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THE LIN BIAO INCIDENT: A STUDY OF EXTRA-INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

HISTORY

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By

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Dissertation Committee:

Stephen Uhalley, Jr., Chairperson
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Sharon Minichiello
John Stephan
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TO MY PARENTS
This study of the Lin Biao Incident is in a sense a result of personal struggle and determination. As a woman whose father, Wu Faxian, was convicted of assisting Lin Biao in his alleged coup d'état, something I never believed he had done, I was determined to find out what happened to Lin Biao on the night of September 12-13, 1971. This determination became stronger when I came to the United States, since I am probably the only person, among the tens of thousands of victims of Mao's purge after the Incident, who has the opportunity and the language ability to conduct such research in the West. I have deep compassion towards the people who fell victim to the purges that followed the Lin Biao Incident. During the subsequent purge, Mao not only removed thousands of senior and junior officials from office, but put them into jail or house arrest. The major "accomplices," including my father, were sentenced to between sixteen and eighteen years in jail. The consequences of the purge also extended to family members of those purged. My mother, for example, was put under house arrestment for eight years, and my brother, for seven years, during which they suffered all kinds of humiliation and forced labor. They were guilty only because of their relationship to my father. My two younger sisters, only 11
and 13 years old at the time, had to struggle to survive on their own since our parents disappeared overnight. Having experienced hardship myself and witnessed the sufferings of my family members, friends, and their families, I made up my mind to investigate the other side of the story about the Lin Biao Incident.

Thus, personal motivation and determination was the major force that carried me through all the difficulties in conducting my research. Fortunately, I am not alone in my hard struggle, first to survive in this country, and then to transfer life stories into an academic work. Many people helped me in the process with their warm hearts and much needed encouragement, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my genuine gratitude, although I am unable to mention the name of each of them.

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risk of being harassed by the Chinese government. I greatly admire their courage and honesty. Unfortunately, I can not mention their names here.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and my brother and sisters whose love and confidence in me has been an inexhaustible source of support. Without their personal sacrifice and unconditional support over these years, I would never have be able to complete this research.
ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the Lin Biao Incident of September 13, 1971, which refers to Marshal Lin Biao's reported defection to the Soviet Union when his aircraft crashed in the Mongolian desert. Lin and his wife and son were killed. The Incident remains an unsolved mystery. The Chinese government issued accusations of an aborted coup d'état and a plot to assassinate Mao supposedly masterminded by Lin Biao, but failed to establish a convincing link between Lin and the crimes of which he was accused.

This dissertation presents a different interpretation of the Incident. The Incident in its narrow sense was a consequence of the political involvement of family members during the Cultural Revolution. Based on this discovery, I made the Incident a case study of Chinese politics, illustrating the function of extra-institutional factors in the Cultural Revolution.

I employed the concept of "extra-institutional" factors to make a distinction between two groups of factors that function in the Chinese politics, those related to a institutional study, such as ideology, organizations, decision-making; and those social, cultural and human factors usually excluded from an institutional studies. More specifically, by extra-institutional factors I mean
such elusive things as personality, individual experience, and social relationships, including family ties and personal connections [guanxi] and loyalties as these function in the political sphere.

In other words, I purposefully draw a distinction between two groups of general political phenomena--those that characterize or constitute political systems, and those that inform or pervade the context in which those systems function and provide meaning. Hopefully, this study of Chinese politics during the Cultural Revolution from a perspective that relates to the political culture and human behaviors of the leaders adds a useful perspective to the study of Chinese institutional history.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the months before his death in 1976, the longtime Communist dictator of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong was prone to look back over his life and to sort out his accomplishments and failures. "I did two things in my life," he told his designated successor Hua Guofeng on one nostalgic occasion. "The first was to have fought against Jiang Jieshi for several decades and drive him to the few islands and send the Japanese back to their home after the eight-year war against Japan." The second accomplishment Mao mentioned was the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1967. Not surprisingly, Mao was confident of the success as well as the significance of the first of these accomplishments, but he was evidently uncertain about how history would judge the second. "Only a few people agree with me [and] quite a few people oppose me," he told Hua in an uncharacteristic moment of self-doubt. "Neither of these [two accomplishments] was finally [i.e. fully] accomplished and [the resulting problems] will be passed to the next generation."¹ Mao was thus evidently concerned about his legacy, even in the areas of what he considered his most basic accomplishments. Would his, he wondered, be a legacy of peace or of "a foul wind

¹By this, Mao probably meant that the issue of Taiwan was not solved and the Cultural Revolution was still going on at the time.
and a rain of blood." "Only heaven knows what you are going to do," Mao said with a sigh to Hua.²

This sigh seemed to reflect Mao's confession of disappointment in the outcome of the Cultural Revolution, a stirring event of social upheaval, to which Mao devoted all of his wisdom and energy during the last ten years of his life. He could no longer hide his disappointment at the outcome of the Cultural Revolution, which must have been great. He never expected that the Revolution which he himself had launched would turn out to be the crowning disgrace of his life. Ten years into the revolution he regretfully admitted that time was running out on his effort to bequeath to his successor a China that was everything he intended it to be. It was finally clear even to Mao that the Cultural Revolution failed to achieve what he had intended.

Mao's judgment on the Cultural Revolution has been validated by events since his death. Five years after his demise, a resolution adopted by the Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party acknowledged that the Cultural Revolution was "responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the party, the state and the people since the founding of

the People's Republic."³ Thereafter, neither the government nor the people who lived through the Cultural Revolution had anything positive to say about it. Mao's adventurous experiment in pursuit of a utopian dream turned out to have been one of the worst nightmares the Chinese people ever experienced. Although the government of Mao's successors has shown understandable caution in evaluating the Cultural Revolution, it has reversed nearly everything the Cultural Revolution stood for.⁴

This dissertation, I wish to emphasize, is not a study of the Cultural Revolution as such. Indeed, the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976, was such a multi-dimensional phenomenon that no single volume can cover its entirety.⁵ From a macro historical viewpoint, the Cultural Revolution was not a single revolution but many revolutions which were related in form but had considerable


diversity in content and process. The Cultural Revolution intended by Party leaders, particularly Mao, was quite different from the Cultural Revolution that actually occurred. Moreover, the Cultural Revolution in Guangdong differed from that in Sichuan, which in turn differed from that in Yunnan and Xinjiang and elsewhere. Each province and even city had its own Cultural Revolution. This makes the Cultural Revolution as a unitary phenomenon impossible to study, at least for the moment. In addition to the difficulties of obtaining archival materials from across China, the complexities and diversities of the Cultural Revolution itself intimidate any researcher seeking to accomplish a comprehensive history of it. Nevertheless, the Cultural Revolution does provide opportunities for scholars to look into individual facets of Chinese politics and society in the last decade of the era of Mao Zedong.

In a broader sense, the Cultural Revolution exemplifies one of the series of public and political crises China has endured over the course of the twentieth century. Politically, the Cultural Revolution was the result of conflict between a charismatic leader and a bureaucratic government in the process of institutionalizing itself. Systemically, it was an effort to rejuvenate the entire administrative system rigidified by a lack of appropriate career alternatives for cadres with no prospects of advancement within the bureaucracy and no means by which
they could exit with dignity. Socially, it was an expression of accumulated frustrations against bureaucracy itself, as Mao himself understood. Culturally, it was a clash between traditional Confucian values and the communist revolutionary spirit. And economically, it was an experiment aimed at creating a "socialist economy" based on egalitarian peasant principles, and as such a refusal of the capitalist model of a market-oriented commoditized economy.

This study will examine certain extra-institutional factors that drove Chinese politics during the Cultural Revolution. This will be accomplished in particular by means of a detailed analysis of one of the pivotal events of the Cultural Revolution, the so-called Lin Biao Incident of 1971. By extra-institutional factors, I mean such amorphous and elusive things as personality, individual experience, and social relationships, including family ties and personal connections [guanxi] and loyalties as these function in the political sphere. The term extra-institutional is of course vague, and may not immediately suggest all of the nuanced phenomena I have in mind in using it. I purposefully use the term to emphasize the distinction I draw between two groups of general political phenomena--those that characterize or constitute political systems, and those that inform or pervade the context in which those systems function and provide meaning.
For a long time, Western studies of Chinese politics have focused on institutional factors, including organizations, ideology, and formal policy making apparatuses. Again, elite studies have tended to concentrate on less formal processes relating to groups, including sociopolitical factions, opinion and interest groups, informal groups and situational groups.

Such studies contribute notably to our understanding of the nature of the Chinese Communist system, especially studies that grasp the dynamics of Chinese politics. The best of these studies on the group level provide good accounts of the interaction between collective behavior and group decision making. They also put Chinese politics in the


broad framework of international politics, which provides the basis for informed comparative studies.

As more information has become available since the Cultural Revolution, it has become apparent that the gap between theory and reality in communist politics in China was always quite large. For the first time in contemporary Chinese studies, scholars now find themselves overwhelmed by detailed information documented in primary sources, including information about the private lives of political leaders. They also now have access to oral accounts by leading participants in important political events. The resulting wealth of new information has made it necessary to modify previous interpretation and understanding. It has also made it easier to research individual topics and to add contextual factors to studies of recent political institutions and elites. Recent publications within China are thus rich in detail but weak in perspectives informed by Western social science theories.

This study endeavors to extend the study of recent Chinese politics to the familial and personal levels of inquiry. My main contention is that the availability of new micro-information at these levels can shed new light on the

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8For example, in addition to numerous biographies of Chinese high officials, the biography of Mao by Dr. Li Zhisui, Mao's long-term personal physician became available in 1994, with a large amount of information of Mao's personal life. Li Zhisui, The Private Life of Chairman Mao (New York: Random House, 1994).
macro-perspectives already well-established in Western works on recent Chinese politics. As a historian, I may not be able to develop a model with the same authority and elegance that Western social scientists insist upon, but I am interested in determining whether a particular event can be interpreted differently by examination of personal and even seemingly tangential data that have become available. More particularly, with this study, I hope to establish a framework with sufficiently persuasive strength to facilitate a credible reconstruction of the series of events during the Cultural Revolution that led to what is known in history as the Lin Biao Incident. I may not be able to prove my case definitively and undoubtedly I will bring a share of my own biases to the topic, but definitive proof is a matter of judgment and thus of subjective considerations; and as we all know, complex historical events always admit to a variety of interpretations, even among well-meaning and open-minded historians. Nevertheless, I hope to illustrate that Lin Biao's demise is understandable only if one takes into consideration extra-institutional factors that not only explain the Lin Biao Incident but also shed light on much about Chinese politics in the modern era. Moreover, I intend to illustrate, through this study of Lin Biao's demise, how extra-institutional factors function and interact with institutional factors in Chinese politics.
Political Theories and the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution has provided scholars with excellent opportunities to test a wide variety of theories and models concerning the behavior of Chinese elites during the Communist era. Theories/models to me are not either/or propositions. I am searching for models and theories which better explain the Cultural Revolution. Among the most elegant of the current theories is Andrew Nathan's factionalism model, which is especially concerned with explaining conflicts within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and between its elites.9 According to Nathan, Chinese politics before the Cultural Revolution gave "direct evidence of the existence of personal factions" among the party elite, including factions headed by Tao Zhu, Lin Biao, Liu Shaoqi, and Mao himself.10 Nathan suggested that the oscillations of policy as well as the purges of political leaders before and during the Cultural Revolution were circumstantial evidence of this factional conflict, the nature of which stemmed ultimately from "opposition to the emergence of a strong leader."11 Nathan thus saw the Cultural Revolution as Mao's effort to end factionalism at the party center by mobilizing "new sources of power from

10 Nathan, 52-53.
11 Nathan, 54.
outside the elite." Mao organized the Red Guards to "cleanse the Party center of factionalism." 12

In a critique of Nathan's model, Tang Tsou provides an important clarification and modification of it. 13 Tsou emphasizes the informal nature of CCP factions, citing as evidence Nathan's own proposition that the formal institution provides built-in mechanisms for the development of factions based on informal personal loyalties and kinship relations. While largely agreeing with Nathan's view of the problem of relationships between formal structures and informal groups, Tsou proposed to replace Nathan's "complex faction" with what he called an "informal group." In doing so, he made an important modification in the relationship between formal institutions and informal groups. Informal groups, he pointed out, "may become formal organization units" under certain circumstances. In addition, Tsou noted, cultural, environmental, and ideological constraints, which Nathan deliberately excluded from his model, are crucial to understanding Chinese politics. 14

This is an important point. Western political theories and insights are often illuminating in the study of Chinese politics, but one should never neglect Chinese models and

12 Nathan, 62-64.


14 Tsou, 100-102.
the light they may cast on the object of study. The study of Chinese politics must include a careful examination of factors that are culture-bound to Chinese values. This proposition was effectively illustrated in Tsou's effort to bridge the cultural gap between the West and China in his study of Chinese politics. In doing that, Tsou paid particular attention to the interaction between ideology and institutional development in his studies of the Cultural Revolution. According to Tsou, the Cultural Revolution was the result of a split between "ideological and organizational authority" during which a process of routinizing charisma became "an open struggle between a charismatic leader and a routinizing and bureaucratized organization."\(^{15}\)

This debate over factional models among scholars represented an important development in Western studies of Chinese elite politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Scholars endeavored not only to integrate theories of bureaucracy, decision making, and elites, but also to use various Western models and socio-political theories to understand Chinese politics. These efforts were explicit in other models designed to study elite politics.

Michel Oksenberg's study of the "exit patterns" of elites from Chinese politics led to a different conclusion

concerning the nature of the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{16}
According to Oksenberg, a new pattern evolved in the personnel system in the mid-1950s as a result of Mao's efforts to create his own personnel system on the ruins of his predecessors, whether Communist or traditional Chinese. Mao, however, was disappointed in the results of his efforts, for he began to believe that the resulting bureaucracy was itself becoming a new exploiting class. In a frustrating search for solutions to this systemic problem, Mao resorted to the extreme of mobilizing forces outside the bureaucracy to destroy the system. In this scenario, the Cultural Revolution became an effort by Mao to rebuild the cadre system. In any case, Oksenberg pinpointed a serious problem--the fact that the Chinese political system provided no decent alternatives for cadres at any level to withdraw from the system with dignity.

The absence of a satisfactory retirement system, according to Hong Yung Lee, largely explained the continuing purges within the system as well as the cruelty attending those purges. The recurrent purges aggravated the chronic conflicts among elites by making every conflict "a life-and-death struggle for each individual cadre to maintain his


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or her position."17 In explaining the variegated patterns of the purges, Lee invokes the concept of the "situational group." Conflicts between different groups, he noted, resulted from the disharmony of group-specific variables rather than the tenuous nature of a single factor such as ideology or public policy, or opinion differences, or particular personal ties. This concept of variableness has been especially helpful when one considers the complexities of individual purges and the dynamics of Chinese politics during the Cultural Revolution in institutional terms.

All of the above models, from Tsou’s informal group to Lee’s situational group, take cognizance of the importance of informal and personal factors in elite conflicts during the Cultural Revolution. However, it is more important to incorporate such factors into an explanatory model than it is to note their existence. The idea that the Chinese political system was a highly personalized one with Mao at its center at the time is nothing new.16 Nor is it new to say that the system had many of the characteristics of "court politics." Such formalization, however, begs some important questions. What kind of personal factors, for

17Hong Yung Lee, From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats in Socialist China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 78.

16See, for example, Frederick C. Teiwes, Politics at Mao’s Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), and Politics and Purges in China, 2nd ed. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993).
example, functioned within the system? How did those factors interact with each other? What kind of behavior codes did the system demand of elites, both socially and politically? And how did these two groups of factors, institutional and extra-institutional, interact in so highly personalized a system?

A study of extra-institutional factors in Chinese politics during the Cultural Revolution promises some fresh answers to these questions. Such a study must examine basic social and cultural forces that condoned as well as controlled the behavior of political elites. It will therefore emphasize continuity in the Chinese political tradition—the influence of traditional political culture on politics during the Communist era. The concept of extra-institutional factors is of course a Western one, but it seems promising for the task at hand. As has always been the case in traditional Chinese politics, such personal factors as personality, family, and social connections were closely integrated into the political system under Mao. In traditional China, there was always a strong tendency to combine morality and politics. The Confucian concept of ritual [Li] was not just moral, but political as well in its connotations. A political tradition based on rule by virtue, the Chinese system shifted all of the responsibility for the exercise of power onto the person in authority, who was obligated not only to provide moral guidance, but also
set an example by personal behavior. This not only allowed
the leader great leeway in matters of personal conduct, but
constituted the basis for "rule by man" instead "rule by
law." The concept of Li also demanded that people obey
constitutional leaders, who had two ways of insuring popular
obedience: providing ideological and moral guidance by
example, or resorting to coercive means, that is, they could
"educate by making the punishment clear."19 The two ways
provided charismatic leaders with considerable authority to
act on their own.

The importance of these factors is self-evident in
contemporary Chinese politics. In a sense, the Chinese
political system has always been a highly personalized one
in which each era bears the characteristics of its
representative charismatic leaders. Mao's personality, to
illustrate, not only explained how Mao handled his personal
life and social relations; it also did much to account for
his decisive impact on state decision-making processes
throughout the course of his reign. All major aspects of
the lives of political leaders were politicized under this
system, including not only such obvious things as marriages,
but even personal preferences in social relations and
matters of health care. Marriages of cadres were routinely

19For detailed discussion of this idea, see Qin Zhihua,
Xinzhizhi yu zhengzhi: lun zhongguo dezhi zhuyi chuantong [Rule
by Heart and Politics: On the Chinese Tradition of Ruling by
political instead of personal, as Ye Qun once complained to her secretary.\textsuperscript{20} Even Mao claimed he had to maintain his marriage to Jiang Qing for political reasons, despite his increasing dissatisfaction with her. This system required party cadres to get permission from the party to marry, one result of which was that the members of elite families were bound together more by politics than by blood relationships. The traditional practice of "guilt by association" meant in the Communist era that the children of leaders could be and regularly were made to suffer for the "sins" of their fathers and mothers. Under certain circumstances, the thinking and the behavior of the children of leaders may also have an impact on state politics.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Extra-institutional Factors and the Lin Biao Incident}

Of all major events in the Cultural Revolution, the Lin Biao Incident remains to this day the most mysterious. Many scholars suggest that the day of the Incident, September 13, 1971, was the date of the greatest crisis in the history of Mao's China. On that day, Lin Biao, then sole vice chairman


\textsuperscript{21}Deng Xiaoping's daughter, Deng Rong, for instance, now has more influence over her father than anyone else.
of the Chinese Communist Party, closest comrade-in-arms of and heir apparent to Mao Zedong, was reportedly defecting to the Soviet Union when the aircraft in which he was fleeing crashed in the People's Republic of Mongolia. All of the people on the plane were killed, including Lin and his wife and son. This event has since been known as the "Lin Biao Incident."

More than two decades later, the Incident remains an unsolved mystery. At the time, Chinese officials issued strongly-worded accusations of an aborted coup d'etat and a plot to assassinate Mao supposedly masterminded by Lin Biao. These accusations formed the official verdict on the matter, "confirmed" a decade later at a show-trial held in 1981-1982. Nonetheless, the authorities never established a convincing link between Lin and the crimes of which he was accused.22 Three key questions concerning the Incident have remained unanswered: Why did Lin, who had always been doggedly loyal to Mao, suddenly decide to attempt a coup? Why, when the alleged coup failed, would he have attempted to escape from the country by fleeing to the Soviet Union? And why, most important of all, did his plane crash?

The problem in studying the Lin Biao Incident is less one of facts than of interpretation. What makes the Incident a mystery is the noticeable discrepancy between Lin's life as a Mao loyalist and his bizarre death in a foreign country, and the incredibility of official explanations of his death. If the charges against him were true, Lin would have been unique among the political figures purged before and during the Cultural Revolution in at least three ways: he was the first high official charged with attempting to assassinate Mao; the first high official who attempted to escape from the country, and whose attempt seemed to imply an arrangement with the Soviet Union; and the first individual among the leadership officially charged (and convicted) of an attempted coup.

The evidence against Lin was and remains vague, indirect, and unconvincing. There is no proof of Lin's involvement in a coup or an assassination plot, and the only evidence of his voluntarily leaving the country consists of the "confession" of a single person whose testimony is

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24 There were earlier charges against several other officials, such as Gao Gang and Peng Dehuai, for "having illicit relations with a foreign country," but none of them were proved.

25 Similar charges had been leveled at other high officials, such as Luo Ruiqing, Peng Zhen, and He Long, but all of them were later vindicated.
contradicted by that of other witnesses. Moreover, the logic of the official explanation of Lin's conduct rests on the skeptical premise that Lin was so ambitious for power that he could not wait until the already-elderly Mao died and passed power to him legitimately. Such reasoning is contrary to everything known concretely of Lin's behavior and of his own understanding of his future in Mao's Party. One is reluctant to accept a verdict based on such insubstantial evidence.

What makes the official version of Lin's behavior ultimately unacceptable is the abrupt nature of the Mao-Lin rupture on which it rests. Lin came to the forefront of Chinese politics at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution five years before his death. He rose from defense minister to sole vice-chairman of the Chinese Communist Party in 1966, and the Party confirmed his position as Mao's heir apparent in the Party Constitution adopted in 1969. At that time the Party honored him as Mao's "closest comrade-in-arms" and thereafter Lin accompanied Mao on every public occasion, clutching a copy of the "little red book" of Mao's quotations. What is even more incongruous is that only two days before Lin's "crash," the Xinhua News Agency reported that a book of photographs, including several of Mao and Lin together, would be published as part of the

\[26\] During the Cultural Revolution, Mao zhuxi yulu [The Quotations of Chairman Mao] was known as the "little red book."
celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party. "This made people feel encouraged," stated the news report, "that Comrade Lin Biao is a bright example for the whole Party, the whole Army, and the whole country to learn from." In addition, the cover of the September 1971 issues of *Hongqi* [Red Flag] carried for the third time that year a color photograph of Mao and Lin together. Thereafter, Lin's name continued to appear in newspapers in Beijing and other cities after the Incident, although less frequently than it had appeared before. All of this has made people wonder how Lin turned overnight from Mao's revered heir apparent into a "careerist, conspirator and double dealer."

Dissatisfied with official explanations, I have looked elsewhere for answers to the questions raised earlier. I have read extensively in the available materials, including official documents of the Lin Biao Incident, and have interviewed a number of the people involved directly and indirectly in the Incident. It seems to me that the official evidence not only does not support the official

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28*Hongqi* [Red Flag] was the journal controlled by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

conclusions but in fact points to other quite different conclusions. This is especially so if the evidence is considered in an extra-institutional context. It is no exaggeration to say that without the involvement of his wife and son in politics, Lin would never have sought to "escape" from the country and would not have died a dishonored death in the Mongolian desert. In other words, the Lin Biao Incident in its narrow sense would have never happened.\(^3\)

The Lin Biao Incident can be effectively studied only in this context. To understand Lin's unexpected fall, one must first understand the politics of the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution itself was an aberrant period in the history of the People's Republic of China, one in which all of the basic problems and contradictions of both the party and the society came to the surface. In an extreme sense, the Cultural Revolution was Mao's personal revolution, his own rejection of the existing institutions of the political apparatus over which he presided. It was Mao who initiated and encouraged the Cultural Revolution, which in turn, bore the marks of his personality. This is in fact the consensus view of scholars in China today. Even the Party itself, which has tried hard to preserve Mao's

\(^{3}\) I define the Lin Biao Incident in two ways. In the narrow sense, the Incident was what happened to Lin Biao and his family on the night of September 12-13, 1971. In a broader sense, the Incident was the result of Mao-Lin rupture, which began at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Party Central Committee in August 1970.
reputation as a political and social leader, has admitted that 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. They represent an entirely erroneous appraisal of the prevailing class relations and political situation in the Party and state."\(^\text{31}\)

Extra-institutional factors were all the more important during this aberrant period. During the first several years of the Cultural Revolution China fell into chaos. Social rules were broken and the norms of political life violated. Because of the disruptions of almost all political institutions, temporary organizations emerged to keep the country functioning, among them the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group \([zhongyang wenge xiaozu]\) and the Working Group of the Central Military Committee \([junwei banshizu]\) at the national level, and revolutionary committees at the provincial and local levels. For a while, the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, headed by Madame Mao, substituted for the Politburo and the national government. Because of the ad hoc nature of these institutions and the ways they were organized, individuals gained power by taking advantage of personal ties rather than working through normal political channels.

Political involvement of family members became much more pronounced during the Cultural Revolution. Families thus began to experience political ups and downs as a group. Both Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and Lin Biao's wife, Ye Qun, became actively involved in politics. These formerly obscure women took advantage of the eminence of their husbands to achieve positions of power for themselves. Jiang Qing helped Mao achieve his revolution agenda, only to fall as a scapegoat when her husband's revolution backfired. The same thing in reverse happened to Ye Qun. As one general later put it, Lin's ill-fortune came largely as a result of the activities of Ye Qun. This judgment might reflect a bias against women in politics, but Ye Qun did in fact manipulate aspects of Lin's political career during the Cultural Revolution. The Lin Biao case thus suggests something of the special problem that family political involvement can create a political crisis.

Sources and Problems

There are two chronic problems in studying the institutional history of the People's Republic of China. One is the scarcity of accessible archival materials; the other is the pervasive influence of official versions of all significant events. Although these are problems involved in the study of any political system, they are more acute in the study of China because the government is authoritarian.
and determined to dominate public understanding of the past as well as the present. This dominance is facilitated by tight control of historical sources.

The development of the historical literature concerning recent Chinese politics is directly related to the control of sources. The availability of primary sources, as Michel Oksenberg has noted, determines not only the nature of the research done, but the perspective of researchers as well. In the years before the Cultural Revolution, sources for studying Chinese politics were not only limited but officially screened as well. This forced scholars to scrutinize every item of information they obtained, and in doing so they developed a special methodology known as "Kremlinology" or "Pekingology" to help them read between the lines.

This situation eased considerably after 1966 when the Cultural Revolution began. Suddenly, large numbers of Red Guard publications became available in the West, due chiefly to efforts by the Central Intelligence Agency and several institutions in Hong Kong. A flow of inside information on ranking Chinese officials, including Mao’s unpublished speeches and writings, became available through Red Guard newspapers and big-character posters [dazibao]. Several

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insightful early studies of the Cultural Revolution resulted from this "gold mine" of information. 33

The obstacles to historical research in recent Chinese politics have been further removed since 1978. The materials that have become available since then have improved not only in terms of quantity and quality but in terms of diversity as well. The publication of numerous biographies, memoirs, reminiscences, and even works of fiction provide valuable information about collective as well as individual experiences. Even Party historiography has developed greater diversity. 34 If Oksenberg is correct that the nature and perspectives of research depend on the volume of available sources, the result must be better understanding of contemporary China.

However, caution must be exercised in using the new materials. Because of government censorship, most mainland Chinese scholars still find it necessary to adhere to party orthodoxies. Knowledge of given events requires not only mastery of available materials, but also special effort to


ferret out and neutralize the sometimes subtle influences of the party line embedded in the materials. The latter is particularly relevant to research on politically sensitive topics such as the Lin Biao Incident.

The sources available on the Incident fall into three categories. The first category consists of official documents issued after the Incident in 1971, which announce the "crimes" of the Lin Biao and Chen Boda "Clique"\(^{35}\) as well as the verdicts of the 1980-1981 trials of the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing "Counter-revolutionary Cliques."\(^{36}\) Although these documents remain important sources, it is now known that some of the evidence they contain, including the "confessions" of the people involved, was tailored to fit the official charges. Moreover, careful comparison of the

\(^{35}\)Some of these documents are available in both Chinese and English. See, for example, Yuan Yue, Lin Biao shijian yuanshi wenjian huibian [A Collection of the Original Documents concerning the Lin Biao Incident] (Taipei: Institute of the Problems of Mainland China, no date), and Michael Y. M. Kau, ed., The Lin Biao Affair: Power Politics and Military Coup (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1975).

two sets of documents shows discrepancies between the official denouncements in 1971 and the verdicts in the trials ten years later. The original charges that Lin's generals were involved in the plots were repudiated in 1981.\textsuperscript{37} The changes were due to political developments in the intervening years. The original documents were compiled by the Central Special Case Group [zhongyang zhuan'anzu] headed by Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng and Jiang Qing.\textsuperscript{38} By the time of the trials in 1981-82, most of that group's members were out of the political picture, and the people who oversaw the trials belonged to what Hong Yung Lee called "the group of the purged" during the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{39}

The differences between the two groups, the "purged" and the "beneficiaries," were reflected in the verdicts of the trials. What is especially interesting is that the people

\textsuperscript{37}Lin's generals include Huang Yongsheng, the former chief of staff of the PLA; Wu Faxian, the former commander-in-chief of the Air Force; Li Zuopeng, the former political commissar of the Navy, and Qiu Huizuo, the former director of the Logistics Department of the People's Liberation Army.

\textsuperscript{38}According to a CCP document, Zhongfa, no 64, 1971, the Central Special Case Group was set up to handle Lin's case. The members include Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, Ji Dengkui, Li Desheng, Wang Dongxing, Wu De and Wu Zhong. Ji Dengkui and Wang Dongxing were in charge of the routine work of this group.

\textsuperscript{39}In his discussion of "situational group," Lee identified four different groups during the Cultural Revolution, the purged, the survivors, the de facto beneficiaries, and the defenders of the Cultural Revolution. Each group possessed different attitudes toward the Cultural Revolution based on their different experiences in the Cultural Revolution. See Lee, From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats in socialist China, 85-95.
who were in charge of the purge of Lin's group in 1971 were put on trial with Lin as his "colleagues" in 1981!

The second category of sources consists of biographies and other secondary works, which contain a great deal of personal and other factual information. At one end of these sources are reports by designated party historians, and at the other are "unauthorized biographies" of a number of the participants. Taking advantage of the privileges of limited access to the archival materials and their own working experience,"40 officially designated historians and journalists produced works that supplement the official version of events.41 Also, a number of party officials holding important positions at the time wrote personal accounts, which are also available. Apart from the rich details they contain, these accounts serve to mitigate suspicion that the official version of the Incident had been

40Some of them themselves were the members of the investigation groups of the Lin Biao case in early 1970s.

doctored to meet official needs. 42 As for the biographies, many of them are poor in quality and contain distorted information—even wild flights of imagination—because they strove for commercial success. 43 In general, one has to work carefully through these works in order to distinguish reliable from unreliable information. Much more useful for historian are works by more conscientious researchers who


sought to provide balanced views of the Incident despite the censorship they encountered. Wang Nianyi's *Dadongluan de niandai* [Years of Turmoil] is a good example of these works.\(^4\) Wang courageously raised questions about official explanations of the Incident, though, as a party historian and member of the armed forces, he could not ignore political considerations. Colonel Zhang Zhenlong, to illustrate the reality of those consideration, was arrested after he published a book with sympathetic comments about Lin.\(^5\)

A third category of sources consists of accounts by direct and indirect victims of the Incident. These works are much more sympathetic to Lin Biao than are those in the first two categories. Examples include accounts by Zhang Yunsheng, Lin's former secretary, and Guan Weixun, who was a member of Lin's staff for several years.\(^6\) These accounts provide perspectives that differ from those whose authors had official ties, but they make their arguments implicitly rather than explicitly in attempts to avoid difficulties.


with official censors. A noticeably distinct perspective characterizes the writings of surviving members of Lin's family, including his daughter Lin Liheng (also known as Lin Doudou) and her husband. The two of them have been working for years to rehabilitate Lin by insisting on and endeavoring to prove his innocence. An account by another important witness of the event, the former fiancee of Lin's son, also supports their view.

In this dissertation, I hope to achieve a balanced, factual account of both Lin Biao and of the Incident that bears his name. At this point in my ongoing research, I believe the Chinese government has suppressed the truth about both Lin and the Incident, and I hope to be able to lift this suppression by bringing to public attention another side of the story of the Lin Biao Incident. The dissertation will have eight chapters. In addition to this introductory chapter which lays out the problem, Chapter 2 will endeavor to recreate the Lin Biao Incident of September 13, 1971, based on the relevant literature and interviews

47 Their own writings are only available in the manuscripts of their several appeals to the Party for a rehabilitation of Lin Biao. Their views, however, are reflected in several books and reports of interviews by magazines published in Hong Kong. See, for example, Wang Nianyi, 427-431, and Xiao Xiao, "Lin Biao nuer dadan pilu fuqin chuzou xiangqing" ["Lin Biao's Daughter Exposes Boldly the Details of Her Father's Flight"] Jing bao 6 (June 1988): 16-23.

with the key witnesses of the Incident. Chapters 3 and 4 will describe and analyze Mao's personal role in the Cultural Revolution, and will include a discussion of events that illustrate and illuminate the patterns of political purges during the era of Mao's supremacy. This will hopefully facilitate an understanding of the purge of Lin Biao. In Chapter 5, I will present a Lin Biao during the Cultural Revolution that is completely at odds with one depicted in the official version of events. During the Cultural Revolution, Lin was a sickly and passive figure who was far removed from the avaricious, calculating, and forceful politician described in official accounts. Chapter 6 will discuss the Mao-Lin rupture at Lushan in August 1970, and will reinterpret the events leading to the Lin Biao Incident. It will illustrate a telling pattern of behavior among Mao's associates that influenced their relationship to Mao and through that relationship Mao's own understanding of the Lin Biao Incident. Chapter 7 will discuss the role of the family in Chinese politics and the manifestations of that role in the Incident, and the final chapter will present my conclusions concerning Lin and the Incident that bears his name.
CHAPTER 2
THE LIN BIAO INCIDENT

The Lin Biao Incident in the narrowest sense was what happened to Lin Biao between September 12-13, 1971. Despite the problems mentioned above, it is worthwhile to try to reconstruct what really happened to Lin that night. A balanced narrative of the event will hopefully throw light on national politics in China during the Cultural Revolution. The following account is based on a careful study of the literature recently published in the PRC, in-depth interviews with many of the people involved in the Incident, and conscientious readings of the official documents. An overall explication of the Incident depends on one’s interpretations of the activities of four groups: Lin’s family at Beidaihe between September 6 and 12; Lin Liguo, Lin’s son, and his Air Force colleagues in Beijing; Lin’s generals, Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng, and Qiu Huizuo; and, most importantly, Mao and Zhou after they received reports of problems at Beidaihe.

Beidaihe, September 6-11, 1971

By September 1971, a split between Mao and Lin was inevitable and impending. Mao went on an inspection tour in the south in mid-August for the obvious purpose of preparing provincial and military officials for the obvious purpose of preparing provincial and military officials for the downfall of Lin and his generals. At the same time, Lin Biao, who was in
very poor health, was at the seaside resort of Beidaihe, where he had spent the summer with his family.

On September 6, Lin’s daughter, Lin Doudou (also known as Lin Liheng) who was in Beijing at the time, received a phone call from Beidaihe asking her, her fiance Zhang Qinglin, and her brother’s fiancee Zhang Ning to join Lin’s family at Beidaihe. When they arrived the next day, Lin Liguo, who was Deputy Chief of the Department of Operations in the Air Force and Deputy Director of the General Office of the Party Committee of the Air Force, greeted them and asked to speak with his sister alone. The contents of their conversation is not known. There is evidence that Lin Liguo tried to persuade his sister to help him protect their father, now that Mao was challenging Lin Biao. Lin Doudou apparently disagreed with her brother on the need for aggressive action, urging him instead to consult their father before he made any important moves. Their conversation lasted for a couple of hours, which suggests that both siblings considered it important, and ended only when Ye Qun called to ask Lin Doudou and the others to go to see Lin Biao. The following is a literary reconstruction of the conversation between Lin’s children, Liguo and Doudou, written by Zhang Ning, Lin Liguo’s former fiancee:

At 3:00 p.m., Lin Liguo asked Lin Doudou to come over to Building 57 alone for a talk. After Doudou came into the room, Liguo told her
abruptly, "Since the Lushan Conference, Group I\textsuperscript{1} will not let the Director go.\textsuperscript{2} She made self-criticisms several times, but still could not satisfy him. Now, he is on an inspection tour to the south and has meetings with provincial leaders along his way. In several of his speeches, he openly discussed his problem with Shou Zhang,\textsuperscript{3} taking advantage of Shou Zhang's convalescence at Beidaihe. His purpose is to get rid of Shou Zhang eventually. Being in such poor health, how can Shou Zhang survive if Group I decides to purge him? There are the examples of Liu Shaoqi and Peng Dehuai in the past.\textsuperscript{4} What is worse is that Shou Zhang refused to admit that he did anything wrong. Group I has sent a very clear message that he has lost his trust in Shou Zhang, which indicates that he will purge Shou Zhang soon. It is better for us to risk everything on a single venture and to wage a struggle than to wait for our doom."

Doudou was shocked when she heard this. She asked Liguo, "What kind of struggle do you want to wage? The Chairman has such high prestige that Shou Zhang will be in an even more disadvantageous position if we do not act with great caution."

Undecided as to what to do himself, Liguo could not answer the question for a moment. Then, Liguo continued, "After all, we are in a very disadvantageous position. Better to strike actively than to sit there waiting for the worst. We may have a chance. Who knows! Of course I can wait to see what will happen on National Day (October 1). As a last resort, we may either wage a "hard" struggle against Group I or may go to Guangzhou in the south to set up another Central Government, or we may go to the mountains to start a guerrilla war. Shou Zhang has been a military

\textsuperscript{1}"Group I" was a code name referring to Mao and his staff.

\textsuperscript{2}Ye Qun held the position of director of Lin Biao's general office. For some strange reasons, Lin's children never called Ye "Mom." Instead, they called her the "Director."

\textsuperscript{3}In Lin's house, everybody used "Shou Zhang" to refer to Lin Biao. "Shou Zhang" means commander.

\textsuperscript{4}Both Liu and Peng died at the hands of zhuan'anzu [The Special Cases Group] after they were out of power.
commander for so many years and enjoys a very high prestige in the army. When the time comes, we will expose the double-faced behavior of Group I and make public all the evils he did in the past. Then, we can call on the whole country to denounce/condemn him. We will find a way."

Disagreeing with what he said, Doudou warned Liguo, "Do not just listen to what the Director says. She always exaggerates and also lies to Shou Zhang. Do not be so hot-headed as to mislead Shou Zhang."

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Sensing that Liguo had not told her everything, Doudou decided to find out what was really in Liguo and Ye Qun’s minds. She asked again, "Are things really as bad as you described? What is Shou Zhang’s opinion? Does he know anything?"

"No," Liguo replied. "Shou Zhang does not know anything yet. I cannot tell him things like this before I have considered it carefully."

Doudou immediately sensed that things were getting serious now. "You cannot cooperate with the Director to deceive Shou Zhang," she warned Liguo. "You must not do anything radical, no matter what, without Shou Zhang’s consent. You must not believe what the Director says. You will not be able to escape responsibility if anything happens. Shou Zhang will not forgive you."

Now, there was nothing more to say between the sister and the brother, since they disagreed with each other. Liguo finally shouted, "According to you, is it best that we do nothing but wait for our doom?"

Without waiting for an answer, Liguo complained again, "I just cannot take it like that. Group I can just make the sky clear now, and then make it dark. He purges whoever he wants to and nobody dares to wage a struggle against him. But I will not take it. Shou Zhang has restrained himself for so many years, but still cannot be spared of a purge. Can you just stand idling by and see Shou Zhang be purged?"

Doudou did not know what to say. However, she could not agree with Liguo’s radical plan, either.5

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5I would like to thank Zhang Ning who kindly allowed me to quote from her manuscript.
The conversation between sister and brother continued the next day, September 8. They still could not agree on what to do if Mao took action against their father. Before Doudou left her room in Building 58 around noon to talk to Liguo, she discussed some of what Liguo had said the night before with Zhang Qinglin, her fiance, asking him to be careful and to seek protection from the guards in case she failed to return by 6 p.m. Zhang did not know exactly what was going on and became very nervous. Nothing happened that day, however, and Doudou returned around 6:30 p.m. Without fully telling Zhang everything she knew, Doudou nevertheless told him that Laohu [the tiger], the nickname of her brother, was planning to take action against Mao and probably would take Lin Biao away from Beidaihe. She did not agree with Liguo’s plan, because she was primarily concerned with protecting Lin Biao, who was suffering from a chronic illness and had been in isolating from the outside world for a long time.

Lin Liguo left for Beijing that evening, telling Ye he was going to see his dentist in Beijing. He also told Li Wenpu, Lin’s chief bodyguard, not to tell Lin Biao of his departure for Beijing. In case Lin asked about Liguo’s whereabouts, Li should tell him that Liguo had gone swimming.6 According to one of Lin’s secretaries who

6It is not uncommon for Chinese high officials to seldom see their children. Sometimes, they cannot see their children even when they want to, as was the case with Mao in
remained at Maojiawan, Lin’s residence in Beijing, Liguo did
go to see a dentist the day after he arrived in Beijing.
The secretary made the appointment for Liguo, at Hospital
301, the General Hospital of the Military. However, Liguo
did not stay at Maojiawan because it was still being
renovated in preparation for Lin’s return for October 1,
National Day. Liguo came back only to retrieve the things
he needed while staying in Beijing.

After Liguo left Beidaihe, Doudou and Zhang Qinglin
warned some of the staff members of Liguo’s possible plan to
take Lin Biao away from Beidaihe. Doudou first told Liu
Jichun, another of Lin’s chief bodyguards, and asked him to
alert Li Wenpu about the problem. She then talked with
Lin’s attendants and medical orderlies, some of whom
believed her, especially Li Wenpu, a key figure in
subsequent events. Doudou never lied to the staff, but what
she told them was too astonishing to believe. It sounded
more like a feud between the children, which was not
uncommon in Lin’s family, and it was the staff who would be
punished if Doudou was wrong about her brother. In fact, of
the two siblings Liguo was more popular than his sister

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his late years. A detailed discussion on this can be found
in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

7Secretary Y, interview by author, Beijing, August 21,
1994.

8Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part
I, 56-57.
among the staff members because of his easy going nature. Not knowing who to trust, everyone in the household staff was observing carefully instead of taking concrete action to counter a possible "plot." This stance among the staff members continued until late in the night of September 12.

Doudou was confused, too. She knew that she had every reason to believe her father was in danger, because Liguo, with Ye's support, might do something radical against Lin's own wishes or interests. For years, that had been happening to Lin. However, Doudou was not sure she knew everything about Liguo's plan; she did not in fact even know whether Liguo was serious about what he had said. Challenge Mao? Nobody dared to think such a thing during the Cultural Revolution. She still hoped that what Liguo told her was nothing more than another complaint against Mao, though this one struck her as worse than the other complaints. In any event, Liguo had mentioned before he left that he would wait until after National Day (October 1) to see what happened. By that time, Liguo might have changed his mind.

For the first several days after Liguo left, Doudou was torn over what she should do. She did not dare go to her father directly until she knew exactly what was going on. Otherwise, her mother and brother would never forgive her, and would probably disassociate themselves from her for the rest of her life. The only person she could confide in was her finance, who had come into her life only a few months
earlier and was still unfamiliar with the complexities and subtleties of the family life of so exalted an official as Lin Biao. In desperation, Doudou avoided other people for several days, during which she and the few people who believed her began to pay close attention to what happened around Lin Biao. Once, she even had Zhang Qinglin climb up on the roof to eavesdrop on what Ye was telling Lin Biao, but Zhang could not overhear a single word of the conversation.

After Liguo left, life in Beidaihe remained quite normal. Doudou began to doubt her own judgement and relaxed a bit. On the morning of September 10, two days before the Incident, she, Zhang Qinglin, and Zhang Ning went sightseeing at Shanhaiguan, a famous historical spot near Beidaihe. They went to Lin Biao afterwards, bringing him gifts they had bought on the excursion. Lin was happy to see them and impressed by the gifts, especially a doll soldier that performed military exercises.

Ye Qun also seemed to lead a quiet life at Beidaihe, enjoying swimming, reading, and attending history lectures. She was seen reading a Chinese translation of Le Pere Goriot and a biography of Richard Nixon, and regularly attending lectures given by Zhang Zhan, her tutor in history. On the evening of September 10, Ye asked Zhang Ning, her future daughter-in-law, to join her for dinner. After dinner, the
two had a long chat until 4:00 a.m. the next morning, during which Ye talked in detail of her life.9

The Lin family was also preparing a wedding at Beidaihe. Ye had telephoned General Wu Faxian on the afternoon of September 9 to inform him of Doudou's engagement to Zhang Qinglin and of their upcoming marriage. Ye asked Wu to choose movies for the wedding celebration, since Doudou was an officer in the Air Force. Despite annoyance at Ye's interruption of his work with such a trivial matter, Wu took the request seriously. He had his wife borrow some movie magazines and go through them in order to find appropriate movies for the wedding.10 Hu Min, the wife of General Qiu Huizuo telephoned Ye on the afternoon of September 11 to congratulate Doudou and Qinglin. She also talked directly with Qinglin for a while.11 Around 5:00 p.m. on September 12, Ye Qun took

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9Zhang Ning told me that after the Incident, she was forced to write about this talk repeatedly, because Zhuan'anzu could not believe that Ye would spend so much time talking about such trivial things only 44 hours away from the Incident. She was supposed to be busily engaged in her "plots" for a "profoundly affecting" struggle against Mao. Zhang Ning, interview by author, New Jersey, August 25, 1993.

10Wu Faxian, Manuscripts, hel7021, 16-17.

11Many years later, Zhang told me that he was very tempted to take this opportunity to tell Hu about what was happening at Beidaihe. Unfortunately, he could not do so because Ye was present when he talked with Hu. "Things might have been totally different if I could have gotten the message across to the generals, Zhang told me. Interview with Zhang Qinglin, Beijing August 8, 1994.
Doudou and Zhang Qinglin to Lin's place, where she told them suddenly that their wedding would be held that evening. Taken by surprise, Doudou and Qinglin refused to get married so soon. They compromised with Ye Qun, however, and agreed to celebrate their engagement that evening. Liguo brought them gifts when he returned from Beijing after 8:00 p.m. in the same evening. The celebration of Doudou’s engagement continued until around midnight, when Ye decided hastily to leave for the airport.

Beijing: Lin Liguo and his Colleagues

In retrospect, it seems certain that what Liguo and his colleagues did in Beijing between September 8 to 12 is crucial to understanding the Incident. Most of the official charges against Lin Biao, including the alleged attempts to assassinate Mao, stage a military coup, and establish rival government in the south point directly to the activities of Liguo and others in Beijing during those four days. After Liguo left Maojiawan on the 8th, he and Zhou Yuchi, one of his Air Force colleagues, had gone to Xijiao Airport.12 There they met several other Air Force officers, including

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12Zhou Yuchi was a secretary in the office of the Party Committee of the Air Force. He was one of the key figures in Liguo’s plot. He committed suicide after he failed in his attempt to escape from Beijing by helicopter on September 13.
Jiang Tengjiao\textsuperscript{13} and Li Weixin.\textsuperscript{14} According to one of the CCP documents, Liguo showed the other officers a "handwritten order from Lin Biao" which said, "Please follow the message passed on by Liguo and Yuchi." The order was signed by Lin Biao and dated September 8.\textsuperscript{15} Liguo then told Jiang Tengjiao to take action against Mao, that is, to assassinate Mao in Shanghai, and they then discussed how it might be accomplished.\textsuperscript{16} Later that night, Liguo went to the Air Force Academy, where he met Liu Peifeng and Cheng Hongzhen\textsuperscript{17} and showed them Lin's "written order."

"Confessions" detailed in the CCP Document (no. 24, 1972) and testimonies by Liguo's colleagues during the "Open Trial of the Counterrevolutionary Cliques of Lin Biao and Jiang Qing, 1980-1981" claim that Liguo and Zhou Yuchi continued constructing their plot the next day, September 9. According to Cheng Hongzhen, a secretary of the General Office of the Party Committee of the Air Force, Zhou Yuchi

\textsuperscript{13}Jiang Tengjiao was Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force Central Headquarters and the Political Commissar of the Air Force in the Nanjing Military Region.

\textsuperscript{14}Li Weixin was one of the staff of the Political Department of the Fourth Air Army. He was on the same helicopter with Zhou and later surrendered to the local militia when it was forced down.

\textsuperscript{15}CCP Document, no. 24, 1972, 52.

\textsuperscript{16}"Jiang Tengjiao's confession (9/24/71)," in CCP Document, no. 24, 1972, 66, and his testimony during the trial, Shenpan jishi, 124.

\textsuperscript{17}Both Liu and Cheng were secretaries of the office of the Party Committee of the Air Force.
asked him that morning to sketch a map of Diaoyutai, where Madame Mao and her colleagues were staying. After Cheng finished the map, he gave it to Zhou between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. that day. Zhou also asked Cheng to get information concerning new chemical weapons and explosives being experimented with by the Committee of Science of the Defense Industry [Guofang kewei] and the Department of Science of the Air Force.18

Jiang Tengjiao testified during the 1980-1981 trial that on the morning of September 9, Liguo, Zhou Yuchi, Wang Fei,19 and himself met again at the Xijiao Airport to continue discussing the assassination plan, because they had not reached an agreement on the previous night.20 Again, the discussion ended without agreement. The following is an excerpt from Jiang's testimony concerning this discussion:

JUDGE: Jiang Tengjiao, Article Forty-one of the indictment accuses you of the following: that after reading Lin Biao's personal instructions on September 8, 1971, you did specifically, until September 11, plan and conspire with Lin Liguo and Zhou Yuchi to assassinate Chairman Mao Zedong, and did accept Lin Liguo's commission to act as commander of the front line in the Shanghai district.

Jiang: Uh.
JUDGE: Where did you see Lin Liguo on September 8?


19Wang Fei was the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

JIANG: At Peking West Airfield (Xijiao Airport).

JUDGE: What command did Lin Liguo bestow on you?
JIANG: He wanted me to go to Shanghai as commander of the front line.
JUDGE: To command what?
JIANG: To implement the plot to kill Chairman Mao.

JUDGE: What course of action did you plan?
JIANG: On the evening of the 8th, after Lin Liguo showed me Lin Biao's counterrevolutionary instructions and I had committed myself to their side, we sat down and he said they had thought up three courses of action. One was to attack the special train that Mao was traveling in with flamethrowers and bazookas. The second was to use 100mm antiaircraft guns to fire point-blank at the train. The third was for Wang Weiguo to go to see Chairman Mao, take a pistol along, and shoot him on the train.

JUDGE: Did you go on to discuss any other ideas?
JIANG: We couldn't reach an agreement that evening and didn't come to a conclusion. On the 9th, we went on discussing it, and the question of bombing a bridge was raised—that was Zhou Yuchi's idea. In the afternoon we discussed other suggestions.

JUDGE: Did you discuss blowing up fuel tanks?
JIANG: That was brought up on the previous evening, after the other three ideas. We ate—it was getting very late. Everybody left the room to eat; only Zhou Yuchi and I stayed behind.... Zhou Yuchi asked me whether the fuel tanks could be bombed, and I said I wasn't sure, but anyway they could be set alight. The ensuing confusion would be splendid, because in the conflagration we could seize the opportunity to act, and come into the station. We would say there had been an accident involving the fuel tanks, and troops were guarding him. But that plan wasn't approved that evening either.

JUDGE: Did you give this plan to Zhou Yuchi, and did he give it to Lin Liguo?
JIANG: As soon as they saw it, they agreed to this course of action. But later on I said the plan was no good, because after the fuel tanks were bombed the guards on the Chairman's train would come to take over.

JUDGE: Did you really plan to bomb the fuel tanks? Had you drawn a plan to this effect, and had they then agreed to it? [without waiting for the reply] ... Did you go into the question of code
Little is known about the activities of Liguo and his colleagues for the next two days, between the evenings of September 9 and September 11. It seems that after the initial contact with his colleagues in Beijing and several fruitless meetings, Liguo took care of his personal matters, including a visit to the dentist, and relaxed for awhile until the afternoon of the 11th when he and his colleagues got together again to discuss their plans.

On the afternoon of the 11th, Liguo and his colleagues held two key meetings in Beijing. The first meeting was at Xijiao Airport and continued into the evening. Wang Fei, Zhou Yuchi, Jiang Tengjiao, and Yu Xinye were present when Liguo told them of his decision to assassinate Mao in the south. Lu Min joined them at the airport in the evening. They still could not reach agreement on exactly

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22Shenpan jishi, 126-130.

23Yu Xinye was another secretary of the office of the Party Committee of the Air Force. He committed suicide together with Zhou Yuchi after their helicopter was forced down on September 13, 1971.


25Lu Min was the Director of the Department of War of the Air Force.
what to do, apparently because few among them were really serious about the plan to assassinate Mao.\textsuperscript{26} Even if they reached an agreement on a course of action against Mao, the plan was called off later that night when Wang Weiguo\textsuperscript{27} called them around 10:00 p.m., informing them that Mao had left Shanghai.

The next day, September 12, Liguo and his colleagues came up with another plan--to take Lin Biao as well as Generals Huang, Wu, Li, and Qiu to Guangzhou on the next day, September 13. Lin Liguo left for Beidaihe that evening, leaving Zhou Yuchi to work out the details of the plan. After Liguo left, Zhou called a meeting at the Air Force Academy. When Jiang Tengjiao arrived at the Academy, Zhou Yuchi told him, "We have decided that at 8:00 a.m.

\textsuperscript{26}For instance, Lu Min told me later that he himself dared not participate in a plot to assassinate Mao. However, because Lin Liguo was Lin Biao's son, Lu did not think that he was in any position to confront him, either. So, he deliberately came out with some impossible ideas during the discussion, trying to intimidate Liguo from taking any action. After the meeting, he was so nervous about the possible consequences of these meetings that he deliberately hurt his eyes and went to hospital in order to avoid any further involvement in Liguo's meeting. After much hesitation, he made a confession to the Central Government on September 13 before he learned what happened at Beidaihe. The accusation against Lin Biao in the first group of CCP documents issued after the Lin Biao Incident were largely based on the confessions of Lu Min and Lin Liguo's other colleagues. Because Lu knew nothing about "Project 571," accusations of Lin's alleged coup appeared only in the CCP documents several months after the Incident. Lu Min, interview by author, Beijing, August 5, 1994.

\textsuperscript{27}Wang Weiguo was the political commissar of the Fourth Air Force Army in the Nanjing Military Region; leader of the Military Control Commission in Shanghai.
tomorrow morning, Lin’s plane will take off from Beidaihe and fly directly to Shati airport in Guangzhou." Zhou then proceeded to explain in detail what Wang Fei, Yu Xinye and Jiang should do in Beijing the next day: After they arrived at Xijiao Airport, one of them would call General Huang Yongsheng, telling him that Lin Biao had returned from Beidaihe and wanted to see him at the airport. Then, they would ask Huang to call Generals Wu, Li and Qiu to the airport, using the same excuse. Upon the generals’ arrival, at least two persons from Liguo’s group would force each of the generals onto waiting planes. Then, the group would fly together to Shati Airport in Guangzhou. When Jiang asked what Lin Biao would do in Guangzhou, Zhou asserted that Lin would call a meeting of military cadres first to tell them what had happened, and then address the people nationwide over the radio. At the end of the meeting, Zhou asked Wang Fei and Yu Xinye to go back to Air Force headquarters to find enough men to carry out the mission the next day. Wang and Yu, consequently, held another meeting at the office building with seven people present, including Lu Min, Liu Shiyi,28 He Dequan,29 Zhu Tiezheng30 and Zheng

28Liu Shiyi was the Deputy Director of the General Office of the Party Committee of the Air Force.

29He Dequan was Director of the Department of Intelligence of the Air Force.

30Zhu Tiezheng was another secretary in the same General Office with Zhou Yuchi, Yu xinye, Liu Peifeng and Liu Shiyi.
They worked out a detailed plan as to who among the Air Force officers should be in charge of which generals and who should be on which plane, as well as a list of people they should trust and should bring to Guangzhou. However, everything was again called off around 11:00 p.m. At that time, Zhou Yuchi had passed word to the people at the meeting that Zhou Enlai had suddenly checked the whereabouts of Trident 256, the plane designated for Lin's use. This indicated that Zhou may have known something of the plan, and thus the plan had to be canceled. Before everybody returned home, Wang told them to forget what had happened, and not mention a word of it to anyone.

One other thing should be mentioned at this point. The above reconstruction of the activities of Lin Liguo and his colleagues in Beijing between September 8 and 12 is based on official CCP documents. The most dubious official bit of official evidence concerning the "plots" was "Lin's handwritten order," which was the sole direct link connecting Lin Biao to the "plots." Lin Doudou and her husband always insisted thereafter that the handwriting of

\(^{31}\)Zheng Xinghe was Deputy Director of Military Training of the Air Force.

\(^{32}\)Shenpan jishi, 139-142.

\(^{33}\)Shenpan jishi, 148.
the alleged "order" was not Lin's at all. Her insistence is based on her knowledge that Liguo had practiced imitating Lin's handwriting for a long time. Liguo even encouraged her to practice the same thing, assuring her that someday it would prove useful. Zhang Yunsheng, a former secretary of Lin Biao, provided another piece of evidence supporting Doudou's notion. He revealed in his book that Lin himself had endorsed Ye's idea of having several of Lin's secretaries imitate Lin's handwriting in order to make comments on documents for Lin Biao. However, even if the handwriting was really Lin's, the "order" was so vague that it could have meant anything.

In fact, this is what one of Lin's former secretaries told me in an interview. This secretary was among the few to whom Liguo showed the note when Liguo returned to Maojiawan on September 8. The secretary believed at the time that the note was actually written by Lin, because he was familiar with Lin's handwriting. He later provided written testimony on this upon the request of zhuan'anzu. However, after he learned years later of Liguo's skill in imitating his father's handwriting, he felt much less sure

34During the trial, the official prosecutors provided a document of determination by Department of Security of the General Political Department of the Army, No. 226, to prove that the handwriting was actually Lin's own. However, they refused Doudou's request to show her both the handwriting and the document when she demanded to see them.

35Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 173-175.
about his early testimony. Regardless of whether the handwriting was Lin's, the secretary is sure that the note had nothing to do with the alleged coup attempt. Otherwise, he himself would also have been a co-conspirator in the attempt since he was among the few who had actually seen the "order."36

Beidaihe, September 12

Everything remained calm at Beidaihe until Liguo returned from Beijing between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. on September 12. Liguo congratulated Doudou and Zhang Qinglin on their engagement, and then hurriedly went to talk to Ye Qun. Doudou followed him down the corridor, but caught only a few sentences of what he said. Liguo told Doudou that the situation was tense in Beijing. Mao had decided to get rid of Generals Huang, Wu, Li, Qiu, and Ye Qun, as well. Liguo also briefed her about the plan to go to Guangzhou the next morning. A moment later, a medical orderly, Little Zhang (Zhang Hengchang), came over to tell Doudou that he had overheard Ye talking to Lin Biao about going to Guangzhou, or Hong Kong, if necessary; but Lin had remained silent. Doudou told Little Zhang to go back to Lin's room immediately and try to find out Lin's own attitude toward leaving.

36Secretary Y, interview by author, Beijing, 21, August, 1994.
Doudou’s nightmare had at last come true: Liguo and Ye were going to take Lin Biao to Guangzhou, and perhaps some other place after that. Until then, she had felt reasonably sure that going away would be against Lin’s wishes. From all she had gathered in the past few days, Lin himself knew nothing about Liguo’s plans. Several days before, Little Zhang had told her that Lin had said firmly to Ye, "I will, at least, remain as a patriot to the country. If I will die, I will die here at Beidaihe." Li Wenpu, who had been with Lin for over 20 years and whom Lin trusted even more than he trusted Ye Qun and Liguo, also assured her that Lin knew absolutely nothing about what Liguo had told her on September 7-8. She had come to realize that to save her father from trouble, she had to act promptly. As long as she could keep Lin at Beidaihe, she would be able later to explain to her father what had happened. In her desperation, Doudou decided to turn for help to Unit 8341, the troops guarding the villa in Beidaihe. Unit 8341, also known as the Regiment of Guards of the Party Central Committee, was under the command of the Beijing Garrison. For years, it had been under the direct control of Wang Dongxing and Zhang Yaoci, both of whom, but especially Wang, were known for their close relationship with Mao. In a sense, Unit 8341 performed the function of a secret police and Wang had a reputation as China’s Beria. In retrospect, nothing could have been worse for Lin than Doudou’s hasty
revelation of Ye and Liguo's plan to guards of the unit, for the Unit 8341 was under the direct control of Lin's political opponents. Doudou's decision to report Liguo's plan, like her brother's action in Beijing, left Lin Biao no choice but to leave. Of course, Doudou's decision to go to Unit 8341 was due more to her own sense of desperation than to her trust of Wang Dongxing and Zhang Yaoci. She herself personally mistrusted both men; but it was too late when she realized how naive she had been in dealing with a political crisis as she had done.

Before she went to Unit 8341, Doudou consulted Li Wenpu and Liu Jichun, Lin's two chief bodyguards. Liu agreed with Doudou's concerns, but Li questioned her interpretation of the situation. Doudou asked the two guards whether Lin Biao knew what Liguo had told her. "There was no way for Shou Zhang to know this," Li firmly assured her. "I was with Shou Zhang all the time and I am absolutely sure that he knows nothing." Then, Li told Doudou something which to Li himself seemed strange: sometime earlier, Ye had

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37 I am very grateful that Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin allowed me to read one of their hand-written accounts concerning what happened on September 12 at Beidaihe. The following account concerning Liheng's activities is based on their "written material," part I, and basically from her point of view.

38 Between Liu Jichun and Li Wenpu, Doudou trusted Liu better, because Liu could not get along with Liguo. But Li Wenpu was much closer to Liguo than to Doudou. This explains why the two had different interpretations about what Doudou told them.
instructed Li to be ready to go to Guangzhou at 6:00 a.m. the next morning, and told him not to inform Unit 8341 of the planned departure. Afterwards, when Li asked Lin about going to Guangzhou, Lin told Li he did not want to go, because the hot weather there was not good for his health. Later, Ye assured Lin that the building they would stay in in Guangzhou was air-conditioned, so it would not be so hot as he imagined. Then Lin did not say anything anymore.

Thus, convinced that Lin knew nothing about why Ye and Liguo wanted to go to Guangzhou, Doudou decided to act on her own to protect her father. She asked Li if he had authority to issue direct orders to Unit 8341. Li told her that he had: several years before, Wang Dongxing and Zhang Yaoci had suggested that Li hold a leading position in Unit 8341 while he continued to guard Lin, but Lin and Ye had rejected the suggestion. However, the Party Committee of Unit 8341 later decided to grant Li Wenpu the right to command the Unit if it became necessary for the sake of Lin's safety. However, Li still felt unsure about Doudou's claim about Liguo's possible plot. "The Director told me to get ready to go to Guangzhou and so did Liguo," Li said hesitantly. "In my opinion, they are going nowhere but to Guangzhou. If nothing like you mentioned happens, who will

39This made Li Wenpu take Doudou's warning more seriously, because in the past, whenever Lin and Ye went somewhere, Ye would inform Zhou Enlai first, then the leaders of Unit 8341.
be able to bear this responsibility?" So, Li refused to go to Unit 8341 with the excuse that he was not sure what was going on. 40

Around 10:00 p.m. Doudou and Chief Liu Jichun went to Building 58, the office of Unit 8341 in Beidaihe. Zhang Hong, the deputy regiment commander, and Jiang Zuoshou, the head of the sub-unit [dadui], received them. Doudou explained to them what had happened, assuring them repeatedly that Lin himself knew nothing of the plan. In order to convince them, Doudou asked them to contact Li Wenpu immediately; and since there were still about seven hours before the planned departure to Guangzhou the next morning, she suggested that troops surround building 57, where Liguo resided, and building 97, Lin and Ye's residence. Zhang Hong, however, insisted on reporting the matter to Wang Dongxing in Beijing before giving any orders. This was the last thing Doudou wanted. She knew that a report to Wang Dongxing meant a report to Mao and Zhou Enlai, for Wang would never keep such important information from Mao and Zhou. However, what was most crucial at the moment to Doudou was preventing Liguo from taking Lin away. Without the help of the guards, it would be impossible for her to do that. Obviously, the guards would not listen to her or Li Wenpu without permission from their superiors.

40Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part I, 61-66.
Doudou tried in vain to convince Zhang and Jiang that it was unnecessary to report the matter to Beijing.

Doudou left the regimental office hoping that Unit 8341 would help her protect her father. She felt reasonably certain by now that she could save her father from trouble, since Lin's staff as well as the officers at Unit 8341 seemed willing to help her. When Doudou came back to Building 96, the movie at her engagement celebration was still playing. She sat beside Zhang Qinglin and told him she had gone to Unit 8341. A moment later, a member of Ye's staff came to tell her Ye want to see her. Uncertain about what would happen, Doudou told Zhang that if she did not return, he should go to Unit 8341 and report her absence. However, Ye Qun wanted only to tell her to be ready to leave tomorrow; Shou Zhang was taking her and others to Dalian.

After Doudou returned, she again asked Li Wenpu about Lin. Li told her Shou Zhang had already gone to bed after taking sleeping pills; as was his habit, he went to bed around 11:00 p.m. While Doudou and Li were talking, Ye

41Shao Yihai, Lianhe jiandui de fumie [Destruction of a "Joint Fleet"] (Beijing: Chunqiu chubanshe, 1988), 271.

42There was great confusion about where Ye told people to go. Some accounts of the incident mentioned Guangzhou, but most accounts mentioned Dalian. Since there is no way to find out for sure at the moment, in my discussion, I will have to go along with whatever the source materials say. It is possible that Lin himself insisted on going to Dalian.

43All my interviewees agree unanimously that Lin had taken sleeping pills that day before he left Beidaihe.
sent a messenger to ask Li to see her immediately. When Li returned, he told Doudou Ye had told him to make arrangements to go to Guangzhou immediately. At the same time, Little Zhang came to tell her "they" would leave immediately.\textsuperscript{44} Then, Ye suddenly appeared in the corridor where the movie was being shown, shouting, "Stop the movie. Go back to pack and get ready to go to Dalian tonight."

Alarmed at this sudden change, Doudou made Li promise to make sure that Lin was not taken to the car, and then she with Yang Sen of the family staff, and Zhang Qinglin took a car down to the office of Unit 8341 to ask again for help. On the way there, Doudou dropped Zhang Qinglin at Building 56, telling him to confront Liguo if he came over.\textsuperscript{45}

When she reached the office of Unit 8341, Doudou again asked Zhang Hong to send troops to Building 96 to help officer Jiang, who was already there. To her surprise, Zhang did nothing but walk back and forth in the room. Then, he stepped out of the room. When he returned, Doudou repeated her request, begging him to rush troops over, but still got no response from Zhang. In desperation, she

\textsuperscript{44}\textsuperscript{4}Shao Yihai, \textit{Lianhe jian dui}, 271-272.

\textsuperscript{45}Zhang Qinglin told me later in my interview that he was very nervous that night, because he knew that if Liguo came over, they probably would exchange fire. He thought about all kinds of methods to beat Liguo, including to eject into his body some medicine to make him sleep for several days, if he could initially get the upper hand over Liguo. Zhang Qinglin, interview by author, Beijing, 10 August, 1994.
beseeched him to call Li Wenpu, which request Zhang also greeted with silence. The reason for Zhang's conduct at this point is unknown.

Meanwhile, Zhang Qinglin in Building 56 got a phone call from Little Zhang, telling him to hurry if he wanted to help Lin. Ye and Liguo had entered Lin's room and helped him dress. "Hurry up, the car will come down in ten minutes," Zhang cried nervously. It was around 11:30 p.m. Hanging up the phone, Zhang dashed toward the office of Unit 8341, where he repeated to Zhang Hong and Doudou what Little Zhang had told him, and urged Zhang to act immediately. Doudou was now yelling at Zhang Hong, unable to hold her anger any longer, "I informed you two hours ago about what would happen. Why on earth have you still not gotten troops ready? You can lead troops up there yourself!" It is not clear why Zhang changed his attitude after Doudou returned to Building 97 after her first report. Zhang still refused Doudou's request. He simply left the room without saying anything. When he reappeared, he picked up the phone in front of everyone in the room and asked the operator to connect him with Beijing. On the phone he said, "They said just now that the car would leave in ten minutes," and then he repeated "Yes, Sir" several times. Then, the most unexpected thing happened. As he hung up the phone, Zhang Hong said to Doudou and Zhang Qinglin slowly but clearly,
"Now, the directive comes from the Central Committee that YOU SHOULD GET ONTO THE PLANE AND GO WITH THEM."

Doudou could hardly believe her ears! What?! Get onto the plane and go with them?! She collapsed onto a chair and for the first time, cried. She knew she had lost the battle. But why? "Who on earth asked us to go along with them? Who said so?" Doudou burst out.

"This is a directive from the Central Party Committee," replied Zhang Hong.

"Who represents the Central Party Committee to give directives like this to you? I would rather die here than get on the plane. I will simply stay here and go nowhere! If you want to get on the plane, go yourselves."

Yang Sen, who accompanied Doudou to the office, pleaded with Zhang Hong, "The plane is about to leave. Who knows where it will go?" Zhang Qinglin waved his fists and shouted at Zhang, "You cannot hesitate like this any more at such a crucial moment. The car will come down in a moment. If you let the car leave, the Party and the people will not forgive you. You must take full responsibility if you do not stop the car right now!"

"Please don’t issue orders to us like that," said Zhang Hong angrily. "We only obey orders from the Central Party Committee."

"Which Central Committee do you submit to?" Doudou yelled, still crying, "Shou Zhang’s safety is in jeopardy,
but you would rather do nothing. Should you not do something for the Party and the Country? Do something, for God's sake! I beg you to stop the car, please!"

More and more soldiers had gathered around the office, many of them holding guns in their hands, obviously waiting for orders to stop the car. Zhang, however, said nothing. Not willing to give up, Doudou asked Zhang Hong repeatedly who had ordered them to get onto the plane. "The Central Committee," was the only answer Zhang he give.

"Who did you talk to over the phone?" Doudou asked. "It was Zhang Yaoci, wasn't it?" Reluctantly, Zhang nodded in the affirmative.

Doudou demanded that Zhang call Beijing again. If he did not, she would call Zhang Yaoci herself. Getting through to Beijing again, Zhang Hong reported to Zhang Yaoci that Doudou had refused to get onto the plane. Doudou suddenly grabbed the phone and started to explain to Zhang Yaoci what had happened. She pleaded with him to order the troops to stop the car. However, the answer was the same refrain: Zhang Yaoci needed permission before he could do anything. This was the fourth time Doudou had asked the 8341 to stop the car.

Shortly afterwards, a big black car drove down and swiftly passed the building at a high speed, leaving behind the armed troops gathering around Building 58. Zhang Qinglin, out of desperation, grabbed a pistol from one of
the officers and rushed out. Suddenly, the car came to a screeching halt 500 meters from the office, and Li Wenpu was seen to jump out of the car. Gun shots rang out, and the wounded Li Wenpu ran toward the building. While Zhang Qinglin, who was an army doctor, attended to Li's wound, Li kept murmuring, "Lin Liguo, the traitor."

We still have a very tattered picture about what happened in Building 96 after Doudou and Zhang Qinglin left after 11:00 p.m. After Lin had gone to bed, his two medical orderlies, Little Zhang and Little Chen, went in turn to take their snack break. Sometime after 11:00 p.m., Lin called Little Zhang over, telling him, "I cannot fall asleep tonight anyway, so get ready to go to Dalian immediately. No need to bring too much luggage, for we will only stay there for a week." Little Zhang informed Doudou of this immediately.

Around 11:30 p.m. Lin called Little Zhang in again, telling him to tell Ye that there was no need to bring along to Dalian the two nurses who took care of him at Beidaihe.

"Even Liheng and Zhang Qinglin do not know for sure what happened in the building between 11 p.m. to 12 a.m., for none of them remained in the building after 11 p.m. Some of the key witnesses, such as Li Wenpu, still choose to remain silent. The following account is based on so-called "reminiscences" by some key witnesses of the event. Caution should be exercised reading these "reminiscences," most of which probably are "excerpts" from the "confessions" of these people collected by zhu'an zu, which is well known for forcing people to make false confessions.

"Reminiscence of Little Zhang," in Shao Yihai, Lianhe jiandui 275.
When Little Zhang arrived at Ye's quarters, he was stopped by Liu Peifeng, who came to Beidaihe with Li Liguo. Ye, Liu Peifeng told Little Zhang, was talking with Liguo.\footnote{"Reminiscence of Little Zhang," in Shao Yihai, \textit{Lianhe jian\-d\-ui}, 275.}

Around 11:40 or 11:50 p.m., Ye, Liguo, and Liu Peifeng appeared in Lin's room. After a moment, Lin called Little Chen in, telling him, "We are going to Dalian immediately. I cannot rest anyway. No need to bring too much luggage. We will come back in several days, and then go to Beijing on National Day." When Lin told him this, Liu Peifeng was the only other person still in the room.\footnote{"Reminiscence of Little Chen," in Shao Yihai, \textit{Lianhe jian\-d\-ui}, 277.}

As Little Chen came out, he saw Ye and Liguo busy packing and having Lin's car brought to the building. Both Little Zhang and Little Chen tried to contact Doudou to tell her what was happening, but neither had been able to contact her before Lin's car left the building.

The action of Li Wenpu on this critical night are still not clear. He must have seen Lin several times. He was seen with Liu Jichun trying to telephone Dalian to make arrangements for Lin there.\footnote{"Reminiscence of Lin Liheng," in Shao Yihai, \textit{Lianhe jian\-d\-ui}, 272.} Their calls to Dalian, however, were cut off by Lin Liguo, who told them not to...
contact anyone, including Unit 8341. Eventually, Li got the word that Lin was going, or at least Li believed that Lin wanted to go to Dalian. He even told Doudou it would be better to get on the plane, and then fight if something happens.

According to Li Wenpu, Ye asked him around 11:40 p.m. to go to see Lin. Ye went into Lin’s room first, telling Li to wait outside. When Li entered the room later, Lin told him, "I cannot get to sleep tonight anyway. Get the things ready and let’s leave now." Lin made it clear to Li that he was going to Dalian. However, when Li came out of the room, he got a different message from Ye and Liguo, both of whom told him to hurry up, for someone was coming to arrest Shou Zhang. Confused, Li called Hu Ping, the former Commander of the 34th Air Division who was in charge of all of Lin’s flights, to check whether or not Liguo had told him where they were flying to. In response, Hu Ping told Li not to ask any more questions and not to call Beijing. The only option left for Li was to act as what he was, an army officer—to carry out orders. He had no time left to find

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51 "Reminiscence of Liu Jichun," in Shao Yihai, Lianhe jiandui, 274.

52 Ibid, 272.


54 By this time, General Wu had already arrived at Xijiao Airport to check with Hu about the Trident 256 upon the order of Zhou. We will discuss this later.
out what was going on. He called Lin’s and Ye’s chauffeurs, Yang Zhengang and Little Mu respectively, asking them to bring the cars to Building 96 immediately. At this moment, Zhang Hong of Unit 8341 called, asking what was going on. Pretending ignorance of what Zhang was talking about, Li told him only that they would leave soon.

According to Li, he did not realize that the Lins were going to "betray the country" until he heard Lin himself ask Liguo, "How far away would Irkutsk be?" That was in the car after they left for the airport. During the next few minutes, Li was torn over what to do. Finally, he realized what was happening; everything Doudou had told him was suddenly clear: the group was heading to the Soviet Union. Torn between loyalty to his long-term master and the well being of his own family, Li asked himself what would happen to his wife and children if he was labeled a "traitor" to the country? He dared not think along that line.

The car continued at high speed, approaching Building 58, the office of Unit 8341. By his own account, Li decided to side with his family instead of his master at the moment he saw troops lining up along the road at Building 58.

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55 This is one of the key points on which Doudou and Li Wenpu cannot agree. Doudou does not believe Li’s version that it was Lin who asked this question. There is circumstantial evidence supporting her suspicion. Even those available accounts by eye-witnesses, which were probably tailored in favor of the official version, provide no evidence that Lin wanted to go anywhere other than Dalian up to the point he got into the car. Hopefully Li will speak out someday to clear up these doubts.
suddenly ordered the chauffeur to stop the car, and jumped out before anyone in the car could stop him from doing so. It was at this point that gun shots rang out, and Li was wounded. Nobody knows who fired the shots, though some eyewitnesses insist that it was Li who shot himself. In any case, the car stopped for only a second, and then, rushed ahead again.

We know little about the rest of Lin's story. Unit 8341 dispatched troops to the airport before Lin's car left his residence, but when Lin's car passed by, nobody dared to intercept it. Several cars of soldiers pursued Lin's car to the airport. Officer Jiang of Unit 8341 took soldiers with him in one car, while Liu Jichun and others members of Lin's staff in another. When they arrived at the airport, however, all they saw was that Lin's plane had already taken off. Zhang Hong, the highest ranking officer of Unit 8341 at Beidaihe, also arrived at the airport, but only in time to report to Beijing that Lin's plane was already airborne. A truck-load of soldiers commanded by deputy officer Yu of Unit 8341 had managed to get to the airport at the same time as Lin's car, but without orders, the soldiers stopped a hundred meters away from the plane where they watched the Lins and their entourage aboard. Yu ran to the control tower to ask officials there to prevent the take

off, but time ran out. In the confusion at the airport, the plane, carrying Lin Biao and eight other people, took off and disappeared into the dark sky.

There is still too much that we do not know about this Incident. What we do not know will probably remain unknown forever. When Doudou learned that the plane was airborne, she did not cry. Instead, staring in the direction into which the plane disappeared, she murmured to herself, "Where can they go?"

Beijing: Lin's Generals

On September 24, two weeks after Lin's escape, four of the ranking generals in his command—Lin's top generals, Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng, and Qiu Huizuo—were put under house arrest and then imprisoned. A document issued by the Party Central Committee formally immediately after the Incident announced their removals from their current positions because "they were deeply involved in the factional activities of the "Lin Biao and Chen Boda Counter-revolutionary Clique." After the arrests, not even their families knew what happened to them until late 1980, when they appeared at the trial of the "Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Counter-revolutionary Cliques." At the end of this show

58 CCP Document, no. 61, 1971.
trial, the generals received sentences of 16 to 18 years in prison. Despite these verdicts, the basic questions remain: were the generals involved in the events of September 12-13, and if so how and to what extent? The following narratives rest largely on the generals own accounts.

General Wu Faxian: 59

At 8:00 p.m. on September 11, 1971, General Wu Faxian attended a politburo meeting chaired by Zhou Enlai. During the meeting, Zhou announced Mao's directive that the Third Plenum should be held soon. At the Plenum, several members would be added to the Central Party Committee, among them Ji Pengfei. The membership of the Standing Committee of the Politburo would also be enlarged. When the meeting ended, it was already 2:00 a.m., on the morning of September 12. After the meeting, Wu returned to his residence at West Mountain and told Chen Suiqi, his wife, about the oncoming Third Plenum. Wu told her too that he would probably have to make another self-criticism, which they had better get to work on. He also told Chen to prepare to move back to their residence at the Air Force Compound, because all of their documents, including the drafts of Wu's earlier self-criticisms, were there. After lunch on September 12,

59Wu Faxian was the Commander-in-chief of the Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff of the army and a Politburo member at the time. The following accounts of Wu is based on a part of the manuscript of his memoirs, he17022.
Wu returned to the Compound, where he read the draft of Zhou’s report to the Fourth People’s Congress, which the Politburo would later discuss. Meanwhile, Chen looked for materials related to Wu’s previous self-criticism. After reading Zhou’s report, Wu decided to spend time on Air Force affairs. At the time, the Air Force was holding a conference concerning the schools of aviation. Wu asked one of his secretaries to arrange a meeting with the dean and the political commissar of the Eighth School of Aviation at 8:00 p.m. to discuss their problems. After that, he met with six political instructors who had just transferred from other units to the Cultural Troupe of the Air Force.

During the meeting with the political instructors, Wu received a call from Zhou Enlai around 11:00 p.m., asking whether he had ordered a plane to fly to the Shanhaiguan Airport. "No," Wu answered. Zhou repeated the question, "Was there such a plane at Shanhaiguan after all?" "Absolutely not," Wu replied. Zhou asked Wu to check the matter and report his finding to him. Hanging up the phone, Wu immediately called the commander of the 34th Air Division, who was in charge of planes designated for high officials like Lin Biao. To Wu’s surprise, the division commander, Shi Niantang, told him there was indeed a plane at Beidaihe. "It was Hu Ping who ordered the plane to

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60 Hu Ping was the deputy chief of staff of the Air Force and the former division commander of the 34th Air Division.
fly to Beidaihe," Shi told Wu. Wu immediately saw that something was wrong. Any flight like the one that took the plane to Beidaihe required his authorization. But this time, he had been kept in the dark about the plane at Beidaihe. More importantly, why had Zhou personally checked on the plane at Beidaihe?

"Where is Hu Ping," Wu asked, when he learned of the problem. Shi told him Hu was at Xijiao Airport. Wu immediately demanded to speak with Hu Ping. "That was a test flight after repairs," Hu told Wu, "That was why I did not report to you." "Then, why did it fly to Shanhaiguan, instead of somewhere else?" Wu asked Hu over the phone. Hu had no answer to this question, so Wu ordered Hu to get the plane back to Beijing immediately. Hu agreed to do so, but Hu called Wu five minutes later to report that "something is wrong with the engine, so the plane is undergoing repairs now." Wu ordered Hu to get the plane back to Beijing immediately after the repair was completed. After the conversation with Hu, Wu immediately called Zhou Enlai and told him what Hu had told him. Wu told Zhou he had ordered Hu to get the plane back to Beijing as soon as possible. Zhou then agreed with what Wu had done, and told him that no passengers should be allowed on the plane when it flew back to Beijing. Wu promptly passed this order to Hu Ping.

A moment later, Zhou called Wu again, "Ye Qun called me just now," Zhou said, "and told me that the Deputy Commander
(Lin Biao) wanted to go to Dalian." Zhou told Wu when he asked Ye whether there was a plane at Beidaihe, Ye answered no, but added: "I haven't asked for planes to fly here yet, but I will call Wu Pangzi (the nickname of Wu Faxian) in a moment to ask him to send planes over.' Zhou told Wu that Ye probably would call him soon. If she did, Wu should tell her that he had to ask Zhou's permission. Indeed, Ye called Wu a moment later. "Commander Lin wants to go to Dalian," she said, "send Hu Ping here, and if you have time, come here, too." "Hu Ping is in the hospital for medical treatment now," Wu responded. "Also, his flying skill is not very good recently. Better use Shi Niantang instead." "I am not familiar with Shi," Ye insisted, "Better send Hu over. He is not seriously ill, anyway." Then, Wu told Ye what Zhou had told him to say, "I cannot send planes over now. I have to ask the Premier." After hanging up, Wu reported Ye's call to Zhou Enlai. He told Zhou that he would go to Xijiao Airport to look into the matter in person. Zhou agreed. Wu then went directly to Xijiao Airport, taking with him Zhang Shuliang, a secretary, and Xue Pangxi, a bodyguard.

It was about midnight on the night of September 12-13, when Wu got to the airport. Hu Ping, who had not returned to the hospital, was talking to Long, deputy chief of staff of the 34th Air Division. Long left when Wu approached. Wu asked Hu again about the plane, but Hu repeated what he had
told Wu earlier over the phone. At this point, Zhou reached Wu at Xijiao Airport, informing him that Lin Biao, together with Ye Qun and Lin Liguo, had left their compound at Beidaihe by car, and they wounded a bodyguard on their way to the airport. Wu suddenly realized that something terrible was afoot. Figuring that it would take about an hour for Lin’s party to get to Shanhaiguan Airport, Wu had his secretary call Pan Jingyan, deputy commander of the 34th Air Division and captain of the Trident at Shanhaiguan Airport. Wu instructed Pan not to fly the aircraft under any circumstances: "You must remain absolutely loyal to Chairman Mao. The plane must not take off under any circumstances, no matter whose order it is." Pan assured Wu that he would obey the order. However, when Wu finally reached Zhou Enlai at about 1:00 a.m. in the early morning of September 13 to report on his talk with Pan, Zhou told him Lin Biao and Ye Qun had boarded the plane and it had already taken off.

Zhou asked Wu to track the direction of the plane and to report to him where the plane landed, no matter where that was. Zhou wanted to go talk to Lin Biao, he said, in person. When Wu suggested that he get planes ready for Zhou’s use, Zhou agreed. Wu immediately asked the 34th Air Division to get two planes ready, because Zhou would also take guard troops with him. Meanwhile, Wu kept Zhou continuously informed of where Lin’s plane was.
After taking off, the plane first flew to the west, but then suddenly turned northward. Wu immediately informed Zhou of the change of direction. When the plane neared Chifeng in northwest Beijing, Wu asked Zhou whether he should order fighters to intercept it, since there were fighters stationed nearby. "Don't be so hasty," Zhou said sternly, "I have to ask Mao about this." Then, Zhou told him that "Mao did not agree, saying that 'rain will fall, widows will remarry. What can we do? Let him go'."

When the plane again changed its course heading to the west, Wu asked Hu Ping to contact the plane through the control tower of the 34th Division, and order the pilot, Pan Jingyan, to return to Beijing. Hu tried for about 15 minutes, but Pan made no reply. At 2:00 a.m. on September 13 Zhou called Wu again, asking about the location of the plane. "It is about to fly out of the country. It is only 100 kilometers away from the Sino-Mongolian border," Wu reported. "The altitude of the plane is only about 300 meters and almost beyond the reach of our radar."

Zhou soon called again, "From now on, absolutely no plane will be allowed to fly to Beijing. Otherwise, both of us will lose our heads," Zhou said to Wu sternly. "Please trust me, Premier," Wu replied. "I will absolutely guarantee it. I will order an interception if any plane flies toward Beijing. I will shoot it down." Wu immediately issued orders to Li Jitai, Commander of the Air
Force of the Beijing Military Region, to ground all planes in the region, to turn on all radar screens, and to make sure that no plane flew into Beijing. If any plane approached Beijing, it was to be shot down. Then, Zhou issued an order grounding all planes nationwide. Zhou also ordered Wu that to allow no plane to take off without an order endorsed jointly by Zhou, Huang Yongsheng, Wu, and Li Zuopeng. Wu immediately passed Zhou's order to Li Jitai and also to Zhang Yonggeng of the Air Force in the Shenyang Military Region. The control officer of Air Force headquarters then passed the order to the Air Forces of other military regions. However, Wu could not reach Liang Pu, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, who was away from his command post arranging a rehearsal for a parade on National Day. Wu ordered the deputy chief of staff on duty to pass the order onto Liang.

Wu then ordered Shi Niantang of the 34th Division to ground immediately all of the planes under his command. No plane was to take off from any of the three airports—Xijiao, Nanyuan and Shahe—under control of the division. At 2:30 a.m., Zhou called Wu again and told him he was going to send Yang Dezhong over to "help" him. By the time Yang arrived, Wu realized that he had lost Zhou's trust. He felt confident, however, that he had done nothing wrong.
General Li Zuopeng: 61

Among the four generals, Li Zuopeng was the only one charged with direct involvement in the Incident. In 1980-81, Li stood trial on charges of attempting to facilitate Lin's escape by changing one of Zhou's orders, a charge Li repeatedly denied. Shanhaiguan Airport, from which Lin's plane took off, was under control of the Navy. On the night of September 12, Zhou called Li Zuopeng after he talked with Wu, asking Li if there was a Trident at Shanhaiguan Airport. After checking with the airport at 11:05 p.m. he answered Zhou in the affirmative. 62 Around 11:30 p.m., Zhou called Li again, telling him that the Trident was not to take off without specific permission from Zhou himself and Generals Huang, Wu, and Li. However, Zhou explained to Li that it was concern for Lin's safety that prompted the order, because night flight was not safe for Lin Biao. Li called the airport twice repeating Zhou's order, at 11:35 p.m. and 12:06 a.m. For some unknown reason, there was a difference between what Zhou said he told Li and what appeared on the record of phone calls at the control tower. According to

the record, the plane was not to take off without approval

61Li Zuopeng was the Political Commissar of the Navy, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army and a Politburo member. The following is based on the manuscript of Li Zuopeng as well as other secondary sources.

of one of the four people mentioned above. After the Incident, Zhou corrected the Airport record. "What I said," Zhou corrected, "was that the plane could not take off unless an order was endorsed by the four jointly."\textsuperscript{63} It is not clear why Zhou made so much of this point, or why or if Li changed Zhou's order when he passed it onto the airport. However, after the Incident, Li did change the telephone record to conform to Zhou's version.\textsuperscript{64} It does not seem to make much difference whether the order required authorization by \textit{all four} of the men, or only one of them. In any case, neither General Huang nor Wu was aware of such an order at the time. Whether caused by miscommunication or calculation, the entry in the phone log became a key piece of evidence that Li facilitated Lin's escape that night by changing Zhou's order. Li, however, never admitted this charge. He claimed instead that if he did anything wrong in handling the matter, it was because Zhou did not tell him what was really happening at Beidaihe.

Li also denied another charge that without authorization he told Huang what Mao had said about Lin Biao in talks with provincial leaders during Mao's inspection tour. According to the official charge, Li's "unauthorized" report to Huang about Mao's talk provided the motivation for

\textsuperscript{63}Xiao Sike, \textit{Chaoji shenpan (The Super Trials)} (I), 250-51.

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid, 339.
the Lins’ final actions against Mao because Huang, in turn, passed Li’s words along to Ye.\textsuperscript{65} Li admitted that on September 6, after he returned to Beijing from Wuhan, he told Huang what he had learned in Wuhan of Mao’s talks. He denied, however that he did so as part of any plot against Mao.

I believed that it [Li said of Mao’s talk] was very important, because Mao referred to Lin Biao many times. I felt that it was necessary to inform Huang of this. Huang was the Chief of Staff, my superior. Also, I trusted Huang at the time. I told him to make sure not to tell this to Ye and Wu Faxian as well.\textsuperscript{66}

Li then described his feeling about Mao’s talk:

First of all, I felt that what happened at Lushan (the Second Plenum of the Ninth Party Congress) was not over yet. Second, I believed that Mao took things more seriously now and raised the problem to the higher plane of principles. At Lushan, Mao had talked about the problem of the party line. Now he changed by emphasizing three principles, i.e. to maintain a Marxist Line or to hold a revisionist line; to unite or to split; to be honest or to be conspiratorial. So, it is not just a problem of the party line now. Third, I felt that this was pointing to Lin. Mao mentioned that he did not agree to have one’s own wife as the director of the office. It was well known that Lin’s wife was the director of his office. Consequently, Mao’s talk was directed at Lin Biao. After I realized this, I became very nervous, believing that things were now getting serious.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65}Xiao Sike, \textit{Chaoji shenpan} (I), 138-139, and (II) 647-648.

\textsuperscript{66}Xiao Sike, \textit{Chaoji shenpan} (II), 648.

\textsuperscript{67}Xiao Sike, \textit{Chaoji shenpan}, (I), 139.
Generals Huang Yongsheng and Qiu Huizuo

Little is known of the involvement of Generals Huang and Qiu in the Incident, even whether or not they were involved at all. On September 12, Huang was at home all day. After 8:00 p.m., he attended a Politburo meeting to discuss Zhou's forthcoming report to the Fourth People's Congress. The meeting lasted until midnight. When Zhou got the first report from Beidaihe that evening, he asked Huang if there had been any problems in Lin's family recently, specifically, whether Doudou had been at odds with Ye Qun again. Huang said no, and after the meeting, Zhou asked Huang to stay for a while.68 Zhou told Huang he needed Huang's help to clear up the situation caused by reports that Lin intended to flee the country.69 After this, the only thing known of Huang's activity was that he was with Zhou until the Politburo meeting held around 3:00 a.m. on September 13.

Of the four generals, Qiu Huizuo had the least involvement in the Incident. He was caught completely by surprise when he was awakened by a phone call around 3:00 a.m. on the 13th, calling him to attend the Politburo meeting just mentioned. He was dumfounded when Zhou

68Huang Chunguang, interview by author, Beijing, June 22, 1994.

69Lin Qing, Zhou Enlai de zhaixiang shengya [Zhou Enlai as Minister] (no publishing place is listed) (Changcheng wenhua chubanshe, 1991), 207.
announced at the meeting that Lin had escaped the country. Qiu had no idea how that could have happened. The night before, Qiu’s wife and Ye Qun had discussed Lin Doudou’s wedding. On the morning of the 12th, Qiu had gone to his office to hold several meetings, and had an appointment with General Wu in the afternoon. That appointment was canceled, however, at Wu’s request. Around midnight, Qiu took sleeping pills and went to bed. As far as Qiu knew, General Huang Yongsheng had been at home all day and General Li had gone to the Summer Palace for sightseeing with his family until 5:00 p.m. To this day, Qiu still cannot figure out what happened to Lin Biao on September 12-13.

Beijing: Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in September

Zhou, with Mao behind him, probably held the most crucial pieces of this puzzle. However, very little is known about the activities of Zhou and Mao on that crucial night. Around 10:30, while he was holding a meeting at the Great Hall of the People, word came to Zhou from Wang Dongxing that Lin Doudou had begged Unit 8341 to protect her.

70 Xie Shouzhen, Quan Yonglin and Ye Deben, compilers, Xinwen renwu jinxi [Accounts of Celebrities] (Yanji: Yanbian University Press, 1991), 65.

71 Chen Runjiang, "Xingman shifang de Qiu Huizuo," ["Qiu Huizuo after his Release"], in Si Ren, compiler, 'Wenhua dagemiao' fengyun renwu fangtan lu [Interviews with the Celebrities of the "Cultural Revolution] (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1993), 425.
father from a possible plot by her brother. It is difficult even to speculate about what exactly went through Zhou’s mind when he learned this. One of Zhou’s biographers, Lin Qing, described Zhou’s reaction this way:

Zhou could hardly believe his ears. It was something right out of the blue sky. He had already known that Mao and Lin were at odds, even the possibility of a split. But now, Lin was escaping from the country? He could not believe that it was actually true.... Handling this matter involved incredible responsibility. What if something went wrong?72

According to Lin Qing, Zhou hesitated because the source of the information was Lin Doudou. Zhou tried to understand her actions. As a member of the family, she should know what was going on in the family. But, why would she report on her brother? Out of a sense of "justice?" Or, more likely, a family feud? Zhou had known of the problems in Lin’s family for years. Once he himself had had to talk to Ye and Doudou separately to mediate one of their spats. If the report tonight was only capricious behavior on the part of Doudou and the information she provided was misleading, who would bear the responsibility for lodging a false accusation against Vice-Chairman Lin?

There is probably much truth in Lin Qing’s speculations along these lines. Zhou’s consultation with Huang about the possibility of a family problem add credibility to his

72Lin Qing, 202-203.
reasoning. However, Zhou had to look into the report of Doudou’s activity, since he had himself received earlier reports about the problem at Beidaihe. Zhou had told troops there to watch developments carefully but to act with great caution, and not to take any serious action without consulting Beijing. He therefore called Generals Wu and Li to ascertain the whereabouts of Trident 256. What was more important, however, was Zhou’s phone conversation with Ye around 11:30 on the night of September 12. It is still unclear who telephoned whom first and nothing concrete is known about the content of the conversation. This conversation later turned out to be one of the pivotal events of that dramatic night. According to official accounts, including Zhou’s own recollection, it was this conversation that convinced Zhou that what Doudou had reported about Ye and Liguo was true. In any case, immediately after the conversation, Zhou ordered Li Zuopeng to ground the Trident.

However, there was another side to this story. At Beidaihe, Ye and Lin Liguo had decided to leave immediately after the conversation. They rushed into Lin’s room and got him ready to leave. While doing so, Ye and Liguo yelled at

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Lin's staff, "Hurry up, someone has come to get Shou Zhang [Lin Biao]." A more dramatic version of this event pictures Ye telling Lin when she got to his room, "Hurry up, and we have to leave now. Huang, Wu, Li and Qiu were arrested. We will not be able to leave if we do not leave now."\textsuperscript{74}

Assuming that there is some truth in those accounts, what did Zhou tell Ye that made her so alarmed?

Doudou later said she was quite angry with Zhou about his conversation with Ye. Doudou believes she was betrayed by Zhou, who told Ye of Doudou's report to Unit 8341. Around 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the 13th, Zhou had a long telephone conversation with Doudou, in which he asked her exactly what happened and why Lin wanted to leave. The conversation lasted over an hour. From the fragments of it Doudou has revealed, Zhou seemed to know nothing of Mao's criticism of Lin Biao in the south.\textsuperscript{75} According to Doudou, Zhou had not challenged her claim that Ye and Liguo had gotten Lin on the plane by deception, and in fact seemed to accept her claim as true. Zhou told her that her father was in poor heath and had not been in touch with the outside world for a long time and that the matter of Lin's flight should be looked at objectively. Eighteen months later, however, when Zhou finally agreed to see Doudou in person,\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{74}Zhang Qinglin, interview by author, Beijing, 10 August, 1994.

\textsuperscript{75}Lin Qing confirms this in his book, \textit{Zhou Enlai}. Lin Qing, 204-211.
he denied what Doudou said he had said to her on September 13.

Mao played the most obscure role of all in the events of September 12-13. All we know for certain is that Mao had uttered his famous sentence quoted earlier, about letting Lin go after Lin's plane had taken off. But what did Mao do in the two and half hours before that take off? When did Zhou tell him of Doudou's report to Unit 8341? At what time did he move from Zhongnanhai to the Great Hall of People for security purpose? Who told Zhang Yaoci at Unit 8341 to tell Doudou and Zhang Qinglin to get onto the plane and go with Lin and his family? And why? Answers to these questions would solve the puzzle of the Lin Biao Incident.76

What happened to Lin's plane after it took off will probably remain a mystery forever. Two additional questions remain unanswered: why did the plane eventually fly north toward the Soviet Union, and how did the plane crash. People sympathetic to Lin Biao have indulged in much speculation. Some of them believe that the reason Lin's plane turned northward had much to do with Zhou's order to ground all planes, for the order closed all airports. It

76Until now, we only have contradictory answers to these questions. Some versions maintain that Zhou reported to Mao around 12 am, September 13 and then, asked Mao to move to the Great Hall of People. Yu Nan, "Zhou Zongli chuzhi '9.13,' 59, and Lin Qing, 205. Others, including Dr. Li Zhisui, believe that Mao moved to the Great Hall of the People at an earlier time, around 11:00 pm, September 12. Li Zhisui, 536-537.
was thus impossible for the plane to land in China, even if
the pilot intended to go back to Shanhuaiguan Airport from
which it had taken off. 7 7

As to the second question, we can rule out the
possibility that the plane was shot down by Chinese
missiles. No proof has ever been found that Zhou or anybody
else issued an order to shoot it down. The causes of the
plane crash thus remain unknown. It is not clear that the
plane was running out of fuel, as the official documents
claim, nor is it clear that the crash resulted from a
problem or a fight inside the plane. Interestingly, the
Chinese Government awarded the title of "revolutionary
martyr" to Pan, the captain of the plane several years after
the plane crash. The award actually rehabilitated Pang and
the other crew members, and absolved them of any involvement
in the "plot." But what about Lin Biao? Is it possible
that someday he will be so honored and absolved?

Comments on What Happened to Lin Biao

How much does this version of the Incident differ from
previous accounts? The following points distinguish this
from most of the literature published previously:

77 According to two Air Force officers I interviewed,
Captain Pang never made any attempt to contact any airports.
The pilot shut off the communication system after the plane
took off. Lu Min, interview by author, Beijing, August 1,
1994, and Hu Ping, interview by author, Beijing, July, 30,
1994.
1. The Lin Biao Incident narrowly defined as Lin’s flight from Beidaihe was an accident. Lin’s hasty departure from Beidaihe was a result of unexpected events that developed within the span of the several hours preceding the flight. There is no evidence that Lin was previously involved in any plot against Mao.

2. One political event most directly tied to Lin’s departure was Mao’s inspection tour in the south between mid-August and September 12. Mao undertook the tour for the purpose of preparing high officials in the provinces, especially the military commanders, for the unexpected fall of Lin Biao. According to a version of Mao’s talks to provincial officials issued later by the CCP,78 Mao directly challenged Lin by claiming that what had happened at Lushan was not over yet.79 Mao made it clear, as Li Zuopeng reported, that the controversy between Lin and Mao was not just a disagreement over the party line. Mao raised the controversy to a higher level of principles, calling on his comrades to stick to three principles: “Practice Marxism

78An English translation of Mao’s talk can be found in Michael Y. M. Kau, ed. The Lin Piao Affair: Power Politics and Military Coup (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1975), 57-66.

79This refers to the Second Plenum of the Ninth Party Central Committee held at Lushan in August, 1970. It was the first time since the Cultural Revolution that Mao and Lin were seen in conflict. Ye Qun and Lin’s generals were forced to do self-criticisms again and again after the meeting. A detailed discussion can be found in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.
and not revisionism; unite, and do not split; be open and aboveboard, and do not intrigue and conspire." Not only did Mao elucidate his discontent with Lin’s generals, he also, for the first time, openly criticized Lin Biao himself. "He must take some of the responsibility." Mao said of Lin. Word of Mao’s talk first reached Lin Liguo and Ye Qun at Beidaihe on September 6. What Liguo did in Beijing afterwards was a direct response to what Mao had said. 81

3. None of Lin’s generals had anything to do with the Incident of September 13. Nor were they involved in any of the alleged plots to assassinate Mao. In fact, Lin Liguo’s group planned to kidnap the generals and take them, with Lin Biao to Guangzhou. They were thus purged for undisclosed reasons. In hindsight, it is clear that Mao would have purged Lin and his generals had nothing occurred on the might of September 12-13. Mao had promised to solve the problem of Lin at the upcoming Third Plenum. However, the fate of Lin’s family and others associated with him might have turned out differently without the Incident on September 13. Mao probably intended to gradually deprive Lin of power, in which case Lin might have been rehabilitated later, as was Deng Xiaoping. Mao would not have risked tarnishing the Cultural Revolution by taking

80 Kau, Lin Piao Affairs, 57.

81 Wang Nianyi was the first to raise the idea of "Mao pushes and Lin reacts" (Mao bi Lin fan). I agree with him on this point.
radical measures against Lin Biao, whose name was too closely associated with the Cultural Revolution.

4. The extent, if any, of Lin’s purposive involvement in the final escape to the Soviet Union is still unclear. Until 11:00 p.m., Ye was still talking about going to Dalian or Guangzhou the next morning. Even Li Wenpu, Lin’s long-term bodyguard, believed Lin was going to Dalian or Guangzhou until the car left for the airport around midnight. Lin himself never mentioned anything to anyone about going anywhere except to Dalian. Otherwise, Li would never have gotten into the car rather than jumping from it two minutes after the car started moving. Without Li’s help, Lin would not have been able to leave the house. 82 Li’s later report of Lin’s question in the car about the Soviet Union is the sole piece of evidence indicating that Lin knew they were going to the Soviet Union. And there is no evidence to corroborate Li’s testimony. It is difficult to believe Li could reach a decision to desert his long-term master within the two minutes between the car’s starting and his jumping out of it. Moreover, there is no reason to speculate that Ye and Liguo would exclude Li from their

82 One of Lin’s secretaries assured me that for several years, Lin never got into a car without the help of Li Wenpu. It may sound strange, but it is true that each time before Lin left his residence, Li had to help him dress and get ready. Not even once did Lin leave by himself. It is also said that Lin would refuse to get into a car if he did not see Li was in the car. Zhang Ning, interview by author, New Jersey, March 27, 1991.
plans, if they had any plans at the time. Both of them knew how much Lin trusted Li. They knew therefore that without Li's help, they would never get Lin to leave the house.

5. Lin's unexpected death may have been a result of family problems. Each family member--Lin, Ye, Liguo and Doudou--had his or her own agenda for dealing with Mao's challenge. Lin's inclination was to remain silent and do nothing. He did not believe Mao would assault him, for to do so would jeopardize the success of the Cultural Revolution in the making of which Lin had been his Number One assistant. Lin Liguo, however, had other purposes. Young, ambitious, and inexperienced, he believed he could save his family, even the whole country, from Mao's schemes. Ye Qun may not have known of her son's radical plans, but she was at least involved in the last minute decision to leave Beidaihe at night in haste and for the Soviet Union.

The most difficult judgment is what to make of Doudou's disagreement with her brother and her mother, and her report to Unit 8341. Her report, which soon reached Wang Dongxing and Zhou Enlai, was one of the things that sent her family on the way to death. Her motivation, as she later described it, was understandable, but it is difficult to explain why she thought she could better help her father by going to Unit 8341 than by going to her father. Her own explanation--that Lin had for years been out of touch with reality because of his illness--is plausible only if Lin had lost
the ability to make rational judgements, that is lost the ability to protect himself.

6. What Mao and Zhou Enlai did after they learned of Doudou's report is still among the missing clues to the September 13 Incident. There is still no plausible explanation why Zhang Yaoci suggested that Doudou should fly with Lin. The suggestion, however, must have originated with Mao or Zhou. Probably neither Zhou nor Mao was in a position to "protect" Lin, even if they believed Doudou's claim that Lin was innocent. Zhou's position was inferior to Lin's, and Zhou would certainly not act before he was sure what the situation was and, more importantly, what Mao's views of the situation were. Mao, on the other hand, may have seen Doudou's report as providing him a perfect opportunity to take advantage of a mistake by an opponent.

In conclusion, Lin had no other choice but leave Beidaihe that night, regardless of whether or not he was willing to do so. It was too dangerous for him to stay at Beidaihe, where he was under the direct control of Mao's Unit 8341. However, Lin probably would not have suffered such a miserable fate if any of the variables discussed above had changed to his advantage.
CHAPTER 3
MAO ZEDONG AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION (I):
CULTURAL REVOLUTION THEORIES

The Lin Biao Incident in the broader sense is not limited to the events of September 12-13, 1971. To understand Lin's unexpected fall, it is necessary to examine Chinese politics during the Cultural Revolution, an event so singular that it brought to the surface the basic problems and contradictions within the CCP and Chinese society. The Cultural Revolution offers historians the best device they have for studying extra-institutional factors and factional activities in contemporary Chinese politics. It was Mao's personal sponsorship that allowed Lin to climb the political ladder during the Cultural Revolution. Lin rose from defense minister to sole vice-chairman of the CCP in 1966 and to Mao's heir apparent in 1969. His sudden fall only two years later was a metaphor for the total failure of the Cultural Revolution.¹

In a real sense, the Cultural Revolution was Mao's personal assault on the existing political institutions his own revolution of 1949 had created and institutionalized. Those institutions, he came to see, were filled with "revisionists." From theory to practice, Mao closely supervised each move of the new revolution. His own ideas became the only guidelines of the party, and every policy

¹Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 434.
had to have his endorsement. Viewed from above, the Cultural Revolution began with Mao's ambition to destroy the existing state and party institutions, and ended with Mao's death and the arrest of his wife, one of the most loyal supporters of the Revolution. An overall comprehension of the period can not be achieved without an understanding of Mao's ideas and practices at the time.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's followers practiced a cult of personality so extremely that they elevated Mao to the position of a demi-god. The masses seemed to worship him and he in turn mobilized the masses to carry out his revolution. Whatever he said was "ultimate truth" and whoever expressed even the slightest doubt about any of it was severely punished. Mao took advantage of this situation to get rid of his political opponents and to experiment with his utopian fantasies.

This chapter will focus on the impact of Mao's personal views and political style on the decision-making processes of party and government institutions. It will try to explain why Mao wanted a second revolution in the 1960s that had the effect of paralyzing the institutions established by the first revolution twenty years before. How do the theories of the Cultural Revolution incorporate Mao's personal beliefs and purposes? And how was it that Mao could force the whole party to go along with him?
Chinese scholars tend to blame party theories for the exercise of the Cultural Revolution, especially Mao's own theory of "continuing revolution under the proletarian dictatorship" \(jixu\ geming\). This theory dominated Chinese politics in the decade of the Cultural Revolution, when Maoists hailed it as not only Mao's most innovative contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory but also the most effective justifications for the necessity of the Cultural Revolution.

The concept of "continuing revolution" never appeared in Mao's published works. Yet, Mao closely supervised the development of this theory and allowed it to bear his name when it was published.\(^2\) Early in the second year of the Cultural Revolution, Mao felt the need to justify the Revolution theoretically. In February 1967, Wang Li told Chen Boda that Mao had given him the task of doing just

\(^2\)Some Chinese scholars have questioned the appropriateness of ascribing the theory to Mao, since Mao himself never wrote anything concerning this theory. However, Wang Li, one of Mao's assistants for Cultural Revolution documents, attested that it was Mao himself who came up with the concept first in his talk with Wang on February 12, 1967. Although nearly all of the central documents during the Cultural Revolution were drafted by Chen Boda, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, Wang Li and others, they were working under Mao's close supervision. In many cases Mao personally edited drafts several times before they were finally published. For details, see Wang Li, Xianchang lishi [Witness to History] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 86; Gong Yuzhi, "Guanyu jixu geming de jige wenti," ["Several Questions on "Continuing the Revolution"], in "Wenhua dageming" ziliao yanjiu [Materials for Research on the "Cultural Revolution"], (Part I), (Beijing: Department of Party History, Academy of the National Defense, 1988), 611-617.
that. Wang Li carefully studied Mao's speeches on the subjects of the Cultural Revolution and put the major points he found in them in an editorial in the October Hongqi, which he wrote in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Mao's, "On Correctly Handling Contradictions Among the People." It was in this editorial that Wang Li first discussed the concept of "continuing revolution."

More explicit discussion of the theory appeared later in an editorial published simultaneously on November 6, 1967, in Renmin ribao, Hongqi and Jiefangjun bao, entitled "March along the Socialist Path Established by the October Revolution." Before publishing the editorial, Chen Boda and Yao Wenyuan sent a draft of it to Mao for his personal approval. "We revised this editorial again," Chen and Yao said in their letter to Mao. "We added new materials for the six new ideas of the Chairman and also quoted sufficiently from Lenin. All of us sincerely hope that the Chairman will take a look at the draft and revise it."

After Mao edited it, he gave permission for it to be published. In explaining the concept of "continuing revolution," the editorial read as followings:

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1. Socialist society is a long historical period, during which struggles between classes and between the socialist and capitalist roads will exist for a long time. The danger of a restoration of capitalism also exists during this historical stage.

2. Class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat is, in essence, related to the question of power. In other words, the capitalists will attempt to overthrow the proletariat. The proletariat has to achieve an overall dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the super-structures and cultural areas.

3. The struggle between the two classes and the two roads will definitely be reflected within the Party. A handful of capitalist roaders in positions of authority will be the major targets of the revolution continued under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

4. The way to continue revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat is to mobilize the masses to stage a cultural revolution.4

This theory clarified not only the purposes of the Cultural Revolution, but its methodology, its use of force, and its targets. Based on an assumption of the continuing existence of classes and class struggle in socialist society, the theory revealed the basis for conflict within the revolutionary party: the still-existing bourgeois class would use its representatives in the revolutionary party to try to restore the power it had lost. The solution to this

problem, as Mao saw it, was to stage a continuing revolution from the bottom.

Many studies of the theory of "continuing revolution" focus on its philosophical and political implications. Many criticisms of the theory centered around questions of its conformity to Marxist-Leninist principles, or of its consonance with the realities of the situation, domestic as well as international. The problem, however, is not what the theory suggests, but why and how Mao came to agree with the intrinsically antagonistic nature of conflict in a socialist society and within the revolutionary party. There is little evidence that Mao sincerely believed, when the theory first surfaced, that his long-term comrades had really turned into his enemies. He no doubt knew that Liu Shaoqi, now named as the head of a capitalist headquarters within the Party, had never intentionally opposed him or objected to any of his major ideas. In denouncing such men as Liu, according to Wang Li, Mao usually wanted only to "teach a lesson" to those who did not accept his ideas uncritically. Whether that was the case or not, after Liu's fall Mao mentioned several times that Liu and Deng Xiaoping should be kept in the Party Central Committee because of their earlier contributions to the original revolution of 1949.5

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5Wang Li, 84.
To answer the questions raised earlier, it is necessary to trace the development of Mao's understanding of conflict in socialist society based on his own experience as a leader after 1949, especially after the economic failures of 1958-1959. It is also necessary to consider Mao's characteristics as a charismatic leader. As Lowell Dittmer points out in a study of China's "continuing revolution," three elements are necessary to "continue" a revolution: a charismatic leader, an illegitimate authority structure, and sustained mobilization of mass support. In light of Dittmer's formulation, Mao's role in the Cultural Revolution is best explainable by the fact that Mao was a charismatic leader whose charisma was a legacy of his sacrifice and leadership in a prolonged war, the CCP's rule became questionable legitimacy for many Chinese, and Mao's personal senility and paranoia. The last two of these conditions required regular reassertion of the legitimacy of the revolution and its progeny.

Mandate of the People: Creation of a Charismatic Leader

The People's Republic of China was established by a group of revolutionaries who fought continuously for 30 years before they finally succeeded in taking power. This struggle created a part of 4.5 million members, a military

of four million troops, and a military elite, including Mao himself. The establishment of the revolutionary state in 1949 substantiated the legitimacy of the Communist Party rule. In Weberian terminology, the legitimacy of the new state rested on charismatic as well as traditional factors.

Mao's charisma derived from the charm and forcefulness of his personality as well as his personal contribution to the revolutionary cause. In comparison to most of the poorly-educated revolutionaries, Mao was a "sage" in terms of his knowledge, imagination, and intuitive resources. Mao impressed educated people with his intelligence as well as his guile in surviving in a long harsh war. By 1949, Mao had achieved the status of an unchallenged and

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7When the word "legitimacy" is used in a discussion of Chinese politics, meaning "in accordance with established rules, or the acceptance of power," the concept can be discussed at three different levels: legitimacy in terms of 1) the party comrades, 2) people in general, and 3) other regimes. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will discuss legitimacy of Mao only in terms of his party comrades and the Chinese people.

8See Frederick Teiwes' detailed discussion on the question of the legitimacy of Mao's power. Frederick C. Teiwes, Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China: From a Charismatic Mao to the Politics of Succession (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1984).

9By 1949, the CCP was comprised mostly of poorly educated youth. In his study of Chinese revolutionary cadres, Lee observes that in Helongjiang Province, 95 percent of 18,903 party members came from the most disadvantaged social groups. Hong Yung Lee, From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats in Socialist China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 45.
unchallengeable leader of the CCP and the respect of his comrades. When Lin Biao insisted that Mao was a genius, he was not the only one doing so. Liu Shaoqi had exalted Mao as early as the Seventh Party Congress in 1945. At an enlarged meeting of the Central Military Committee on August 17, 1959, Liu repeated his exaltation and criticized Peng Dehuai for opposing the idea of "the cult of personality":

I always actively advocate the idea of "the cult of personality," although the concept itself may not totally be appropriate.... What I mean by this is that I will actively enhance the prestige of Chairman Mao. I have held this opinion for a long time and I propagated [the greatness of] Chairman Mao even before the Seventh Party Congress.... And I am doing it now. It is absolutely wrong for someone [like Peng Dehuai] to oppose "the cult of personality" of Mao with the excuse that in the Soviet Union "the cult of personality" of Stalin was destroyed. [To oppose Mao's personality cult] is a destructive action against the proletarian cause.10

Liu Shaoqi's speech elucidated an already widely accepted fact within the party--Mao personified the Party. To many of his colleagues, Mao deserved this reputation because of his leadership during the brutal struggle before 1949. In those trying times, he had established himself as a capable leader with his sound assessments of situations and his outsmarting of enemies with superior strategies and

tactics. Whether it was the result of personal luck, talent, or something else, winning the war established Mao as a charismatic leader in the eyes of his colleagues and the Chinese people alike. Most of his colleagues openly supported Liu's statement about the cult of personality. One of them expressed his respect for Mao this way: "[We should] believe Mao with a blind faith and follow Mao unconditionally."¹¹ This personification of party power in Mao's person institutionalized Mao's authority, and created a charismatic leader who eventually elevated himself above the party and ultimately nearly destroyed it.

Chinese political tradition provided its own justifications for recognizing and accepting a charismatic leader. The concept of the "mandate of heaven" had traditionally been used to sustain the legitimacy of dynastic rulers. Mao and his comrades conveniently transformed it into the modern concept of the "mandate of the people," which they repeatedly used to legitimize the rule of the CCP. Mao himself once wrote of this subject:

What is the "mandate of heaven?" It is nothing but the "mandate of the people." Is our power granted by heaven? Our power is granted by the people, and above all, by the working class as well as the poor and lower-middle class peasants.¹²

¹¹Cong Jin, 117.

¹²"Hangzhou juiyi jianghua" ["Speech in Hangzhou"] in Mao Zedong sixiang wansui [Long Live Mao Zedong Thought], Mi400-12c (Oakton: Center for Chinese Research Materials, 98
A *Hongqi* editorial in 1968 elaborated upon Mao's ideas:

> Who grants power to us? It is granted by the working class, by the poor and lower-middle class peasants, and by the broad laboring class that comprises ninety percent of our population. We represent the proletariat and the broad masses. The people support us because we crushed the enemy of the people. One fundamental principle for the Communist Party is to rely directly on the broad revolutionary masses.\(^{13}\)

The Chinese political tradition not only facilitated the acceptance of a charismatic leader like Mao, it also exerted a strong influence on the mentality of Mao as a leader. Mao fantasized himself as a savior of the Chinese people with the holy task of rescuing them from "an abyss of misery." A man who does that is unlikely to see himself as an ordinary human being.\(^{14}\) Mao enjoyed this fantasy with increasing enthusiasm. His bodyguards witnessed a change in his attitude as early as 1947, when for the first time he received a hail of "wansui" [long live] from a crowd of poor people.\(^ {13}\)

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\(^{13}\) *Hongqi* 4 (1968): 3, and Xiao Yanzhong, 77.

\(^{14}\) Xiao Yanzhong insists that according to Mao’s self evaluation, he always looked at the world condescendingly as if he was a savior of the world. Consciously or unconsciously, he mistook his personal will as the source and center of the national forces. Consequently, "believe in the people" is merely a substitute for "believe in self." See Xiao Yanzhong, "An Analysis and Understanding of an Epoch-making Tragedy," in *Wannian Mao Zedong*, ed. Xiao Yangzhong, 71. Mao’s former personal physician, Li Zhisui, also provides witness to Mao’s view of himself as an "emperor."
peasants as he passed by. 15 Mao was so touched by the salutation that he accepted it with tears in his eyes. He and his colleagues took this as a sign of the legitimacy of their struggle to rule China in the future. 16 After 1949, Mao was much more at ease when he attracted worship from the people. In 1952, his appearance at Wuhan aroused the enthusiasm of over ten thousand people, who gathered around him cheering and saluting him with uncritical adulation. The spontaneous outpouring of enthusiasm caused his bodyguards great anxiety as they tried to protect him from the crowd. Showing no sympathy for the plight of his guards, Mao said jokingly, "I almost could not leave Huanghelou [the building he stayed]." 17 Another occasion later described by his bodyguard was even more striking in terms of how it revealed Mao's acceptance of his idolization by the masses. This time, Mao deliberately ignored warnings not to attract attention from people on the street when he was having lunch in a second-floor restaurant in Tianjin in August 1958. He showed himself in the windows and was immediately "discovered" by a woman on the street below.

15 "wansui" in Chinese means "Long Live." It was used exclusively for worshiping emperors in traditional China.

16 Jing Hong and Wu Hua, compilers, Mao Zedong shenping shilu [The Actual Life of Mao Zedong] (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1992), 657-59.

17 Li Yingqiao, Mao Zedong shiweichang zaji [Anecdotes from Mao's Chief Bodyguard] (Hong Kong: Cultural and Education Press, inc., 1989), 94.
When the woman cried out, "Long live Chairman Mao!" people rushed from all directions to the restaurant. Rejecting pleas for caution from his guards, Mao went to the window six times, waving and shouting to the crowd. After four hours of this, Mao was able to leave the restaurant with the assistance of extra guards sent over from the Tianjin Garrison.¹⁸

Afterwards, one of Mao's bodyguards made a revealing remark about the occasion. In the past, he said, Mao had been angry when anyone shouted "wansui" when he was among the people, because the ensuing chanting and celebration interrupted his speaking. During the incident at Tianjin, however, Mao thoroughly enjoyed the attention he attracted. Benjamin Schwartz, who studied Mao through his careful readings of Mao's speeches between 1957 and 1958, had concluded that by the fall 1958 Mao was fully comfortable with the idea that he was a spiritual leader of the Chinese people.¹⁹

The experience of being worshiped had a transforming effect on Mao, reinforcing his sense of himself as a charismatic leader. In a sense, the Cultural Revolution consummated this personal fantasy. A revolutionary song

¹⁸Li Yinqiao, Zaji, 126-127.

expressed the idea precisely: "The east is red, and arises the Sun, there emerges in China Mao Zedong." This song gained such popularity during the Cultural Revolution that some suggested that it be made the national anthem. From August to November 1966, Mao regularly appeared on Tian'anmen or at Tian'anmen Square in a convertible car receiving the worship of the Red Guards with ever increasing enthusiasm. The resulting demonstrations of support confirmed Mao's conviction that his power was legitimized by the "mandate of people."

Challenge the Earth

Before 1949, the legitimacy of the CCP rested on its war record. After 1949, however, the CCP confronted a less heroic experience: the task of building state institutions, developing a national economy, and solving intractable social problems. One major problem for these CCP war veterans was their lack of administrative qualifications and economic expertise. Hong Yung Lee has concluded in a study of the CCP cadre system that the factors that helped the CCP achieve power in 1949 thereafter restricted its abilities in state building and economic development. Comparing China's experience in co-opting technical experts into the bureaucracy with the experience of Eastern European countries, Lee found that the Chinese experience, which lasted thirty years and more, was much longer than that in
Eastern Europe. This prolonged transition from cadres to professional, Lee suggested, was responsible for a number of economic and bureaucratic disasters, including the Great Leap Forward.

To Mao, however, the problem was not to promote an elite transformation—-from revolutionary cadres to professional administrators for purposes of state building and economic development—-it was instead to maintain CCP legitimacy by showing the people that the CCP was one with them. Although he did not completely ignore technical training of his cadres, Mao was confident, at least until 1959 of the CCP’s ability to build a socialist and then a communist society in China without worrying about immediate economic, technological or other similar problems.

Mao’s confidence was boosted by the performance of the national economy from 1949 to 1952 and by the unexpectedly rapid transformation of the structure of the national economy from 1949 to 1956. In 1952, grain output amounted to 308.8 billion jin, an increase of 42.8 percent over 1949. The value of the gross output of

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20For the details of Lee’s arguments, see "Introduction" in Hong Yung Lee, From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats, 1-9.

21According to Li Rui, Mao had expected that it would take fifteen years before the transformation could be completed. Li Rui, Lushan huiyi shilu [A True Record of the Lushan Conference] (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books Ltd, 1993), 1.

22One jin equals one half of a kilogram.
industry in 1952 reached 34.33 billion yuan, 144.9 percent above the level of 1949. According to Party publications, the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and industries was completed in 1956. The peasants had been put into agricultural cooperatives, private enterprises organized into handicraft co-operatives, and capitalist industries and commercial enterprises transformed into joint state-private enterprises. In comparison with the Soviet Union and East European countries, where these transformations had generated widespread resistance, the processes in China had gone relatively smoothly, with less resistance and blood-shed. According to a party resolution in 1981, 1957 was the best economically since the founding of the PRC.

These successes in the national economy overshadowed for the time being the problem of under-qualified cadres. This problem by no means disappeared, however. Cadres continued to employ techniques developed during the war, such as issuing arbitrary orders and overestimating the power of the human will in organizing economic work. Li Yingqiao, one of Mao’s chief bodyguards, told Mao in 1955 that the party cadres in his hometown forced peasants to join co-operatives. Party cadres went to the village and


24Liu Suinian and Wu Qungan, 595.
called everybody together, Li reported. Then, they announced, "Those who will follow Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of Guomindang) go to that side and work on your own, and those who will follow Chairman Mao stay on this side and get into the cooperatives." Of course, no one dared to reject the cooperatives. Mao admitted, after hearing of this practice, that the cadres were too simple minded, but he never saw this as a serious problem. Mao simply wrote a letter to the provincial leader, asking him to criticize those who did this.25

This kind of problem did not loom at the lower levels of administration alone. Most members of the Party Central Committee, including Mao himself, believed that economic development could be sparked by lighting revolutionary spirit among the masses. During the Great Leap Forward in 1958, the party newspaper, Renmin ribao took the lead in spreading unrealistic expectations with regard to economic goals. In an editorial on August 3, 1958, Renmin ribao praised absurd slogans, "The bolder you are, the more the land will produce"; and "How much is produced by the land will depend on your courage, so, forget about 'restrictionists'."26 False reports of grain output appeared in newspapers, among them claims that the wheat


26Xu Quanxing, 135.
harvest had reached 5,000 kilograms per mu\textsuperscript{27}, with a record annual output of 15,000 kilograms from one mu.\textsuperscript{28} Provincial leaders out did each other in falsifying their claims of grain production. The entire country indulged in this exaggeration to the point that even some scientists provided "scientific proof" that absurdly high production levels were possible. A well known physician, for example, published an article in Zhongguo qingnian [Chinese Youth] "proving" that it was possible to produce 20 times more than the old average of 1,000 kilo per mu by using just 30\% of the available annual solar energy. Mao, who came from a peasant family, never believed these exaggerations, but he refused to discourage the masses, as he was a firm believer in the possibilities of the human will. Responding to a question in Shanghai in 1959 from Li Rui, one of his former secretaries on how he could have believed the falsified grain reports, Mao simply blamed scientists for providing misleading information. "You also joined in the bragging without being on firm ground," Mao said jokingly to one scientist. "But your view is correct in terms of the way of thinking."	extsuperscript{29}

Another well-known example of misguided policy was the "mass campaign to boost iron and steel production." Bo

\textsuperscript{27}One mu equals to ca. one-sixth acre.

\textsuperscript{28}Ding Shu, 61-67.

\textsuperscript{29}Xu Quanxing, 137-138.
Yibo, who was in charge of state industry at the time, wrote this twenty years later of how policy was formulated:

Between June and July 1958, Mao said to me, "now we know how to do it in terms of agriculture. The method is to 'let grain take the lead in producing other agricultural products'. The problem concerning agricultural policy has been solved, but what about industry?" [I knew that] Mao meant to ask me to come up with a slogan to illustrate the idea of surpassing Great Britain, who was the highest annual producer of steel and iron at twenty-two million tons. *Without much thinking*, I replied, "Then, we can say, 'Let steel take the lead in other industries'." "Good," Mao replied, "Let's do it."[30]

Soon thereafter, the Politburo issued a communique entitled "The Enlarged Politburo Conference Called on the Whole Party and Whole People to Strive to Produce 10.7 Million Tons of Steel." To accomplish this goal, it would be necessary to double the 1957 production of 5.35 million tons. Since production through August 1958 totaled a mere 4 million tons, it was clearly impossible to achieve the goal of 10.7 million by the end of the year. However, Mao and many others professed to believe it could be done. Why? According to Wang Heshou, the Minister of Metallurgy at the time, they counted on a mass movement to do the job.

To reach the quota, Party leaders at the all levels organized mass campaigns to boost steel and iron production. The Party Central Committee called four tele-conferences to pressure local cadres to fulfil the quota. The Central

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Secretariat organized a telephone conference on September 24, demanding a "campaign by big regiments" to boost daily production of steel to 60,000 tons. The Party Central Committee accompanied such demands with threats to punish cadres who fell short of their quotas. The army also mobilized to increase iron and steel production. By the end of 1958, over 600,000 small "backyard" blast furnaces were operating across the country. The number of people mobilized to work in the mines and furnaces jumped from 240,000 in August to 50,000,000 by September, and eventually reached 90,000,000. Iron and steel production spread everywhere, in the fields, the schools, the streets, the courtyard of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, even in State Vice Chairman Madame Song Qingling's backyard. Many veteran communists came to see the effort as a new war to "challenge the earth." The Great Leap Forward rested on the ideas that by mobilizing the masses to boost production, China would make a "leap" to a communist society in a few years.

This wishful thinking had disastrous consequences. It appeared at first that iron and steel production did increase through the nationwide efforts. The state announced on December 19 that the goal of 10.7 million tons of steel had been met 12 days ahead of schedule. However, 31

31 Ding shu, 26.
only 72 percent of the total was of standard quality.\textsuperscript{32} The campaign wasted large amounts of materials, labor, and money, damaged equipment by overuse, and produced a great deal of steel of such low quality that it was useless. Furthermore, the huge demand for wood for backyard furnaces destroyed the natural environment over an extensive area.

The damage done to agriculture and other industries was even greater. The movement exhausted so much rural labor (38.18 million people altogether) that crops went unharvested due to insufficient hands. Damage to other industries was no less significant. The excessive consumption of power and raw materials interrupted normal operations in many factories in light industry. The imbalance between industry and transportation was also exacerbated.\textsuperscript{33}

By early 1959, the disruptive consequences of mass movement were apparent to most party leaders. The misguided policies and irrational behavior combined with a series of severe natural disasters in a three-year period to reduce grain output dramatically. According to economist Wen Tiejun, the first economic crisis showed its full strength between 1958 and 1960. In those three years, the state deficit increased from 5.6 percent in 1958 to 14.3 percent in 1960. The total deficit over three years amounted to 20

\textsuperscript{32}Liu Suinian and Wu Qungan, 239, and Cong Jin, 160.

\textsuperscript{33}Liu Suinian and Wu Qungan, 239-240.
billion yuan. The table below illustrates some of the problems at the time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>GRAIN OUTPUT (jin)</th>
<th>CRUDE DEATH RATE</th>
<th>NATURAL INCREASE RATE</th>
<th>POPULATION INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>390,000,000,000</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
<td>23.23%</td>
<td>18,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>400,000,000,000</td>
<td>11.98%</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
<td>13,410,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>340,000,000,000</td>
<td>14.59%</td>
<td>10.19%</td>
<td>12,130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>287,000,000,000</td>
<td>25.43%</td>
<td>-4.57%</td>
<td>-10,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

note: one jin equals one half of a kilogram.

In reality, the situation was worse than these figures indicate. By January 1959, the food supply for residents of Beijing reduced to only one cabbage per household per day. The situation was worse in the countryside, especially in poor areas like Henan and Gansu. Although grain output decreased after 1958, the amount of grain that peasants had to hand over to the state increased, rising from 24.6% of the total in 1957 to 39.6% in 1959, and 35.7% in 1960. Many peasants suffered from malnutrition and some in the worst-hit areas died of starvation. No one knows how many people died from the dislocations. Estimates range from 10 million to 30 million deaths. In Gansu province alone, perhaps 1.3


million people died, a figure equal to one tenth of the total population.\textsuperscript{36}

How could this happen? Lack of technical expertise among revolutionary cadres, misguided policies, and deep social and political problems all contributed to the disaster, but the greatest responsibility lay with Mao and his colleagues. Mao was behind all of these policies, many of which reflected his personal beliefs, and even his own personality. To emphasize Mao’s personal role is not to deny that profound social, political, institutional, and cultural problems were also present.\textsuperscript{37} The above discussion illustrates one of the special problems that always plagued the PRC—the conflict between a charismatic leader and the process of institutionalization. Political institutions during the Great Leap Forward placed few restrictions on the power of Mao, who was in reality the leader of a group war veterans who believed that the war strategies that won their war would be equally effective in building up the national economy. Although decision-making processes were more complicated than those described above,

\textsuperscript{36}For more details for the famine, see Ding Shu, Chapter 9, 173-203.

in the first decades of the People's Republic, CCP leaders tended to make economic policies based on their estimations of the capabilities of human will rather than careful calculations based on economic realities.\(^3\) Mao and his colleagues carried their wartime experiences into their efforts at state building and economic development. Because of their war experiences, they relied almost exclusively on courage and persistence in building their socialist society. "I simply do not believe that it will be more difficult to develop industry and agriculture than to fight a war," Mao said at the Nanning Meeting on January 20, 1958.\(^3\) On another occasion, Mao said it was necessary for the party to wage a new war--a war against nature--to develop the economy.\(^4\)

This was not just a matter of rhetoric. Mao and his comrades constantly drew nostalgic comparisons between their war experiences and their effort to build the national economy. Mao himself once put it this way:

In the past, millions of us trained [ourselves] through class struggle into communist fighters with support from the masses. [We]

\(^3\)This does not mean that the Party completely ignored economic factors in making policy. From time to time, Mao himself listened to the advice of experts and economic specialists. However, the Great Leap Forward itself was more a result of Mao's utopian fantasy.

\(^3\)Shi Zhongquan, "A Difficult Opening up" in Xiao Yanzhong, 133.

\(^4\)Xiao Yanzhong, 66.
practiced the supply system\footnote{The supply system was a system of payment in kind practiced during the revolutionary wars and in the early days of the PRC. Working personnel and their dependents were provided with the primary necessities of life instead of being paid in salary.} and led a communist life—this was a Marxist work style as opposed to a bourgeois work style. In my view, the rural work style and guerrilla practices are, after all, better. We were victorious in twenty-two years of war. Why shouldn’t it work out in building communism? Why do [we] have to change to a wage system? This is a concession to the bourgeoisie. [We are] allowing the rural work style and guerrilla practices to be used to belittle us [and] the result is the development of individualism.\footnote{Mao’s speech at Beidaihe Conference, August 21 in The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao, eds by Roderick MacFarquhar et al, 417. For a version in Chinese, see Yan Yongsong and Wang Junwei, compilers, Zuoqin ershi nian [Twenty Years of Leftism: 1957-1976] (Nongcun: Nongcun duwu chubanshe, 1993), 141.}

Like Mao, many other war veterans showed absolute faith in this style of war communism. Liu Shaoqi also shared the same enthusiasm toward war methodology. During the Great Leap Forward, Liu fantasized about winning a decisive success in building a socialist economy by waging several campaigns at once, much like the CCP had done in the late 1940s in defeating the Nationalists. Liu advocated an "experiment in communism" in Xushui County in Hebei Province, where everybody would have an equal share of the daily necessities.\footnote{Cong Jin, 158-162.}
Before 1960, Mao made no effort to familiarize himself with economic theories. Mao had little trust in "bookish" knowledge and preferred to rely on his own experience and intuition. "I never read any books for commanding a war," he told a group of foreign guests in March 1965. "We should read fewer books. Too many books is no good." He mocked agricultural experts who could not make distinctions between certain crops. He repeatedly made analogies between himself and emperors who once ruled China successfully with little or no education. Only after serious problems developed in the economy after 1959 did Mao organize a group to study political economy. According to Shi Zhongquan, this was the first time, and the only time in his life that Mao had ever undertook a study of economics.45

Mao trusted intellectuals even less than he trusted book-learning. After the anti-communist uprising in Hungary in 1956, Mao estimated that eighty to ninety percent of Chinese intellectuals--about five million individuals--still belonged to the bourgeois class. Thus, it was not rich peasants, landlords, and compradors who threatened proletarian power, it was bourgeois intellectuals.46

44 Zheng Qian and Han Gang, 415.


46 Mao Zedong, "Jiangang de xiangxing qunzhong de daduoshu," ["Firmly Believe in the Majority of the People"], in Mao Zedong zhuzuo xuandu [Selected Works of Mao], vol. 5, (Beijing" Renmin chubanshe, 1977), 484.
March 1958, after the "anti-rightist movement," Mao proposed a theory of "two exploiting classes," one of which included intellectuals."\(^{47}\) This bias against intellectuals meant not only the disregard for expert opinion in economic development, but also eventually led to a broad purge of intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution, when a popular belief was "the more books you read, the more reactionary you will become."

"Do Not Lose the Heart of the People"

The misguided policies of the Great Leap Forward soon had an impact on the economy, and in late 1958 the party made the first efforts to readjust its economic policies. From November 1958 to April 1959, the Politburo held a series of meetings at Zhengzhou, Wuchang and Shanghai. There, Mao criticized 'leftist' ideas, including the tendency to blur the distinction between socialism and communism as illustrated by misconduct in the movement to set up people's communes in 1958. Some rural cadres believed that they could deprive peasants of their labor as well as their products without paying compensation on the assumption that in a people's commune, everything belonged to the people.\(^{48}\) Mao tried to educate the cadres on the difference between ownership in a people's commune, which

\(^{47}\)Tan Zongji, 53.

\(^{48}\)Liu Suinian and Wu Qungan, 244-246.
was a "collective ownership" in nature, and "socialist ownership by the people." He meant that at the present stage of socialism, products should still be distributed according to the amount of one's labor instead of to everyone equally. He also rejected proposals to abolish commodity production and exchange.\(^4^9\) The Sixth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee held in Wuhan in January 1958 adopted a resolution emphasizing that the people's communes must continue to distribute products according to the amount of one's work. The resolution also cautioned that communism would not soon establish itself in China.

Although Mao acknowledged problems in the people's communes, he would tolerate no criticism of the decision to establish communes in the first place. Mao endeavored to convince the people and his comrades that the problems in the communes were minor ones related to working methodologies and proper understandings of Marxist theories. There was nothing wrong with the "three red flags," that is, the Party's general line, the Great Leap Forward, and the people's communes. Mao was especially sensitive about criticism of the people's communes, which he took as personal criticism of him. The commune represented an experiment in his long-cherished utopian dream based on peasant equality. Having been a peasant boy himself, Mao thought nothing was more exciting than the prospect of

\(^{4^9}\)Cong Jin, 165.
setting up places where peasants could eat without having to pay for doing so. According Li Rui, Mao had first outlined his dream for this new society as early as 1919: a piece of ideal land with new style villages consisting of new style families, new style schools and other new style staff. 50 This may reflect the influence on Mao of Kang Youwei's Da tong shu [The Book of Universal Commonwealth] or of European utopian socialist ideas, but Mao never gave up his desire to establish an ideal society in China. During the Cultural Revolution, he made a clearer statement of his vision in his famous "May Seventh Directive."

Throughout his life, Mao had a keen concern for the peasants. Few leaders in Chinese history ever paid as much attention to the peasants as Mao did. He once said that the happiest moment in his life was not when the CCP gained power in China, but when he learned that most peasants had been organized into agricultural cooperatives. 51 Once before the Great Leap Forward, according to Li Yinqiao, Mao was in tears when he saw a piece of corn bread, dark in color and bitter in taste, brought back by a bodyguard from his home village. He could not sleep that night, murmuring repeatedly, "We are in a socialist society and we have to find a way [to solve this problem]." 52 His deep feeling

50 Li Rui, Shilu, 8-9.
52 Li Yinqiao, Zaji, 121-122.

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for the peasants partially explains why Mao supported and
defended the Great Leap Forward and the People’s Communes
with such vehemence.

However, "good will" toward the peasantry does not
fully explain why Mao defended "the three red flags" so
stubbornly. He became cautious after he heard repeated
complaints from the peasants while traveling in the
countryside in mid-1958. Worried about losing "people’s
hearts" if he ignored these complaints, Mao was willing to
make adjustments in his policies and even took some of the
blame upon himself. He would not, however, allow anyone to
question the legitimacy of his rule or the "correctness" of
"the three red flags." This finally led to his conflict
with Peng Dehuai at the Lushan Conference in 1959, which
destroyed all of his previous efforts to adjust party
economic policy within the Party.

The enlarged politburo meeting and the Eighth Plenum of
the Eighth Party Congress were held between July and August
1959 at Lushan. Known as the first "Lushan Conference,"
these meetings were among the most important meetings in CCP
history. The conference occasioned for the fall of Peng
Dehuai, the Defense Minister and Vice-Chairman of the
Central Military Commission, and other leaders in one of
Mao’s worst purges of his long-term comrades. The men were
purged because they differed with Mao over how to evaluate
the nation’s economic problems, and Mao’s victory over Peng

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and others resulted in the continuation of misguided economic policies. In the long run, this hurt the national economy and resulted in the loss of millions of lives in the early 1960s. Above all, the conference extended the enormous power of Mao and few people ever again dared to tell Mao the truth if the truth was not want Mao wanted to hear.

The enlarged politburo meeting began calmly enough. Many participants took the occasion as an opportunity to vacation at Lushan, a famous mountain resort. The purpose of the meeting was to "make a further summary of the past experiences and correct 'left' errors which had come to the notice of the leadership." Mao’s initial speeches were positive discussions of party work in the past. Believing that most problems had been solved through previous efforts, Mao set the tone for the conference by characterizing the current situation as one of "great achievements, numerous problems, and a bright future." However, not every one shared this view, especially Mao’s evaluation of the "three red flags." Halfway through the scheduled sessions, the Party was divided over how to evaluate mistakes made in the recent past. Some wanted to view the situation positively, while others emphasized the economic problems then facing the country. Peng Dehuai was the most outspoken in the

53Liu Suinian and Wu Qungan, 257.
latter group. The following are excerpts from Peng’s remarks during group discussions:

Morning, July 3:
The amount of the increase of production in the commune of Mao’s hometown was actually not that much. As far as I know, the production increased by only 16%. I asked Comrade Zhou Xiaozhou who told me that the production of that commune increased only by 14%, also with much help and funding from the state. The Chairman had been to that commune. I asked the Chairman, "what do you think?" He told me that he had not discussed this matter when he was there. I think he did.

Morning, July 4:
[We should] learn a lesson, not just complain, or find fault. Everybody bears some responsibility, including Comrade Mao Zedong, who decided on ‘10.7’ [billion tons of steel]. How can he not share some responsibility? He made a self-criticism at the Shanghai Conference, admitting that he was somewhat hot-headed. I also bear some responsibility. At least I did not oppose [the ideas] at the time. What is great about the Chairman is that he can figure out problems in time and makes a quick adjustment....

Morning, July 7:
The people’s communes, I believe, were established too early.... without any early experimentation. It would be better if we had experimented for a year before they were set up.

Morning, July 8:
Mao has such high prestige within the party and among the Chinese people that he has no match in the whole world. However, this prestige should not be misused. It caused many problems when the Chairman’s opinions were communicated loosely.

Morning, July 10:

54Zhou Xiaozhou was a former secretary to Mao and later became Party Secretary of Hunan Province. He was purged together with Peng Dehuai at Lushan in 1959.
After the liberation, a series of victories made many people hot-headed. Therefore, only those positive and advantageous reports were sent to Mao. After a great victory, it's easy to overlook and refuse opposite opinions.\textsuperscript{55}

What Peng said must have received general support. Other people, including Li Rui, Zhou Xiaozhou, and Zhang Wentian, shared Peng's opinions.\textsuperscript{56} After the group discussions, Peng felt it was necessary to let the Chairman know his opinions directly, since Mao did not participate in group discussions and since there was little time left before the conference was to end on July 15. On the night of July 14, Peng wrote a letter to Mao and sent it to Mao the next day. The letter unexpectedly ended Peng's political career, and turned him into an "anti-party element."

In retrospect, Peng's letter was only a request for the Party to draw lessons from past experience, not a challenge to Mao's position as party leader.\textsuperscript{57} On the contrary, Peng was careful not to create any misunderstandings between Mao and himself. Unlike the speeches quoted above, the letter directed no personal criticism at Mao. The first part of

\textsuperscript{55}Cong Jin, 199-200.

\textsuperscript{56}All of them were purged together with Peng Dehuai.

the letter focused on the achievements made under Mao's leadership, but in discussing problems in the second part of his letter, Peng listed "petty bourgeois fanaticism" as one of the reasons for mistakes. Huang Kecheng, another major victim of the Lushan Conference, recognized Peng's mistake immediately when Peng later showed him the letter. "It is not very well written," commented Huang, "because there is 'sting' in it"—"sting" meaning that some of the words may offend Mao.58

Huang was right. Peng's letter offended Mao. Mao mentioned to Wang Renzhong59 the day after he got Peng's letter that he would not make any immediate comment on the phrase "petty bourgeois fanaticism."60 But Mao did not control his anger long. "Can you allow me to speak for a little while since you have said so much? I took sleeping pills three times [last night], but I still could not sleep."61 With these words, Mao launched his counterattack

58Cong Jin, 206.

59Wang Renzhong was the governor of Hubei Province at the time.

60In the CCP history, the expression "petty bourgeoisie" was employed to distinguish those who do not belong to proletariat class. Intellectuals, for example, belong to petty bourgeoisie instead of proletariat. Mao was from a rich peasant family and he went to school before he joined the revolution. That was why Mao was especially sensitive about the criticism related to "petty bourgeoisie."

61The Chairman was known to have serious bouts of insomnia. He would be in a very bad mood whenever he could not sleep.
on July 23, eight days after receiving Peng's letter.\textsuperscript{62}

Then words fell into the hall like bomb shells:

> Now some wind is blowing both within and outside of the Party. [The rightists said] nothing good about us and [expected that] we would fall.... All the rightists' opinions were repeated [at the meeting].... Some of them [who made criticism] are rightists and wavering elements themselves. They can not hold an overall view and are angry [about what happened]. [Some of them] will change after some work, but some of them [will not] because they also had problems in the past and were criticized before.... This time, [those] at the meeting ganged up with [those] outside the meeting. It's a pity that we cannot invite them [i.e. rightists] all, because Lushan is too small. Just invite them all, such as Luo Longji and Chen Mingshu,\textsuperscript{63} but the hall is indeed too small!

> .... Then, I will go to the countryside and lead the peasants to overthrow the government. If you People's Liberation Army (PLA) won't follow me, I will go looking for the Red Army. I will organize another PLA. I think the PLA will follow me.\textsuperscript{64}

According to Li Rui, who has provided the most detailed accounts of the Lushan Conference, most people present were shocked by the tone of Mao's speech. At least seven times Mao mentioned the phrase "petty bourgeois fanaticism."

After the speech, Peng tried to explain to Mao that the letter he wrote was nothing but an expression of his own opinions to the Chairman. He did not think it right for Mao

\textsuperscript{62}Li Rui, \textit{Shilu}, 145.

\textsuperscript{63}Both Luo Longji and Chen Mingshu were well known "rightists" at the time.

\textsuperscript{64}For Mao's speech, see Li Rui, \textit{Shilu}, 145-159.
to distribute the letter at the conference. Peng asked Mao to return the letter, but it was too late. The Chairman had made up his mind not to let him go.

At first it was not easy for Mao to settle his personal score with Peng. Despite the personal problems he had with some of his colleagues, Peng enjoyed a high reputation in the party. For several days after Mao's speech, criticism of Peng and others did not reach the level Mao had expected it to. While criticizing Peng, many participants also made self-criticism, admitting that they had not taken the letter as a serious problem before the Chairman's speech. Some of them even tried to help Peng by emphasizing repeatedly that Peng did not mean anything malicious by the letter.

On July 26, word from the Chairman reached the meeting. According to Li Rui's notebook, Mao's directive said this: "Do not just point to the letter, but also to the person as well. Draw clear distinctions [between party lines] and elucidate the problems. No ambiguity." Most people realized by now that Mao considered the problem between Peng

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65 When Li Rui attended the Lushan Conference, he recorded in his note books Mao's instructions and other people's speeches at the meetings. He was purged together with Peng Dehuai and was in "exile" outside Beijing until 1979. These note books were once taken away from him during the Cultural Revolution, but he managed to get them back after he returned to Beijing. These note books became precious sources for research of the Lushan Conference. Later, when Li Rui participated in drafting a Party solution, "On Question of Party History," adopted by the Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee, these notebooks helped his work greatly. Li Rui, Shilu, 14-16.
and himself as much deeper than a difference of opinion over party policy. The Chairman wanted more than criticism of Peng’s letter: he wanted criticism of Peng himself. On the same day, Peng on the advice of several comrades reluctantly made his first self-criticism. Peng noted later in his diary that he was very depressed and uneasy that he had to make a self-criticism against his will and to admit things he did not mean. "I felt as bad as if ten thousand swords had stabbed my heart," he wrote. 66

Nevertheless, Mao would not let the matter drop. With a keen political sensitivity sharpened by the harsh experiences of war, he saw much more than differences of opinions regarding the Great Leap Forward and the people’s communes. Peng’s letter provided Mao an opportunity to destroy what he perceived as strong anti-party tendencies inside as well as outside the Party. He would let people know that to deny the three flags was to deny the correctness of his leadership, and denial of his leadership within the party would not be tolerated. He would make sure that nothing like this ever happened again.

While Peng Dehuai was experiencing the agony of involuntary self-criticism, Mao was elevating the struggle to a higher level of principle. Soon thereafter, Tian Jiaying told Li Rui that a document concerning an "anti-party clique" was being drafted and Zhou Xiaozhou was one of

66Li Rui, Shilu, 179.
the clique. Tian wanted Li to pass the word to Zhou and tell him to be more cautious in what he said.

On July 29, Mao decided to call the Eighth Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress to meet on August 2 and continue discussing of the problem of "rightist tendencies" in the Party. Before the plenum, Peng received severe criticism at two enlarged meetings of a politburo committee on July 31 and August 1. Mao took the lead in the criticism, focusing on Peng’s past problems. Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Lin Biao participated in the meeting, and Peng Dehuai, Peng Zhen, He Long, Huang Kecheng, Zhou Xiaozhou, Zhou Hui, and Li Rui audited the meeting. Li Rui kept a record of the meeting, producing thereby what turned out to be a very important historical document. Li Rui was so pained watching Mao and others criticize Peng in so shameful a way that he could hardly keep his hand steady when he wrote. No one present stood up in Peng’s defense.  

The Plenum defined Peng Dehuai, Huang Kecheng, Zhang Wentian and Zhou Xiaozhou as the chief members of an anti-party clique. The Central Party Committee took several actions, among them "A Decision Concerning the Mistakes of

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67 Tian Jiaying, Li Rui and Zhou Xiaozhou had all worked as Mao’s secretaries. They maintained good personal relationships among themselves.

68 For these records, see Li Rui, Shilu, 210-39. More detailed discussion about the reasons behind Peng’s purge can be found in the next chapter when a CCP purge pattern is discussed.
the Anti-Party Clique Headed By Comrade Peng Dehuai" and "A Decision concerning the Removal of Comrade Huang Kecheng from his Position as Secretary of the Central Secretariat." On August 16, Mao wrote an important document entitled "The Origins of the Machine Gun, Mortar, and Others," in which he presented the dispute at Lushan as "a continuation of a life and death struggle between the two contradictory classes, the proletariat and the bourgeois, during the process of socialist revolution in the past ten years." The struggle would continue, Mao said, for another twenty or fifty years until the final extinction of classes. What began as a personal conflict between Mao and Peng had now become "a class struggle."

Events after the Lushan Conference, however, soon threatened Mao's leadership even more. Despite the victory in the "anti-rightist deviation" struggle during and after the first Lushan Conference, the economy continued to deteriorate in 1960 and famine spread across the countryside. Even those who firmly supported Mao in his struggle against Peng began to question Mao's handling of it. On January 11, 1962, a working conference of the Central Committee, also known as the "Conference of Seven Thousand People" [qiqianren dahui] met in Beijing. In his

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69 Cong Jin, 219.

report on the conference, Liu Shaoqi admitted nationwide problems much more frankly than anyone had done so before, though he included exaggerated compliments about past achievements to mitigate what he reported. What was more alarming to Mao in the report was that Liu described the problems as due "seventy percent from natural disaster, but thirty percent from human factors." This assessment contradicted Mao's own judgment, and in fact was consonant with Peng's early notion on the problems of party leadership. Many scholars have since maintained that it was Liu's report at the "Conference of Seven Thousand People" that first provoked Mao's distrust of Liu. Later at the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Party Committee in 1966, Mao referred to "the problem of 1962" in his big-character poster announcing his split with Liu. Jiang Qing, Madame Mao, gave a clearer indication of Mao's resentment of Liu's report when she said later that "the Cultural Revolution finally enabled [us] to give vent to the anger nursed since the "Conference of Seven Thousand People.""  

To his dismay, Mao finally had to relinquish personal direction of economic works, which he had taken over in 1956 after his severe criticism of Chen Yun, Zhou Enlai, and others for their opposition to Mao's ideas of a rapid acceleration of economic development. After the "Conference

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71 See, for example, Cong Jin, 404.

72 Cong Jin, 713.
of Seven Thousand People," Liu Shaoqi presided over an
enlarged meeting of the Standing Committee that discussed
the national budget and economy. When the meeting was over,
Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping went together to
Wuhan to report to Mao, asking for his endorsement of their
decisions to restore the Small Group of Central Finance and
Economy, which Mao had abolished in 1956, and to appoint
Chen Yun to head the group. The requests were actually
pleas to Mao to yield responsibility for directing the
economy to Chen Yun. Mao saw the requests as a personal
humiliation, a sign that he was no longer an "infallible"
and unchallengeable leader to his colleagues. This was what
Jiang Qing referred to when she mentioned Mao’s "nursed
anger."

Although it was difficult for Mao to acknowledge his
own failures, he was forced to do so this time. He could
not deny that he bore responsibility for the economic
disasters during the period of his leadership since 1956.
Neither could he overlook the fact that people were starving
to death, having seen with his own eyes how starved his own
daughter was when she came home from boarding school.
Whether Mao ever regretted what he had done is unknown, but
he did refuse to have meat with his meals for at least seven
months beginning in the summer of 1960.73

73Ding Shu, 216.
Mao thus retired from the "front line" of leadership when he agreed the group's request, but he could not and would not give up his leadership so easily. As Peng Dehuai had said privately to a friend during the Lushan Conference, "The first emperor who established a new dynasty was usually great, but at the same time, terrible." To Mao's disappointment, he could not easily find fault with his successors in their leadership in the economic field. The state economy was soon recovering through the efforts of Chen Yun and others. Starting from 1962, the state economy improved. There was a 25 million jin increase in grain output in 1962, 6.2 percent more than that of 1961. The average salary for workers also increased by 6 percent. In fact, the national economy had reached an all-time high in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution began. Economic achievements under the leadership of Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai and Chen Yun collectively made Mao feel left out. To compensate for the feeling, he decided to make a breakthrough in the field of Marxist social theory. Mao worked on the theory of class struggle continuously until he finally perfected his theory of "continuing revolution" to justify the coming revolution.

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74 Cong Jin, 429-431.

75 Zhu Jiaming, "Mao Zedong wannian dui jingji de zhuzhang yu xuanze," ["Mao Zedong's Basic Ideas and Choices in the Economy in his Late Years"], in Xiao Yanzhong, 91, and Wen Tiejun, 8.
Continuing the Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

For a long time, Mao had been the major theorist of the CCP, though what was known later as Mao Zedong Thought included the collective efforts of many others. While other leaders in the early 1960s concentrated on reviving the national economy, Mao used his time to contemplate certain problems of theory. In August 1962 at the working conference of the Central Committee at Beidaihe, Mao began maneuvering to refocus party work from economics to politics by means of re-emphasizing the theory of class struggle. According to the original agenda, the conference was to focus on agricultural and commercial policies. However, in a speech on the first day of the conference, Mao raised the question of class struggle and contradictions in socialist society. "If the proletariat overlooks their responsibility for leadership," Mao warned, "the capitalist restoration is quite possible." Mao thereby changed the agenda set for the conference, the remainder of which was almost entirely dedicated to discussions of the problems of class struggle. 76 At the following Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee, Mao continued his discussion on class struggle. "Never forget class struggle," Mao warned the Party. "From now on, we should talk about it year by year, month by month, and day by day. We will talk about it

76 Cong Jin, 508.
in every meeting, every party conference, and whenever [we] hold a meeting until we have a clearer Marxist and Leninist line on this." Mao's arbitrary directive severely interfered with the regular work of the party.

The party simply had no way to constrain its mighty but capricious leader. Liu Shaoqi and others repeatedly deferred to Mao on many important issues. The constant concession to Mao's arbitrary decisions not only disrupted in economic planning, but led to the tragic purges of many leaders during the Cultural Revolution. Liu himself never suspected that in supporting Mao's theory of class struggle, he was jeopardizing his political career and even his life. When he joined Mao in talking about class struggle and the threat of "bourgeois restoration" in China, he never imagined that Mao would one day accuse him of being the leader of such a threatened restoration several years later.

The communique of the tenth plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee reflected, once again, Mao's victory over the Party. The Party accepted Mao's idea of class struggle without reservation. It took Mao only seven months--from the "Conference of Seven Thousand People" in January 1962 to the Beidaihe Conference in August 1962--to reassert his control of the Party and redirect its attention from economic problems to the theory of class struggle. The communique, which Mao edited himself, announced that class

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77Cong Jin, 510.
struggle would continue through the entire transitional period from a socialist to a communist society. The class struggle would inevitably influence the Party itself and could become the source of revisionism within the party. The message was clear: because of the danger of revisionism, the Party would treat any difference of opinion within its ranks as a difference between Marxism and revisionism.

Mao needed only one more thing to implement his theory of the "continuing revolution"--an illegitimate authority structure to target in his future revolution. The conflict between the CCP and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since the late 1950s made finding that target easy. Mao had felt personally threatened by Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin not long after Stalin's death. Mao stood and watched as a respected Communist leader was turned into an "enemy of the people" overnight. Witnessing the Soviet example, Mao realized that his own comrades could do him more harm than his enemies outside the Party, because the comrades would be in position to disguise their purposes, as in the case of Khrushchev, who had appeared absolutely loyal to Stalin before Stalin died. To Mao, "capitalist restoration" in the Soviet Union began with the denunciation of Stalin. Thus, Mao made a logical connection between protecting his personal reputation and protecting that of the Party.

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78 Cong Jin, 518.
Mao became excited again by the challenge posed by a new kind of enemy--revisionists within the party. Mao decided to launch a new nationwide struggle against revisionism to guard the country against a "capitalist restoration." In February 1963, the Working Conference of the Party Central Committee in Beijing decided to launch struggles against "five-antis" [wu fan] in the cities and for "four-cleans" [si qing] in the countryside. Mao traveled extensively after the conference to organize forces for these struggles. To his disappointment, he found little enthusiasm for the struggles among provincial leaders. He complained in May 1963 that of the official he conferred with in eleven provinces, only two, Liu Zihou, First Secretary of the Party Committee in Hebei Province, and Wang Yanchun, Secretary of the Party Committee of Hunan Province, mentioned the Socialist Educational Movement. Mao believed the problems of revisionism were not just among the party cadres at the bottom level.

The Socialist Educational Movement was something of a prelude to the Cultural Revolution. It was Mao's first effort against revisionists within the party. The most

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79Cong Jin, 526. The "Five-evils" included corruption, speculation, extravagance and waste, decentralization and bureaucracy. The "Four-cleans" meant to be clean on political, economical, organizational and ideological questions. Later, at the national working conference held by the Politburo in December 1964, the two movements were renamed as the "Socialist Educational Movement."

80Cong Jin, 526.
significant consequence of the movement was the clash between Mao and Liu Shaoqi over differing conceptualizations of the movement itself. To Liu, the movement should address problems at the lower levels of the party structure, whereas Mao wanted to use the movement to purge "the capitalist roaders within the party." This disagreement deepened Mao's personal animus against Liu. If in 1962, Mao had hesitated turn against Liu Shaoqi, who had been one of his most loyal followers for thirty years, he now began to consider seriously the possibility of doing just that. Mao was irritated that Liu was unimpressed by Mao's claim that there were "capitalist roaders within the Party." Although Liu did not challenge the claim directly and even agreed that there were some cadres within the party taking a "capitalist road," he insisted that it was an exaggeration to take them as a faction. Liu was worried that a wholesale pursuit of "capitalist roaders" would make too many party cadres vulnerable, especially on the provincial level.

Liu's anxiety was well founded. As early as the Lushan Conference in 1959, Mao was already detecting "machine guns\footnote{For the different conceptualizations between Mao and Liu regarding the movement, see Dittmer, Liu Shaoqi, 228-229.}"

\footnote{In answering a question from Edgar Snow in December 1970, Mao admitted that he gave serious thought to the problem of Liu in January 1965 when he was outlining the "23 items," which is a short name for the document entitled "On Questions of the Socialist Educational Movement in the Countryside at Present" endorsed by Working Conference of the Politburo in January 1964.}
within the party. He then raised the problem of capitalist roaders in the "23 items," which indicated that he had decided to cleanse the party from within. Mao professed to be especially pessimistic about the situation in 1963-1964. "One third of the power in the country is no longer in our hands, but in the hands of our enemies'," Mao told a Central Committee working conference on June 8, 1964. In a document concerning the Socialist Education Movement, Mao assessed the situation as follows:

Class enemies of all descriptions [niu gui she shen] will be at large everywhere, but our cadres still totally ignore them. Many of us, not knowing a distinction between enemies and friends, will cooperate with the enemy or be corrupted by the enemy.... Many workers, peasants and intellectuals will also be turned to their side through their weakness to various tricks [of the enemies]. If things go on like this, it won't be long, several years to ten years at the least and several decades at the most, [reactionaries] will inevitably succeed in their nationwide counterrevolutionary restoration. The Marxist party will be turned into a revisionist party and a fascist party, and the whole country will change color. Please think about this, comrades. What a dangerous situation this will be.

The problems he encountered in trying to implement the Socialist Educational Movement convinced Mao that although the problems he encountered appeared at the bottom, their roots were at the top. In January 1964, he therefore began to prepare his comrades for a split in the Party Central

83Cong Jin, 533.
84Cong Jin, 530.
Committee. "What are you going to do, if revisionism appears in the Central Committee?" Mao asked responsible cadres in the provinces. Mao's warnings on this point became more and more frequent and serious until he finally announced his discovery: "the Khrushchev is right beside us." Thus, Mao was fully justified to start his second revolution, or rather to continue the revolution.

In conclusion, the theory of "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" was a summary of Mao's visions and practices after 1949. In many ways, it reflected Mao's own experience and personality. Mao and his comrades were nostalgic about their wartime experience and always tried to keep the revolutionary spirit alive for economic work. They were extremely anxious to achieve economic success in order to maintain their legitimacy to govern China. Driven by their communist ideology, Mao and his comrades idealistically assumed that the proletariat should be able to prove their system to be superior to the capitalist system. They launched one "great leap forward" after another in economic areas in order to show that China could achieve much faster economic growth than the bourgeoisie had achieved in the past one hundred years. Unfortunately, the economy did not develop in the way Mao wanted. Human will and enthusiasm alone cannot guarantee

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85 Cong Jin, 604.
faster economic growth. On the contrary, arbitrary decisions and blind belief in wartime experience threw the country into an economic crisis. The result was a dramatic decrease in population by 10,000,000 to 30,000,000 in the early 1960s.\(^8\)\(^6\)

Despite economic setbacks, Mao refused to admit problems in the political system and ignored the problem of the poor-qualifications of his party cadres in leading economic construction. He took any criticism as a challenge to his leadership or to his party’s legitimacy to rule. In 1957, the party launched a large-scale anti-rightist movement to "counterattack" the challenge to the party leadership from the society. Over 100,000 people were labelled "rightist" and persecuted. In 1959, Mao turned against his own comrades who criticized the party’s economic policies. This led to the purge of Peng Dehuai and other high officials and the consequent "anti-rightist deviation" movement made 365,000 victims in the party itself.\(^8\)\(^7\)

When Mao finally had to accept partial blame for the mistaken economic policies and retreated from the first line of leadership, he was upset as well as resentful. As a charismatic leader, he simply did not believe that anything was beyond his ability. In his reply to the question about

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\(^8\)\(^6\)For the population decrease during the Great Leap Forward, see Bachman, \textit{Bureaucracy}, 4-5.

\(^8\)\(^7\)For the detail of this movement, see Cong Jin, 227-232.
Mao's most striking characteristic, Li Yinqiao described it as "his courage to encounter challenges." Li recited one anecdote to illustrate Mao's personality. One day at Beidaihe, Mao was suddenly in a mood to go swimming, despite the extremely rough weather, and stubbornly ignoring all advice from his staff, Mao rushed to the roaring sea, shouting to his bodyguards behind him, "Come on, I don't think it is worse than the seven brigades of Liu Kan." One big wave knocked all of them down on the beach. Seeing his guards in a frenzy, Mao laughed and yelled to the sea, "Good, I finally found my match. I will see who is the winner!" He also got angry with his bodyguards. "If you lose your courage to follow me, you may go. I will organize other forces to fight," Mao yelled to his staff. For the second and third time, he rushed into the water, surrounded by his guards, only to be thrown back by the mountainous waves. When he finally had to give up, he still murmured about coming back again.

88During Mao's retreat from Yan'an in 1945, he was hotly pursued by Liu Kan's seven brigades. Later, Mao always referred to this experience when he encountered problems, because it was one of the most dangerous experiences of his life. Chen Jin, Mao Zedong's wenhua xingge [The Cultural Character of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1991), 243.

89Quan Yanchi, "Zouxia shentian de Mao Zedong" ["Mao Zedong Who Came Down the Shrine--interviews with "Chief Bodyguard"] Xinhua wenzhai New China Digest 7-8 (1989): 101-104.
His personal preferences and beliefs revealed more penetratively his defiant character. As one Chinese scholar puts it, Mao's worst enemy was a pedestrian life without any challenges. He loved hot peppers and liked his dishes very hot. To him, all the good revolutionaries should be able to stand hot food like him. He kept experimenting on new ideas, and simply would not give up pursuing his personal dream of creating a new society. He could not face the loss of his authority and was furious over challenges to his ideas. He knew he was not infallible, but he did not need someone else to point this out to him. A combination of his early utopian dream and a senile paranoia inspired him to engage in one struggle after another. He never wanted the revolution to stop. A continuing revolution would reassure him of his indispensability as a revolutionary leader.

As a person, this may add to Mao's personal charm, but as a charismatic leader, this was a disaster to the party and the country who created him. Several months after he retired from leading economic work, he came back with a sword of "class struggle." With this, he knocked down most of his colleagues and recreated the myth of an invincible leader. He must have felt the greatest personal satisfaction when he stood atop Tian'anmen to receive worship from hundreds of thousands of Red Guards. This began the most disastrous period in its history as the People's Republic.
In their studies of Mao Zedong, Chinese party historians have made a clear distinction between a "great Mao" during his prime and an "erroneous Mao" in his later years. They described both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution as mistakes made by an elderly Mao. They also constantly compare Mao with Stalin in his late years, and suggest thereby that mighty leaders who rule too long engender political instability. Few of these scholars, however, have been made to elucidate what exactly differentiated the "great Mao" from the "erroneous Mao."

Even among the extensive and diverse studies of Mao by Western scholars, only a few offer any analyses of Mao's physical and psychological problems in his later years.¹

Any inquiry into the probable physical and psychological effects of aging on Mao leads one to gerontocracy, government by the elderly and in turn to gerontology, the study of the effects of aging on human behavior, including the behavior of aged political leaders.

It is not the purpose here to make a systematic study of the elderly Mao exclusively from gerontocratic or gerontological perspectives. It is instead to make connections between the Cultural Revolution and Mao's personal circumstances, including the fact that he was 73 years old in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution began. One of the most important features of national politics during the Cultural Revolution was Mao's continuing purge of high officials. More or less suddenly, Mao turned against almost all of his long-term Party comrades. The pattern of his behavior in doing so suggests what psychologists call senile paranoia. To understand Mao's behavior, it is necessary to view it in light of that psychological concept. Doing so will not offer definitive answers to questions about the Cultural Revolution, but it will add additional pieces of information to questions about the origin and course of the Cultural Revolution.

According to general theories of social gerontology, people undergo physical and psychological changes in later adulthood. As a result of these changes, elderly persons are more subject to physical and mental impairments that affect their abilities to function efficiently. Social gerontologists believe that such conditions are most
noticeable among persons of advanced ages, particularly those over 75.²

If aging is a difficult experience for most people, the idea of impending death is especially painful for powerful political leaders without heirs they can depend on to perpetuate their legacy intact. In a discussion of "the politics of rejuvenation," Angus McIntyre identifies the patterned behavior of such political leaders. Prominent among the patterns is reliance on the ego-defense mechanism of denial of death in the form of fantasies of immortality or indispensability. Another prominent pattern is the manic defense of idealization—conjuring up a renovated image of their youthful political selves as an antidote to the envy of their contemporary peers.³ Many of McIntyre’s insights about aged leaders are especially pertinent to the elderly Mao in the Cultural Revolution. In fact several of Mao’s biographers have already established a connection between Mao’s inner struggle against old age and his role in the Revolution. Robert J. Lifton has suggested that Mao sought


³Angus McIntyre, "Conclusion," in Aging & Political Leadership, 283.
to deny his imminent death by seeking "immortality" through the Cultural Revolution. 4

Integration of Life and the Theories of the Cultural Revolution

Among the characteristic concerns identified by psychologists of later adulthood are ongoing internalized struggles to accept one's life as lived and to develop an acceptable point of view about death. E. H. Erikson described this as a conflict of integrity versus despair in later adulthood. 5 During the process of searching for the meaning of his or her life, an individual is "inevitably vulnerable to some degree about the limitations of his accomplishments." In order to overcome the fear of death, an aged adult may exaggerate his or her importance by associating his or her existence with something more grandiose than the individual's life itself. At the same time, such an aging adult may try to develop a sense of

4Lifton, 7. Schram also believed that the Cultural Revolution was Mao's attempt to erect his monument in China for centuries to come. Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 345.

5Integrity, as it is used in Erikson's theory, refers to an ability to accept the facts of one's life and to face death without fear. B.M. Newman and P.R. Newman, "Later Adulthood" in Jon Hendricks and C. Davis Hendricks, Dimensions of Aging (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1979), 131.
effectiveness and vitality to "lessen the threat of death as a blow to narcissism.""

In Mao's case, the personal psychology of an elderly individual had implication far beyond the man himself. Mao's psychological adjustment to aging was not that of an individual coming to terms with himself and his family and immediate circumstance, but that of a relationship between an absolutely powerful charismatic leader and the people, the country and the causes he had led. The idea of the "continuing revolution" discussed in the last chapter was Mao's remedy for his own psychological dilemmas as an old man. It provided a logical link between the meaning of his own life and of China's political future. As Lucian Pye put it, psychologically, Mao confused the meaning of the 1949 revolution with the meaning of his own life. The aged Mao was thus unable to "distinguish between the moment in history when he was the appropriate revolutionary leader and the need for a different role for future revolutionary spirits in China."7 The older he got, the more deeply Mao was obsessed with the revolution that gave meaning to his life. It was too painful for him to accept the fact that he could lead the revolution of 1949, but he could not lead the economic transformation the country needed after the


7Pye, Mao Tse-tung, 314.
revolution. His effort to show that the latter was not the case resulted in the Great Leap Forward.

Psychologically, Mao was unprepared to deal with failure in later adulthood. After the failure of his courageous experiment to accelerate economic development by force of human will, he reasserted his leadership of the revolution by developing a theory of the "continuing revolution." This theory guaranteed the future of Communist China and thus affirmed the immortality of his generation and its revolutionary achievement. Mao fantasized these things in terms of a personal war to save China from "revisionists" or "capitalist restoration." The fantasy validated to himself and hopefully to the country as well his own indispensability and the immortality on the one hand, and to satisfy his nostalgia for revolutionary experience on the other. The theory of "continuing revolution" provided Mao with a perfect sense of immortality by connecting the meaning of his past and present with China's future.

Cognitive Impairments and the Decision to Undertake a Cultural Revolution

Examining Mao's decision to launch the Cultural Revolution from a cognitive point of view offers a different psychological perspective. This point of view suggests that motivational as well unmotivational forces may have affected
Mao's decision. According to Yaacov Vertzberger, motivational biases "arise from emotions, personal motives and needs, and have ego-defensive functions," whereas unmotivational biases are the "products of complexity of the environment, the inherent limitations on cognitive capabilities, and the strategies used to overcome them."

In the case of Mao, the influence of both types of biases was obvious in many of his decisions before and during the Cultural Revolution. The connection between Mao's theory of the Cultural Revolution and his pursuit of personal immortality has already been noted. The Chairman became increasingly stubborn in pushing his own ideas upon the party, and his stubbornness, increasing with his aging, was largely a result of motivational biases in Mao's outlook. Aging, according to Vertzberger, tends to produce rigidity and overconfidence in the individual, and a preference for extreme choices.\(^9\)

However, Mao's miscalculations in his old age may not have been conscious mistakes. Mao's well-worded worries about China's future sounded valid to many of his comrades. There did indeed exist a world-wide enmity toward Mao's China during the first two decades of the Republic. The Soviet Union, which under Stalin Mao considered a "big


\(^9\)Vertzberger, 183.
brother," became an enemy under Khrushchev. Now, in China itself, corruption and bureaucratism within the Party and the government worsened in the early 1960s. Until the eve of the Cultural Revolution, few of Mao’s colleagues questioned the necessity of reform, much less a full-scale cultural revolution. In fact, it was Liu Shaoqi who chaired the enlarged politburo meeting in May 1966 that made the decision to stage the Cultural Revolution. What eventually cost Mao the support of most of his colleagues during that Revolution was not his ideas about the need for the Revolution, but the way Mao conducted it--by mobilizing the Red Guards and the masses to smash virtually all state and party institutions. Even in China of the 1990s, government and Party officials still generally accept Mao’s idea of preventing a Heping yanbian [peaceful evolution] to capitalism.

When Mao mixed his motives and need for immortality with perceptions of problems in the Party and the government, his own cognitive biases seemed to disappear for himself and were less visible to his comrades. According to Vertzberger, once motivational biases integrate themselves into one’s internal cognitive process, the individual may become even more convinced of a decision because he will "consequently ignore or even distort the interpretation of information indicating the need for major policy change." This process may be even more pronounced in an elderly
leader, because even if the leader realizes his motivational biases, he is less likely than a younger person to attempt to correct them because of the psychological discomforts such a correction may arouse.\textsuperscript{10} This was exactly the case with Mao during the Cultural Revolution. Unaware of anything like the above cognitive considerations, Mao was certain that his decisions were fully justified and based on sound understandings of the realities he faced. The following discussion will also show that by the time of the Lin Biao Incident in 1971, Mao was at least intermittently aware of his errors in the Cultural Revolution. However, the elderly Mao was psychologically incapable of correcting his mistakes. He was thus preoccupied for the rest of his life defending the Cultural Revolution, his last contribution to China and the one that would lead to his immortality.

\textbf{Fear of Death and the Rejuvenation of Society}

Some of the conceptualizations and classifications of aging proposed by McIntyre and other gerontologists will further facilitate the discussion of the psychological problems of the elderly Mao. In his discussion of different types of aging among leaders, McIntyre employed concepts of reparative and destructive narcissistic leadership. The former type is characterized by a leader's protection of

\textsuperscript{10}Vertzberger, 184-185.
"his grandiose self by idealizing his supporters," and the latter by a leader’s protection of "his grandiose self by devaluing his opponents." Sometimes, the two types may coexist in the same leader.11

Applying McIntyre’s concepts, we find in the elderly Mao’s behavior during the Cultural Revolution a standard case of shifting between reparative and destructive leadership. The Cultural Revolution from its beginning was characterized by the mobilization of youth to rebel against old authorities and extensive purges of senior party officials. Scholars have proposed several hypotheses to link the two prominent phenomena. Some of them have suggested that Mao mobilized the Red Guards in order to overthrow his political opponents.12 Others proposed a reverse cause-effect relationship according to which the downfall of large numbers of senior officials was the logical result of Mao’s outrageous efforts to rejuvenate society by unleashing a new revolutionary spirit.13 Following McIntyre’s argument, we may also infer a third

11 For further discussions on this, see McIntyre, Aging & Political Leadership, 290-298.


13 Dittmer suggests such an hypotheses when he discusses the purge of a rather large proportion of China’s leaders as the immediate result of Mao’s mobilization efforts. Dittmer, "Mao Zedong," 163-170.
hypothesis, which suggests a parallel instead of causal relationship between the two phenomena as Mao kept shifting between reparative and destructive forms of leadership. When Mao idealized the Chinese youth, his distrust of colleagues of his own age went deeper and deeper. The two processes paralleled each other during the revolution. The Cultural Revolution began with Mao's dual intentions to "rejuvenate and revitalize the entire society" on one hand and to clear the party of capitalist roaders on the other.14

There is an obvious link between the narcissistic Mao and his mobilization of the Red Guards to launch the revolution. Like many other aged leaders, Mao responded to his own old age by a spurious identification with youth. If the death of his own revolutionary generation was now inevitable, it would lessen Mao's own psychological agony to see the revolutionary spirit flourishing in the young. In Robert Lifton's words, Mao unconsciously transferred his dread of the "historical death" of the revolution onto his exaggerated image of the revolutionary spirit of Chinese youth.15 Lowell Dittmer has noticed a three-stage change in Mao's attitude toward youth with his advancing age. Mao's skeptical attitude toward youth in the 1930s turned into ambivalence in the mid-1950s, which itself gave way to

14Dittmer, "Mao Zedong," 162.
15Lifton, 19.
an exaggerated belief in the significance of youth to perpetuate the revolution, and thus Mao’s own immortality. "The generation of our young people will build our poor country into a great socialist power with their own hands," Mao wrote to college students in 1965. "The Chinese youth with strong absolution and high aspiration will devote all themselves to fulfil this great historical mission." 

In this idealization of youth, Mao had also nostalgically identified them with his own rebellious self. When he was young, he often had serious conflicts with his teachers. He wandered from one school to another, failing to find a niche in any of them. Mao never forgot the humiliation he felt as an assistant in the library at Beijing University. "My office was so low that people avoided me," he recalled. This personal experience explained in part why Mao distrusted intellectuals in general for the rest of his life. He respected knowledge, but he resented the condescending air he associated with intellectuals, who had embarrassed him. Mao maintained a bitter feeling toward school teachers and professors

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throughout his life. Once he encouraged a niece to rebel against school rules by refusing to return to school on time, "Tell them [school authorities] I will listen to Mao because I am his relative. I will rebel because I listen to him." On another occasion, Mao spoke to a nephew of his bias against professors, "Reform of education is in essence a reform of teachers," Mao said. "The teachers usually only have that much to offer and they are no good without their lecture notes." It is no wonder that as soon as the Cultural Revolution began, school teachers became the victims of rebellious students.

Meanwhile, Mao took increasing pleasure in educating young people in his later years. He told Edgar Snow he wanted to be remembered only as a teacher when the two of them discussed the four popular titles he had received during the Cultural Revolution. The youth were his hope. Identifying himself with them assuaged the pain of facing an impending death and brought vitality and energy to his own life. At the same time, Mao always worried about the genuineness of young people's commitment to the revolution. In a talk with his nephew, Mao expressed his deep concern over the softness of the younger generation:

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19Mao Zedong sixiang wansui, M1400-12c, 211.
20Mao Zedong sixiang wansui, M1400-12c, 153.
You only think about yourself and your own problems. Your father remained faithful and unyielding in front of enemies, because he was serving the majority of the people. You probably would have surrendered and begged for your life if you had been him. Many of our family members were killed by the Guomindang and U.S. imperialists. You were brought up on eggs and candy and have never known hardship. I will be quite contented if you remain as a zhongjianpai [middle-of-the-roader]. How can you be a leftist since you have never suffered?22

Mao concluded that what the young people needed was the disciplining experiences of a "great revolutionary storm." When Mao learned about students organizing themselves in high schools, he immediately supported the idea, and later made use of them as the Red Guard. On August 1, 1966 Mao wrote a personal letter to the Red Guards expressing his support:

Allow me to express my warm support to you. At the same time, I sincerely support the big-character poster, which spelled out the reasons to rebel, by the "Red Flag Fighting Group" from the secondary school attached to Beijing University as well as the revolutionary speech by Comrade Peng who represented the "Red Flag Fighting Group" at the June 25 meeting of all the faculty and students at Beijing University. 23

As the leader of the country, Mao surely knew that it was imprudent to support rebellious students. But Mao was determined to do so, despite differences of opinion on the subject within the Central Government. Mao’s letter was not

22Mao Zedong sixiang wansui, M1400-12c, 150-151.
23Mao Zedong sixiang wansui, M1400-12c, 127.
written just to support the students, but to challenge his party colleagues. He had the letter printed and distributed during the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee (August 1 to 12, 1966). In doing so, Mao forced the Central Party Committee to go along with him, thereby confirming the legitimacy of the Red Guard organizations.

On August 18, 1966, the Red Guards held their first rally at Tian’anmen. Concerns over whether the young people were ready to continue the revolution had heretofore put a damper on Mao’s personal satisfaction at receiving worship from the masses. Mao told Wang Li and others in mid-August 1966 that one reason revisionism succeeded had in the Soviet Union was that only a limited number of people had had the chance to see Lenin in person. Chinese youth would therefore have a chance to see their revolutionary leader, the more the better.24 Before his decision to receive the Red Guards publicly and on a large scale, Mao had been very much impressed by the emotions his appearance had aroused at a Red Guard office on an earlier occasion. He was convinced that direct contact between leader and young people was crucial to implant in them the revolutionary spirit. In his excitement at the Tian’anmen rally, he even changed one

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young girl's name from Song Bingbing to Song Yaowu when she
gave him a "red guard" armband.\textsuperscript{25}

This was the beginning of what was later known as
dachuanlian [establishing contacts]. On September 5, the
Party Central Committee and the State Council issued
directive to facilitate dachuanlian. The directive
requested various government agencies to provide free
transportation, board and lodging for Red Guards. The
central government would absorb the cost. Between August to
November 1966, over 13 million Red Guards came to Beijing to
attend eight rallies and to see Mao.\textsuperscript{26} Mao was as
impressed as were the students. He was excited by the
evident vitality of the students. Dachuanlian soon produced
nationwide disarray, as thousands of students flocked to
Beijing and other cities, and swarmed into famous historical
places, such as Shaoshan, Mao’s home town, and Jingganshan,
where Mao’s revolution had started. The army mobilized to
solve the resulting logistical problems by offering shelter,
transportation and food to the students. The Air Force had
to send planes and helicopters from time to time to drop
food and clothes to people stuck in Shaoshan and other
mountain areas.\textsuperscript{27} In late October, the central government

\textsuperscript{25}Bingbing in Chinese means "refined and courteous"
whereas yaowu means "wants to be armed."

\textsuperscript{26}Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank, Cambridge
History, vol 15, part 2, 143.

\textsuperscript{27}Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 77-79.
moved to end this chaotic movement. However, Mao still indulged in the excitement and suggested the establishment of permanent stations nationwide to receive Red Guards. He dropped the suggestion only after Zhou Enlai and others pointed out its inappropriateness.

It was not long before the Red Guards began to disappoint Mao. Out of control Red Guards began to engage in disruptive activities, and turned against each other instead of following Mao's directives to grasp power from "capitalist roaders."²⁸ Mao admitted at the central working meeting in October that he was at fault for allowing three things to happen: broadcasting the poster at Beijing University, supporting the Red Guards, and promoting dachuanlian.²⁹ In January 1967, only six months after condemning Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping for sending work teams to schools, Mao himself dispatched soldiers and workers to the schools to contain the students. The next year, on July 1968, in one of his meetings with students leaders, Mao was in tears when he said to Kuai Dafu, one of the most famous of the leaders, "You have let me down, and what is more, you have disappointed the workers, peasants


²⁹Mao Zedong sixiang wansui, M1400-7, 148.
and soldiers in China. Finally disillusioned with the Red Guards, Mao sent millions of them to the countryside in 1968.

**A Bourgeois Headquarters in the Party and Mao's Destructive Defense**

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao oscillated between two alternative defense mechanisms, idealizing youth and destroying his enemies. Mao's suspicion of his comrades increased to the point of paranoia as he grew older, especially after Khrushchev denounced Stalin. Mao was increasingly anxious to identify potential enemies, and to disarm them before they struck at him. In a speech at the Twelfth Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee, he explicated his concerns over the problem of spotting enemies, "In the past, we fought from the north to the south. That kind of war was easy to fight, because the enemies were clear to us. The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution is much more difficult than that type of war."³¹ The problem, he continued, was the confusion of antagonistic contradictions (enemies) with non-antagonistic contradictions (comrades who make mistakes). There was something of a Don Quixote fantasy in such statements. Even if he could not identify his enemies, Mao was ready to

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³⁰Dittmer, "Mao Zedong," 164.
confront them, and his inability to identify them increased his certainty that enemies were everywhere.

Although not all of Mao's worries were unjustified, he certainly exaggerated the problem of internal enemies. His distrust of his comrades were soon out of control. In order to gain "an illusory security," Mao resorted to increasingly aggressive actions against his comrades.32 His paranoid suspicion had been growing ever since he disengaged himself from regular work in 1959 and retreated into his private world to contemplate theory. It is not an overstatement to say that most purges of high officials after 1949 were at least partially the consequences of Mao's susceptible paranoia.

In the case of the purge of Peng Dehuai, discussed above, Mao's mistrust of Peng largely accounted for Peng's ouster. The letter Peng wrote to Mao at Lushan was by no means the sole reason for Peng's fall. During the Great Leap Forward, Peng was not the only person who wrote to Mao to complain about the Great Leap Forward and the people's communes. Li Yunzhong, deputy director of the Bureau of Infrastructure of the State Planning Committee, wrote a similar letter and also addressed it to Mao.33 Liu Shaoqi

32 For more discussion concerning paranoid suspicion of leaders, see Vertzberger, 176.

33 The letter was also printed and distributed later at Lushan conference with Mao's critical comments. Li Rui, Lushan huiyi, 63-71; Bo Yibo, Ruogan zhongda juece yu shijian de huigu [Reminiscence of Several Important Policies
explained later, in 1962, that nothing had been really wrong with Peng's letter. The problem was the "clique" Peng had formed within the party.  

Mao and Peng did not trust each other for specific historical reasons. Mao once went over his feuds with others in a speech before the Lushan Conference. As he named those who opposed him in the past, he interjected, "Peng hates me with an all-consuming passion." Mao's problem with Peng went back at least to the Yan'an period. In 1945, Peng was a major victim at a meeting called the "East-China Forum." There Mao and his Party comrades criticized Peng for his direction of the controversial "the hundred regiments campaign," and for his "tendency to seek independence from the Central Party Committee." Although Peng made a self-criticism at the meeting, he never admitted his alleged errors. In an emotional moment at Lushan in 1959, Peng shouted at Mao, "You 'screwed' me for forty days at Yan'an. Why can't you allow me to 'screw' you for twenty


34For an excerpt of Liu's speech, see Xu Quanxing, 237.

35Li Rui, Lushan huiyi, 125.

36For more discussion about the meeting at Yan'an, see Po Yibo, Lingxiu, yuanshuai, zhanyou [The leader, the Marshal and the Comrade] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1992), 105-108. For Peng's self-defence of the campaign, see Peng Dehuai, Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 434-447.

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days?"37 Peng’s vulgar language shocked the people, and later Peng angrily refused Mao’s suggestion that they talk things over. 38 Understandably, such an outburst made it more difficult for Mao to forgive Peng, and Mao later repeated Peng’s words at three high-level meetings. In 1962, at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee, for example, Mao said "The first Lushan conference was meant to discuss our work. But Peng Dehuai came out [with vulgar language]. This ‘screw’ by Peng messed up everything and interrupted our work."39

Mao also had personal scores to settle with Peng. In his letter to Mao Peng had quoted a Chinese proverb that says that whoever creates something new may run the risk of no descendants, meaning that the individual risks a punishment from heaven. In criticizing Peng’s letter on July 23, 1959, an emotional Mao responded to Peng, "Should the person who made a start lose his descendants? Should I have no descendants? One of my sons was killed and the other had a mental problem. Should I have no descendants because of this?"40 Everyone at the meeting was touched when they saw tears in Mao’s eyes, for they knew that Mao’s

37Bo Yibo, Huiqu, 880, and Xu Quanxing, Mao Zedong, 233.
38Li Yinqiao, Zaji, 137-138.
39Xu Quanxing, 233.
40Li Rui, Lushan huixi shilu (A True Record of the Lushan Conference) (Beijing: Chunqiu chubanshe, 1989), 174.
eldest son, Mao Anying, was killed during the Korea War while serving under Peng Dehuai’s command. Mao never publicly blamed Peng for the death of his son, but surely Peng should have known better than to provoke Mao on the point of having no descendants. By referring to his son’s death in his criticism of Peng, Mao won his audience over. Peng had clearly gone too far by in awakening Mao’s sorrow. The death of his son had been one of the heaviest emotional blows in Mao’s life. According to Mao’s daughter-in-law, Liu Songlin, Mao was in such enormous pain when he broke the news of Mao anying’s death to her that his hands turned icy-cold.41

Psychologically, Mao was unable to detach personal feelings or "motivational bias" from political decision making. He fell more and more deeply into a cognitive vicious circle as he aged. His personal feeling and suspicion gave rise to motivational biases toward people like Peng, which in turn worsened his tendencies toward paranoia. The result was to confirm his unrealistic perception that the party was full of conspirators against him. One example of the resulting confusion of reality and imagination was that Mao told his bodyguard on the day he

41Shao Yang, compiler, Beijing: Zhongguo de gaogang zidiman [Beijing: Children of High Officials in China] (Beijing: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1993), 8-9. Some Chinese scholars even suggest that the death of Mao Anying had the worst psychological impact on an elderly Mao. If Mao Anying had been able to outlive Mao, the Chairman probably would not have felt so keenly about the problem of succession.
delivered his "counter-attack" speech at Lushan that Peng's original name was Peng Dehua (Dehua means in Chinese "to obtain China"). "It means that Peng had ambition to control China," Mao claimed. What further aroused Mao's suspicion that Peng was a conspirator was Peng's trip to the Soviet Union and several East European countries in April 1959. Mao heard that in one of their talks, Khrushchev had acknowledged Peng as an "international hero," which aroused Mao's suspicion of cooperation between Peng and Khrushchev. At the enlarged Politburo meeting on August 1, 1959, Mao exclaimed, "You, Peng Dehuai, always want to reform the party and the world according to your ideas. For some reason, however, you never got the chance. This time, you got advice from abroad.... You smelled the other's odor about the Great Leap Forward and the People's communes." A chance event during the Lushan conference deepened Mao's suspicion of Peng's "organized conspiracy." After Mao's speech of July 23, Li Rui felt depressed, and went to see Zhou Xiaozhou. Zhou suggested that the two of them go

42Li Yinqiao, Zaji, 139.

43Xu Quanxing, Mao Zedong, 236. Clare Hollingworth believed that Khrushchev had private conversations with Peng during his visit to the Soviet Union, during which Khrushchev criticized Mao's mistakes during the Great Leap Forward and the formation of People's communes. Khrushchev allegedly urged Peng to write to Mao from Tirana, itemizing the points Khrushchev had raised. This version, however, still needs to be verified. Clare Hollingworth, Mao and the Men against Him (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), 98-99.

44Xu Quanxing, 236. Emphasis added.

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together to talk to Huang Kecheng. When they suggested to
Huang over the phone, however, Huang refused to see them,
fearing that people (or Mao) might misinterpret their get-
together as a group activity, which had repeatedly caused
trouble in the Party. Huang later changed his mind, when
Zhou insisted on coming to see him. What made things
worse was that during their ensuing talk, Peng, who stayed
just several doors away from Huang, also came over.
According to Peng, he came to discuss with Huang a telegram
for the Tibet Military Area. None of the men stayed long
at Huang's place. Their brief meeting, however, proved to
be a fatal mistake. When word of their meeting reached Mao,
he took it as evidence that Peng Dehuai, Huang Kecheng,
Zhang Wentian, Zhou Xiaozhou and Li Rui had formed a
"clique" against him. Within the CCP, an accusation of
organized anti-party activity was the worst thing that could
happen in one's political career. In the subsequent
criticism of Peng and the others, there was no way for the
accused to defend themselves. Even the fact that all of
them, except Zhang Wentian, were from Hunan was held against
them. They were indicted as a "Hunan clique" first, and
then as the "military club."

Peng never admitted the charges. In his fury, he
shouted at the enlarged meeting of the Central Military

45Li Rui, Shilu, 160-161.
46Peng, Memoirs, 505.
Committee held after the Lushan conference, "You can expel me from the Party and have me shot! If any of you are members of the 'military club,' step forward to admit it yourselves." 47 Years later, when he recalled the events at Lushan, Li Rui still regretted that he had gone to Huang's quarters that night. 48 Nobody believed the meeting had been innocent. Liu Shaoqi, for example, said several years later, "The reason we staged the struggle against the anti-party clique headed by comrade Peng Dehuai at Lushan is because for a long time, Comrade Peng Dehuai formed a faction within the party. He even joined the anti-party clique of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi." 49 Li Rui probably would not have been a member of this "counter-revolutionary clique" if he had not happened to go to Huang's that night.

Comparing Peng's case with other purges later in the Cultural Revolution shows that what happened at Lushan was not unique. A number of factors were common to the purges of high Party officials. Some are political and accidental, but others are historical and personal. Some are necessary in nature, but others are contingent. A four-step pattern can be characterized inner-party struggles in Mao's era. A struggle always began with Mao's distrust of an individual. The Chairman then would begin to "work on public opinion"

47 Cong Jin, 304.
48 Li Rui, Shilu, 179.
49 Xu Quanxing, 237.

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against the individual by spreading complaints among cadres at various levels. Then came the stage of criticism and self-criticism, during which Mao mobilized forces to criticize the individual and in turn compel the individual to make a self-criticism. Once the individual admitted a "crime," the Party pronounced a verdict of guilty. Invoking his charismatic power, Mao then transferred his personal dislike and distrust into a fully "justified" party condemnation of the individual's outrageous crimes, such as having formed "an anti-party clique" in an attempt to split the Party.

The fate of those who thus fell out of Mao's favor was largely determined by an individual's relationship with Mao and other leaders. The stronger the historical and personal feud with Mao and others, the worse the criticism the individual received. In many cases, the criticism mounted until the victim was politically, if not physically destroyed. Mao was ruthless in these intra-party struggles, because cognitively, he gradually lost the ability to distinguish between a personal feud and a party conflict. Mao told his bodyguards many times that he fought only to protect the Party and not for personal reasons.\(^{50}\) Mao also insisted that he would never concede on questions of

\(^{50}\text{Xu Quanxing, 383.}\)
"principles". Once Mao identified an individual as a rival, he seldom gave him a chance to fight back. If a victim was lucky enough to survive, he or she might have a chance to be rehabilitated by Mao or Mao's successor, as in the cases of Deng Xiaoping and Luo Ruiqing. The less lucky might be rehabilitated posthumously after Mao's death, as were Liu Shaoqi and Peng Dehuai. Those with no luck at all continued to serve, also posthumously, as the scapegoats to be invoked during Mao's purges of others, which was the fate of Chen Boda and Lin Biao.

Nearly all of Mao's purges in the period of the PRC conform to these patterns, including the purges of Huang Kecheng, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, Luo Ruiqing, Lu Dingyi, Yang Shangkun, Chen Yi, and Tang Zhenlin. Space limitations preclude indepth discussions of each of these cases. It is necessary, however, to discuss one of them--the purge of Liu Shaoqi--for it illustrates an important aspect of the question under discussion, the problem of Mao's successor and how the factors, including personal, emotional, and historical, functioned at Mao's court.

In a sense, Liu's fall in the Cultural Revolution was inevitable since he had lost Mao's trust as early as 1962. The final split between Mao and Liu, however, was probably more a result of Liu's position as Mao's successor than the

51 For instance, see Mao's personal letter to Jiang Qing in Michael Y. M. Kau, Lin Piao Affair, 62.
consequence of factional politics or their differences over policies.

**Charismatic Mao and the Succession Problem**

Throughout his life, Mao’s personality displayed extreme contradictions and ambivalence. His intelligence enabled him to make sound and rational judgments, but his capriciousness and ego often caused him deep psychological distress afterwards. The resulting ambiguities showed themselves in every aspect of his life. For example, he detested the personality cult, opposed the naming of cities and streets after leaders, including himself, and forbade his colleagues from celebrating his birthday. He told Edgar Snow in 1970 that he disliked being worshiped in the Cultural Revolution, but when he stood on Tian’anmen and received worship from the Red Guards, he obviously enjoyed it. Once, he confessed to his bodyguards that it would not do for them to treat him as a leader, but it would not do if they did not treat him as a leader. On another occasion, Mao admitted to Mei Bai, a member of his staff, that he felt

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52Li Rui, *Mao Zedong de zaonian yu wannian* [Mao Zedong in his Early and Late Years] (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1992), 313-315.


regret for having mentioned "Hai Rui" at the Seventh Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee.\textsuperscript{55} "I felt regret after I mentioned Hai Rui," Mao told Mei, "I will not be able to stand it if a 'Hai Rui' really emerges."\textsuperscript{56} Mao's prediction proved to be correct. Later at Lushan, he retaliated strongly against Peng Dehuai's outspoken criticism of his leadership. His resentment of Peng's frankness continued into the Cultural Revolution. Mao sponsored the publication of articles criticizing literary works about Hai Rui, for the works allegedly drew comparisons between Hai Rui's dismissal from office and Peng's fall at Lushan. Yet, Mao's best self-evaluation came in a letter to his wife, Jiang Qing in 1966. According to Pye, "Mao himself identified the character of his inner ambivalence as a clash between self-confidence and self-doubt, between solid strength and impish trickiness." Mao described himself as a combination of a "self-assured" tiger and a "spontaneous and affect-free" monkey.\textsuperscript{57}

The ambiguity in Mao's character manifested itself most clearly in the question of succession. Mao began to prepare

\textsuperscript{55}Hai Rui was a minister of the Ming Dynasty. He was known to be very outspoken about the emperor's mistakes. By mentioning Hai Rui, Mao actually encouraged others to criticize him.

\textsuperscript{56}Jia Sinan, ed. Mao Zedong renji jiaowang shilu [Actual Associations of Mao] (Nanjing: Jianshu wenyi chubanshe, 1989), 166.

\textsuperscript{57}Pye, Mao Zedong, 36-37.
for his own retirement as early as 1958 when he was 64 years old. That year he told Gao Zhi, one of his former secretaries that he did not want to be the state chairman any more. The reason, Mao explained, was that he wanted to forego routine work, such as receiving credentials from foreign ambassadors, so he could concentrate on more significant things. In 1961 in a conversation with Lord Montgomery, Mao mentioned for the first time that Liu Shaoqi would be his successor.

When Mao proposed his own retirement, however, he expected the masses to object. He also expected a call to shoulder leadership once again "whenever the nation is urgently in need" of his service and "if the party decides" to recall him. To Mao's dismay, however, nothing like that happened. Mao may well have felt hurt that his colleagues were so ready to accept his retirement. He felt more and more like a "shelved father" whom no one cared to consult. He may not have wanted the position of state

58 Gao Zhi and Zhang Ni'er, *Jiyao mishu de sinian* [The Memory from a Secretary] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1993), 155-156.

59 Xiao Feng and Ming Jun, compilers, *Mao Zedong zhimi* [The Mystery of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1992), 94.


61 Dittmer, "Mao Zedong," 158.
chairman, but he could not tolerate the fact that his colleagues did not treat him as state chairman.

Because of his deep fear of being left out of the national leadership, Mao was especially sensitive about having access to all necessary information. He was furious when he found out at a central work conference in Guangzhou in 1961 that his colleagues had already drafted key changes to a plan concerning the reorganization of people’s communes without consulting him. 62 Mao finally found a chance to give vent to his accumulated anger at a working conference in December 1964. Before the conference, Deng Xiaoping suggested to Mao that because of his health, Mao did not have to attend this routine report-back meeting. Mao was annoyed by the suggestion, and the next day, he appeared at the meeting with the State and the Party Constitutions in hand. "I am still a party member and a citizen," he told the meeting. "One of you [Deng Xiaoping] forbade me from attending the meeting, and another [Liu Shaoqi] did not allow me to speak!" 63 The episode represented a turning point in Mao-Liu relations. Although he made a self-


63In a previous meeting, Liu had interrupted Mao’s speech by disagreeing with Mao. Xiao Xinli, compiler, Kushi dajianges nanbei de Mao Zedong [Mao Zedong who Travelled Around the Country] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan, 1993), 359; Cong Jin, 603-604, and Xiao Peng and Ming Jun, 267.
criticism later, Liu never won back Mao's trust and confidence.

Mao was seventy-two in 1965. Although physically still in good shape, he began to prepare himself and China, for an era without Mao. In Chinese tradition, seventy-three and eighty-four are vicious numbers for the elderly. In popular belief, it is unusual for one to live beyond the age of seventy-three, but if one does one will likely live until eighty-four. Mao was obviously aware of this when he quoted this Chinese saying to Lord Montgomery in 1961, "Seventy-three and eighty-four, you will go to the king of hell even if he does not invite you." He told Montgomery that he had only one more "five-year" plan for himself, since he was sixty-eight at the time. In 1964, he told Edgar Snow that he was "getting ready to see God very soon." Mao even fantasized about five different ways he might die: to be shot; to die in a plane or a train crash; to drown; or to be killed by germs.

The search for a reliable successor assumed great importance for Mao in the mid-1960s, since he believed he

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64 In his book, Dr. Li Zhisui only discussed occasional illnesses which Mao suffered between 1957 and 1971, such as colds, pneumonia and infected pimples. Li Zhisui, The Private Life of Chairman Mao (New York: Random House, 1994).

65 Xiao Feng and Ming Jun, 56.


67 Snow, Long Revolution, 57, and Mao Zedong sixiang wansui, M1400-12c, 105.
had little time left. In June 1966 Mao revealed his anxiety to Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, "Both of us are over seventy now and we will be invited by Marx sooner or later. Who will be the successor? We don't know whether he will be Beinstein, Kautsky, or Khrushchev. We should get ready while we still have time." As part of his preparation, Mao accelerated the process of looking for a successor. Mao wanted to make sure before it was too late that his successor would carry on what he had begun, and would not turn against him after he was gone. But could he trust Liu as his successor?

Since 1962, it had appeared more and more to Mao that he could not. Mao could not forget his humiliation that year when Liu alluded to Mao's personal responsibility for the disastrous Great Leap Forward in a speech at the Meeting of Seven Thousand People. Neither could Mao overlook Liu's disagreement with him concerning the ultimate goal of the "four-cleans" in 1964. Accordingly even before the Cultural Revolution, Mao had already began to "work on public opinion" against Liu. In November 1964, shortly after the incident just mentioned concerning the "four cleans," which Mao became furious over Liu's attempt to interrupt his speech, Mao publicly condemned Liu in the following terms:

I am the chairman [of the party], and you are the first vice-chairman. A storm may arise from a

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"Zheng Qian and Han Gang, 440.
clear sky [i.e. Mao may die a sudden death]. Once I die, you probably still cannot fit into my position. So, I will give you my title right now. You become the chairman, and you become Qinshihuang [the first emperor in Qin Dynasty]. I have my weak points. It is no use any more for me to "scold the mother." It will not work any more. You are tough, so you took the lead to "scold the mother".

In January 1965, Mao criticized Liu several times at central working conferences. On January 13, he first asked provincial leaders what they would do if revisionism appeared within the central government, and then revealed to them his concern about China's future. On January 14, Mao rejected a document regarding the "Socialist Educational Movement" drafted by a group under Liu's direction. He again raised the question of revisionism in the Central Committee at the central working conference of September-October 1965. "What will you do if revisionism appears within the central committee?" he asked. "It is very likely and this is most dangerous." In the following March, Mao bade Kang Sheng and others to get ready to "attack the Central Committee." The same instruction later appeared in

69 "Scold the mother" means in Chinese "to scold others using vulgar language."

70 Cong Jin, 602.

71 Cong Jin, 605.

a CCP document in mid-May. As one Chinese scholar puts it, a "Chinese Khrushchev" had become Mao's worst nightmare. He had to find him, no matter what the cost.

A chance event increased Mao's alarm over the possibility of a conspiracy in the central government. After Khrushchev was ousted in 1964, Zhou Enlai and He Long headed a delegation to attend the celebration of the forty-seventh anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow. On November 7, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the Soviet Defense Minister, told He Long, "Now we have gotten rid of Khrushchev. You should follow our example and get rid of Mao, too." He Long immediately reported the conversation to Zhou, who lodged a protest with Brezhnev, who in turn later apologized to the Chinese delegation. No one will ever know exactly how much this upset Mao, but he responded immediately. In December 1965, he asked several local military leaders, including the commander of the Nanjing Military Region, Xu Shiyou, what they would do if there was a coup in Beijing. Lin Biao's speech at an enlarged politburo meeting on May 18, 1966 actually reflected Mao's anxieties:


74Xi Xuan, "Qiyin de tantao," 57.

75Xi Xuan, "Qiyin de tantao," 57.

76Xu Quanxing, 367.
In recent months, Chairman Mao has paid particular attention to the adoption of many measures toward preventing a counterrevolutionary coup d'etat. After the Lo Jui-ch'ing problem, he talked about it. Now that the P'eng Chen problem has been exposed, he has again summoned several persons and talked about it, dispatched personnel and had them stationed in the radio broadcasting stations, the armed forces, and the public security systems in order to prevent a counterrevolutionary coup d'etat and the occupation of our crucial points. This is the "article" Chairman Mao has been writing in recent months. This is the "article" he has not quite finished and printed, and because of this, Chairman Mao has not slept well for many days. It is a very profound and serious problem. This is the endeavor of Chairman Mao that we ought to learn from. 

While more evidence is needed to establish a link between Mao's fear of a coup and the fall of Luo Ruiqing in December 1965, such a fear definitely played a role in the fall of Peng Zhen and He Long in 1966. On February 3, 1967, Mao told Albanian guests how nervous he had been the preceding May. He had thought about the possibility of sabotage while he reorganized the Beijing Municipal Government. "We transferred two divisions of garrison troops [to Beijing]." Mao told his guests. "[That is why] you can wander around now in Beijing and so can we." 

By May 1965 Mao felt he was losing power and was surrounded by conspirators. Some of his colleagues, he felt certain, were forming "independent kingdoms" to keep him out of the leadership, while others were preparing a coup

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77Kau, Lin Piao Affairs, 328.

78Xu Quanxing, 367-68.

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d'état. He criticized Deng Xiaoping and Li Fuchun for their "independent kingdoms" in the Central Secretariat and the State Planning Commission. He then leveled the same charge at Peng Zhen, and in addition charged Peng with plotting a coup. Luo Ruiqing lost his position as Chief of Staff of the PLA on December 1965, and several months later He Long faced charges for his alleged role in the "February Mutiny plot," based entirely on evidence provided by Red Guard big-character posters. 79 Mao also removed Yang Shangkun from his position as director of the Central Working Office for allegedly "bugging" Mao and secretly recording Mao's private conversations. In retrospect, it is clear that there were no valid charges against any of these victims of the Cultural Revolution. The fact that all of them were rehabilitated after Mao's death in 1976 and the additional fact that they held such key positions suggest that all of them were victims of Mao's paranoid fear of a possible coup against him.

Mao did charge Peng Zhen and others with an attempted coup, but others were simply guilty only of having lost Mao's trust. The purges of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, however, were more complicated for several reasons. First, Liu held the highest position than anyone previously purged, 79

79For the "February Mutiny," see Jin Chunming, Huang Yuchong and Chang Huimin, compilers 'Wenge' shiqi guishiquiyu [The Strange Events and Strange Talks during the 'Cultural Revolution'] (Beijing: Quishi chubanshe, 1989), 8-9.
being the state chairman at the time of his purge. Second, Liu's case had the widest impact across the country, owing to the mass criticism introduced during the stage of criticism and self-criticism. This device of mass criticism broke the usual pattern in dealing with inner-Party cleavage, and finally cost Liu Shaoqi and many other high officials their lives during the Cultural Revolution. Finally, the increasingly absurdity of the criticisms of Liu suggests that Liu was actually the victim of a dynamic mass movement that got out of control.

In this sense, Liu Shaoqi was a victim not only of Mao's mistrust, but also of the mass movement. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Mao probably did not want physically to destroy Liu Shaoqi. According to Wang Li, the explosive dynamic of the Cultural Revolution far exceeded anything Mao had in mind when he launched the Revolution. Mao had a three-year plan for the Cultural Revolution, during which a great number of veteran cadres would be criticized and ousted as "capitalist roaders."

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Dittmer suggested a similar argument when he studied the case of Liu Shaoqi in terms of the "politics of mass criticism." For more discussion, see Dittmer, *Liu Shaoqi*, 109-118. Wang Nianyi also believed that politically, Liu was a victim of Mao's policy "let the masses liberate themselves." Wang Nianyi, "Wenge shuping," 11.

Mao showed his sympathy to Liu and others in 1970 when he told Snow that one of the two things that made him most unhappy during the Cultural Revolution was the maltreatment of "captives"--Party leaders and others removed from power. Snow, *Long Revolution*, 174.
However, Mao wanted only to teach the cadres a lesson, after which he would rehabilitate most of them and return them back to office properly chastised. He told Wang Li in July 1967 that he would keep Liu and Deng in the Central Party Committee. Even Peng Zhen, who was as a traitor, Mao said, should be allowed to remain a party member and assigned some work after the Culture Revolution because of his early contribution to the Chinese Revolution.82

What happened later went far beyond Mao's expectation. First, the Red Guards, whom Mao mobilized to carry out the Revolution disappointed him. Second, many of the leading cadres engaged in an outburst of criticism of the Cultural Revolution that was so strong that it was later known as the "February Adverse Current." Mao became more and more agitated by the reluctance of his colleagues to cooperate with his ideas for the Cultural Revolution. The reluctance threatened to leave the Revolution and thus Mao's work itself unfinished. "I cannot die, and I should hold on for a while," Mao told a provincial leader. Mao believed that China still needed a leader like himself, someone to represent the interest of the masses now that the relationships between the cadres and masses and the party and the masses were deteriorating.83

82Wang Li, 84.

The Cultural Revolution in many localities resulted in total chaos. Mass organizations divided into factions and fought among themselves. Efforts by the Central Government to promote unity among the masses [dalianhe] and to "grasp power" [duoquan] from "capitalist roaders" did little to stabilize the situation nationwide. Mao felt the need for radical methods to guarantee the success of the Cultural Revolution. In March 1967, he decided to encourage mass criticism [dapipan] of Liu Shaoqi to divert attention from struggles between Red Guard factions. On April 1, Renmin ribao published an article by Qi Benyu, openly accusing Liu of being a "representative of imperialism, feudalism, and a reactionary bourgeois class," "a false revolutionary," and a "Chinese Khrushchev." 84

To label Liu Shaoqi the number one enemy served a dual purpose: it eased Mao's psychological need to find a "Chinese Khrushchev," and provided a common target for mass criticism, one that gave "polemical focus to a movement that threatened to get out of hand." 85 Liu himself commented after he read Qi's article that "the inner Party struggle has never been conducted in such an absurd way." He wrote several letters to Mao and the Central Committee refuting the accusations against him, but of course Mao turned a deaf ear to his appeals. To carry the Cultural Revolution to a

84Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 323-326.
85Dittmer, Liu Shaoqi, 33.
successful end, Mao was determined to break all the party
regulations and expose inner party cleavages to the masses.
Editorials in central newspapers under Mao’s control and
pronouncements from the Central Cultural Revolutionary Small
Group usurped the authority of resolutions and decisions of
the Central Party Committee, which now had the right to
approve only afterwards what had already been publicized by
the newspapers. Instead of receiving non-violent criticism
and conducting self-criticism within the Party, subjects
being criticized found themselves in prisons or quasi-
prisons known as "study groups" [xuexiban]. Among those
jailed after December 1966 were thirty or so veteran cadres
in Shifangyuan in the west suburb of Beijing, including Lu
Dingyi, Huang Kecheng, Tan Zhen, Peng Dehuai, Peng Zhen, Luo
Ruiqing, He Long, Wan Li, Li Jiangquan, Liu Ren, and Chen
Zaidao.86 Mao’s decision to subject them to mass criticism
left them in the hands of zhuan’anzu (Special Case Groups)
and reduced their chances for survival. Liu Shaoqi died of
exposure on November 12, 1969; He Long died on June 19,
1968, and Peng Dehuai on November 19, 1974. All these died
while under the charge of zhuan’anzu.

Mao’s attitude toward Deng, however, was noticeably
different. On July 14, 1967, Mao told Wang Li in Wuhan that
he himself did not want to link Liu and Deng together as

86Li Yang, Tejian yishi [Sketches about a Special

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allies. Then he said, "[I just want to] oust them for one year, or two years at most. Others [the masses] want to expose them, we have to go along with the idea.... If Lin Biao cannot function efficiently any more because of his poor health, I will restore Deng to the leading position." Personally, Mao never completely lost trust in Deng. Mao told Wang Li, as early as in 1963, that the three people he trusted most completely were Luo Ronghuan, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun. Mao believed that he could expect life-long cooperation especially from the first two persons, Luo Ronghuan and Deng Xiaoping. Chen Boda also recalled that when he used the phrase, "Liu-Deng line" in his draft of a political report to the Ninth Party Congress, Mao instructed him to delete the expression, "Comrade Deng Xiaoping had commanded many wars, so he is different from Liu Shaoqi. Do not mention him in the report." Although the names of Liu and Deng were linked together for the purpose of mass criticism, Deng received much better treatment than Liu Shaoqi due to Mao’s protection. He was never forced to attend mass criticism and he received much less criticism from the masses, which meant less personal humiliation. In the thirty-one volumes of Red Guard publications kept at the Library of Congress, 653 items

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87Wang Li, 63; 96.
88Wang Li, 94-95.
89Ye Yonglie, Chen Boda, 458.
refer to the "crimes" of Liu Shaoqi, but only 30 items refer to those of Deng Xiaoping. When the Party expelled Liu permanently at the Twelfth Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee in December 1968, Mao himself saved Deng from being punished in the same way. "Some people also suggested Deng’s expulsion from the Party, but personally I disagree. He is somewhat different from Liu," Mao told the meeting.90 After the Lin Biao Incident, Mao indeed restored Deng to the position of vice-premier, as he had earlier told Wang Li he would. Only after Deng voiced his intention to stop the Cultural Revolution, was he ousted again, in April 1976. The charge against him then was his alleged efforts to "overturn the verdict" [fan’an] of the Cultural Revolution.

The fall of Mao’s first designated successor, Liu Shaoqi, by no means solved Mao’s succession problem. Despite the general argument that the communist countries never solved the problem of succession because of the totalitarian nature of their regimes, there were more profound social, cultural, and personal reasons behind each succession crisis. In the case of China, at least three groups of factors, systemic, traditional, and personal, function in every succession crisis. Problems with the system derive from the ambiguity of the nature of communist power. Neither from Marxist-Leninist theories nor communist

90Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 311-315.
practices in general did anyone ever devise a means for transferring power. 91 The People's Republic China never solved the problem of drawing the line between the authoritarian rule of one person and the "collective leadership" of the party. It was always difficult to detect which policy was Mao's or Deng's and which was the Party's in a collective sense.

In addition, Chinese political tradition grants a leader the freedom to choose a successor. In Chinese history, emperors regularly designated their successors. Even now, few Chinese scholars have ever questioned Mao's right to choose his successor for the party at the first place. 92 When Mao designated Lin Biao as his successor, the whole party applauded the decision with much more sincerity than its leaders now admit.

The ambiguity in the succession problem also led to the ill-fortunes of Mao's designated successors. After Liu Shaoqi, Mao dropped one successor after another before he reluctantly transferred power to Hua Guofeng, who was clearly not the best choice but who was least likely to turn against Mao immediately after his death. We have learned

91 For more discussion of succession problems, see Dittmer, "Mao Zedong," 157-158.

92 It always amazes me that nearly all scholars in China take Mao's right to choose his own successors for granted. Throughout all my readings for this dissertation, I have not come across a single person who casts doubt on Mao's legitimacy in doing so.
repeatedly in history that the mightier a given leader, it sometimes seems, the more uncertain is the fate of a designated successor. A designated heir apparent has to juggle the expectations of his "overseer" with those of his own. Since the trusteeship rests on absolute obedience and loyalty, few designated successor survive any fundamental bias against them by their overseer, who often visualizes the successor as a potential usurper and a threat to his own power. The so-called "line struggles" and the constant purge/rehabilitation cycle during the Cultural Revolution illustrated this ambiguous master-successor relationship. Dittmer identified a Don Juan pattern in Mao's behavior toward his designated successors: "first embracing an heir apparent enthusiastically and with exaggerated expectations, only to grow disillusioned and finally to cast off the object of his previous ardor."\textsuperscript{93} None of Mao's arrangements for his pre-mortem successors worked out. Liu Shaoqi ended up "a traitor, a spy, and a scab" and died of exposure in a prison cell. Lin Biao was, in the end, "careerist, conspirator, and double-dealer" who died in the desert of Mongolia. Wang Hongwen, after eight months as heir apparent, ended up with a life sentence in jail after Mao's death.

\textsuperscript{93}Dittmer, "Mao Zedong," 166.
Disappointed with Liu Shaoqi as a successor, Mao turned his eyes toward Lin Biao. At the time, Lin was the defense minister, and although his name was little known to the outside world, he had already had an accomplished political career. Throughout that career, Lin Biao had been remarkable for two things: personal devotion to Mao Zedong, and military genius. One of Lin’s biographers believes Lin was the only important figure who did not turn against Mao at one time or another in the years before 1949. Thomas Robinson even suggests that Mao fulfilled Lin’s psychological need for a father figure.

The Historical Relationship between Mao Zedong and Lin Biao

The close relationship between Mao and Lin went back to the Jinggang Mountain period, during which Lin’s military and political career rose rapidly. Lin participated in a series of military engagements which offered him opportunities to display his military talents. Within

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approximately four years, he rose from battalion commander to commander of the First Red Army Corps. In October 1928, Lin commanded of the 28th Regiment. In January 1929, he was made the commander of the First Column, the elite force of the Red Army.³ In June 1930, he was appointed the commander of the 10th Division of the Fourth Red Army,⁴ and in December 1930, he became the commander of the Fourth Red Army in the First Front Army.⁵ In March 1932, Lin was promoted to commander of the Red Army's First Army Corps.⁶ By this time, he was one of the most senior officials in the Red Army, having surpassed many who were once his superiors, including Chen Yi. When Mao created a Revolutionary Military Commission sometime in 1931, or possibly earlier in


the summer, Lin was its fourth ranking member, after only Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, and Wang Jiaxiang.\textsuperscript{7}

The reasons for Lin's rapid rise were two-fold. First, Lin's military skills stood out among those of communist commanders. He gained distinction for himself and his forces through his performance in many major battles. Lin and his troops fought in each of the five encirclement campaigns conducted by the Guomindang to annihilate the Communists, and his victories were often instrumental in rescuing the Chinese Soviet Republic in the first four campaigns. When the fifth campaign ended in the defeat that forced the Communists to retreat from their revolutionary bases in Jiangxi, Lin's troops managed to avoid serious losses, although other communist forces suffered heavy casualties.\textsuperscript{8}

Second, Lin's rapid rise was partly the result of his close personal relationships with Mao and Zhu, especially with Mao. Lin owed his initial rise to Zhu, in whose army he became the best among all company commanders.\textsuperscript{9} However, Lin apparently moved closer to Mao after the move to Jinggang Mountain. Lin's nomination as commander of the


\textsuperscript{8}Robinson, \textit{Biography}, 22-23.

28th Regiment in 1928, which was interpreted as a victory of Mao over Zhu, probably began the link between Lin and Mao.\footnote{Li Tianmin, Pingzhu, nan, 11; Gong, "Jishi" (March 1972): 99; (April 1972): 100, and (May 1972): 99.} For reasons of military strategy or personality conflict, Mao and Zhu were soon at odds at Jinggang Mountain. In order to gain control of the army, Mao had to make sure that the 28th regiment, the best of his troops, had a reliable commander. Mao considered Lin the best candidate for the position, and reportedly told Lin that when he nominated him for the post, Zhu had objected. Out of gratitude to Mao, Lin thereafter sided with Mao in the Zhu-Mao conflict.\footnote{Huang Chenxia, 209.} Soon afterwards Lin was critical of Zhu at a CCP meeting, claiming that Zhu was responsible for the Red Army’s loss in a battle in February 1930 because of Zhu’s “warlord habit.”\footnote{“Warlord habit” indicated that one would act on his own without consulting the Party. Zhu was a warlord before he joined the Chinese Communist Party. Gong, (May 1972): 99-100, and Li Tianmin, Pingzhu, nan, 28.} Although Lin’s role in the Zhu-Mao conflict may have been exaggerated, the period between the Seventh and the Ninth Congresses of the CCP of the Fourth Red Army, in 1929-1930, marked a new phase in the Lin-Mao relationship. Lin became one of Mao’s most trusted comrades, a position he earned through faithful support of
Mao. In June 1929, Mao himself was dismissed from the Red Army after the Seventh Congress, as a result of the Mao-Zhu conflict, whereupon Lin, however, sent a battalion of troops to Western Fujian province to protect Mao. He also showed his loyalty to Mao by demanding Mao's return to the Red Army, although his efforts were not immediately successful.

In December 1930, after his return to the Red Army, Mao presided at the Ninth Congress of the CCP in the Red Fourth Army, at which he purged his opponents in the army, whom he labeled "the A-B (Anti-Bolshevik) Corps." He also wrote "The Resolution of the Gutian Meeting" for the Congress in which he criticized "wrong ideas" in the Fourth Red Army. Lin once again stood as the most faithful supporter of Mao's resolution. Zhu complained during the Gutian meeting that Lin was a "bad fellow" who "in the end turned against me publicly."

There is other evidence of Mao's effort to strengthen his relationship with Lin during this period. On January 5, 1930, Mao wrote a letter to Lin, which Mao later retitled as

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14Li Tianmin, *Pingzhuan*, 12.

15After the Lin Biao Incident in 1971, however, Lin was condemned as having opposed to the resolution in 1929. Li Tianmin, *Pingzhuan*, 14.

16Robinson, *Biography*, 16.
"A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire" and placed it in *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. After the Lin Biao Incident in 1971, the Party characterized the letter as Mao’s criticism of Lin in response to a previous letter from Lin to Mao in which Lin pessimistically questioned the future of the revolution. In fact, however, Mao’s letter provides another piece of evidence of the close relationship that had developed between the two men.\(^{17}\) It was a personal letter with intimate remarks at the opening and the end. In 1930, Lin was still an obscure officer in Zhu’s command. To how many other such officers would Mao write a personal letter discussing the current situation?

It is significant, however, that the available sources put little emphasis on Lin’s participation in the political struggle within the Party during the Jinggang Mountain period. Originally a junior military officer, Lin was more of an instrument used by others to achieve their purposes rather than an independent political force.\(^{18}\) No evidence suggests Lin’s direct involvement in the political struggles at that time between Mao’s group and other factions, such as the Party branches under Qu Qiubai.

In 1934 the CCP and the Red Army had to leave their revolutionary base in the Jinggang Mountain area and trek to

\(^{17}\) For a detailed analysis of the letter and the Mao-Lin relationship, see Li Tianmin, "The Mao-Lin Relationship," 78-85.

North China because of their defeat in the Guomindang’s fifth encirclement campaign. The trek later became known as the Long March. Lin, as commander of the First Red Army Corps, contributed greatly during the Long March to the survival of the Red Army. His units were vanguards whose primary function, according to Zhu, was "to clear the way for the rest of us." They also had the task of protecting the political leaders of the CCP.

It was Lin’s men who broke through the Guomindang’s encirclement line, and enabled the Red Army to survive the heavy losses to the Guomindang. Lin’s units captured the Luding bridge over the Dadu River so the Red Army could escape from the Guomindang troops. Both Edgar Snow and Agnes Smedley have given vivid descriptions of this battle. "Had the Red Army failed there," Snow has speculated, "quite possibly it would have been exterminated." In January 1935, Lin’s troops captured Zunyi, a town in Guizhou province, where the CCP held its first important meeting during the Long March. The meeting restored Mao to the leading positions in the CCP and the Red Army.

On June 16, 1935, Mao’s First Field Army arrived at Maogong in Sichuan province and joined forces with the

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Fourth Field Army led by Zhang Guotao. Immediately afterwards, the First and the Fourth Field Armies disagreed over several fundamental matters during the Lianghekou meeting and the Mao’ergai Meetings. Zhang and Mao reached a temporary compromise, reorganizing their troops into Right and Left columns. Mao kept Peng Dehuai’s and Lin Biao’s troops in his Right Column, and sent Zhu De and Liu Bocheng to Zhang’s Left Column. This compromise did not last long. Zhang Guotao, whose troops were five times more numerous than Mao’s and also better equipped, soon split with Mao. Mao virtually had to run away from Zhang, turning his troops to the northward, while Zhang turned to the south. Mao reorganized his forces into three columns, which included Lin’s First Army and Peng’s Third Army.

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22In June 1935 when Mao and Zhang joined forces, the CCP held a politburo meeting at Lianghekou. During the meeting, Mao’s Central Army disputed with Zhang’s Fourth Army Corps over a series of questions, including the legitimacy of the central committee, which had been altered during the Zunyi meeting, the administrative system of the Chinese Soviets, and the route that the Red Army should take later. Zhang opposed Mao’s idea of going to Northern Shaanxi province, suggesting that the Red Army go to Sichuan province, then, to Xinjiang. The two forces reached a temporary compromise in the end.

23In August 1935, the CCP held two meetings near a small town called Mao’ergai in Gansu province trying to smooth disputes between Mao and Zhang Guotao. These meetings are later known as the Mao’ergai Meetings. Historians disagree over the time and place of the meetings, but there is little dispute as to what happened at the meetings. It is agreed that the meetings failed to achieve their purpose, so immediately afterwards, Mao and Zhang openly split with each other.

24Li Tianmin, Pingzhuan, 32-33.
was commander and Lin deputy commander of this newly established force named Shaangan zhidui [the "Chinese People’s Anti-Japanese Vanguard"]. The creation of the Shaangan zhidui was a personal victory for Mao, for he finally had an army of his own. It also showed Mao’s preference for Peng and Lin over Zhu De and Liu Bocheng. At the crucial moment in the Mao-Zhang conflict, which Mao later described as "the darkest moment of my life," Lin was again at Mao’s side. Throughout the Long March, Lin’s forces contributed substantially to saving the Red Army from extinction. According to Snow, Lin’s First Army sometimes put Guomindang armies to rout when the latter "simply discovered that they were fighting the First Red Army Corps." Lin was also, in Snow’s words, "one of the few Red commanders who was never wounded by the end of the Long March, although he had been engaged in more than a hundred battles."  

The Long March consolidated the relationship between Mao and Lin. On its way to north China, the Red Army not only suffered from harassment by Guomindang forces, but also from the inhospitable grasslands and snow-covered mountains it had to cross. There was also internal conflict between

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25Robinson, Biography, 27.


Mao, Qin Bangxian and Zhang Guotao. In these disputes from the Zunyi Conference to the Mao'ergai meetings, Lin was always loyal to Mao. It should be noted that many of the materials recently published in the People’s Republic offer biased comments on Lin because of his later "crimes" during the Cultural Revolution. Wu Xiuquan,28 for example, asserts that at the Zunyi meeting, Lin "did not speak a word, having been a supporter of Qin Bangxian29 and Otto Braun30 and having come under criticism for this." Hu Hua, a professor of CCP history at the People’s University of Beijing, argues on the other hand that Lin supported Mao’s call for the removal of Bo Gu and Braun. "Lin was said to have become openly critical of the pair after the Xiang River Battle and the losses of the First Army Group," Hu wrote. "Now he became very vocal, very hostile."31 Hu’s comments are more reliable than those of Wu, because little evidence is available concerning Lin’s ties with either Bo Gu or Zhou Enlai.32 In any case after the Zunyi

28Wu Xiuquan was a Long March veteran and held important government positions from 1949. His memoirs are entitled Wo de shengya: 1908-1949 [My Career: 1908-1949] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986).

29Qin Bangxian (also known as Bo Gu) was the secretary and nominal leader of the CCP at that time.

30Otto Braun (also known as Li De), a German, was the representative of the Third Comintern to the CCP at that time.

31Salisbury, Long March, 125-126.

32Zhou Enlai was also criticized as being responsible
Conference, Lin maintained his position as commander of the First Red Army Corps, and Mao became the political commissar of the Corps.\textsuperscript{33} This is additional proof that Lin sided with Mao during the meeting.

By the end of the Long March, Lin had become, in Harrison Salisbury's words, Mao's "darling."\textsuperscript{34} Although he did not wholeheartedly agreed with Mao all the time, Lin never failed to carry out Mao's orders, even when he was not completely satisfied with the orders.\textsuperscript{35}

In June 1936, Lin Biao became president of the University of Workers and Peasants Red Army to Resist Japanese [\textit{Kongnong hongjun kangri junzheng daxue,} and \textit{Kangda,} in short]. Scholars have assessed this assignment for the loss of the fifth encirclement battle at the meeting and was removed from his position in the Military Committee. Chi-hsi Hu, cites an article by Lin Biao in the Chinese Communist journal \textit{Geming yu zhanzheng [Revolution and War]} in July 1934. It contains what Hu regards as a thinly veiled attack on Braun's strategy and implied support for Mao. Braun makes a rather condescending reference to Lin's article in his memoirs. Chi-hsi Hu, "Mao, Lin and the Fifth Encirclement Campaign," \textit{China Quarterly} 82 (April-June 1980): 250-80.


\textsuperscript{34}Salisbury, \textit{Long March}, 191.

\textsuperscript{35}Salisbury gave several examples of Lin's dissatisfaction with Mao during the Long March. For example, Lin suggested at the Huili meeting that Mao should give his active command to Peng Dehuai. Salisbury, however, pointed out some of these were most likely exaggerated by the Red Army survivors who fell victim during the Cultural Revolution. Salisbury, \textit{Long March}, 189-190.
variously. Thomas Robinson has suggested that it was the result of a disagreement between Lin and Mao at an earlier time, and that the appointment was in fact a demotion for Lin, a blow to his career.\(^{36}\) Li Tianmin disagrees with that assessment because he was unable to discover any basic disagreement between Mao and Lin during this period.\(^{37}\) Li's argument is the more convincing of the two, because the presidency of Kangda was a very important position at the time.

According to Red Army regulations, every active commander or commissar was to spend at least four months out of every two years of active service studying of military affairs. The years 1936-1937, when Lin was president of Kangda, were years of adjustment for the Red Army. Having lost 90 per cent of his troops in the Long March, Mao wanted his men to get much needed rest, and at the same time receive training. Mao himself was the political commissar of the university.

Lin did his work at the university conscientiously and actually benefitted from his tenure there. He became "second to none in experience as a military educator and administrator," and a top Communist military leader in both knowledge of warfare and command experience.\(^{38}\) He trained

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\(^{36}\) Robinson, *Biography*, 31-32.

\(^{37}\) Li Tianmin, *Pingzhuang*, 42.

\(^{38}\) Robinson, *Biography*, 49.
Red Army cadres, army and division commanders, and low-ranking officers, as well as students from various parts of China. He also gained experience in administrative work.

Lin's career in Kangda, however, was brief. In July 1937, when the CCP volunteered to cooperate with the Guomindang against the Japanese, the CCP reorganized its forces into two armies, the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army, under Guomindang command. Lin was appointed commander of the 115th Division of the Eighth Route Army, in which capacity he soon won national recognition for routing Lieutenant General Itagaki Seishiro's 5th Division as it advanced south through the Wutai mountains in Shanxi province. He ambushed the Japanese at Pingxingguan Pass, inflicting 2,000 to 3,000 casualties. The Pingxingguan Campaign may not have been very effective in stopping the Japanese advance into central China, but it was the first Chinese defeat of the Japanese. The campaign was thus more important psychologically than militarily for the Chinese, for it gave them confidence to fight against the Japanese. Lin thus gained fame as a talented military commander whose

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forces won victories while "other units either did not fight or suffered defeat." 40

In March 1938, Lin was wounded in action, which removed him from active duty for several years. 41 He was unable to resume his military position until 1944. In the winter of 1939 he went to the Soviet Union for medical treatment. His stay in the Soviet Union is shrouded in mystery, as few materials are available on Lin’s activities in there. It is not even clear in fact where and for how long Lin stayed in the hospital. Li Tianmin believes that the purpose of Lin’s travel to the Soviet Union was not just for reasons of health. Ten other military officers accompanied him, most of whom stayed at the Frunze Military Academy. 42 Some sources refer to Lin as the Chinese representative to the Comintern and as such Mao’s personal representative to Stalin. Mao did not trust Wang Ming, through whom the CCP normally communicated with the Soviets. 43 The only evidence from Soviet sources concerning Lin’s presence is an

40 Robinson, Biography, 36.

41 It is not clear how and when Lin Biao was wounded. Smedley says that it was in early 1938 (Smedley, 368), but Huang Chenxia believes that it was in September 1938 (Huang, 211). Robinson and Li agree upon March 1938. Robinson, Biography, 39, and Li Tianmin, Pingzhuan, 48.

42 Li Tianmin, Pingzhuan, 48-49.

43 Robinson, Biography, 40-41.
article in *The Communist International* in August 1940 by a person named "Ling Pao."\(^4^4\)

It is also not clear whether Lin had any contact with Stalin or whether Lin was in any military service against the Nazis while in the Soviet Union. During the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards reported that Lin had been involved in the Stalingrad Campaign and Stalin had been so impressed by Lin's military prowess that Stalin awarded Lin his own pistol.\(^4^5\) However, this information can not be considered reliable because of the propaganda circulating in China during that period.

In January 1942, Lin returned to Yan'an, just in time to support Mao's rectification campaign. Mao aimed this campaign at Wang Ming and his followers, who were known as "Internationalists." It is not clear whether Lin's return was a coincidence or whether Mao called Lin back to support the campaign. In either case, Mao showed his delight at Lin's return by greeting him in person upon his arrival. At the welcome meeting on February 17, 1942, Lin announced his support for the campaign, reportedly saying that the

\(^{4^4}\)In 1940, *The Communist International* (No. 8, New York) published an article "For the Third Anniversary of the Chinese National Liberation War" by a person named 'Ling Pao'. It had been published in Russian sometime early in Moscow. It is far from clear whether Lin actually wrote this article, although he may have signed his name to it. For the argument as to why this article may not have been written by Lin, see Li Tianmin, *Pingzhuang*, 49-50, and Robinson, *Biography*, 202.

\(^{4^5}\)Li Tianmin, *Pingzhuang*, 50.
Communist Party in China should unite around Mao in order to make it a great party. He also endorsed Mao's basic reason for this rectification movement—to fight subjectivism and factionalism.\textsuperscript{46} For Mao's purposes, Lin's support was ideal, because Lin, freshly returned from the Soviet Union, would be helpful in his plan to oppose Wang and other Internationalists, some of whom were students returning from the Soviet Union. Lin reportedly declared he would not support Wang Ming's International Faction, even though he himself had three years of experience in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{47} As Mao expected, Lin's cooperation undercut political support for the Internationalists.

Apparently, Mao and Wang Ming competed for Lin's support. Wang recorded an unpleasant incident between himself and Mao in the spring of 1939, in which Mao reportedly asked Wang why he tried to win over Lin from Mao by openly praising Lin as the "famous commander of Pingxingguan Pass." Wang denied this charge, but Mao was not convinced by the denial and warned him not to try to "undermine Mao's wall." "I tell you," Mao allegedly said, "I have engaged in military affairs for several years, but

\textsuperscript{46}Li Tianmin, \textit{Pingzhuan}, 51.

\textsuperscript{47}The International Faction refers to the twenty-eight "returned students" who studied in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and early 1930s. After they returned to China, they formed a faction led by Wang Ming and dominated the Party. With few exceptions, they were all removed from authoritative positions in the Party by the end of the Rectification Movement in 1945.
only accomplished the training of Lin Biao. He is really my man and among the units of the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army, only the troops commanded by him are the troops I can rely on."^{48}

Communist victories in the Civil War were in fact closely associated with Lin Biao's name. The war gave Lin the opportunity to refine his military techniques, which he had worked on since his early years in the Red Army. In October 1945, Lin led 100,000 troops into Northeast China (Manchuria), which was just then strategically important to the Communists for several reasons. It connects the Soviet Union and China, and had remained a neutral area after Japanese forces in the region surrendered to Soviet forces in August 1945. If the Communists could occupy the area, they would have a solid base through which to secure aid from the Soviet Union and from which to mount a show of force in dealing with the Guomindang. But the Guomindang also realized the strategic significance of the area, which soon became the locus of a major confrontation.

Why did Mao choose Lin to command the fight against Guomindang forces in Manchuria? Of the communist commanders, Lin was one of the most knowledgeable and experienced with conventional warfare and probably the most successful as well. While in the Soviet Union, he had

^{48}Wang Ming, Zhonggong ban shij i yu pantu Mao Zedong [Fifty Years of the Chinese Communist Party and the Traitor Mao Zedong] (Hong Kong: Wanhai yuyan chubanshe, 1989), 171.
received training in modern military warfare, and because of his recent stay in the Soviet Union, Lin would probably be more adept in dealing with his Soviet counterparts than would other commanders. But most importantly, Mao trusted Lin, not only because of Lin's personal loyalty, but also because Lin's attitude towards the Soviet Union was, in Mao's eyes, "correct." Lin would never be an "intellectual captive" of the Soviets, as Mao considered Wang and many other returnees from the Soviet Union to be.

When Lin arrived in the Northeast, Communist forces there were inferior to those of the Guomindang in numbers and equipment. As a result, in 1947 Lin's forces suffered several setbacks, especially the defeat at Siping which cost him about 40,000 casualties.49 This was the first major defeat in Lin's career as a military commander. He attributed to his own underestimation of Guomindang forces and to the fact that he had too little time to prepare properly for the action. After this loss, careful planning became one of the hallmarks of Lin's military style.

The turning point for the Communists in the Northeast began in 1948. In November, Lin concentrated his troops along the railway lines from Shenyang to Beijing, and launched the Liaoshen Campaign. He captured the city of Jinzhou first, then proceeded to Changchun and Shenyang in

spite of strong resistance from Guomindang forces. Within two months, the whole Northeast came under Lin’s control.

Lin’s experience in the Northeast proved to be pivotal for his military career. Not only did Lin refine his military style, but he also gained political and administrative experience. In 1946, Lin replaced Peng Zhen as general secretary of the Party Committee in the Northeast because Lin could not get along well with the former secretary. This made Lin the most powerful man in the Northeast, responsible to the CCP for all political, administrative, and military activities there. Moreover, his army had developed into the most powerful force in the PLA.

After the Liaoshen Campaign, Mao ordered Lin and his troops to central China. In cooperation with other PLA troops there, they were soon embroiled in another battle against Guomindang forces, the Ping-Jin Campaign. The Communists soon captured Tianjin and with the surrender of Fu Zuoyi’s 250,000 Guomindang troops soon thereafter, in January 1949, Beijing came under Communist control. Guomindang troops were in full retreat to the south of the Yangtze River.

The final stage of the civil War provided Lin further opportunities to demonstrate his prowess in military leadership. On April 21, 1949, after the breakdown of negotiations between the Communists and the Guomindang, Mao,
then chairman of the Military Committee, and Zhu De, commander-in-chief of the PLA, ordered Communist forces across the Yangtze River. Of the five field armies of the PLA at the time, Lin’s Fourth Field Army was by far the biggest, numbering over one million troops, almost as many as the total number of troops of all the other four field armies combined. In May, Lin’s army captured Wuhan, then Hunan. On October 14, Lin’s troops entered Guangzhou, and on November 22, they penetrated Guilin. On December 4, Nanning fell and finally on April 26, 1950, the Fourth Field Army conquered Hainan Island, after an earlier futile effort by the Third Field Army which cost 7,000 lives. Within a year, Lin’s army had fought from the northeast all the way to the southeast, taking over in the process almost half of China.

Lin’s military achievements made him a key political figure in central China. By 1950, Lin was a member of the Central People’s Government Council and member of the Standing Committee of the First Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference; commander of the Central China

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50 The creation of the Fourth Field Army began in November 1948 and was completed in March 1949. The Field Army, based on the Northeast People’s Army, included approximately 75 divisions, 24 corps and 9 armies with altogether nearly one million men. It became Lin’s power base in his later political career. During the Cultural Revolution, many former Fourth Field Army elites were promoted to key positions in the PLA, including Lin’s four major assistants, Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng and Qiu Huizuo. William Whitson has written a very good history of the Fourth Field Army.
Military Region and of the Fourth Field Army, chairman of the Central-South Military and Administrative Committee, and first secretary of the Party Committee of Central-South China. In June 1950, the Third Plenum of the Seventh Central Party Committee elected him to the Politburo.

When the communists took power in China, Lin was thus a rising star and among the most powerful members of the ruling elite. Because of his remarkable military record, Lin in 1955, at the age of 47, received the title of Marshal, the youngest of the ten men in the PLA to hold the title. His future seemed bright and assured: he was still young, militarily brilliant and loyal to Mao.

After the Communists formed a government in 1949, however, Lin Biao remained out of the national spotlight for several years. He did not participate in the Korean War, explanations for which have prompted controversy among scholars. Even after the Korean War, Lin was invisible

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51 It was very rare for one person to hold simultaneously the positions of military commander, administrative governor and the party secretary of one region. For example, the commander of the Southwestern China Military Region was He Long, but the Chairman of the Southwestern China Military and Administrative Committee was Liu Bocheng and the first secretary of the Party Committee was Deng Xiaoping.

52 A collection of materials about Lin Biao published in Hong Kong mentions that he was the commander in chief of the Chinese Volunteers. Li Tianmin, Pingzhuan, 22. Martin Ebon quotes from an American historian that it was Lin Biao who attacked the U.S. I and IX Corps. Martin Ebon, Lin Piao: The Life and Writings of China's New Ruler (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), 32. Michael Y. M. Kau notes that Lin "was reported to have commanded the Chinese Volunteers" in the
until 1956. He was reportedly absent from several important meetings the next year, 1957, including the third meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in October and the Supreme State Conference in November. The reason for this protracted absence seems to have been protracted illness. He may have been in the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1956 because of poor health.\footnote{Hong Xuezhi, 17, and Li Tianmin, Pingzhuang, 78.}

The Soviet interregnum, if that is what it was, did not hinder the advance of Lin's political and military careers. In February 1950, he became chairman of the Central-South Military and Administrative Committee, which controlled the provinces of Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangdong and Guangxi. Among the other positions he held in the early 1950s, Lin was one of the ten State Council vice-premiers under Zhou Enlai and one of the fifteen vice-chairmen of the newly-established National Defense Council in 1954. In April 1955, the Fifth Plenum of the Party Central Committee, re-elected him to the Politburo, and in September, he ranked

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\footnote{Hong Xuezhi, 17, and Li Tianmin, *Pingzhuang*, 78.}
the third among the ten military marshals in the newspaper. In September 1956, when he made his first public appearance in five years, the Eighth Party Congress, re-elected Lin to the Central Committee, and the First Plenum of the new Central Committee re-elected him again to the Politburo. Significantly, of the seventeen members of the Politburo at that time, Lin ranked the seventh, after only Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Chen Yun, and Deng Xiaoping. In February 1958, Lin became a vice chairman of the CCP and a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo.

Lin’s political rise was a result of his loyalty to Mao, which compensated for his relative inactivity in national affairs in early the 1950s. Lin’s loyalty made a deep impression on Mao, and allowed him to maintain a special relationship with Mao. According to Li Yinqiac, Lin Biao and Peng Dehuai were distinctive among the military leaders because of their frankness in front of Mao. Li remembered Lin’s rigid, professional manner when he came to see Mao. Unlike others who may have felt intimidated by Mao, Lin voiced his opinion openly and even argued with Mao.54

Lin also enjoyed a good reputation among his military colleagues. In the 1950s, few high officials held low opinions of Lin. At the enlarged conference of the Central

54Li Yinqiao, "Zouxiang shentian de Mao Zedong" ["Mao on his way to becoming God"], 130. Quoted from Xu Quanxing, Mao Zedong, 407.
Military Commission in 1959, Liu Shaoqi insisted that he not only supported a cult of personality for Mao, but for Lin Biao and Deng Xiaoping as well.\textsuperscript{55} When Mao appointed Lin as his successor in 1966, nobody in the leadership questioned the legitimacy of the appointment. Many leaders complimented Lin on his promotion more than they wanted to admit it after the Lin Biao Incident. It was Zhou Enlai who first suggested the use of the expression Mao's "closest comrade-in-arms" to specify Lin's position as Mao's successor.\textsuperscript{56} Zhou Enlai, Ye Jianying, Chen Yi, Li Fuchun, Xu Xiangqian, and the members of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group (CCRSG) repeatedly confirmed Lin's unique position among the nation's leadership.

On September 25, 1966, in a speech to representatives of the faculty and students of thirteen art colleges in Beijing, Marshal Ye Jianying made the following comments about Lin as Mao's successor:

Recently, there is another happy event in our party, that is, Chairman Mao has decided on his first successor. For several decades, the Chairman has been considering the question of who should succeed him.... After the forty-year test of revolutionary struggle, Comrade Lin Biao, with his rich experience of revolutionary struggle, has proved to be a great politician and strategist. He has also mastered high-level leadership skills and is Mao's successor. It can be said positively that Mao's decision that Comrade Lin Biao, his closest comrade-in-arms, is his successor will not

\textsuperscript{55}Cong Jin, 305-306.

\textsuperscript{56}Wu Faxian, "Manuscript" hel5004, 7-8.
only guarantee a thorough victory of our Cultural Revolution movement, but also indicates optimistically a victory in the Chinese as well as the world revolution. Comrade Lin Biao is in better health than any of us. We are convinced that Comrade Lin Biao will follow Chairman Mao’s leadership for several decades.\textsuperscript{57}

On October 5, Ye made another reference to Lin as Mao’s successor in his speech to students from army schools:

It is the most happy event for the Chinese and the people of the world to have Comrade Lin Biao as our vice-commander.... Among the Party leaders, especially among the military leaders, Lin Biao has best mastered Mao Zedong Thought, and he is the youngest. He is only 59 years old this year and is the youngest among all the leaders. Doctor’s examinations reveal that he is in good health.... So, he is the best, the healthiest, the youngest, and the most capable person to lead us. We should not only propagate Mao Zedong Thought, but we should also propagate the healthiness of Chairman Mao and Comrade Lin Biao to the country and to the world. It is of tremendous political significance.\textsuperscript{58}

Other marshals, including Chen Yi and Nie Rongzhen expressed similar opinions in speeches on November 13 and 19.\textsuperscript{59} Even after the Lin Biao Incident, when it became

\textsuperscript{57}Xu Quanxing, 411-412.


politically necessary to denounce Lin, one of Lin's subordinates, Huang Kecheng, still defended Lin as one of the best generals in the history of the PLA. 

"Learn From the PLA" Movement and the Cultural Revolution

Mao's trust in Lin may not be the only reason for his decision to make Lin his successor. Mao had already worked out his grand plan for the Cultural Revolution before he made up his mind to replace Liu Shaoqi with Lin. Mao laid out his ideas about the Cultural Revolution as well as his feelings toward Lin in a personal letter to Jiang Qing dated July 8, 1966. The letter conveyed several important

60 Huang Kecheng was purged together with Peng Dehuai in 1959. He was rehabilitated after the death of Mao.


62 This letter remains one of the few available documents written by Mao himself regarding the Cultural Revolution. It provides scholars clues on what was on Mao's mind on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. Mao was not concerned about the possible political implications of his comments in a private letter like this and felt free to discuss the matter in an informal manner. Scholars in China hold differing opinions as to when and why Mao wrote the letter. Some even question its authenticity. See Jin Chunming, "Yipian qite de ziwo jiebo" ["A Peculiar Self-analysis"], Dangxiao luntan [Forum of Party Schools] 5 (May 5, 1989):54-58; Hu Xiongwei, "Ziwo jiebo de qite haishi ziwo xinxin de xianyi" ["Peculiarity of Self-analysis or Demonstration of Self-confidence"], ibid, 8 (August 5, 1989): 45-49, and Xu Quanxing, "Mao Zedong wannian zai jiebanren wenti shang de chouchu" ["Mao Zedong's Hesitation on the Question of Successor in his Late Years"], Mao Zedong sixiang yanjiu [Study of Mao Zedong Thought] 3 (1990): 85-90. For an English translation of the letter, see, Kau, The Lin Biao Affair, 118-123.
messages, but in an obscure way. In Mao's own words, he wrote the letter in "black words." Mao therefore told Jiang not to publicize the letter at the time because "publication of these words means pouring cold water on [the leftists], which will help the rightists."\(^{63}\)

When the Party published the letter after the Incident as supplementary material for the movement to criticize Lin Biao, Jiang Qing elucidated that the letter was evidence that Mao had reservations about Lin Biao as his successor as early as 1966. However, even party historians have found this assessment unconvincing.\(^{64}\) A careful study of the letter suggests that it contained Mao's statement of the purposes of the Cultural Revolution, his strategic plan for implementing the Cultural Revolution, and his relationship with Lin Biao and others.

At the beginning of the letter, Mao made it clear that he was ready to permit the Central Committee to publish the speech Lin gave at the enlarged meeting of the Politburo on May 18, 1966, although he was not entirely happy with the way Lin had discussed the topic of a possible coup d'etat. Mao claimed this was the first time in his life he had had to go along with the ideas of other. Why did he have to do so? Mao's own explanation was that he needed allies in an

\(^{63}\)Kau, The Lin Piao Affair, 120.

\(^{64}\)Jin Chunming, "A Peculiar Self-analysis," 54, and Xu Quanxing, "Mao Zedong's Hesitation on the Question of Successor in his Late Years," 85-86.
impending confrontation with the "rightists." When Mao used the word "rightists," he did so with specific implications in mind. Mao, who was so obsessed with his own deep confusion toward life and death in his later years, was now unconsciously engaged in a psychological process that carried him further and further away from reality. When he isolated himself in "a cave in the west" (Dishui dong at Shaoshan, his hometown) to draft his letter to Jiang Qing, China, in his view, faced an immediate showdown between "leftists" and "rightists." "Ghosts and monsters jumped out by themselves," Mao stated of the situation. Mao was still confident that his decision to launch the Cultural Revolution was not only justified, but extremely necessary as well.

Mao also stated, in his letter to Jiang Qing, how he would stage the impending revolution. "The Cultural Revolution this time is a large-scale and serious maneuver," he wrote, in which "the leftists, the rightists, and the wavering fence-sitters will absorb useful lessons." Mao anticipated and hoped for a nation-wide upheaval, for only in that way, he believed, would China achieve eventually a great peace. To be successful, this process would have to be repeated every seven or eight years. Several months after writing this letter, Mao proposed a toast to "overall class struggle in China" at his birthday party on December

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65 Kau, The Lin Piao Affair, 119.
26, 1966. The toast caught everyone present by surprise, including the members of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, Mao's think-tank for the Cultural Revolution.66

When Mao himself raised the possibility of an anticommunist, rightist political coup in China, he seemed to agree with a speech Lin had made on May 18. What made Mao uneasy was Lin's remarks in the same speech regarding the cult of personality. Mao was uncertain about the result of the spreading of worship of him as god. He complained to Jiang Qing about having been turned into the Zhong Kui of the Communist Party.67 Mao mockingly used the analogy of "Old-lady Wang who bragged about the melons she sold" to describe the awkward position he was in. However, he understood the political implication of the movement to create a cult of personality around him. As a politician, he decided to go along with it and use it against his rightist enemies. "I am now prepared to be broken to pieces," Mao told Jiang Qing. "And this does not bother me."

66Mao and Jiang Qing invited the members of the Cultural Revolutionary Small Group to a birthday dinner, including Chen Boda, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu, and Yao Wenyuan. Over dinner, Mao discussed his ideas about the Cultural Revolution in detail. Some scholars have interpreted Mao's words "overall class struggle" to mean "overall civil war." For details on Mao's discussion, see Wang Li, Xianchang lishi [Witness to History] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 100-110.

67Zhong Kui is a legendary figure in Chinese folklore who had the power to chase away ghosts and evil spirits.
Despite all of his self-doubt, which he described as the temperament of "a monkey," Mao was confident of his ability to lead a national war against "rightists." "In my mind there is the air of the tiger which is primary," he said, "and also the air of the monkey which is secondary." He added confidently, "If there is an anticommunist rightist political coup in China, I am certain that it will not be peaceful and very probably will be short-lived." He would prepare the "leftists" to fight whenever an anti-communist coup threatened, he would guarantee a revolutionary "red" China forever.

On what forces could Mao rely for such a noble mission? When Mao referred to Lin as "my friend," (the opposite of the "rightists" in Mao's letter), the answer seemed clear. Mao would make sure that the People's Liberation Army would be on his side. From its beginnings, the PLA was a peculiar armed force because of its involvement in political affairs. In its history of more than forty years, the army had always been more than a military institution. It was an "armed force of peasants and workers under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party," and it performed diverse functions as "a fighting team, a working team, and a production team." Most political leaders in Mao's generation identified themselves closely with the army. In the first two decades of the PRC, the same group of elites simultaneously held key positions in the Party, the government, and the army. Lin
himself was both defense minister and vice-chairman of the Party. Marshal Chen Yi was also the first foreign minister, and Marshal He Long was director of the State Commission for Sports. As a result, the line between Party and army elites was never clear.

Mao was especially pleased with Lin's successful efforts to strengthen political and ideological work in the PLA after Lin replaced Peng Dehuai as defense minister. In October 1959, Jiefangjun bao [The People's Liberation Army Daily] published an article under Lin's name, which avowed that the army would give priority to political work, and in doing so, the PLA would become a "Great School of Mao Zedong Thought." From 1960 to 1965 the General Political Department, with Lin's permission, made a series of efforts to achieve this objective.

In September and October 1960, an enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission met in Beijing and adopted a resolution spelling out a detailed program for political and ideological work in the army. It established the "Four-First" principles as guidelines for political work in the PLA. The principles emphasized human factors over weapons, political work over military training, ideological over

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administrative work, and living ideology over book ideology. The resolution detailed how to indoctrinate the masses, how to develop the "Three-Eight working style," how to make Party branches strong "bulwarks" for combat, and how a political director could accomplish political and ideological works. The resolution served as a blueprint for revitalizing political work in the army.

One immediate effect of the resolution was the restoration of political organization at the company level and below. By April 1961, Party branches were in place in every company and Party cells in every platoon. In the year in which this occurred, an estimated 229,999 new Party members joined the PLA. Mao's ideas of the mass line and political and ideological work spread through the PLA when

69 The Resolution explains that by "living ideology," it means that people should not confine themselves to the words of books, but should go beyond them and put these words into practice. In other words, "it is what Mao often said of it: the unity of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese Revolution." Cheng, 67-68.

70 In May 1960, Xiao Hua, the director of the General Political Department of the PLA, issued a directive to cultivate the "Three-Eight style" in the PLA. The PLA was asked to follow a tradition which could be summarized by three phrases and eight Chinese characters. The three phrases called for a firm and correct political orientation, persevering and simple style of work, and flexible strategy and tactics. The eight characters meant united, alert, earnest, and lively. Chiang I-shan, "Military Affairs," Communist China (1960), 186.


Lin advocated the study of Mao's works. The resolution just discussed included Lin's instruction to "read Chairman Mao's works, listen to his words, do as he instructs and become a good soldier of Chairman Mao," which later became a famous slogan during the Cultural Revolution.

In 1960, Lin wrote the introduction to the first edition of the four-volume *Mao Zedong zhuzuo xuandu* [Selected Works of Mao Zedong]. In it, he celebrated the victory of the Chinese Revolution as the victory of Mao Zedong Thought. In November 1961, the General Political Department, under Lin's directive, provided copies of *Mao Zedong zhuzuo xuandu* to every company, and during the next three years the number of copies distributed exceeded 150 million. 73 In May 1964, the General Political Department published the first edition of *Mao zhuxi yulu* [Quotations of Chairman Mao], known as the "Little Red Book" during the Cultural Revolution, and printed nearly a billion copies over the next several years. 74

By 1965, Lin's efforts to ideologically indoctrinate the PLA had succeeded. Politics now dominated the army. In May 1965, the army abolished its rank system in an effort to illustrate Mao's egalitarian principle that "soldiers and


officers are the same." The PLA had become "Great School of Mao Zedong Thought."

Lin Biao's accomplishments from 1960 to 1965 pleased Mao, as did Lin's devotion to Mao's mass line and political work system. In a letter to Lin and other PLA leaders on November 16, 1963, Mao wrote, "The ideological and political works of the PLA have become more theoretical and systematic since Lin raised the ideas of 'the Four-First' principles and the 'Three-Eight working style'."\(^75\) Through the "Socialist Education" movement that got underway at the end of 1963, Mao sought to extend Lin's achievements in the army to the nation as a whole. "I have considered this question for several years," he stated in the letter just mentioned. "Now that some industrial departments suggest voluntarily learning from the PLA, and we have gained positive results from the experiences of the Department of Petroleum to convince people, it is time to implement it on a larger scale."\(^76\)

On February 1, 1964, Renmin ribao [People's Daily] published an editorial initiating the "learn from the PLA" campaign. The editorial, entitled "The Whole Country Must Learn from the PLA," praised the PLA as "an army of

\(^{75}\)Xuexi ziliao [Study Materials], vol. 3 (Oakton, Va.: Center for Chinese Research Materials, 1989), 72.

\(^{76}\)Xuexi ziliao, 72.
extremely high proletarian and combat character." One consequence of this campaign was the increased popularity and prestige of Mao Zedong Thought. Mass worship of Mao, which Lin had perfected in the army, now spread through the nation, fueled by the study of Mao's works. The movement, which was "a new development of Mao Zedong's thinking concerning socialist construction," aimed at pounding the values of Mao into the mind of everyone in the nation. Through celebrations of the revolutionary spirit of such model soldier-heroes as Lei Feng, the whole country learned proper Maoist moral virtues and the Party asked everyone to become "obedient tools" of the Party in the so-called "spirit of a spike."

Some scholars have argued that the "learn from the PLA" movement did not last long, and thus had only limited impact on the nation as a whole. It is true that the high tide

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77 Renmin Ribao, February 1, 1964, p. 1.

78 Gittings, The Role of the Chinese Army, 257.

79 Lei Feng was a soldier who was known for his "high political consciousness." He became a model soldier for others to follow after he died in an accident in 1964.

80 When the General Political Department set Lei Feng as a good example for others to follow, the analogy of "a spike" was often used to describe his unconditional devotion to the party. "A spike of the party," means that no matter what the party asks him to do, he does his share devotedly without any conditions, just as a spike does when it is nailed somewhere.

of the campaign lasted only about four or five months; however, the influence of the campaign was powerful and pervasive. It was not just a propaganda movement, but a well-organized cultural force supported by both the Party and the Government. Zhou Enlai, the premier, applauded the movement in his speech at the Third National Congress in December 1964:

All our Party and government organs and the broad mass of our cadres should learn from the thoroughly revolutionary spirit and style of work of the Liberation Army...and advance along the road to revolution. 82

The influence of the movement continued in the first several years of the Cultural Revolution. In fact, the purpose of the "learn from the PLA" movement was not merely to improve political work at various levels. In a sense, the campaign was a very important preparation for the Cultural Revolution, which was to begin the next year. Mao used it as a test of the effectiveness of his methods of political education and of his idea of employing mass movements to fight the Party bureaucracy. In doing so, he gained important experience in how to organize and mobilize the masses. More importantly, the campaign greatly enhanced the cult of Mao and the prestige of the PLA. With Lin's


help, Mao had turned the PLA into an "obedient and absolute tool" of the Party. Without full confidence in the PLA and in his "mass line," Mao would probably not have felt comfortable initiating the Cultural Revolution, during which he had to rely heavily on the PLA to support the "leftists." The "learn from the PLA" campaign convinced Mao that it was possible to mobilize the masses in a large scale for his purpose.

Lin of course understood the meaning of Mao's July 8 letter to Jiang Qing. Zhou went to Dalian to show Lin the letter shortly after Mao had shown it to him in Wuhan.83 In August 1967, Lin told Zeng Siyu and Liu Feng that Mao had relied on two things in beginning the Cultural Revolution: the high prestige of Mao Zedong Thought and of Mao himself, and the People's Liberation Army.84 In her speech at the enlarged conference of the Central Military Commission in April 1967, Jiang Qing also revealed Mao's intention to ask

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83According to a Chinese Party historian, Xu Quanxing, Zhou Enlai suggested to Mao after he had seen the letter at Wuhan to go to Dalian to talk to Lin Biao, and Mao agreed. Xu Quanxing, "Mao Zedong wannian zai jiebanren wenti shang de chouchu," ["Mao's Hesitation on the Question of Successor in his Late Years"], Mao Zedong sixiang yanjiu [Study of Mao Zedong Thought] 28 (March 1990): 86.

help from "the God of PLA" to attack the bourgeois representatives within the party.  

Despite these assurances, Lin felt uneasy in his new position as Mao’s successor. His problems were personal as well as institutional. Personally, Lin realized his dilemma as Mao’s successor, and institutionally he was concerned about the integrity of the PLA. According to his daughter, Lin had been very reluctant to accept the position as successor and even less willing to get involved in the Cultural Revolution. Despite his clear public record as Mao’s loyal follower, Lin had his own opinions of Mao and what had happened in China since the Great Leap Forward. In 1949, Lin made an uncomplimentary comment on Mao, "He will fabricate ‘your’ opinion first, then he will change ‘your’ opinion which is not actually yours, but his fabrication. I should be careful about this usual trick." In 1958, Lin Biao made another critical comment, "He [Mao] worships himself and has a blind faith in himself. He worships himself to such an extent that all accomplishments are

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attributed to himself, but all the mistakes are made by others." 87

Like Mao, Lin had a good knowledge of Chinese history. He was especially interested in the theories about and concepts of human relations in Confucianism, Legalism, and Daoism. On one occasion he asked a history professor to put quotations from Confucius, Mencius, Han Feizi, and Lao Zi on flash cards for him to read. 88 After the Lin Biao Incident, the investigation group found boxes of such cards at Lin's residence. Some of them turned out to be Ye Qun's recording of Lin's ideas, including his negative comments on Mao. 89 In 1974, these cards triggered a strange episode, in which Lin Biao and Confucius were criticized together.

Based on his understanding of Chinese history and of Mao, Lin knew that a position next to a powerful charismatic leader would be a vulnerable one, especially after he saw what happened to Liu Shaoqi. In private, Lin often showed respect for Liu Shaoqi. He told his daughter that Liu had "a better understanding of theories than Mao." Lin also expressed sympathy for Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping when he told his daughter that it made no sense to oust them because

87Xu Quanxing, Mao Zedong, 408.


89Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 481-83.
both of them "good comrades." It seemed to Lin that Mao's dissatisfaction with the two men was the only reason for their fall. The ill-fortune of Liu and Deng reminded Lin of an old Chinese proverb, "To be in the company of a king is to be in the company of a tiger." In fact, Lin was not the only person who understood the dilemma of Mao's successor. Zhou Enlai was always careful to distance himself from that position. Before the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress in 1966, Zhou crossed off his own name from the list of candidates for vice-chairman of the Communist Party. As a result, Lin Biao became the sole vice-chairman of the Chinese Communist Party.

Lin could not reject the appointment because Mao had made it a decision of the Party Central Committee. As a senior party official, Lin knew that once the Party made a final decision, he had no choice but to accept it. To reject it would jeopardize his political career. Still, Lin expressed his anxiety over the position in a speech on August 13, 1966, immediately after his appointment,

Recently, I have been quite heavy hearted. Because of the incompatibility between the work assigned to me and my ability, I am afraid that I am not competent for such a job. I know I will make mistakes, although I will try my best to avoid them....

I know that my knowledge and ability are not sufficient enough [for such a position]. Several times, I asked sincerely not to be given this post. But since the Chairman and the Central

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90Guan Weixun, 215.
Committee have decided, I have to accept the decision.\footnote{Zhonggong zhongyan bangongting, "Lin Biao zai 1966 nian 8 yue 13 ri zhongyong gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua," ["Lin's August 13, 1966 speech at the central working conference"], a document prepared for a conference (July 1, 1972), 9-10.}

When Lin noted his desire to reject the position, he was not being modest.\footnote{In traditional Chinese political culture, it was considered a virtue if one made a modest gesture of refusing an appointment even if he wanted it very much.} Lin did not attend the Eleventh Plenum when the move to criticize Liu Shaoqi and to name Lin Mao's successor began. On August 8, after Mao publicized his big-character poster, "Bombard the Headquarters," Zhou Enlai made secret arrangement to bring Lin to Beijing from Dalian. After Lin's plane landed, Zhou and Wang Dongxing boarded it and talked with Lin for about half an hour. Lin was in a gloomy mood when he stepped out of the plane. Zhou took Lin directly to the Great Hall of the People where Mao was staying for the summer.\footnote{Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5004, 1.} There, Lin reportedly "begged" Mao not to appoint him his successor for the purpose of the Cultural Revolution,\footnote{There is an even more dramatic version of this meeting between Mao and Lin, which says that Lin was on his knees when he begged Mao. A party historian, interview by author, Beijing, 15 August, 1994.} but Mao sternly
criticized Lin, using an analogy of Emperor Shizong in the Ming Dynasty. 95

Lin later sent a formal request to Mao that Mao rescind his appointment to the position of successor. Again Mao rejected the request. In his fury, Lin tore the returned report apart and threw the pieces into a garbage. Ye Qun later picked up the pieces and stuck them together. 96

"Passive, Passive, and Passive Again"

Since there was no way for Lin to refuse the appointment, he tried to secure his own position by following Mao unconditionally and, as the head of the PLA, to keep the army out of the Cultural Revolution. According to his former secretaries, he showed no interest in his new job. In sharp contrast to his public image as Mao's staunch supporter, Lin privately had no desire to promote the Cultural Revolution. He secluded himself in his residence, and attended meetings only when Mao demanded that he do so. He managed his daily work peculiarly: he made no phone calls, had only minimum contact with his colleagues, and received very few visitors. His secretaries read documents

95Ming Shizong is known for spending so much time looking for medicine for longevity that he left national affairs unattended. One party historian who had seen written materials in the Central Achieves related this fact to me in one of our discussions of the incident.

96According to some scholars, the document is still kept in the Central archives. Guan Weixun, 215.
for him, but he was only willing to listen to short summaries of selected documents for half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon. 97 One of his secretaries complained that an hour a day was insufficient to do the work that had to be done. "As his secretary," Zhang Yunsheng stated, "I was at a loss as to how I could possibly fulfill my responsibilities of informing Lin of key decisions in such a short time span." 98

There were two reasons for Lin's survival in the early years of the Cultural Revolution: he adhered closely to Mao's every decision, and he adopted Daoist strategy of "doing nothing." When he had difficulty deciding on something, he waited until Mao's opinion on the issue was clear. To show Lin's loyalty to Mao, Ye Qun urged Lin's staff to make sure Lin always arrived minutes before Mao and was waiting for Mao's arrival whenever both men were to be present at an event. 99 Lin deliberately encouraged people to believe he was Mao's closest follower. When one of his secretaries told Lin that Lin was well known as Mao's best student, he was very happy. "We should all follow Mao closely," he told the secretary, with a proud smile on his face.

face. "I don’t have any talent. What I know, I learned from Mao."

Colleagues and staff members who knew Lin well noticed that except in public speeches, he seldom expressed his own opinions about issues regarding the Cultural Revolution. Among his colleagues, he came to have a reputation as "reticent and mysterious." He seldom spoke his mind, and when he did speak, he spoke as briefly as possible. When one of his long-term subordinates, Tao Zhu, was in trouble with the CCRSG and was facing an impending purge, Lin tried to warn him about the danger he would soon encounter. Lin’s words to Tao were, "You should be passive, passive and passive again." Despite the value of this message, Tao probably never figured out what it meant.

The Army Cannot Be in Disorder

As head of the PLA, Lin was also concerned about the army. He was worried whether the PLA could achieve Mao’s goals without damaging itself. In speeches throughout 1966-1967, Lin repeatedly expressed his anxieties over what he saw as threats to the integrity of the PLA. In August 1966, he warned army officials to avoid political mistakes. "It will be the worst scandal," he said, "if someone among the
military officials turns out opposing Chairman Mao." In an address to military commanders in the spring of 1967, Lin again reminded his subordinates to avoid political errors. The danger of doing so just then, he felt, was especially great because the People's Liberation Army had never been engaged in so large an intervention in national affairs.

Lin's concerns about threats to the integrity of the army turned out to be warranted. From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, it was difficult for the army to maintain internal discipline. In fact, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in such a way that nobody save Mao himself understood what was going on. Mao wanted a mass movement against "rightists" that would achieve "ultimate peace in the country through a great chaos." With his personal encouragement, the Red Guards quickly threw the country into chaos.


103 "Document" issued by Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting, June 6, 1972, 21-22.

104 There are more profound social and political reasons behind the formation and the development of the Red Guard movement than it is described here. For detailed discussion on the movement, see Hong Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution; Stanley Rosen, Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou (Canton) (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982); Jing Lin, The Red Guards' Path to Violence: Political, Educational, and Psychological Factors (New York: Praeger, 1991); Gordon A. Bennett and Ronald N. Montaperto, Red Guard: The Political Biography of Da Hsiao-ai (New York: Dougleday & Company, 1971); Anita Chan, Children of Mao: Personality Development and Political Activism in the Red Guard Generation (Seattle:
The first Red Guard organization appeared on the campus of the middle school attached to Qinghua University on May 29, 1966. A group of students there decided they wanted to join and intensify an ongoing campaign to criticize the Beijing Municipal Government. They put out big-character posters around campus, identifying themselves as Hongweibing [Red Guards]. Similar student organizations soon sprang up on other campuses in Beijing. This movement probably would not have lasted long had it not caught Mao's attention and received his personal endorsement. On July 28, Red Guards from Qinghua University middle school asked Jiang Qing to give two of their posters to Mao. To everybody's surprise, Mao immediately answered them with a letter, stating his support for the Red Guards and their activities.

On August 1, Mao circulated his letter and the two posters at the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Party Central Committee. The Party and the Central Government, however, were less impressed than Mao had been, and the Committee did not confirm the legality of the Red Guards at the Eleventh Plenum. It did adopt a document known as the "Sixteen Items," which contained an outline of the Cultural Revolution but did not include the term "Red Guard." Mao therefore acted on his own. As a charismatic leader, he felt no need for anyone else's endorsement to implement his

own ideas. He was confident that he could rely on irregular
groups to stage the Cultural Revolution, namely the CCRSG
and the Red Guards.

On August 3, Wang Renzhong, a deputy leader of the
CCRSG, told the Red Guards from Qinghua University middle
school of Mao's endorsement.¹⁰⁵ The movement thereafter
grew, and after the first Red Guard rally on August 18,
1966, quickly spread across the country. Most of the Red
Guards were teenagers and thrilled to carry out their
mission to "smash the four-olds" nationwide.¹⁰⁶ On the
evening of August 19, a group of them took their first
action. They broke into a well-known Beijing restaurant,
smashed the signboard and tore down the decorative paintings
and pictures. They then put Mao's picture and quotations
from his writings on the wall to "revolutionize" the shop.
In the days following, other Red Guards swarmed into
hospitals, hotels, theaters, department stores, public
parks, and historical sites smashing whatever was viewed as
"old," even revolutionizing "old" names. For example, Xiehe
Hospital, which Americans had established in the 1920s, was
renamed "Fandi" [Anti-imperialism] hospital; "Dong'an

¹⁰⁵Gao Shu and others, Juren Mao Zedong [Mao Zedong, a
Giant] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1993), 1461-1463.

¹⁰⁶"Four olds" includes "old ideas, old culture, old
customs, and old habits."
Market" became "Dongfeng [East-wind] Market."\textsuperscript{107} Even their schools received new names, many of them some variation of "Red Guard Fighting School."\textsuperscript{108} As their revolutionary enthusiasm rose, Red Guards began targeting people on the street, harasssing anyone who dressed or otherwise appeared bourgeois or Western. They stopped individuals with long hair or permanent waves and cut their hair on the spot. They also targeted mini-skirts, Western suits, leather shoes, and tight jeans as "bourgeois," and therefore unacceptable. For the rest of the year, the nation suffered under the red terror of these "little generals."

This violent and irrational behavior received no interference from the authorities. Instead, the official propaganda organs, now controlled by the CCRSG, gave the green light to students to do whatever they wanted. On August 21, the General Political Department of the army issued a "hands off" order to troops not to interfere with the movement. The next day, Mao approved a directive of the Public Security Department strictly forbidding policemen from suppressing or interfering with the students. In his

\textsuperscript{107}"East Wind" comes from a famous statement of Mao, which says, "The East Wind prevails over the West Wind." It means that the peoples in the East will triumph over the peoples in the West.

\textsuperscript{108}Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, Wenhua dageming shinian shi [Ten-Year History of the Cultural Revolution], 2nd ed. (Taiwan: Yuanliu chuban shiyi gufen youxian gongsi, 1990), 89-98.
speech at a central working conference on August 23, Mao expressed his approval of the turmoil. "In my opinion, we should let it be like this for several months," he said. "I do not think the chaos in Beijing was that bad. [The students] are still too civilized in their behavior."

Although the Eleventh Plenum had not acknowledged the legitimacy of the Red Guard movement, central newspapers and journals, including Renmin ribao, Jiefangjun bao and Hongqi, encouraged and applauded the anarchical behavior of the Red Guard, making it impossible for local authorities to challenge its legitimacy. Renmin ribao, for example, saluted the Red Guards and editorially labeled some of the atrocities as "achievements of our Red Guards. They [the Red Guards] truly have shaken the whole society and the old world," stated the editorial. "The Red Guards exposed 'blood-suckers' and the enemies of the people one by one."

The CCRSG received a constant stream of Red Guard representatives, and gave them instructions on how to carry out their revolutionary mission. Xie Fuzhi, head of the Public Security Department and deputy chief of the Small Group, asked in one of his speeches, "Should the Red Guards who beat someone to death go to jail? If someone is dead,

he is dead. I do not think we can do anything about it at all.... You will make a big mistake if you arrest the person who beat the person up."\textsuperscript{110} On September 7, Mao wrote to Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Tao Zhu, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng and Jiang Qing asking them to have the Central Committee issue a directive to the provinces against interference with the Red Guards. "It is wrong to provoke workers and peasants against students," Mao said.\textsuperscript{111}

Encouragement from Mao and the CCRSG rationalized the irrational behavior of Red Guards. The radicals soon realized that changing the names of streets and destroying the "four olds" were only minor parts of their mission. They came to see themselves as what Mao said they were: chosen rebels against institutional authority, instruments of the class struggle, enforcers of Mao's theories. From the very beginning, the reputation of the Red Guards rested on the idea that consisted of youths from "good" family backgrounds, that is, from families of workers, poor and lower middle class peasants, revolutionary and military cadres. Among the people from "bad" background in this way of thinking were members of the "black classes," including intellectuals. This conceptualization reflects the ambiguity of the concept of class itself in Communist China, where there were no easy answers to the question of whether

\textsuperscript{110}Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 73.

\textsuperscript{111}Chen Donglin and Du Pu, 159-160.
class was a factor of economic status, as Marx suggested, or of political consciousness, or both.\textsuperscript{112}

The students, however, had no time for social complexities. They simplified the matter of social class with a popular saying that everyone understood: "If one's father is revolutionary his son is a hero, and if one's father is reactionary, his son is a bad egg."\textsuperscript{113} Such slogans justified ransacking the households of people with "bad" backgrounds and humiliating, torturing, and even killing the occupants.

As early as June 18, 1966, students at Beijing University created new ways to humiliate professors they considered "demons and evil spirits." In one incident the students gathered eighteen objectionable professors and administrators, poured ink on their faces, put paper hats on their heads, and hung boards with humiliating words around their necks. They also shaved one half of the head of each victim, man or woman, making it easy to identify them as "bad." This was the first of many cases of physical abuse

\textsuperscript{112}Hong Yung Lee, \textit{Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution}, 68-69.

of people relegated to "black gangs" [heibang].\(^{114}\)

Although the work team on the campus stopped the students and criticized them for the incident just described, physical torture later became the most standard form of Red Guards punishment for everyone from high school teachers to the state chairman.

Statistics of the overall human and material cost of the Red Guard movement are still not available. The following list illustrates the damages done by the Red Guard Movement in Beijing between August and September 1966.\(^{115}\)

On August 23, Red Guards burned a huge pile of opera costumes they had confiscated from various opera troupes in Beijing.

On August 24, Lao She, author of *Rickshaw Boy* and one of China's best known contemporary writers, committed suicide after several humiliating beatings by Red Guards.

On August 27, Red Guards broke into the houses of several former generals of the Guomindang, humiliated the men, and ordered them to clean up the street everyday thereafter. Few non-communist celebrities escaped

\(^{114}\)At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, "black gang" [heibang] was a term used to refer to those either with bad class origins or considered having any political problems.

\(^{115}\)For more information, see Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, *Shinian shi* chapter 4, 89-125; Wang Nianyi, *Dadongluan*, 64-92, and Xiao Di and et al, eds. *"Wenge" zhi mi [Mysteries of the "Cultural Revolution"]* (Beijing: Zhao hua chubanshe, 1993), 71-88.
punishment of some sort from Red Guards. Even Madame Song Qinglin was harassed from time to time. Red Guards "ordered" her to change her hair-style and destroy her pet pigeons.

During the period, the Red Guards beat over 1,700 people to death in Beijing. In Daxing county alone, they killed 325 people from "four black categories" within a single week. The oldest victim was eighty and the youngest only one month old. In 22 households, the Red Guards killed everyone. During the same period, they ransacked over 33,695 households, and expelled 85,198 residents from the city. They also destroyed 4,922 of the 6,843 historic sites and relics in Beijing, sent more than 3,200,000 tons of books to paper mills, including 2,347,000 copies of classic, ancient and rare books. No single institution remained intact and untouched from the irrational assaults of rebellious youngsters. In late August, various democratic parties closed their offices, and every school, from primary grades to universities, closed for the new semester.

Mao had not expected this when he supported the Red Guard Movement in mid-August. From October 9 to 28, Mao chaired a central working conference in Beijing. In a speech to the conference on October 25, 1966, he appeared to be apologetic.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{116}For the details of this meeting, see MacFarquhar and Fairbank, eds, Cambridge History, 150-151, and Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 100-117.
I brought trouble [when I decided] to broadcast the big-character poster [from Beijing University, [when I] wrote a letter to the Red Guards of the middle school attached to Qinghua University, and [when] I myself wrote a big-character poster.

Even I did not expected that [the Red Guard movement] would develop on such a large scale in such a short time. Once the big-character poster (the poster from Beijing University) was on the radio, it created agitation throughout the country. Red Guards were organized across the country even before I sent out my letter to them....117

Mao might have voiced reservations about the movement, but he had no intention of ending it, even if most of his comrades disagreed with his decision. "The movement has been on the stage for five months," Mao told his comrades at the meeting. "It probably needs twice as much time as this, and maybe more." Instead of restricting the movement, Mao publicized his big-character poster, "Bombard the Headquarters" across the country. Meanwhile, he continued to encourage the Red Guards and other radical mass organizations [zaofan pai] to attack the "bourgeois reactionary line."118 Mao decided to publicize this slogan in Lin's speech on National day and in the Hongqi editorial for the month of October. Chen Boda, Wang Renzhong, and

117Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 113-114.

118During the Cultural Revolution, various mass organizations fell into two basic categories: radicals [zaofan pai] and conservatives [baohuang pai] in terms of their attitude toward the leaders of various administrative organizations. The radicals were engaged in rebelling against the leaders, but the conservatives were on the side of the leaders, trying to help them.

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Zhang Chunqiao drafted Lin's speech. Before National Day, Tao Zhu, Wang Renzhong, and Wang Li each suggested to Mao the inappropriateness of using the word "reactionary" to refer to an inner party struggle, but Mao turned a deaf ear to their suggestion. Zhou Enlai also questioned the use of the expression "bourgeois reactionary line." He told Wang Li that he would see Mao about this, because in the past, the "wrong" side in inner party struggles was referred to as "leftist or rightist opportunists," but never as "bourgeois reactionaries." Zhou did not understand why, Mao now insisted on the terms "bourgeois" and "reactionary" to refer to a difference of opinion within the Party. Mao would not listen to Zhou, either.119

After the October central working conference and the publicizing of the slogan "criticize bourgeois reactionary line," the situation everywhere became increasingly chaotic. Local radicals kidnapped many ranking provincial cadres as they returned from the conference in Beijing. In November and December, workers and peasants joined Red Guards in criticizing the "bourgeois reactionary line" of party and government figures. In response, many local government agencies created conservative mass organizations to counter the radicals. As a result, mass organizations everywhere divided into different factions and fought each other. By the end of 1966, almost all of the provincial party

119Wang Li, 66-67.
committees and local governments at various levels had collapsed. In January 1967, when the Revolution entered a new stage characterized by a general "seizure of power from capitalist roaders"--the overthrow of party and administrative institutions and the reorganization of them under radical supervision--the country entered a period of even greater confusion and disorder.

Factional controversies, especially over who should exercise power after the breakdown of formal institutions, soon developed into armed conflict, as each faction wanted a share of power. In some areas, radicals broke into military garrisons and seized PLA weaponry. In the Northeast, the winning radical factions even had tanks patrolling the streets. This was probably what Mao expected when he made a toast wishing for an "overall class struggle" at his birthday party in December 1966. In Lin's words, the "cultural revolution" now became an "armed revolution."\(^{120}\)

Mao finally decided to use the PLA to stabilize the situation. On January 23, he received a report concerning the use of troops in the Anhui military region to keep order at a rally to criticize and denounce the secretary of the provincial party committee, Li Baohua. Mao wrote on the report, "[We] should send the PLA soldiers to support the leftist revolutionary masses. From now on, if the real revolutionary masses ask the army for assistance, it should

\(^{120}\)Zhang Yunsheng, *Jishi*, 108.
agree. The so-called 'non-interference' is not true, for [the PLA] has already gotten involved. [We] should issue a new order and declare the previous order null and void. Please consider this. 121

Mao's order left Lin no way to keep the PLA out of the Cultural Revolution, which was actually a key point of controversy between the CCRSG and the military. As defense minister, Lin had responsibility for maintaining order in the army for the sake of national security. He did not want the army involved in the Cultural Revolution, and he especially wanted to keep the army away from local radicals.

The Central Military Committee under his supervision had worked arduously to keep order within the army when everything else was in chaos. When Liu Shaoqi sent work teams to schools, the army also dispatched teams to army schools to maintain order. After the Red Guard movement began, the Central Military Committee issued several documents requiring students at army schools to remain on campus to receive "positive education" [zhangnian jiaoyu]. These documents emphasized party leadership at army schools after the withdrawal of work teams, and established rules to keep students from displaying posters on campus and from contact with local radicals. Until October 1966, the Central Military Committee had managed to make the Cultural Revolution in the army relatively less violent and chaotic.

121 Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 84, and True Account, 25.
that it was elsewhere. The students in army schools were relatively easy to control because of the army tradition of stern discipline.

Lin was in an awkward position. As Mao's successor, he was supposed to be actively assisting Mao in the Cultural Revolution. He also had expected to cooperate with the CCRSG headed by Madame Mao. Because Jiang Qing was Mao's wife, Lin and others in high places felt obligated to maintain a good relationship with her and her group. Jiang Qing pressed the army to start a revolution within itself, and Kang Sheng accused the army of "staying idle outside the overall war" that was the Cultural Revolution. Chen Boda likewise insisted that in the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, which was a general class struggle, the PLA had no right to remain uninvolved, nor could it hope to do so.122

In a sense, Chen Boda was right. It was impossible for the People's Liberation Army to remain immune to the social chaos created by the Red Guards. It was more and more difficult to control army students, especially after Mao encouraged Red Guards across the country to "make contact" [dachuanlian] with each other by going to Beijing to seeing Mao. Army students demanded the opportunity to go to

Beijing and the rehabilitation of radical army students whom the work teams had previously criticized as "counter-revolutionaries." When their complaints reached the CCRSG, Jiang Qing pressured Lin to encourage the Cultural Revolution within the army. On October 1, a group of army students who had traveled to Beijing raised the issue with Mao and Lin at Tian'anmen. Lin was probably embarrassed by the incident because it appeared as if the army did not support Mao's Cultural Revolution. Students from the Second Military Medical School in Shanghai also sent a coat "stained with blood" to Lin, demanding that he give army students permission to come to Beijing.123

To ease the pressure on him, Lin asked Ye Jianying to preside over an enlarged conference of the Central Military Committee called to discuss the issue. Although the officials at the meeting were reluctant to grant the students' request, nobody could find an excuse to prevent army students from going to Beijing to see Mao, since Mao had encouraged students at local schools to do so. The students' other request for the "rehabilitation" of the radicals in army school was an especially sensitive issue, because Mao had insisted that whoever suppressed a student movement was carrying out a "bourgeois reactionary line." The Central Military Committee finally decided to compromise.

with the students, but in doing so, emphasized three points: Students must return to their schools immediately after attending a rally to see Mao; they must observe army discipline while in Beijing; and they must not "make contact" with local Red Guards or to interfere with the local Cultural Revolution. After the meeting, the Army Cultural Revolution Small Group (ACRSG) drafted a document outlining the implementation of the Cultural Revolution in army schools.

However, when the draft of a directive implementing these orders reached the CCRSG for endorsement, Liu Zhijian, the head of the ACRSG and also a deputy chief of the CCRSG, encountered opposition from Chen Boda, Jiang Qing and others. The latter rejected the basic idea behind the directive, namely that the Party should supervise the Cultural Revolution in army schools. Chen Boda edited the entire document, sentence by sentence, completely changing its original meaning. As a result, the document, titled as "An Urgent Instruction regarding the Cultural Revolution in Army Schools," became just another document the CCRSG used to promote the Cultural Revolution. After Ye Jianying described the "Urgent Instruction" to army students at a rally on October 5, Zhang Chunqiao announced at a mass rally

124All the documents regarding the Cultural Revolution required final approval from the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group.

125Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 96.

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the following day that the "Instructions" enabled students in army school to join the Cultural Revolution on the same basis as other students.\textsuperscript{126}

The "Instruction" produced chaos in army schools as well as at military headquarters in Beijing. Army students swarmed into Beijing to see Mao and refused to leave. After making contacts with radical students in Beijing, they felt resentful over having been "suppressed" and kept out of the movement for so long. By November, the number of the army students in Beijing exceeded 100,000, and assisted by Red Guards they began assaulting the Defense Ministry, the Science Committee of the National Defense, and military headquarters. On November 8, over 600 army students broke into the Defense Ministry, wounding guards who tried to stop them. They demonstrated around and within the building, demanding that Deputy Chief of Staff Li Tianyou accompany them to a "struggle meeting." Lin was surprised when he learned of this, and asked Ye Jianying and Liu Zhijian to handle the matter. Lin told Ye and Liu to persuade the students to withdraw, but not to punish them and to avoid direct confrontation with the radicals. Several senior army officials from the General Political Department negotiated with the students, but they were unable to establish

meaningful communication with the radicals, who were too excited to listen to anybody. Ye Qun finally solved the problem by asking Chen Boda for help. Chen sent Zhang Chunqiao and Qi Benyu to negotiate with the students, and they finally managed to persuade the students to withdraw.\textsuperscript{127}

While the crisis in the Defense Ministry was temporarily solved, the poor handling of the situation brought unexpected consequences. Lin's "non-punishment policy" resulted in increased rebelliousness among the students. Between late October and the end of the year, radical students crowded into all military headquarters buildings in Beijing. At the end of October, over 3,000 students entered the compound of Air Force Headquarters, settled into offices there, which became their bed rooms, and demanded self-criticisms from leading Air Force officials at student rallies. In order to evade the students' assault, many senior officials stayed away from their homes as well as their offices. Whoever fell into the students' hands would be humiliated and perhaps even tortured. Wu Faxian, Commander of the Air Force, later gave the following account of the difficulties he had faced:

\begin{quote}
The students took over all the offices and disrupted our routine work at headquarters. They wanted the leading officials to attend their
\end{quote}

meetings and demanded that we do self-criticism. Under these circumstances, there was no way for us to keep up with our daily work. I was worried to death. There were so many planes in the air every day that we might have plane accidents if things continued out of control like this. As the Commander-in-chief of the Air Force, I would have to take full responsibility if any accidents occurred. I asked Yang Chengwu, the acting Chief of Staff, for help. However, he had his own difficulties in dealing with radical students. He escaped from his home and his office in order to evade the students’ assault. He told me to seek help from Ye Jianying instead, the secretary of the Central Military Committee. After Ye consulted with Zhou Enlai, he told me that I could take refuge in his house. However, I could not stay for long, because I was worried about what was happening at the headquarters.

As soon as I returned to the compound, the students came to demand that I attend their meeting for criticism. They prepared a spittoon as a hat to be put on my head and ink on my face. It was said that they even planned to shave half of my hair off. Again, I reported this to Ye, who told me to stay away from the students and leave the compound immediately. Otherwise, the students may kidnap me as they did many other high officials. Again, I was on the run. The students got several cars to follow me everywhere, seeking an opportunity to catch me. As a last resort, Ye told me to move to the Jingxi Hotel, which the students felt hesitant to break into, because it was guarded by the troops from the Beijing Garrison. Meanwhile, the students kept breaking into my house at night and harassing my wife and children if they could not find me there. Thus, I remained as a "refugee" for at least several months until Jiang Qing referred to me as a "good comrade" in one of her receptions to the students, upon Lin’s request. At that time, if you were lucky enough to get direct "protection" from "proletariat headquarters," you would be spared from students’ harassment.129

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128 In contrast to Liu Shaoqi’s bourgeois headquarters. Only Mao, Lin, Zhou and members of a few Cultural Revolution groups belonged to proletarian headquarters.

Other military organizations fared no better than the Air Force. Qiu Huizuo, Director of the General Logistics Department, was among the initial victims of the students' attack. Students took him from his home and held him for several weeks to make sure he would be available for their "meetings of criticism." At one of those meetings, they forced Qiu to crawl from the one end of the stage to the other while being beaten. If Ye Qun had not come in person to rescue him from radical students, it is unlikely that he would have survived the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{130}

Qiu was lucky that Lin Biao and Ye Qun went out of their way to help him because of his long-term special relationship with Lin.\textsuperscript{131} He ended up with only a few broken ribs and missing teeth. Other generals and civilians victimized by the students were not so lucky. To give just a few examples, on January 8, Yan Hongyan, first political commissar of the Kunming Military Region, committed suicide after Chen Boda refused his plea for help; on January 21, 1967, the Commander of the Donghai fleet, Tao Yong died mysteriously after a "meeting of criticism"; on January 22, Zhang Linzhi, Minister of Coal Industry, was beaten to

\textsuperscript{130}Zhang Yunsheng, \textit{Jishi}, 68-75.

\textsuperscript{131}Lin was known for trusting and caring for his subordinates, especially those who followed him through the war time. For more examples of this, see Quan Yanchi, \textit{Tao Zhu zai wenhua dageming zhong [Tao Zhu in the Cultural Revolution]} (Beijing: Zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1991), 124-125.
death; and on September 21, Wan Xiaotang, the secretary of Tianjin died after students kidnapped and abused him.¹³²

The radical students did not confine their turmoil to military headquarters in Beijing. They subjected military officers all over the country to attack. Students from army schools in the area, for example, assaulted eight military commanders in the Nanjing Military Region. Xu Shiyou, commander-in-chief of the Region, threatened to open fire if students assaulted him. Students kidnapped and tortured Tan Zi’an, vice commander of the Shenyang Military Region. Commander Han Xianchu of the Fuzhou Military Region complained to Lin’s secretary that a radical Red Guard faction in Beijing called "the Third Headquarters," had sent members to Fuzhou to encourage local radicals to assault military establishments there. "If this continues, I will go up to the mountains and engage in a guerrilla war," Han shouted angrily over the phone. "I believe that Chairman Mao is surrounded by bad people. Be warned of that!"¹³³

Whether or not he had any other choices, Lin adopted a Daoist strategy of passive involvement and provided only limited help to local troops assaulted by radicals. In fact, Lin handed over the matters in the army to the CCRSG. This worked, to a degree, because anyone "protected" by the

¹³²Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 150-151, and Chen Donglin and Dong Pu, 164.

CCRSG was thereby exempt from students’ harassment and could conduct routine work. In the long run, however, Lin’s concession to the CCRSG increased the hold of the Group over army students at the expense of the army’s own authorities. As a result, radical army students listened to the CCRSG rather than their military superiors. Thus, Lin provided opportunity for Jiang Qing and her colleagues to interfere in military affairs, and made it more difficult for the Central Military Committee to control the army.

It is difficult to understand why Lin, the defense minister, would tolerate this situation which put many of his long-term subordinates in danger. Of course his options were limited even if he had performed his responsibilities more actively. Mao often refused Lin’s suggestions when he offered them. One day in October 1966, for example, Lin learned that radicals in Shanxi province had broken into army garrisons there and grabbed arms. He brought the incident to Mao’s attention, attaching a note to the reports, which he sent to Mao, asking Mao to pay attention to the turmoil in the Northwestern area. Mao promptly returned the reports with a written comment: "Comrade Lin Biao, This is a very good thing. The leftists should be prepared to sacrifice thousands of lives in exchange for tens of thousands of the rightists." Mao criticized Lin for making a fuss over something so trivial.
In January 1967 when conditions in the army worsened, Lin's office received "internal instructions" from Mao that the basic strategy for the time being was to "let it go" instead of acting to curb the movement.\textsuperscript{134} Between late 1966 and August 1968, Mao rejected several suggestions from Lin that he prohibit mass organizations from taking arms from the army. In a letter to Jiang Qing, he criticized Lin's proposal that he issue orders to stop radicals from seizing arms from the army on the grounds that the central strategy of the Cultural Revolution at the moment was to arm the "leftists." Mao believed that 75 percent of the regional military organizations were supporting the "rightists." He later even ordered the army to issue arms to the "leftists," which resulted in widespread armed conflict in mid-1967.\textsuperscript{135} Lin realized by that time that he had no influence with Mao on this matter, as Mao was determined to reach "an ultimate harmony through a great chaos under heaven" [\textit{Tianxia daluan dadao tianxia dazhi}]. Mao's subordinates now had only two choices, to follow or to perish. Lin, like the others, chose the former. This was probably why Lin told Tao Zhu that Tao should be passive, passive and passive again.

Lin also protected himself by avoiding routine responsibilities. Using poor health as an excuse, Lin

\textsuperscript{134}Zhang Yunsheng, \textit{Jishi}, 63.

\textsuperscript{135}Wang Li, 53-54.

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avoided reading documents and attending meetings, and his position as Mao's successor exempted him from Red Guard assaults. Lin was probably the only person, except Mao and the CCRSG, able to protect himself in this way in the Red Guard stage of the Cultural Revolution. He could easily find scapegoats among his subordinates who were in much more vulnerable positions than he was. None of the other military leaders holding executive positions had liberty to do the same. They had to pass Mao's tests, which were carried out by the Red Guards.

Resistance from the Other Marshals

The Cultural Revolution put the army through its worst ordeal since 1949. Although Lin protected himself by taking as little responsibility as possible, the Central Military Committee under Ye Jianying, the General Political Department under Xiao Hua, and the ACRSG under Liu Zhijian had the responsibility for leading the Cultural Revolution in the army. Not one of them survived the test politically in the initial chaos of the Cultural Revolution.

As the leader of the ACRSG, Liu Zhijian was the liaison between the CCRSG and the army. This was a difficult, even impossible, job, because the CCRSG, which sided routinely with radical students, and the Central Military Committee, which was concerned with discipline in the army, could hardly ever agreed on anything. Often caught in resulting
cross-fires, Liu could do nothing to improve situation. In early October when army students crowded into Beijing, Liu, on the instruction of several marshals, drafted a telegram ordering the military regions to prevent their students from traveling to Beijing in large groups. Chen Boda, however, rejected the order, and it was not issued. In November, Liu drafted another order prohibiting mass organizations in the army, but Chen Boda again overruled him. Subsequently, Chen withheld approval of two other orders of Liu’s. In one of those orders, Liu wanted to prohibit students from interfering with the regular work at military headquarters for reasons of national security and to punish those who disobeyed the prohibition. In the other, Liu wanted to instruct army hospitals to provide shelter for local leaders assaulted by radicals. At a CCRSG meeting, considering these two proposal orders, Chen accused Liu Zhijian of trying to "suppress the revolution."  

To try to discipline army students in Beijing, the General Political Department organized two rallies on November 11 and 29, and invited the marshals of the Chinese army to speak to the students. Ye Jianying, Chen Yi, Xu Xiangqian, and He Long attended the rallies and addressed the students.  

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136 Tie Zhuwei, Shuang zhong se yu nong [The Heavier is the Frost, the Brighter is the Color] (Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1986), 109-111, and Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 119.

137 Li Ke and Hao Shengzhang, 30-36.
disruptive behavior and urged them to go back to their schools immediately. But, even marshals had no authority in front of radical students, who jeered the speakers. Some of the students even questioned the legitimacy of the rallies, asking whether the CCRSG and Lin had approved them.

After the meetings, several of the students complained to the CCRSG. Jiang Qing, who was already upset with the marshals' attitudes toward the Cultural Revolution, claimed at a meeting of the Group that the purpose of the rallies was to "suppress the masses." "It was wrong for the marshals to make such speeches," Guan Feng, a member of the CCRSG, added. "So they should go to the masses to make self-criticisms and receive education from the masses." With support from the CCRSG, the radical army students scheduled a rally to criticize and educate the marshals. They invited members of the CCRSG to chair the meeting and local Red Guards to attend. They demanded that Chen Yi, Ye Jianying and other marshals and generals attend the meeting to "be educated." The invitations to the marshals and generals were on paper of different colors, red or white. Those the students intended to criticize received white invitations.

The prospect of this meeting intimidated the marshals and generals who received them. Approximately twenty of those who received white invitations gathered at Ye Jianying's house to discuss how to handle the matter. Ye
Jianying suggested that they attend the meeting, but most of those present opposed doing so because no one knew what the students were up to. The meeting continued until midnight with no solution.\textsuperscript{138} When Zhou Enlai finally heard about this, he brought the issue to Mao, who agreed with him that this had gone too far. Mao therefore criticized Jiang Qing for organizing the meeting to criticize the marshals. When the CCRSG finally canceled the meeting, 100,000 students had been waiting all day at the amphitheater where the meeting was to be held.

Embarrassed and resentful, Jiang Qing then insisted that the marshals had to make self-criticisms before a smaller group of students in order to pacify the furious students. The result was Liu Zhijian chaired a smaller meeting in a conference hall in the Jingxi Hotel. At the meeting, Ye Jianying could hardly finish his self-criticism, prepared for him by Liu Zhijian, because of student jeering. In addition to the two thousand students present at the meeting, many more had gathered outside the hall and were threatening to break in. Concerned about the safety of the marshals, Liu Zhijian and the other generals in charge immediately directed Marshal Ye and the others to leave the hall through the back door.

When Lin learned of this, he complained directly to Mao. Mao was doubly angry because he was not informed of

\textsuperscript{138}Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5004, 16.
the meeting beforehand. To deflect Mao’s criticism, Jiang Qing blamed Liu Zhijian for what happened. On January 4, Liu Zhijian, upon Zhou’s advice, agreed to make a self-criticism. While he was doing so, Kang Sheng suddenly interrupted him, and shouted, "Liu Zhijian, you are not an ‘eclecticist’ (person who takes a middle road). You yourself represent the Liu-Deng bourgeois reactionary line in the army. If this meeting is being held to criticize and assault, it was you, Liu Zhijian, who should be criticized and assaulted." Liu Zhijian lost his position after the meeting. It became known only later that Kang Sheng had denounced Liu Zhijian on instructions from Mao. On January 8, Lin appointed Guan Feng deputy director of the General Political Department to replace Liu Zhijian, and three days later Xu Xiangqian became the leader of a reorganized ACRSG.139 Jiang Qing was now in charge of personnel changes in the new ACRSG. Even before the reorganization of the ACRSG was announced, Yang Chengwu told Xu Xiangqian that Jiang had suggested to Mao that Xu Xiangqian head the new group, and Mao accepted her suggestion. Then, Jiang sent the list of new group members to Xu for his "advice."140 She also went to Lin’s residence to suggest that he appoint Guan Feng deputy director of the General Political Department and she herself as advisor to the new ACRSG. She

139Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 150-151.
told Lin that Mao had agreed to this arrangement. When Lin asked Mao about it, Mao said he agreed.141

In early January, with permission from the Party Central Committee, the Central Military Committee decided to hold an enlarged conference in Beijing. Among the participants were the commanders-in-chief of the military regions and the heads of military headquarters in Beijing. The conference was important for several reasons. The conference adopted several important documents that helped to alleviate tension within the army. One of the documents outlawed attacks on army establishments. Another provided shelter for local military leaders assaulted by radicals. For some time, the participants of the meeting shared the leadership of the Cultural Revolution together with Zhou Enlai and the CCRSG, who regularly attended the meetings. After the collapse of various institutions, the army, with all its difficulties, remained the only institution that could still function. Many important policies at the time were drafted and discussed at the meeting, not only those concerning the army, but concerning the Cultural Revolution nationwide as well.

The removal of Liu Zhijian did not ease the tension between the CCRSG and the army. On the contrary, the conference intensified the dispute since now the army was

sharing with the CCRSG the leadership of the Cultural Revolution. After Liu's dismissal, Jiang Qing turned her eyes to Xiao Hua, her next target. She telephoned Ye Qun one day and told her that radical students were still felt dissatisfied, even after the ouster of Liu Zhijian, and were demanding to criticize Xiao Hua. Lin and Ye did not agree with Jiang's proposal, because Xiao Hua was one of Lin's long-term subordinates. Lin told Jiang that since Xiao Hua was Director of the General Political Department, he would have to ask Mao about her proposal.

On January 19, Jiang Qing came to Lin's residence and talked with Lin and Ye. After she left, Ye told the secretaries that Mao had decided to remove Xiao Hua from his office. On Jiang's request, Ye immediately left to attend a meeting at the Jingxi Hotel. When Ye arrived at the hotel, the meeting, which was to discuss the Cultural Revolution in the army, had already begun. Chen Boda was criticizing the army for putting too many restrictions on the Cultural Revolution, and for its arrogant behavior. Even members of the CCRSG, he claimed, were intimidated by the idea of going to Sanzuomen, the office of the ACRSG. Chen himself was disgusted every time he passed by the place. "The army," he added, "has actually moved within the boundary of revisionism." Chen concluded by accusing Xiao Hua of abusing his position as head of the General Political

142 Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 65-68.
Department. Chen’s speech enraged many military commanders. Xiao Hua tried to speak in self-defense, but Chen rudely interrupted him. "If you want to say something, say it at the mass rally this evening." While Chen was thus speaking, Ye Jianying burst out in anger, "Chen Boda, you talk nonsense!" Ye shouted. "To find fault with Xiao Hua is to tarnish the reputation of the PLA. The country is in a mess because of you and now, you want to bring disorder to the army!" While speaking, Ye pounded his fist on the table so hard that he broke his fingers. As the leader of the ACRSG, however, Xu Xiangqian was obliged to cooperate with Chen Boda. He joined Chen in criticizing Xiao Hua and the General Political Department, which brought a direct confrontation between the two marshals. Everyone at the meeting, including Chen Boda, was uncomfortable watching the conflict between Marshals Ye and Xu, and the meeting soon adjourned for the day.\footnote{The Central Cultural Revolution Group had already prepared a mass rally to criticize Xiao Hua at 7:00 p.m. on the same day.}

At midnight, radical students suddenly surrounded Xiao Hua’s house, though Xiao managed to escape to Ye’s house before the students burst inside. The students broke into Xiao’s office, pried open his safe, and took out top secret documents. When Ye reported this to Mao, Mao ordered an immediate investigation. Mao also pointed out that it was

\footnote{Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5005, 11-12.}
wrong to ransack Xiao Hua’s house, and asked Jiang Qing to see that the students left the house promptly.

When Lin received a report on this incident, he was outraged, and asked Jiang Qing for an explanation. Lin especially resented Chen’s saying that "the army actually moved within the boundary of revisionism." When Jiang Qing tried to avoid responsibility for what happened, Lin was so angry he would not listen to her. He yelled at Jiang and reprimanded the CCRSG for its reckless disruption of the army. "You have no respect for the Central Military Committee," Lin shouted. "Who would ransack the house of the director of the General Political Department and steal documents like this without permission from the Central Military Committee?" When Ye came over to try to calm him down, Lin asked her to send Jiang away because he could not stand her any more. Lin also asked Ye to get his car ready, for he was going to see the Chairman right away. "I will resign, for I am unable to perform my duty any more," Lin continued his tirade. Ye was so frightened and worried by Lin’s outburst that, in desperation, she knelt in front of him and begged him to calm down. One secretary recalled later that he had never seen Lin so angry.\(^{145}\) The event left a permanent scar on Lin’s relationship with Jiang Qing. Lin was among the few people who dared raise his voice to

\(^{145}\)Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 163-164. Also see Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5005, 12-14.
Jiang. After this, Lin not only tried to avoid Jiang, but prohibited Ye from seeing her as well.

On January 20, Lin asked Marshals Ye and Xu to chair an enlarged meeting of the Central Military Committee to announce Mao’s positive comments on Xiao Hua. Out of embarrassment, no one from the CCRSG except Guan Feng attended the meeting. With the clear intention of excusing Jiang Qing from responsibility, Guan blamed Chen Boda for everything, saying that Chen was drunk the day before so he did not know what he was talking about. With support from Mao and Lin, Xiao Hua and others disputed the criticism of the CCRSG. One after another, the generals condemned the Group’s activities since the Cultural Revolution began. Huang Yongsheng was particularly outspoken. He even accused Jiang Qing of not listening to Mao. Everyone present was shocked because Jiang Qing was Mao’s wife and no one at the time dared criticize her openly. Guan Feng immediately accused Huang of opposing the work of the CCRSG. When Jiang Qing learned of this incident, she claimed that the purpose of the meeting had been to oppose Mao and the CCRSG. She demanded an apology from Xu, chief of the ACRSG, who in his distress, asked Huang to make a self-criticism instead, because it was Huang who had provoked Jiang Qing. Lin, however, was on Huang’s side. He told Huang not to back off and not to make a self-criticism. Lin promised Huang that he would report directly to Mao if anything happened to him.
In the increasing tension between the army and the CCRSG, Mao probably felt obliged to support his comrades in the military. On January 22, Mao received 40 military leaders who were participating in the enlarged conference mentioned above. All of them took the opportunity to complain to Mao of their predicament. Mao patiently explained to them the necessity of the Cultural Revolution, but promised he would help maintain order in the army. This meeting may have been part of Mao's preparation for the army to intervene in the Cultural Revolution on a large scale.

On January 23, Mao informed Lin of his decision to employ the PLA to support the "leftists." The army took the occasion of the decision to ask Mao first to guarantee the stability of the army. Lin, together with Ye Jianying, Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen and Yang Chengwu, had already worked out a nine-point command to implement Mao's decision. Lin asked the marshals to bring the draft to the enlarged meeting for further discussion. After some difficult bargaining with the CCRSG, Ye told Lin that only seven points in the original draft were agreeable to the CCRSG. Ye suggested that Lin ask Mao to resolve the disagreement. On January 28, Lin and Xu Xiangqian went to Mao's residence for Mao's decision. Mao immediately ratified the seven

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points and added an item about the education of the children of high officials. "These eight points are very good," Mao wrote on the document, "issue it as it is." Lin was relieved when Mao returned the document to him. "Long live you Chairman. [You deserve it] because you have approved this document," said Lin gratefully.\textsuperscript{147}

This document, known as "The Eight-Point Order from the Central Military Committee" made the following things explicit: students must stop disturbing army headquarters and facilities; stop breaking into houses of military officials and stop kidnapping, torturing, and insulting military officials. In addition, PLA soldiers and officers must remain at their posts; army students in Beijing must return at once to their schools; and field armies must not participate in the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{148}

For a while, the Eight-point Command helped to protect military leaders and facilities. The radical students who brought most of the chaos to military establishments gradually left Beijing. However, the "Eight-point Command" did not and could not achieve what Mao expected it to be in the long run. The chaos in the country as well as in the


army was too profound to go away easily. Radicals within the army headquarters continued to cause problems after the students left Beijing. Moreover, after Mao ordered the PLA to support the "leftists," tension between the army and the radicals at local level continued and even increased.

In February, the first serious debate regarding the Cultural Revolution at the central level was under way. Following the breakdown of most government institutions, the Occasional Meetings [pengtouhui] presided over by Mao, Lin, Zhou or members of the CCRSG conducted daily routine work and made policy decisions. Regular participants of these meetings were politburo members, vice premiers, and military commanders, who still held their positions, as well as members of the CCRSG. The participants varied from meeting to meeting according to the agenda.\(^{149}\) In February at several of the meetings, the marshals launched a campaign to criticize the way that the CCRSG managed the Cultural Revolution. These criticisms came to be known as the "February Adverse Current."

In retrospect, the key issues in the dispute were whether responsibility for the Cultural Revolution belonged to the Party or to the CCRSG; whether all cadres should vulnerable to assaults and criticism by the Red Guards; and

\(^{149}\)It is unclear how the list of participants for each meeting was decided upon. In many cases, Mao himself made the decision and occasionally he consulted with Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng and others. Lin Biao seldom attended these meeting, using his poor health as a regular excuse.
whether stability in the army should take precedence over the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{150} When Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in the second half of 1966, most members of the Politburo had supported his decision or were at least willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, out of their respect for Mao and trust in him. As events unfolded, they tried their best to understand and support the Cultural Revolution despite their growing suspicions about the necessity of such a revolution. They accepted the Cultural Revolution as another effort to help the Party solve the problems of bureaucracy and corruption. As staunch communists, none of them opposed the noble mission ascribed to the Revolution by Mao--to make sure that China was forever under the control of the Communist Party. It was their understanding that the Cultural Revolution would end in no more than several months. Ye Jianying said in an address on October 9, 1966, that according to the Chairman's tentative plan, the movement would last until January 1967.\textsuperscript{151} Xiao Jinguang, Commander of the Navy, also

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\textsuperscript{151}Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 101.
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recalled in his memoirs his naive belief in October 1966 that the Cultural Revolution would end in a few months.\footnote{Xiao Jinguang, *Xiao Jinguang huìyìlù* [Xiao Jinguang’s Memoirs] (Beijing: Jiefangjün chubanshe, 1988), 271.}

However, what high official saw by February 1967 was completely beyond their expectation. The Cultural Revolution turned out to be nothing but utter chaos, even anarchy. Red Guards and radicals were running around, rebelling against all party and state establishments. Factories closed, and peasants left the fields to take part in the revolution. Only Mao, Lin, Zhou and members of the CCRSG, were exempt from the radicals' assaults. Most participants of the February meetings had experienced harassment and criticism from the Red Guards. Many senior officials had been especially upset by two developments in the Cultural Revolution in January 1967.

The first of these developments was the overthrow of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee in what was later known as the "January Revolution" or the "January Power Seizure." On January 4 and 5, radical groups headed by Wang Hongwen had taken over the two major newspapers in Shanghai, *Wenhui bao* and *Jiefang ribao*, both of which were under the direct control of the Municipal Party Committee. This was the first instance in the Cultural Revolution of "seizing power" from "bourgeois capitalist roaders." The CCRSG, with Mao’s support, immediately approved the action. On January
4, the group sent Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan to Shanghai to direct the movement. Zhang and Yao immediately delivered Mao's recent directive to leaders of the radicals in Shanghai, "[It is necessary] to start an overall class struggle nationwide." The directive read. "Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and the Northeast are crucial areas [for the success of this struggle]." On January 6, several radical groups in Shanghai held a mass rally to criticize Governor Cao Diqiu and other municipal leaders. In flyers circulated at the end of the meeting, the radicals announced they would no longer acknowledge the leadership of the Shanghai municipal government and party committee led by Cao Diqiu. On January 8, Mao congratulated the Shanghai radicals in a speech to the members of the Cultural Revolution Group. He described the events in Shanghai as a revolution in which one class overthrew another class, and suggested that the central presses in Beijing issue editorials in support of the Shanghai radicals. Thus, radicals in Shanghai set the example for the "seizure of power" from local party organizations. After serious internal disputes themselves, the leading radical organizations in the city announced on February 5 establishment of the "Shanghai Commune," which would take over the duties of the former municipal government and Party Committee. Senior officials in Beijing understandably held

153Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 172, footnote 1.
serious doubts about allowing mass organizations to overthrow party establishments.

A second significant development that added to the anxieties of senior officials was the fall of Tao Zhu. Tao had been in charge of the Cultural Revolution and the CCRSG since June 1966, when transferred from Guangzhou to Beijing to replace Lu Dingyi as director of the Central Propaganda Department. In August 1966, Tao became a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo and advisor to the CCRSG at the Eleventh Plenum. However, he never relished the job of directing the Cultural Revolution, and could not get along with Jiang Qing and other members of the group. Like most veteran cadres, Tao Zhu's acceptance of the Cultural Revolution rested on his trust in and respect for Mao. Tao and Li Xiannian often met at Li Fuchun's house to discuss and understand Mao's directives, but the discussions only added to their confusion. Tao never understood what Mao actually wanted from the Cultural Revolution, nor what it was supposed to achieve.\(^{154}\) Working according to his own instincts, he often found himself opposing Jiang Qing.

When the conflict between Jiang and Tao intensified, the Chairman himself adopted his usual strategy of detaching himself from both sides and watching developments. In late December and early January, Mao still favored Tao telling him on December 29, 1966, that Jiang Qing was "narrow-

\(^{154}\)Quan Yanchi, *Tao Zhu*, 124.
minded" and "intolerant," and asked Tao not to take what she said seriously. Mao also instructed Tao to travel to the provinces after New Year's Day. Before Tao left Mao's residence, Mao took out a list of the names of over twenty provincial leaders. "These people should be 'put into the fire', but do not 'burn' them," said Mao when he handed the list to Tao.\footnote{Quan Yanchi, \textit{Tao Zhu}, 207-211, and Ye Yonglie, \textit{Chen Boda}, 342-343.}

Several days later, however, the CCRSG suddenly labelled Tao "the biggest conservative" in China in speeches to Red Guards. This meant associating Tao with Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and alleging that he had tried to protect them. The Red Guards took this as permission to "bombard" Tao with criticism. When they hung big-character posters proclaiming "Down with Tao Zhu" on the streets, Tao was in a meeting with Zhou and others attempting to solve the problems of the Cultural Revolution. The sudden assault on Tao puzzled even the members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. When Li Fuchun asked Mao about the matter, Mao told Li that he knew nothing of it.\footnote{Dong Baocun, \textit{Tan Zhenlin waizhuan [An Unauthorized Biography of Tan Zhenlin]} (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1992), 105.} It is still not clear whether Mao had prior knowledge of the criticism of Tao Zhu, made chiefly by Jiang Qing and Chen Boda. At least one source indicates that Jiang reported the incident to Mao.
immediately after the speeches.\textsuperscript{157} Another source indicates that Mao discussed his disagreements with Tao Zhu on several important matters at Mao’s birthday party on December 26, 1966, in the presence of members of the CCRSG.\textsuperscript{158}

Tao learned of the Red Guard posters after he returned from his meeting after midnight of January 3. The first thing he did was to check with Zhou Enlai about Mao’s attitude toward the criticism. Zhou told Tao only that Mao had asked Zhou earlier whether Tao had suppressed the mass movement. Zhou, who was unsure of Mao’s thinking at the moment, told Tao to "stop working" and "rest at home for a few days." Several days after this informal suspension, Mao’s attitude toward Tao Zhu became clear.\textsuperscript{159} On January 8, at the same meeting at which he approved the "January Revolution," Mao recalled that it was Deng Xiaoping who introduced Tao Zhu to Beijing and Tao had turned out to be "dishonest." Mao shunned responsibility for Tao’s fall by attributing it to the Red Guards. "I could not solve the problem of Tao and you couldn’t either," he said. "Only

\textsuperscript{157}Lin Qing, 116.

\textsuperscript{158}Wang Li, 102.

\textsuperscript{159}Quan Yanchi, Tao Zhu, 232-233.
after the Red Guards came, they solved the problem." Mao therefore approved Tao’s dismissal.

To many senior officials, the ouster of Tao was a serious violation of party principles. Tao was a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, secretary of the General Secretariat, and minister of the Central Propaganda Department. In theory at least, no single person could decide the removal of anyone from such high posts without approval of the Party. Although these principles had never stopped Mao from getting rid of individuals he disliked in the past, he at least went through motions that "legitimized" his removal. Usually Mao brought up such matter at Party conferences as subjects for "discussion." Previous dismissals of leaders such as Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi thus appeared to be Party decisions rather than Mao’s personal decision. This time, however, Mao made no attempt to "legitimize" the dismissal of Tao.

Mao himself may have realized this soon after he confirmed Tao’s ouster. On February 10, in order to avoid full responsibility, Mao suddenly blamed Chen Boda and Jiang Qing for Tao’s removal. "You [Chen Boda] were only a member of the Standing Committee, but [you] decided the fall of another member of the Standing Committee," Mao told Chen Boda angrily. "You [Chen Boda] never came to me for advice

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Ye Yonglie, Chen Boda, 348, and Chen Qian, "Wenge mantan," 43.
unless you yourself were in trouble." Mao also rebuked Jiang as "ambitious but with little talent." He instructed the CCRSG to hold a meeting to criticize both of them, but the group permitted no outsiders to attend the meeting.\footnote{For the details of the meeting, see Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 150; Ye Yonglie, Chen Boda, 348, and Wang Li, 29-32.}

Chen Boda, who could hardly bear the thought of being criticized by Mao, told Wang Li after the meeting that he was so despondent over always being caught between Mao and Jiang that he wanted to commit suicide. Wang Li reported this to Zhou Enlai, who later talked with Chen for several hours before Chen gave up his thoughts of suicide.\footnote{Wang Li, 148, and Ye Yonglie, Chen Boda, 365-368.}

Chen’s dilemma was understandable. Like Liu Zhijian’s job mentioned earlier, Chen’s job as the chief of the CCRSG was an impossible one. He was in a better position than Liu had been to figure out what was in Mao’s mind, but there was no guarantee that he could fathom Mao’s whimsical moods all of the time. On August 12, Chen drafted a document requesting provincial administrations to prevent local students from coming to Beijing in large numbers, and advising students already in Beijing to return to their homes.\footnote{Cheng Qian found a document drafted by the CCRSG in the central archives. Two items in this document dated August 12 caught Cheng’s attention. Item No. 6 advised the provinces not to encourage students to come to Beijing. Those who had already come to Beijing should go back to the provinces.} At Mao’s direction, however, he changed his
mind, and four days later he made a speech encouraging students to come to Beijing to establish "revolutionary connections" and "grow up in a revolutionary storm."\textsuperscript{164}

Chen also had to change his public stance on the "Shanghai Commune" the following January. Early in that month, January, Chen described what was happening in Shanghai as "a new form of the capitalist line." His reasoning here rested on his belief that the radicals should "supervise" local administrations rather than "seize power" from them. Chen later suffered criticism for this stance after Mao decided to support the Shanghai radicals. A part of Chen's problem was that neither Mao nor Jiang Qing had any respect for him. Wang Li recalled an occasion in which Mao scolded Chen in front of others, telling him to "get out of here" unless he was prepared to do what Mao told him to do.\textsuperscript{165} From time to time, Chen also had to take responsibility for Jiang Qing's errors. Chen told Wang Li that he had no prior knowledge of the rally at which he criticized Tao Zhu. He was awakened by a call from Jiang Qing only minutes before the meeting, asking him to accompany her to receive Red Guards. At the meeting he provinces immediately. Item No. 7 asks the schools to advise their students to stay at school instead of running around. However, this draft was never published or issued. Cheng Qian, "Wenge mantian," manuscripts, 7-8.

\textsuperscript{164}Cheng Qian, manuscripts, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{165}Wang Li, 148.
repeated what Jiang Qing told him to say. "Jiang Qing had pushed me to the corner and left me no room to live," Chen told Wang Li. Later, when Mao was angry at Chen and Jiang and asked them to make self-criticisms, Chen was the only victim at the meeting. Jiang Qing excused herself from attending because of poor health.

Only Lin Biao understood Chen's problem. Lin knew that he and Chen faced the same dilemma, and Chen's position perhaps was even worse than his own. Like Lin, Chen had also privately expressed his sympathy for Liu Shaoqi. Chen first sensed Mao's intention to get rid of Liu Shaoqi when he helped Mao to draft the "Twenty-three Items" in 1964. He told Wang Li of his reaction. "Liu Shaoqi is an authentic Marxist. What shall we do?" Chen had asked Wang, who later suggested to Liu that he make self-criticism to Mao.\textsuperscript{166}

After Mao criticized Chen Boda, Lin was probably the only person who let his colleagues know of his sympathy toward Chen. Lin told Wang Li that Chen was only a shusheng [an intellectual] and "it is not easy for a shusheng to shoulder such heavy responsibilities." When Chen learned of this, he was grateful to Lin, which may explain why Chen allied himself with Lin in Lin's later conflicts with Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{166}Wang Li, 147.

\textsuperscript{167}Wang Li, 34, and Ye Yonglie, \textit{Chen Boda}, 378.
Although Mao did not want to criticize to Jiang Qing and Chen Boda in public, several senior officials soon learned of his private criticism. Ye Jianying and Li Xiannian had been present when Mao gave vent to his anger at Chen and Jiang. Tan Zhenlin and others also heard Mao criticize Chen and Jiang at Li Fuchun's home on February 10.\(^{168}\) They took the opportunity to launch their own criticism of the CCRSG, perhaps because the CCRSG prevented them from its own closed meetings to criticize Jiang and Chen.

On February 11, Zhou Enlai chaired a meeting to discuss how to "promote production by encouraging revolution." It was at this meeting that Ye Jianying and Xu Xiangqian made their public protest against Chen Boda, blaming Chen for the chaos in the Party, the country, and the army. The two marshals angrily demanded to know why Chen had not brought an issue as important as the "Shanghai Commune"--which indicated a change in the nation's political system--to the Politburo for discussion.\(^{169}\) The question they raised was whether the Cultural Revolution was to be carried out without party leadership and without participation of the PLA. This discussion of the Cultural Revolution did not


\(^{169}\)Before the meeting, the marshals also learned about Mao's disagreement on using the name "Shanghai Commune" for the new administrative body.
last long, however, for Zhou cautiously interrupted the marshals and changed the subject.

On February 16, the veteran cadres and the CCRSG had a more serious confrontation at another central working meeting. The occasion for this second confrontation concerned Chen Pixian, party secretary in Shanghai. After Mao had given Tao Zhu the list of the names of provincial leaders to be protected, Zhou arranged for those on the list to come to Beijing in order to evade radical harassment. Chen Pixian was one of those on the list, but he could not come to Beijing because the Shanghai radicals refused to let him go. Vice-premier Tan Zhenlin was angry about this, because Chen was one of his long term subordinates. When Tan met Zhang Chunqiao at the central meeting, he asked Zhang to protect Chen Pixian, but Zhang refused, saying he had first to discuss the matter with the radicals. The veterans cadres at the meeting could no longer hold their anger at the CCRSG and the Cultural Revolution, and turned the meeting into a forum for their grievances.

Mao was not surprised at the anger or the complaints of the veteran cadres. He knew the Cultural Revolution had brought personal humiliation and other difficulties to most of his subordinates. He had intended that all along. "Do not take it too seriously if these old comrades complain about the Cultural Revolution," Mao told Wang Li, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan
with a smile. However, his smile disappeared when he learned the details of the complaints. Xu Xiangqian attributed the harassment of veteran cadres to a Hongqi editorial in October 1966, which publicized Mao’s idea to "thoroughly criticize the bourgeois reactionary line." What alarmed Mao even more was that Zhou Enlai agreed with Xu’s complaint, and claimed that he had not had an opportunity to read the editorial before it was published. Mao interrupted Wang Li’s report at this point to state that the Party Constitution did not stipulate that an editorial should be submitted for Zhou’s approval.170 Statements by Chen Yi and Tan Zhenlin irritated Mao even more. Compared to other participants, Chen Yi had not said much, but what he said touched upon three points especially sensitive to Mao: Khrushchev, Stalin in his last years, and the Yan’an Rectification movement. Next to the Lushan Conference of 1959, "Stalin in his last years" was the last topic Mao wanted to discuss. Nor was Mao willing to accept criticism of the Yan’an Rectification Movement, because Mao was suspicious that some of his comrades still had sympathy for Wang Ming against whom he had directed the movement.171

170Wang Li, 29-37.

171According to the minutes of the meeting that day, Chen Yi complained about the Yan’an Rectification movement because Chen was one of the people who received criticism in the movement. That was why Mao later suspected that Chen wanted to "reverse the case" of the movement. Xiao Sike, Super Trials, 330-332. Chen’s biographers, however, believed that when Chen mentioned "the Yan’an Rectification
Among the speakers, Tan Zhenlin was the most outspoken and emotional. "Your purpose is to get rid of all the veteran cadres--to finish off each and every one of them." Tan shouted at the CCRSG. "This is by far the cruelest struggle in Party history." In his excitement, Tan made an assertion Mao later made him regret. Tan ascribed his own miseries in the Cultural Revolution to three things he regretted having done--participated in the early stage of the Chinese Revolution, followed Mao during those stages, and lived to the age of 65. In short, if he were not one of the veteran cadres, he would have been better off in the Cultural Revolution. After the February 16 meeting, Tan was still so angry that he wrote letters to Mao and Lin Biao repeating his grievances against the Cultural Revolution.

Movement," he was criticizing Kang Sheng, who was in charge of the purge of a large number of cadres at Yan'an. Tie Zhuwei, 182, and Chen Yi zhuan bianji zu, Chen Yi zhuan [Biography of Chen Yi] (Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 1991) 609.

According to Wang Li, it was understandable why Tan "hated" Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan most of all. Tan believed that they were responsible for what was happening in Shanghai and East China, which was Tan's power base. Most provincial and military leaders in the area were Tan's long-term subordinates. Wang Li, 31.

Zong Huaiwen, Years of Trial, Turmoil and Triumph (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989), 140-141.

Wu Faxian, "Manuscripts," hel5005, 15.
In one of the letters, he referred to Jiang Qing as a "latter-day Empress Wu Zetian."\(^{175}\)

As Roderick MacFarquhar has noted, the February meetings were not unlike those that took place at the Lushan Conference in 1959 during the Great Leap Forward.\(^{176}\) On the earlier occasion, when the disruptive consequences of one of Mao's mass movements became apparent, senior officials came out to expose those consequences, and Mao had responded accordingly. A senile Mao could no longer tolerate defiance—or even criticism of his personal authority. He not only disregarded opposing opinions, but dismissed those who offered them as enemies of his leadership. This was not the last time Mao used his veto power to suppress opposing opinions of the Cultural Revolution.\(^{177}\) A few years later, in 1970, Mao crushed another revolt against the Cultural Revolution—or, rather, against the members of the former CCRSG—at Lushan, a revolt led by Lin Biao himself.

Mao decided to confront the challenge posed by his comrades in the senior cadres. Around midnight on February


\(^{176}\)MacFarquhar and Fairbank, *Cambridge History*, 177-178.

\(^{177}\)A resolution of the Central Secretariat dated March 20, 1943 granted Mao a veto power over the party decision. Hei Yannan, *Shinian dongluan [Ten Year of Turmoil]* (Xi'an: Guoji wenhua chuban gongsi, 1988), 172.
18, Mao summoned Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Ye Qun, Ye Jianying, Li Fuchun, Li Xiannian and Xie Fuzhi for a meeting. There, he reprimanded the marshals and vice-premiers for their speeches at the February meetings. Mao insisted that no one could deny the achievements of the CCRSG and whoever opposed the Group opposed Mao himself.

"Comrade Ye Qun," Mao called out, "You tell Lin Biao that his position is not stable at all, for somebody wants his power. Tell him to get ready. If this Cultural Revolution should fail, I will take him out of Beijing and go up to Jianggang Mountain to start a guerilla war again." Mao then berated the marshals. "You said that Jiang Qing and Chen Boda are not capable [of doing the job]," he told them, "then, let you Chen Yi head the CCRSG. Arrest Chen Boda and Jiang Qing, and execute them. Send Kang Sheng into exile, too. I will also step down and you can invite Wang Ming back to chair the party. The whole party will not agree if you, Chen Yi, want to negate the case of the Yan'an Rectification movement."178 After this speech, Mao suspended Chen Yi, Tan Zhenlin and Xu Xiangqian from their jobs, and forced them to make self-criticisms. Zhou Enlai chaired the central meetings that criticized them.

From February 22 to March 18, the Politburo held seven meetings to criticize veteran cadres who had spoken against

178 Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 216.
the CCRSG. Li Fuchun was also criticized because Mao learned that the marshals and vice-premiers often got together in his home, where, according to Kang Sheng, they had founded a "black club." As a result, most of these senior officials actually "stepped aside" [kao bian zhan], and the CCRSG gradually superseded the Politburo and the State Council, both of which could no longer function because most of their members had been ousted or had "stepped aside." In March 1967, Mao granted the CCRSG the right to organize Occasional Working Meetings, which replaced the working meetings of the Politburo and the State Council. Although Zhou was one of the organizers of these meetings, he had effectively lost power to the CCRSG.

Jiang Qing was so carried away by her victory that she once said to Zhou, mockingly, "You, Zhou Enlai, also had to come over to our meetings, because your meetings do not work anymore."

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179 Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 216, and Li Ke and Hao Shengzhang, Jiefangjun, 212.

180 Li Ke and Hao Shengzhang, 213, and Wang Li, 35.

181 During the Cultural Revolution, "step aside" was a popular means of punishing cadres. Cadres who could not be trusted to continue their work, but had not committed enough "mistakes" to be ousted would be asked to "step aside" to wait for a final decision on their political future.

182 Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 216, footnote 3.

183 Jiang had asked Zhou several times before to come to join the CCRSG meetings, but Zhou refused. Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," he15006, 4-5.
At the outset of the Cultural Revolution, Mao probably had no intention of ousting so many marshals, vice premiers, and other senior cadres; rather he only wanted to force them to accept criticism from the masses. But after the February meetings, Mao was disillusioned by the rejection of the Cultural Revolution from his long-term comrades. As the movement got out of control, Mao did not want to take a chance of imperiling his impending victory in his last revolution. He decided to teach the marshals and other senior cadres a lesson. As Deng Xiaoping put it later, "whoever did not listen to him, he [Mao] would punish him in some way. However, he had considerations as to what extent the person should be punished." Later, in his paranoia over the reactions of the marshals to his criticism of the "February Adverse Current," Mao asked a vice-commander in the Air Force to move to Xishan where most of the marshals and vice-premiers lived, and find out their reactions to the criticisms of them and report what he found to Mao.

Meanwhile, at Mao's instigation, Kang Sheng found new ways to harass the senior cadres. In addition to encouraging Red Guards and radicals to criticize the seniors, Kang turned to their family members and staffs, including secretaries, bodyguards, chefs and chauffeurs, to

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185Hei Yannan, 174-178.
hold regular meetings of criticism in the cadres' own homes.\textsuperscript{186} This was all for the purpose of "teaching a lesson" to the veteran revolutionaries. After several months, Lin Biao suggested that Mao "liberate" the seniors because of their poor health and old age. After Mao agreed, Lin sent Huang Yongsheng and Wu Faxian to the homes of the seniors to report the decision to free them. But Mao exempted Tan Zhenlin from the decision, because he was still angry about what Tan had said about him.\textsuperscript{187}

One consequence of the repression of the "February Adverse Current" was that the Party lost an opportunity to end the Cultural Revolution in early 1967. But even if Mao and the Party wanted to end the Cultural Revolution at that point, they could not do so. After Mao's counter-attack on the "February Adverse Current," Mao found out that he had bound himself tightly to the chariot of the Cultural Revolution. He had no alternative but to carry on with it, at least for foreseeable future. By the Summer of 1967, Mao at last achieved his goal of creating "a total chaos under the heaven" [\textit{tianxia daluan}], but there was still no "great harmony" [\textit{tianxia dazhi}] in sight.

\textsuperscript{186}During Mao's time, a party branch was organized in each of the residences of the high officials, consisting of party members among the staff and the family members.

\textsuperscript{187}For the detail of this, see Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5007, 12-14, and Li Ke and Hao Shengzhang, 48.
CHAPTER 6
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN POWER GROUPS

In 1967 and 1968 two power groups emerged in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution: Jiang Qing and her Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, and Lin Biao and his generals. Chinese officials now condemn both groups as the two "counterrevolutionary cliques" responsible for the disastrous consequences of the Cultural Revolution.¹ This notion is misleading, however, because during the Cultural Revolution the groups were in conflict and in fact had little in common.² Many events in the Cultural Revolution related directly to the friction between the two groups. In fact, what happened at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee in 1970, at which the Mao-Lin rupture began, was the result of accumulated tension between the two groups just delineated.³

¹In the "Indictment of the Special Procuratorate under the Supreme People’s Procuratorate of the People’s Republic of China," the two groups were accused of acting "in collusion during the 'great cultural revolution' and, taking advantage of their positions and the power at their disposal, framed and persecuted Communist Party and state leaders in a premeditated way in their attempts to usurp Party leadership and state power and overthrow the political power of the dictatorship of the proletariat." A Great Trial in Chinese History (Beijing: New World Press, 1981), 149-150.


³Lin Biao and his followers were accused of conducting
The Rise of Lin Biao's Generals

After most marshals had "stepped aside" [kao bian zhan] during the "February Adverse Current," Yang Chengwu and Xiao Hua remained in charge of routine work at the Central Military Committee. At the time, military leaders were subordinate to the CCRSG because of the removal of so many of the marshals and generals from their positions. Xiao Hua himself was under constant assault from radicals and chaos continued at military headquarters in Beijing. This disarray lasted until after "the May 13 Incident," an episode in the "armed conflict" [wudou] between "conservative factions" [baohuang pai] and radical factions [zaofan pai] in which the latter enjoyed the support of local Red Guard organizations all the way to military headquarters in Beijing.

By May 1967, officers in military headquarters found themselves divided into factions according to their attitudes toward leading officials at the headquarters. Radical factions wanted to overthrow established authorities, while "conservatives" wanted to protect senior commanders. In the Air Force, the dispute centered around Commander Wu Faxian and Political Commissar Yu Lijin. In the Navy, the struggle focused on Political Commissar Li Zuopeng, and in the General Logistics Department, Qiu ሁብانتخاب (an abortive coup attempt during the Second Plenum of the Ninth Party Central Committee in August 1970. The meeting is also known as "Lushan huiyi" [the Lushan Conference].

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Huizuo, the director. Both factions refused to budge. "Conservatives" were under increasingly pressure from army and local radicals, who charged that the "conservatives" were opposing the wishes of the people to rebel against authorities.

"Conservatives" in the various military headquarters decided to hold an art performance on May 13, 1967, to show their strength. Army radicals, with the support of the Red Guards, promised to disrupt the performance. One of Jiang Qing's right-hand men, Kuai Dafu, leader of the local Red Guards, was the man behind the promise. Worried that armed conflict might occur, Xiao Hua refused to approve the performance. Several women from the "conservative" faction asked Mao directly to approve the performance, taking advantage of their "special" relationship with Mao. Mao referred them to Lin Biao. Since it was Mao who sent the women to him, Lin felt obliged to approve the performance.

The performance took place on the evening of May 13 at Zhanlanguan Theater. As soon as it began, radicals from in and out of the army rushed into the theater, confident that the CCRSG would support their action. The theater soon resembled a battlefield and many "conservatives" were wounded.

As soon as the leaders at military headquarters learned of the melee at the theater, they decided to send help to the "conservatives." Xiao Jinguang, commander of the Navy,
Li Zuopeng, and a group of navy officers rushed to the theater to rescue the "conservatives." As they left, Li Zuopeng called Wu Faxian of the Air Force asking him to guard the Navy Compound in their absence, because the Air Force Headquarters was next door. Wu immediately announced a state of emergency at Air Force Headquarters, requiring that all officers stay in their offices and be prepared to got o the aid of those at the theater if necessary. Meanwhile, Wu reported what was happening to Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai.

When the navy officers arrived at the theater, they joined the fight, and helped evacuate the wounded from the theater. Soon more radicals and "conservatives" alike arrived at the theater and the fight threatened to get completely out of control. The confrontation lasted several hours, until Chen Boda, sent over by the CCRSG, and Xiao Hua, sent by Lin Biao, arrived at the theater. The two men succeeded in restoring order and then criticized the "conservatives" for not having followed their advice to cancel the performance.

The following evening, May 14, Zhou Enlai held a meeting at the Great Hall of the People to discuss the problem. Zhou supported Xiao Hua and blamed the "conservatives" for holding the performance. The "conservatives" resented being so criticized and reported the incident to Lin Biao.

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In responding to the report, Lin Biao showed for the first time his attitude toward an issue of the Cultural Revolution. In so doing, he ran the risk of a confrontation with the CCRSG. On the morning of May 15, Lin asked Ye and several leading military officers to go to the hospital to express his sympathy for the "conservative" victims of the fight. On May 23, the "conservatives" staged another performance, this one at Tian'anmen Square. Lin Biao asked Ye to attend, and ordered troops from the Beijing Garrison to maintain order for the show. After Lin had thus openly supported the army "conservatives," Zhou Enlai and the Central Cultural Revolution Group also changed their positions. On June 9, the "conservatives" gave another performance at the Great Hall of the People. This time, not only Lin Biao, but Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Li Fuchun, and Li Xiannian also attended the show, thereby demonstrating their support for the "conservative" faction in the dispute. With open support from Lin Biao, and now also from the CCRSG, the army "conservatives" not only achieved a complete victory over their radicals counterparts, but also over local radical students supported by the CCRSG. After the event, the army finally restored stability at its Beijing headquarters under the supervision of Generals Yang Chengwu, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng, and Qiu Huizuo, and gradually regained its independence from the CCRSG.
The decision to restore control of the army to Lin’s generals was an important one. By the summer of 1967, the chaos in the nation had turned to virtual civil war. Even Mao no longer maintained his optimistic fantasies about the Cultural Revolution. He admitted to Edgar Snow that “the conflict during the Cultural Revolution developed into war between factions—first with spears, then rifles, then mortars.” The place to begin restoring order was at army headquarters in Beijing. Once that was done, the army could then bring the country under control. This may be the reason that Lin gained the upper hand, and managed to restore power to his generals. It may also be assumed that Mao approved of this development.

In June 1967, Mao decided to tour the south to see what was happening there as a result the Cultural Revolution. To guarantee Mao’s security, the Central Government decided that Yang Chengwu, Yu Lijin and Li Zuopeng should accompany Mao on the tour. Because Yang Chengwu was the acting chief of staff, Zhou Enlai suggested to Lin Biao that Lin appoint a temporary group to run the army in Yang’s absence, which would last several months. Lin agreed, and designated Wu Faxian, Qiu Huizuo, and Zhang Xiuchuan, the last the Deputy

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4Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 286-287.
Political Commissar of the Navy, with Wu as the ranking official. On July 17, at an Occasional Meeting of the CCRSG, Zhou announced establishment of the "Temporary Group", which would report to the Occasional Meeting of the CCRSG. Members of the temporary group would also participate in the Occasional Meetings. When Yang Chengwu returned from the south in September, the Temporary Group disbanded and control of the army reverted to the Working Group of the Central Military Committee headed by Yang Chengwu. In addition to the original members of the Temporary Group, Ye Qun and Li Zuopeng joined the newly established Working Group. Until the Lin Biao Incident in 1971, the Working Group and not the Central Military Committee continued to direct the army. However, the Working Group was only in charge of routine work. It issued all orders under the name of the Central Military Committee, or under the names of the General Political Department, the Department of the General Staff, and the Department of General Logistics.

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7Huang Yongsheng replaced Yang Chengwu as head of the group in March 1968. Wu Faxian was the deputy chief of the group. Although Ye Qun was a member of the Working Group, she did not actually participate in any activities of the group and never attended any group meetings. The other members of the group included Xie Fuzhi, Liu Xianquan, Wen Yucheng, Zhang Caiqian, Li Desheng, and Ji Dengkui. (Not everyone worked with the group at the same time).

8Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 380.
Since the Cultural Revolution was still underway, it was impossible for the PLA to achieve complete stability within itself. Unexpected events continued to take place in the army, among the most mysterious of which was the simultaneous fall of Yang Chengwu, the acting chief of staff, Yu Lijin, political commissar of the Air Force, and Fu Chongbi, commander of Beijing Garrison. On March 22, 1968, the Central Committee unexpectedly issued a directive announcing the dismissal of the three men from their posts. The directive denounced the three for having "made mistakes," and accused Yu of being a "traitor." Why these men suddenly lost favor with Mao and Lin is still unclear. One possibility is that they were scapegoats in the conflict between the power groups headed by Lin and Jiang Qing.

Lin and Yang Chengwu had always gotten along very well. After the fall of Luo Ruiging in 1965, it was Lin who suggested that Yang be made acting chief of staff. When he appointed the Working Group in September 1967, Lin made Yang its chief. Ye Qun had also helped arrange for Yang’s daughter, Yang Yi, to work at the Air Force Press, where her own daughter Lin Doudou worked. This suggested a special relationship between the two families.

Yang Chengwu had also had the trust of Jiang Qing, who often asked him for personal favors. Jiang even entrusted

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Yang with a box of "black materials" about her early life in Shanghai, which she later asked Yang to burn in the presence of Xie Fuzhi and Qi Benyu. Jiang also put Yang Chengwu in charge of drafting "An Outline of the History of the Two Line Struggle," a new version of the Party history. To produce the history, Yang organized a group of more than thirty writers from the army, including his daughter. The finished Party history mentioned only three names, that of Mao Zedong, Lin Biao and Jiang Qing herself. After reading a draft of the history, Wu Faxian asked Yang, "Why is it that even Zhu De and Zhu Enlai were omitted from this version of history?" Yang answered that Jiang Qing would not allow anyone else to appear in the history. Perhaps that explained why Mao, when Jiang brought the finished history to him, angrily threw it to the ground, and ordered her to burn all of the copies and send everyone in the writing group back to their original working units.10

For some unknown reason, Yang gradually fell out of favor with Mao and Lin by the end of 1967. The first indication of this concerned Yang Chengwu's article, "Establishing the Great and Absolute Authority of Mao Zedong Thought." The article was drafted by Yang's subordinates at the Department of the General Staff. Before its publication Yang sent a draft to Mao, which Mao passed to Chen Boda and Yao Wenyuan without reading. When Chen Boda approved the


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draft, Yang Chengwu published the article on November 13, 1967, under his own name. Yang, who was very proud of the article, told Wu Faxian excitedly that after Luo Ruiqing had read it, including the criticism of Luo Ruiqing, Luo immediately admitted that he was a false party member.

However, on December 17, 1967, Mao publicly criticized the article on the ground that the expression, "Establishing the Great and Absolute Authority of Mao Zedong Thought" was not an appropriate one. "All authority is relative," Mao asserted. "Authority is established through practice of revolutionary struggle, not through certain announcements."

In saying this, Mao was criticizing Yang Chengwu.\(^1\)

For Yang Chengwu, misfortunes came in pairs. His relationship with Lin Biao was also deteriorating. Toward the end of December, Ye scolded Yang over a seemingly insignificant matter. One day, the CCRSG viewed a rehearsal of a "model opera" in order to decide whether it was suitable for public release.\(^12\) Jiang Qing invited Lin to attend the rehearsal. Yang Chengwu, however, had not

\(^1\)Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel15006, 22.

\(^12\)During the years of the Cultural Revolution, nobody except for the CCRSG, Jiang Qing in particular, could make decisions to release new movies or operas to the public. Jiang Qing was especially keen on "reforming" Beijing operas. She personally participated in directing eight operas, honoring them as "model operas." For several years, nothing but these eight "model operas" were allowed on stage. Interestingly enough, these opera troupes which originally performed the "model operas" later became parts of Jiang Qing's power base.
reconfirmed Lin's attendance with his staff. As was his habit, Lin took his sleeping pills at 8:00 p.m. on the night of the rehearsal, and was in bed before his office was notified of Jiang's invitation. When notified of this, Jiang Qing insisted that Lin be present, and delayed the performance until Lin arrived. Lin had to be awakened by his staff and taken to the theater. When the performance started, Ye called Yang Chengwu and Wu Faxian to the lobby and scolded them. "You two ungrateful men! As soon as you became acting chief of staff and deputy chief of staff, you snubbed Commander Lin. What are you up to by doing this?"

Both Yang and Wu listened to her tirade in silence. Wu was puzzled because it was unusual for Ye to shout like this at generals over such a trivial matter. The situation was awkward but nothing more, and Lin himself said nothing about it afterwards.13

Yang thereafter became very cautious, and often found excuses to avoid meetings of the Working Group, and even the Occasional Meetings of the CCRSG. Soon afterwards, however, another seemingly trivial matter led to Yang's ouster. One day in March, Wang Fei, director of the General Office of the Air Force, and Zhou Yuchi, Wang's assistant, reported to Wu Faxian that the wife of one of Yu Lijin's secretaries had come to Wang for help, because she believed that her husband

was having an affair with Yang Chengwu’s daughter. Wu was shocked because he realized the potential seriousness of the matter. During the Cultural Revolution, any person except Mao and a few others in high places would be punished severely for having an extra-marital affair exposed. In this instance, the two people involved were the secretary of the Air Force commissar and the daughter of the acting chief of staff. Wu told Wang and Zhou to do nothing until he looked into the situation. They could talk to Yu’s secretary, but should do or say nothing to harm the reputation of Yang Chengwu’s daughter.

When Wang Fei and Zhou Yuchi talked to Yu’s secretary, the secretary insisted on his innocence. Wang and Zhou became so irritated at his denials that they put the secretary into custody. Wu was very angry when he learned of this, because he thought it was inappropriate to detain Yu’s secretary without consulting Yu first. Besides, Wu was already unhappy with Wang Fei and Zhou Yuchi, who became good friends with Lin Liguo after Liguo became an Air Force officer in the summer of 1967. Wu thought Wang and Zhou behaved arrogantly because of their special relationship with Liguo, often making false accusations against their colleagues, including the secretaries of Wu and Yu. Wu suspected that the accusation against Yu’s secretary was

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14For more accounts of this event, see Xiao Sike, *Chaoji shenpan*, vol 1, 334.
another of these false allegations. Wu therefore criticized Zhou Yuchi for his imprudence. "How dare you detain Commissar Yu’s secretary without my permission? This actually means that you took over power from me," Wu shouted at Zhou.

To Wu’s surprise, Ye Qun called him the evening after his criticism of Zhou Yuchi, asked him why he was accusing Liguo of taking power from him. "If you think that it is no good for Liguo to stay in the Air Force, we can leave," Ye shouted angrily. Confused over the source of Ye’s anger, Wu tried to explain that he blamed Zhou Yuchi, and the incident had nothing to do with Liguo. Ye, however, would not listen to Wu’s protestations, and told Wu to talk to Zhou Yuchi and told Zhou to relax. "What are you afraid of?" Ye continued. "Even Commander Lin said that it was right to detain Yu’s secretary. It was a move to protect acting chief of staff Yang’s reputation."\(^\text{16}\)

As soon as Wu put down the phone, he received another call from Zhao Zizhen, Yang Chengwu’s wife, demanding that Wu free Yu’s secretary immediately. Wu was thus caught

\(^{15}\)For more accounts on this, see Zhang Yunsheng, \textit{Jishi}, 138-140.

\(^{16}\)Ji Xichen, "‘Yang, Yu, Fu’ shijian neiqing," ["The Inner Story of ‘Yang-Yu-Fu Incident’"], in \textit{Zhongnanhai renshi chenfu [Ups and Downs at Zhongnanhai]} (Hong Kong: Xianggang wenhui chuban youxian gongsi, 1991), 136-137. It is not clear why Ye Qun was interested in the affairs. For one interpretation concerning her motives, see Zhang Yunsheng, \textit{Jishi}, 138-141.
between conflicting pressures from two powerfully connected women: the wife of Lin Biao on the one hand and the wife of Yang Chengwu on the other, neither of whom Wu could afford to offend.

The next day, Zhao Zizhen and Yu Lijin visited Ye Qun. Zhao cried in front of Ye, asking her to report the matter to Lin. "Wu Faxian tried to ruin the reputation of acting chief of staff Yang," Zhao claimed. "Please ask Commander Lin to criticize Wu." By now, the alleged affair between Yang's daughter and Yu's secretary had developed into a confrontation between the acting chief of staff and the Air Force commissar on the one side, and the Air Force commander on the other. Lin was therefore forced to choose sides. After careful consideration and probably under Ye's influence, Lin decided to back Wu. Lin told Wu that Zhao Zizhen and Yu Lijin had accused Wu of opposing Yang Chengwu. "They are going to seize power in the Air Force," Lin told Wu. "Don't be afraid. You should dare to challenge Yang Chengwu." 17

Although Lin sided with Wu on this matter, there as yet was no other indication that Lin had decided to oust Yang. The final decision to dismiss Yang Chengwu was Mao's, not Lin's. When Lin Biao announced the dismissal of Yang Chengwu as well as Yu Lijin and Fu Chongbi on March 24,

1968, he said that Mao had held four discussions of the issues involved before making the decision.\textsuperscript{18} At 1:00 a.m. on March 23, Wu received a call from the Central General Office asking him to come immediately to the Great Hall of the People. When Wu arrived, he saw among others Mao, Lin, Zhou, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, Xie Fuzhi, Ye Qun and Wang Dongxing. As soon as Mao saw Wu, he told Wu that he had learned of his problem with Yang Chengwu. "You are right and I support you," Mao told Wu. Then, Mao checked with Lin concerning a replacement for Yang Chengwu as chief of staff, and agreed with Lin's suggestion that the job go to Huang Yongsheng. Even Wu was surprised by the decision to dismiss Yang and Yu. If it was because of Yang's daughter's affair, the punishment was too severe. As for Yu Lijin, Mao said that Commander Xu Shiyou of the Nanjing Military Region had sent him information that Yu Lijin had once betrayed the revolution during the war. Because of this, Mao ordered Yu arrested and the charge investigated.

The real reasons for the fall of Yang Chengwu, Yu Lijin and Fu Chongbi are still not clear. There were no direct connections between the cases of the three men. Information

revealed later suggested Fu Chongbi's fall was the work of Jiang Qing, who personally disliked Fu. In retrospect, it seems that Lin had become unhappy with Yang for two reasons. First, Yang did not get along with Lin's other generals. In his speech denouncing Yang, Yu, and Fu, Lin reproached Yang for being too ambitious and for being unable to get along with other military leaders, such as Xie Fuzhi, Han Xianchu and Huang Yongsheng. In order to preserve the still-precarious stability in the army, Lin did not want disputes between his generals.

Yang may also have offended Lin by his close association with Jiang Qing. According to Wang Nianyi, Yang had annoyed Lin by writing several letters to Jiang expressing his admiration for her. When Mao toured the provinces in the summer of 1967, Yang accompanied him. According to Wang, Yang refused to report to Ye Qun the

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19 One writer assumed that Jiang Qing was angry with Fu Chongbi, because Fu by chance read the "black materials" about Jiang Qing's early life in Shanghai, which he was not supposed to know about. Dong Baocun, "Yang Yu Fu mengnanji," ["Yang, Yu and Fu were in Trouble"], in Yanjiu ziliao, (Guofang daxue, 1988), 67-70.

20 Xie Fuzhi was the commander of the Beijing Garrison.

21 Han Xianchu was the commander of the Fuzhou Military Region.

content of Mao’s discussion during the tour. Despite these reasons, however, it was Mao who made the decision to dismiss Yang. In a speech delivered in December 1971, Mao accused Lin of having deceived him in the case of Yang Chengwu, causing him to make a wrong decision. Wang also suggests that although Lin made the speech denouncing Yang on March 24, Lin had failed to explain why Yang, Yu, and Fu should be ousted. The reason for that, according to Wang, was that Lin had not known how to explain why they were being dismissed until Ye Qun brought him Mao’s directives concerning what he should say. One by-product of this event was that Huang Yongsheng, one of Lin’s major supporters, became chief of staff.

From the Ninth Party Congress to the Second Lushan Conference: Increasing Tension between the Two Power Groups

The conflict between the two power groups intensified after Yang Chengwu’s ouster. The major problem was that Lin’s generals could not get along with Jiang Qing, whose behavior was capricious and unpredictable. She was difficult to work with because of her “subjectivism, theatrical ways and sensitive ego.” She reveled in using her position as Mao’s wife to force other people to do what

23Wang Nianyi, Dadongl uan, 289.
24Wang Nianyi, Dadongl uan, 285-293.
25Terrill, Madame Mao, 200.
she wanted them to do. For Jiang Qing, the Cultural Revolution had a personal meaning—it was the device she used to realize her dream of becoming a modern-day empress of China. Ross Terrill has even suggested that Jiang Qing’s personal quest is the key to understanding the Cultural Revolution.²⁶

Unlike Yang Chengwu, Huang Yongsheng had little respect for Jiang Qing, believing that Jiang did not always represent Mao. Despite their growing irritation with Jiang’s subjectivity and imperiousness, however, the generals were still awed by Jiang because she stood in the reflection of Mao’s glory. After Huang became head of the Working Group of the Central Military Committee, he and the generals tried to "stay at a respectable distance" from Jiang Qing and her Group.

At the same time, Jiang Qing became increasingly discontented with the members of the Working Group because of their reluctance to do what she wanted them to do. Two months after Huang became chief of staff, Jiang Qing began finding fault with the Working Group. She once complained to one of her colleagues that Huang was not ideal for the position of chief of staff. Not long after that, Jiang Qing had a chance to vent her anger toward the army group. One day in May, Jiang suddenly charged the Working Group with usurping her power and withholding information from her.

²⁶Terrill, *Madame Mao*, 299.
She demanded that Huang Yongsheng and Wu Faxian be suspended from the Occasional Meetings of the CCRSG and that they make self-criticisms. What angered Jiang Qing was a recent decision by the Working Group. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the Central Government had decided that the army must report all decisions on troop maneuvers, even down to the platoon level, to Mao, Lin, Zhou, and the CCRSG. After Huang became chief of staff, Mao decided that it was no longer necessary to send such decisions to the CCRSG. Mao wrote on his copy of one such decision, "From now on, reports like this should be sent only to Mao, Lin and Zhou." When Jiang Qing found out that she was left out of decisions on military affairs, she accused Huang and Wu of "blocking her access to information."

As usual, it was Zhou Enlai who was caught in the middle, and had to try to work out a compromise between the two groups. After considering the matter, Zhou, together with Kang Sheng and Yang Wenyuan, asked Huang and Wu to make self-criticisms to Jiang Qing. Lin Biao, however, told his generals not to back down, because it was Mao who had decided to leave the CCRSG out of the routing of military decisions. As a result, Huang Yongsheng and Wu Faxian refused to make self-criticisms.

The Central Party Committee had decided earlier that Huang Yongsheng would head a delegation to visit Albania in late 1968. Jiang Qing, however, announced that Huang
Yongsheng's upcoming visit would be canceled if Huang refused to make a self-criticism. This put the Foreign Ministry in an awkward position. The Ministry had already informed the Albanian government of Huang's visit, and it would be difficult to explain change in the leadership of the delegation. After Zhou reported this flap to Mao, Mao criticized Jiang Qing and said that Huang Yongsheng would head the delegation and the Working Group would continue its routine work as it had in the past.²⁷ Thereafter, the relationship between the two groups became even more strained.

By late 1968, Jiang Qing was already at work to oust Huang Yongsheng. She sent a report on the Cultural Revolution in Guangdong to Mao and Lin to which she added a long comment on how "conservatives" were taking power in the south and were doing so with support from "someone in the Central Government." Obviously, this "someone" was Huang Yongsheng, who had once been in charge of the Guangdong area before he came to Beijing. Jiang suggested the report, together with her comments, be released to the country. Neither Mao nor Lin responded to her request.²⁸ Jiang Qing then suggested that Lin appoint Zhang Chunqiao director of the Department of General Politics in the army, but Lin


²⁸Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 386.
refused. In revenge, Jiang rejected one candidate after another the Working Group selected for the position. As the result, the position of the director remained unfilled for a long time.29

The tension between the army and the CCRSG was especially aggravated around the time of the Ninth Party Congress. As the split between the two groups became clear, more people joined the army group because of the difficulty of getting along with Jiang Qing. Among them was Chen Boda, chief of the Cultural Revolution Group. By the end of 1968, there were only five members left in the CCRSG--Chen Boda, Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan, and none of the others had any respect for Chen.30 At several Occasional Meetings, Jiang initiated criticism of Chen, and encouraged the army group to join her. The generals, however, refused, because Lin had voiced his support for Chen. Later, Ye Qun reassured Chen Boda of this support when Chen called Ye Qun to complain about his difficulties with Jiang Qing.31

Chen Boda moved still closer to Lin Biao after the dispute over the drafts of the Report to the Ninth Party Congress. Mao had decided at the Twelfth Plenum of the

29Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 386-387, and Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 206-209.

30Ye Yonglie, Chen Boda, 448.

31Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 179-180.
Eighth Central Committee that Lin Biao would give a report to the Ninth Party Congress and ordered Chen Boda to help Lin draft it. After several discussions, Lin and Chen decided that the theme of the report would be "Strive to Build China into a Great Socialist Country," which would also be the title of the political report. Chen soon completed a draft of the first section of the report, in which he stated that the purpose of the Cultural Revolution was to promote socialist production and raise the living standard of the people, both materially and culturally. In a meeting called to discuss Chen's draft and chaired by Mao, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan objected to the theme, claiming that it incorporated the theory that "the force of production alone will be decisive for social development" [wei shengchanli luan]. Mao agreed with them, and rejected Chen's draft, saying that it emphasized production at the cost of revolution and class struggle. Mao then asked Kang Sheng, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan to make another draft.

Chen continued to work on his own draft, however, hoping that Mao would finally prefer his version. After all, over the years Chen had drafted many important documents for Mao. The competition between the two groups

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intensified as the Ninth Congress approached. After Chen completed a second draft, he sent it to Mao. The envelope containing the draft was returned to him several days later, unopened. Chen could not believe that Mao would not even bother to open the envelope before returning it. "I cried when I found this out and I had never cried so hard," Chen told Ye Yonglie, his biographer. "I was hurt, I was really hurt." 34

As Lin Biao once said, Chen Boda was only a shusheng [an intellectual], and he was indeed a shusheng. At a meeting Mao called to discuss the report drafted by Kang, Zhang and Yao, Chen stubbornly clung to his own version when no one else dared to venture different opinions. "It is better to concentrate on developing production," he insisted. "If we only focus on the movement, it will remind people of Bernstein’s statement that ‘a movement is everything and no specific purpose is needed except the movement itself’." Most of the people at the meeting feared for Chen, and watched carefully for Mao’s reaction. "You, Chen Boda, just could not wait," Mao said angrily. "It has been only half a month and you came back to seek revenge. You will never change your nature, just as both imperialism and Marxism can not change."

After Mao criticized Chen Boda, Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng organized several meetings to continue the criticism.

34Ye Yonglie, Chen Boda, 462-463.
Lin's generals remained silent at these meetings. While Ye Qun occasionally expressed her support for Jiang Qing, Lin Biao had his own way of showing his discontent with the version of the report drafted by Zhang Chunqiao and others. He completely detached himself from the preparation of the report after Mao rejected his idea of what the report should emphasize and which Chen had incorporated in his draft. When Zhang sent the finished report to Lin Biao for his signature, Lin refused to sign it, and Zhang had to find someone to forge Lin's signature. Lin did not touch the report at all before he presented it to the Ninth Party Congress. It is no wonder that Jiang Qing complained afterwards that Lin's presentation was poor, and that he stuttered during his speech.

Wang Dongxing also gradually identified himself with the army group. For many reasons, Wang was a key figure in the central power struggle, not simply because of his position as the head of Unit 8341, but also because of his close relationship to Mao. He was in charge Mao's personal staff, so he was in the best position of anyone involved in the struggle to approach Mao and know Mao's thinking. Wang had control of secret information about many high officials, including Mao. Wang told Ye Qun privately that he kept a


record of everything he did for Mao and Jiang Qing in order to protect himself in case anything went wrong.\textsuperscript{37} Despite this caution, Wang was often caught between Mao and Jiang Qing. Once, Jiang asked Wang to fire one of Mao’s nurses. Knowing that Mao would not agree to the firing because the nurse was his favorite, Wang refused Jiang’s request. Jiang was infuriated, and scolded him harshly. Her daughter, Li Na, also joined in the criticism of Wang. Not knowing what to do, Wang went to Lin Biao for help. Lin told Wang to tell Jiang Qing that Lin said Mao had the right to choose his own staff without interference from anyone. Wang was grateful for Lin’s help, because he knew Lin was among the few people who could intimidate Jiang Qing. Mao was happy, too.\textsuperscript{38}

What finally pushed Wang to Lin’s side, however, was not Jiang Qing’s capriciousness but Mao’s treatment of Wang. Li Zhisui has described an event in which Mao greatly hurt Wang’s feelings. Prior to the Ninth Party Congress, Wang was seriously ill with a bleeding ulcer and had to be hospitalized. Zhou took Dr. Li and Nurse Wu to Mao to break the news to Mao. The three were so concerned about Wang’s condition that they burst into tears in front of Mao. Mao, however, remained impassive, suggesting only, “If Wang is

\textsuperscript{37}Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part II, 93.

\textsuperscript{38}Wu Faxian, “Manuscript,” hel5007, 3.
sick, get him the treatment the doctor suggests. We can do nothing else." As they left the room, they heard Mao make a derisive remark about their shedding tears over Wang’s sickness. According to Li Zhisui, Mao even suspected that Zhou and Li were colluding with Wang Dongxing against him. During Wang’s stay in the hospital, neither Mao nor Jiang Qing went to see him. When Ye Qun took Doudou to see him at Lin’s request, Wang’s wife cried, telling Ye, "They want Wang to die, because he knows too much." Even Zhou Enlai, who in one man’s opinion was "obsequious before Jiang Qing," made gestures toward associating himself with Lin’s group, although he did so cautiously and only in a limited degree. Li Zhisui believed that Zhou’s relationship with Lin was much closer than he wanted to admit after the Lin Biao Incident. Lin understood Zhou’s awkward position very well and often told his subordinates they should respect Zhou, because no one, including Mao and Lin himself, could handle national affairs as effectively as Zhou did. He warned Wu Faxian not to listen to Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng, who had told Wu that

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39Li Zhisui, 511. For another account of Wang Dongxing’s relationship with Lin, also see, Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5007, 519.

40Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part II, 94-95

41Li Zhisui, 510.

42Li Zhisui, 358.
Zhou Enlai was responsible for a previous anti-army slogan. "I do not think that Kang Sheng can handle the work of a premier," Lin told Wu, believing that Kang had ambition to replace Zhou as premier. Whenever Jiang Qing initiated criticism of Zhou, Lin's group remained silent. This is perhaps why Zhou had more trust in Lin's generals than in members of the Jiang's group. After Wang Dongxing became too ill to work, Zhou asked Wu Faxian to help him prepare for the Ninth Party Congress.

Although the Ninth Congress gave the appearance that both groups had won political victories since all of the major members of both groups were elected to the Politburo, it did not heal the rift between them. Before the vote for Party Central Committee members, Ye Qun told the generals to persuade several army delegates not to vote for Jiang Qing and her men. In the voting, Jiang Qing had her supporters, including Kang Sheng, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan, received fewer votes than Lin's group. Jiang Qing was infuriated by what she regarded as a humiliation, and demanded an investigation.

To retaliate against Ye Qun, Jiang Qing openly turned against Lin Biao after the Ninth Congress. At one Politburo meeting, Jiang criticized Lin for doing a poor job in reading the report to the Party Congress. At another, Jiang

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suddenly suggested that Lin's speech at the Twelfth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee, in which he compared the Cultural Revolution to the European Renaissance, should be criticized. After the meeting, Jiang asked Yao Wenyuan to write an article criticizing the ideas of the Renaissance in order to deprecate Lin. Jiang kept raising the same issue at six subsequent Politburo meetings, and demanded that Yao's article be published as a government document. On each of the occasions, only Kang Sheng, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan supported her, while other members, including Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, Li Xiannian, Wang Dongxing, Ye Qun, and Lin's generals, opposed her. Jiang continued to push her idea until Zhou could no longer take it. "Comrade Jiang Qing," Zhou told her, "you should understand the basic principle of collective leadership, that is, the principles of democratic centralism. Only you three or four agreed on this issue, but the majority opposed it. Yet, you still raised the issue again and again. If you insist on issuing the article as a party document, we have to get the Chairman's approval." Jiang knew Mao would not approve that, so she gave up the idea of criticizing Lin for the time being.45

The Second Plenum: The Beginning of the Mao-Lin Rupture

It was against this background that the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee, also known as the second Lushan meeting, was held in August 1970. On the evening of May 8, 1970, Wang Dongxing returned to Beijing from Hangzhou, where Mao was staying, and brought with him Mao’s instructions on the upcoming Fourth People’s Congress. Wang Dongxing told the Politburo that Mao wanted the Politburo to discuss ways of summing up the experience of the Cultural Revolution, of restoring government institutions to their regular functioning, developing the economy, and preparing for war. In addition, Mao wanted the Politburo to set up groups to draft a new state constitution and to prepare reports for the forthcoming congress, and to discuss whether or not the new constitution should re-establish the position of state chairman. Mao himself preferred not to re-establish the position. If the Politburo decided to re-establish the position, it should do so with other candidates in mind than Mao himself. "I, Mao Zedong, do not want to be the Chairman," Wang read Mao’s own words. "If [the Politburo] decides to recreate such a position, it is Lin Biao who should hold the position."46

After the meeting, Wang Dongxing wanted to go to Lin’s home to report Mao’s instructions to Lin in person, but Lin had already gone to bed. Wang Dongxing then invited Ye Qun,

46Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7001, 1.

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Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng and Qiu Huizuo to his residence for a late dinner. When their conversation turned to the topic of state chairman, Wang repeated that Mao had said that if there were to be such an office, Lin Biao should hold it. Everybody present was happy about this, since it demonstrated again Mao’s trust in Lin.

At the Politburo meeting on May 9, Zhou decided that Kang Sheng would head the group to draft the new constitution. The other members of the group would be Chen Boda, Zhang Chunqiao, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng and Ji Dengkui. The group would discuss the matter of re-establishing the state chairmanship and report its decision to the Politburo. Mao himself had already worked out a brief outline for the new constitution and all the group actually did was fill in the details to Mao’s draft.

On the afternoon of July 17, the Working Group of the Central Military Committee went to Lin’s residence to report on their recent work. After they told Lin of Mao’s instructions concerning the state chairmanship, Lin made the following statement,

I will not take the position of state Chairman. It is not appropriate. Chairman Mao should hold this position as state chairman and it is perfectly justifiable. China is such a big country, it will not be appropriate if this big country has no figurehead to represent it. Chairman Mao should be the only candidate for state chairman. Of course, Mao is in his old age now and may have difficulty going abroad to visit other countries. We can have several vice chairmen, who can visit other countries in Mao’s
place. I am not fit for the position of a vice chairman because of my poor heath. I will be unable to attend public activities, nor can I visit other countries. In a word, Mao should be the state chairman.  

This was not the first time Lin had expressed himself on the subject of the state chairmanship. In mid April, Lin had asked his secretaries to compose a written statement of his view and sent it to the Central Party Committee. China, he believed, should have a state chairman and Mao should hold the office. It did not matter to him whether there was vice-state chairman or more than one vice-chairmen, but he himself would not be a vice-chairman.  

Soon thereafter, Mao’s secretary, Xu Yefu, called Lin to convey Mao’s instruction concerning the issue to Lin, which indicated that Mao agreed with Lin’s opinion that the new constitution should establish the position of state chairman. Mao wrote Lin, "As to the state chairman, I will not hold the position, and neither will you. Let Old Dong (Dong Biwu) be the state chairman and at the same time, put several younger people in the position of vice chairmen."  

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47 Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7001, 2.  
48 This statement by Lin, especially the last point, was later used as proof that Lin had ambition to became the state chairman, because he claimed he did not want to be a vice chairman. See Ye Yonglie, Zhang Chungiao chenfu shi [The Ups and Downs of Zhang Chungiao] (Changchun: Shidai chubanshe, 1988), 258-259; Shao Yihai, Lin Biao wangchao heimu [The Lin Biao Dynasty under the Dark Screen] (Chengdu: Sichuan wenyi chubanshe, 1988, 62-64.  
49 Secretary A, interview by author, Beijing, August 21,
Because of the persisting conflicts between the army and the CCRSG, the task of drafting the new constitution under Kang Sheng did not go smoothly. The group responsible for the task soon split, with Kang Sheng and Zhang Chunqiao on one side, Chen Boda, Wu Faxian and Li Zuopeng on the other, and Ji Dengkui in the middle, perhaps because he had only recently joined the Central Government from Henan Province, and was still uninformed about the issues that divided the others. The disputes focused on two issues: whether the new constitution should re-establish the office of the state chairman, and whether it should contain the sentence, "Mao Zedong Thought is the guiding principle of the country." Wu Faxian and Li Zuopeng supported both ideas, and Kang Sheng and Zhang Chunqiao opposed them. Kang suggested that instead of re-establishing the state chairmanship, the constitution should create a new position, "director of the Committee of the People's Congress."

At the working meeting on August 13, the differing opinions produced an open collision between the two groups. Only four people attended the meeting, Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, Zhang Chunqiao and Wu Faxian. Again, they could not agree on the issue of state chairman. Kang Sheng proposed that they leave the matter of the state chairmanship to the Politburo. When the discussion proceeded to the section on the State Council, Wu suggested writing into it a statement
that Mao Zedong Thought should be the guideline for the work of the State Council. Kang Sheng and Zhang Chunqiao opposed the suggestions, insisting that Mao would not himself agree to it. What Zhang said after this, however, annoyed Wu.

"Some people mention Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought all the time," Zhang said to Wu, "but it does not mean that they are real Marxists. Someone claimed that [Mao] 'creatively' developed Marxism, but even Khrushchev had 'creatively' developed Marxism." Wu took Zhang's remarks as an assault to Lin Biao, because everyone knew that it was Lin who said that Mao had "creatively" developed Marxism.

After the meeting, both Wu and Chen Boda believed that Zhang's statements at the meeting were aimed at Lin. Chen encouraged Wu to report Zhang's remarks to Lin as well as to Zhou Enlai and Huang Yongsheng. Wu immediately contacted Zhou and Huang, and both expressed support for Wu's stand. Huang also told Wu he would ask Li Zuopeng to return to Beijing to help Wu in subsequent group meetings.50

The next day, August 15, Wu told Ye Qun about Zhang's remarks and asked her to report it to Lin Biao. An hour later, Ye called Wu, telling him Lin approved of Wu's action, and wanted Wu to stand firm on the issue. "It was

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50 Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7001, 4, and Yu Nan, "Jiujie erzhong guanhui shang de yichang fengbo," ["A Problem at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee], Dang de wenxian [Party Literature], No. 3 (March 1993), 84.
very good," Ye added excitedly, "Zhang Chunqiao has at last given us an excuse to get at him."

It was in this context that the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee met in August 1970 at Lushan. In retrospect, this second Lushan conference, in the middle of the Cultural Revolution, had much in common with the first Lushan conference in 1959, which met in the midst of the Great Leap Forward. At the time of both conferences, Party comrades were increasingly discontented with the disturbing results of mass movements initiated by Mao. In both cases, someone from the army, Peng Dehuai in 1959 and now Lin Biao, stood up and voiced the concerns of most participants in the meetings. And, on both occasions, Mao took the criticism thus voiced as challenges to his power, and crushed the challengers ruthlessly.

Also like the first Lushan conference, the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee began calmly. Before the conference, Ye took generals Wu, Li and Qiu for sightseeing around Lushan. She told them that the impending meeting had little of importance to discuss, and they should relax for several days after a long period of hard work. As to the dispute with Kang Sheng and Zhang Chunqiao over provisions of the new constitution, Ye Qun told the generals that the issue may not even surface at the conference. Lin himself had prepared no speeches for the conference.
At the opening session on the morning of August 23, Mao unexpectedly stated that Lin Biao would give a speech at the conference, and thus surprised Ye Qun. The reason for this unexpected development is not altogether clear. Ye Qun told the generals that just before the conference began, Mao received members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo for a final discussion about the conference. When Mao asked Lin Biao whether he would like to say anything during the opening session, Lin said that he would say a few words about the new constitution because someone had objected to the idea of adding the statement affirming Mao’s genius. Lin then told Mao of the dispute just described between Wu Faxian and Zhang Chunqiao. Zhou Enlai then added his agreement with Lin’s remarks. Mao instructed Lin to criticize Zhang Chunqiao, but without mentioning Zhang’s name. “It must be Jiang Qing who backed Zhang Chunqiao,” Mao told Lin.\(^5\)

According to the written record of Lin’s speech at the opening session, Lin affirmed his position on the issues just discussed. At the outset, Lin emphasized the importance of the new constitution confirming Mao’s position as a “great leader, the head of the state and the supreme commander.” By saying that, Lin actually revealed his opinion that there should be a state chairmanship and Mao

should hold the office. Lin also suggested that the constitution acknowledge Mao Zedong Thought as the guiding principle of the country. Further, he stated that it could not be denied that Mao was a genius, which was a reply to Zhang’s previous speech at the constitution preparation meetings. Lin, however, did not mention Zhang’s name, as Mao had requested.52

Delegates received Lin’s speech favorably, especially those who knew of the conflict between Lin’s group and the Cultural Revolution Group. Most of the delegates had suffered during the Red Guard stage of the Cultural Revolution, and still resented the treatment they received. When they learned that Zhang Chunqiao was the individual Lin had criticized for having opposed the idea that Mao was a genius, many of them took pleasure in Zhang’s misfortune. If they had to choose between Lin’s group and Jiang Qing’s group, most of them preferred the former. It was less radical, and most of them could identify with Lin and his generals because of their experiences in the war. Moreover, army representatives comprised about 40 percent of the members of the Ninth Party Central Committee, and after the speech, many of them and other senior cadres shook Lin’s hand to show their support.

52 Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting, "Lin Biao zai jiujie erzhong quanhui kaimuhui shang de jiang hua" ["Lin Biao’s Speech at the Opening Session of the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee"], January 5, 1972, 137-146.
In ensuring group discussions over the next two days, Lin and his men got the upper hand over Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao among delegates at the conference. According to the conference minutes, Chen Boda, Ye Qun, and the generals took the lead in criticizing Zhang Chunqiao, although no one mentioned his name. "Someone wanted to take advantage of the Chairman's great modesty to disgrace Mao and Mao Zedong Thought," Chen Boda claimed in a meeting of the North China Group.53 "Comrade Lin Biao had mentioned many times that Mao is a great genius," Ye Qun similarly said at the Central China Group, "Should he take all this back? Never!" At the same time, Wu Faxian was telling the Southwest China Group, "During the discussion to prepare the new version of the state constitution, someone opposed the idea that Chairman Mao ingeniously and creatively developed Marxism and Leninism and described this idea as 'ridiculous'." Qiu Huizuo and Li Zuopeng respectively expressed similar ideas at the Northwest Group and the South Central Group.54

When participants learned that the "someone" alluded to by Wu and others was none other than Zhang Chunqiao, their anger, turned inward since the Cultural Revolution began, burst out. Many participants who blamed the CCRSG for their

53Group discussion during the conference was organized according to the regions where the delegates came from, such as the Central China Group, the South China Group and the North China Group.

54Ye Yonglie, Zhang Chunqiao, 260-261.
personal agonies during the Cultural Revolution, took the opportunity to settle personal scores with the Group. In their speeches, they demanded that the "someone" referred to "make a self-criticism at the conference" and "be expelled from the Central Committee immediately to receive re-education from the workers and peasants." Chen Yi, for example, discussed Mao's genius in detail, and insisted that it would be a serious matter for "someone" to deny it. 55

Yang Dezhi, who became chief of staff of the PLA in 1983, recalled the second Lushan Conference this way:

"Everyone hated Zhang Chunqiao, so we criticized him severely. Zhang Chunqiao was so nervous and frustrated that he smoked one cigarette after another. Everyday, the ashtray in front of him was filled with the cigarette butts. Watching him in such an awkward plight, we were extremely delighted. For the first time since the Cultural Revolution began we finally got a chance to vent the anger in our hearts as never before." 56

The general feeling against Zhang Chunqiao and the CCRSG also produced the following passage from the second briefing of the North China Group:

"Many felt that their understanding of Vice-Chairman Lin's speech was enhanced after they listened to Comrade Chen Boda's speech at the group meeting. They expressed the greatest and strongest anger when they learned that some people within the party tried to deny that the great leader Chairman Mao is the greatest genius of our time. It is very a serious problem that within the party there are some members with such reactionary ideas. These people are power hungry,"

55Tie Zhuwei, 255-256.

56Tie Zhuwei, 257.
conspirators, reactionaries in the extreme, and authentic counter-revolutionary revisionists.\textsuperscript{57}

Zhang Chunqiao might have faced an immediate purge as a "counter-revolutionary" had the conference continued in this vein. The tension grew so palpable that Mao, who did not attend the group discussions, had to make a decision. On August 25, Jiang Qing brought Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan to Mao’s residence to complain about what was happening at the conference. Jiang Qing told Mao that something was going wrong. Lin and his generals wanted to "pull someone out," she allegedly said.\textsuperscript{58} The exact content of the conversation is not known, but it is reasonable to assume that the three visitors tried to win Mao’s support in order to save themselves from impending disgrace.

The following day, Mao spoke in Zhang’s defense at a meeting of the enlarged Politburo Standing Committee meeting, at which he also voiced his discontent with Lin’s group. Mao then decided to adjourn the Plenum in order to stop the discussion of Lin’s speech. Mao later mentioned, derisively, that he would not be state chairman, and would advise Lin Biao not to be, either. That seemingly innocuous

\textsuperscript{57}Wang Nianyi, \textit{Dadongluan}, 401.

\textsuperscript{58}Wang Nianyi, \textit{Dadongluan}, 402, and Yu Nan, "Lin Biao jituan xingwang chutian" ["An initial Research on the rise and Fall of the Lin Biao Clique"], in \textit{Shinian hou de pingshuo} [Comments Ten Years Later], eds, Tang Zongji, and Zheng Qian. (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao chubanshe, 1987), 89.
statement was the first signal that Lin had begun to lose Mao's favor. On August 31, Mao issued a letter entitled "Some Opinions of Mine" to the reconvened Lushan conference. In the letter Mao unexpectedly denounced Chen Boda as a "political fraud" intent upon deceiving the Central Committee. Chen had supported Lin Biao and was one of the authors of the second briefing of the North China Group, quoted above. At Mao's instigation, the conference then proceeded to criticize Chen, and in turn, Wu Faxian, Ye Qun, Qiu Huizuo, and Li Zuopeng.

Like the first Lushan conference in 1959 when Peng Dehuai ended his political career, Lin Biao and his military men were the losers in the confrontation with Jiang's group at the second Lushan conference because of Mao's stance. Lin got no support from Mao in his effort to discredit Zhang Chunqiao. Instead, Mao openly showed his discontent with Lin Biao. What is difficult to determine is why Mao suddenly turned against the man who had been his "closest comrade-in-arms" since the Cultural Revolution. Mao's later charge against Lin and his lieutenants was that they plotted an "unaccomplished coup," which referred, bizarrely, to Lin's suggestion that Mao was a genius, that the new constitution should acknowledge his genius, and that the position of the state chairman should be re-established and
reserve the position for Mao. These two ideas actually comprised Lin's strategy to defeat Zhang, not to offend Mao.

The key issue was still the Cultural Revolution and the fact that Mao trusted Jiang Qing and the CCRSG for all their weaknesses and limitations, rather than Lin and his generals. Lin's strategy to challenge Jiang's group during the conference was flawed. Lin and his generals probably did not realize that, given Mao's concerns, the course of events had turned against the army, now that the army had ended the earlier chaos that threatened to create total anarchy. Through the proliferation across the country of "revolutionary committees," which consisted of representatives of the masses, the cadres, and the army, military officers had become heavily involved in administrative work at all levels, from the ministries of the central government to the smallest local school district. Since the army had restored national order by 1969, military personnel on the revolutionary committees seemed to have become obstacles to rebuilding an effective civilian administrative system. It was time for the army to hand power back to the civilian administration. This might have been the reason Mao sided with the Cultural Revolutionaries against the army.

What is much less clear is why Mao condemned Lin so harshly on the issue of the state chairmanship. Mao may have been annoyed by Lin's insistence that Mao become the state chairman, although he repeatedly claimed that he had no interest in the position. Mao may have taken Lin's insistence as a lack of respect for Mao's own wishes on the subject. In a speech to provincial leaders in August 1971, Mao said angrily that Lin did not listen to him on the issue of the state chairmanship, even after he had stated for the sixth time that he did not want the position established and if it were established he did not want to occupy it. 60

There is no evidence to prove Mao's suspicion that Lin actually wanted to be state chairman. It is widely noted in the recent literature that Ye Qun had asked Wu Faxian "What should Lin Biao do (i.e., what position should Lin take) if there was no such a position of state chairman?" However, according Wu himself, it was Wang Dongxing, not Ye Qun, who said so to Cheng Shiqing, the commander of the Jiangxi military region, who, in turn, told Wu about it. 61

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60 Kau, Lin Biao Affair, 61-62.

61 Wu Faxian admitted that he had been forced to distort the facts under the heavy pressure of the "Special Case Group." He made marks in original texts of his "confessions" where he had to write something untrue in case he himself may forget in future. In his "Manuscript," he made several corrections concerning the false testimony he was forced to give. Ye's alleged statement was one of them. Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7001, 6-7.
There are reasons to believe Lin when he told his lieutenants that he had no interest in being state chairman or vice-chairman. In poor health and introverted by nature, Lin disliked public appearances and activities. According to his daughter Doudou, Lin often had to be injected with imported medication before appearing in public during the Cultural Revolution. The medication kept him "high" for the duration of his public appearance, but left him sick for weeks thereafter. Doudou later described one such occasion on which Ye shut herself in her room crying because she could not stand to see Lin suffer as he did after a public appearance.

Lin Biao abhorred receiving foreign guests. He tried to avoid doing so unless it was unavoidable. One of his secretaries has described several occasions when Lin refused to do so. Once, Lin refused Mao's repeated requests that the two of them receive a Romanian delegation until Ye was on her knees pleading with Lin to behave sensibly for the sake of the family. After Lin heeded Ye's plea, and

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62 Lin's secretaries confirmed Doudou's claims. See Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 330-333. During my interviews with two more of Lin's secretaries, both of them agreed with this account. However, no one knows what exactly the "medicine" was. Lin's son-in-law told me that usually the bottle was marked, "vitamin C."

63 Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part III, 17.

64 Detailed accounts for this, see Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 329-330.
returned from the reception, he remarked to his bodyguard how much he hated doing such things.

Moreover, Lin must have known, because of the difficulties he had as Mao's successor, that anyone other than Mao in the state chairmanship would be in a vulnerable position. Mao did not want the chairmanship established because he himself had no interest in the title and he was reluctant to see anyone else occupy the position. Mao believed that anyone in such a position would be a potential threat to his own power. This was the lesson Mao learned from his problems with the former state chairman, Liu Shaoqi.\footnote{Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 392-394.} In criticizing Lin Biao, Mao used an analogy of the classical story about Sun Quan and Cao Cao. Sun Quan urged Cao Cao to become emperor, a position of no use to Cao Cao. "Sun Quan wanted to put Cao Cao on a stove to burn him," Mao said, "and Lin Biao was doing the same thing to me." If Mao's reasoning was valid, why would Lin want to put himself "on a stove to burn," especially after he stood and watched what had happened to Liu Shaoqi several years before?

What may account for Lin's persistence on the subject is that Lin reckoned it was time to restore formal state institutions as a first step toward ending the Cultural Revolution. Lin was in no position himself to end the Cultural Revolution, but he wanted to end it as soon as
possible. Even before the Ninth Party Congress, Lin and Chen Boda had suggested in their version of the report to the congress that it was time to focus on the national economy, which would have meant ending the Cultural Revolution. Later developments proved that Lin was right. In 1982, China did restore the position of state chairman. "In terms of state system, it is compulsory to have a state chairman to represent the country both inside and outside the state," declared Zhang Youyu, the state spokesman, in 1982. "To reestablish the position of the state chairman is both truly necessary and wish-fulfilling for the Chinese people."66

In more personal terms, Lin may have felt that a state chairman would rid Lin himself his awkward position as Mao’s successor. Whoever became chairman or the vice-chairman would assume the responsibilities Lin was then shouldering as Mao’s designated successor. That would also give him an opportunity to retreat from the public activities he hated so much. A vice-chairman of the Communist Party was a much more convenient and safer position for him. But, his wife and his followers may not share whatever Lin had in mind for himself. They no doubt wanted Lin to become the state chairman.

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The most interesting of Lin's supporters was Wang Dongxing, who pushed hard for Lin's nomination as state chairman. Lin's generals may have mistaken Wang's position on the issue as Mao's own because of Wang's closeness to Mao. Because of Wang's enthusiastic support for Lin, the idea circulated later that Mao had made the state chairmanship an issue to test Lin. As noted above, Mao did tell Lin, through his secretaries, that Mao was thinking of making Dong Biwu state chairman. Besides, Lin was not the only one who wanted to re-establish the position. The draft of the new constitution approved by the Politburo contained a section regarding the election and the responsibilities of a state chairman.

For whatever reasons, Mao opted to protect Jiang's group against Lin and his lieutenants, and in doing so missed an opportunity to end the destructive Cultural Revolution and restore order to the country. For the largely personal reasons already discussed in Chapter Four, Mao stubbornly persisted in the Cultural Revolution at the expense of the country and the people. Mao was angry because Lin's dispute with the CCRSG aroused a general abhorrence among the delegates to the Cultural Revolution, and his group won as much support at the Lushan as it was.

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Yu Nan, "Yichang Fengbo," 86.
in Mao’s words, "enough to level Lushan or stop the earth’s rotation."\(^68\)

Lin and his generals, on the other hand, were no match for Mao in handling the politics of things. Lin told his general before they left Lushan, "We are generals, and we only know how to fight wars." Disappointed over events at Lushan, General Li Zuopeng said, "There is no room for us [generals] in the complicated political struggles."\(^69\)

It is important to note that no one mentioned Mao’s charges against Lin Biao and his generals at Lushan during the 1980-1981 open trial of "the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Counterrevolutionary Cliques." The omission was due to the fact that the basic assumption of the trial was that Lin Biao and Jiang Qing had cooperated closely during the Cultural Revolution. Bringing up this conflict at Lushan would have destroyed the validity of that accusations and the strategy of putting the two groups on trial together.

**Mao in Action**

The events of the Second Plenum are important for understanding Lin’s fall. In fact, the Lin Biao Incident in its broad sense consists of events that began at the Second

\(^{68}\)"Summary of Chairman Mao’s Talks to Responsible Local Comrades During His Tour of Inspection (Mid-August to September 12, 1971)" in Kau, *Lin Biao Affair*, 60.

\(^{69}\)Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7013, 6.
Plenum and culminated in his flight from China in 1971. After the Second Plenum, Lin and his generals had increasing difficulties. By October 1970, a movement to criticize Chen Boda was under way within the party. Soon, Huang, Wu, Li, and Qiu as well as Chen Boda found themselves criticized at central meetings. When Lin, who went to Beidaihe directly from Lushan after the Second Plenum, returned to Beijing for National Day on October 1, Mao called him in for conversation. After the conversation, Lin summoned Wu Faxian and directed him to go to Mao and make a self-criticism. "In the past I told you not to make self-criticism," Lin told Wu, "but now, I think you should go directly to Mao to report your dispute with Zhang Chunqiao and your work in the Air Force so that Mao will know you better." By saying so, Lin actually warned Wu that Mao was thinking of removing him from his position.

Taking Lin's advice, Wu immediately had his secretaries draft a self-criticism for him. However, when he asked Mao's secretary for an appointment with Mao, the reply was that Mao was too busy to see him before National Day. Mao also refused Wu's subsequent requests for an interview. Wu then decided to submit a written self-criticism to Mao. On October 14, Mao commented on Wu's self-criticism: "In the history of our Party, there was never such a thing as

70Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 368.

several people making trouble and trying to deceive over two hundred committee members." Of Ye Qun's written self-criticism, Mao's comment was even more severe: "When [someone] became a member of the Central Party Committee, [she] became carried away as if [she] was the number one in the world." In thus criticizing Lin's wife, Mao was demonstrating his dissatisfaction with Lin Biao as well.

From December 22, 1970 to mid-January 1971, the Party Committee of the Beijing Military Region held a series of meetings to criticize Chen Boda. Military leaders who had previously attended meetings of the Central Military Committee also attended the meeting, which was also known as the "Huabei huiyi" [North China Conference]. By the end of the meeting, critics had labeled Chen Boda "a traitor, a spy, and a careerist," and Chen disappeared from the political stage.

Meanwhile, Mao himself was increasingly frustrated. Although he had employed a variety of strategies against Lin and his generals, the results were not what he had expected. In his own words, Mao described three of the strategies as "mixing sands," "throwing stones," and "digging the corner of the wall." On November 13, Mao decided to reorganize the Working Group of the Central Military Committee by adding Li Desheng and Ji Dengkui to it. This was what Mao meant by "mixing sands." In order to further weaken Lin's group, Mao

\[72\]Wang Nianyi, Dadongluan, 412.
dismissed Li Xuefeng, who had been the chief of the North China Group during the Second Plenum at Lushan, and commander of the Beijing Military Region, and Zheng Weishan, who was political commissar of the Beijing Military Region, from their positions during the North China Conference. These were instances of what Mao called "digging the corner of [Lin's] wall."

All of this still did not crush Lin's military group. Although Wu Faxian was increasingly worried about his political future, the other generals, especially Huang Yongsheng, still refused to make self-criticisms. During the enlarged meetings of the Central Military Committee in January, the participants complimented instead of criticizing the Working Group of the Central Military Committee. Only after Mao criticized the army for its failure to participate in the criticism of Chen Boda, did Huang, Li and Qiu make self-criticisms to Mao and the Party Central Committee.

Meanwhile, Mao was waiting for Lin to make a self-criticism. But Lin, who remained away from Beijing, refused to do so. In May 1971, Mao suddenly summoned Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng, Qiu Huizuo, Li Desheng, Ji Dengkui, and Wang Dongxing, and told them that the self-criticisms of Huang, Li, and Qiu were good, but those of Wu and Ye Qun were not. "Go back and write another one," Mao told Wu. "Then I will protect you.
again." Mao then asked Zhou to take the members of the Working Group to Beidaihe and "report" their work to Lin Biao. This was to be Mao's last test of Lin's attitude toward what had happened at Lushan the year before.

As usual, Lin uttered only one sentence to Zhou and others concerning the problems of his generals: "One often harvests what one unintentionally sowed." When Zhou and others reported on their trip to Mao, the first thing Mao asked was whether or not Lin had criticized the generals. To protect Lin, Wu assured Mao that Lin had done so. Zhou Enlai also confirmed that Lin had criticized Wu and others. Only then did Mao smile with relief. "That is good. Now you can go to prepare for the central working conference."

That conference met in May 1971 to continue the criticism of Chen Boda and Lin's generals. Lin Biao, however, did not return from Beidaihe to attend the meeting. Mao circulated the self-criticisms of Wu and others, and asked the participants to criticize Chen Boda as well as Lin's generals. However, unlike the conference at Lushan, at which Zhang Chunqiao had been showered with criticism, this meeting went relatively well from Lin's standpoint, because many of the participants still had respect for Lin's generals. Only Kang Sheng and those promoted since the Cultural Revolution began, offered severe criticisms. Senior officials, such as Zhu De, Li Xiannian, and Nie Rongzhen seldom spoke at the meeting.
Half way through the meeting, however, something unexpected happened, which almost put an end to Wu Fuxian's political career. Some of his colleagues in the Air Force exposed his "underground activities" at Lushan. At Lushan, Wu had encouraged several Air Force officials to criticize Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan during the group discussion of Lin's speech at the opening session. Similar to what happened to Peng Dehuai and others at the first Lushan Conference, critics of the generals interpreted this as an "organized anti-party activity," but Zhou Enlai downplayed the significance of the event.

When Lin Biao learned of this, he immediately returned to Beijing to protect his generals. However, he never went to the meeting himself, though he did send Ye there from time to time. Mao probably expected Lin to make a self-criticism at the meeting, or at least show regret over what he had said at Lushan. "It would be much better if Vice Chairman Lin made a self-criticism speech," Zhou told Wu Faxian after Lin had returned to Beijing. Lin, however, remained silent.

By July 1971, Mao had decided to get rid of Lin Biao and his generals. One day that month, Mao had a surprising conversation with Xiong Xianghui, Zhou Enlai's long-term subordinate who at the time held a position in the Department of the General Staff of the PLA. Xiong, accompanied by Zhou, went to see Mao for what Xiong thought
was to be a discussion of the international situation after Henry Kissenger's secret visits to China. To Xiong's surprise, Mao began by asking about a meeting held by the Department of General Staff to criticize Chen Boda. Mao wanted to know in detail what Huang Yongsheng had said about the second Lushan Conference. Mao learned that Huang had said only that if Mao and Lin had not pointed out the problem with Chen Boda, he himself would have been deceived by Chen for he would not have known what was wrong with Chen and his work. When Mao heard that, the smile on his face disappeared, for it convinced Mao that Lin's generals still refused to accept Mao's criticism of them. "Their self-criticisms are nothing but false," Mao said suddenly raising his voice. "What happened at Lushan has not finished, for the basic problem has not been solved yet. They have someone behind them."

Zhou tried to mitigate Mao's bitterness by saying that the generals had made self-criticisms and would correct their mistakes. Mao, however, did not agree. "Their mistakes are different from your past mistakes, because they were conspirators," he said. Then, Mao began a criticism of Lin Biao, Ye Qun, and the generals that lasted almost an hour. This was probably the first time Mao had ever criticized Lin Biao in front of subordinates other than his
own staff. After their talk with Mao ended, Zhou warned Xiong that he must not tell anyone what Mao had said.\textsuperscript{73}

From mid-August to September 1971, Mao made an inspection tour of south China, during which he began to whip up public opinion against Lin Biao, his generals, and even his family. In speeches to local cadres, Mao expressed his dissatisfaction with Lin clearly:

> At the [Lushan] conference they engaged in surprise attacks and underground activities. Why were not they brave enough to come out in the open? It was obvious they were up to no good. First they concealed things, then they launched a surprise attack. They deceived three of the five standing members and the majority of comrades in the Politburo, except for the big generals. The big generals, including Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Ye Qun, Li Zuopeng, and Qiu Huizuo, and also Li Xuefeng and Zheng Weishan, maintained airtight secrecy and suddenly launched a surprise attack. Their coup did not just last a day and a half, but went on for two and a half days.

> I thought that their surprise attacks and underground activity were planned, organized, and programmed.

> The struggle at the 1959 Lushan Conference with Peng Dehuai was a struggle between headquarters. The struggle with Liu Shaoqi was also a struggle between two headquarters.\textsuperscript{7} The struggle at this Lushan Conference was again a struggle between two headquarters.

> I have told Comrade Lin Biao that some things he said are not particularly proper.

> Comrade Lin Biao did not consult with me about or show me that talk of his.

> This time, to protect Vice Chairman Lin, no conclusions concerning individuals were reached. But of course, he must take some of the responsibility.

\textsuperscript{73}For Mao’s talk with Xiong Xianghui, see Mao Zedong de shengqian sihou, [Mao Zedong: Before and After his Death] (Hong Kong: Wen Wei Publishing Co., 1993), 140-145.
When I return to Beijing, I will again seek them out to talk things over. If they will not come to me, I will go to them. Some can probably be saved; some not—we must observe their actions. There are two future possibilities: one is to reform; one is not to reform. Those who have made serious mistakes of principle, of line, and of direction, and who have been the leaders in this, will find it difficult to reform.

I just do not believe that our army would rebel. I just do not believe that you, Huang Yongsheng, could lead the Liberation Army to rebel!

But there should be no flattery—what good is there in praising someone in his twenties as a "super genius?" 74

I have never approved of one's wife heading the administrative office of one's own work unit. At Lin Biao's office, Ye Qun is the director of the administrative Office.... In work one should rely on one's own effort—read reports yourself, endorse reports yourself. You should not rely on secretaries and allow secretaries to get such enormous power. 75

These were unmistakable signals that Mao intended to solve the "problem" of Lin Biao. The signals were part of the background of the Lin Biao Incident, but they do not altogether account for what happened later. There are still too many unknown and unexplained things about the Incident to account for it fully. The key to a plausible explanation is what would be the most likely reaction of Lin and his generals to Mao's challenge. A military coup d'état? In

74 By this, Mao indicated Lin Liguo, Lin's son. Mao learned that Liguo's colleagues in the Air Force claimed that Lin Liguo was a "super genius." For details on this, see the discussion in the next chapter.

the words of Wu Faxian, "I was a member of the Chinese Communist Party and everything I have is given by the Party. If the Party wants me to die, I would give my life to it." When he said that, nobody doubted that Mao was the Party.

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76 Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," he18003, 11.
CHAPTER 7
FAMILIES IN CHINESE POLITICS

To understand the role of the family in politics in communist China, one must first understand the basic features of the traditional family in Chinese society. In Confucian China, the family, rather than the individual, was the basic social and economic unit of society. Confucian doctrine put great emphasis on strong family structure. According to Mencius, the state itself was rooted in the family. An individual properly raised in a family that valued Confucian doctrine would learn to respect authority, to carry out duties responsibly, and to remain a loyal member of the family. Such a person would also be loyal to the state, which replicated the hierarchical structure of an extended family. The relationship between rulers and deputies was analogous to that between the fathers and the sons.

Within this Confucian structure, as Olga Lang has observed, the state consciously cultivated the family as the primary unit of social organization. This structure

1The discussion here will be brief and general because of the limited space of this dissertation.
persists in contemporary China as it did in ancient China.\(^4\) Respect for family remains a defining feature of Chinese civilization. Family members follow strict hierarchical rules. In the nuclear (stem) families, which consisted of parents and children, the ideal is an authoritarian husband and father, an obedient wife and mother, and filial children. In extended families of more than two generations living in the same household, the oldest male holds the highest authority.\(^5\)

Confucian doctrine, however, does not fully account of the importance of the family in traditional Chinese society. The state strengthened Confucian values through social administration and legislation. In addition to its vitally important economic functions, the family performed equally important administrative functions in imperial China, where social administration was built around the household. The bureaucratic hierarchy of the Qing Dynasty, for example, rested upon the pai, which consisted of ten households. Ten pai equalled one jia and ten jia equalled one bao. The heads of these organizations were also the heads of families within them, and responsible for the moral and political conduct of their members.\(^6\)


\(^5\) For different type of families, see Lang, 14.

\(^6\) Olga Lang, 18, and Baker, 118.
In China, the stability of the state was predicated on the stability of the family. Confucius put so much emphasis on proper family structure, the three of the "five relationships" that formed the core of Confucian teaching concerned the family: father-son, husband-wife, and elder bother-younger brother. According to Confucian principles, the family is a strict hierarchical group in which the father rules the son, the husband rules the wife, and the elder brother rules the younger brother. Anyone who violated these principles was not just morally and ethically wrong, but legally wrong as well. A son who struck a parent committed a capital offense; the punishment for striking an elder brother was imprisonment. Chinese rulers even extended a criminal's punishment to his family members, as a powerful deterrent to the commission of crimes. There are numerous instances in Chinese history in which entire families were punished, even put to death, because of the crime of a single member.

Family ties, however, had positive as well as negative consequences for the individual. Nepotism was an important factor in the economy of traditional China. Chinese customs and ethics insisted on mutual help among family members and relatives. A person was immoral who did not use a position

Baker, 113-121.

to help family members and extended kinsmen. The employment of family members and other relatives regardless of their capabilities was common in traditional China. Even in modern China, it is not unusual to conduct business through family members and networks based on kinship.

Families cultivated under these traditions, bore specific features. In terms of the relationship of the individual to the family, Confucian doctrine requires the perfection of the individual not for the individual's sake, but for the sake of the family and the state. In this sense, the individual was subordinate to the family and clan. The primary responsibility of a male was to maintain a "continuum of descent," which, as Hugh Baker has suggested, was analogically similar to a rope which "began somewhere back in the remote past and which stretches on to the infinitive future." The family and its individual members were strands or fibers of the rope. Marriages were arranged by parents, who chose spouses based on what they felt was best for the family. Love was not necessary for a good marriage. The traditional wife was obedient to her husband and acted according to his wishes.

Confucian ideas of personal loyalties to strong families were a mixed blessing for the state. According to Baker, the great inward full of the family was achieved at

9Lang, 22.
10Baker, 27.
an equivalent cost of indifference toward extra-familial affairs. When the interests of the family and those of the state conflicted, the individual's fundamental loyalties were often divided. In many cases, family's interests prevailed over those of the state. In a comparative study of Chinese and Japanese kinship, John Pelzel found that the tensions between loyalty to kin and to the state in Chinese society were stronger than those in Japan, where "task oriented organizations that fall somewhere between family and nation are relatively numerous." In neglecting the non-kinship social community, Confucian doctrine created something of a vacuum between the state and the family.

Wives of the Leading Revolutionaries

The Communists changed many features of the traditional Chinese family. The men who led the Chinese Revolution, including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and Zhu De, rebelled against Confucian family norms. Each of the men just named rejected traditional ideas of family and marriage. The young Mao was well known for his defiance of a tyrannical father. As an eldest son, Mao had to fight to get permission to leave home and pursue an education. His father demanded that Mao remain at home and carry on the family business. Throughout his life, even in his late

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years, Mao remembered the way his father mistreated him.\textsuperscript{12}
The young Zhou Enlai openly boasted that he would remain celibate throughout his life, a condition Confucian doctrine condemned as extremely "unfilial" and even "immoral." The tendency to rebel against old tradition was also common among women revolutionaries, who had to be exceptionally strong-minded and defiant to leave home and join the revolution. Most of them either ran away from their families or grew up in non-traditional families.

What were the general characteristics of the families of leading revolutionaries? Similar to the changes these revolutionaries introduced to the family elsewhere in Communist society, the most noticeable feature concerned the altered position of women. Marriage was the result of personal choice, usually based on love. In communist theory, at least, wives enjoyed equal rights with husbands and thus had equal say in family decisions. In many cases, wives had even more power in family affairs since their husbands were preoccupied with revolutionary affairs. It had not been uncommon in traditional Chinese society that educated wives had relatively more power in the family than their uneducated counterparts.

However, certain traditional assumptions concerning the family remained untouched by the Communists. As Ross

\textsuperscript{12}For more details on this, see Lucian Pye, \textit{Mao Tse-tung}, 111-142.
Terrill has observed, even in the revolutionary world of Yan’an, two basic principles guided sexual practice—the Party ruled the bedroom, and men ruled women. The Party, in fact, played a role "reminiscent of that of a family head in feudal China." All marriages required Party Committee approval, and the Party interfered whenever it concluded that a comrade’s sex life would "affect" his political career. Even Mao had difficulty convincing the Party Committee to approve his marriage to Jiang Qing, his fourth wife. Those who indulged in extra-marital affairs were reprimanded or punished, but the punishment varied according to position and influence. In most cases at Yan’an, the woman was sent away and the man was allowed to stay. Mao’s affair with Lili Wu, who came to Yan’an as Agnes Smedley’s interpreter, ended that way. The affair, according to Terrill, actually ended up with both Lili Wu and He Zizhen, Mao’s third wife, leaving Yan’an.14

Many leading revolutionaries married or remarried during the Yan’an period. Since few women survived the Long March of 1935-1936, only about 50 in all, a group of relatively young and better educated women who came to Yan’an to join the revolution in the 1940s caught the eyes of the leading revolutionaries. Jiang Qing, Ye Qun, Wang

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14For a detailed description of the affair, see Ross Terrill, 142-148.
Guangmei (Liu Shaoqi’s wife), Zhang Qian (Chen Yi’s wife), Zhuo Lin (Deng Xiaoping’s wife), Lin Jiamei (Li Xiannian’s wife), Xue Ming (He Long’s wife) and Pu Anxiu (Peng Dehuai’s wife) all belonged to this group. The age differences between these husbands and wives were often substantial. Mao Zedong was 21 years older than Jiang Qing, Liu Shaoqi 25 years older than Wang Guangmei, Deng Xiaoping 12 years older than Zhuo Lin, Lin Biao 14 years older than Ye Qun, Chen Yi 21 years older than Zhang Qian, and Peng Dehuai 14 years older than Pu Anxiu.

The wives of leading revolutionaries had to make considerable adjustments in their lives. There was a significant gap between the revolutionary ideal they pursued and the realities of "the wife of a cadre" role they found. Much like traditional Chinese wives, they were expected to devote themselves to their husbands. Both He Zizhen, Mao’s third wife, and Jiang Qing, his fourth wife, served as Mao’s secretaries, which meant that taking care of their husband became their revolutionary career. It was difficult for them to draw the line between family matters and party affairs. Disobedience to their husband was tantamount to disobedience to the Party. Part of the reason He Zizhen left Mao was that she failed to achieve a balance between her own desire to be a revolutionary and the role she had to play as a loyal supporter of her husband’s career and the mother of his children.
Above all, the wives were victims of the "male chauvinist" attitudes of their husbands, especially those among the Long Marchers, whose marriages became quite vulnerable to the conditions at Yan’an. In comparison to the young and relatively better educated women who arrived at Yan’an after 1936, the veteran women lost much of their appeal in the eyes of their husbands. Even Li Min, the daughter of Mao and He Zizhen, admitted that her biological mother He Zizhen was no match for her stepmother, Jiang Qing, in terms of beauty, intelligence, and demeanor. Jiang was exceptionally beautiful and intelligent and therefore stood out among the women at Yan’an. Jiang could speak and read English, which was rare among women revolutionaries at Yan’an, and her calligraphy was outstanding. Mao was impressed by Jiang Qing and praised her in public. 15 He was also impressed by her political maturity. "He Zizhen was not of any help to me politically," Mao told Tao Zhu’s wife Zeng Zhi, comparing two of his wives. "But Jiang Qing could provide help." 16 In the male-dominated world of Yan’an, it was not unusual for leading revolutionaries to divorce their wives and marry young intellectuals. He Zizhen’s frustration over her husband’s constant affairs was typical among the female Long Marchers.

15 Wang Xingjuan, Li Min, He Zizhen yu Mao Zedong [Li Min, He Zizhen and Mao Zedong] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chuban gosi, 1993), 127-128.

16 Wang Xingjuan, 188.
Moreover, frequent pregnancies under harsh living conditions destroyed many of the women’s health, including that of He Zizhen, who was six times pregnant within ten years. During these years, there were few effective methods of birth control or abortion. Women revolutionaries therefore suffered greatly when they became pregnant. It was a common practice to abandon pregnant women when the army had to move, leaving them to survive on their own. Pregnancy was not just physical torture for the women, but mental torment as well. In most cases, they had to abandon their babies after they were born. In order to prevent pregnancy, many of the women underwent sterilization. Among those who did were Deng Yingchao, Zhou Enlai’s wife, and Zeng Zhi, Tao Zhu’s wife.¹⁷ Wang Xingjuan, He Zizhen’s biographer, describe He’s decision to leave Mao this way:

She felt very depressed. She had sacrificed so much for Mao. The result [of this marriage] was that she lost her chance to be promoted to a position [appropriate to her own abilities] and her health collapsed. [As Mao’s secretary], she spent ten years reading newspapers and collecting clippings. To her extreme dismay, she found out, at this time of depression, that she was pregnant again. This destroyed her final hope of starting a new life [as an independent person]. To be pregnant meant that she would have to stay idle for another year. The more she thought about it, the more frightened she felt. She

¹⁷For more on this, see Quan Yanchi, Tao Zhu, 31-32 and 138-139; Wang Xingjuan, 188-189, and Jin Feng, Deng Yingchao zhuan [Biography of Deng Yingchao], vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1993), 105-122.
wanted to separate from Mao temporarily in order to avoid frequent pregnancy.\textsuperscript{18}

Even after He's marriage ended, she lived in Mao's shadow for the rest of her life. She could not find a job or start a new life of her own. Her identity as Mao's ex-wife had a "negative impact" on Mao's political career and as a result, her existence had to be known by as few people as possible.\textsuperscript{19} After she left Yan'an, She was in the Soviet Union until the end of 1946. When she finally returned to China, she had to remain anonymous and was kept under "supervision" wherever she went. She was not allowed to visit Beijing until after Mao's death and Jiang Qing's arrest in 1976. She even had trouble seeing her daughter, the only one of her children who survived the harsh war years, but who lived with Mao. She lived alone in Shanghai, struggling through a lonely life without family or work. Under such conditions, she could not recover from the mental or emotional problems that began when she was in the Soviet Union in the 1940s, and which continued for the rest of her life. According to one of her friends, He Zizhen killed time by staring at Mao's picture, sometimes for hours.\textsuperscript{20} Interestingly enough, people began to remember her after the

\textsuperscript{18}Wang Xingjuan, 34-35.

\textsuperscript{19}In Chinese politics, details concerning the life of the high officials, including their family life and health, are considered "top secret" and are kept from the public.

\textsuperscript{20}Wang Xingjuan, 216-2170.
fall of the "Gang of the Four," headed by Jiang Qing, in 1976. The name He Zizhen reappeared everywhere as Mao’s former wife. "Many people believed," stated Wang Xingjuan, "that if He Zizhen had not left Mao, Jiang Qing would not have had the chance to become Mao’s wife. Neither would the Cultural Revolution have happened, during which so many veteran revolutionaries were purged." Wang was not the only one holding this opinion.

He Zizhen was not the only woman who became the wife of a leading revolutionary at the cost of personal identity. Deng Yingchao, who belonged to the earliest group of women revolutionaries, emerged from the shadow of her husband, Zhou Enlai, only after his death. In 1978, two years after Zhou’s death, she was elected to the Politburo, an office she could never have aspired to while Zhou was alive. Zeng Zhi, the wife of Tao Zhu, was another revolutionary wife who had difficulty pursuing her own career. A Red Army veteran herself, Zeng wanted a public career, not to remain a housewife. "What I hated most was to be treated only as someone’s wife," Zeng told her husband on more one occasion. "I will not spend my life as just a housewife." In order to show her independence from her husband, Zeng moved out of

21 Wang Xingjuan, 164-165.
23 Quan Yanchi, Tao Zhu, 143-144.
the house she shared with Tao Zhu and found a residence of her own after she was appointed to a leading position in the Guangzhou municipal government. Once, she wrote directly to Mao, with whom she had maintained a good personal relationship since the late 1920s, complaining that Tao Zhu had crossed her name off the list of candidates for the First National Congress simply because she was his wife. In the letter, Zeng claimed that she objected to Tao’s handling of this matter. It was a party decision that she represent Guangdong province at the First National Congress. How, she asked Mao, could Tao alone cancel her candidacy? On another occasion, she even considered divorcing Tao Zhu who, she claimed, always "suppressed" her with his "male chauvinist" attitude and neglected her opinions concerning public affairs.²⁴

Of course, wives also gained from their husbands’ power and fame. Jiang Qing and Ye Qun, the two female "villains" supposedly responsible for the Cultural Revolution, had reputations for knowing especially well how to benefit from their husbands’ power and parlay it into an "extravagant" life style. Jiang Qing was extremely particular about what she ate, and was very stern with her staff. According to Dr. Li Zhisui, few people in "Group One" got along with her. Her nurses, who endured her constant attacks, were continually running to Dr. Li in tears to complain. From

²⁴Quan Yanchi, Tao Zhu, 146-149.

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time to time, Mao apologized to his staff for Jiang Qing, asking them to be tolerant of her for his sake.25

However, there was another side to the story of these women. Like He Zizhen, they suffered emotionally from the constant struggle to maintain their own identities and at the same time maintain normal husband-wife relationships with their spouses. When the Communists triumphed China in 1949, Jiang Qing was only 32 years old. With her beauty, talent and intelligence, and, above all, her status as Mao’s wife, she probably had great ambition and expectations for her future. From the very beginning, however, something had been wrong with her marriage with Mao, which she had managed to achieve at Yan’an, but not without a price. Because of Jiang Qing’s "dubious past" as an actress in Shanghai, the Central Committee considered her "unsuitable" to be Mao’s wife. Since Mao insisted on marrying her, the Party Committee exacted from her a pledge that she would devote herself to taking care of Mao and not interfere in political affairs for thirty years.26 Thus, the Central Committee kept Jiang out of politics until just before the Cultural Revolution. The highest position she ever held before the Cultural Revolution was that of a section chief in charge of artwork.

25Li Zhisui, 227-229, 256-257, and 259-260.

26Terrill, 154.
In the mid-1950s, Jiang seemed to be repeating He Zizhen’s tragedy. In 1956, she almost collapsed physically and mentally, and had to go to the Soviet Union for treatment for cervical cancer. According to Dr. Li, Jiang became hysterical when she learned about her cancer, and after she returned from the Soviet Union, she became "obsessively hypochondriacal." She often accused her nurses of trying to "poison" her. According to Dr. Li, her condition was the result of a life without meaning and her constant fear of being abandoned by Mao.

Mao understood Jiang’s problem. "What really bothers her is that she is afraid that one day I might not want her anymore," Mao told Dr. Li Zhisui. "I have told her many times that it is not true and that she should stop worrying about it." However, Mao’s promises meant little to Jiang Qing, since she knew Mao continued to sleep around with young women. According to Dr. Li, Mao in his later years did not even bother to hide his affairs from Jiang Qing. Once, Dr. Li caught Jiang crying on a park bench just outside Mao’s compound in Zhongnanhai. She begged Li not to tell anyone about her tears, and told him she worried that

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27Li Zhisui, 224.

28Interestingly enough, He Zizhen also suffered from the same fear of being poisoned.

29Li Zhisui, 143.

30Li Zhisui, 259.
Mao's womanizing was becoming so flagrant that she feared he would eventually leave her.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1957, Dr. Li reported Jiang's mental condition to Mao and Zhou Enlai. They did nothing about it, however, because in Deng Yingchao's words, it was not "fair to the Chairman" to say that Comrade Jiang Qing had mental problems, since Mao had already suffered too much from the loss of his family members.\textsuperscript{32} Beginning in the late 1950s, Jiang Qing was actually separated from Mao. Mao continued his active sex life with numerous female partners, but there was no possibility for Jiang Qing to find lover. It seems that Jiang remained faithful to Mao. Even after the Cultural Revolution, when Jiang Qing's reputation became notorious throughout China, her biographers did not find sound evidence that she had love affairs. According to Dr. Li, Jiang Qing never dared to have an affair, for to do so would provide Mao with an excuse to get rid of her. Her fear of abandonment was too strong to give Mao such an opportunity.\textsuperscript{33}

Jiang Qing's devotion to Mao was unquestionable. Even Mao himself knew this, which was why Mao constantly defended Jiang Qing during the Cultural Revolution. Most of Mao's criticism of Jiang, which was widely quoted later as proof

\textsuperscript{31}Li Zhisui, 145.
\textsuperscript{32}Li Zhisui, 258.
\textsuperscript{33}Li Zhisui, 154-155.
that Mao saw through her and had decided to part company with her, was actually prompted by Mao's concern for Jiang's future. Although contemporary Chinese writers now typically portray Jiang Qing as a dragon lady who took advantage of her husband's power to play her own political role, Mao probably could not have found a better and more appropriate wife than Jiang Qing. Despite all of her problems, many of which resulted from Mao's womanizing, Jiang remained absolutely loyal to Mao for reasons of her own. Not only was she of political help to Mao, as Mao himself confirmed, but she finally even came to tolerate Mao's frequent affairs and even tried to maintain a civil relationship with the women involved.  

If Jiang Qing suffered from Mao's infidelity, Ye Qun's problem was just the opposite. Like Jiang Qing, Ye Qun also belonged to the group of young students who had gone to Yan'an to join the revolution and remained off the political stage until the Cultural Revolution. With her beauty and intelligence, she soon caught the eyes of one of the most powerful men at Yan'an, and became Lin Biao's wife in 1943. She was only in her early twenties at the time, and was about 14 years younger than Lin Biao.  

34For more of this, see Li Zhisui, 570-571, and Guo Jinrong, Mao Zedong de wannian shenghuo [Mao Zedong's Late Life] (Beijing: Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe, 1993, 117-121.

35According to Li Zhisui, Ye was probably born in 1920, but another source indicates that she was probably younger than that. Ye was described as in her "forties" in 1970.
remained a housewife, taking care of Lin Biao and their two children. She never held any public position until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

In the eyes of many Chinese, Ye Qun was also a malicious woman, greedy, capricious, and mean. Many of Lin Biao’s staff, however, described Ye as benign and caring, something no one said of Jiang Qing. Ye Qun, however, had more control over Lin Biao than Jiang had over Mao.36 This was not because Ye had a stronger personality than Jiang, but because Lin was in poor health, and thus vulnerable and submissive. Few people know for sure what was wrong with Lin, and his medical records have never been released. According to Dr. Li Zhisui, Lin suffered from neurasthenia and was a hypochondriac. Lin would get seriously ill whenever he perspired and had phobias about water, wind, and cold.37 He was even said to be afraid of paintings with water in them and became nervous when he saw water in traditional Chinese paintings. As early as the 1950s, a Soviet doctor diagnosed Lin’s problem as manic depression, but Ye did not accept the diagnosis and sent the Soviet specialist back to the Soviet Union. Apparently, Chinese doctors later confirmed diagnosis, however. One source

Li Zhisui, *Chairman Mao*, 662, and Jiao Ye, *Ye Quan*, 220.


37Li Zhisui, 315.
suggests that Lin's medical records indicated as early as 1953 that Lin suffered from manic depression.  

There are numerous stories about Lin Biao’s health problems, many of them incredible, though they may contain elements of truth. In any case, there is little reason for the authors of the stories to have lied about Lin’s health. One of the strangest of the stories originated with a former member of Lin’s staff, Guan Weixun. Guan wrote:

My fried Zhang, who was Ye’s literature tutor, witnessed one event. In the summer of 1971, when he was watching a movie with Ye Qun and other people after swimming, one of Lin’s staff came over to ask Ye, “The Commander said that he had a phlegm in his mouth and he did not know whether he should swallow it or spit it out. He wanted to ask you.” Guan recorded. “Tell him to spit it out,” Ye said impatiently. The staff in Lin’s office was quite accustomed to things like this, so no one felt that this was strange or amusing.

According to the manager of a guest house for high officials in Guangzhou, Lin Biao’s poor health was the result of his wartime experience. One summer when Lin arrived at Guangzhou, the manager went to see him and noticed that there was an old-fashioned motorcycle in Lin’s house with its muffler sticking outside the house through the wall. Another day, a member of Lin’s staff called the manager asking him to rush to Lin’s house because Lin was

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38 Guan Weixun, 206-207.

39 Guan Weixun, 213-214.
ill. When the manager arrived, Lin entered the room where the motorcycle was standing. He was supported by his bodyguards, and he looked pale and weak and held his head with both hands. At Ye Qun's direction, the manager started the motorcycle. "More gas, more...," Lin told him, sitting beside him in the motorcycle's sidecar. The manager opened the throttle to its maximum, and the motorcycle roared, filling the room with the fumes of diesel gasoline, which Lin inhaled the way a smoker inhales cigarette smoke. After about 15 minutes of this, Lin's color returned and he opened his eyes. When he finally recovered from his pain, he thanked the manager with a grateful smile.40 On another occasion, one of Lin's bodyguard said to the same manager, "The Commander has been away from war for too long." He meant that war had so affected Lin that he could not feel comfortable in a peaceful environment.

Dr. Li who treated Lin Biao for the first time in August 1966, gives this description of the experience:

When we were escorted into his room, Lin Biao was in bed, curled in the arms of his wife, Ye Qun, his head nestled against her bosom. Lin Biao was crying, and Ye Qun was patting him and comforting him as though he were a baby. In that one moment, my view of Lin Biao changed--from bold and brilliant military commander to troubled soul unfit to lead.

The experience led Dr. Li to conclude that Lin was "obviously mentally unsound." But when Li told Mao about Lin's problems, Mao was "expressionless and silent." Li dared not tell others of Lin's condition, because to do so was the political crime of revealing privileged information about a high official. In fact, Li was not the only one whose opinion of Lin Biao changed as a result of Lin's condition. One of Lin's staff members was so shocked by the discrepancy between Lin's public image and his actual condition that he cried after he met Lin Biao for the first time.

Lin Doudou is the source of another story that illustrates how Lin's disorders affected his work. When Lin announced the ouster of Yang Chengwu, Yu Lijin and Fu Chongbi at a meeting on March, 1967, Doudou was away from Beijing. When she returned, she asked her father what was wrong with Yang Chengwu. Lin's answer, however, was incredible. "Yes, what was wrong with Yang Chengwu?" Lin answered, seemingly puzzled himself. "But it was you who made the speech, which was passed to the troops as a document from the Central Committee," Doudou reminded him. "Why do you not remember what was wrong with Yang Chengwu?" Lin seemed more confused. "Was that so?" he asked. "What

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41 Li Zhisui, 453-454.

42 Guan Weixun, 214.
did I say? Call Ye Qun over and let her tell us what on earth was wrong with Yang Chengwu."43

Whether or not these stories are exaggerations, it is clear that Lin was indeed often ill. Because of his poor health, Lin cared little for what was happening around him and even to him. He did not want to disturb others, nor did he want to be disturbed himself. Ye Qun thus became the master of the house. Whatever was reported to Lin had to be reported to her first. Many of Lin’s staff later admitted that, Ye sometimes deceived Lin and bid them to do so, too.44 Meanwhile, Ye Qun’s dissatisfaction with Lin Biao as a husband increased. "My marriage was a political one," Ye said to Lin’s secretaries several times.45

"Wives in Politics" [furen zhengzhil]

Jiang Qing and Ye Qun’s lives and marriages would have remained private matters without the Cultural Revolution, during which both became politically prominent. Despite their lack of political experience, both Jiang Qing and Ye Qun were elected to the Politburo at the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969. Ye Qun disappeared from the

43Guan Weixun, 225, and interview with Zhang Qinglin, Beijing, August 16, 1994.

44For more details on this, see Zhang Yunsheng, 78-83, 164-167, 250-252; Guan Weixun, 91-94, 219-220, and Jiao Ye, 369-379. Also interviews with Lin’s former secretaries, Lin Doudou and Zhang Qinglin.

45Guan Weixun, 171, and Zhang Yunsheng, 408.

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political arena two years later in the plane crash in the Mongolian desert, and Jiang Qing was arrested after Mao died in 1976. Today, conventional Chinese interpretations of the Cultural Revolution blame the two women for its disastrous results. Some writers even suggest that the Cultural Revolution should be understood as a time of "wives in politics" [furen zhengzhi].46 To a certain extent, that is a valid understanding.

After thirty years of political "exile," Jiang Qing suddenly appeared on the political stage in 1966 as a major actor in the Cultural Revolution. The only reason she could do so was that she was Mao's wife and Mao entrusted her with the responsibility of leading the Cultural Revolution. "I was Mao's dog. What he said to bite, I bit," Jiang Qing said later of her role in the Cultural Revolution.

When Mao appointed Jiang as first deputy chief of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group in May 1966, most Party and government officials did not take her seriously. In their understanding, the Cultural Revolution was to be another rectification movement mainly concerned with cultural matters, as its name suggested. If that had been the case, Jiang Qing's appointment as one of the leaders of the CCRSG was justifiable since she had long been in charge of an office of cultural affairs in the Beijing municipal

46Guan Weixun, 217-227.
government. Party and government officials agreed to
Jiang’s appointment because of their respect for Mao.

Their expectations of the Cultural Revolution and of
Jiang Qing’s role in it soon proved to be completely wrong.
The Cultural Revolution turned out to be a "revolution to
touch peoples’ souls" [chuji linghun], during which all the
veteran cadres except a select few were "held to the fire."
Jiang Qing and her group caused trouble for most of the
leading revolutionaries at Zhongnanhai, including Liu
Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and Tao Zhu. The very
fact that she was Mao’s wife enabled Jiang Qing to do this.
In Chinese communist political culture, the family was
treated as a unit, which meant that the wife enjoyed the
same status of the husband. To offend the wife or other
family members was an insult to the husband, the head of the
family. Jiang Qing knew how to tap this source for her own
purpose. She regularly appeared in public as Mao’s wife,
always beginning her speeches with the announcement, "I came
to see you on behalf of Chairman Mao." Once she established
herself as the guiding force at the CCRSG, the Red Guards
and the radicals listened to no one else.

In the eyes of Party and government officials, there
were thus two Jiang Qings: Jiang Qing as Mao’s wife, and
Jiang Qing as herself. Most of the officials had little
personal respect for Jiang as herself, but all of them had a
great deal of respect for her as Mao’s wife. This created
considerable confusion when they tried to decide whether Jiang's words were her own or Mao's. They usually had no way of knowing for certain, and they were in no position to make a mistake. During the Cultural Revolution, which was also the last years of Mao's life, Mao isolated himself from the public and his comrades. Even Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai had only limited access to him. After 1969, Mao also forbade Jiang Qing from seeing him without permission.47 This self-imposed seclusion gave Jiang freedom to push her own agenda in Mao's name. When she expressed her opinion, no one really knew whether it was hers or Mao's. For a long time, Jiang Qing was a virtual liaison between Mao and other leading officials. By the time she became a Politburo member in 1969, even Mao was losing control of her.48

47Li Zhisui, 480-481. Mao isolated himself even further in the last several years of his life. Nobody but two women could get into his room freely. Those who wanted to see him usually had to inform these two women, who in turn reported to Mao and brought back his permission. Even Jiang Qing and Mao's children had no freedom to go to see him. In 1976 before Mao died, Li Min was allowed only three times to see her father. The second time was in August, 1976, one month before Mao's death, when Li Min read about Mao's critical condition in a CCP document. She immediately went to Zhongnanhai, asking to see Mao and was given permission to see him. For more about the last years of Mao's life, see Wang Xingjuan, 271-273.

48For example, in 1975, when Mao learned from Zhu De's letter that Jiang Qing provided personal information to an American professor, Roxane Witke, asking her to write her biography, Mao was so angry that he wrote on Zhu's letter, "Little knowledge and stupid. [She] has not changed her bad habits for thirty years. Expel [her] from the Politburo immediately and go different ways." However, when this letter was sent to Zhou, Zhou preferred not to pass it around and the case was dropped. Guo Jinrong, 117.
However, as the source of her power disappeared with Mao’s death, her political career ended as well.

During the Cultural Revolution Ye Qun played a role no less important than Jiang Qing’s. Because of Lin’s poor health, Ye became the indispensable link between Lin Biao and the outside world. Anyone who needed to report to Lin reported to Ye Qun first. She decided not only what Lin should know but what Lin said to the outside world. Knowing this, Mao actually encouraged Ye to perform Lin’s role and gave her more responsibility than she otherwise would have had. It was Mao who asked Ye to participate in the Shanghai Conference in December 1965 during which Luo Ruiqing was purged. At that time, Ye Qun was not a member of the Central Party Committee, but Mao asked her to make a long speech at the Central Committee meeting to criticize Luo Ruiqing on behalf of Lin Biao. According to Lin Doudou, when Lin Biao, who had not attended the conference, learned afterward of Ye’s speech criticizing Luo Ruiqing at the Shanghai Conference, he was angry. In her defense, Ye told Lin that Mao had insisted that she make the speech on his behalf, and she had no choice but to follow Mao’s notion.49

After the Shanghai Conference, Mao frequently asked Ye to attend Politburo meetings in Lin’s place. It was not that Mao trusted Ye; rather Lin used the excuse of his poor health to make her the intermediary.

49Lin Doudou and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part II, 33-37.
health to avoid Politburo meetings and Mao wanted him represented. Once Jiang Qing told Lin and Ye that Mao was angry about Lin’s shedding his responsibilities. "The Chairman said that Comrade Lin Biao had to shoulder the responsibilities, no matter what," Jiang told Lin and Ye. "If the Deputy Commander [Lin Biao] is ill, why does not Comrade Ye Qun attend meetings? Is she also ill?"50 After the February Adverse Current when most Politburo members were suspended from their work, Mao made Ye a regular at Politburo meetings. This put Ye in a special position--holding no formal position in the Party, but attending Politburo meetings as Lin’s wife and representative. Ye enjoyed being politically active, for it brought power, fame, and new meaning to her life. Lin, however, became increasingly distraught over his wife’s increasing involvement in politics. To remind her of her proper position, Lin wrote Ye a couplet, and asked her to hang it above her bed. It said, "Pay attention to morality, education and physical exercises instead of seeking fame, position and power."51 Lin wished to restrain Ye’s political activity, but he was never able to do so. In fact, Ye hid most of her outside activities from Lin, in order to avoid his criticism. Many times, she asked Lin’s

50Lin Doudou and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part II, 37.

51Lin Doudou and Zhang Qinglin, written material, part II, 13.

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staff to lie to Lin if he asked about her whereabouts while she was attending to her political activities. The more active Ye was on the political stage, the more often she hid her activities from Lin Biao.

Lin's attitude toward Ye Qun, however, gradually changed. As Lin had first gotten involved in political affairs and shouldered more responsibilities, he realized that Ye's talent for handling human relations could be of great help to him. He began to rely on Ye to make sure of his "political correctness" in public, and often told his secretaries to show Ye documents he had approved before they were sent out for circulation. It was known to Lin's staff that on many issues, Ye's opinion counted even more than Lin's own. When Zhang Yunsheng worked as a secretary in Lin's office, he came to realize this. In October 1967, Jiang Qing sent two documents to Lin, asking his permission to issue them as central government documents. One of them was a letter to the party, in which Jiang Qing criticized cultural work in China before the Cultural Revolution, and the other was Jiang Qing's and Yao Wenyun's criticism of the European Renaissance. When Zhang asked Ye whether to give the documents to Lin, Ye told him to hold them until she had time to find out through "inside information" about what

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52For example, Ye Qun would remind him to take the "little red book" with him before he went out for a public appearance, and would make sure that Lin would attend Mao's meeting on time.
Jiang was up to. Several days later, she told Zhang she had learned from Zhou Enlai and Wang Dongxing that Mao had already rejected the two documents. Zhou told Ye to make sure that Lin did not approve the documents, and especially not to send them to the Politburo. At this point, Ye told Zhang to report the matter to Lin.

When Lin got the report, he asked Zhang whether Ye knew of the matter and what her opinion was. Zhang replied that Ye wanted Lin to make a decision. Without much thinking, Lin told Zhang to shelve it. "That will not do," said Ye Qun, who had just come into the room. "You have to put some comments on it and send it back to Zhou Enlai, although he would not want it," Ye continued. "We have to throw the ball to him. If someone has to be blamed by Mao, let it be Zhou Enlai."53

This episode was one of many such events. Zhang Yunsheng offers another example how things worked in Lin’s office during the years of the Cultural Revolution. One day, Ye Qun came to the office, asking to see a document Lin had just endorsed. Ye wanted to make sure that Lin had specially mentioned the "two line struggle" [luxian douzheng] in his comments on the documents.54 When the

53Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 224.

54During the Cultural Revolution, it became a symbol of political correctness to mention "two line struggle" [luxian douzheng] in documents. If one emphasized the importance and the victory of Mao’s revolutionary line, it indicated that one listened to Mao attentively and followed Mao.
secretary told her that Lin had not done so, Ye delayed sending it out. "But the Commander said that it must be sent to the Chairman at noon and told me not to hold it," the secretary said hesitantly. "No need to be in a hurry," Ye told the secretary, "we can wait for a few hours." On second thought, Ye asked again, "How will you report to the Commander after he gets up?" "I will just tell him that the Director suggested mentioning luxian in his comment," the secretary answered. "That will not do," Ye yelled. "I am the wife of the Commander and I do not want people to think that I am the backstage boss of the Commander." "But if we do not mention you, how can we secretaries bear the responsibility for holding the document?" the worried secretary asked. "Why do you not just lie to him, telling him that the Chairman is taking a nap, so you had to wait until the afternoon?" replied Ye Qun. Still, the secretary was not convinced, "How can I say so without any proof?" he asked. "All right, whatever," Ye said angrily and left the room.

Later, Ye called the secretary to her room, asking him to call Xu Yefu, Mao's secretary, to ask whether Mao had gone to bed. However, Xu told the secretary that Mao was still at work. "It is so difficult," Ye said with a sigh. She came out with another idea a moment later. "Get me through to Chen Boda," she told the secretary. Ye convinced closely.
Chen that it was necessary that Lin's comments on the document mention luxian douzheng, and that it would be better if Chen, instead of Ye, made the suggestion to Lin. "I simply do not want people to say that it is me who manages this house," Ye told Chen. After she hung up the phone, she told the secretary to tell Lin that it was Chen Boda who made the suggestion.55

In the prologue of his book, Zhang Yunsheng answered questions about Ye Qun raised by the readers of his manuscript. He wrote this:56

Question: You made many comments about Ye Qun in your book. It seemed that many of Ye's activities were conducted behind Lin's back. Is this true? Answer: Ye Qun was the Director of Lin's office, and I was a secretary. I had many contacts with Ye in my work. That was why I often mentioned Ye Qun in my memoirs. Ye did hide many of her activities from Lin Biao, but at the same time she made full use of Lin's name. I have presented many examples of this in my memoirs. I can still add more if it is necessary. However, it was also not true that everything Ye did was behind Lin's back. The problem was that Ye often told lies. It was difficult to tell to what extent Ye Qun was telling Lin Biao the truth. Question: Why then did not Lin's staff expose her to Lin? Answer: Who dared to do so at that time? Ye often threatened that whoever opposed her opposed Lin Biao, and whoever opposed Lin Biao opposed Mao.... Who was willing to be condemned as a "counterrevolutionary? At Maojiawan (Lin's residence), only the courageous Lin Doudou was an exception. Several times she exposed Ye Qun in front of Lin Biao, which only resulted in her

55Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 78-80.
56The prologue is written in the form of questions and answers.
drawing fire to herself. Ye Qun punished her severely afterwards.\textsuperscript{57}

"The Princes' Party": Children of High Officials

In recent writings on the subject, Chinese authors refer collectively to the children of high officials to as the "princes' party" [taizidang]. The expression refers not only to the privileges the children enjoy because of their family, but also suggests that they form a social subgroup because of their social being and personal experiences. Although in theory, hereditary social and political status disappeared in China with the fall of the Qing dynasty. In practice, however, that was never the case, before or after the Communist Revolution. Some Chinese have even assumed that the death of Mao's eldest son, Mao Anying, during the Korean War was one of the tragedies in contemporary Chinese history. They believe that if Mao Anying had outlived Mao, Mao might not have felt so desperate about the succession problem, and might not have been so eager to launch the Cultural Revolution.

Very few studies, however, provide detailed information on this social subgroup beyond brief, biographical sketches. To better understand the Lin Biao Incident as an episode of family involvement in politics, it will be helpful to

\textsuperscript{57}Once Doudou attempted suicide because Ye humiliated her. This will be discussed later. Zhang Yunsheng, 428-429.
discuss certain aspects of the "princes' party," using Lin's children as examples.

The Tragedy of Lin Doudou

Both of Lin Biao's children, Lin Doudou and Lin Liguo, were born during the war. Doudou, the older, had an especially difficult early childhood. When Ye Qun was pregnant with her, Ye tried several times to abort the fetus, but failed. She then had a premature delivery, only seven months into the pregnancy. When Doudou was born, she weighed less than five pounds, and Ye was so weak that she had no milk to feed Doudou. As an infant, Doudou was very frail, and often ill. She remembered after growing up that it was Luo Ruiqing who told her to eat raw turnips, which made her stronger.\(^58\) Doudou also had other problems as a child. When Doudou was eleven months old, Ye gave her away to a villager, believing Doudou had no chance to survive the harsh environment in which Ye had to live.\(^59\) Ye later asked for Doudou back when Ye found out that the family to which she had given Doudou might not be politically reliable. On another occasion, Ye abandoned Doudou on a battlefield because she could no longer carry her.

\(^{58}\)Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, part II, 2-3.

\(^{59}\)Guan Weixun, 170.
Fortunately, one of Lin's bodyguards went back to get her. In the words of Luo Ruiqing, Doudou had nine lives.60

After she grew up, being the daughter of a high official was a mixed blessing. On the surface, Doudou was one of an elite who enjoyed many privileges--nice living quarters, nannies, the best schools and medical care, and modern conveniences--all of which were luxuries in Mao's China. However, while she had what she wanted materially, she lacked love and attention from her parents. Lin Biao was not an uncaring father, but he was too busy to spend time with his children. Similarly, Ye Qun was not an unfit mother, but she wanted to control her daughter's life, and Doudou resisted her efforts to do so. When Doudou became defiant, Ye punished her, sometimes with beatings. Doudou eventually found that silence was the most effective way to show her disobedience. When Ye scolded or berated her, she refused to answer, making Ye even angrier.

The most sensitive point of conflict between Ye Qun and Doudou concerned Lin Biao himself. Because of his poor health, Lin was isolated, and Doudou became one of the few people Lin counted on to tell him the truth about what was going on, inside as well as outside the house. Doudou never lied to him and often told Lin things Ye Qun did behind his back, including things Ye tried to hide from Lin. These

60Lin Liheng and Zhang Qinglin, written materials, party II, 3.
reports made Lin angry, and he often scolded Ye for what she had done. Ye Qun, in turn, vented her anger at Doudou, berating her with foul language. After several such events, Doudou became more careful about what she told Lin, and sometimes asked him not to tell Ye what she had told him. However, this did not work, either. Lin's short-term memory deteriorated, and he would forget Doudou's warning, and repeated to Ye what Doudou told him. It was Doudou who always suffered the consequences for this, and she eventually gave up and tried to avoid seeing Lin. When she did visit Lin, she kept the visits short, or arranged to have somebody else present so that Lin would not ask her anything.

Doudou's behavior in these things made matters worse between mother and daughter. Ye Qun sometimes did desperate things trying to control her daughter. In 1966, to illustrate, Ye sent photographs of pages of Doudou's diary, in which Doudou made negative remarks about Mao, perhaps under the influence of her father, to the security bureau before Ye burned Doudou's diary.\textsuperscript{61} Due to Ye Qun's repeated mistreatment of her, Doudou wondered whether Ye Qun was her biological mother, especially after Yan Weibing, Liu Dingyi's wife, sent her anonymous letters telling her that

\textsuperscript{61}Guan Weixun, 175.
Ye was not her real mother. Doudou became more and more cynical, and probably herself suffered from manic depression.

Life became even more difficult for Doudou when Ye rudely interfered with her marriage plans. In 1967 when Doudou was 23, Ye became concerned about Doudou’s marriage prospects, but she refused to allow Doudou to find her own spouse. When Ye found out that Doudou had fallen in love with an Air Force officer, with whom she worked, Ye ordered Wu Faxian to send the officer to far-away Xinjiang so Doudou would never see him again. In response, Doudou tried to kill herself, only to be thwarted by her mother. Ye told everyone on the house staff to keep Doudou’s suicide attempt from Lin Biao, and apparently Lin never knew of it. So strong were the tensions between Ye and Doudou that even Mao knew of them. After the Lin Biao Incident, Mao passed the word to Doudou through the Central Special Case Group

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62 Guan Weixun, 170-173. It is said that after Ye Qun found out that it was Yan Weibing who wrote these letters, she retaliated against her during the Cultural Revolution, which was part of the reasons for Liu Dingyi’s fall. For details of this, see Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 47-52.


64 Cao Weidong, Hong bingli [Red Medical Records] (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1993), 136-137.

65 Guan Weixun, 169, and Cao Weidong, 136.
that he knew about the two "parties" in Lin's family, Dad's party and Mom's party. 66

Among the children of the high officials, Doudou was not the only victim of a distorted family relationship. Because of the strength of traditional values, Ye may not have realized that her desire to control her daughter's life actually ruined it. She may well have believed that what she did was for Doudou's benefit, especially when she insisted on choosing Doudou's husband. Mao's children, Li Min, Li Na, and Mao Anqing, all had problems similar to Doudou's. All of them may have suffered some degree of manic depression [youyuzheng] because of the pressure, and distortions of being Mao's offspring.

Lin Liguo and his Colleagues

If Doudou was a victim of family circumstances, her brother, Lin Liguo benefited from his family connections, which he used to his own advantage. Liguo was less sensitive and sentimental than Doudou, and received much better treatment from Ye Qun. 67 Little biographical information is available on Liguo except for the last several years of his life. When the Cultural Revolution began, he was student at Qinghua University. When the


67 In traditional Chinese culture, the family usually cared more for the son than the daughter.
Revolution closed all schools, Ye Qun arranged for him to join the army, one of the best careers for young men during the years of the Cultural Revolution. Most high officials sent their children to the army, where they enjoyed social prestige and where the services helped establish their careers. The Air Force became a favorite career starters for children of high officials. Mao Yuanxin, Mao’s nephew, was an Air Force officer in a missile unit in the Northeast. Both Lin Doudou and Lin Liguo entered the Air Force in Beijing. Children or relatives of other high officials, including Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Dong Biwu, Liu Bocheng, Li Fuchun, Li Xiannian, Yang Chengwu, Xu Shiyou, Han Xianchu, Wang Dongxing, and Yang Dezhong, all entered the Air Force through "special arrangements" [teshu guanxi].

When Lin Liguo came to Air Force headquarters in Beijing, he immediately became a center of attention. The Commander-in-chief, Wu Faxian saw to it personally that Liguo received the best care. He chose Zhou Yuchi, a secretary in the office where Liguo worked, to be Liguo’s partner and to make sure that all Liguo’s needs were met. Unlike Lin Doudou, who behaved cautiously and seldom asked for special favors, Liguo quickly learned to take advantage of his special status to have things done his own way. Ye Qun who seldom showed special concern for Doudou, often called Wu to make special arrangements for Liguo. She wanted Wang Fei, director of the general office of the Air
Force Party Committee, to take care of Liguo politically and demanded that Wang recruit Liguo into the Party. "It will also help the work of the Air Force to put Liguo there," Ye told Wu. "He can report directly to Commander Lin about your work." Wu felt flattered, believing that Lin's and Ye's decision to put Liguo in the Air Force illustrated their trust in him and would later bring honor and fame to the Air Force. Out of loyalty to Lin Biao, Wu acceded to Ye's every demand.

Things soon turned out to be different from what Wu expected. With Ye Qun protecting him, Liguo soon began making trouble. He gathered a group of middle-rank Air Force officers around him, most of whom were his colleagues in the general office of the Air Force Party Committee. Liguo, like many other children of high officials, believed he was superior to other people in intelligence and ability. Because of their family connections, the children had better access to information about what was going on at the central level and at the same time they were in positions to influence their parents. They belonged to a new generation that was qualitatively different from their parents generation: they were better educated and less intellectually rigid, but they were also more ambitious and politically naive, and inexperienced in the ways of the real world. Probably only a few of them genuinely respected their parents and probably most of them believed they could
do better than their parents had done, if they had chance to do so.

Young officers from the group gathered around Liguo, hoping that a close association with Liguo, the son of so exalted a man as Lin Biao, would open up opportunities for them. During peace time, promotion was slow and limited in the army, especially for men like themselves who worked in offices. If they were lucky enough to be chosen as secretaries for commanders and vice-commanders, which was rare, they might have a brighter future. Otherwise they would remain junior officers until released from the army, which seldom brought better opportunities in Mao's era. Zhou Yuchi was one such officer. He had been chosen as the secretary of the former commander-in-chief, Liu Yalou, but was sent back to the general office because he had neglected his duty. If he had not met Lin Liguo, he probably would have remained an anonymous junior officer, awaiting his turn to be released from the army. Association with Liguo, however, brought him fame and power, as it did to Liguo's other close associates. Gradually, they formed a de facto faction in Air Force Headquarters, and their prior association helped Liguo plot against Mao.

After he settled into his career in the Air Force, Liguo professed to be unhappy at always being treated as

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68 China did not develop a system of civilian employees in the army until the mid-1980s.
"Lin Biao's son." He wanted a career of his own. As noted earlier in the discussion of the fall of Yang Chengwu, Yu Lijin, and Fu Chongbi in early 1968, those men, with Ye Qun's backing, had behaved arrogantly and defiantly toward Commander Wu Faxian. Those who would not associate themselves with this group at Air Force Headquarters came under constant attack. Commander Wu, however, preferred not to do anything to restrain their conduct since one of them, Liguo, was Lin Biao's son.

Liguo soon became bored with his job as a secretary in the general office of the Air Force Headquarters in Beijing, and decided to create a more exciting assignment for himself elsewhere. In the summer of 1968, Wang Fei and Zhou Yuchi approached Wu Faxian, asking permission for Liguo and a group under his command to inspect troops outside Beijing and gather first-hand information for policy makers at Headquarters. When Wu agreed to the proposal, Liguo and his colleagues had license to travel to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Nanchang, and wherever else they wanted to. Few people knew what they were doing, and nobody cared to find out. Made careless by the presence of Liguo at their helm, the young officers went too far. They had special buildings built for themselves, and set up "investigation groups" in Shanghai and Guangzhou, which the Central Party Committee labeled a counterrevolutionary "small fleet" after the Lin Biao Incident. The label, however, was political rather than
There is no evidence that the groups engaged in any counter-revolutionary activities. Liguo and his colleagues may have abused their powers and squandered funds, but their almost juvenile antics were not anti-party counter-revolutionary.

In October 1969, Ye Qun pressed the Air Force to promote Lin Liguo. She called Wu Faxian to suggest that Liguo could do more for the Air Force than he was doing now in the general office. Wu took this as another opportunity to do something for Lin Biao. When Ye made her suggestion, Li Na, Mao's daughter, was deputy chief-editor of the PLA Daily, and Mao Yuanxin, Mao's nephew, was deputy director of the Liaoning Province Revolutionary Committee. It seemed appropriate to Wu to follow these examples, and promote Lin's children to higher positions as long as they did not outrank Li Na and Mao Yuanxin. On October 17, Commander Wu and Political Commissar Wang Huiqiu signed the document appointing Lin Liguo deputy director of the general office and deputy minister of the Department of War of the Air Force. At the same time, Lin Doudou became deputy chief-editor of the Air Force Daily. Since Ye Qun had raised the subject of promotion, Wu believed that it was Lin's idea, too. It turned out later that Lin knew nothing of the

69Between 1968 and 1970, the Revolutionary Committee was the name for administrative organizations in China. A deputy director of Liaoning Province Revolutionary Committee was equal to the current position of deputy provincial governor.
promotion of his children for a year. Ye had forbidden Lin's secretaries from telling Lin about Liguo’s new position because she was afraid that Lin would oppose the special treatment she had arranged for Liguo.  

At Ye Qun’s instigation, Liguo became actively involved in politics. By 1970, he and his colleagues were pushing hard to further Liguo’s career. Young and politically inexperienced, Liguo became more and more ambitious and hot-headed with each new advancement. Even the secretaries in Lin’s office noted the changes in Liguo. Unlike Doudou, who became more and more cynical and disinterested in politics, Liguo grew increasingly keen about anything with implications on his new career. He acted as if he were a special channel between Lin and the Air Force, making important decisions on his own without consulting proper authorities. For example, after his trips to the south to survey troops, Liguo returned with several reports recommending changes to improve military technology in the Air Force. Taking advantage of his special status, he carried his reports directly to Lin, which violated every rule for processing documents of this kind. One of Liguo’s reports later caught Mao’s attention, and Mao made

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complimentary comments on it. Encouragement from Mao fueled Liguo’s willingness to act on his own.  

In the summer of 1970, Liguo and his friends at Headquarters prepared a report on Liguo’s "achievements" since he came to the Air Force. Ye Qun arranged a rehearsed presentation of the report in front of Lin’s staff before Liguo read the report at an Air Force conference, chaired by Political Commissar Wang Huiqiu. Commander Wu did not attend the conference, but sent his wife there to show his support. After the conference, Wu called Ye Qun to offer his congratulations on Liguo’s performance. The flattering compliments to Lin Liguo from Air Force leaders resulted in a new movement in which Lin Liguo was to instruct the Air Force on how to accomplish its mission. The movement was soon out of control. Liguo’s colleagues made full use of the praise, especially Wu’s exaggeration that "Liguo could command the entire Air Force." Wu was carried away in this by his eagerness to please Lin Biao and Ye Qun, and he did not realize that Liguo’s colleagues were taking advantage of his words until it was too late. Liguo’s comrades began acting as if Wu had yielded command of the Air Force to Liguo. "I truly regretted that I accepted Liguo to the Air Force."

For a detailed account of this, see Zhang Yunsheng, Jishi, 325-326.
Force," Wu recalled many years later. "I never expected that he would bring so much trouble to the Air Force."\textsuperscript{72}

The exaggerated compliments on Liguo's report and Liguo himself soon had negative results at Air Force Headquarters. After Liguo made his report, his colleagues insisted that the Air Force print it and distribute it to the troops. Liguo's colleagues did this despite the fact that Commander Wu had not endorsed the idea.\textsuperscript{73} What worried Wu was that these antics would catch the attention of Party leaders. At the Second Plenum at Lushan in August 1970, Zhou Enlai told Wu Faxian that Lin Liguo's report was good, but the Air Force should not praise it in such an uncritical way. Someone on Mao's staff expressed a similar opinion to Wu, which made him even more nervous. When Wu reported the criticisms to Ye Qun, Ye also agreed that caution was necessary since Mao had just issued his criticisms of Chen Boda and Lin's generals. Wu immediately called his wife in Beijing, telling her to go the conference and confiscate the copies of Liguo's report and destroy them.

But it was already too late to stop Liguo and his colleagues. Liguo, who had little respect for his father's generation, was determined to go his own way. At Lushan during the Second Plenum, he concluded that Ye Qun and Lin's generals were unable to control the situation. Because of

\textsuperscript{72}Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7021, 19.

\textsuperscript{73}Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5007, 21-23.
his own family experience, Liguo knew too much to respect the first generation revolutionaries. He therefore decided to mobilize his own allies to achieve his goals and establish a power base of his own.

After the Lushan conference, Commander Wu recognized that he was losing control of Liguo and his colleagues, as well as other junior officers at the Air Force Headquarters in Beijing. Liguo’s colleagues went out to the military regions spreading the word that Wu had "made mistakes" at Lushan. In the summer of 1970, Wu’s office received repeated reports from the regions that something "abnormal" was afoot. Zhang Yonggang, the political commissar of the Air Force at the Shenyang Military Region, told Wu that one of his junior officers was spreading the word that Lin Liguo was a genius and that whoever opposed the "learn from Liguo" movement was politically out-of-step. The officer also reportedly told his young colleagues that when they went to Beijing they should contact only He Dequan in the Department of Intelligence and Lu Min in the Department of War, and no one else.

In the summer of 1971, additional letters reached Wu’s office reporting on the factional activities of Liguo and his colleagues. Even one of Wu’s former secretaries, who

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74Wu Faxian "Manuscript, hel7013, 6-7.

75Both of whom were later labelled as members of Liguo’s "small fleet" after the Lin Biao Incident. Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel7021, 18-19.
had been transferred to Guangzhou Military Region, reported to Wu that he was spied on and was treated as a "dissident" at Guangzhou because he had come from Wu's office. In the Beijing Headquarters, Liguo and his colleagues made lists of the names of officers on their side as distinct from those they considered loyal to Commander Wu. Their list contained at least 64 officers at the Air Force Beijing Headquarters. Wu now truly regretted accepting Liguo into the Air Force. He never expected that Liguo would form his own power base within the Air Force to oppose him.

The split between Liguo and Wu was not just a personal dispute. On the contrary, the split was generational and it involved fundamental matters of generational differences. Until now, there has been little information available about the ideas and activities of Liguo's group. Through interviews with a number of the group's members, I learned that they were not as ambitious, power hungry, and malicious as they have been depicted by most Chinese writers. In comparison to other officers I interviewed, they struck me as open-minded and possessed of more political insight and understanding of the Cultural Revolution than other officers. The best written illustration of their thinking is perhaps the "Outline of 'Project 571'." Although Chinese officials later claimed that this document was the

76 "571" is a pun or homophone for the Chinese characters for "armed uprising."
blueprint for Lin Biao’s coup attempt, it is now known that
it was written by Yu Xinye, one of Liguo’s colleagues, and
not by one of Lin’s confidants. It was written in a note
book, in fact, and left on a table in a building at the Air
Force Academy where Liguo’s colleagues often gathered.
Whoever found it there sent it to Zhou Enlai on October 9,
1971, four weeks after the Lin Biao Incident."

It was not until November 1971, two months after the
Incident, that Mao decided to use the note book as evidence
of Lin Biao’s plot. On November 14, the Central Party
Committee issued a document publicizing for the first time
the "Outline of 'Project 571'." However, no one, even among
Lin Liguo’s closest colleagues, ever confessed to having
heard of such a plan. The only person who claimed to have
heard of the plan was Li Weixin, the only survivor of those
who boarded a helicopter tying to escape from Beijing after
Lin’s plane took off from Beidaihe on September 13, 1971.
In one of his "confessions," Li Weixin claimed that he had
heard Yu Xinye mention such a plan, but Li himself had never
seen the plan. Li Weixin also confessed that Yu Xinye told
him on September 11, 1971 that Liguo had brought the plan
with him and left it with "Shouzhang" (Lin Biao) and

77Shao Yihai, Lin Biao wangchao heimu [Inside the Dark
Dynasty of Lin Biao] (Chengdu: Sichuan wenyi chubanshe,
1988, 99-107.)
"Director" (Ye Qun) at Beidaihe. Li's statement was the only evidence connecting Li Biao and Ye Qun with the plan, but his statement is contradicted by what is now known about the notebook.

Mao never believed Lin Biao would or did stage a coup d'état against him. In his comments on the Lin Biao Incident, Li Zhisui reported that Mao had long been suspicious of Lin Biao, who he thought "wanted him dead and was even afraid that Lin might try to poison him." Nevertheless, Li reported, Mao never believed that "Lin Biao might be plotting to assassinate him and seize power himself." 80

Furthermore, the notebook copy of the alleged plan for the coup reads more like a political proclamation than a plan for coup d'état. Only two of the nine parts in the notebook Outline discuss military strategy. The other parts

78This statement is ambiguous in nature. It is now known that Liguo did not go back to Beidaihe until the evening of September 12. Also, the statement that Liguo had "left it with Shouzhang and Director at Beidaihe" does not prove that Lin Biao and Ye Qun had seen the plan.

79For Li Weixin's confession, see CCP Document, Zhongfa No. 4, 1972, 40-46, and for an English version of Li Weixin's confession, see Kau, Lin Piao Affairs, 90-95.

80Li Zhisui, 540. One of my interviewees, whose father was in charge of the Central Investigation Group, also told me that when his father presented the newly discovered "Outline of 'Project 571'" to Mao and Zhou Enlai, Mao did not believe at all that it was Lin's plan. However, Mao agreed that it should be publicized as Lin Biao's coup plan in order to convict Lin's group. H. M. (pseud.), interviewed by author, Boston, September 21, 1993.
are concerned with the political situation. The following excerpts from the "Outline" are typical:

After the Second Plenum of the Ninth Party Congress, the political situation has been unstable; a split has shattered the ruling group and the rightists were getting the upper hand; the military is being suppressed. The national economy has been stagnant for over ten years and the living standard of the masses, basic-level cadres, and the middle and lower ranked military officials is falling. Dissatisfaction is spreading. They are angry, but dare not speak, and they even come to the point of daring not to be angry, let alone to speak. The ruling group is corrupt, muddled and incompetent. The masses are in rebellion and friends are deserting.

1) A political crisis is in the making.
2) A struggle for power is in progress.
3) The object of the opponent is to change successors
4) China is in the midst of a gradual, peacefully evolving political coup.
5) This kind of coup was his [Mao’s] old trick.
6) He [Mao] employed the same old tricks
7) The coup is presently developing in a way that will benefit the "pen"\(^{81}\) instead of the "gun."\(^{82}\)

8) Therefore, we should make violent, revolutionary, and rapid change to block this evolving peaceful, counterrevolutionary change. Otherwise, if we cannot use "Project 571" to stop peaceful evolution, once they succeed, who knows how many heads will fall and how many years the Chinese Revolution will be postponed.

9) A new power struggle is inevitable. If we do not gain the power of leadership, it will fall into the hands of others.

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The Trotskyist clique who wields the "pen" willfully tampers with and distorts Marxism-

\(^{81}\)The "pen" here indicates Jiang Qing’s group. Zhang Chunqiao and Yang Wenyun were known for their debatable skill in composing theories.

\(^{82}\)The "gun" indicates the military.
Leninism in order to deceive and mislead the thoughts of the Chinese people.

Their present theory of continuing revolution is the same as Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

The target of their revolution is, in fact, the Chinese people, and above all is the army and those who hold different opinion from them.

Their socialism is in essence social fascism. They have turned China's state machine into a meat grinder for mutual slaughter and strife.

They have turned political life in the state and the party into a feudal, dictatorial, and patriarchal system.

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Cadres who were rejected and attacked in the course of the protracted struggle within the Party and the Cultural Revolution are angry but dare not speak.

The peasants lack food and are short of clothing. Sending of young students to the mountains and the countryside is really a disguised form of unemployment.

During the early stages, the Red Guards were cheated and used, and they served as cannon fodder; during the later stages, they were suppressed and made into scapegoats.

Administrative cadres were retrenched and sent to "May 7 cadres schools," which amounted to reform through labor.

Workers (especially young workers) had their wages frozen, which amounted to disguised exploitation.

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Is there a single political force which has been able to work with him [Mao] from beginning to end? His [Mao's] former secretaries have either committed suicide or been arrested. His [Mao's] few close comrades-in-arms or trusted aides have also been sent to prison by him [Mao]. Even his [Mao's] own son has been driven mad by him.

He [Mao] is a paranoid and sadist. His philosophy of liquidating people is either do not do it, or do it thoroughly. Every time he liquidates someone, he will not desist until he puts them to death; once he hurts you, he will hurt you all the way, and he puts the blame for all bad things on others.

Frankly speaking, all of those who have been forced from the scene in his merry-go-round style
have in fact been made scapegoats for his own crimes.\footnote{Kau, Lin Piao Affairs, 81-90, and Wang Nianyi, 417-421.}

From these excerpts, one can see that the "Outline of 'Project 571'" was written crudely and many ideas in it were sharp criticism of Mao and the politics of the Cultural Revolution, which compared with those of Mao in the post-Mao era. Only a person like Lin Liguo, who knew the "inside stories" of the ruling elite and who combined that knowledge with a sense of superiority could speak like this at that time. Liguo's thinking had obviously influenced his colleagues; unfortunately, the thoughts of anyone who reasoned that way in Mao's era was unacceptable.

Through the differing experiences of Doudou and Liguo, we can actually see two general types of the children of Chinese revolutionaries, and two different aspects of their live. Some of the children had identity problems and were constantly frustrated by the shadow their families cast. Others found their privileged life enjoyable, and tried to make the most of it. Many of those who did so were actively involved in politics, benefiting from their family connections, and otherwise enjoying the glory of being the children of high officials. When they went too far in pushing the privileges, they not only created problems for their families but in many cases for the country as well.
Liguo’s activities during the Lin Biao Incident was a perfect example of this.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION: THE TRAGEDY OF LIN BIAO

Lin Biao was ultimately a tragic figure. One of the "best and brightest" of his generation of the CCP veterans, he had the intelligence and courage to lead a million men of the Communist Fourth Field Army triumphantly from the Northeast to South China. Perhaps none of his peers exceeded him at strategic planning or commanding troops on the battlefield. After 1949, he began a promising political career in which he rose to become defense minister in 1959. Yet, a dozen years later, he died a tragic death in the Mongolian desert at the age of 64 and he was posthumously the target of severe criticism and even tried as a "counter-revolutionary" in 1980-1981.

Lin's tragedy, however, was not a personal matter only. As a ranking member of the national leadership, he can not escape some of the responsibility for the disaster of the Cultural Revolution, which ruined the lives of millions of people. From the perspective of that leadership, the Cultural Revolution was largely the result of the personal and political problems of Mao and a few other members of his ruling clique, including Lin Biao.

But so profound a movement as the Cultural Revolution had much deeper roots than that. This study has emphasized extra-institutional factors in Chinese politics to understand the Cultural Revolution, but other approaches may
be equally helpful. Every study of the Cultural Revolution should take into consideration the dynamics of the interaction between leaders and circumstances, as Bernard Bass suggests in his study of leadership.\footnote{Bernard Bass, \textit{Leadership, Psychology, and Organizational Behavior} (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 18.} In fact, one way to fill in the gaps between the two seemingly different levels of analysis, the institutional and the extra-institutional, is to study the interaction between the leaders and the led.

Mao was a frustrated man in the last decade or so of his life. In his late years, he was no longer able to neutralize his personal limitations, and gradually let his personal concerns and senile paranoia create a predicament he finally escaped only by his death. Mao had possessed in abundance the qualities needed by a revolutionary leader. To his revolutionary comrades, he was an inspired man who promised them and the people of China a utopian future, a transcendence of the discontentment that had defined their lives. With the sacrifice of six members of his immediate family, including his second wife, his son, and his brother, Mao set a personal example of commitment to the revolution. A politician with many of the qualities of Machiavelli's prince, Mao knew how to maintain his power by love, if possible, and by hate, if necessary. When the Communists took power in 1949, Mao had already established his personal
authority within the party and the army. He became the personification of the party. Among the CCP elite, loyalty to Mao was loyalty to the party.

But, things changed in 1949. Thereafter, the major tasks of the revolutionaries were state building and economic development. In theory, the new tasks presupposed a change in the revolutionary leadership, if the will of the followers is taken into consideration. Followers want leaders who will provide them what they want. Thus, the CCP and Mao faced new challenges. To consolidate his power, Mao had to provide inspirational initiatives for the Chinese people as he had done for the revolutionaries. He had to convince tens of millions of people that the road they were asked to follow was first promising and then rewarding. When Mao repeatedly emphasized the "Mandate of the People," he realized the importance of providing inspirational leadership. This, however, was no easy task. Complicating it was the "geographic separation, social distance and sheer size" of the population Mao had to convince. As Neil Smelser has suggested, these things made direct, efficient

²In his study of rebel relationship, Downton suggests that personal authority is an especially important aspect of rebel leader-follower relations. For detailed discussion of this idea, see James V. Downton, Jr., Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in the Revolutionary Process (New York: Collier-Macmillan Publishers, 1973), 72-74.

³Downton, 96.
communication between the leaders and followers impossible. When channels of direct communication are limited and controlled, a leader has an opportunity to create a public image that may be different from--even contradictory to the realities of his actual behavior. At the same time, the lack of direct communication with his followers increases the leader's inability to correctly assess political and economic actualities and thereby reduce his ability to take appropriate measures. Both of these circumstances applied to Mao, and they ultimately contributed to the collapse of his leadership.

In addition to these considerations, Mao also experienced difficulties with his party followers, especially the men and women around him in the highest circle of leadership. The process of institutionalization weakened Mao's position as a charismatic and inspirational leader. Institutionalization demands divisions of powers and responsibilities. Although leadership in the Party remained in the hands of the same group of people after 1949, Mao's task thereafter was to provide leadership for bureaucrats rather than enthusiastic revolutionaries. Mao never convinced his comrades that he was the kind of governmental leader that he had been a revolutionary leader.

After the failures of the Great Leap Forward, Mao’s leadership began to collapse. At the first Lushan Conference in 1959, Mao’s immediate followers openly criticized his leadership for the first time. Thereafter, bureaucrats gradually excluded Mao from basic economic policy making. As a charismatic leader, it was difficult for Mao to accept this change. He fought back by reassuming ideological leadership and guidance for the Party and by composing theories to facilitate the consolidation of proletarian power. Meanwhile, he maintained his charismatic appeal over his comrades, especially those who had been with him long before 1949. This explains why Mao could still crush the resistance of his comrades, and launch the Cultural Revolution without their support.

In this sense, the Cultural Revolution was a result of Mao’s precarious hold on leadership. One important indication of this was the breakdown of mutual trust between Mao and his older colleagues, an important basis for efficient leadership. As a powerful charismatic leader, Mao felt himself being displaced by the process of institutionalization. Even his closest supporters in the leadership began to question his position as an invincible and indispensable leader. He felt an increasing and personally frightening, alienation from his close comrades who fit themselves into bureaucratic structures. The more alienated he felt, the more imperative was his need to
reassert his leadership, even at the price of coercive means against his old colleagues. The series of purges against almost all of these colleagues during the Cultural Revolution was an immediate result of Mao's personal frustration over the weakening of his leadership. The purges of his own comrades, however, only added to his sense of frustration. In fact, Mao collapsed physically after Lin Biao, his last "closest comrade-in-arms," deserted him in 1971. Until the end of his life, he never completely recovered from the desertion and the collapse.

Thus, what we see in Mao at the time of the Cultural Revolution was a frustrated elderly man, full of contradictions. He cared for his people and the state, wanting only the best for both of them. But he was psychologically unable to give up his personal power or adjust to a position other than that of a charismatic leader. He was sensitive and compassionate, with the temperament of a poet, but at the same time, he was a ruthless politician, willing to destroy his opponents when he thought it necessary. He was always at ease in battle, but found no place for himself in the processes of institutionalization and modernization his party launched after 1949. He never admitted that he was unfit to lead the new China his own fellow communists were creating. Frustrated and lonely, he isolated himself from most people, including his own family, and surrounded himself with young
women and poorly educated bodyguards from whom he received absolute loyalty. By this time, he trusted no one, not even his closest followers, and took action against them before they had a chance to destroy him. Mao’s personal tragedy, however, was China’s tragedy as well, because Chinese traditions allowed Mao to project his personal agony onto the country and its billion people. The Party and the government became miserably impotent in front of this powerful charismatic leader.

A puzzling question remains, however. Why did China’s leaders followed Mao unconditionally after they realized that what Mao was doing was damaging the country? If Lin Doudou and his former staff members are right, Lin Biao never agreed with Mao that China needed a Cultural Revolution. On the contrary, in private, he often expressed concern over Mao’s decisions. But in public, Lin always appeared as the most devoted supporter of Mao’s revolution. The same discrepancy between public and private behavior also characterized Zhou Enlai, although the contrast between the public and the private Zhou was not as large as it was in the case of Lin Biao.

Zhou Enlai is actually the most enigmatic figure among the PRC leaders. As premier, Zhou contributed greatly to the political and economic development of the country, and he still enjoys a good reputation among the Chinese people. He has received the least critical treatment of all the PRC
leaders from Chinese scholars. Many Chinese even have
positive views of Zhou’s role in the Cultural Revolution,
believing that the situation would have been worse without
his restraining influences on Mao and his work in running
the country while Mao was distracted by the Revolution.

However, Zhou’s political career, especially his
relationship with Mao, badly needs studying. It is
difficult to understand why Zhou, as an established
statesman in his own right, always supported Mao’s ideas
unconditionally and implemented them with absolute loyalty,
in many cases at a cost to his own integrity. According
to Cheng Qian, Zhou was the first member of the Standing
Committee of the Politburo to endorse Mao’s idea of a
Cultural Revolution. By doing so, however, Zhou put
himself in a difficult position. The reasons for his
political survival during the Cultural Revolution were his
political shrewdness, a quality Lin Biao obviously lacked,
and his organizational ability, which made him indispensable
to Mao.

On July 14, 1967, Mao commented to Wang Li on his chief
associates, including Deng Xiaoping, Lin Biao, and Zhou
Enlai. Mao said he had disagreed with the ouster of Deng,

\[\text{According to Li Zhisui, Zhou Enlai remained more loyal to Mao than any of China’s top leaders. He was not just loyal, but "subservient, and sometimes embarrassingly so." He even sacrificed his long term bodyguard in order to please Jiang Qing. See, Li Zhisui, 508-512.}\]

\[\text{Cheng Qian, "Manuscript," 162.}\]
whose political talents ranked with those of Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, and whose military talents ranked with those of Lin Biao and Peng Dehuai. When Lin could work no more because of his poor health, Mao said he would rehabilitate Deng Xiaoping and let him shoulder Lin’s responsibilities. However, Mao added, Zhou Enlai was indispensable among the leadership, no matter who was in charge of the country, be it Mao, or Lin, or Deng. Lin Biao said much the same thing about Zhou. Many times, Lin told his generals to respect Zhou, because it was Zhou who turned Mao’s ideas into actualities and who made the Party and the country function.

If this was indeed the case, why did Zhou Enlai accept what amounted to the position of Mao’s "housekeeper," or, in Li Zhisui’s words, Mao’s "obedient servant," rather than seeking an independent political role? Zhou personally took care of Mao’s family, especially Mao’s difficulty with individual family members. According to one of Mao’s bodyguards, it was Zhou Enlai who decided that He Zizhen, Mao’s ex-wife, not be allowed to come to Beijing. When Jiang Qing was ill, Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai took responsibility for finding her doctors and saw to it that

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7Wang Li, 96.

8Wu Faxian, "Manuscript," hel5007, 11.

9Quan Yanchi, Hongqiang neiwai [Inside and Outside of the Red Walls] (Beijing: Kunlun chubanshe, 1989), 276.
she received the best medical care.\textsuperscript{10} On more than one occasion when Jiang Qing was having problems with her nurses, Zhou adjourned Politburo meetings to attend to Jiang's personal problems.

One explanation for Zhou's subservience to Mao and his family is that Zhou had a "total" or "blind" commitment to Mao as a person, which is not uncommon among followers of a charismatic leader. The bases for such commitments vary from person to person, from expectations of personal reward to individual psychological needs, and the common manifestations of such a commitment are demonstrated public loyalty, willingness to follow faithfully, and devotion of the person of the leader.\textsuperscript{11} Both Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai fit these patterns vis-a-vis Mao.

Personal loyalty to Mao meant loyalty to the Party as well. Mao achieved a position within the Party that made it impossible to separate Mao from the Party. Lin Biao, for example, was a general and thus knew how to maneuver on the battlefield. But in the political arena, he had to rely on Mao for political initiatives, as he did for years. He may have disagreed with Mao at times, but he was unable to provide a political alternative to Mao. When he and other generals were caught up in the Cultural Revolution, a tragic end to their political careers was more or less inevitable.

\textsuperscript{10}Li Zhisui, 497.

\textsuperscript{11}Downton, 73.
When weighing the loyalty of Chinese leaders to Mao and the Party, one must always remember the depth of the commitment the old leaders had to the Chinese revolution. Many of them joined the revolution as teenagers and risked everything they had, including their lives, for the cause they pursued. Most of them lost family members and nearly all of them were wounded in battle at one time or another. According to Downton's theory of commitment, when the sacrifices and costs of a commitment become overwhelming, a decision to "end [the] commitment become[s] impossible, or at least, traumatic," even after one becomes disillusioned with the object of the commitment. This may help to explain the puzzling questions about Zhou Enlai. He may have cared so much for his reputation that he was unable to face the consequences of losing what he had already achieved. Or he may have cared too much for his political career, without which he would have no identity. When he learned that he was dying, the last thing he did before he entered the operating room for cancer treatment was to send an envelope to Mao containing evidence that he had never betrayed the party.

Like Zhou Enlai, many of Mao's colleagues were prepared to sacrifice everything to protect their reputation as faithful party members and revolutionaries, even after Mao had them purged. Their "revolutionary mentality" required

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12Downton, 75-76.
that they be willing to sacrifice personal interests for the integrity of the Party. If Mao's decision was also a Party decision, they had to accept it. Liu Shaoqi's handling of his disagreements with Mao over the Cultural Revolution is an illuminating example of this. Instead of challenging Mao's decision, he decided to resign.\textsuperscript{13} Liu Yuan, Liu Shaoqi's son, who had respect and affection for his father, later said his father's biggest mistake as State Chairman was not stopping the chaotic Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{14} A story told of Luo Ruiqing by his daughter Luo Diandian illustrates the same point. After Mao had him purged in December 1965, Luo Ruiqing attempted suicide, but survived. When he was released from prison after Mao's death, the first thing he did was to go to Tian'anmen, where he saluted Mao's picture with obvious sincerity. Although the basis for such devotion needs further study, the loyalty of the first generation of revolutionaries to Mao, the Party and the revolution is unquestionable. This is why it is unbelievable that Lin Biao and his generals would plot a military coup against Mao. Only members of the second generation of revolutionaries, who shared the glory of the first generation but not the loyalty and commitment to the

\textsuperscript{13}For the details of this argument, see Dittmer, Liu Shao-ch'i, 109-118.

\textsuperscript{14}Zhang Xiaolin, 152-153.
Party, could contemplate a plan to destroy Mao. This is perhaps the fundamental fact about the Lin Biao Incident.

So, what was the nature of Chinese politics in Mao's era? In order to answer this question, we have to understand Mao and his lieutenants. Who were they and why did they behave the way they did? What were the political and cultural restraints in their thinking and performance? To what extent did their personal lives influence Chinese politics? Without a better understanding of these factors, many questions concerning Chinese politics will remain unanswered. This dissertation is one modest step in this direction, but there remains much more to be done in this regard.
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