China in the Era of Mao and Deng

- Communists take over Beijing, Jan 1949.
- Stalin and Khrushchev did not like Mao’s policies.
  - Deng really took charge in Dec 1978 (p 383).
- Mao started policies that made chaos in China.
- Deng tried to solve China’s big problems.
- Introduce the good China book by Harrison Salisbury.
- Spring 1979: Wife of Liu Shaoqi was freed after 12 years in prison.
  - Her husband, Liu Shaoqi, (Premier of China) had been dead for 10 years. But people did not know this.
- Mar-Apr 1976: China ripe for change or worse (p 353)
- Sep 9, 1976: Mao died, 82 years old.
- Oct 6, 1976: The Gang of Four was arrested (cheers) p 373.

Great Leap Forward 1957 – 59 (A disaster)

- 1959 – 61: 26 million Chinese died of starvation (effects from “Great Leap”)

The Awful Cultural Revolution was Started by Mao in 1966

- May 1966: Mao starts the terrible Cultural Revolution.
- Aug 1971: The bad ones plan to blow up Mao’s train.
- Oct 1969: Deng arrested and sent to the country.
- March 1973: Now they want Deng to again work in Beijing
  - China in very bad shape. (Deng has ability to make things work.)
- Jan 1975: More power is handed to Deng.
- Mid-1975: The tide turns against Deng—again.
- Dec 1975: Mao flipped to be anti-Deng. (So Deng will leave again.)
- Jan 1976: Zhou Enlai (good China Premier) died (sad).
- Jan 1976: The last time Deng appears in public til after Mao dies.
- Aug 1977: Deng officially comes to power as head of China. (In full power Dec 1978.)

Ready to scan June 26, 2007 (Doc RJ0414, 32 p)
China in the Era of Mao and Deng

Roy Jenne
June 26, 2007

INTRODUCTION

For this text I have selected information that tells something about the relationship between Russia and China. Stalin did not trust Mao. Khrushchev became very angry with Mao, especially in the late 1950s. In 1960, Khrushchev announced that he was pulling the Soviet technicians out of China.

I traveled to China several times. The first time was in Dec 1980. We heard a lot about the terrible Gang of Four. They were bad. My last time there was likely about 1996 – 1998. I mostly worked with the China Meteorological Bureau, the Academy, and some universities. Once we had some river data issues, and I talked with a dozen of their researchers in Beijing.

About 1985, I was talking to a young meteorologist (age ~25) in Beijing. He explained that they saw how bad Mao’s Cultural Revolution was. Then they were told how bad the Great Leap Forward really was (1957 – 61). Now they thought that Mao may have done something good during 1950 – 56, but they were not sure.

Deng brought in an era of “lets get the job done and create a better China.” He pushed back at excess rules and bureaucracy. He permitted some competition and personal initiative. The country started to grow very rapidly. Cheers to Deng. For some years it was almost equally likely that the bad Gang of Four would win the power struggle.

Some other documents on China:
c. RJ0415 Secret picture archive of China Cultural Revolution, 65 pages.
   - Part 1 secret pictures (36p)
   - Part 2 Life and death in Shanghai (8p)
   - Part 3 China, Vietnam, Russia, US News from 1971-79 (15p)
A very good history

The New Emperors
China in the Era of Mao and Deng

Harrison E. Salisbury

Please buy the book

Published 1992

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BOSTON    TORONTO    LONDON
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The surrender of Beijing was agreed to on January 21, 1949, effective at 6:00 P.M., January 22. By this time the streets were littered with garbage. Fortunately, Bodde commented, the weather was cold. The pleasure gardens behind the Gate of Yearning were a shambles. Not until March could the Forbidden City reopen. Of the three lakes only Beihai, the Northern Sea, once again admitted the public. Rubble cluttered paths, and the lake was a muddy stink. It had been drained for a thorough scrubbing. The other lakes, Zhonghai and Nanhai, stayed closed. Forty years passed. In 1991 they were still closed.

The first Communist detachments marched into Beijing about 4:00 p.m. on January 31, 1949, holding aloft red flags and portraits of Mao Zedong and Zhu De, Mao's great commander. Many peasants thought the Revolution was led by one man, named Zhu Mao. The troops moved up ancient Wangfujing Street, Palace Well Street, and into the heart of the city.

There is no evidence that Mao considered these ideas. The factor that tipped the scales, some associates believed, was Mao's fear that the United States might intervene and try to crush the infant Communist state in its cradle, as England and France had tried to stifle Lenin's Soviet in its swaddling clothes.

American military might cast a strong shadow over China in Mao's mind and would continue to do so over the years. Mao interpreted the mission of General George C. Marshall to mediate between the Nationalists and the Communists in 1945–46 as a hypocritical U.S. maneuver to bring Chiang Kaishek into power.

Mao's fears were fanned by Josef Stalin, who warned Mao repeatedly to beware of America's might. Prudence, thus, as well as tradition, dictated to Mao that he pick Beijing. It was close to the Soviet border, a flight of only two to three hours. Better play it safe.

Publicly, Mao had sailed in the face of the American threat and, in effect, thumbed his nose at Stalin's warnings as well. In 1946, when Chiang Kaishek began preparing an all-out drive against the Communists, Stalin urged Mao to enter into a coalition with Chiang and take a secondary role. Resistance, Stalin contended, might lead to World War III. For many years Stalin had demonstrated his preference for Chiang, as Mao bitterly knew. Stalin had supported Chiang even after he turned on the Communists in the 1927 massacre at Shanghai.

Only with the greatest reluctance had Stalin shifted his backing from Chiang Kaishek in Shanghai to the Communists and left-wingers
in Wuhan. During the United Front period of the 1930s, Stalin sent Chiang planes, arms, and military advisers (some of whom had escaped the 1927 massacre by a hair’s breadth). To Mao he sent only a planeload of propaganda leaflets. When Hitler attacked the Soviets in June 1941, Stalin asked Mao to down arms against Chiang and launch a suicide offensive against Japan in Manchuria. Mao refused.2

Mao had no illusions about whom Stalin preferred. As a contemporary Soviet historian commented: “Stalin favored a two-Chinas policy.” Stalin felt Chiang was weak and posed no danger to Moscow. He did not trust Mao.

In 1946 Mao had ignored Stalin’s advice to avoid conflict with Chiang.3 Mao paid no heed to a proposal from Stalin that he turn over to Chiang U.S. military supplies that fell into his hands (but the Soviets did turn over vast stores to Chiang).4 Mao kept all the U.S. stores he could grab. They helped him mightily.

Now, despite (or was it because of?) the success of Mao’s armies, Stalin made a last-minute effort to keep them from destroying Chiang. Around year’s end 1948, he sent Anastas Mikoyan to Xibaipo with a message asking Mao to halt at the Yangtze; let Chiang have south China. It was too dangerous to wipe him out. If Mao destroyed Chiang, the United States would come in and world war would break out. Mao must remember that America still had military personnel in China.

Mao was not moved. He laid out his plans to Mikoyan. They were so good they won Mikoyan over (or so Mao thought) and were bound to convince Stalin (they didn’t).5 As if to remove all doubt of his

The “someone” to whom Mao referred was, of course, Stalin.8 Perhaps Stalin’s opposition to Mao’s plans was the reason that the Soviet Union, alone among the foreign powers, sent its ambassador along with Chiang when he fled Nanjing, his capital. All the other ambassadors remained in Nanjing in preparation for Mao’s takeover.9 As Mao himself told André Malraux, “The Russians’ feelings were for Chiang Kai-shek. When he escaped from China, the Soviet ambassador was the last person to wish him goodbye.”10

The Russian feelings were with Chiang Kai-shek.
Mao’s father expanded the family’s landholdings. He became a moneylender and grain merchant. He squeezed his neighbors. He was illiterate, tough, grasping, mean-spirited, and domineering. Before his death he had amassed 10,000 silver dollars in addition to his property, a fortune in those days, and a tidy sum in China twelve years after his son’s death. He envisioned his young son as a bookkeeper and partner; he needed someone who could read and write, do the accounts, and figure the usurious interest.

Mao grew up hating his father, sympathizing with his mother, educating himself in his own way, becoming a teacher and almost a scholar. He was not a happy youngster. He was brooding, talented, ambitious, and a Chinese patriot, at war with his father, at war with the world, and at war with himself. He was twenty-three years old before he heard of Karl Marx. His first hero was the great American guerrilla George Washington, from whom he learned some of the tactics that he used in the Long March. Mao’s bodyguards called him Lao Tu, the Old Peasant. Mao didn’t mind that. He said: “I am not. I am too vulgar. I am the son of peasants and I have the peasants’ living habits.”

“Don’t Underestimate That Little Fellow”

(Deng Xiaoping)

During an argument in 1957 with Nikita Khrushchev, Mao Zedong pointed to Deng and warned the Soviet leader, “Don’t underestimate that little fellow. He destroyed an army of one million of Chiang’s best troops.” Then Mao added: “He has a bright future ahead of him.”

As 1949 opened, that “little fellow” and his Central Plains Army were completing the feat to which Mao referred, the destruction of 25 Nationalist corps, 5 armies, and 56 divisions in sixty-six days. Between September 12, 1948, and January 11, 1949, the Communists destroyed 1.5 million Nationalist troops — 12 armies and 149 divisions.

Deng was then and would continue for years to be a favorite lieutenant of Mao’s, both in war and in peace. He remained relatively
Mao’s bodyguards recalled Mao’s inveighing against Jiang Qing in those spring days when he was still at Xibaipo, about to leave for the Fragrant Hills. Mao and Jiang Qing had a fierce quarrel, bodyguard Li Yinqiao remembered. It started over a seventeen-year-old baby-sitter for their daughter, Li Na. Jiang cursed the baby-sitter and said she was stupid. Mao flared up: “You just can’t correct your bourgeois egotism and selfishness.” In light of Mao’s liking for teenage girls, there may have been more behind the outburst than baby-sitting. 5

“This marriage is a failure,” the bodyguards also recalled Mao’s saying. “If she was my secretary I would have thrown her out long ago.” Now he couldn’t simply divorce her. She had committed no “big mistake.” Divorce would cause controversy among the leaders. “But if I don’t divorce her I will always carry a political burden. I’m helpless. I must manage to live with her.” 6

Jiang Qing, Mao said, was very jealous. She could not tolerate those who did things better than she. She liked to swim but would never go in the pool if Wang Guangmei, Liu Shaoqi’s wife, was there, because Wang Guangmei could swim properly while Jiang Qing could only dog-paddle.

“She has a sharp mouth and a sharp tongue,” Mao said, “and she will always make trouble. A week after I die people will kill her.” 7

No wonder Jiang had nothing to say about these times. There is good evidence that her fate was hanging in the balance.

Mao heard Khrushchev out, then turned Deng Xiaoping loose. Deng flew at the Soviet leader like a terrier. He accused the Russians of “Great Nation” and “Great Party” chauvinism. It wasn’t only the matter of the fleet. The Russians wanted to set up long-range wireless stations in China to communicate with their fleet and particularly with their submarines in the Pacific.

Deng criticized the conduct of some of the thousands of Soviet experts based in China. He implied they were more interested in spying than in helping. He said they had made it their business to learn everything worth learning about China. Some of them were excellent, cooperative people. Others were not; they interfered in Chinese internal affairs.

Deng set it out bluntly, without diplomatic words. When he was finished it was time to break for the traditional banquet, but Mao was more angry than ever.
The spectacle of the champions of the Communist world in their watery encounter was one never to fade from the memory of the handful of spectators. (In his memoirs Khrushchev described meeting Mao Zedong at the swimming pool. He omitted his adventures in the pool.)

Finally Mao relented and permitted the sodden Khrushchev to follow him to a wooden shed beside the pool. The statesmen donned their bathrobes and were joined by the sedate Liu Shaoqi, a slightly embarrassed Zhou Enlai, and the openly smiling Yang Shangkun and Deng Xiaoping. The atmosphere became relaxed.

Once again, growing Soviet-Chinese differences had been papered over. It was business as usual — but not quite. Fedorenko noted the differences: no more talk of Elder Brother and Younger Brother, no more singing of the popular song “Moskva-Beijing.” No more folderol, choruses, dancing children, great illuminations. Fedorenko felt, sadly, that the eternal alliance was less than what they had hoped for.

There had been sharp exchanges on nuclear weapons. Mao had asked Khrushchev for nuclear arms or the means of making them. Khrushchev said China didn’t need them, since Russia was sworn to come to China’s aid if it was attacked. For China to build its own would take a long time and would employ its total power-generating capacity. There were acid exchanges about “paper tigers” — as Mao had called America and other capitalist powers. This paper tiger, Khrushchev said, “has nuclear teeth.”

Mao commented on the differences in customs between Russians and Chinese. The Russians didn’t like China’s green tea and didn’t eat the leaves (as he proceeded to do). Chinese ate rice, Europeans ate bread. And, said Mao, as if it had just occurred to him, the Chinese had had a very good harvest and possessed very generous supplies of grain. They had so much they just didn’t know what to do with it.

Did Khrushchev have some advice? Khrushchev had no advice for Mao. He said simply that the Soviets never had this problem. They were always short of grain.

Mao did not press the question. He perhaps was not aware that thanks to his Great Leap Forward, China was plunging into one of the greatest famines of its long history.

Andrei Gromyko, the straitlaced Soviet foreign minister, paid a visit to Beijing six weeks later, in August-September 1958 to express Moscow’s concern over the Chinese shelling of Quemoy and Matsu islands in the Taiwan Strait. The Russians were afraid war might develop.
The great Leap Forward, 1957-59

Here the khan on his birthday received twelve thousand barons and knights, the whole company clothed in silk and gold. So wrote Marco Polo. Mao's Great Hall was a shabby imitation.

To the left rose matching buildings, the new, not quite completed twin Museums of History, one of China's history, one of China's revolution. That of the Revolution was larger than that devoted to the six thousand years of China before 1949.

Trouble plagued Mao Zedong. His lieutenants Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping were far from comfortable. They shared a guilty secret. They knew the communes were a shambles, the Great Leap a horror. The greatest famine of contemporary China was clutching at its throat. But spread before Mao and his men — and their guest of the day, Nikita Khrushchev — was a monument to China's transformation. True, Soviet architects had had a hand in its design. Their imprint was recognizable in the banality of architecture, the pedestrian columns, and the shallowness of concept. There was no echo of the majesty of Rome or Athens. Mao's Tiananmen was anchored in Moscow's shabby world and shackled by Stalin's provincial taste. Any soaring vision had escaped the Chinese copyists.

But there was more to Tiananmen than met the eye. The square was not just bricks and mortar; it was ideology. The process of its creation bore the indelible stamp of the age of Mao.

(26 million Chinese died of starvation, 1959-61)

They had said at the end of 1958 that it couldn't be finished for the October celebration. In June 1959 they conceded that "it might be done." In September they said "China has had a Great Leap Forward." Mao liked to quote that to his visitors.¹

Whatever the men who gathered on the Gate of Heavenly Peace thought of Mao's metaphor, there was no doubt that Mao himself was elated. The new Tiananmen was a monument for the ages. He never tired of boasting about this triumph of Maoist mass movement. Thought of it took away the bitter taste of Lushan, the violent break with Peng Dehuai, and even the dangers of the new war that had suddenly broken out with India, possibly a sly stratagem of Lin Biao's, the new defense minister. Tiananmen helped Mao shift his thoughts from the ugly confrontation with Moscow. Khrushchev had reneged on his pledge to give Beijing atom-bomb know-how and high-tech weapons — what next? There were few smiles on the faces of Khrushchev and Mao as they stood atop Tiananmen. Each knew that the great Communist camp was tottering on the brink of dissolution.

Later, after the tortures and turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, Wan Li took charge of China's railroads and helped restore them to order. Mao didn't have a more able younger lieutenant, and he knew it. Go and see Wan Li, Mao urged his associates; let him show you how Tiananmen was built. Wan Li, Mao bragged, could run 10,000 li (about 3,000 miles) — a pun on Li's name, which literally means 10,000 li.²

Tiananmen and Miyun were two of Mao's "Ten Great Projects" in Beijing. All were visible advertisement of China's success under the ten years of Mao's Communist leadership.
There was in this a strong hint of the ideology that would surface in Mao's next epochal episode — the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution would proclaim as its objective the destruction of China's Four Olds: old thoughts, old culture, old customs, and old habits.

What could possibly epitomize the old more perfectly than the Forbidden City? Speech by Khrushchev

No evidence exists that Khrushchev was affected by or even noticed Mao's symbolic charade. Nikita Khrushchev did not arrive in Beijing in a jolly mood. He was fed up with what he regarded as Mao's posturing. The memory of the swimming pool debate and the mosquito-bitten night at the Fragrant Hills had not faded. He came to Beijing with the success of his meeting with President Dwight Eisenhower ringing in his ears and the spirit of Camp David surging in his veins. He was exhilarated by his recent triumphs and had no patience for Chinese games.

From the moment his stretch Tupelov-114 touched down it was apparent that the temperature of Moscow-Beijing friendship had cooled. Had there been any doubt, Khrushchev blasted it away at the ceremonial banquet on the eve of the great October 1 festivities.

Khrushchev had written his remarks in advance and given a copy to the Chinese interpreters. The Soviets expected a copy of Mao's speech, but it was not forthcoming. They were told Mao would not speak; Liu Shaoqi would do the honors. Mao probably decided to duck after a glance at Khrushchev's text. Khrushchev opened by attacking the Chinese for provocative behavior in the shelling of Quemoy and Matsus, the Taiwanese-held islands in the Taiwan Strait. Khrushchev said it was not wise "to test the stability of Capitalism by force." He was saying that it behooved the Chinese not to twist the tail of the "paper tiger," as they liked to call the United States.

There was worse to come. Khrushchev praised Eisenhower and the need for accommodation. He said that in the early days of the Soviet Union it had gotten along in friendly fashion with the Far Eastern Republic, an independent regime in Vladivostok. Later, the Soviets
had peacefully incorporated the Far Eastern Republic. The implication was plain — why shouldn’t Beijing get along with Taiwan and incorporate it later in a peaceful manner?

Khrushchev had a specific demand from Eisenhower to convey. The Soviet leader asked the Chinese to release two American airmen, pilots of intelligence overfights who had made forced landings in China. This, Mao felt, was outrageous interference in China’s affairs.

Khrushchev launched a full-scale attack on the Chinese action in India, which he blamed (accurately) on China’s intransigence. What was the purpose of this adventure? The territory — remote, uninhabitable mountain peaks — was worth nothing. India was prepared to settle the quarrel on the basis of the McMahon Line. To Mao this was even more hostile than the words about Taiwan. China had never recognized the McMahon Line, a product of British imperialism. He regarded the quarrel with India as China’s own business. Khrushchev had already publicly criticized the Chinese for the conflict and was pursuing an evenhanded policy that quickly was to escalate into arms shipments and open support of India. Mao regarded this as an unconscionable violation of the relationship between members of what he liked to call the “Communist camp.”

Khrushchev appeared on the gate at Tiananmen beside Mao on the next day, October 1. Photos of Mao and Khrushchev at their October meeting are rare. They disappeared into closed files soon after. But one exists of the airport ceremony. Khrushchev is approaching the microphone, his head shaven almost bald, and Mao is looking sidewise at him with some apprehension. What would the ebullient Russian say next?

** Khrushchev angry **

The talks went on for three days. Before Khrushchev flew back to Moscow he had ridiculed the Great Leap Forward, denounced the communes, questioned Mao as to what he had meant about the Hundred Flowers movement, and made clear he was not giving any more large-scale aid to China. He complained that the Chinese security police were harassing the Soviet experts, ransacking their rooms and possessions, and abusively subjecting them to vulgar racial slurs. As one Chinese participant observed: “The visit by Khrushchev ended in rather an unpleasant manner. In fact, it was a great quarrel.” There was no immediate explosion in China-Soviet relations. But it was not far distant. Khrushchev’s free-swinging comments in the October meeting, his praise for Eisenhower, his warnings about the nuclear might of the United States, became the subject of point two of an
Peng Dehuai had dropped from sight. He had not yet lost his Politburo seat and was still vice premier. But he had been moved out of Zhongnanhai. He was absent from the October 1 celebration and the Khrushchev meetings. He lived now in an ancient abandoned park, the Wu Family Gardens, in the village of Guajiacun, in northwest Beijing, close to Beijing University. It was an appropriate place. Guajiacun means Hanging Up Your Armor. It was so named for a warrior who, leading an expedition against the barbarians, paused here to rest and remove his battle dress.

The park was forlorn when Peng moved in. There were two courtyard houses. Peng and his wife, Puan, and two secretaries occupied one, his chauffeur and bodyguards the other. For six years he lived here in seclusion, not under house arrest but cut off from contact with politics, government, and the army. Possibly under political pressure to “draw a line,” his wife divorced him.

Peng occupied himself raising peaches and puttering about the garden. He made friends with the villagers. Active as he had always been, he felt at a loss. This went on until September 23, 1965, when Mao called him to Zhongnanhai and proposed to send him to the southwest to take the number-two post in building the Third Line. After a day of talks Peng accepted the assignment and went to Chongqing. He never got to work on the project. He was arrested in 1966, put in the hands of violent Red Guard torturers, beaten and beaten until his internal organs were crushed and his back splintered. He died November 29, 1974, having endured 130 “interrogations.” He never gave up. “You can shoot me,” he said. “I fear nothing. Your days are numbered. The more you interrogate me the firmer I become.” Peng lived and died a hero of the Long March.

So far as the record shows, neither Zhou Enlai nor Liu Shaoqi played any meaningful role in the case of Peng Dehuai. Nor did Deng Xiaoping. All three knew that Peng was right, that he had done nothing wrong. They held their tongues and saved their skins — for the moment.

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**Mao's Metaphor**

*Violent Red Guards destroy Peng*

elaborate nine-point propaganda barrage issued by Beijing in 1963 and 1964.7

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* Mao's treatment of his victims

---

* Peng out of sight

---

*Terrorite things done to Peng

- Peng was right -- and a hero
- Peng arrested 1966, died Nov. 1974
  - After huge abuse and
  - 130 Interrogations.
Mao’s Great Leap Forward (1957-59) was a disaster.

Mao words just lies

Whatever Mao said or did at Lushan, he had the no-words-spared Tian Jiaying reports. Mao knew just how bad things were — very bad, as Tian reported. So that, in fact, the views Mao gave at Lushan were nothing but lies, and Mao knew it. Not the first and far from the last time when Mao would tell a big lie and, like Hitler, use it to his political advantage.

During 1959 - 61 there were 26 million excess deaths in China due to starvation

Mao seemed to accept Tian’s reports — even a stark account of conditions in rich Zhejiang Province, site of Mao’s beloved Hangzhou, which told of peasant starvation and incomes of 3 yuan ($1.50) a year. Mao knew Tian had broken into tears when confronting the peasants, gaunt as Walker Evans photographs, and had denounced the Party bureaucracy for its unwillingness to tell the truth.

Tian continued doing his duty, regardless of warnings from friends. But in 1962 he argued with Mao in favor of a modified family responsibility system, which was being introduced in agriculture by Liu and Deng. Almost instantly it would begin to produce large yields and prosperity for farmers who entered the program (a primitive precursor of Deng’s fabulously successful agricultural initiative of 1978). Mao caught up Tian sharply, accusing him of speaking not for himself but for someone else, meaning Liu and Deng).

That ended the relationship of confidants. As had happened with Li Rui, Tian had crossed a line, and he knew it. He begged Mao to let him go, asking to be sent to a county as Party leader. His wife could take charge of women’s work. Or let him be released for historical research on the Qing dynasty. Anything to get out of the golden cage of Zhongnanhai. It was too late; Mao never let his victims escape. Tian told his wife: “The Chairman is very tough. Very tough.”

Tian went on working. In the spring of 1965 Mao named him to a team that he took to Hangzhou to work on preparation of six books on ideology, basic reading for Party cadres. Mao himself would prepare an introduction for a new edition of Marx’s Communist Manifesto. But the onset of the Cultural Revolution swept the project into oblivion.

Mao’s treatment of his victims

In the lurid fashion that became a hallmark of Mao’s treatment of his victims, he took Tian into his confidence one last time. Mao was in Hangzhou, initiating the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. He suddenly called in five Party workers, four radicals and Tian. The radicals were Chen Boda, soon to be the rising star of the Cultural Revolution; Hu Sheng, successor to Chen Boda as editor of the Party organ, Red Flag; Ai Siqi, head of a Party ideological school; and Guan Feng, member-to-be of the Cultural Revolution group and an editor of Red Flag.

For three hours Mao talked to the group of five, ranging over world problems. He discussed American relations, ancient Chinese history, great wars of the past, and contemporary economic conditions — he
thought the outlook now was very bright. Mao said he was worried about aspects of China’s cultural and social situation. He spoke of the Cultural Revolution, which he felt was needed. Mao also touched on the play “Hai Rui Dismissed from Office,” which had recently been criticized ferociously in a Shanghai newspaper for its defense of a Ming dynasty official who lost his post after speaking out against misguided imperial policies. Mao said the point of the play was that the emperor had sacked Hai Rui. Since Mao had sacked Peng Dehuai, he was being portrayed as the evil emperor.

When the three hours ended, the five knew the talk was of enormous importance. A report should be drawn up and circulated to the cadres. They picked Tian Jiaying to write it. He swiftly composed a summary and submitted it to his companions, who unanimously accepted it. No one spoke of a great oddity: Tian Jiaying had not mentioned Hai Rui. As he confessed later, he hadn’t thought the chairman’s remark about Hai Rui was of special importance. He had seen the play several years earlier in Beijing and had not interpreted it politically. He did not think Hai Rui was Peng Dehuai or that Mao was the emperor. Tian was naive.

Without dissent the Tian Jiaying report was placed in circulation. Of the five only Guan Feng understood that Hai Rui was the key to Mao’s thought. He did not mention this to Tian but promptly reported it to Jiang Qing, who in turn told Mao. Much later Hu Sheng said he didn’t fault Tian for not mentioning Hai Rui. “After all,” he said, “it was only a few words in an afternoon of talk.”

The Cultural Revolution lumbered into action. The significance of Mao’s remarks was now apparent to Tian Jiaying and everyone else. Tian Jiaying continued as Mao’s secretary, but no one was better aware than he, living in the heart of the storm in Zhongnanhai, how troubled the times had become.

Tian still did not count Mao an enemy. However, he knew that Chen Boda and Jiang Qing, as he told his wife, were deadly dangers. Jiang Qing, he said, was the first and only person ever to call him a “rightist” — a fatal accusation at that time. In talking of Jiang he customarily called her Miss, as though she were still a coltish actress making cheap movies in Shanghai, rather than the respected wife of Chairman Mao. He would say, “If Miss isn’t under Mao’s control she will come out and play.” Or, “Miss wants to get out from under Mao and play her own role.” Tian thought Mao would keep Jiang in check. But, as Hu Sheng noted, “it was not true after 1965.” Miss had slipped the bridle.
One afternoon in late March 1966, Hu Sheng encountered Tian Jiaying just outside Zhongnanhai. He happened to have a rare piece of calligraphy with him. They unrolled the scroll and admired the Ming dynasty work, very unusual and famous, of Xu Sang.

"We both knew that dark clouds had appeared," Hu Sheng recalled. "We did not know what kind of a storm was brewing or that it would prove to be our last meeting."

About midnight on May 21-22, 1966, one of Mao's secretaries, Mei Xing, arrived home from a special Party meeting and telephoned Tian Jiaying, who hurried over to hear what had happened. It was five days after a meeting at which Mao had thrown the Cultural Revolution into high gear.

When Tian Jiaying arrived at Mei Xing's house, Mei told him about this meeting. Four persons had been named as members of an "anti-Party clique"—Peng Zhen, the Long Marcher and Party boss of Beijing; Luo Ruiqing, chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army, enemy of Lin Biao's, soon unsuccessfully to attempt suicide; Yang Shangkun, for years head of the Party's General Office until quietly removed and rusticated in Canton two years earlier; and Lu Dingyi, chief of Party propaganda.

Tian Jiaying was shocked and angry. "All of those men are innocent," he said. "I know that." He added that his own record was clean. His social origins were also clean (i.e., peasant working class). "I joined the Party more than twenty years ago," he said. "I have not committed any big mistakes. Mao knows everything about me. I am not afraid. I am not going to betray the Party." As he left, Mei remembered, he was murmuring: "I've done nothing... I have done nothing wrong."

Tian Jiaying walked out into the soft May evening and back to his home in Zhongnanhai. Next day Mei Xing called his friend several times. No answer. He was worried. He did not know that on May 22 two men, criminal operatives of the Cultural Revolution, called on Tian Jiaying. One, whose name was Wang Li, would survive and surface in 1989, claiming he was a victim and not a tool of the Gang of Four. The other was Qi Benyu, who fell in 1967 with Wang Li and Guan Feng and was never heard of again.

On this bright May 22 the two hit men rode high. They bore a four-part message to Tian Jiaying. First, Tian possessed, and had for a long time, a "rightist orientation." Second, his relationship with Yang Shangkun was "more than ordinary" and Yang Shangkun was a member of the anti-Party clique. Third, Tian's position as Mao's
Tian killed himself
Mao was a rat that caused it

Tian's secretary was terminated as of this moment. He must write a confession and hand over all his papers. Fourth, he must move out of Zhongnanhai within twenty-four hours.

Early in the morning of May 23 Tian Jiaying departed Zhongnanhai. He swallowed a bottle of sleeping pills and ended his life. His family was not notified, but later that day they were thrown out of Zhongnanhai. Tian had been secretary to Mao for eighteen years.

Long before, Tian had spoken of how hard it was to work for Mao; how often Mao changed his mind; how quick he was to accept negative opinions (he once asked Tian to write a self-criticism about a rumor he'd heard, not bothering to ask Tian if it was true or not); how whimsical he was; how much he enjoyed compelling people to criticize their own acts.

When the day came to leave Zhongnanhai and Mao's service, Tian had said, he would tell his master three things:

First, that Mao could manage the universe but he could not manage the people around him.

Second, that he should avoid doing things that people would criticize after he was dead; as an example he would cite what Khrushchev had had to say after Stalin's death.

Third, that Mao would never accept a negative opinion. Therefore no one could tell him the truth. No one tell truth.

Tian never got to give Mao his scorecard.

Three years after Tian's death Mao Zedong told a friend that Tian Jiaying had "no major problems." Mao's listener was not certain what Mao was trying to say — did he now miss Tian? Had he reevaluated Tian's situation? Did he now regret what he had done?10

To Hu Qiaomu the matter was profoundly clear. There was nothing personal about Mao's action. "It was entirely political in the higher meaning of the word," he said.

Mei Xing was soon arrested and locked up in Qincheng Prison for seven years. "During those days," he recalled, "I thought of my last meeting with Tian Jiaying millions of times.211

May 1966 Tian killed himself
Mao was a rat that caused it
WHERE RUSSIA AND CHINA COLLIDE

A LONG the 4,500-mile border shared by Russia and China, there is no clearer natural dividing line than the purple-hued Tien Shan mountain range. Rising majestically to heights of almost 25,000 feet, the permanently snow-capped peaks separate Soviet Kazakhstan from the Chinese region of Sinkiang. One main pass through the Tien Shan range is called the Dzungarian Gates, named after the Dsongars who formed the left flank of the Mongolian army of old. Historically the Gates have been the passageway for Mid-Asian traffic between Russia and China. Last week the two Communist giants reported that their troops had engaged in an armed clash at the Dzungarian Gates—the latest, and potentially most dangerous, of a series of border battles between Soviet and Chinese soldiers this year.

According to China, which first reported the skirmish, Soviet troops intruded into Sinkiang for no ostensible reason. They killed one shepherd, kidnapped another, and brought large numbers of tanks and armored cars onto Chinese soil in an effort to "provoke still larger armed conflicts," said Peking. After the Russians refused to "talk reason," Chinese troops fought back in self-defense, but the situation was still "developing," the Chinese protest to Moscow added ominously.

The Russian Foreign Ministry immediately issued a countercharge, claiming that a Chinese shepherd had sauntered 400 yards into Soviet territory in order to distract border guards while Chinese troops slipped into Russia. When ordered to leave, said the Russians, the Chinese replied with a burst of submachine-gun fire. Moscow mentioned no casualties on either side.

Propaganda Beamed. Both Russia and China could have figured to gain something from staging the clash. The Russians were quick to accuse the Chinese of "trying to poison the good atmosphere" of the Communist summit in Moscow. Peking might hope to show up Moscow as the aggressor before the world's other Communists. Clearly disturbed by the incident, Russia hastily summoned several of its ambassadors to Asian countries back to Moscow for consultations.

The most ominous aspect of the event was the implication from both sides that such clashes had occurred before in this sensitive area. The Sinkiang border region is probably a more volatile confrontation point than even the far-eastern Ussuri River area, where Chinese and Soviet troops engaged in a series of bloody border fights last March. The Dzungarian Gates lie just 250 miles from China's nuclear-testing and research sites on the Taklamakan Desert. Moreover, the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region, as it is officially called, is two-thirds populated by Kazakh people, many of whom resent Chinese rule. Russian radio propaganda beamed there frequently urges Chinese Kazakhs to rise up in arms against the Peking authorities.

The flare-up will doubtless give a new sense of urgency to Russia's campaign of military preparedness along the Sino-Soviet border. The campaign began some time ago, but has become much more evident since the Ussuri fighting.

Trip by Intourist. Much of the frontier area is remote and desolate territory, seldom seen by outsiders except the most hardy tourists. There may be fewer of those in the future; last week Russia acknowledged that most of the Trans-Siberian Railway had been off limits to foreigners since June 1. The ban was presumably imposed to prevent non-Russians from viewing Soviet troop movements and military hardware along the border. On the following pages are rare, recent color photographs taken in the troubled border areas. They are the work of an enterprising Italian freelance photographer who, just prior to the ban, completed a trip through Siberia arranged by Intourist, the official Soviet tourist agency.

Soviet military officials make no secret of the readiness campaign. First Deputy Defense Minister Sergei L. Sokolov recently wrote that "a straining of the U.S.S.R.'s entire military preparedness" was necessary to deal with recent Maoist provocations.

The Russians have generally kept some 20 army divisions stationed in the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern military regions. These have recently been beefed up to full strength, and some reports suggest that new divisions have been added—bringing total estimated armed strength up to as many as 1,500,000 men. Most of these are concentrated along the Trans-Siberian Railway east of Irkutsk. In Mongolia, theoretically an independent republic, Soviet authorities have stationed up to 200,000 new troops under a defense treaty signed in 1966. Fighter planes, which can land almost anywhere on the flat Mongolian plateau, are scattered about the vast grasslands, housed in earthen shelters. Russia's main listening post on China is also in Mongolia, and Peking has begun to speak derisively...
The clandestine auditing commission, guarded by a squad of soldiers, moved to a shabby zoo building, sat down on folding chairs, spread their documents out on a table, and went to work. Peng Zhen felt it unlikely Mao would hear of the unusual party at the zoo. He was right.¹

The scope of inquiry suggested that an effort was afoot to retire Mao. When the proceedings were uncovered by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, they charged that Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi indeed had this intention, and the evidence suggests that the Red Guards may have been right. Mao’s status had, in fact, shrunk. He had, for reasons obscure, given up his title as president to Liu Shaoqi in 1959. Earlier he had turned over day-to-day operations to Deng, who had proved to be a take-charge executive. The Red Guards were to allege that Deng didn’t bother to consult Mao, handled everything himself, and showed little respect for Mao, a claim that Mao rather plaintively confirmed, saying he never got any reports from Deng. Throughout his career Deng was dogged by complaints that he was in too much of a hurry to bother to inform others of what he was doing.

It was no easy task to get China back on track. In the summer of 1960 Khrushchev landed another blow, announcing that the Soviet Union was pulling out all its technicians and their blueprints. This move struck deeper than China was willing to admit. The great Wuhan steelworks was dead in the water, unfinished and inoperable. A dozen years later the author found it half-deserted, most of the shops idle.²

Han Suyin, the famous Euro-Chinese writer, reported that the Anshun coalfields were operating at 20 percent capacity because the Russians had left electrical installations, water pumps, and air blowers half-finished.³ In every industrial town in China there were factories with smokeless chimneys, bridges half-built, buildings in disarray.

The food crisis eased a bit. Deng and Liu bought six million tons of grain on the world market and dug the money out of Mao’s crippled budget to pay for it. A good many projects were put on hold as a result. Mao was furious. Grain had to be paid for in foreign exchange. It was a step backward, he felt, toward capitalism. But Deng and Liu had to have quick results. The country could not go on starving. “Communism is not poverty,” Deng said. Deng was aggressive in restoring the economy.

Deng was never good at keeping his tongue in his mouth. As early as January 1961, at the Central Committee’s plenary session, he put it on the line: “Any idea which cannot be carried out and does not hold water must be rectified no matter who initiated it.”⁴ A clean shot at Mao.

To make his point even more plain, Deng spoke the words that were to become his trademark: “It does not matter whether the cat is black or white. So long as it catches the mouse it is a good cat.”

With these words Marx went out the window. Lenin went out the window. So did Mao.
his gambit of the Cultural Revolution grew out of frustration with the Soviet Union, which he believed was moving into "revisionism" and capitalism. He was also frustrated with China's slow progress. He began to believe that his own associates had embarked on the course he felt Russia had taken. After two great revolutions, Russian and Chinese, the world was turning away from Communism. He resolved to mobilize the Chinese masses, by which he believed anything could be achieved, and lead them into a new and greater revolution.

- Lead the Chinese into a new and greater revolution. **Help!!**

- So Mao started the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and China was put into turmoil until 1978

No poet, Hu believed, could perform all of these functions. But Mao was a poet, too, and that made a big difference. It gave him powers of imagination.

"If his imagination was misguided," said Hu Qiaomu, "it could inflict heavy losses or even disasters for his cause. And, as it happened, this was the case."

Mao liked "total solutions" a big problem.

Mao was strongly inclined to "total solutions." He believed in philosophy as an instrument of change and that society was always in flux between periods of stability and periods of luan, chaos. Change arose from luan. Stability was static. In a state of upheaval, progress was made and new, capable people and ideas emerged.

The Mao scholar Li Zehou quotes Mao as saying after he read the history of China's Warring States, "It is a delight to read. But when it moves to the peaceful years I hate it. Not because I love chaos but because a time of peace is not good for the development of the people. It is unbearable." 19

\[\text{A contrast} \quad \text{Deng was a problem solver.} \quad \text{I love his style!} \quad \text{Mao mainly created crises and disasters.} \quad \text{The poor Chinese people.} \]

Roy Curve
Mao’s wife not good

Still the furor raged. Jiang Qing shouted to a mass meeting on September 18, 1968, “I’m in charge of the most important case in China,” that of Liu Shaoqi. “He deserves a slow death by a thousand cuts, ten thousand cuts.” “Flog the cur that has fallen in the water,” yelled Zhang Chunqiao, one of her Gang of Four associates.

More than five hundred investigators opened fifteen archives and examined 2.5 million documents; hundreds were arrested, beaten, tortured, starved, and killed, as the Gang tried to drum up evidence against Liu. He was still a member of the Party, still president of

Mao wife - she terrible

The House of Good Fortune

China. Obscure professors were driven to death because they could not give evidence that Wang Guangmei (whom they had never heard of) was an American spy.

On October 8, 1968, Liu Shaoqi burst into tears. He wept and wept without control. He could no longer swallow and had to be fed through a tube in his nose. His hands turned into claws. When he clutched an object it could not be pried from his fists. The nurses put two small plastic bottles in his hands. He was still clutching them when he died a year later.

The worst years of China’s Cultural Revolution were 1966-1968
Mao used it to wreak the whole top leadership of China. Just terrible!
Liu Shaoqi had been the good leader of China. It did not seem revolutionary enough for Mao. So essentially, Mao had him killed.

And Mao’s wife fully participated. She liked power, and was a worse far left person than Mao.

Ray James
June 2007
Lin Biao: Work to strengthen his position with Mao

Whatever addiction's effects on Lin Biao, they did not prevent him from working incessantly to strengthen his position with Mao. He had invented the "little red book" of Mao's sayings — Quotations from Mao.

Now Lin Biao produced another triumph: "Long Live the Victory of the People's War." This pamphlet, released in 1965, proposed that China could win the world by mobilizing the people of backward countries just as Mao had mobilized the poor peasants to win China. As Mao, the Red Army, and the peasants had surrounded China's advanced urban centers, so the peasants of the world would surround and triumph over the United States, England, France, and Japan. Mass action, Mao's adored cliché, would win the world.

Lin Biao's strategy was as windy and divorced from practicality as Mao's vision of the Great Leap Forward propelling China into the modern world in three years. The idea, like Mao's, seemed in cold daylight to have been blown out of a pipe. Since the days of Thomas De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater, published in 1822, the literate reader had been familiar with the manner in which the drug-distorted vision had lifted the victim into a cloudy state in which anything seemed possible. It was De Quincey who put the expression "pipe dream" into the language. The concept of Mao's Cultural Revolution — a revolution against the Revolution, destruction of Party and state, creation of luan (chaos) in order to produce a new utopia — reeks of the same delusion-prone psyche.

Then Zhou Enlai won a breathing spell from the threat of war. He met Premier Aleksei Kosygin at Beijing Airport in September 1969 and after a six-hour talk got a standstill agreement for negotiations to ease the crisis. Lin Biao took advantage of the cooling off to race ahead toward the pinnacle of power. He had gotten his official anointment as Mao's successor at the Ninth Party Congress, in April 1969, when he was named sole vice chairman and Mao's official heir. There was no rival in sight, with the possible exception of Premier Zhou Enlai. Deng Xiaoping was in forced residence deep in Jiangxi; Liu Shaoqi was dead.

Lin Biao watched Zhou Enlai carefully. Zhou appeared again and again onstage with Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng, and Lin Biao all through the Cultural Revolution. Not a word did he speak in public to oppose Mao's wildest fancies. Zhou courted Jiang Qing as meticulously as the nobles at Versailles attended Madame de Pompadour. Zhou was self-effacing. He took no credit for himself. He did not seem a credible challenger.

Lin Biao could see the Dragon Throne on his horizon. Only a few paces and it would be his.
Nothing came of the sketchy military operation. Very late in the day the plotters’ focus turned to assassination.

Mao on a train tour

Mao had set off in August 1971 for a tour of south and central China to visit military provincial headquarters and military bases and to rally the armed forces to his side. He had been carrying out extensive reshuffling of commands in order to weaken Lin’s control. Mao knew that Lin’s principal strength had to be in the armed forces. Now he was putting reliable men in place. He gave a series of talks, often alluding openly to his differences with Lin Biao. Lin Biao got a stream of reports on Mao’s progress and watched it with apprehension. He could feel his support melting away. Mao’s special train carried him from point to point with frequent stops for speeches, inspections, and heart-to-heart talks. It was due to bring him into Shanghai about the middle of September.

Faced with Mao’s fast-moving and apparently successful effort to turn the tables, the conspirators began to improvise an assassination plot. In two or three days, beginning about September 8 (so the official accounts contend), Lin Liguo and his chums tried to put together a plot of unbelievable complexity. They would bring to bear such firepower on Mao that the aging chairman would simply vanish in a storm of fire and bullets.

Plan to blow up the train

An attack would be made on his special train as it approached Shanghai. A heavy dynamite charge would be smuggled aboard to blow up the train, a plane would bomb it from above, and a battery of 100-millimeter antiaircraft guns would fire point-blank and blast it to bits. Then a squad of rocket men and soldiers equipped with flamethrowers would move in for the kill. Another unit would blow up a bridge to bar the train’s passage, and a plane would bomb the Shanghai oil storage park to create such a confusion of flame and smoke that no one would be able to tell what was happening. If all this failed and Mao survived the fire, the bombs, and the bullets, a fearless gunman would enter the train and shoot him dead with a .45 Colt.

It was an *Apocalypse Now* scenario. Only juveniles or drug-sotted minds could have contemplated anything so bizarre. Yet, if we believe the government’s version, that is precisely what they did contemplate, meeting in a conference room at the Beijing West Airport, shuttling back and forth to Shanghai, and trying to put the final touches on the attack in an all-day meeting on September 11. A dozen witnesses testified so at the trial of Jiang Qing, the rest of the Gang of Four, and the surviving Lin Biao conspirators, which opened on November 20, 1980, in Beijing. The witnesses included the chief of the air force, the chief of staff of the army, and the head of the navy. All were described as close collaborators of Lin Biao’s. None offered any substantive evidence of his role in the harebrained schemes. Not one of the melodramatic scenarios was carried out.

Please see the book for more info.
THE DRAMATIC EVENTS in Beijing reverberated only dimly in the ears of Deng Xiaoping. He and his wife, Zhuo Lin, and his stepmother Xia Bogan had been packed off to distant Jiangxi Province late in October 1969 under Lin Biao's Order Number 1 for evacuation of all important political prisoners from the capital.

The order had been served on Deng on October 20. When the Dongs arrived in Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi, they were harangued by a provincial army officer who warned that they were under military arrest. They could talk to no one, had no right of communication, and were subject to regulations applying to state criminals.

Deng was sixty-five at the time of his banishment, still active and lively despite three years of harassment following his arrest and dismissal from office in 1969, when his salary had also been cut off. His wife, in her early fifties, suffered from high blood pressure. Deng's stepmother, the illiterate daughter of a boatman on the great Jialing River, was slightly older than Deng. She had lived with the family following Deng's Chongqing days, a capable, hardworking, intelligent woman. It is difficult to imagine the Deng household without her.

Deng himself chopped the wood for the stoves in their new quarters and broke the forty-pound hunks of soft coal into stove-sized pieces. He mopped the floors, swept the halls, and did a lot of other housework, and when spring came he, his wife, and his stepmother planted a good-sized garden. The physical labor didn't bother Deng; it kept him fit. What worried Deng and his wife was the plight of their older son, Deng Pufang, twenty-five, a brilliant senior physics student at Beijing University. Pufang had been taken prisoner by a savage Red

Plant a garden

Deng and Zhuo Lin planted cabbage, beans, chilies, and squash in their garden. They also raised chickens. This provided food for their table, and by selling the eggs they brought in a little more cash to allow Pufang and their other children to join them. The rest of the Deng children had been scattered after undergoing harassment from their Beijing classmates. Maomao and the younger son, Deng Zhifang, eighteen in 1969, had been sent to the countryside, Zhifang to remote Shaanxi.
Deng was held in reserve; might need him

From the start there had been hints that Mao held Deng in a different category than Liu Shaoqi. Some said that Mao never intended to take Deng's life. They thought the fate of Liu had been sealed from the beginning. Mao had, according to this theory, always held Deng in reserve — regardless of how he treated him — as a kind of insurance policy.

In fact, a second Deng was suicided, Deng Shiping, the youngest of Deng's brothers. When Deng's father died in 1940, Shiping had taken over the family houses and estate. He managed the property until 1949, when he was sent to a Communist Party school and became a Party worker, an able one. Before long he went to Guizhou Province as mayor of a city, possibly Luzh. The Red Guards charged him with KMT connections and with being a member of a landlord family and brother of the number-two capitalist roader. He was savagely beaten and exposed to struggle sessions. Despairing, it was said, of finding a way out of the terror, he committed suicide on March 15, 1967. As in so many cases of suiciding, there is no way of knowing the truth. He was in contact with the leadership and told Maomao that the Central Committee (a euphemism for Mao) "made certain distinctions between Deng" and the other targets of the Cultural Revolution — a confirmation, in a way, of the theory that Mao always regarded Deng as an exception. Wang Zhen said he was writing the Central Committee urging it to let Deng return to Beijing and take a leading position again. Deng was excited when Maomao brought this news.

There were other good signs. Lin Biao's supporters had been cleared out of the Jiangxi government. The new local officials paid a courtesy call on Deng. The armed guards disappeared. People could come to visit. At the end of 1972 Deng and his wife were taken on a trip to Jinggang Mountain, where Zhu De and Mao had joined forces, creating the base of the Red Army in 1927 and 1928. They visited a nearby

Word came down from Zhou Enlai. If Deng would write a self-criticism to Mao — it needn't be long or detailed — and ask for a chance to go back to work, a job was waiting for him. On August 3, 1972, Deng wrote the letter. He admitted he had made mistakes but swore he was a true follower of Mao's line and loyal to the Cultural Revolution — a basic requisite insisted upon by Mao because he feared that the generation after him would abandon it.

In February 1973, word came from the Central Committee that the Dens were to return to Beijing. They packed their things. When Maomao went to the tractor-repair shop and told the workers that the Dens were leaving, the workers wished them well. "He never seemed like a great state leader," one of the men recalled twenty years later. "He seemed just like one of us." Indeed, the workers were proud and flattered that the Dens were living in the community and working in the shop.

Deng Xiaoping was ready to go to work. On March 10, Mao and Zhou formally proposed to restore him as vice premier of the State Council. With no more ado Deng rolled up his sleeves.
There was no formal announcement that Deng Xiaoping had returned to Beijing and the Party leadership. He simply walked in one evening at a reception for Prince Sihanouk in the Great Hall of the People and began to talk to guests as though he had just returned from a trip to Chongqing. No questions, no explanations.

None knew the necessity for speed better than Deng. He knew that Zhou had cancer. Zhou had given no outward sign, keeping up his ferocious pace, but Deng knew he would be taking over Zhou's duties as fast as he could absorb them. He knew he had Mao's backing — for the moment. He knew how deeply the Lin Biao affair had shaken Mao and how precarious was Mao's health.

And Deng knew, as well as anyone, the extent of Mao's capriciousness and his susceptibility to those around him. The Gang of Four was still in place, still at hand in Mao's circle. Jiang Qing was more quiet, perhaps, but Deng knew she had not given up. The fact that she and her associates had not lost favor when Lin Biao fell was sign certain that they held a powerful hand.

China in very bad shape. The work was not being done.

There was everything to be done. Industrial production had not met planned targets for nearly two years. Rail traffic had been brought to a halt by the Red Guards' seizure of critical junctions. Heavy industry was dead or nearly so, having registered no improvement since Lin Biao's death. Workers spent their time reading newspapers, drinking tea, going to political meetings, marching in the streets. The slogan "Make Revolution, Not Production" still prevailed. If a worker tried to fulfill his quota he was denounced as a rightist.
Deng needs authority to act in every field. To do it he needed power — authority to act in every field, an unlimited transfer of power from Mao. He knew Mao well enough to know he must seem to act entirely in Mao’s name for Mao’s ends, using Mao’s words. And he must have personnel. He had to rid the system of the violent radicals brought in by Jiang Qing and rescue the surviving professionals torn out of government all over the country who were set to minding pigsties and viciously beaten. The Red Guard instructions called for the removal of the two top executives at every level. Deng needed those men back.

- He must rid the system of violent radicals
- He must rescue the surviving professionals

Marshall Ye visits Deng

Hardly had Deng returned to Beijing than Marshal Ye Jianying called on him. The two sat a few moments in silence. Then both spoke simultaneously, echoing the same thought: “How do you assess the current situation?” Something, each said, must be done to rid the country of the Gang when Mao died, or even before. They stayed in touch from then on. Marshal Ye helped Deng with his household, arranging for staff: a doctor, nurses, servants, a driver. Ye went to Mao and asked that Deng be assigned to the Central Military Committee.¹

Mao gives a big tribute to Deng — Cheere

Tribute to Deng

Mao and Zhou had gotten the Party Central Committee to name Deng Xiaoping vice premier in March 1973. In presenting his proposal Mao said: “Deng is a rare talent. He is known in both military and civilian circles for this. He is like a needle wrapped in cotton. He has ideas. He does not confront problems head-on. He can deal with difficult problems with responsibility. His mind is round and his actions are square.” Mao meant that Deng possessed tact, skill, a mind that could see problems in the round, and judgment that was solid. From Mao it was a rare and extraordinary tribute.²

But this was only the beginning. In August 1973 the Tenth Party Congress named Deng to its Presidium and made him a member of the Central Committee, and on December 12, 1973, he joined the Central Military Committee and became chief of staff of the armed forces. Mao made a self-criticism, saying he had been wrong to listen to Lin Biao and to make He Long and former chief of staff Luo Ruiqing (both now dead) targets of the Cultural Revolution.
However, the return of Deng Xiaoping did not mean that Mao had abandoned the Cultural Revolution — far from it. He still considered it his most important achievement. At the congress that put Deng on the Central Committee, Mao criticized Zhou. And in December 1973, he criticized both Zhou and Marshal Ye for not paying attention to “political problems.” If Mao was trying to drive a wedge between Deng and Zhou, this was not a good omen for the radical changes Zhou and Deng knew had to be made.

Mao viewed the Cultural Revolution in the same percentages, 30 percent negative, 70 percent positive.

He also told his listeners that Deng seemed to be soft but was hard as steel inside. Marshal Ye listened with great pleasure. Almost immediately he went over to Deng’s house for another talk.

Deng was building a base. Most important, he won Mao’s support for release of administrators from tending pigs and other odoriferous jobs to which they had been assigned. He had managed to pry loose more than three hundred top personnel.

Despite illness Zhou worked tirelessly through 1973, helping strengthen Deng’s infrastructure. Mao’s health stabilized, but Zhou continued to carry most of the work load. Mao traveled a bit, going south to escape Beijing’s spring and autumn winds. Zhou Enlai rebuffed sporadic gambits by Jiang Qing to undercut Deng. Zhou probably knew better than Deng how dangerous Jiang Qing could be. If he moved too swiftly to reverse the effects of the Cultural Revolution she would run to Mao, and Mao might well reverse himself once again.

The spring festival, China’s great holiday, of 1974 was hardly over when another blow fell. Mao Zedong complained one day that he was having trouble reading; the characters were all blurred, and his eyes tired trying to bring them into focus. It was the same the next day and the next. He told only one person about his condition: Zhang Yufeng, his nurse-companion. It quickly became apparent to Zhang Yufeng that Mao was going blind.

Mao had won the greatest empire in the world. He held it in the hollow of his hand. Now he could not see that hand if he held it eight inches from his eyes. The deadly secret that Mao was losing his sight (it took only weeks, it seems, for his descent into darkness)
Mao had rebuked Jiang Qing on November 12, 1974, “Don’t show your face too much. Don’t write instructions or comments on documents. You are not to form the cabinet from backstage. You have stirred up widespread resentment. You should unite with the majority.”

Jiang Qing apologized for “failing to know my limitations” but complained she had not been assigned much work, especially of late. Mao snapped back, “Your job is to study current affairs inside and outside the country. This is an important task.”

Jiang Qing would not be put off. She instructed Wang Hairong and Nancy Tang to tell Mao, who had gone to Changsha, that he should put Wang Hongwen, the youngest of the Gang of Four, into a key spot in the National People’s Congress.

But the two interpreters would not be the only visitors to Changsha. Deng flew down himself to tell Mao of the trouble the Gang was making. Before he could open his mouth Mao started to criticize the Gang.

“You’ve set up an iron and steel company,” Mao said — his way of saying Deng had created his own power base. Deng said he had indeed. He couldn’t stand the mess Jiang Qing and her people had created in the Politburo.

Mao agreed with Deng. “They are imposing things on other people and I’m not happy about that.”

Deng told him: “I’m using my iron and steel plant to oppose her iron and steel plant.”

“That’s good,” Mao said. “That’s good.”

Mao gave the same kind of answer to Wang Hairong and Nancy Tang when they delivered Jiang Qing’s message about Wang Hongwen. “Jiang,” he said, “has ambitions. She wants Wang Hongwen to be chairman of the Congress Standing Committee so that she herself can be Party chairman.” When Wang Hongwen managed to see Mao in Changsha in December, he hinted that all four of the Gang wanted seats in the power structure. Mao blasted the idea, ordering, “Don’t form a Gang of Four, don’t form factions. Whoever does will trip and fall.”

On January 3, 1975, Mao named Deng Xiaoping vice chairman of the Military Committee and chief of staff of the PLA. When the Second Plenary of the Tenth Party Central Committee met on January 8, Deng was named vice chairman of the Central Committee and member of the Politburo Standing Committee. He now had the authority to move fast and hard.

Mao was of wife; when I die she will make trouble!

Jiang stormed at Nancy Tang and Wang Hairong and then insisted that they convey her hot words to Mao. They did, and Mao replied: “She thinks highly of few people, except one, herself.”

“What does she think of you?” the women asked.

“I’m nothing in her eyes,” Mao said. “One day she is going to break with everybody. Right now people are only humoring her. After I die she will make trouble.”
The Fourth National People's Congress met in January 1975. Zhou Enlai, emaciated, pale, face drawn, barely holding himself at the podium, laid before his countrymen his vision of China's paths to the future. It was not a long address; his limited strength did not permit that. But his words staked out an avenue for his country to follow. He called it the Four Modernizations (Chinese have a passion for numerology — the Four Olds, the PLA's Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention).

The Four Modernizations were Zhou's goals for renewal and advance in agriculture, industry, science-technology, and national defense. They were going to be achieved by the year 2000, a quarter-century ahead. Zhou did not describe a society that would be ideological; not a word was spoken to hint at the egalitarianism of the Cultural Revolution. His program was succinct and specific. More goods, more services, higher production quotas, an end to China's backwardness, and implicit repudiation of the know-nothingism of Jiang Qing and, of course, of Mao himself.

Zhou and Deng try to build a new China (and ye was also a key player)

Zhou's program was Deng's program. Deng was the man who would fill it in, insert the figures, provide the drive to bring it into being. If and when it was achieved, the windy, lethal nonsense that Mao had imposed upon his country would be swept away and a New China, free of sloth, ignorance, and morphia-tinged fantasy, would emerge, scrubbed clean by hard-edged pragmatism.
Death getting closer for both Mao and Zhou

With death gnawing at the heels of both Mao and Zhou, Deng raced ahead. He grew increasingly certain that Jiang would fashion a trap, catch Mao in it, and bring Deng down.

Deng had managed to shake free several young and able lieutenants. One was Wan Li, a deputy mayor of Beijing, the builder of the Great Hall and the new Tiananmen Square, the man who could run 10,000 li, as Mao had referred to him. An attractive, vigorous man with a will of steel, Wan Li had known Deng, worked with him, and played bridge with him since the days in Chongqing. Another was a provincial chief named Zhao Ziyang, then in Guangzhou. A third was Hu Yaobang, a man as small as Deng and just as full of vitality, leader of the Communist Youth League. These names would more and more frequently be associated with that of Deng.

Deng and associates in China

Thirteen years later Wan Li, by then chairman of the National People's Congress, described how Deng proposed they should deal with the chaos the Red Guards had inflicted on the railway system: "The railroads were completely paralyzed by the rebels and by factional fighting. Traffic on many main routes was halted completely. One of the worst blocks was Xuzhou, through which traffic to Shanghai, particularly coal, had to be shipped. Nothing was getting through. It was a very serious situation." In case of war the PLA could not move troops.

Deng, Wan Li said, "came to power at the end of 1974," but the Gang of Four was still in place. It was almost impossible to travel so long as Red Guards controlled the rails. Deng assigned Wan Li to break the blockade.

"I told Deng," Wan Li said, "that the Central Committee must issue a directive to permit the arrest of the key rebels." Deng got the committee to approve Document Number 9, which Wan Li described as his "secret weapon" in the fight to unblock the railroads. The Gang tried to hold him off but failed. Deng spoke bluntly in an address to

- Must permit arrest of key rebels

Fix train system

"The struggle in 1975 and 1976 was very complicated," Wan Li said wryly (it wound up with his own arrest and detention for two and a half years); in fact, it was not entirely resolved until sometime after Mao's death. But trains rolled. In April 1975 the state production plan was met for the first time in twenty-one months. By June service began to approach normal.

Wan Li was a no-nonsense man. Speaking of the "three bad years of natural disasters" — the standard cliche for the starvation years of 1959, 1960, and 1961 — he said in 1987: "I think we should call these three years of man-made disasters. That would be more appropriate."