revolution. As Mao led the rebels, he effectively revolted against his own party.

From October to November, the Cultural Revolution spread into leading military organs. On November 13, Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu, He Long, Chen Yi, Xu Xiangqian, Ye Jianying, and Yang Chengwu (Deputy Chief of Staff of the PLA) attended the Rally of 100,000 Teachers and Students of Military and Revolutionary Academies. Chen Yi spoke at the rally, saying: "Some students rushed into Zhongnanhai and damaged its gates, while others barged into the Military of National Defense. I strongly protested against the escalating violence and advocated no retaliation against comrades." He Long called for continued non-intervention by the PLA in the Cultural Revolution, including no participation in local disorder such as rebellions against local party organizations, illegal household searches, and rallies. Xu Xiangqian warned: "As we carry out the Cultural Revolution, we must not neglect our enemies and must remain vigilant against possible sudden attacks by American imperialists and Soviet revisionists, including troop deployments or other trouble on our borders. Relaxing our vigilance may result in serious losses." Ye Jianying said: "As Lenin remarked, 'a lie told often enough becomes the truth.' Similarly, volume of action alone is sufficient to bring about qualitative change. We must understand the above laws of nature, and take care not to guide the masses to support a wrong line." These leaders clearly disagreed with Mao on mobilizing the masses to rebel, and spared no effort to stabilize the army and protest army involvement in the Cultural Revolution.

On November 29, Chen Yi and Ye Jianying spoke at the Rally of Teachers and Students of Military and Revolutionary Academies, saying: "We question the attacking of all veteran cadres." Chen Yi further said: "I am afraid that by setting unclear struggle targets you will fail to carry out the Cultural Revolution. You should avoid simplifying the line struggle and expanding the numbers you accuse by condemning all those with work faults, all those in power, and all political lines."⁵⁹⁹ Chen Yi's point was valid. Since the *Notice on May 16* and the *16-Article Document* failed to clearly define essential concepts, simplified and expanded accusations became inevitable. The Anti-rightist Struggle, the Anti-rightist Opportunism Struggle, and the Four Clean-ups Movement all had limits in scope, whereas the Cultural Revolution spread across the country and became a disaster.

On November 28, Chen Boda praised Jiang Qing for following revolutionary literary and artistic guidelines at the General Assembly of Literary and Artistic

599. Chen and Du eds., *Documents of the People's Republic of China: Domestic Turmoil and Resistance — The 10 Years of the "Great Cultural Revolution"*, 185–186.

Circles to Discuss the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Chen said that Jiang's special contribution stood out among the comrades who indomitably fought against counter-revolutionaries and revisionists.⁶⁰⁰

Jiang elaborated her thinking regarding the Cultural Revolution and explicitly mentioned the struggle between Mao and Liu, a comment that Mao later commented on and modified.⁶⁰¹ She condemned as counter-revolutionary revisionists Lu Dingyi, Zhou Yang, Lin Mohan (former Deputy Minister of Culture,) and Peng Zhen, as well as Liu Ren, Zheng Tianyu, Wan Li, Deng Tuo, Chen Kehan, Li Qi, and Zhao Dingxin from the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC. Additionally, she rebuked the old Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee, and the Ministry of Culture for colluding in crimes against the Party and people, and called for them to be unmasked and denounced. Thus, with the approval of Mao, Jiang condemned and persecuted Peng Zhen and ten other cadres. The implication of cadres on such a large scale reflects the complexities of political struggle during the Cultural Revolution. Chen Yun later commented on the handling of the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Counter-revolutionary Clique case: "The Cultural Revolution of 1966 was an instance of civil strife and political struggle occurring under particular historical conditions, and some conspirators and careerists exploited the political struggle to pursue personal objectives. Besides those conspirators, others involved should be treated according to the principles of political struggle."⁶⁰² He described the

600. Chen, "Speech at the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution General Assembly of Literary and Artistic Circles," November 28, 1966.

601. Mao Zedong issued instructions and made modifications to Jiang Qing's "Speech at the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution General Assembly of Literary and Artistic Circles," such that the modified version read: "Only now have I (Jiang) clearly realized, during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, that the previous form of work team was wrong, especially in terms of what they did. They aimed not at a small number of capitalist roaders within the CPC and reactionary academic authorities, but rather at the revolutionary students. My dear friends, determining the correct targets is a problem of right or wrong, related to the principles of Marxism and Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought! It is said our Chairman Mao stopped designating work teams from early June this year (1966,) but some comrades (Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping) designated work teams themselves without seeking the approval of Chairman Mao." (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 164.)

602. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Selected Works of Chen Yun* vol. 3, 304.

Cultural Revolution as political struggle occurring under particular historical conditions because it was staged and led by Mao. Since Lin and Jiang were simply attempting to obey or take advantage of Mao Zedong's instructions, most of the political persecution they committed ultimately originated from Mao.

In a speech, Zhou said: "Our Cultural Revolution brings us a new and great democratic experience under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The masses received self-education and achieved self-liberation by freely airing their views, producing big-character posters, engaging in vigorous debate, and traveling the country to publicize Mao Zedong Thought, and this activity developed the Chairman's mass line in the socialist revolution." Zhou also highly praised Chen, Kang, and Jiang,⁶⁰³ lauded Jiang's achievements in promoting literary revolution among foreigners, and noted the reforms that had been achieved under her guidance in Peking Opera, ballet, classical music, and sculpture, which together amounted to an artistic revolution. He praised Jiang particularly for participating in the struggle and artistic practice.

Notably, Zhou had also praised Lin previously. On October 3, Zhou delivered a speech when meeting Red Guard attendees of the National Day Ceremony, and said: "Lin Biao carries the red flag of Mao Zedong Thought." Subsequently, he once again praised Wang Hongwen. Interestingly, none of these remarks are included in the *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai*. From the start of the Cultural Revolution, Lin and Zhou were the most loyal members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau in the way they followed, obeyed and carried out Mao's instructions, and Zhou provided crucial support to Mao in staging the Cultural Revolution. Zhou's political motives in supporting Mao remain a historical mystery, and the Central Committee of the CPC praised him excessively and distorted facts. Zhou operated within a highly totalitarian regime and a specific political environment that prevented him from maintaining his integrity and speaking candidly. He was thus compelled to become a dishonest politician.

603. On November 28, 1966, Zhou Enlai said: "Chen Boda, Kang Sheng and Comrade Jiang Qing all support and implement the proletarian revolutionary line of Chairman Mao. The achievements of the Cultural Revolution in the literary and artistic fields are closely related to the instructions of Comrade Jiang Qing, and to the support and cooperation of revolutionary leftists in the field." On October 18, 1966, when interviewing students, teachers, and faculty in colleges in Beijing, Zhou Enlai said: "Chen Boda is the best theorist in our Party under the leadership of Chairman Mao and Chairman Lin Biao. He is good at using a single example to draw inferences about other cases, and at illustrating Mao Zedong Thought." (Zhou, "Speech at the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution General Assembly of Literary and Artistic Circles," November 28, 1966.)

By the end of November, Mao had held eight consecutive meetings with teachers, students and Red Guards, who numbered 11 million in total. Xinhua News Agency published a summary and claimed that it showcased the great proletarian democracy and international communist movement reform. Earlier, on November 3, Lin had said in a speech: “Mao Zedong contributed to the proletarian revolution and dictatorship doctrine of Marxism-Leninism by establishing a great democracy.” Lin also announced that Mao supported his revolutionary comrades in traveling China to publicize Mao Zedong Thought. Meanwhile, Guo Moruo commemorated Mao’s meetings in poems to praise democracy.⁶⁰⁴

However, an aging Mao felt exhausted and announced that he could no longer meet with the Red Guards.⁶⁰⁵ The tide of young students and Red Guards traveling the country to publicize Mao Zedong Thought thus began to recede.

On November 6, with approval from Mao, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the *Notification on Revolutionary Teachers and Students Traveling the Country to Publicize Mao Zedong Thought*, and suspended state-sponsored travel to publicize Mao Zedong Thought by national revolutionary teachers, students and Red Guards from universities, colleges, military academies and schools from November 21 until Spring of the following year. On December 2, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council followed up with a supplementary notification.⁶⁰⁶

What were the motivations behind the unprecedented campaign to deify Mao Zedong in the late 1960s? The teachers, students, and masses unanimously longed to meet Mao, who had become a god to the Chinese people. Meanwhile, Mao also wished to interact closely with the people, particularly young students, and rejoiced in becoming their “god”. Psychologically, Mao derived great personal satisfaction from these meetings, while politically, his joining with the masses

604. Guo Moruo’s poem “Shuidiaogetou — Great Democracy” was as follows: “Joint actions all over the country mark the great democracy. All waters flow to the vast sea in the big storm. Eight ranks parade on Chang’an Street to wish the leader a long life. On the ground the leader smiles, and in the sky the sun accompanies him. The grand parade is both a big drill and a homecoming. The spiritual missile encourages the masses to destroy the old thinking, develop the theories of Marx and Engels, promote the thoughts of Lenin and Stalin, and turn the tables on the imperialists and revisionists. Spring returns to the universe in the blossom of white flowers.” (Feng, *Guo Moruo’s Later Years*, 124.)

605. Wu, *Rough Years: Wu Faxian’s Memoir*, 612.

606. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 159–160.

provided him with important assets for successfully conducting the Cultural Revolution.”⁶⁰⁷ Personal meetings with Red Guards allowed Mao to bypass party and governmental organs and directly control the publicity tools that were vital to the Cultural Revolution. However, there was a heavy price to be paid.⁶⁰⁸ Mao would later turn on the Red Guards he met with when he disbanded Red Guard organizations and even deployed troops to suppress Red Guards and arrest “May 16 counter-revolutionaries.”

After the Central Working Conference held in October, the campaign to denounce the Liu-Deng Bourgeois Reactionary Line reached a climax. At this point, Mao still viewed the Liu issue as an internal conflict and had little intention of purging him. On November 3, Mao met the Red Guards at the rostrum on the Tiananmen gate tower and offered to speak with Liu and send regards to his family. When Liu stated that he planned to work together with the masses, Mao responded: “You are too old to temper yourself in grassroots units and should not do it.”⁶⁰⁹ However, the campaign to denounce Liu escalated and evolved from political issues to historical issues, as those campaigning against Liu sought to frame him with fabricated historical records as a means to purge him.

Kang Sheng acted as the sinister “political director” in this activity. With the support of Kang and his allies, the campaign to unmask traitors was launched. Numerous veteran cadres, especially outstanding cadres jailed during the revolutionary period, were framed as traitors.

On November 24, Zhou reported to Mao on Red Guards disclosing that Liu Lantao (former Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC, and the First Secretary of the Northwest Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC) and his allies had been released from prison. Numerous people were accused of involvement in the case. In fact, Liu Shaoqi had made this decision

607. These words were spoken by Mao Zedong to leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC and other authorities attending the audience at the Tiananmen gate tower on November 1, 1966. (Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China*, vol. 12, 158.)

608. MacFarquhar believed that: “The ‘Great Cultural Revolution’ created a new means of publicity that enabled the central government to spread ideology throughout the country via broadcasting stations, TV stations, and direct circulation of millions of Mao’s quotations. Numerous violent actions were committed in the name of Mao and his thinking, and the whole country was driven to the brink of total anarchy.” (MacFarquhar, “Postscript — Missions after Unity.”)

609. Huang, *Study on Liu Shaoqi*, 208–209.

on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC and the 7th and 8th National Congresses of the CPC approved it. Therefore, the Central Committee of the CPC was aware of the case. Zhou drafted a telegram in reply to the Northwest Bureau on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC, and requested that the Northwest Bureau explain to the Nankai University Weidong Red Guard Combat Brigade and the Xi'an Bombarding the Headquarters Combat Brigade regarding the Central Committee's knowledge that Liu Lantao and his allies had been released from prison. Mao issued instructions on taking prompt and appropriate action.⁶¹⁰ However, the matter escalated until Liu Shaoqi unexpectedly became involved. Mao then made a critical mistake that was followed by other mistakes. The unjust framing of Liu Shaoqi typifies the way historical records were fabricated to frame others during the Cultural Revolution.

On December 6, Lin presided over the enlarged meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, and further inflamed the case against Liu and Deng, saying in a speech: "The Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping Case is not merely about the accused having resisted the Cultural Revolution for over 50 days, but is a matter that may affect the country's fate over the next 10 or 20 years." Liu was present the meeting.⁶¹¹

On December 8, Xie Fuzhi wrote a report to Lin, saying: "It is necessary to review the political history and I proposed setting up a special case group for this purpose." Xie's actual intention was to frame Wang Guangmei and Liu Shaoqi. On December 18, Zhou presided over a brief meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, which approved the decision to set up the Wang Guangmei Special Case Group with Xie as leader.⁶¹² Wang Guangmei served as deputy to the Third

610. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, vol. 12, 169.

611. Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi in the 20 Years after the Founding of New China*, 367.

612. On December 18, 1966, the Central Committee held a workshop. The meeting discussed materials that revealed the "historic errors" of Liu Shaoqi and Wang Guangmei, and decided to establish a case investigation team. Liu Shaoqi was exempt from direct investigation owing to being a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and Chairman of the PRC. Therefore, a Wang Guangmei Case Group was established, known publicly first as "Team C of the Central General Office," and later as "Team 504." The group was headed by Xie Fuzhi and advised by Chen Boda, and its members included Jiang Qing, Xiao Hua, and Ye Qun. Xiao Hua, Director of the General Political Department, was later attacked, and Chen Boda did not actually act as advisor to the group. Xie Fuzhi was the nominal head, but simply followed Jiang Qing, who was the *de facto* leader of the group and controlled its activities.

National People's Congress and was subject to protection under Article 37 of the Constitution, meaning the decision to purge Liu and Wang was unconstitutional. The same afternoon, Zhang Chunqiao met Kuai Dafu, the deputy director of the rebels from Tsinghua University, and encouraged him to attack Liu and Deng, together with their bourgeois reactionary line. On the morning of December 25, Kuai led nearly 5,000 rebels to hold a rally, deliver speeches, distribute leaflets and display big-character posts and slogans, intensifying the social campaign against Liu and Deng.⁶¹³

On December 27, after his birthday, Mao changed his attitude towards Liu, and said: "It seems now that the handling of the Liu Shaoqi case can no longer be given insider treatment, and instead we must openly denounce him."⁶¹⁴ Jiang asked Kang to propose the establishment of the Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and Tao Zhu Special Case Group. However, Mao denied the proposal, and noted that such an investigation would be difficult because the three were members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau elected at the Eleventh Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CPC. Nevertheless, Jiang repeated her instruction to Kang, saying: "We must set up a special case group. If we cannot set up on its own, then we will deal with them as part of the Peng Zhen special case."⁶¹⁵

On December 30, Jiang gave a speech at Tsinghua University and openly denounced the Liu-Deng political line.⁶¹⁶ She also met with the Red Guards and issued fresh instructions, saying: "The struggle situation has changed and you can do anything except detain people."⁶¹⁷ The Red Guards responded positively.

On January 1, 1967, rebels from the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC posted the slogan "Bombard Liu Shaoqi, China's Khrushchev" on the wall of Liu's residence. On January 3, instigated by Qi Benyu, they accused and

613. Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee comp., *Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1974)*, vol. 2, 1935.

614. Wang, *Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 775.

615. *Ibid.*, 733.

616. Jiang Qing said, "The speeches of Lin Biao and Chen Boda at the Central Working Meeting both proposed thoroughly criticizing the wrong line of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Thoroughly criticize Liu and Deng's reactionary line! We will improve your understanding of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution line represented by Chairman Mao and thoroughly defeat the bourgeois reactionary line of Liu and Deng! Overthrow the line of Liu and Deng!" ("Speeches of Jiang Qing and Others When Interviewing Revolutionary Students, Teachers and Faculty at Tsinghua University," December 30, 1966.)

617. Wang, *Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 775.

denounced Liu Shaoqi and Wang Guangmei for the first time. On January 6, the Tsinghua University Jinggang Mountain Red Guard Brigade tricked Wang into leaving Zhongnanhai by pretending her daughter had been injured in a traffic accident, whereupon they abducted her, took her to Tsinghua University, and denounced her. Wang was released only after intervention by Zhou. On January 12, Qi acted on Jiang's instructions and ordered rebels from the Secretarial Bureau of the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC to once again accuse and denounce Liu and Wang.⁶¹⁸

Liu was no longer able to perform his constitutional duties as Chairman of the State. The substitution of the rule of law by the rule of individual was both an inevitable result of the Cultural Revolution and a reason for the movement being sustained for ten years. Only Liu was aware of the seriousness of the problem. He saw that the Cultural Revolution was not only a personal takedown on him, but also a destruction of the country's constitution. Since he considered that Mao's intention for launching the Cultural Revolution was merely to remove himself from power, he offered to resign his positions as member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and President of the People's Republic of China, hoping that by placating Mao, the Cultural Revolution could be brought to an end, thus preserving the constitution.

On January 13, Mao finally agreed to meet with Liu after Liu made several attempts to solicit an audience. Liu volunteered to assume primary responsibility for the various crimes he had been associated with in the hope of swiftly ending the persecution of other cadres and minimizing the damage to the Party. He also proposed resigning from the state presidency and the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, and retiring to his hometown.⁶¹⁹ However, Mao was unresponsive and refused to change his course.

618. Lu and Feng, *Liu Shaoqi in the Two Decades after the Founding of New China*, 368.

619. On January 13, 1967, while meeting Mao Zedong in the Great Hall of the People, Liu Shaoqi said: "First, I assume responsibility for this error of political line, and stress that the majority of officials are competent, especially the many senior officials who are valuable assets of the Party. I assume principal responsibility and hope other officials will be released from responsibility to reduce the loss to the Party. Second, I resign from my posts as Chairman of the PRC, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, and Director of the Compilation Commission of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. I plan to travel together with my wife and children to Yan'an or my hometown to begin a new life as a farmer. I hope this can help to end the Great Cultural Revolution as early as possible and reduce the loss to the state." Huang ed., *Last Days of Liu Shaoqi*, 26.

Sidebar 3.5 *Mao Zedong's Birthday Speech (December 26, 1966)*

The socialist revolution reached a new stage when the Soviet Union restored revisionists to power and negated the October Revolution. We should thus address the new issue of how the proletariat can hold on to power and prevent the restoration of capitalism. The key is to reinforce party construction, but any fortress is vulnerable to attack from within. We have not ended the class struggle, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has merely begun the struggle against the bourgeoisie and their party proxies who have seized power.

I issued the *Notice on May 16* to order the publication of a big-character poster, and encouraged Red Guards to travel the country to publicize Mao Zedong Thought and spread the Cultural Revolution nationwide. The Cultural Revolution was staged to attack the bourgeois reactionary line. Bourgeois thoughts existed within the Party and many cadres refused to rectify their outlook and upheld a bourgeois reactionary line. These reactionary cadres existed at all levels and were influential within the party. They also claimed the achievements of others as their own, viewed themselves as the incarnation of the Party, and believed that their personal leadership represented Party leadership. They also called for unconditional and slavish obedience to instructions rather than sticking to principles. My political line and theirs were divergent. The mistakes of the cadres who resolutely followed the bourgeois reactionary line needed to be corrected. They presented themselves dishonestly, and either secretly supported capitalist roaders or were capitalist roaders themselves. The proletariat line worked to achieve socialist revolution while the bourgeois reactionary line worked to maintain bourgeois orders, organizations and procedures, resulting in struggle between the two lines.

Revolutionary movements in contemporary China have always been initiated by students, and when worker, peasants, and revolutionary intellectuals join in, there will be success. This is an observable pattern. The May Fourth Movement and Cultural Revolution are examples. Students, cultural organizations, superstructures, workers, and peasants should work together to establish democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat and attack the enemies of socialism. Without democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is easy for a small number of cadres to suppress the masses, and there is a risk that the dictatorship of the proletariat will become a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Our great democracy must exist under the centralized guidance of the proletarian headquarters of Marxism, and the dictatorship must protect the democratic rights of the people and ban intervention in, and suppression of, democracy, as well as unlawful detentions.

Struggle between two party lines appeared to occur after we established socialism, and specifically means struggle between socialist and capitalist lines. In the Cultural Revolution, Liu Shaoqi followed the bourgeois reactionary line, which caused struggle between two party lines. This struggle has not ended and will continue even after the purging of Liu Shaoqi.

A few cadres who refused to rectify their faults and presented themselves dishonestly must be attacked and purged by the masses, and have only themselves to blame for this. All those who have attempted to stop the Cultural Revolution will be eliminated. I have argued with Tao Zhu about this.

It is recommended that old state apparatus be transformed into new state apparatus, old methods into new methods, the old order into a new order, the old system into a new system and old discipline into new discipline. This is necessary because the old system resembles the capitalist and feudal system of the Soviet Union.

Source: Wang, *Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 693–670.

Liu and other Party leaders could not understand why Mao elected to continue the Cultural Revolution even after Liu had been purged. In fact, Mao conducted two critical discussions before his conversation with Liu. First, on December 21 he spoke with a reporter from Poland and opined: “Resisting Khrushchev’s revisionism is not enough, and we must also revolt against the revisionism within our Party. If we neglect this China may change its political line and the situation may become impossible to rectify. Previously, we were so focused on fixing problems that we neglected class struggle. Nowadays, we call for class struggle to spread from schools and other organs throughout urban and rural areas, and thus are carrying on class struggle across China.”⁶²⁰ Second, on December 26, Mao delivered an important speech on his 73rd birthday at his Zhongnanhai residence to elaborate on his political motives in staging the Cultural Revolution (Sidebar 3.5.) Only the members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, namely Jiang Qing, Chen Boda, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu, and Yao Wenyuan, were invited to attend his birthday party. Mao said: “We have not ended class struggle, and the Cultural Revolution has seen us struggle against the bourgeoisie, and especially party proxies of the petty bourgeoisie that seized power. The Cultural Revolution is being staged to purge our Party and state organs of the proxies of the bourgeoisie that comprise a majority of party leaders at all levels and negatively influence our Party.” Mao further gave his assessment of the political situation in China, and

620. Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1459.

expressed his belief that the Cultural Revolution had initiated a decisive struggle against bourgeois elements within the party. Finally, he offered a toast to successful nationwide class struggle.⁶²¹

By secretly delivering his birthday speech,⁶²² Mao ostracized the majority of the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPC (specifically the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC,) with the exception of Chen Boda.⁶²³ In fact, it was Mao rather than the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau who had decided to seize power.⁶²⁴ By secretly revealing his true intention, Mao was better able to manipulate the members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group to control central political newspapers and periodicals and thus mobilize the masses. As Meisner remarked, ultimate power in China rested with Mao and Mao Zedong Thought, and Mao's actions sealed the fates of individuals and of the nation.⁶²⁵

621. Wang, *Reflections on the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 693–701.

622. Mao Zedong's speech that night was not officially recorded at the time, and records are based on the subsequent recollection of Wang Li, who attended the dinner. (Ibid.)

623. Mao Zedong did not invite Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu and Kang Sheng, then Members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau.

624. Pang believes that Mao Zedong's strategic decisions, like "comprehensive power seizure," had not been fully prepared, discussed, and officially decided upon within the Central Committee of the CPC, but were nevertheless rapidly implemented throughout the country. This was unusual, and further reflected that Mao Zedong's arbitrary personal control had succeeded the collective leadership of the Central Committee." (Pang and Jin eds., *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976)*, vol. 2, 1471.)

625. Meisner: *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, 308–309.

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A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution from the Political Perspectives of Mao and the Politburo

Acclaimed national researcher Hu Angang presents *Mao and the Cultural Revolution*, an immensely rich account of the massive political event of 1966–1976 that brought seismic changes to the landscape of New China.

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