

Record: 1**Title:** The Chinese Cultural Revolution revisited: The role of the...**Authors:** Dittmer, Lowell**Source:** Journal of Contemporary China. Nov96, Vol. 5 Issue 13, p255. 14p.**Document Type:** Article**Subjects:** Cultural Revolution, China, 1966-1969**Abstract:** Discusses the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (CR) in China, specially looking at the feud between Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shaoqi. Reasons for the split between the two leaders; Early acts of organizational defiance by rebels; Conspiracy involved in the revolution; Shaoqi's impact on the CR; Details on the CR.**Full Text Word Count:** 7835**ISSN:** 1067-0564**DOI:** 10.1080/10670569608724254**Accession Number:** 9701131091**Database:** Humanities International Complete**THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION REVISITED: THE ROLE OF THE NEMESIS**

This paper takes issue with the tendency to 'reduce' the Cultural Revolution to elite conflict, specifically the 'two-line struggle' between Mao and his erstwhile heir apparent, Liu Shaoqi. There was elite conflict before the Cultural Revolution but the basic reason for the elite split was the Cultural Revolution itself; which Liu Shaoqi and most other members of his generation of senior officials strongly opposed until Mao reprimanded them. Liu was subsequently made the focal 'human target' as an expedient designed to unify the movement against a common adversary. Although unsuccessful in coordinating the movement, his role as nemesis infused the movement with negative meaning as its more positive goal of reviving a revolutionary 'spirit' was discredited by Red Guard excesses. Liu Shaoqi leaves an ambiguous legacy, consisting on the one hand of a pragmatic endorsement of economic and social reform that has since become extremely successful, and on the other hand of a classic defense of Confucian-Leninist ideals of organizational rectitude that have proved difficult to resuscitate.

On the eve of the third decennial of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (hereinafter, CR), that epoch-making event has justifiably come under renewed scholarly scrutiny.⁽ⁿ¹⁾ Any such retrospective would surely be incomplete without due attention to its nemesis and principal target, Liu Shaoqi. Aside from the Chinese fascination with political martyrdom, it is always useful in reviewing history's major watersheds to look at losers as well as winners, the representatives of what 'might have been'. But Liu's historical interest transcends the counterfactual conditional case, for to a considerable extent he also had the ability to shape what 'actually was'. To the extent that the CR was driven by elite rivalry (as distinct from the mere desire to have a cultural revolution), Liu may be assumed to have been *sine qua non* in its launching. To the extent that the meaning of the CR was shaped by its polemics, Liu contributed to the movement's reflexive self-definition. Even his villification, persecution and physical death have not terminated his symbolic career. The ironic twists of post-Mao history have resulted not only in Liu's personal rehabilitation, but in the revival of so many of the policies he was once identified with that the question arises: who really won and who lost the CR?

This essay will focus on three issues. First, why did Mao split with Liu? Second, what was Liu's personal impact on the CR? Third, how has Liu's posthumous rehabilitation and restoration to the pantheon of CCP heroes (even including a listing in Mao's own mausoleum) affected the mnemonic impact of the CR? It should perhaps be emphasized in advance that the answers proposed here to these questions are hypotheses presented for the purpose of discussion rather than exhaustively researched or firmly established conclusions.

Why the split?

The question of why Mao split with Liu was once answered with such dogmatic certainty as to have become part of the PRC's ideological bedrock, ranking as the last and greatest of the 'ten great line struggles'. That answer was that the Mao-Liu cleavage opened years ago, before the CR, before the Great Leap Forward, before land reform, even before Liberation. There was a 'struggle between two lines, two headquarters, and two roads', namely Mao's 'proletarian revolutionary line' and Liu's 'bourgeois reactionary line', which was tantamount to a 'class struggle' because there was a direct correspondence between the bourgeois classes in society and the 'people in authority taking the capitalist road'. This Manichaeian opposition had been waged with continual, fierce intensity throughout the history of the PRC or even before that, coinciding with the rise of its two respective protagonists. The reason it had not hitherto been publicly visible is that Liu, an extremely mendacious and resourceful antagonist, concealed his true nature except when an unusually tempting opportunity presented itself for him to strike, which was usually at just those points in the economic conjuncture when either Mao or the country in general (or both) were most vulnerable. At these points the 'snake' would come out of its 'hole', the 'time bomb' that had for so long been ticking away would explode, and the country's socialist course would be seriously jeopardized, even possibly reversed. Fortunately Mao managed to withstand Liu's opposition at each crisis point and the 'proletarian revolutionary line' was able to regroup and regain revolutionary momentum, while the subtle Liu would slink back into hiding until the next suitable opportunity presented itself.(n2)

There are two problems with this version of history: one evidentiary, one logical. The evidentiary support for the story seemed irrefutable in sheer mass and detail as in the course of the ten years of CR the archives were ransacked and every corroborating scintilla of evidence assembled and published. In order to find materials demonstrating that Liu was a 'renegade', for example, Jiang Qing dispatched more than 400 researchers to the Shenyang archives in July 1967; in the course of their (fruitless) 2-month search, they reviewed some 2,450,00 files in 15 or 16 archives.(n3) But there is another side of the coin. First, no 'line struggle' had been visible to close observers of the CCP leadership before the Cultural Revolution erupted--which is not necessarily to deny its existence, but to note that any such differences must have been covert. Second, only the leadership of the victorious, accusing 'line' has attested to the existence of 'line struggle': neither Liu Shaoqi nor Deng Xiaoping, nor any other principal in the 'bourgeois reactionary line', admitted in any of their public self-criticisms having anything to do with a consistent, coherent opposition to Mao's 'line', although they did confess making many discrete 'errors' in the course of their careers.(n4) It is of course conceivable that these 'human targets' were not being entirely forthcoming (none of their self-criticisms were accepted as 'sincere'), but in view of the pressure on them to admit the existence of such a line (pressure to which the accused in Stalin's purge trials succumbed)(n5) their refusal to do so earns them a certain credibility. Third, following Liu's official rehabilitation in 1981, new evidence and testimony has been published that tends to bear out their disclaimers and to discredit the 'two lines' interpretations.(n6)

While it might be objected that this evidence is no less the result of tendentious historiography than the polemical indictment, there are also serious logical flaws in the prosecutorial case. One is compelled to believe that Mao, after successfully resisting the 'frantic' assaults on his ideological line that Liu and his followers launched during land reform, after the Great Leap failure and at other periods of acute vulnerability in the course of the previous 17 years, took no punitive action whatever against Liu after defeating him, indeed that he encouraged Liu to publish his *How to Be a Good Communist*, become chief of state, and remain his heir apparent. Was Mao such a generous, gullible or tolerant man that he would repeatedly turn the other cheek to an identified antagonist? In his discussions of conflict, a topic on which he justly considered himself proficient, both in practice and in theory, the watchword was 'tit for tat'; as Mao put it at Lushan: 'if someone hits me I hit them back, and if someone hits me hard I hit back hard'. Mao did recommend feints and tactical delays to lure the enemy beyond his supply lines before striking, but the enemy was the enemy, to be 'annihilated'. If Mao had identified Liu as an opponent before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution why did he not promptly proceed against him and resolve the issue, as he did in the cases of Gao Gang, Peng Dehuai, and Lin Biao? In some of his obiter dicta Mao sometimes gave the impression that he was a dead father at his own funeral (as he put it), too weak to gain a Central Committee majority against his opponents, but a careful review of the available material on high-level policy debates from, say, the Great Leap Forward to the CR does not reveal a single instance of a majority coalescing to oppose him--though it does suggest that when the apparatus was laboriously mobilized to implement his initiatives the results were often disappointing to him.

Yet if the 'two-line struggle' story gives us an 'overdetermined' explanation of the CR, how can we accept the 'no two lines' post-Mao verdict on Liu without being obliged to accept an underdetermined account? After all, Liu was not only purged, but became the central polemical target of the CR, and bore the severest organizational sanctions of any elite victim at the 12th Plenum of the 8th Party Congress, being not only removed from all leadership positions in the Party and State but evicted from the Party itself--a supreme punishment indeed for someone who had dedicated his life to the Party, probably accelerating his physical demise. We seem driven by the severity of the punishment to presume that Mao must have harbored a deep animus against Liu for some time. Yet although Liu did occasionally take initial positions on policy issues diverging from those eventually decided upon by the Party leadership, the available documentation indicates that these did not add up to a consistent 'line' and were not considered deviant at the time, as Liu typically accepted criticism and joined the concurrent majority.⁽ⁿ⁷⁾ According to the rules of democratic centralism a wide array of options could be tabled and considered before arriving at a consensus, after which iron discipline was invoked. Not even in the disagreements involved in the implementation of the Socialist Education Movement in the years immediately preceding the CR are any clear or consistent opposing 'lines' apparent, but rather a complicated zig-zag pattern in which all seemed equally perplexed by the difficulties the CCP faced in the countryside.

If there were 'no two lines', why was Liu attacked and purged? I would hypothesize that a necessary and sufficient explanation for this may be found in the CR itself: i.e., Liu Shaoqi opposed the CR. This movement was a unique one in PRC history, marking a sharp departure from all previous mass movements, and has been retrospectively repudiated since Mao's death. It had two defining features: its departure from even the most rudimentary constraints on public civility; and its de facto repudiation of Party leadership of the mass movement, allowing decision making to flow to a considerable extent 'from the bottom to the top' instead of 'from the top down'. Mao found himself committed to the CR as it unfolded through a series of impulsive acts in its early stages, from which he could not then easily detach himself. He licensed a departure from civility in the period between October 1965 and May 1966 by endorsing the 'underground' political critique by Yao Wenyuan

when the official critique was still under the jurisdiction of Peng Zhen and the 5-member Cultural Revolution Group. His support of Kuai Dafu and other 'rebels' against work team oversight in the spring of 1966 was likewise based in part on their rejection of ritualized sloganeering in favor of more vigorous and pointed polemics.(n8) Mao first implicitly endorsed the repudiation of Party oversight of the movement by giving (on Kang Sheng's recommendation) his approval to Nie Yuanzi's 25 May 1966 'first big-character poster' at Peking University, in which she criticized local university and Party authorities. Mao's endorsement resulted in the contents of the poster being broadcast on national radio on 1 June, thereby inspiring the movement's more unruly elements nationwide. He underscored his position on this issue by posting 'Bombard the Headquarters: My First Big-character Poster' on the wall of the Zhongnanhai compound 5 August (the work teams had proscribed posters in public), also appearing with the first 'Red Guards' and publicly donning their brassard at a public rally before the 11th Plenum in early August.

The early acts of organizational defiance at the grass roots by Nie Yuanzi, Kuai Dafu and other rebels were probably not unprecedented in such movements but they would normally have been contained at the local level, and there is no doubt they would have been snuffed out here as well had it not been for the second unique feature of the Cultural Revolution, the rise of a radical elite group prepared to provide clandestine encouragement to local dissidents. This radical group was led by Kang Sheng, who had a different vision of a mass movement conceivably dating all the way back to his experience in the 1942-1944 Zhengfeng rectification movement in Yanan.(n9) This group of dissident elites proved untouchable despite its violation of organizational discipline because it included Mao's wife (and Kang's protege) Jiang Qing--just as the work teams had included Wang Guangmei, Cao Yi'ou (Kang's wife) and other relatives of senior cadres. Thus in the CR we have the first manifestation of something that has since become more widespread, namely the 'politics of the family' (e.g., the taizidang or 'princelings'). Jiang seems to have had personal reasons for a bias against Liu having to do with his previous opposition to her marriage to Mao and her jealousy of the public role played by Liu's wife Wang Guangmei.

Thus we seem driven to the inference that the launching of the CR did involve a conspiracy: after all, since September 1965, Jiang Qing had been meeting regularly with Yao Wenyuan and her group in Shanghai (unknown to the Central Committee) to write the critique of Wu Han, which Mao read (three times) and approved for publication. Yet this informal group was not necessarily conspiring against specific individuals, who would no doubt have immediately capitulated had Mao directly confronted them, but in favor of a certain form of radical revivalist movement, in whose ability to mobilize or even tolerate he had little faith in the regular Party apparatus. As he indicated in his revealing interview with Snow in 1970, Mao did not fully trust the love professed by his followers, either among the masses or among the elite, and sought while purposely withdrawing from the scene to stir up something that would force them to show their hands. And this Liu did: even after Mao had publicly signalled his sympathy for the rebels, Liu vigorously attempted to stifle the dissidents--which meant throttling the CR as Mao evidently conceived it--for a full 50 days in June and July before Mao returned to Beijing and repudiated his officious way of 'leading' the movement. In fact even after Mao had (on 18 July) called for the withdrawal of the work teams Liu equivocated, classifying them into three categories and arguing (on 23 July) that 'For such a great movement who can be relied upon to take leadership? The Party's leadership must take some form ... most of the work teams are still good'.(n10) While criticizing the work teams' (and his own) errors he also told them: 'Don't be afraid to let bad people go on the stage, this may do us some good. You can kill a snake only when it comes out of its hole'.(n11) Not until his first self-criticism to a central work conference on 23 October did Liu fully acknowledge and repudiate his work team 'error'. In contrast, Zhou Enlai, who was certainly not in on the radical conspiracy and whom Mao (later)

characterized as the 'biggest capitalist-roader', did not commit himself to either side of the work-team issue, but seemed to fade into the woodwork during this period.

Yet I would contend that despite Mao's warnings about revisionism cropping up in the Center, and Lin Biao's speech on the dangers of a coup d'etat, the struggle did not become personalized until several months later. Nor did Liu seem to have realized that Mao was the 'black hand' behind the radicals who were in turn rendering covert aid and support to the dissidents at the grass roots (he does seem to have suspected Kang Sheng). Liu respected Mao, but would brook no interference from radicals junior to him, who in turn hated Liu. As manifest leader of the anti-CR forces, Liu was sacked from his position as Party vice-chair (and heir apparent) in favor of Lin Biao and slid down the Politburo ranking from second to eighth place, but remained chief of state and a member of the Politburo and continued to appear with the rest of the leadership on Tiananmen during public ceremonies several times throughout the fall of 1966, signifying that he was not yet under house arrest. Mao approved his October self-criticism and said that he (and Deng) should be given time to correct their mistakes. The decision to turn the 'spearhead' of mass criticism against Liu was apparently first made by the Cultural Revolution Small Group (CRSG) in December 1966,(n12) but this did not yet represent a leadership consensus (e.g., it was still vocally resisted by Tao Zhu), and the radicals did not claim Mao's backing for targeting Liu. (n13)

The Center seems to have arrived at that decision in connection with the 'February adverse current'.(n14) There is no indication that Liu was personally active in these debates or even a central focus of discussion, but the position of the dissidents, apparently led by Tan Zhenlin, was so close to the position Liu had so energetically espoused during the 50 days--viz., the Party must lead the movement, any notion that the masses might govern themselves (i.e., a 'Paris Commune') was beyond the pale, a Central Committee plenum should be convened to reassert Party leadership, there should be greater civility in debates, and so forth(n15)--that Mao may have conceived Liu to be the 'black hand' behind this powerful grouping. The CR was by this time beginning to disintegrate into chaos, as Mao (if not the 'Maoists') would have had to concede, with local 'power seizures' against municipal and local governments and factory managements resulting in internecine factional violence. Yet for Mao to rescind his earlier decisions concerning the wrong-headedness of Party work teams or the right of the 'masses' to post big-character posters freely in public and circulate self-published newspapers would have incurred serious damage to his own position at this point. If he compromised with the conservatives and agreed to hold a Party Congress or CC Plenum to reconsider the untenable direction the movement had taken, not only would that spell the doom of the CR and a purge of the radicals committed to the empowerment of the Red Guards, Mao's own leadership would once again be linked with a major political blunder; Liu and Deng might even have been vindicated. Mao would probably have been forced back into semi-retirement on the 'second front', from which he would not so easily reemerge. Mao had just escaped that sort of doghouse and did not foresee such a denouement for the grand finale in which he had invested such extravagant hopes. Thus he and the radicals saw no choice but to allow the movement to continue to unfold without central organizational guidance, trying now however to give it symbolic direction by focusing the polemic against the central symbol of Liu Shaoqi.

Liu thus became a touchstone for all the forces of the organizational status quo, just as Mao had become a touchstone for any who believed in the right of the masses freely to mobilize themselves. The definition of his 'error' however had to be broadened from his original dispatch of work teams during the 50 days, for this was after all no departure from previous standard operating procedures and in any event Mao seems to have endorsed Liu's decision before deciding otherwise.(n16) So CRSG and Red Guard 'pens' were authorized to

launch a more comprehensive critique based on a thorough review of his historical record. This was criticism by analogy, and despite the specious use of the apparatus of scholarship it resulted in scurrilous exaggeration and factual inaccuracy, a bill of indictment permitting no less than political capital punishment. Liu was understandably infuriated by both the smears and their political implications, which hardened his determination to resist.⁽ⁿ¹⁷⁾ Thus the CR indeed became a (quite unequal) 'struggle between two lines', an eschatological drama rationalized by detailed 'historical' documentation and countless anecdotes. As the symbolic leader of the 'bourgeois reactionary line', as 'top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road', Liu's fate was sealed; acceptance of any of his self-criticisms or his proffered resignation was no longer in question, if the charade of people's justice were to be maintained.

If Mao split with Liu not because of any prior disagreements but because of his opposition to the CR, then picked him as top polemical target because of the functional exigencies of the CR, why then did Mao launch the CR? There is a fairly widespread tendency to assume that he launched it merely to get rid of Liu Shaoqi and his fellow 'capitalist-roaders', which would make our whole argument circular. Such an interpretation is in a way natural, for clearly the most obvious consequence of the CR was a wholesale purge of bureaucrats (especially Party cadres) at all levels of the apparatus; but that would be to confuse effects with intentions. Mao had intrinsic reasons for launching the CR, which tend to be dismissed in retrospect simply because they did not pan out very well. A review of Wansui and other compilations of Mao's informal talks during this period reveals growing concern for the survival of the revolutionary spirit in China, particularly among the younger generation--a fear that China would fall prey to the bureaucratic arteriosclerosis afflicting the Soviet Union. He wanted to launch a cultural revolution to challenge and inspire both the youth and the established bureaucracy, and although he was not at all clear about how it should be organized he had definite ideas about how it should not be organized and was willing to experiment; at least since the abortive Hundred Flowers movement he had been interested in 'boldly' mobilizing a mass criticism campaign without the comprehensive steering mechanism imposed by the Party. Liu obviously did not share or perhaps even comprehend Mao's concerns, but was more typical of his cohort in prioritizing economic recovery and rapid development (polemically characterized as the 'theory of productive forces'), and dreading luan (chaos). It is hence plausible to speculate (without any specific evidence) that Mao had decided to bump Liu from the line of succession in favor of Lin Biao (his wife would have supported such a plan). But if so, this had been achieved by early August 1966 and there was no need for the CR to continue had this been its only purpose. If we have correctly reconstructed the decision-making sequence above, the decision to target Liu was made well after he was no longer a political threat.

Liu's impact on the CR

In discussing Liu's impact on the CR we may divide his participation into two phases, active and passive. While it is impossible to demarcate them precisely, as we do not know when he and his family were placed under house arrest, the approximate boundary line was the fall of 1966. During his active phase, Liu had a major role in defining the central line of cleavage in the movement, hence the central issues in the new version of Mao Zedong Thought then being formulated by radical polemicists. He was able to construct the ideological horizon, as it were, against which a dialectical antithesis would soon define itself. There were two major issue areas on which Liu had a formative impact: the climate of discourse, and Party leadership.

With regard to the climate of discourse Liu put himself on record very early in favor of civility, rationality ('the principle of seeking truth from facts and of everyone being equal before the truth'), and 'reasoned argument'. This was the reason (though factional considerations cannot be precluded) for his support of Peng Zhen's

conduct of the decorous critique of Wu Han and other 'bourgeois academic authorities' during the winter of 1965-1966. During the 50 days, the work teams were likewise expected to impose rules of civility on the movement; the 'Eight Central Regulations' stipulated that big-character posters must not appear in the streets, the inside should be differentiated from the outside, meetings should be held only on campus, do not go into the streets to hold protest marches, no large-scale mass rallies, etc.(n18) His position on public civility was altogether consistent with his previous talks and writings on the need for a more accurate and 'objective' journalism, and for a strict functional division between the Party and various scientific and professional realms (in which apolitical, meritocratic criteria should apply).(n19) The radical critique, hearkening back to Mao's 'revolution is not a tea party', was that such civility was 'bourgeois' (i.e., class-based), an exercise in what Gramsci would have called cultural hegemony, and that the proletariat must break free of such inhibitions (i.e., 'smash the frames') and emancipate themselves. Thus it was not the early work teams or their mass constituencies who engaged in the beating of teachers or smashing of cultural icons representing the 'four olds' but the rebels, whom the work teams had 'suppressed'(n20) Following the emancipation of the movement from work team guidance, Red Guard violence escalated, initially against school and Party authorities, later against one another.

From the outset of mass mobilization Liu stood for the Party's leading role in the movement; indeed, even after his demotion and self-criticism he (unrealistically, perhaps) expected the Party to play a leading role. This was again quite consistent with his theoretical writings on the Party, in which he set forth his vision of democratic centralism as proceeding from reasoned discussion to iron law, from top to bottom, and from inside to outside. In opposition to Liu's vision there arose from the 'revolutionary masses' a less coherent but more vitalistic notion of leadership in which those who are most charismatic are entitled to seize command ('rebellion is justified'), the Party (which had been fatally adulterated by 'capitalist-roaders') could be swept aside in favor of mass democracy as represented by the 'Paris Commune', indeed any form of institutionalized leadership was dangerous and should be replaced by frequent rotation of leaders, leaders as custodians or servants, leadership by a committee representing selected population quotas (the two 'three-in-one' combinations), or some other experimental arrangement.

After the fall of 1966 Liu was thrust into a more passive role as victim, as the 'chicken' to be killed to scare the 'monkeys', as 'dog in the water' to be ruthlessly beaten to death. True, he was permitted to see Mao at least once and was able express himself in at least two additional self-criticisms. But Mao's responses were Delphic, and Liu's room for maneuver in mass struggle rallies was very limited, the self-criticism being intrinsically a ceremonial, highly constrained form of discourse(n21) His image in the role of victim was one of self-discipline and dignity, an appropriate personification of seniority in the movement's sharp cleavage between youth and age. In this passive, symbolic role it must nevertheless be concluded that he failed (perhaps due to the inherent contradiction between his two functions-to unite the movement, and to incite criticism). Polemicists on either side of various local factional schisms simply used the two-line, anti-Liu rhetoric against one another, 'raising the red flag to oppose the red flag'; by the summer of 1968 it was necessary to mobilize the PLA and the 'Mao Zedong Thought propaganda teams' to restore order forcibly. Thus Mao found himself finally obliged to shift from one 'line' to the other (after its former leadership had been unhorsed).

Liu and the memory of the Cultural Revolution

The criticisms of Liu Shaoqi continued throughout the entire decade of Cultural Revolution, and his core symbolic meaning remained relatively coherent: a representative of bureaucratic authority ('docile tool' theory),

relentless Party discipline ('self-cultivation'), economic pragmatism (the 'capitalist road'), an elitist form of civil rights ('bourgeois liberalism'), and so forth. Criticism varied in intensity, however, diminishing considerably after the death of Lin Biao, still more after the death of Mao and the arrest of the Gang of Four. With the onset of reforms, as the policies with which he had been associated--material incentives, free rural markets, the theory of productive forces, peasant leaseholds--were progressively reinstated, the issue of Liu's rehabilitation also reasserted itself--especially in the context of Hu Yaobang's rehabilitation of 'rightists' by the hundred thousands. When big-character posters again began to proliferate in support of the campaign for 'practice as the sole criterion' in the fall of 1978, some of them called for the rehabilitation of Liu Shaoqi. Liu's case apparently did figure in the Third Plenum discussion of Cultural Revolution purge victims entitled to rehabilitation (pingfan), but precipitated heated opposition from those still determined to defend Mao's reputation. So his case was deferred pending further investigation by the Central Commission for Inspecting (Party) Discipline, established under Chen Yun. His wife Wang Guangmei was however promptly released from prison, and by March 1975 had been officially cleared of all criminal charges. In June she appeared for the first time on Chinese television in an interview, in which she discussed her twelve years in prison and the fate of her children. But not her husband--that topic was broached only very cautiously and gradually.

Finally, after the CDIC had completed its investigation and submitted a report (which denounced the 12th Plenum of the 8th CC's indictment as 'the biggest frameup the CCP has ever known in its history ... created out of thin air by fabricating materials, forging evidence, extorting confessions, withholding testimony'), Liu's case was brought forward at the Fifth Plenum of the 11th Congress in February 1980. Liu's family had been notified, and when Wang Guangmei noticed that the 'Draft Decision for the Reversal of Verdicts on Liu Shaoqi' mentioned Liu's 'mistakes', she objected, and the reference was dropped from the draft (albeit not from the discussion). The Central Committee rescinded the resolution imposing the criminal labels 'renegade, scab, hidden traitor' on Liu and dismissing him from all positions inside and outside the Party, and unanimously resolved to rehabilitate Liu as one of the 'great Marxists and proletarian revolutionaries.(n22) Liu's most significant works were all republished, and the grisly account of his persecution and death (on 12 November 1969, in Kaifeng, Henan, under conditions that verged on the criminally negligent), for the first time publicly exhumed (Mao was given absolutely no responsibility, all being blamed on Lin Biao and the Gang of Four). His family and children were also exonerated and restored to honorable positions in public life.(n23)

In the public reworking of the memory of the Cultural Revolution two distinct images have predominated: one of ideological tyranny and the abuse of power, the political implications of which in the post-Mao context were emancipatory; the other of the uncontrollable chaos unleashed by the withdrawal of Party authority over the masses, the political implications of which were bureaucratic authoritarian(n24) Liu's rehabilitation reinforced both images. On the one hand, the personal story of his suffering and miserable death fit neatly into the genre of 'wound' literature then graphically dramatizing the issue of the CR's dehumanization of its victims. Thus it was part of the current leading Wang Ruoshui, Zhou Yang and other intellectuals to propose a reconsideration of 'Marxist humanism', based on Marx's pre-1848 writings, and to broaden the concept of 'alienation' to apply under certain circumstances to socialist systems. On the other hand, Liu's writings and teachings clearly reinforced the 'leading role' of the Communist Party and the nobility of the (self-cultivated) cadre, and Liu's rehabilitation was followed immediately by a campaign to popularize How to Be a Good Communist as a teaching manual for Party cadres. Moreover, Liu's role in the Cultural Revolution during the time that he still was in a leadership position clearly placed him in the ranks of those who likened the unguided masses to a pack of wild horses. His closest colleagues were among those who were later to decide on the crackdown at Tiananmen (partly, of course, in overreaction to what they had experienced during the CR).

Although Liu's personal fate was not public knowledge until his rehabilitation in 1980, it was certainly familiar to the CCP elite. As such, it is quite conceivable that Liu's personal tragedy contributed to Lin Biao's alleged coup conspiracy: if such a miserable fate lay in store for those who had faithfully served Mao for many years, Lin may have thought, far better to strike first and go down fighting, or make a desperate bid for escape. And the Lin Biao case in turn may well have contributed to the gradual advance in elite civility that has emerged since Mao's death: to the gradual and gentle demotion of Hua Guofeng to a low-ranking position in the Party's Central Committee, to the Gang of Four's incarceration only after a long, public trial (though no model of judicial procedure, Jiang Qing did have a chance to articulate a defense); to Hu Yaobang's survival as an inactive member of the Politburo following his removal as General Secretary, to Zhao Ziyang's retirement to the golf course.

From an historical perspective, Liu will probably be regarded as a tragic figure, but a Janus-faced, transitional one rather than either a harbinger of the future or an irrelevant reactionary. On the one hand, the contributions in which he personally put greatest store, his theoretical writings on the building of the Communist Party and the cultivation of the individual Party cadre, are almost as if written on water. The best efforts of the Deng regime to restore the Party have had very modest success indeed, and by the fall of 1988 the CCP was considered so thoroughly corrupt that it was seriously in danger of collapse, not only in the eyes of the Tiananmen protesters but in the eyes of its leaders.⁽ⁿ²⁵⁾ The Party was saved at that time not by inner-Party criticism and self-criticism or 'self-cultivation' but by smashing all resistance to it, in far more dramatically brutal fashion than Liu had condoned with his work teams.

Yet the apparent failure of Liu's Party building strategy to endure is not necessarily due to its intrinsic flaws, but to the changed environmental conditions in which the Party has had to operate during the reform era. The chief factor underlying these environmental changes were the economic reforms, which stand in direct descent to the program of economic 'revisionism' introduced in response to the emergency conditions pandemic in the economy following the collapse of the Great Leap Forward. During this period, Liu Shaoqi, working closely with Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun and others, demonstrated an eclectic pragmatism, a willingness to experiment with ideas borrowed not only from Eastern European reformers but from capitalist economies, anything to get the economy moving again. He proposed devolution of greater responsibility to local factory managers, rationalization of material incentives and modern cost accounting, a mobile labor market, commercial advertising, the redistribution of land to the peasant (then referred to as *san zi yi boo*, or three freedoms and one guarantee), stratified school systems, and many other innovations now familiar.⁽ⁿ²⁶⁾ While Mao apparently considered these innovations ideologically contaminating and threatening to the integrity of socialism, Liu justified them in terms of his concept of a functional division of labor between politics and economics.

This 'revisionist' program of course proved to be runaway success when reintroduced in more ideologically untrammled fashion following the Third Plenum of the 11th CC. But the impact of marketization and privatization on the Party does seem to have vindicated Mao's concerns about the ability of the CCP or indeed the revolution itself to preserve its 'spirit' in such an atmosphere. In the mid-1980s there was great concern expressed about a 'crisis of faith', particularly among young people. A decade later there seems to be neither faith nor much sense of crisis about its loss. Nearly three decades after Liu's death, the CCP is still wrestling with the dilemma posed by the gap or even 'contradiction' between his vision of Party purity and his commitment to mass economic prosperity.

Meanwhile, the emancipatory, iconoclastic, bottom-to-top form of mass movement Liu died opposing has also had a checkered career. Mao defended the Cultural Revolution to the end, claiming it as one of his two major contributions (the other being the revolutionary civil war), but in practice his own leadership of the movement was erratic, sometimes encouraging the revolutionary masses to storm the heavens, other times sending them down to the countryside to do manual labor or throwing them in jail (e.g., the Li Yizhe group). Not even the unambiguously negative verdict on the Cultural Revolution formulated by the Deng regime at the 12th Plenum of the 11th CC in June 1981 has altogether succeeded in quelling popular fascination with this form of movement, which (now of course mobilized in support of 'reform' and 'socialist democracy' rather than the 'proletarian revolutionary line') recurred under various pretexts in 1985, 1986, and 1989. Although the crackdown at Tiananmen seems to have successfully deterred further efforts to instigate major urban uprisings for at least the time being, isolated spontaneous rural protests over economic issues have continued. Even more than the Party-led movements of the 1950s or early 1960s, these blind juggernauts generate their own collective momentum, impervious to the most rudimentary tactical considerations. Meanwhile the Party's efforts to lead its own mass campaigns seem to have fizzled out since its disenchantment with electoral reform in the early 1980s and the problems encountered in its subsequent drives against spiritual pollution and bourgeois liberalism. In place of the 'mass line' or the mass campaign there are only question marks mediating between the 'broad masses' and the national leadership. Thus the Chinese political system is still haunted by the dilemma of the Cultural Revolution: the great movement Mao conceived as a finale was only, perhaps, a prelude.

(n1.) See Kao Kao and Jiaqi Yan, *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996); Wang Nianyi, *Da dongluan di niandai* (Decade of great chaos) (Zhengzhou: Honan renmin chubanshe, 1988) Jin Chunming, *Wenhua da goming shikao* (Outline history of the great cultural revolution) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1995); Dajin Sun at the University of Pittsburgh has compiled a comprehensive and most useful draft bibliography.

(n2.) This is of course the Maoist interpretation, but it has been quite widely accepted. E.g., cf. Peter Cheng 'The root of China's Cultural Revolution: the feud between Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi', *Orbis* XI(4), (Winter 1968), pp. 1160-1178; Xu Guansan, *Liu Shaoqi yu Liu Shaoqi luxian* (Liu Shaoqi and Liu Shaoqi's line) (Jiulong: Zhongdao chubanshe, 1980); and Jack Gray, 'The two roads: alternative strategies of social change and economic growth in China', in Stuart Schram, ed., *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

(n3.) Compilation group, *Historical Trials* (Beijing: Chunzhong chubanshe, 1981), p. 288.

(n4.) Liu's reaction to Mao's first big-character poster was that he wished to reserve judgment on the conclusions, that the formulation of a 'capitalist reactionary line' was unintentional and a cognitive problem, and that he had never acted behind anyone's back. Yan and Kao, 'Wenhua', p. 98. Deng said in 1981 that 'The struggle against Comrade Peng Dehuai cannot be viewed as a struggle between two lines. Nor can the struggle against Comrade Liu Shaoqi ... Zhang Guotao engaged in conspiracy, and so did Gao Gang. And, of course, so did Lin Biao and Jiang Qing . Deng, 'Remarks on Successive Drafts of the "Resolution on certain questions in the history of our Party since the founding of the People's Republic of China"' (March 1980-June 1981), in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), pp. 278-279. Liu's self-criticisms have been published in *Liu Shaoqi wenti ziliao zhuanji* (A special collection of materials on Liu

Shaoqi) (Taipei: Zhonggong wenti yanjiu quo, 1970), pp. 621-630; for Deng Xiaoping's self-criticism, cf. Helmut Martin, ea., Deng Xiaoping: die re form der revolution (Hamburg: Siedler Verlag, 1988), pp. 80-86.

(n5.) See Nathan Leites (with Elsa Bernaut), *Ritual of Liquidation* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1954).

(n6.) See Huainian Liu Shaoqi tongzhi (In memory of Liu Shaoqi) (Beijing: Central Document Publishing House, 1988), particularly the essays by Zhu Zhongli, Wu Liping, Zhang Pinghua, Xue Muqiao, Deng Liqun, Shi Zhe, Wang Shoudao, and three of his children (Yuan, Pingping and Tingting).

(n7.) E.g., 'I also remember clearly that on many, many occasions, comrade Shaoqi almost always asked comrade Mao Zedong for instructions before handling a certain affair or problem and always reported to Mao after the problem had been handled. On some occasions when he was unable to discuss it beforehand because of the shortage of time, he always reported to Mao immediately afterward. No matter what he had done, once he found that comrade Mao Zedong had ideas different from his, he would always make new efforts strictly according to comrade Mao Zedong's instructions and do his best'. Shi Zhe, 'The days when Comrade Shaoqi was in Yanan', in Huainian Liu, p. 284.

(n8.) This was not the first time Mao endorsed an abandonment of civility. In one of his first published essays, 'Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Uprisings in Hunan', he reminded his colleagues that revolution was not a tea party, and praised the crudeness of the rebels. The 'little red book' collected many such passages to inspire the Red Guards.

(n9.) Cf. John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), pp. 171-190.

(n10.) Yan and Kao, *Wenhua* 1, pp. 32-33.

(n11.) 'Di sanzi "ziwo jiancha"' (Third self-criticism), Liu Shaoqi went), p. 629.

(n12.) See the report on the speeches made at a rally that month by Jiang Qing and Lin Biao, in Yan and Kao, *Wenhua*, p. 133.

(n13.) Tao Zhu said, 'Jiang Qing wanted me to be the first to attack Liu and Deng. I refused to do so and told her I knew almost nothing as I had just been transferred to the Center ... Several shenghuo (life) meetings were held and only the premier and I never uttered a word'. Zhen Zhi (Tao Zhu's widow), 'Hard to forget bygone days, Wenge, p. 212.

(n14.) In March 1967 Mao said at a meeting, 'I still want to suggest that Liu Shaoqi be a member of the Central Committee at the 9th Party Congress'. Jin Chunming, *Wenhua da geming lunshi* (On the cultural revolution) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 70. Jin speculates on this basis that Mao did not finally make up his mind on Liu until late 1967, but in the absence of additional evidence that seems to me implausible. The decision to launch a coordinated polemical onslaught in both official and informal media on 1 April could not have been made without Mao's approval, and such a bill of indictment could culminate in only the most severe punitive consequences. In any case, Wang Ming remained on the Central Committee.

(n15.) Ji Xicheng, 'The beginning and end of the February adverse current', *Wenge mishi* (Secret History of the Cultural Revolution) (Beijing: Guoji wenti yanjiu quo, 1986), p. 52.

(n16.) Liu and Deng flew to Hangzhou to report to Mao on the situation in Beijing when school authorities were requesting Party help in dealing with the aroused students. Mao said he had no immediate plans to return to Beijing and authorized them to deal with the situation according to circumstances. They returned and decided after convening an expanded session of the Politburo Standing Committee that work teams should be sent. After the meeting Liu telexed the decision to Mao in Hangzhou, and the latter sent back a reply of his agreement. Yan and Kao, *Wenhua*, p. 23.

(n17.) On the eve of the broadcast of Qi Benyu's article 'Patriotism or treason: a critique of the film *Secret History of the Qing Court*', on 31 March 1967, inaugurating the wave of officially sponsored criticism, Liu threw down the newspaper and said to his family: 'This essay is full of lies. When did I ever say the film was patriotic? ... It's not true; it's a plant! Internal Party struggles have never been made so carelessly. I'm not a counterrevolutionary and I'm not opposed to Chairman Mao. I was the one who first proposed Mao Zedong Thought, and I've promoted it as much as anyone'. Liu wanted to have a chance to argue his case before the Central Committee. Yan Jiaqi and Kao Kao, *Wenhua koming shinian shi* (Ten year history of the 'Cultural Revolution', vol. I) (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1990), pp. 156-157.

(n18.) Yan and Kao, *Wenhua*, p. 24.

(n19.) See Dittmer, *Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 187-194.

(n20.) It was reported that on 18 June, the majority of the revolutionary students at Peking University launched a 'struggle' against the 'cow' 'ghosts' and 'snake' demons (niugui sheshen), but that the work team stationed in the university tried to interfere with the struggle. They pointed out that beating and struggling without discrimination did harm to the revolutionary movement and asked the masses to be on the alert against the emergence of phony leftists. Liu and Deng decided to attribute their 'Brief 9 points on the CR' to the whole nation in the name of the Central Committee. Hei Yannan, *Shinian dongluan* (Ten years of chaos) (Hong Kong: Xingcheng chubanshe, 1988), pp. 47 48.

(n21.) The audience would vociferously deny any 'wrong' answers. In a public struggle meeting in April 1967, for example, Liu handed the rebel faction his written responses to the 'eight whys' contained in Qi Benyu's article, and copies were soon circulated and posted in Zhongnanhai. But within a few hours, Liu's posters had been ripped to shreds. Yan Jiaqi and Kao Kao, *op. cit.* 1, pp. 157-158.

(n22.) Hunan Provincial Committee of the CCP, 'Hunan people cherish the memory of comrade Shaoqi deep in their hearts', in *Huainian Liu Shaoqi tongzhi* (In memory of comrade Liu Shaoqi) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 295.

(n23.) See Dittmer, 'Death and transfiguration: Liu Shaoqi's rehabilitation and contemporary Chinese politics', *Journal of Asian Studies* XL(3), (May 1981), pp. 455 479.

(n24.) See Dittmer, 'Learning from trauma: the Cultural Revolution in Post-Mao politics', in William Joseph, Christine Wong and David Zweig, eds, *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 19-40.

(n25.) See Hsi-sheng Ch'i, *Politics of Disillusionment: the Chinese Communist Party under Deng Xiaoping, 1978-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991).

(n26.) See Dittmer, 'The origins of China's Post-Mao reforms', in Victor Falkenheim, ea., Chinese Politics from Mao to Deng (New York: Paragon House, 1989), pp. 41-66.

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