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The Cultural Revolution

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Mao's final effort to regain control over the progress of revolution came in the form of a power struggle against Liu Shaoqi and his supporters. Ever since Liu assumed power as head of state, Mao had continued to challenge his policies. Mao was not only angered by Liu's economic policies, but the Chairman and many of his supporters believed that revolutionary development of all aspects of Chinese society had stagnated. For them, China was still mired in enervating traditional cultural conventions—customs and habits that were millennia old. If Chinese society was to evolve from socialism to communism in accordance with Marxist theory, then drastic change was necessary. What was needed, according to Mao, was nothing less than a thorough revamping of Chinese culture. By culture Mao was referring not only to how people were educated, what they read, how they created their art and music—although these were important—but also to how people interrelated, what they thought, even how they amused themselves. All aspects of culture had to be changed so that working class values replaced traditional bourgeois customs because, according to Marxists, cultural consciousness reflects the economic values of the prevailing class. Mao Zedong explained to fellow revolutionaries in Yan'an:

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics. ¹

When a society is in its feudal or capitalist stage, culture is identified with the values of the wealthy. Education, literature, and the arts all have their roots implanted deeply in this past and, more importantly, are often available only to the privileged. While scholars, writers, and artists can and do emerge from the working class as a result of exceptional talent or luck, the works they produce are understood only by those with an appropriate education. The knowledge they acquire through education or training sets them apart

from the class from which they have emerged. Working class intellectuals may be able to join the elite, but they remain, as a group, relatively few in number.

A problem for Marxists is that the existence of an elite is not necessarily challenged by a socialist revolution. Although specific groups, such as the landowners and wealthy bourgeoisie, may be annihilated during the revolution, they are merely replaced by another elite, namely, party leaders and those whose talents are needed in the new society. Mao called this elite the new "bourgeois" class because it held fast to prerevolutionary values. The actual makers of revolution had not forsaken attitudes from the past, since cultural values respected for centuries tend to pass into the new social order. Party leaders in the Soviet Union, for example, have enjoyed many of the same dances performed by the Bolshoi Ballet for the tsars.

A similar situation of cultural atavism existed in China during the 1960s, and Mao and his followers perceived it as a serious threat to an all-out socialist revolution. In the new China, the dominant class was to be the proletariat, but a proletarian culture did not yet exist. Although the capitalist means of production were gone, many older institutions remained and continued to function as they had prior to the revolution. One such institution which became a target for change was the university. Faculty, curricula, and admissions procedures conformed to standards established in traditional China. The universities were obviously indispensable since they educated the new society's much-needed engineers, scientists, and technicians. Yet they also produced a new privileged class. Mao feared that this situation would perpetuate a schism within society based on the privilege and deference accorded to those who possessed knowledge rather than those who did manual labor. Such attitudes were deeply ingrained in Chinese society with its Confucian heritage, a tradition which revered the Mandarin scholar with his long fingernails, a symbol of life without physical labor. As a result, the status of the new intellectual class, many of whom were sons and daughters of the revolution, was challenged by the Maoists in order to produce a new Chinese culture: a proletarian culture. Mao also believed in the need for "permanent" revolution to keep revolutionary and proletarian values alive. The generation of students and young leaders coming of age during the 1960s was too young to have experienced the privations of civil war. They had little appreciation for the struggles undertaken by the older generations to produce the new society. Mao felt that Chinese youth should not be complacent; they should work vigilantly at improving society. He wanted to entrust China's future to its youth and not to those he charged with "taking the capitalist road." Moreover, Mao sought out the youth of the working class to lead the Cultural Revolution, since his goal was to establish a proletarian culture, a culture defined by the masses. Such changes did not come easily. There were many within the CCP who did not agree with such ideas. These people not only presented serious obstacles to the Maoist strategy, but they were also the ones who held power during the mid-1960s.

Mao Regains Power

According to CCP historians, the cataclysm known as the Cultural Revolution began on November 10, 1965, when the Shanghai *Evening News* printed Yao Wenyan's criticism of *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*. It was no secret among China's leaders and intellectuals that those who had supported Mao during the Great Leap Forward were targets of this satire. Its hero, Hai Rui, was personified by Peng Dehuai, Mao's antagonist, who had been dismissed for his disagreements with the CCP chairman in 1959. The play satirized the plight of peasants who had lost control over their land. Those who tried to stop the process were depicted as heroes. At Mao's instigation, Shanghai journalist Yao Wenyan attacked the play and its author, a move that was merely a thinly veiled attempt by Mao to lash out at his critics. In December 1965 Mao remarked:

The crux of *Hai Rui [Rui] Dismissed from Office* was the question of dismissal from office. The Jia Qing Emperor [of the Ming dynasty, 1522-1566] dismissed Hai Rui from office. In 1959, we dismissed Peng Dehuai from office. And Peng Dehuai is "Hai Rui" too.²

While by no means an earth-shattering event in itself, this was a significant political tremor: a first step in Mao's road back to power.

Mao set up his strategic base in Shanghai, far from Beijing, the center of CCP power. When Mao felt he was losing ground in the struggle to stay in power, he retreated, turned his back on the party, and appealed directly to the masses. This had happened several times throughout his career—in Hunan during the late 1920s when he discovered the revolutionary potential of the peasants, in the anti-Japanese War when the CCP fought behind Japanese lines, and during the civil war when Mao earned popular support for his anti-Guomindang campaign. This strategy was hardly revolutionary. Its precedent was the recognition that from the people came the Mandate of Heaven, the authority to rule in Confucian China. Mao now needed popular support to regain power, so he tried to repeat the process during the Cultural Revolution. While Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping controlled the party Central Committee at the capital, Mao worked with a closely knit group of supporters in Shanghai away from the center of party power. The group included Yao Wenyan, and Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, an enthusiastic force behind the Cultural Revolution.

During the first six months of the Cultural Revolution, from November 1965 to June 1966, the conflict centered on the debate over Wu Han's play. Although Liu Shaoqi, Mao's adversary, later became Mao's chief target, during this first phase, Liu himself was not portrayed as a major opponent. Rather, one of Liu's supporters, the mayor of Beijing and Politburo member, Peng Zhen, became the scapegoat. Mao's plan was to pick away slowly at the Liuists, perhaps never making it clear that they were his targets and thereby avoiding or at least delaying a potential counterattack. Furthermore, Mao had several reasons to be especially annoyed with Peng Zhen. As Beijing's mayor and a CCP leader, Peng represented those in power at the capital, the vortex of CCP power. He also was a supporter and a friend of playwright Wu Han and had become increasingly bold in his

attacks on Maoism by the mid-1960s. Peng became entangled in the debate over Wu Han's play in an attempt to defend his colleague. He collaborated with other friends in the CCP and successfully blocked the publication of Yao Wenyuan's article in many of China's newspapers. Peng's well-publicized opinion was that the entire debate was an academic issue with no political relevance. This particularly grated Mao, since Peng and friends were openly dismissing the importance of his own attack on Wu Han's play. On December 30, 1965, the Maoists were able to pressure Wu Han into admitting publicly that he had failed to use the leader's theory of class warfare in his play. Peng then announced that he would end the conflict soon, implying that the debate was trivial and that the argument would be settled in short order. Peng had Wu sent to a rural commune. To the Maoists, however, such lenient punishment was inadequate for the crime; indeed, Wu's visit to the countryside suggested that the party had exonerated him.

Meanwhile, Peng also became head of the "Group of Five in Charge of the Cultural Revolution," clearly a potentially powerful position for charting the subsequent course of events. Many historians have debated whether this appointment signaled Mao's total loss of power in the early months of 1966. Others suggest that since it was Mao who contrived the Cultural Revolution, Peng's appointment as group head was, in reality, a calculated step in the fulfillment of Mao's long-term goals. Mao could now wait for the inevitable failure of Peng and his followers to implement the changes the Maoists demanded, since a Maoist program would run counter to Peng's philosophy. By April, Peng was referred to by Mao's supporters as the "representative of the bourgeoisie," and Mao's friends formed a second Cultural Revolution group, called the "Drafters of Documents of the Cultural Revolution Group." Their initial intentions were to eradicate the "bourgeois mentality" that had permeated China during the previous four years. The five original members were deliberately selected for their support of Maoist policies. They included Jiang Qing, by this time Lin Biao's appointee as cultural adviser to the army; Chen Boda, Mao's long-time secretary and supporter; Zhang Chunqiao, controller of the secret police and the only holdover from Peng's committee; and Yao Wenyuan, the Shanghai journalist who wrote the critique of Wu Han's play. At one of the new committee's first meetings, some members of Peng's old group made an abortive attempt to assassinate Mao. Several years later, Jiang Qing told American historian Roxane Witke that Peng's supporters actually burst into the room where Mao's allies were meeting and started shooting, but no one was injured. The group was immediately arrested.³ Peng quickly became a victim of the new committee. On March 26, the day on which his supporter President Liu Shaoqi left for an official visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mayor Peng was purged from the party. Jiang Qing launched an offensive against the remainder of Peng's supporters for what she claimed was their evil influence in the fields of art and literature. According to Jiang, the group had openly supported "bourgeois" artists and intellectuals, thereby assuring that Chinese culture would not reflect proletarian values. For the

next few weeks, a series of accusations against the "Black Gang" penned by Mao's supporters appeared in the *Liberation Army Daily*, the journal controlled by Lin Biao. On April 30, Premier Zhou Enlai outlined the goals of the Cultural Revolution:

A socialist cultural revolution with a significant historical meaning is now rising in our country. This is a fierce and long-term struggle in the ideological sphere between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. We have vigorously to promote proletarian thoughts and smash bourgeois thoughts in all the academic, education, journalistic, art, literary and other cultural circles. This is a crucial problem concerning the country as a whole, a problem of development in the socialist revolution in the present stage. It is of the utmost importance, involving the fate and future of our Party and our country. ⁴

Simultaneously, there was a revival of an old Chinese custom, the use of wall posters to allow the expression of opinion to a large, if local, audience. The first poster appeared May 25 at Beijing University, often the site of political unrest. A philosophy instructor, Nie Yuanzi, with several of her colleagues, criticized the administration of the conservative university president, Lu Ping, who also happened to be a longtime friend of the purged Peng Zhen. Nie called on Mao and the Central Committee to "break down all the various controls and plots of the revisionists" and "wipe out all ghosts and monsters and all Khrushchev-type counterrevolutionary revisionists, and carry the socialist revolution through to the end." Mao supported the poster campaign and asked a member of the Cultural Revolution Group to publicize it nationally. In fact, Mao and Lin Biao had approved earlier of Nie's year-long criticisms of the Beijing University administration. Some weeks later, Mao produced his own poster. Its message was unmistakable: "Bomb the Liu Headquarters!" The posters and the editorials had two purposes: first, to get the public involved in the debate and, second, to gain support for the eventual elimination of the Liuists.

During the first week of June 1966, Mao's allies went on the offensive. Many of Peng's and Liu's supporters in CCP organizations were replaced with Maoists. Much of the Beijing press was restaffed. Lu Ping, president of Beijing University, was dismissed, and a pro-Mao group arrived there to run the school's Cultural Revolution. By this time campuses throughout Beijing were being torn apart by strikes, protests, murder, and suicide. Ironically, many of the suicide victims were students of working class and peasant families who were unfairly branded as counterrevolutionaries by their peers. Alliances changed daily; those who were revolutionary one day were branded by other Red Guards as revisionists the next. On June 24, Mao's young followers in Beijing made their intentions clear:

You say we are too rude? We should be rude. How can we be soft and clinging towards revisionism or go in for moderation in a big way? To be moderate towards the enemy is to be cruel to the revolution!

You say we are going too far? To put it bluntly, your "avoid going too far" is reformism; it is "peaceful transition." You are day-dreaming! We are going to strike you down to the dust and keep you there! ⁵

Meanwhile, in mid-July, Marshal Lin Biao marched into Beijing with the People's Liberation Army. On July 18, during the height of violence in Beijing, Mao returned to the capital. The PLA had paved the way for Mao's safe arrival and for a series of purges in the political and educational leadership. Mao was forcefully demonstrating his own belief that "political power comes from the barrel of a gun." Mao was soon followed by the members of the Shanghai Cultural Revolution Group who visited the universities in a vain attempt to quell the violence. By now a turning point had been reached in the Cultural Revolution. Mao's decision to take up residency in Beijing signaled that he was closer to regaining full power. Any questions the opposition may have had about Mao's ability to retake control owing to reputed illnesses or the fact that he was now seventy-three years old were dispelled soon after his return when he demonstrated his "youthful vigor" by swimming for an hour in the Yangzi River. This much-publicized event helped solidify his support among enthusiastic revolutionary youth. But there remained several formidable obstacles to his complete political recovery, most notably President Liu Shaoqi and Party Secretary Deng Xiaoping.

Throughout the summer of 1966, Liu and Deng attempted unsuccessfully to control the Cultural Revolution. A crucial issue was that the CCP leadership, including Peng Zhen before his purge, insisted that Cultural Revolution activities be monitored by party directors. This meant, of course, that the direction of the revolution would be dominated by those in control of Beijing, the Liuists. Mao's group, on the other hand, demanded that the Cultural Revolution group from Shanghai have equal status among party committees in charge. In this way, Mao would be at the helm. The conflict was settled on August 1 when Mao named General Lin Biao first vice-chairman of the Central Committee in a reshuffle that made him second in command in the CCP hierarchy while Liu Shaoqi fell to number eight. More importantly, the military became even more powerful because Lin Biao was also PLA commander.

On August 8 the Central Committee, now in Maoist hands, published a Sixteen-Point Directive on the aims of the Cultural Revolution. In the directive, Mao insisted on the necessity of molding public opinion and gave the party's blessing to a movement led by youth. He wanted the masses to be "liberated" and united against the 5 percent of the population that was antiparty and antisocialist and, in particular, against CCP leaders who had taken the "capitalist road." Cultural Revolution committees were established in schools, factories, mines, and neighborhoods throughout the country. Furthermore, those committees made it clear that those young people who followed their directives would be excused for any excesses or mistakes they might make. As he stirred up youth to "seize power," Mao relaxed police controls, thereby creating conditions for anarchy. This was the most important specific spark for the Cultural Revolution, since it forbade the public security forces from suppressing the emergence of new political groups seemingly carrying out Mao's designs. Almost everyone now became involved in political

organizing either to defend themselves or to make new power claims. Certainly thousands who had been discriminated against saw this as an opportunity to vent their frustrations and seek revenge. Mao, for his part, seems to have been positively charged by the chaos he initiated. After a violent struggle at a school in the summer of 1966 he announced, "There is one good thing about our era: the left-wingers get beaten up by the right-wingers, and this toughens up the left-wingers." ⁶

The Sixteen-Point Directive on the aims of the Cultural Revolution unleashed a reign of terror against the Chinese population carried out by Mao's newly created youthful revolutionaries, the Red Guards. In August, an official radio broadcast defined the Red Guards as "an organization set up by middle-school pupils from families of workers, poor and lower-middle peasants, revolutionary cadres and revolutionary soldiers." As it turned out, the Red Guards or "little revolutionary generals" as they were sometimes called—a term of flattery that Mao's followers coined to encourage zealotry—were students of all ages. They came from schools throughout China which had closed during the summer of 1966 as a result of the mayhem caused by the Cultural Revolution. The Central Committee invited the youths to leave their homes and schools and come to Beijing where they would be greeted by Chairman Mao. Approximately 11 million young radicals arrived to join the ranks of the Red Guards. On August 18, Mao, Jiang Qing, Zhou Enlai, and Lin Biao reviewed their young followers. One million appeared at a rally that afternoon at the Beijing Workers' Stadium, where they wore the red armbands that were the hallmark of several peasant armies during the civil war. Some boys arrived in their fathers' old Red Army uniforms. It was a highly emotional meeting, with the members of the Cultural Revolution Group accompanying Mao on stage in rallying the youth to action. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were verbally abused before the millions. The New China News Agency (Xinhua) summarized the event:

A great proletarian cultural revolution without parallel in history is being carried out in our country under the leadership of our great leader Chairman Mao. This is a revolution of world significance. We will smash the old world to smithereens, create a new world and carry the great proletarian cultural revolution through to the end.

Sailing the seas depends on the helmsman, the growth of everything depends on the sun, and making revolution depends on Mao Zedong's thought. . . Chairman Mao is the reddest sun of our hearts. . . ⁷

The Red Guards then turned to rectifying the "ills" of Chinese society. Among their first targets were the schools from which they came. Curricula, admissions procedures, books, testing, and teaching methods were attacked. Professors became the victims of humiliating accusations. Mao's own visceral hatred for intellectuals certainly aided and abetted the Red Guard's violent campaigns against their teachers and professors. As early as May 1958, for example, Mao had boasted that he had already outdone the notoriously cruel first emperor of the Qing dynasty in his policy against intellectuals:

He buried only 460 scholars alive; we have buried forty-six thousand scholars alive. . . You [intellectuals] revile us for being Qin Shi Huangs. You are wrong. We have surpassed Qin Shi Huang a hundred fold.⁸

In August the press announced that schools at all levels would remain closed for at least six months until a new system could be created that would meet the demands of the Red Guards. Considerable controversy, both in and outside of China, resulted from the zeal with which the youth attacked what they considered to be reactionary elements in society. With the support of the Cultural Revolution Group and with free access to public transportation, and liberated from academic obligations, the gangs of youths rampaged through Beijing and its suburbs changing street and store names, burning foreign books, defacing buildings constructed during the imperialist era, vandalizing homes of formerly wealthy families, lashing out at "bourgeois" vendors, humiliating and beating older citizens, destroying priceless art and artifacts in many of China's best museums, fighting with police, and attacking soldiers. As one Western eyewitness to these events reported:

The slogan on everyone's lips was "Smash the old; build the new!" ... The smashing was selective and symbolic: We saw stone lions broken with sledge hammers, wooden motifs chiseled off and carted away in trucks, statues of the Buddha replaced by red flags.⁹

The fury continued from August to January when a new phase began, an even more virulent campaign directed against Liu and Deng, even though they had remained virtually powerless since Mao's return in August. It started with a rally on December 12, 1966, where the Liuist Peng Zhen and some of his supporters were publicly degraded. Under military escort, the hapless offenders were brought to Beijing's Workers' Stadium where 10,000 Red Guards waited. There the "enemies of the masses" were forced to wear heavy wooden placards around their necks on which their names were first printed then crossed out with huge X's. As party leaders looked on, Peng and his associates were "tried" and condemned. They were later sent to prison. Liu and Deng remained out of sight. Meanwhile, the Red Guards stampeded across the countryside wreaking havoc on the most remote provinces. There the going became tougher; they met with sharp resistance from conservative peasants and national minorities who looked on the urban youth with contempt. The American agronomist William Hinton, who lived and worked in Long Bow Village, 400 miles southwest of Beijing, described great outbursts of fighting, the reasons for which "no one could really explain." A young villager was employed in a local mine in 1967 as the Cultural Revolution began to heat up. During this time he "learned very little about mining but a great deal about political agitation, debating, poster writing, and, finally, street fighting." As the miner himself explained it:

Fighting began early in the year. In those days we fought with fists and sticks. If we began debating, we ended up fighting. If we put up posters, we fought over their content. Once I spoke at a meeting and they beat me up. Sometimes, when we sat down to eat in the dining room, we began to argue. The arguments led to brawls. We threw stools at each other and smashed all the lights. Nobody got killed, but a lot of people got hurt.

One night two or three of us were eating in the dining room along with four or five opponents. They began to talk about how good their faction [revolutionary group] was. When we disagreed they grabbed our bowls and smashed them on the floor. Then we all took hold of stools and went after each other. I got whacked twice on the back. Since we were outnumbered, we already had a plan. We would knock out the lights, then skip out, leaving the opposition to fight among themselves. As soon as the fracas began I got it on the back, but when the lights went out I managed to sneak to the far end of the hall and escape. I hid among the crops in the fields until I found my companions. Then, at 2:00 A.M., I ran back to Long Bow. ¹⁰

The Red Guards also attempted to take over whole administrative areas in the hope of establishing a revolutionary collective modeled on the Paris Commune of 1871. Until December 1966, Jiang Qing had pressed the Red Guards under her leadership to take such action. She retreated only when Mao expressed his disapproval. Another member of the Cultural Revolution Group, Chen Boda, called for the establishment of "Paris Communes," and as a result Red Guards attempted to seize control of cities throughout China. Their one success was in Shanghai. Two members of the Cultural Revolution Group, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan, were overseeing events in Shanghai at the time. They did nothing when a group of student leaders from Beijing took over several Shanghai newspapers and radio and television stations and called for the workers to overthrow the existing city government and seize power. Soon all normal urban activities ground to a halt. The rebels gloated over the terrible disorder they caused. A Red Guard newspaper reported:

In the brief time of a few days, Shanghai, with its population of 10 million, has been turned upside down! ... This is wonderful! There will be no stopping the movement now!

...

We rebels have been trying for six months to get this kind of chaos. We'd had little success up to this, but now at last we've made it! Rebellion needs disorder. Without revolutionary disorder, there cannot be broad democracy for the working class. ¹¹

On February 5, 1967, Yao and Zhang proclaimed the establishment of the Shanghai Commune, with over one million demonstrating in celebration. But both Mao and Lin Biao, who regarded the behavior as tantamount to secession, quickly disapproved. The two Shanghai leaders were recalled to Beijing, and within a few weeks Mao set up a new government in Shanghai incorporating members of the CCP and the PLA over whom he had control.

By the spring of 1967 the number of clashes involving the Red Guards began to escalate. In Beijing alone there were 133 incidents of violence reported between April 30 and May 10, involving some 60,000 people.¹² Beijing was not the only scene of fighting. Violence continued in most major cities and throughout the countryside. Mao had made a move to defuse the fury of the Red Guards by reopening many of the secondary schools and universities on March 1, but this did not stop the fighting or settle the real issue, namely what to do about Liu, Deng, and the remainder of their followers still holding important party positions. Red Guards continued to denounce Liu and those surrounding him. Liu's wife, Wang Guangmei, also became one of their prime targets. Wang was characterized

as an "enemy of the people" for numerous reasons. She had been a forceful and articulate supporter of her husband and his views, having directed programs under his guidance. In her own right, Wang was a talented and respected intellectual. Born in the United States, she returned to China to attend Roman Catholic universities. She served as translator for Americans in Yan'an during the 1940s and traveled on state visits with her husband. Wang often wore stylish clothes rather than plainer working class dress and had on occasion danced socially. Such "bourgeois" habits were sufficient to unleash against her the wrath of the Red Guards.

On April 10, 1967, a student leader of one of the Red Guard groups organized a rally at Qinghua University in Beijing. Over 3,000 people attended. Despite protests by Liu, the campus and a special kangaroo court were plastered with anti-Liu posters. The unfortunate Wang Guangmei was marched before the students. She had been dressed by some of the Red Guards in a tight evening gown, spiked heeled shoes, "an English aristocrat's" straw hat, and a necklace of ping pong balls on which skulls had been painted. Presented as such, Wang Guangmei became an unwitting caricature of her despicable "bourgeois" days. As the crowd jeered and chanted, Wang Guangmei was forced to reap the scorn directed against her hated husband.

Protests continued to focus on Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and their families. Thousands of Red Guards marched by Liu's house daily demanding his dismissal. His famous pamphlet "How to Be a Good Communist" was publicly denounced. Subsequent editions made the grievous error, according to the Maoists, of having failed to include the ideas of their "Great Helmsman." Liu and his wife were pressured into public self-criticism. Liu confessed to the charges of having right-wing ideas, possessing a bourgeois class outlook, and failing to appreciate the true meaning of Mao's thought. He was put under house arrest, but not officially dismissed from his post as state chairman, since such action would have required a vote of the National People's Congress. Despite Mao's apparent control over the progress of the Cultural Revolution, a victory among his party colleagues in the Congress was not necessarily assured. But Mao managed to reorganize the entire government in April, replacing the Liuists with his supporters. The Politburo then voted by a close margin to condemn Liu; Vice-premier Zhou Enlai cast the deciding vote. Liu was accused of following an antiparty policy for over two decades. His and Deng's subsequent exile signaled Mao's return to power; but it was not until October 1968 that the CCP Central Committee announced that the Liuists had been ousted from their party and governmental positions. On October 13, a plenary session of the Central Committee ratified the "Report on the Examination of the Crimes of the Renegade, Traitor and Scab Liu Shaoqi" and resolved to dismiss him from all posts inside and outside of the CCP. They also called on all Chinese to carry on "deep-going revolutionary mass criticism" to eradicate Liu's counterrevolutionary revisionist ideas.

The Cultural Revolution is replete with tragic stories of families turning against each other, students attacking their teachers, and friends denouncing friends. This was the ugly legacy of a society in full-scale rebellion against its cultural heritage. The humiliation and

suffering of "struggle sessions" touched nearly everyone, but few more tellingly than that visited on Liu Shaoqi and his wife. The sad tale of their end has been described by the historian Anne Thurston. After severe beatings Liu, who had lost his shoes, limped toward his wife, Wang Guangmei. As they were taken by the Red Guards back to captivity,

. . . Wang Guangmei stopped only a few paces from where their children were watching. She broke loose from her captors, turned and faced her husband, her hands reaching out. Husband and wife grabbed each other's hands and held on, a circle of two. Hands in each other's hands, they looked into each other's eyes, trying to straighten their bent and broken bodies. Liu Shaoqi was kicked and beaten, but still husband and wife clung to each other, hand in hand. Rudely, they were pulled apart. Wang Guangmei struggled loose from her captors again, grabbed on to her husband, and refused to let go. Only by violence were they separated.

It was their final farewell. ¹³

The purge of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping and their followers cleared the way for Mao to retake control and also to end the Cultural Revolution. The Ninth Party Congress, held in April 1969, officially marked the end of the Cultural Revolution and Mao's return to power. There were some pressing issues, neglected during the power struggle, that now demanded attention. Order had been restored, for the most part, by the PLA, which used force when necessary to stop Red Guard violence. China's economy was in a shambles as a result of the pervasive violence. Mao and his followers had been surprised by the resistance to the Cultural Revolution among the "masses" and peasants the very groups that were to be the beneficiaries of its policies. Industrial laborers, police, soldiers, and other workers often would not submit to Red Guard authority. National minorities, bent on preserving their own culture and traditions, also joined the battle against Red Guard zealots. The resistance of such disparate groups damaged the economy in many parts of China. A retreat was necessary.

Moreover, many CCP leaders, especially Premier Zhou Enlai, had begun to feel that China had become vulnerable to superpower aggression because of its isolation from world affairs. Ending the Cultural Revolution and restoring a Chinese presence in the diplomatic community was necessary before relations with foreign nations could improve. This was particularly important since China's dispute with the Soviets had intensified while the United States had increased its commitment to Southeast Asia. The United States had stationed over a half million troops in Vietnam by 1968 and unleashed a fury of bombing attacks in North Vietnam, dreadfully close to China's southern border. The vitriolic criticism of the two superpowers by the Chinese press and the Red Guards portrayed China as the enemy of the powers to its north and south. With the end of the Cultural Revolution, Zhou pursued avenues to return China to the international community, softening the rhetoric, and eventually winning China's seat in the United Nations from Taiwan in 1971.