

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF CHINA'S
CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND
ITS COVERAGE BY THE
NEW YORK TIMES

BY

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A NOTE TO THE READER:

Pinyin System

This thesis has generally adopted the Chinese Pinyin System of Romanization for transcribing Chinese names and places. Original spellings of names of persons and places have changed into Pinyin, which has been adopted by The New York Times for many years. For example, Peking is Beijing, Mao Tsetung is Mao Zedong and Liu Shao-ch'i is Liu Shaoqi, Chou Enlai ia Zhou Enlai. The original spelling is found only in quotations.

The names of persons in this thesis are spelled in the traditional Chinese way, that is, surname first, except in the case of Nien Cheng, who chose to put her surname last in her book Life and Death in Shanghai. A few names of persons bear a hyphen between a two-word name. Such names were left as they appear in the quotations.

Last of all, pinyin represent sounds similar to English sounds with only a few exceptions, such as c in Pinyin equals to ts in English; q equals to ch; x equals to sh; z equals to dz and zh equals to j.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Revolution

The gunshots and bloodbath in the Tiananmen Square Massacre on June 4, 1989, shocked the entire world. In Beijing, reporters from many countries sent home pictures and stories as witnesses to the brutality of Communist power.

In contrast to the media coverage by foreign reporters in this demonstration, 23 years ago American newsmen were not able to be present in China during the Cultural Revolution (CR) because there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries. However, The New York Times exerted great effort to inform American readers of this important event in China's contemporary history by reporting from outside China.

Comparing the deaths and bloodshed of this demonstration in 1989 to those occurring in the CR, more people were affected by the CR. According to the People's Daily, more than one million people died and 100 million people were persecuted, arrested and tortured.¹ Today any Chinese citizen between 30 and 40 years of age can recall

30 and 40 years of age can recall ten turbulent years of disrupted family life and little formal education. The wounds of lost educational opportunity and shattered lives, in addition to a ruined economy and culture can still be felt today.

In fact, the political campaign the Communist Party inflicted on the Chinese people had begun 40 years ago. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party, first headed by Mao Zedong, has launched a series of political movements that have drawn attention and energy away from the country's economic development.

In 1958, Mao launched an economic campaign known as the "Great Leap Forward." Mao imagined that by engaging the whole nation, including its 80 percent agricultural population, in "basic neighborhood" industries, China might make a "great leap forward" to catch up with advanced industrial countries. On the contrary, the campaign triggered national famine for several years because the rural population, instead of growing agricultural products, was dragged into the so-called "basic neighborhood" industry, which they knew nothing about.

In the 1960s the moderate policy represented by President Liu Shaoqi began to pull the country out of its economic backwardness. Liu's success made Party Chairman

Mao Zedong feel that he had lost face. He accused Liu Shaoqi of leading the country toward capitalism and decided that the "capitalist roaders" should be overthrown. Mao's determination to overthrow all the "capitalist roaders," aided by Lin Biao, Defense Minister, and Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, and her radical associates, produced the national tragedy known as the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

On November 10, 1965, the Shanghai-based literary critic Yao Wenyuan, later identified as a member of the "Gang of Four," published an article in Wen Hui Bao, a major newspaper in China, attacking a historic play written by Wu Han, the vice-mayor of Beijing at that time. Shortly thereafter, Wu Han and his supporter, Peng Zhen, the mayor of Beijing, were purged.

On May 16, 1966, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party issued a document calling for all Party members to participate in the current political campaign. The document, known as the "May 16 Circular," served as a command to start the Cultural Revolution. It stated,

The whole Party must follow Comrade Mao Tse-tung's instructions, hold high the great banner of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, thoroughly expose the reactionary bourgeois stand of those so-called "academic authorities" who oppose the Party and socialism, thoroughly criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois ideas in the sphere of academic work, education, journalism, literature and art and publishing, and seize the leadership in these cultural spheres. To achieve this, it is necessary at the same time to criticize and repudiate those

representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the government, the army and all spheres of culture, to clear them out or transfer some of them to other positions.²

Within months, "bourgeois" academics and intellectuals were attacked. The attack soon spread to Party leaders and any persons in leading positions in society. The scope of the purge ranged from Liu Shaoqi to ordinary citizens who were descendants of former landlords and wealthy families.

Lin Biao replaced Liu Shaoqi as Mao's successor at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969 and was appointed Vice Chairman of the Party.

Mao soon became uneasy about Lin's power expansion in central and provincial governments. In September 1971, Lin Biao mysteriously disappeared from the public view. After ten months' silence about Lin's whereabouts, Mao began to tell foreign visitors that Lin had died in a plane crash outside China in an attempt to flee to the Soviet Union after he failed in a coup to assassinate Mao.

After Lin's death, Jiang Qing and her radical associates became increasingly powerful for the next five years. After Mao's death in 1976, Jiang lost the power struggle between the radicals and the moderates and has been in prison ever since. The arrests of Jiang Qing and her followers were announced in the Chinese media as a "smashing victory" and marked the end of the CR.

Beyond the struggle for power between Mao and his

successors, Mao used young students, known as the Red Guards, to attack millions of intellectuals, government officials, writers, films stars, sports stars, and descendants of former landowners and wealthy families.

The Red Guards were high school and university students between the age of fifteen and twenty-five. In 1966, Mao received thirteen million students at eight rallies in Beijing's Tiananmen Square between August and November. At the rallies, Mao Zedong encouraged the students that "To rebel is justified." The student representatives pledged that they would be "red guards³ defending Chairman Mao and the Communist Party.

According to Yan Jiaqi, author of Ten-Year History of China's Cultural Revolution,

The duties of the Red Guards are to overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic authorities and the ideology of the transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base; to support the Vietnamese people in their struggle against the U.S. imperialists and revisionist elements; to destroy the old world and to build a new world; to take actions under the direction of the Cultural Revolution Committee.⁴

The Red Guards first fought against school authorities on campuses and quickly moved their battlefields to society and among themselves. By 1968, Mao became frustrated by violence and turmoil and ordered the People's Liberation Army to restore order. The army took

over schools, factories, hospitals, government offices, department stores, radio stations, and newspapers, wherever the Red Guards had control. At the same time, Mao issued orders to send millions of Red Guards to the countryside to receive reeducation through hard physical labor under peasant supervision. Many of them found it difficult to adjust themselves in the countryside and returned to the cities where they grew up. Many of them returned home and started to make trouble on the streets. After the CR, these Red Guards found themselves labeled the "lost generation."

The New York Times

The New York Times, located halfway around the world from China, is a newspaper well known for its domestic and international coverage. The Times has been proud that,

Every morning at the breakfast table it brings to its readers the current history of the world. It records the dreams and hopes and accomplishments of millions of men and women all over the globe, and their disappointments and sufferings as well.⁵

Harrison E. Salisbury, former reporter for The Times, described the newspaper as a "looking glass to history" and a "newspaper of record."⁶

One of the major factors that made The Times successful is that the newspaper has a very competitive and responsible team of reporters both in the United States and in many other countries in the world.

The Times has long stressed the responsibilities of its newsmen. As early as 1896 when Adolph S. Ochs took over the newspaper, the new publisher issued a statement that all the newsmen were required "to give all the news without fear or favor."⁷ This statement has guided The Times newsmen in their work to this day. Arthur Hays Sulzberger, who succeeded Ochs on May 7, 1935, took over not only the newspaper but also Ochs' spirit of news reporting. In 1945, in a lecture on "The Newspaper, Its Making and Its Meaning," Sulzberger reinforced Ochs' philosophy:

I don't suppose there are many in this audience or elsewhere who question that it succeeds. I take it that what we are interested in today is to see if we are performing our allotted task accurately, and without fear, and without favor.⁸

The Times foreign news service has sent its newsmen to every important capital city in the world. It has set up bureaus in Asia, Africa, South America, Australia and Europe.

The work of foreign correspondents differs from that of staff who work in the United States. The Times has decided that a foreign correspondent has to be more selective: "He has to include more interpretation in his dispatches if he is to fulfill his function of reporting on the life of the country to which he is assigned."⁹ This decision is based on the fact that the American public needs background in order to be knowledgeable about other

cultures.

The Times has defined four chief news sources for overseas reporters:

1. Official news furnished by the government, which is highly important but often "slanted" for propaganda purposes;
2. The opposition, which always exists, even when dictatorships have driven it underground, and which is eager to counter the claims of those in power;
3. The local newspapers;
4. And last and most important of all, contacts with individuals who have a flair for knowing what is going on, and who have demonstrated in the past their reliability.⁸

The Times began to cover China as early as the beginning of the century when the country was governed by the Qing dynasty. Since then it has followed the ups and downs of the country. In the 1940s, The Times staff followed the Nationalist regime from Beijing to Nanjing and Chungqing; they also interviewed the Nationalists' opponents, the Communists in Yen-an and Shanghai.

China was a closed country before Nixon's visit in 1972. During the CR, The Times watched Beijing from Hong Kong, the closest place to China. Seymour Topping, Charles Mohr, Tillman Durdin, James Reston, Henry Lieberman and Fox Butterfield all filed stories from The Times office in Hong Kong.

In April 1971, Durdin became the first American newspaperman to report from China. Max Frankel had an

opportunity to enter China in February 1972 when he was on a special assignment to cover Nixon's visit. Fox Butterfield became The Times first Beijing bureau chief in December 1979 after China and the United States normalized their relations.

Therefore, most China stories during the CR were "off-the-spot" coverage. Lieberman described how the overseas correspondents reported the CR from outside China. He said, "with travel restricted, Communist functionaries aloof and Chinese afraid to talk to foreigners, journalistic activity in any mainland city today would amount primarily to monitoring the local press."¹¹ Unfortunately, the local press was not a reliable source because newsmen in China had to follow instructions about what to report.

Under such difficult conditions, Lieberman believed that the difference between good and mediocre reporters is the "difference between digging carefully for available information and not digging at all."¹² The Times reporters made the best of the situation by whatever means were available and dug out information via the "spoken word, the printed publication, and the dots and dashes of domestic press transmissions tapped out in standardized Chinese number code."¹³ Sometimes they had to piece together the accumulated information and explain, interpret or comment on it.

Value of the Study

In examining how well The New York Times reported the CR 23 years ago even without having its reporters physically present in China, the thesis studies how close Times' stories are to the facts of the CR revealed in the aftermath by insiders and survivors. The results of the study also show the quality and ability of The Times' foreign correspondents working under difficult conditions.

In addition, the thesis examines what sources The Times used, who the reporters were, what was in their stories of each event and how the reporters speculated, interpreted and explained the situation, especially when the Chinese media were silenced or slanted.

Method and Scope of the Study

This thesis presents a historic review of the CR and examines how well The Times reported the event from 1966 to 1976. The examination of the report and reality of the CR has focused on four major events, namely, Liu Shaoqi's fall and wide purge at the beginning of the CR, the rise and fall of Lin Biao, Nixon's China visit and the arrests of the "Gang of Four," which marked the end of the CR. This study used The New York Times Index and reviewed about 30 stories of each event from The New York Times. Following a historic description of the selected event,

the thesis employs qualitative content analysis methodology to examine The Times coverage of the corresponding events during the CR.

The introduction chapter describes the Cultural Revolution and The New York Times' philosophy of running the newspaper, especially its policy for foreign correspondents.

Chapter II reviews literature about the CR by Chinese and American writers.

Chapter III examines the wide purge and the fall of Liu Shaoqi, former President of China, the rise and death of Lin Biao, as well as The Times' report on these events.

Chapter IV examines China's foreign policy during CR, focusing on Nixon's China visit and Sino-U.S. relations and related reports from The Times.

Chapter V presents the arrest of the "Gang of Four" at the end of the ten-year-old Cultural Revolution and the report by The Times.

Chapter VI covers the summary, discussion and the recommendations of this thesis.

Endnotes

- 1 Butterfield, Fox, China: Alive in the Bitter Sea (New York: Times Books, 1982), 17.
- 2 CCP Documents of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968), 18.
- 3 Hsiung, Y.T., Red China's Cultural Revolution (New York: Vantage Press, 1968), 94.
- 4 Yan Jiaqi and Gao Xiang, Ten-Year History of China's Cultural Revolution (Taipei: China Studies Press, 1986), 66.
- 5 News, (New York: The New York Times Company, 1945), 3.
- 6 Salisbury, Harrison E., Without Fear Or Favor (New York: The New York Times Book Co., Inc., 1980), ix.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 The Newspaper, Its Making And Its Meaning, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), 173.
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- 10 Ibid.
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- 12 Ibid., 113.
- 13 Ibid., 114.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Among Chinese authors who wrote about the Cultural Revolution, Liang Heng, Gao Yuan, Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun recorded in detail their personal experiences during the CR. Among American writers, Harrison Salisbury, Fox Butterfield, Anne Thurston and Ross Terrill investigated and interviewed people who survived the CR.

Liang Heng and Gao Yuan shared similar experiences as Red Guards. When the CR began in 1966, they were both teenage boys. Gao Yuan, author of Born Red, was from a revolutionary family in a county town in Hebei province. Gao described his involvement in mass rallies against "reactionary" teachers and administrators, marching them on the streets, beating them and driving some of them to suicide.

Gao recalled that the Red Guards ended up in fighting with other factions. They turned the schools into armed camps, claiming that they would guard Mao Zedong and his revolutionary line at the cost of their lives. Once when a friend of Gao's was hit in the forehead by a sharp rock, Chairman Mao's teachings gave them encouragement to

continue the fight. They memorized these lines from Mao's Little Red Book, "We are learning about warfare from¹ engaging in warfare."

When Mao called for the Red Guards to resettle in the countryside in 1968, Gao realized what was waiting for him and decided, "I don't want to be a peasant for the rest of my life."² He joined the army instead, hoping to "continue³ the revolution."

Liang Heng was from Mao Zedong's native province of Hunan. His mother had been labelled "antiparty" and "rightist" before the CR. His father, a newsman at the Hunan Daily, was accused of opposing the Party and the socialist system. Nevertheless, Liang managed to join the Red Guards with other teenagers. Liang recalled a horrible scene during the CR in Son Of The Revolution: The streets of Changsha, the capital city of Hunan province, "ran with⁴ blood in the humid hundred degree heat of August."

Liang was sent to the countryside with many other Red Guards in 1968. However, like many other students who could not adapt to life in the countryside, Liang returned home and ended up on the street drinking and fighting with other sons and daughters of the revolution.

Nien Cheng, author of Life and Death in Shanghai, was born to a wealthy family, and married the general manager of Shell Oil's office in Shanghai. Her privileged family background was often the target of the Red Guards.

Cheng recalled that one night in 1966, a crowd of young students forced their way into her house, smashing whatever they could find. She tried to explain that some of the antiques she had collected for many years were irreplaceable. The Red Guards said to her,

You shut up! These things belong to the old culture. They are useless toys of the feudal emperors and the modern capitalist class and have no significance uses to the proletarian class. They cannot be compared to cameras and binoculars, which are useful for our struggle in time of war. Our great leader Chairman Mao taught us, 'If we do not destroy, we cannot establish.' The old culture must be destroyed to make way for the new socialist culture.5

Cheng was first put under house arrest and then sent to prison, where she was in solitary confinement more than six years. Cheng was almost destroyed physically, and yet her strong will sustained her survival.

Among the victims of the CR, Chinese intellectuals suffered most. Yue Daiyun, a female literature professor at Beijing University, witnessed many deaths of innocent people. Almost every day she heard news of suicides or people beaten to death by the Red Guards.

Once when Yue Daiyun went to see her mother in hospital, she saw a nurse wheeling in a cart on which lay the body of a teenage girl who was obviously beaten to death. Yue recalled,

Since she had been dead upon arrival, no one had bothered to cover her with a sheet. Across her chest were two paper banners, one announcing her identity as a 'counterrevolutionary bastard dog' and the other proclaiming, 'Anyone who opposed the Cultural

Revolution will come to no good end.' Her face and hair were matted with blood.⁶

Lin Zhao, a student of Yue's, had written several poems protesting the privilege of the Communist Party. Lin had also secretly translated the manifesto of the Yugoslav Communist Party which she believed was less dictatorial. She kept her ideas in a diary which was discovered by the Red Guards. She was soon sent to prison. Later, Yue learned that in her cell,

Lin was crippled by arthritis, her condition aggravated by the dampness of her cell. She looked close to death in her white prison uniform, with her hair uncut, her finger gaunt, her complexion pale. In spite of her failing health, she had apparently continued to write poems on scraps of toilet paper, sometimes with her own blood.⁷

In 1968, Lin Zhao was sentenced to death for attacking Mao Zedong and the Communist Party.

Fox Butterfield of The New York Times, author of China: Alive in the Bitter Sea, learned Lin Zhao's story from three reporters at the New China News Agency. In their account, some government officials went to the Shanghai home of Lin's mother telling her that her daughter had been executed three days earlier for the counter-revolutionary crime in her diary. But the money spent on the execution had to be paid by the mother. Butterfield wrote, "the officials demanded that the mother pay five fen, a little more than three cents, to cover the cost of the bullet they had put through the back of her

daughter's head" because the money spent on the execution⁸ had been a waste, according to the sardonic officials.

In 1979, following the normalization of relations between China and the United States, The Times opened its office in China. Having reported for four years from Hong Kong, Butterfield moved to Beijing where he had a chance to listen to people talking about the CR. He learned that almost all the Chinese he met had been compelled to turn in their valued books, records, or paintings to the fanatic Red Guards who ransacked their homes looking for "decadent bourgeois or feudal culture." He also learned that most of China's leading writers, musicians, and artists were imprisoned and some of them were tortured to death. Lao She, author of Rickshaw Boy was "forced head-down into the bottom of a muddy lake by a band of Red Guards till he drowned."⁹ Butterfield was impressed by what Liao Mosha, a distinguished writer who was imprisoned for thirteen years, said that the CR actually destroyed¹⁰ China's traditional culture.

Harrison Salisbury, author of several books about China, considered that the key to understand China was to understand the CR. He interviewed people who had been involved and asked many questions of what had happened to them during the CR. Salisbury wrote in To Peking and Beyond,

I am sure that there is much that I still do not

understand, but I have learned enough to know no one can begin to comprehend China today, no one can begin to draw conclusions about the nature of the country, the quality of the people, the inner meaning of Chinese policy, the psychology of her leaders or her attitude toward the world and toward the United States, without grasping the essentials of the Cultural Revolution. If there is in China a New Man, if China is creating the pattern of the world's future, the secret, I think, must lie in the Cultural Revolution.¹¹

Salisbury visited several universities such as Hunan Science and Engineering University, Wuhan University and Qinghua University---the latter as highly regarded as MIT in the United States. He noticed broken window panes in all the classrooms he visited and learned there had been violent physical combat and rifle fire in these universities. As his interviews developed, Salisbury felt that it was becoming more and more clear that violence was one of the "salient features" of the CR.¹²

From 1981 to 1982 Anne F. Thurston, author of Enemies of the People, conducted 49 interviews with the survivors of the CR both in China and in the United States. Thurston specifically described a situation in which the Red Guards were "criticizing" You Xiaoli, a female university professor who was accused of being a counterrevolutionary. Thurston wrote,

You Xiaoli was standing, precariously balanced, on a stool. Her body was bent over from the waist into a right angle, and her arms, elbows stiff and straight, were behind her back, one hand grasping the other at the wrist. It was the position known as 'doing the airplane.' Around her neck was a heavy chain, and attached to the chain was a blackboard, a

real blackboard, one that had been removed from a classroom at the University where You Xiaoli, for more than ten years, had served as a full professor.

After doing the jet airplane for several hours, listening to the endless taunts and jeers and the repeated chants calling for her downfall, the chair on which You Xiaoli had been balancing was suddenly kicked from under her and she tumbled from the stool, hitting the table, and onto the ground. Blood flowed from her nose and from her mouth and from her neck where the chain had dug into the flesh.¹³

Thurston described the brutality of the CR in yet another example:

Zhao Shuli, one of China's leading twentieth century novelists, had died as a result of a similar incident. A rib had broken and punctured his lung when the chair had been knocked from beneath the stool on which he had been standing. Accused of being a counterrevolutionary, he was not eligible for medical treatment. Instead, he was dragged to another city to face yet another struggle session against him. He died several days later.¹⁴

Today any Chinese citizen 30 years of age or above could recount similar situations they saw with their own eyes during the CR. Many of them witnessed violence, shootings, bloodshed and death. Thurston concluded that the CR was surpassed only by the Nazi holocaust, the Stalinist purges, and genocide in Cambodia.

Endnotes

- 1 Gao, Yuan, Born Red (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 236.
- 2 Ibid., 350.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Liang, Heng and Judith Shapiro, Son Of The Revolution (Glasgow, Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1983), 132.
- 5 Cheng, Nien, Life And Death In Shanghai (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986), 74.
- 6 Wakeman, Carolyn, To The Storm (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 106.
- 7 Ibid., 188.
- 8 Butterfield, Fox, China: Alive in the Bitter Sea (New York: Times Books, 1982), 17-8.
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- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Salisbury, Harrison E., To Peking And Beyond (New York: The New York Times Book Co., 1973), 27.
- 12 Ibid., 38.
- 13 Thurston, Anne F., Enemies Of The People (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1987), xv.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.

CHAPTER III

POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN MAO AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The Purge of Liu Shaoqi

Liu Shaoqi was born in 1898 into a wealthy family in Mao's native province of Hunan. Liu was a few years younger than Mao. He joined the Communist Party through Mao's introduction in 1921. In the same year, Liu enrolled in the School for Foreign Languages set up by the Communist Party and was chosen with seven other students to study for two years at the Eastern University in Moscow. After his return to China in late 1922, Liu spent six years leading the workers' movement of the Communist revolution in the areas controlled by the Nationalists.

In October 1934 Liu Shaoqi participated in the Long March as chief of the Political Department of the Eighth Corps of the Red Army and later served in the same position in the Third Corps. From 1945 to 1955 Liu served as General Secretary of the Central Committee Secretariat. On April 28, 1959, he was elected the President of the People's Republic of China. After Liu came to power, he supported economic development, a policy which was different from that of Mao. Liu's success with the

national economy triggered Mao's criticism. Mao began to¹ accuse Liu of leading the country toward capitalism.

The Difference Between Liu and Mao

Mao began his career as a rebel leader in the peasants' movement in Jiangxi Province in the early 1920's. His education was based on traditional Chinese culture. It is obvious from the literary allusions in Mao's widely published poems that Mao had widely read classical Chinese novels and history and studied each palace coup of China's ancient dynasties.

Liu Shaoqi received extensive theoretical education on Communism in the Soviet Union in early 1920s. Liu was a well-trained orthodox Communist.

During the time of great difficulties for the Communist Party, Mao and Liu supported and complemented each other against their common enemies: the Japanese troops and the Nationalists. After the Communists came to² power, their relationship began to sour.

Before 1966, the Party Chairman and the President of the state were almost evenly matched in strength. Mao's advantages were his public image built up over the years, the armed forces and his propaganda machine. Liu's power came from the support he had won in government organizations at both central and local levels.

As Liu's strength grew stronger, Mao became more

afraid of losing power. In 1965 Mao began to complain that Liu and other government officials treated him as if he were their "dead parent at a funeral" and they "never³ bothered to consult me on vital matters."

In order to take the power from the opposition, Mao launched the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." It took Mao three years to purge Liu Shaoqi from his positions. At the beginning, Liu was criticized without his name being mentioned. The May 16 Circular of 1966 described Liu as China's Khrushchev who had served as the commander of the anti-Mao, anti-party and anti-socialist⁴ group.

In early 1967, tens of thousands of Mao's Red Guards gathered at Zhong Nan Hai where Liu had lived and worked. Liu was forced to bend his back before the angry crowd to recite Mao's quotations from the Little Red Book and to make a confession.

On January 25 of the same year, the Liberation Army Daily published an editorial entitled "The People's Liberation Army Firmly Supports the Proletarian Revolutionary Faction," claiming that the army was committed to destroying the bourgeois headquarters headed by Liu Shaoqi at the central, provincial and municipal government⁵ levels. In July, the People's Daily described Liu as a⁶ "drowning dog" which should be struck to its end.

Historian Li Tien-min wrote in Liu Shao-ch'i that by

1968 the power struggle in CR had become an "undisguised personal vendetta" against Liu, for the purpose of "stripping away his power, his influence, and the ideology he represented."⁷

An editorial of the Liberation Daily on November 11, 1968 implied that the purge of Liu Shaoqi was almost at an end. It indicated "the very exposure of Liu Shao-ch'i is a gigantic achievement for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, even if the revolution has accomplished nothing else."⁸ Liu had been placed under house arrest by the Red Guards in early 1967 until he died in disgrace on December 12, 1969.

The Times Report on Liu's Fall and the Wide Purge

In the 1960s The New York Times reporting on China heavily relied on monitoring Chinese official media from Hong Kong and using sources of other countries. Liu's name was not found in Chinese media in 1966 and 1967. In May, 1968, when China first publicly attacked Liu in the Liberation Army Daily, The Times ran a story from Agence France-Press entitled "Peking Calls Liu Agent of Chiang." The story began by pointing out that Liu was accused by the official press for the first time of representing the interests of the Nationalists. To be a Nationalist agent was considered to be a deadly charge because among Chinese

Communist class enemies, Nationalist agents were the
"lowest form," the story explained.⁹

The same story suggested that the accusation against Liu was aimed at purging Mao's opponents both in the Party and in the government. It indicated that the Mao-Liu relation had come to an end by this point when "charges apparently indicated that there was no longer any possibility of a compromise between Mr. Liu and the present leaders of China."¹⁰

Another Times story depicted China's "victory" over the battle against Liu Shaoqi. Written by Hong Kong based reporter Tillman Durdin on November 1, 1968, the story headlined "Chinese Reds Expel Liu From the Party" indicated that the Chinese Communist Party "formally expelled Mr. Liu, the country's disgraced head of state, from the party and other posts."¹¹ Durdin quoted the Chinese press as denouncing Liu by name as a "traitor, renegade and scab" and a "lackey of imperialism, modern revisionism and the Kuomintang."¹²

Meanwhile, the Chinese media were hailing the decision to expel Liu from the Party as a "sweeping success" and declaring that "all policies laid down and actions taken under the leadership of Mao and his deputy, Lin Piao, have been correct," the story added.¹³ Durdin also noted that it was the first time since late 1966 that Liu was identified by name in an official Party

declaration and the first time he was connected with the term "counter-revolutionary crime."¹⁴

In the background information, Durdin noted that Liu was first made a target of the CR in 1966, after serving 20 years as Mao's chief aide. The spearhead that brought him down was the "militant students," known as the Red Guards.¹⁵

While Liu Shaoqi was under attack, a sweeping purge was under way in Beijing. Beginning on February 16, one of the stories entitled "2 Peking Writers Accused of Criticizing Regime" reported that one of the prominent writers, Wu Han, Deputy Mayor of Beijing, was under attack for a play he wrote. The play, titled Hai Rui Loses His Office, was about Hai Rui, the Minister of revenue in the Ming dynasty (1644-1912), who was dismissed from office and jailed for criticizing the emperor. In Chinese history, he has symbolized honesty, integrity, and uprightness in public officials. As the result of his virtue, he offended the emperor and lost his position. The play encouraged people to speak the truth and to criticize the wrongdoings of the top leaders.

The Times interpreted the play as angering the "regime because it suggested that traditional moral values could be taken over by contemporary society."¹⁶ The play was first criticized in Wen Hui Bao in November 1965 and had since been denounced in most major newspapers in

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China.

Another literary figure under attack was Tien Han, a leading playwright, who also had written the words for China's national anthem. His play Xie Yao-huan was about an imaginative historical heroine during the Tang dynasty (618-907), who opposed official corruption and petitioned the Empress Wu Zetien for political reform. Eventually Xie failed to persuade the court and was killed by the intrigues of corrupt officials.

The People's Daily was first to accuse Tien of distorting history and preaching an idealistic historical viewpoint. The Times commented that the Chinese press accused Tien of borrowing historical characters and incidents to attack the current government. The Times story also compared the situation of writers in China in the 60s with that of in the Soviet Union in the 30s. It concluded that the "Soviet writers have considerably more freedom."¹⁸ The Times story quoted the New China News Agency as saying that "160,000 literary and art workers had gone to factories, rural areas and armed forces to¹⁹ remold their thinking."

The purge began in cultural fields and spread to the whole society in the three-year period from early 1966 to the end of 1968. Durdin reported that "Communist China is experiencing a period of intense political purging known as 'purifying the class ranks.'²⁰" The reporter explained

terms used in the Chinese media such as "class enemies," who were supposed to be dragged out from the working class. He said that the label "class enemy" can be applied to "anyone with an even remotely bourgeois background or pinned on individuals who have been opponents of the military dominated revolutionary committees, the new ruling bodies in the cities and villages of China."²¹ The term "seven black elements" used in the Chinese media referred to "former landlords, former rich peasants, rightists, former capitalists, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and black gangsters."²² In analyzing the purpose of the purge, Durdin remarked that "one seems to be to root out these elements. Another is to crack down on detractors and opponents of the new power-holders."²³

The Rise and Fall of Lin Biao

When CR began in 1966, Lin Biao was actively engaged in doing three things: attacking Liu Shaoqi who was on his way to the top leadership as Mao's successor, providing Mao with a personality cult in order to gain his favor, and increasing the strength of his clique. Meanwhile, Mao badly needed Lin's military force to overthrow Liu Shaoqi whose power had endangered Mao's position.

In public, Lin Biao created an image of being most loyal to the Party Chairman by holding Mao's Little Red

Book in hand at all times, meanwhile, increasing military personnel at both local and state levels of government. China scholar John Gardner recorded in Chinese Politics and the Succession to Mao that by 1969,

Army representatives were found throughout society: in local administration, in industrial enterprises, and in educational institutions. It appeared then that the army controlled China, that Lin Biao controlled the army and that Mao had given his blessing to a new successor. 24

In the Ninth Party Congress held in April 1969, Lin's status as Mao's successor was written in the revised Party Constitution,

Comrade Lin Piao has consistently held high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung's thought and he has most loyally and resolutely carried out and defended Comrade Mao Tsetung's proletarian revolutionary line. Comrade Lin Piao is Comrade Mao Tsetung's closest comrade-in-arms and successor. 25

In this Congress, Lin's speech pronounced the final sentence on Liu Shaoqi, calling Liu a "hidden traitor and scab," "a crime-steeped lackey of the imperialists," "modern revisionists and Kuomintang reactionaries," and "the arch-representative of the persons in power taking the capitalist road." From then on, Liu disappeared from the stage of the Chinese politics forever.

Four years later, the 10th Party Congress dramatically and officially overturned the decision about Lin's position as Mao's successor made in the previous Congress. It proclaimed on August 29, 1973,

The congress indignantly denounced the Lin Piao

anti-Party clique for its crimes. All the delegates firmly supported this resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to expel Lin Piao, the bourgeois careerist, conspirator, counter-revolutionary double-dealer, renegade and traitor from the Party once and for all!²⁶

In fact, Lin's fall and death had occurred two years earlier. As Lin's power continued to grow after he rose to the number two rank, Mao grew increasingly uneasy and soon began to take actions to strengthen his own power.

In August 1971, Mao left Beijing in a special train for central southern and eastern China to strengthen his own support from military leaders in those areas. Mao was planning to organize a show down before Lin's supporters were properly organized.²⁷

During his tour, Mao stayed in Wuhan for ten days holding talks with senior leaders of Hubei and neighboring provinces. In his conversation with those senior leaders, Mao implied, "a certain person was very anxious to become state Chairman, to split the Party, and to seize power."²⁸

In Gardner's account, "By the evening of 6 September Lin was fully informed of what Mao had said, and his understandable reaction was to panic."²⁹ Lin and his wife directed their son Lin Ligu, an Air Force commander, to take action in Shanghai, where "B-52," a code name for Mao, would stop on his itinerary to return to Beijing. Lin Ligu, instructed his followers that "three methods of assassination were being considered: using flame throwers

and 40-mm bazookas to attack B-52's train, or using reassembled 100-mm artillery to shoot the train, or alternatively having Wang Weiguo carry out the murder with a pistol while being received by B-52 on the train."³⁰

Mao was aware of the emergency situation. On September 8, Mao suddenly changed his schedule and ordered the train to move only a few minutes after he finished his midnight snack. Two days later, Mao suddenly changed again: "Now turn the train back. We shall leave right away!" By constantly changing his schedule, Mao safely³¹ arrived in Beijing on September 12, 1971.

Upon learning that Mao reached Beijing, Lin and his wife decided to flee. Lin Doudou, Lin Biao's daughter from a previous marriage, reported to Premier Zhou Enlai that her father intended to make an unexpected night flight. Zhou immediately decided to ground all flights as a precaution. He ordered that any flight would have to be authorized by three signatures: his own, Lin Biao's, and the authority ordering the flight.³² At the airfield, Lin Biao, as the number two man in the Party and the future head of the state, forced the Trident to take off shortly before 1:00 a.m. on September 13 and headed north. An hour later, it crashed in the Mongolian People's Republic, killing all the people on board.

Ironically, on the same day of Lin Biao's fall, the People's Daily carried an article in praise of Lin,

Comrade Lin Piao has at all times held high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought. He has at all times defended Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary lines and put it into practice, and he has always been a shining example to the whole Party, to the Army, and to the people of the whole country!³³

During the following months, this "shining example" was not mentioned again by the Chinese media. When Lin Biao's name reappeared, he became a "pseudo-Marxist political swindler like Liu Shaoqi," and "army-splitter," "a conspirator, opportunist, renegade and traitor." Finally, he became "dog-shit, indigestible to human ³⁴ society."

The Times Report on Lin Biao

On May 15, 1966, one day before the CR officially began, Seymour Topping of The Times, reported from Hong Kong that Lin Biao "appears to have emerged as a dominant figure in the country's affairs after a political struggle in Peking." ³⁵ Topping remarked that the emergence of Lin "signaled the beginning of the current purge of intellectuals and of officials of the Peking municipal Party organization." ³⁷ The story noted that in the last months of 1965 and the early months of 1966, Lin apparently was preoccupied with a campaign within the army to "improve tighter political control over senior commanders who were not responding to Mr. Mao's ³⁷ ideological directions."

During this period, The Times reporters, unable to do interviews in Beijing, had to base their stories on the Chinese media and to listen to what the specialists and the analysts had to say. Topping's story is an example: "According to provincial radio broadcasts, an army-led campaign against antiparty, antisocialist elements" has been extended to the rest of the country.³⁸ The story indicated that "people in the provinces are being told that they should be guided by editorials in the army newspaper," which was under Lin's control.³⁹

On August 16, 1966, Salisbury wrote a story with the headline, "Mao's Effort to Steal China's Youth Is Seen Behind Purge." A question Salisbury raised in the story was, "Who were the participants?" He explained that while some China watchers picked on Lin Biao, others disagreed because his health was too poor.⁴⁰ Salisbury speculated that Deng Xiaoping, "the tough, durable secretary general of the Party," might be the major purger. On the contrary, instead of being the man behind the purge, Deng became the second victim after Liu Shaoqi's fall.⁴¹

Salisbury soon changed his mind. Two months later, Salisbury wrote on the same subject that "Chinese Reds Begin Drive to Glorify Lin Piao," suggesting that the emergence of the Defense Minister marked a turning point in Chinese history. Salisbury remarked,

A campaign has been launched in China to glorify

Lin Piao, the Defense Minister, and underline his new role as heir apparent to Mao Tsetung, the Communist Party's Chairman. This represents a significant shift in emphasis on the part of Peking. Until recently Mr. Lin was content to stand in Mr. Mao's shadow and be acknowledged simply as the Party leader's chief aide and spokesman. Today he is being praised and his name is appearing more frequently in the press as the authoritative voice of the hierarchy.⁴²

As Lin's power increased, Salisbury indicated that it was difficult to tell "just where Chairman Mao's authority ends and Mr. Lin's begins."⁴³

Meanwhile, the praising of Lin became an important political task for the Chinese media, headed by the People's Liberation Army Daily and reproduced by other newspapers. A Times story quoted the military paper as praising Lin who had "always implemented Chairman Mao's thought and followed his correct line most faithfully, firmly and thoroughly."⁴⁴

In analyzing the purposes of the current propaganda campaign, the story suggested, "The intensified adulation of Mr. Lin" was aiming at:

- 1) increasing Lin's stature in preparation for his eventual succession to Chairman Mao;
- 2) strengthening his hand for further purging of important party figures.⁴⁵

The Times was able to keep a good record of Lin's public activities until September 1971, when suddenly it lost his track. Silent about Lin Biao for a couple of weeks in September, The Times began to speculate on his whereabouts on October 1--the Chinese National Day. A

story noticed that the People's Daily omitted publishing the "customary large photos of Chairman Mao and Deputy Chairman Lin Piao."⁴⁶

A week later, The Times reported that Premier Zhou met Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie in Beijing. The story referred to members of the delegation who said that they were not certain whether Lin was present."⁴⁷

On the same day following the previous story, The Times ran another story under the headline of "The Lin Piao mystery," that,

All China watchers have noted recent signs of shifts and changes and particularly the nonappearance of such prominent personages as Vice Chairman Lin Piao and other top army men.⁴⁸

The mystery remained for the rest of the year in China.

On December 2, 1971, Tillman Durdin, by sorting the facts from Chinese media which deliberately omitted the name of their target, said that "Peking Denounces Plotters in Party Attack on Lin." He noted that a joint editorial in Beijing's leading newspapers charged that the "chieftains of opportunist lines were intriguing against Communist unity in China."⁴⁹

Durdin commented that the editorial was the "sharpest" and most "outspoken" official attack in connection with the "protracted absence of Mr. Lin." Instead of mentioning his name, the editorial labeled Lin and his associates as "bourgeois careerists," "splitters"

and "sham Marxist schemers," Durdin added.⁵⁰

The Chinese government disclosed Lin's fall on July 27, 1972, almost ten months after Lin's death on September 12, 1971. In fact, The Times' conclusion about Lin's fate had been arrived at six months earlier than the Chinese media actually disclosed the news. In December, 1971, Durdin concluded, "It now seems likely that Mr. Lin gradually came to realize that Mr. Mao and his supporters were moving to downgrade him and that Mr. Lin's actions to combat this led to confrontation in September that Mr. Lin⁵¹ lost."

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CHAPTER IV

CHINA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS;

THE NIXON VISIT

Background

Before the Cultural Revolution, China had established formal diplomatic relations with 46 countries. Sixteen of them were in Asia, 13 in Africa, 16 in Europe, and one in Latin America.

When the CR began, China's relations with other countries began to sour dramatically. Of 46 ambassadors, 45 had been called back to Beijing. The only country that had retained a Chinese diplomatic envoy was Egypt.

Meanwhile, constant military conflicts escalated the tension on the Sino-Soviet border. By the end of 1971, the Soviet Union increased its military buildup along the 400-¹ mile border to about forty-four divisions. The two countries were on the edge of war. The serious Soviet military threat led Premier Zhou Enlai to readjust China's foreign policy. He persuaded Mao to send the ambassadors back to the countries with which China had diplomatic relations before the CR. Meanwhile, China began to search for a counter-balance against the Soviet Union. The United

States was on the top of its list.

In a 1970 interview with American writer Edgar Snow, Mao had indicated that Richard Nixon would be welcome in Beijing. The informal invitation soon reached Washington. Shortly thereafter, the President referred, for the first time, to "Red China" as the People's Republic of China. As a response, China invited the U.S. table tennis team to China in April 1971. In July, Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State, secretly visited China, preparing the way for President Nixon's visit the following February.

The Times Report on China's
Foreign Relations

In Durdin's account, the reason China recalled its ambassadors stemmed from clashes between Chinese diplomats and local authorities of the host countries, as Chinese officials were trying to spread the CR fever to the local Chinese population in 1966. Durdin briefly described the scene: "In Hong Kong, Peking partisans attempted an uprising, while in Burma pro-Peking Chinese went on a rampage of violence. Foreign envoys in Peking and some foreign missions were subjected to attacks."²

By 1969 China had already realized the seriousness of being isolated from the outside world and had begun to improve its relations with other countries. On October 14, 1970, after 20 months of talks, China established

diplomatic relations with Canada, a big step on the road toward restoring foreign relations with other countries. Meanwhile, the Canadian government broke relations with the Nationalist government on Taiwan.

On October 14, 1970, the day that China and Canada declared their decision, The Times reported that "Canada Set Up Ties To Red China and Drop Taiwan."³ The story quoted a joint communique by the Chinese and Canadian governments issued in Beijing: "The Canadian Government recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China." The story indicated that "the issue of Taiwan's status had been the chief element delaying the agreement on mutual recognition"⁴ for 20 months.

Following Canada's move, the United States established diplomatic relations with China in less than two years. Meanwhile, The Times was closely following China's diplomatic actions.

On November 24, 1970, The Times reported "Moscow and Peking Conclude One-Year Agreement on Trade;"⁵ on January 6, 1971, "Communist China Recognized by Chile;"⁶ on January 23, Japan's desire to improve relations with China.⁷ At the same time, The Times observed China's actions in improving relations with Arab and African countries.

Ihsan A. Hijazi, The Times Arab reporter, indicated

that Beijing was "Widening Ties With Arabs."⁸ The reporter recorded that China's exports to Arab markets in 1970 "increased 10 per cent over the period of 1967 to 1969. The increase totaled about \$200 million."⁹ The story noted that China's major trade partners in the Arab market were Southern Yemen, the Sudan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and the United Arab Republic.

Another story stated "China Quietly Renewing An Active Role in Africa."¹⁰ From Nigeria William Borders reported that China had recently established diplomatic relations with Nigeria, Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea, and at the same time, inaugurated a \$400 million railway project in Tanzania and Zambia. Borders indicated that China had been engaged in many activities in Africa "with a zeal that often surpasses that of advisers from other countries."¹¹

The Times Report on U.S.-China Relations

In June 1971, The Times reported the first signal sent by the Nixon Administration to improve relations with China. Tad Szulc reported from Washington that the U.S. government decided to lift its ban on "travel by Americans to Communist China."¹² The Nixon Administration was aiming at creating "broad opportunities for contacts between the Chinese and American people," the story explained.¹³ In

contrast to China travel, the story revealed that the U.S. government still banned Americans from travel to North Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba.¹⁴

A further step toward the normalization of Sino-U.S. relations was taken on April 10, 1971, when a "15-man U.S. Table Tennis Team Crosses Into China From Hong Kong."¹⁵ The event was well-known as "Ping-pong Diplomacy," the prelude to a relationship between China and the United States. The following day, China granted visas to three American journalists entering China.¹⁶

The ping pong story about the 15 team members entering China reported the facts about the visit as a plain sports event. The story included time, place and people who were involved in the event. This story did not connect the sporting event with politics.

However, the second day story changed the theme. The Times interpreted the event as a symbol of a thaw in the relations between the two countries. In Washington, Ian Stewart wrote that many government officials viewed the granting of the visas to American newsmen "as a further sign that China was moving to discard its policy of self-isolation."¹⁷ Stewart connected the invitation to the table tennis team and the granting of the visas to American journalists as the "first positive response" by the Chinese government to the Nixon Administration's decision to lift bans on travel by Americans to China. The

reporter referred to these signs as "major events in what has been a sterile history of relations" between the two countries.¹⁸ Stewart anticipated that, sooner or later, these major events could possibly lead to a broad range of exchanges in many fields."¹⁹

Since the Communist Party took power in 1949, only two American journalists had been permitted to visit China. The year 1957 brought in William Worthy who worked for the Afro-American newspapers and the Columbia Broadcasting System. Prior to 1970, Edgar Snow twice visited China.

Stewart referred to an informed source as saying that "local Communist officials appeared 'shell-shocked' by the sudden shift in Peking policy."²⁰

To summarize the American position about the exchange of newsmen, The Times recalled that the American government had called for an exchange as early as 1964, and again in 1966. The U.S. government informed China through ambassadorial meetings in Warsaw that Chinese newsmen could visit the United States "despite the Chinese ban on American reporters."²¹ However, Stewart said that China did not respond to the American moves.

On the other hand, the story recorded the Chinese position on this issue. Stewart indicated China had declared that "so long as the principal issue of Taiwan was unresolved there could be no progress on 'secondary

issues.'" ²² However, the breakthrough of China's policy change indicated that "applications for visas by other American correspondents might be favorably received." ²³

Another step toward normalizing relations was taken by the U.S. government. Robert B. Semple Jr. reported in June 1971 that "President Ends 21-year Embargo On Peking Trade." ²⁴ Semple said that President Nixon "authorized the export of a wide range of nonstrategic items and he lifted all controls on imports from China." The White House considered these moves as more political than commercial. The Nixon Administration overtly declared that "Chinese products are sold at a political price without regard to cost." ²⁵ Thereafter, the pace toward normalizing the relations between the two countries escalated.

A month later, The Times disclosed, "Nixon Is Expected To Visit China Around End Of Year; To See Both Mao And Chou." ²⁶ The same story also revealed that Kissinger visited China from July 9 to 11 and forged the agreement with the Chinese leaders that President Nixon would visit Beijing as soon as possible. The story described how Kissinger walked in the press room after his 49-hour visit to China "with a broad smile on his face, obviously pleased with the outcome of his trip." ²⁷

However, the White House was not totally optimistic about Nixon's future visit to China. Some U.S. government officials worried about "certain risks" in dealing with

China. They understood that the Chinese government considered American support for the Nationalist government on Taiwan an obstacle on the road toward improved relations between the two countries.

The Taiwan issue remained an obstacle not only in U.S.-China relations but also on China's road to U.N. recognition. The American delegation to the United Nations, headed by George Bush, drafted a resolution to keep the Nationalist government in the U.N. while admitting China. The special resolution addressing "important questions" required a two-thirds majority vote from the representatives.

On October 26, 1971, the General Assembly voted, as The Times put it, "overwhelmingly to admit Communist China²⁸ and to expel the Chinese Nationalist government." The story said that the result of the voting was a last battle on the part of the United States to keep the Nationalist government in the U.N. in the 22nd year.²⁹ That same American delegation had played a major role in keeping the Chinese Communists out of the U.N. since 1961.

When the voting results were announced, the story went on, "as the electrical tally boards flashed the news that the 'important question' proposal had failed, pandemonium broke out on the Assembly floor. Delegates²⁹ jumped up and applauded." On the contrary, the American delegation "sat in total dejection."³¹ The story quoted

Bush in responding to the situation that he hoped the world organization would "not relive this moment of infamy."³² Bush was further quoted as saying, "It's hard to believe that a few hours ago we didn't think we had anything to worry about."³³

On February 10, 1972, after the Taiwan delegation walked out of the U.N. building, The Times reported that "President Calls On Taipei And Peking To Negotiate."³⁴ In this story, Tad Szulc wrote from Washington about the change in Nixon's attitude toward the Taiwan issue. He quoted President Nixon: "The ultimate relationship between Taiwan and the mainland is not a matter for the United States to decide."³⁶ This change laid a foundation for the leaders of the two countries to surmount the obstacle of the Taiwan issue when they came to the negotiation table.

However, three weeks before Nixon's China visit, The Times remarked that there were still some uncertainties and doubt about Nixon's trip. In an opinion piece headlined "Nixon Turns to China," James Reston wrote, "what then, it is asked, can Mr. Nixon hope to get out of the China visit? In tangible terms, probably not much."³⁶ Reston raised the Taiwan issue and was not optimistic about the solution. He reasoned that on Taiwan, the President was "almost certain to be asked why he still has several thousand troops in what Zhou Enlai considers a

province of China, and how would Mr. Nixon like it if
 China stationed troops in Hawaii or Long Island?"³⁷

Therefore, in expressing very limited expectations about Nixon's visit, the writer suggested that "the President is undoubtedly right to minimize the expectations of the American people before he leaves."³⁸ Reston was convinced that the negotiation simply could not go beyond cultural and trade exchanges.

The Times Report on the Nixon Visit

President Nixon's hope to visit China materialized on February 21, 1971, in spite of various concerns and doubts. Max Frankel, on a special assignment to report Nixon's China visit for The New York Times, filed his first story about Nixon's arrival in Shanghai:

President Nixon arrived in China this morning to mark the end of a generation of hostility between the United States and China and to begin a new but undefined relationship between the most powerful and the most populous of nations.³⁹

Premier Zhou Enlai was waiting with the reception committee at Hong Qiao airport in Shanghai. His handshake with President Nixon reminded Frankel of the hand that "Secretary of State John Foster Dulles spurned at the Geneva Conference in 1954, when the memories of conflict between China and the United States in Korea were still raw and their contest over Indochina had just been
⁴⁰
 joined."

But this time, the handshake "symbolized the end of American ostracism of his Communist Government."⁴¹ Due to the fact that there were no formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, the reception ceremony was short and small in scale: "The moment that has been so elaborately labeled as historic by the President and by many other Americans passed swiftly into history," wrote Frankel, who perceived the reception ceremony as a "studiously correct but minimal official welcome."⁴²

In 1972, the Cultural Revolution was still underway. The American delegation could see some signs and could sense this political event everywhere they passed. Frankel noticed that "Mr. Mao's portrait stares down upon visitors from prominent positions at both the Shanghai and the Peking airports and from many of the prominent buildings of the capital along the drive to the government guest house, where the Nixons will be staying."⁴³ Some slogans expressing China's foreign policy against the United States and the Soviet Union were still on display. One of them "complains of the 'bullying by United States imperialism and by social imperialism'--the latter expression being a euphemism for the Russians." Another slogan "warmly hails the great victories of the three Indochina peoples in their war against United States imperialism." A third slogan was about the support to Arab countries "in their struggle against U.S. imperialism and

Zionism." ⁴⁴ These slogans obviously suggested to the American delegation that they had landed in a country that was very different from their own.

Despite the differences between the two countries, the negotiators from both sides decided to search for more communication over issues of common concern including Taiwan and the Vietnam War. President Nixon articulated the common ground in his toast at a banquet with the Chinese leaders: "There is no reason for us to be enemies. Neither of us seeks the territory of the other. Neither of us seeks domination over the other. Neither of us seeks to stretch out our hand and rule the world." ⁴⁵

On the second day of the visit, this headline dominated the front page of The Times: "Nixon Spends An Hour With Mao And Then, At A Banquet, Hears Chou Toast His Trip As 'Positive.'" ⁴⁶

Unfortunately, The Times was unable to report the Mao-Nixon meeting in further detail because no media were allowed during the meeting.

When the Taiwan issue was addressed in the Nixon-Zhou meeting, leaders of both sides agreed that the Taiwan issue was crucial in the negotiation. American officials insisted that the United States was committed to defend Taiwan under the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty, while Chinese leaders asserted that "Taiwan is part of China" and that the Taiwan issue "remained the crucial question

obstructing' normal relations with the United States."⁴⁷

At the end, the American leaders expressed their wish that the Taiwan issue could be settled by "the Chinese themselves."⁴⁸

Frankel noticed that during the negotiation, Zhou was confident that both governments would work "through common efforts" to normalize their relations.⁴⁹ The "common efforts" were summarized below:

They found each other useful, sharing parallel concerns about the Russians, holding common concerns about the Japanese, groping for a new post-Vietnam balance in Asia and wondering why they had ever permitted themselves to become such passionate and obsessed enemies.⁵⁰

As a result, the Chinese leader promised to keep in touch with the American government through various channels. Zhou agreed to "facilitate" further "unofficial contacts" in science, technology, culture, sports and journalism and to "permit the progressive development of trade with the United States."⁵¹

When the eight-day visit came to an end, President Nixon found himself parting with an "American pledge to arrange a gradual withdrawal of United States forces from Taiwan and a joint pledge for a gradual increase in American-Chinese contacts and exchanges."⁵² Frankel quoted President Nixon who contended that "this was the week that changed the world."⁵³

As a witness of Nixon's China visit and reporter for

The Times for this special coverage, Frankel concluded that both Nixon and Zhou found that they were much closer to the normalization of relations between the two countries. At the end, Frankel wrote that President Nixon was heading home with a "conviction that both governments were committed to 'build a bridge' across the Pacific and 22 years of hostility."

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CHAPTER V

THE GANG OF FOUR

Background

Mao's death on September 9, 1976 left a vacancy in the supreme position in China's political apparatus, and consequently, created another power struggle among China's top leaders. The two major rivals for the top leadership were Premier Hua Guofeng, Mao's chosen successor, and Jiang Qing, Mao's widow. Hua gained the upper hand in the power struggle and ordered the arrest of Jiang and the other three politburo members who had supported her. The other three persons were Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen. These four politicians were labeled the "Gang of Four" immediately following their arrests in October, 1976.

Jiang Qing, a Shanghai actress in the late 1930s, joined the revolution led by Mao Zedong in Yenan, Shanxi Province, where she met and married Mao. Jiang's first taste of power was bestowed by Lin Biao who appointed her chief adviser to PLA on opera, dance, music, and novels, in 1966, the year that the CR began. A few months later, Mao made his wife deputy head of CR's leading group. Of

the five members in this group, three were "Gang of Four" elements, namely, Jiang Qing herself, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan.

The first target of this group was Liu Shaoqi, whose high position had threatened Mao. Meanwhile, Jiang kept a close relationship with Lin Biao because both Mao and Jiang understood that they needed the army to secure their power. With Mao and Lin, the two most powerful men behind her, Jiang directed a wide purge through Red Guard violence.

Between 1966 and 1968, Jiang frequently visited Beijing University where she talked to the Red Guard organizations and encouraged them to use violence against "capitalist roaders." In two years, more than 52 percent of the National Political Consolidation members and 65 percent of the Party Central Committee members were forced by violence to confess that they were "traitors," "spies," "counter-revolutionaries," "capitalist-roaders," and "revisionists," and consequently removed from office.¹

Jiang's power had been dramatically increased since 1966. Her name was routinely listed first in rank when Mao was away from Beijing. On many occasions she received leaders from other countries in the name of the top leader and stole most of the spotlight from the media. Historian Ross Terrill, author of Madame Mao, the White-Boned Demon, remarked that "turn on the TV and there was her face; open the newspaper and there was news of her

activities."²

The "Gang of Four" was also known as the "Shanghai Gang" because all four persons had Shanghai connections. Jiang met both Zhang and Yao in Shanghai in the 1930s. At that time, Zhang was the head of Wen Hui Bao, and later rose to be Party chief of Shanghai. Yao was a Shanghai writer and literary critic. Their relationship had continued for 30 years and reached its climax during the CR. In Terrill's analysis: "The loyalty of Zhang and Yao to Jiang Qing was due to her charm, her left-wing views on arts, and the appeal of her proximity to Mao."³

Wang Hongwen was almost 30 years younger than the other three. Starting as a security guard in the No. 17 Textile Mill in Shanghai, Wang joined the clique in 1966 when he was in his thirties. Gardner noted that Wang "threw himself into the violent political struggle which convulsed that city and mobilized workers in support of Zhang Chungqiao."⁴ Promoted by Jiang, Zhang and Yao, Wang rose to Vice-Chairman of the Municipal Revolutionary Committee of Shanghai in 1972. At the same time, he was Political Commissar of the Shanghai Military Garrison and the head of the Shanghai Union Federation. In 1973, the Party's Tenth Congress appointed Wang Vice-Chairman of the Party, the same position Lin Biao formerly held.

The Times Report on the Gang of Four

In a country like China where politics are tightly controlled from the top, so is the information. Any detail of the procedure of selecting a new leader can be handled in total secrecy. After Nixon's visit to China in 1972, it was much easier for the United States to send newsmen to Beijing, but it didn't mean that gathering news was easy. For an event like the purge of the "Gang of Four," foreign newsmen had to start with speculation.

Before China officially released the news of the arrests of Jiang Qing and her associates, the speculation was mostly based on wall posters on school campuses. In China, the media served as instruments conveying the voice of the Party only. During the CR, Mao encouraged the Red Guards to use dazibao, a Chinese term for wall posters, to express their love of Mao and hatred of the "counter-revolutionaries." Not long after, dazibao spread to the whole society.

The first story in The Times about the Gang of Four appeared on October 12, 1976, a week after their arrests. Written by Ross H. Munro of Canadian Globe and Mail, the story, disclosed in "Mao's Widow, 3 Shanghai Radicals Reported Held for Plotting a Coup" that "mounting evidence" in Beijing seemed to suggest that the "Gang of Four" had⁵ been arrested about a week earlier. The Munro story,

based on a dazibao on the campus of the Foreign Languages Institute in Beijing, declared that some signs indicated that Hua Guofeng had gained the upper hand in the power struggle. The dazibao disclosed that "Chairman Mao had made arrangements before his death for Hua to succeed him." ⁶ Another dazibao obviously suggested the same: "In one army compound, posters announced the appointment of Mr. Hua as Chairman and called for uniting around the Party Central Committee headed by him." ⁷

The story characterized the "Four:" Jiang was called a "key influence on her husband and one who helped radicalize the content of art, literature and music in China during the past decade." Wang was said to "rank second in the Communist Party hierarchy." Zhang "ranks fourth" among the Chinese leaders, and had been considered as a "potential Chairman or Prime Minister." Yao, who "ranks sixth, has exerted significant control in recent years over the press, which has tended to reflect a radical line." ⁸

On the same day, following Munro's story, Butterfield filed "'No Comment' in Peking," in which the reporter indicated that the Chinese officials used an unusual "no comment" in response to the arrest of Jiang Qing. Butterfield commented that "In the past, Chinese spokesmen have usually immediately denied reports they considered untrue." ⁹ But this time, they neither denied nor supported

the report. Therefore, Butterfield was confident that the unusual "no comment" meant silent agreement.

Following Butterfield's story, The Times ran sketches with mug shots of the four leaders reportedly being
¹⁰
 purged. The sketches can be summarized thus:

Jiang Qing

- . Once an obscure Shanghai actress known as Lan Ping
- . Came to rank high in the Beijing hierarchy as the wife of Mao Zedong
- . Most prominent member of the Party's radical faction and nation's most powerful woman
- . Inconspicuous in her role as Mao's wife and mother of one daughter before Mao pushed her into the limelight to guide cultural affairs
- . Banished many earlier works of drama, art and music and promoted the output of operas, ballets, dramas and musical works that advocated new Maoism
- . Played key role during the CR
- . 62 years old

Zhang Chungqiao:

- . An original member of the radical "Shanghai set" of the Communist Party
- . A Deputy Prime Minister and possibly a candidate for party leadership
- . Propagandist for Communist in World War II
- . Became leader in art and literary circles in Shanghai after Communist takeover in 1949, when he began to climb party's leadership ladder
- . Catapulted into prominence in the CR
- . One of four remaining members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo at time of Mao's death

Wang Hongwen

- . A radical in the Mao tradition, Party's deputy chairman, second in rank
- . In his early 40s, the youngest of Party's leaders
- . A charismatic leader from Shanghai, not considered a favorite for Party leadership
- . Political apprenticeship rooted in the CR

Yao Wenyuan

- . A propagandist from Shanghai and leading figure among leftist radicals
- . Came to prominence in the CR
- . Set the tone of the CR with editorials; dealt with matters of ideology, Party organization and propaganda

On the following day, The Times ran a story from Reuters with the headline of "Photos of 4 Leftists Withdrawn in Peking." Based on past experience that photographs of purged leaders were quickly withdrawn from circulation, the story recounted that foreign correspondents who tried to buy the official photograph of the four were told that "none was available."¹¹ The only pictures available for sale were of Hua, the story noted.

On October 14, Butterfield reported, "China's information media have begun issuing strongly worded warnings against 'conspiracies' as Chinese officials continued their silence today."¹² The story quoted a Chinese local radio as announcing that "we must be united very closely around the Party center headed by Comrade Hua

Guofeng and resolutely uphold the unity of the Party."¹³

Based on the radio announcement, Butterfield was convinced that "members of the so-called 'moderates' among Peking's leaders had increased their authority."¹⁴

Meanwhile, more facts of the purge were revealed through dazibao, the unofficial means of disseminating information among the people themselves. On October 15, 1976, Butterfield wrote in "Wall Posters in China Charge Four Leftists With Plotting Against Party" that dazibao in Shanghai, Beijing and other cities were expressing sentiment against the four Shanghai radicals. A Shanghai dazibao identified the "Four" by name and denounced them as an "antiparty plot group."¹⁵ The story also showed that some dazibao read, "Crush the heads of the four dogs;" others wrote, "Crush and strangle the gang of four."¹⁶

As Hua's position was increasingly confirmed, more army and provincial leaders pledged their support. The Beijing Garrison was among the first to do so. The Times reported on October 17 that China's elite Beijing Garrison "pledged allegiance" to Hua after a weekend of mass demonstrations against his opponents."¹⁷ The reporter quoted a front-page story in the People's Daily which said, "the garrison had sworn to win new victories under the Party's Central Committee headed by Hua, who has succeeded Mao Tse-tung as Chairman of the Communist Party

and leader of China." ¹⁸ the People's Daily also declared that the Beijing Garrison would "battle resolutely against 'factionalists' and plotters." At the end, the writer remarked that in Shanghai, "some of the marchers carried effigies of Jiang dangling on a noose and banners bore her name in big ideographic characters drawn to look like ¹⁹ bones."

Another story about dazibao on October 18, titled "Poster Says Wife Tried to Kill Mao," indicated that a dazibao on the campus of Beijing University charged that Jiang Qing "personally tried to kill Mao on his ²⁰ deathbed." The story attributed the dazibao to some physics students of Beijing University, who supplied a "dramatic ²¹ version of the events surrounding Mao's death on Sept. 9." The dazibao read, "When Chairman Mao was gravely ill, Jiang Qing did not care.... When Chairman Mao's illness reached its crisis, Jiang Qing disregarded opposition and obstacles from the doctor and attempted to ²² kill him."

Based on sources from Hong Kong, Butterfield reported at the end of October that Jiang reportedly "took out several of Mao's documents from the Communist Party's ²³ special archives and reworded them." Hua reportedly discovered that Jiang Qing had obtained the documents "without proper permission." Hua immediately ordered Jiang to return the documents and then "discovered the

alterations." ²⁴ The Hong Kong source indicated that this was one of the reasons that Hua decided to arrest her and her associates. In Butterfield's analysis the account "sounded highly plausible." ²⁵ Furthermore, the story quoted a Chinese official in Hong Kong who said that the story appeared to be "based on facts." ²⁶

In the same story, Butterfield wrote that one poster addressed Jiang and her associates as the "four poisonous insects." ²⁷ He commented that Jiang's unpopularity stemmed from her attacks on too many "old-time" Party leaders during CR. ²⁸

By the end of October, The Times had printed 32 stories about the Gang of Four. The content of the stories during the month was consistent, except that by the end of the month the tone became more and more certain as the events unfolded.

On the last day of October, The Times ran an opinion piece written by Allen S. Whiting, professor of political science at the University of Michigan, anticipating that the fall of Jiang Qing and her associates might bring closer U.S.-China relations. ²⁹ Professor Whiting said that the fall of the Gang of Four "removes the most poisonous elements in Peking affecting Sino-American relations." ³⁰ He perceived the "Four" as "the primary obstacle" on the Chinese side toward the normalization of the relations between the two countries. ³¹ Whiting noted that under the

control of radical policies, "the propagandized images of the United States were 'U.S. imperialism,' 'American devils,' 'aggressors' and 'plunderers.'" ³² The professor explained that history books for China's younger generation asserted that in the 1950s, "the U.S. imperialists suddenly began an aggressive attack on Korea with the mad ambition to seize Korea and continue on to attack China." ³³

However, Jiang Qing's hard-line foreign policy did not stand alone. Her supporters echoed her views on many occasions. Whiting recalled that in July 1976, Zhang Chungqiao "shocked American visitors by ruling out the 'peaceful liberation of Taiwan' as a viable option." ³⁴ Since Zhang was Deputy Prime Minister, and chief political commissar of the armed forces, "his hard line was dutifully echoed by other officials in Peking and in China's liaison office in Washington." ³⁵

Wang Hongwen's support of anti-American policy was reflected at the 10th Party Congress when he was named Vice Chairman of the Party. In his speech to this Congress, Wang "warned against a 'surprise attack' by imperialism and social-imperialism." ³⁶

Although Yao Wenyuan did not address foreign policy in public, he exercised tight control over China's major official media apparatus. Whiting asserted that Yao "was responsible for implementing Jiang Qing's line." ³⁷

Endnotes

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Summary and Discussion

The Cultural Revolution has been viewed by both Chinese and Western writers as a power struggle among China's top leadership and as a brutal attack on millions of Chinese people. This thesis has outlined four major events that took place between 1966 and 1976; at the same time, it has reviewed The New York Times reporting on China during the CR.

The major events have been summarized chronologically as the purge of Liu Shaoqi, the rise and fall of Lin Biao, Nixon's China visit and the arrests of the "Gang of Four." The picture of inhumane suffering that millions of Chinese people experienced was presented through the accounts by survivors of and writers on the CR, such as Liang, Gao, Cheng, Thurston, Salisbury and Butterfield.

Due to historical limitations, most stories reported by The Times from 1966 to 1976 were off-spot-coverage. The only exception was the coverage of Nixon's visit, during which reporter Max Frankel traveled with the President. The Times foreign correspondents had watched China from

Hong Kong office and moved to Beijing only in 1979, three years after the CR officially ended.

During the CR, The Times also used numerous stories from sources of other countries, such as Reuters, Agence France-Press, the Canadian Globe and Mail, and Tanyug, the Yugoslav press agency.

The major sources of the stories from China were official newspapers and radio broadcasts, often seriously slanted. However, The Times reporters' knowledge of China helped them explain, analyse and interpret what was going on. For example, during the Lin Biao incident, the Chinese government and the media had kept silent for ten months about Lin's sudden disappearance. In this case, there was no official account for the foreign correspondent. However, six months before the Chinese government officially disclosed the news, The Times reporters had read between lines of Chinese media and had put forth a series of logical speculations on the likely status of Lin Biao and his followers.

The Times speculated and analysed the arrests of the "Gang of Four" under similar conditions. The reporters based their observation on the fact that the official pictures of the "Four" had been withdrawn from circulation and speculated that the "Four" must have been purged. They made the best of the situation by whatever channels were available and dug out information via sources from Hong

Kong, spoken words from government officials and from dazibao. Again, The Times conclusion coincided with the fate of the "Four" announced by the Chinese government much later.

It is not an exaggeration for Salisbury to say that The Times is a "newspaper of record." It has recorded each major event including three major power struggles and Nixon's visit, which have been included in this thesis. In each power struggle when a person emerged among the leading group or disappeared from the political scene, The Times was able to follow the changes and to provide fairly complete background information on each major political figure.

In Nixon's visit, The Times provided full and detailed coverage and analysis of China's foreign policy and its foreign relations in its stories and editorials. Details were given in the stories about Nixon's landing in China, the reception banquet, the Joint Communiqué and Nixon's departure from China. The stories recounted the subtle changes in the relations between the two countries as the visit unfolded.

However, during the CR, The Times stories had very few details about the brutality and inhumane treatment that millions of Chinese people experienced. The facts about the deaths of more than one million people and those who shared similar experiences, like Liang Heng, Gao Yuan,

Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun, were not found in The Times stories. Many stories about the wide purge were revealed only in the aftermath by insiders and survivors. To answer the research question raised earlier in this thesis, that is, how well The Times reported the CR between 1966 and 1976, the conclusion is, that the newspaper kept a good record of each power struggle and other major events but missing was an account of the deaths and brutal treatment experienced by many well known intellectuals, government officials, writers, film stars, sports stars and millions of other victims of the CR. This omission can be attributed to the limitations of the off-spot-coverage.

Recommendations

This thesis has presented a historical summary of four major events in the CR, while examining how well The New York Times reported on China during the CR. Future researchers might select other events of interest.

It might be interesting to examine the Chinese version of the CR from the People's Daily, China's official newspaper, or other sources, or compare the Chinese sources with western sources.

It also may be of interest to select sources other than The New York Times, or make make comparison between The New York Times with other sources, such as the London Times or the Los Angeles Times.

It is also recommended that further studies be done through quantitative content analysis.

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APPENDIX A

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE CR

1966

May "May 16 Circular," the first important document in the Cultural Revolution.

First dazibao appears at Beijing University.

August Red Guards make formal debut in Beijing.

1967

January People's Liberation Army intervenes in the CR.

April Liu Shaoqi officially denounced as "China's Khrushchev."

1968

June Violence on upswing throughout China. Red Guards raid military arsenals, turn captured weapons on rival factions.

September Mao calls for the Red Guards to be sent to rural areas to be "reeducated" by peasants.

October Liu Shaoqi expelled from the Party.

1969

March Armed conflict between China and the Soviet Union breaks out on the border.

April Ninth Party Congress meets. Lin Biao formally named Mao's legal successor.

November Death of Liu Shaoqi.

1970

October Canada extends formal diplomatic recognition to China.

1971

September Death of Lin Biao following a failed coup attempt.

October China seated in the U.N.

1972

February Nixon visits China.

1976

January Death of Zhou Enlai.

September Death of Mao Zedong

October Arrest of the Gang of Four.

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Deng Xiaoping

Secretary-general of the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party before the CR. Deng became a main target of criticism but emerged as the key architect of the subsequent economic and political reforms. He is currently Chairman of the Central Military Commission, which ordered gunfire be used against the students demonstrating at Beijing Tiananmen Square.

Jiang Qing

Mao's widow. She was one of the Gang of Four.

Lin Biao

Defense Minister before the CR. He was named Mao's legal successor in the Ninth Party Congress in 1969. In 1971, he died in a plane crash in Mongolia, allegedly trying to flee to the Soviet Union after his plot to assassinate Mao failed.

Liu Shaoqi

President of China before the CR. He became the main target of the CR and died in custody.

Mao Zedong

Long time Party Chairman. He dominated Chinese politics for about 40 years. Died in 1976.

Wang Hongwen

Vice Chairman of the Party after the Tenth Party Congress. One of the Gang of Four.

Yao Wenyan

Propagandist who controlled media during the CR.

Zhang Chunqiao

Vice Premier before his arrest in 1976. He was one of the Gang of Four.

Zhou Enlai

Long time Premier before he died in 1976.

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