

Words & Images of China's Cultural Revolution

In 1966, 73-year old Mao Zedong at that time, launched another campaign known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This was, in fact, a culturally-disguised political-ideological campaign targeting China's then leadership. Mao was disillusioned and felt "betrayed" by the then Communist Party Government and its leaders. According to Mao, Chinese Leadership was not revolutionary but also with "capitalist" tendencies.

Mao decided that his decisive intervention was necessary to "save" Communist China from the erroneous "capitalist" path that China's leadership –at the time– had taken. One of Mao's main slogans to ideologically support this campaign was "Bombard the Headquarters", suggesting the Government's overthrowing.

The Cultural Revolution, that was Mao's effort to reassert his authority and purge "capitalist" elements, lasted a decade (1966–1976) and was an upheaval for the entire Chinese society with unmeasurable impact on the lives of the people.

The Cultural Revolution developed as a full-fledged ideological fight among China's Leadership during the following three chronological phases :

- 1) Phase I : Personality Cult and Mass Mobilization of the Red Guards (1966–1968),
- 2) Phase II : The Consolidation of power by Lin Biao and the Military (1969–1971), and
- 3) Phase III : The Final power struggle between moderate and radicals (1972–1976).

These three phases are documented in this One-Frame Open Philately exhibit by using specific philatelic and non-philatelic material, primarily focusing on the Words – Slogans as well as the Images of the period.

EXHIBIT PLAN

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*Significant material is indicated with a **green dot***



Personality Cult & Mass Mobilization of Red Guards I

Mao the period before he launched the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) was politically marginalized. With the assistance of People's Liberation Army (PLA), Defense Minister, Marshal Lin Biao and the Gang of Four (his wife and her three radical officials) and his numerous of eager and devoted young followers, the Red Guards, Mao decided to reimpose Mao Zedong Thought as China's dominant ideology and to purge government leaders whose he labelled as "capitalist roaders".

Mao at the first phase of his "revolutionary pursuit" singled out, the "capitalist roaders" were President Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, the General Secretary of the Standing Committee of the Politburo at the time. Premier Zhou Enlai stood as a mediator between Mao and his ideological opponents.

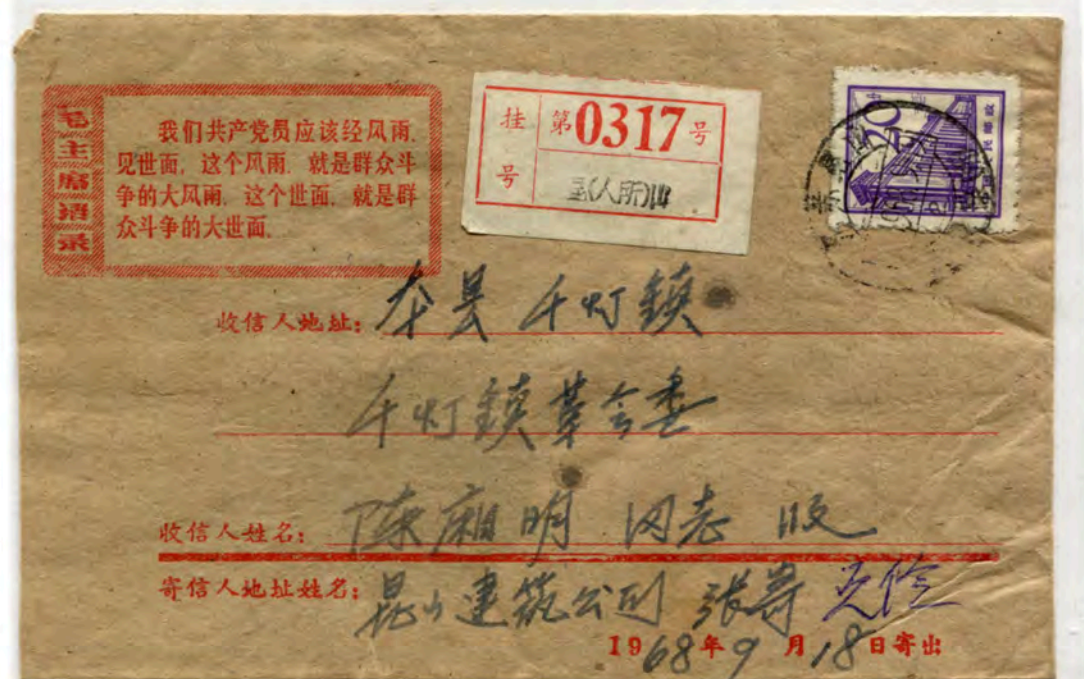
Mao Zedong's Definition of the Cultural Revolution (on the postage stamp)



"The Cultural Revolution was, in essence, a political revolution waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all exploiting classes under socialist conditions. It was a continuation of the long-term struggle of revolutionary people under its leadership and the Kuomintang reactionaries, and a continuation of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie".

Quotation of Chairman Mao (on top left red box of the cover)

"We, Communists should weather storms and broaden our horizons. These storms are the great storms of mass struggle, and these horizons are the great world of mass struggle".



Registered cover, posted on 18 September 1968 from Kunshan, Jiangsu Province to the Revolutionary Committee of Qiandeng Town in Jiangsu with correct rate of 20 Fen.

Personality Cult & Mass Mobilization of Red Guards II

After the failure of Mao's plan for rapid industrialization known as "The Great Leap Forward" (1958-1962) and its catastrophic socioeconomic impact on China, Mao was politically marginalized having a symbolic role. Right from the launch of the Cultural Revolution, the purpose of Mao Zedong's Personality Cult was used to regain his personal power and mobilize the Chinese masses for his ideological campaigns and to finally eliminate his political "capitalist roader" opponents.

Mao was honourably named as "*The Red Sun*" and the "*Great Helmsman*".



"Navigating the Sea, depends on the Helmsman"

Numerous copies of Mao's Selected Works (the Little Red Book, 1.2 billion Mao's portraits as well as 4.8 billion Chairman Mao's badges were manufactured.



1968 Ration Coupon of Ningxia Autonomous Region

"Infinitely loyal to Chairman Mao"



An immense quantity of Mao's Quotations and Portraits also appeared on Ration Coupons of Daily Necessities as well as on postage stamps and on envelopes for postal use.

无限忠于毛主席
ماؤ جوشقاچە كەسسىز سادىق بولايلى

中国人民银行转账支票存根
جوڭخۇا خەلق ئاركانىنىڭ مەمۇرىيەت بۆلۈمىگە تەقدىم قىلىندى

号码 3674217

签发日期: 70年 12月 18日
كۆن: 18 ئاينىڭ 70 يىلى

收款单位 名称 八一医院	收款人 姓名 李淑珍
用途 或预算科目 手术费	收款人 姓名 李淑珍
金额 500.00	收款人 姓名 李淑珍
备注: 杨国平	收款人 姓名 李淑珍

签发单位名称 八一医院

People's Bank of China bank deposit slip 18/12/1970

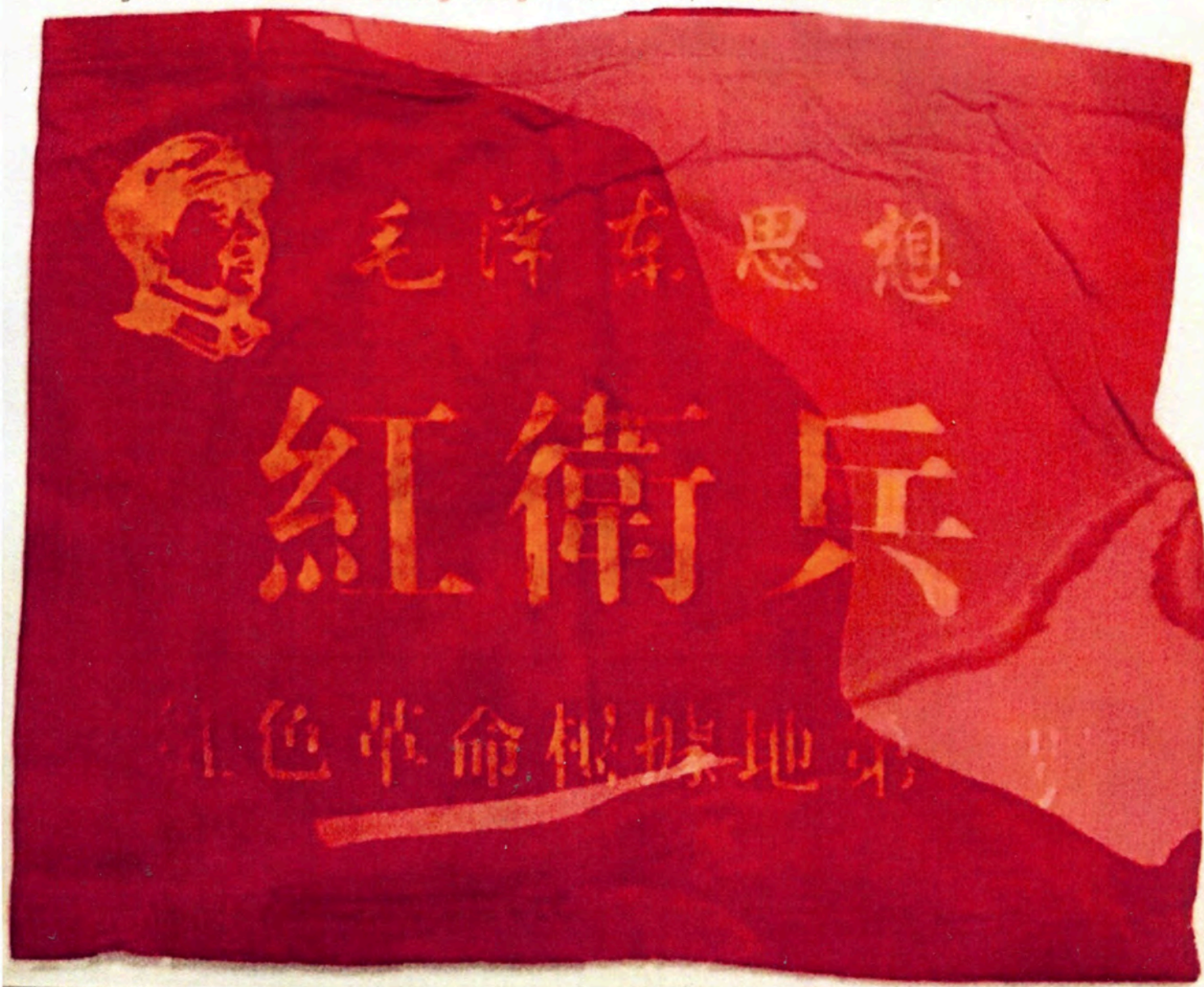
Personality Cult & Mass Mobilization of Red Guards III

In August 1966 millions of students all over China responded to Mao's call in order to combat "revisionist" authorities. Mao's "Revolutionary Army" of devoted youngsters. The Red Guards wore a red armband and a badge -at the level of their hearts, with Mao's portrait and quotations- as well as carrying their "revolutionary Bible", a book composed by Lin Biao with Mao's Quotations, known as the "Little Red Book". All these symbols of loyalty to Mao were part of Lin Biao's plan of constructing Mao's Personality Cult.

忠 (zhōng) = Loyalty (to Chairman Mao)



Original Armband of "*Mao Zedong Thought*" Red Guard, Red Guard Base no 7 (number erased)



Personality Cult & Mass Mobilization of Red Guards V

The first phase of the Cultural Revolution is characterized by two Mao's slogan "smash the Capitalist Headquarters" –meaning to attack China's legal Government and to attack the "Four Olds", which were defined as old ideas, culture, customs, habits.

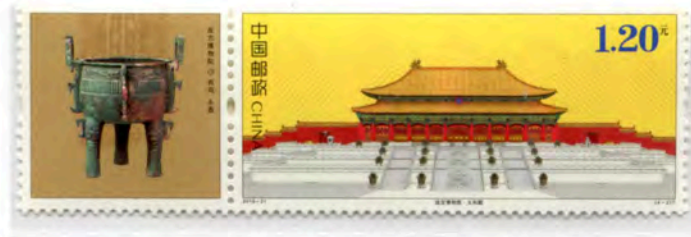
The Red Guards fanatically followed both the above-mentioned slogans by attacking and humiliating purged officials. The most notable victim of Red Guards' revolutionary wrath was China's –officially labelled as "*a traitor and enemy agent*" – President Liu Shaoqi who died due to torture and hardships.



THE RED GUARDS ARE OUT OF HAND

By the end of 1968 Mao realized that factional fighting and widespread violence of various Red Guard groups could not be controlled. During that period the Red Guards had destroyed invaluable cultural relics, labelled as one of the "**Four Olds**".

Only thanks to Premier Zhou Enlai's intervention of the Forbidden City was saved from the attack of the Red Guards.



SENDING DOWN THE RED GUARDS – STEPPING IN THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY



Mao, Lin Biao and other leaders decided that People's Liberation Army (P.L.A) should intervene and impose Martial Law restoring order and the Red Guards to be sent down to the countryside to learn from the farmers.

The Consolidation of power by the Military and Lin Biao I

The 2nd Phase of the Cultural Revolution started at the 9th National Congress of China's Communist Party in April 1969. At this Congress four major decisions were taken : 1) the purge of President Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping was officially ratified, 2) Lin Biao was officially appointed as "the close comrade-in-arms of Chairman Mao and his successor", 3) the role of the radical faction led by Mao's wife Jiang Qing and her three ideological partners was elevated and 4) the People's Liberation Army (P.L.A), gained a central role with significant power after it had successfully restored public order, putting an end to Red Guard extremities.

Medal of the 9th National Congress

with Portraits of Mao Zedong and Lin Biao



Text on Medal's back side

*The 9th National
Congress of China's
Communist Party,
a significant milestone
in Party's History.*

April 1st, 1969

Produced by Army

Unit 6297



Lin Biao's Quotation about the P.L.A on stamp

*"Chinese People's Liberation Army is a force armed with
Mao Zedong's Thought. A force that serves the People
wholeheartedly and therefor it is an invincible force."*



*"National
Unity, the
solidarity of
People and
the solidarity
of all ethnic
groups within
the country
are the
fundamental
guarantees
for the
inevitable
victory of our
cause".*

Front Cover left Mao's Quotation is in box

敬祝毛主席万寿无疆

毛主席语录
国家的统一，
人民的团结，国
内各民族的团
结，这是我们的
事业必定要胜利
的基本保证。

Letter from Shanghai, with domestic 1st weight rate of 8 Fen.

The Consolidation of power by the Military and Lin Biao II

The Rise of Lin Biao

Lin and Mao's acquaintance goes back to 1928 in the Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet base area. Comintern (Third International) representative Otto Braun described Lin Biao during this period as "*politically ... a blank sheet on which Mao could write as he pleased*".



A bowed Lin listens to Mao attentively



Lin Biao was Mao's most trusted and loyal ally and "*Mao's best student*". Lin himself declared that "*he knew nothing, all he had learnt was thanks to Mao's teaching*". Lin was also the first to arrive holding the "Little Red Book", at every public appearances of Mao for welcoming him.

● Essay of the Unissued 1969 Postage Stamp of Lin Biao who stands behind Mao holding the Little Red Book.



送审手稿

林彪

The Consolidation of power by the Military and Lin Biao III

The P.L.A guaranteed the social order as well as advancing Mao's thought and serving the people.
Lin Biao between 1959 – 1971 was Defense Minister and in charge of P.L.A.

Chairman Mao's Quotation (top left cover)

"All Officers and Soldiers of the P.L.A should never relax their fighting will even slightly. Any thought of weakening their fighting will by being complacent is wrong".

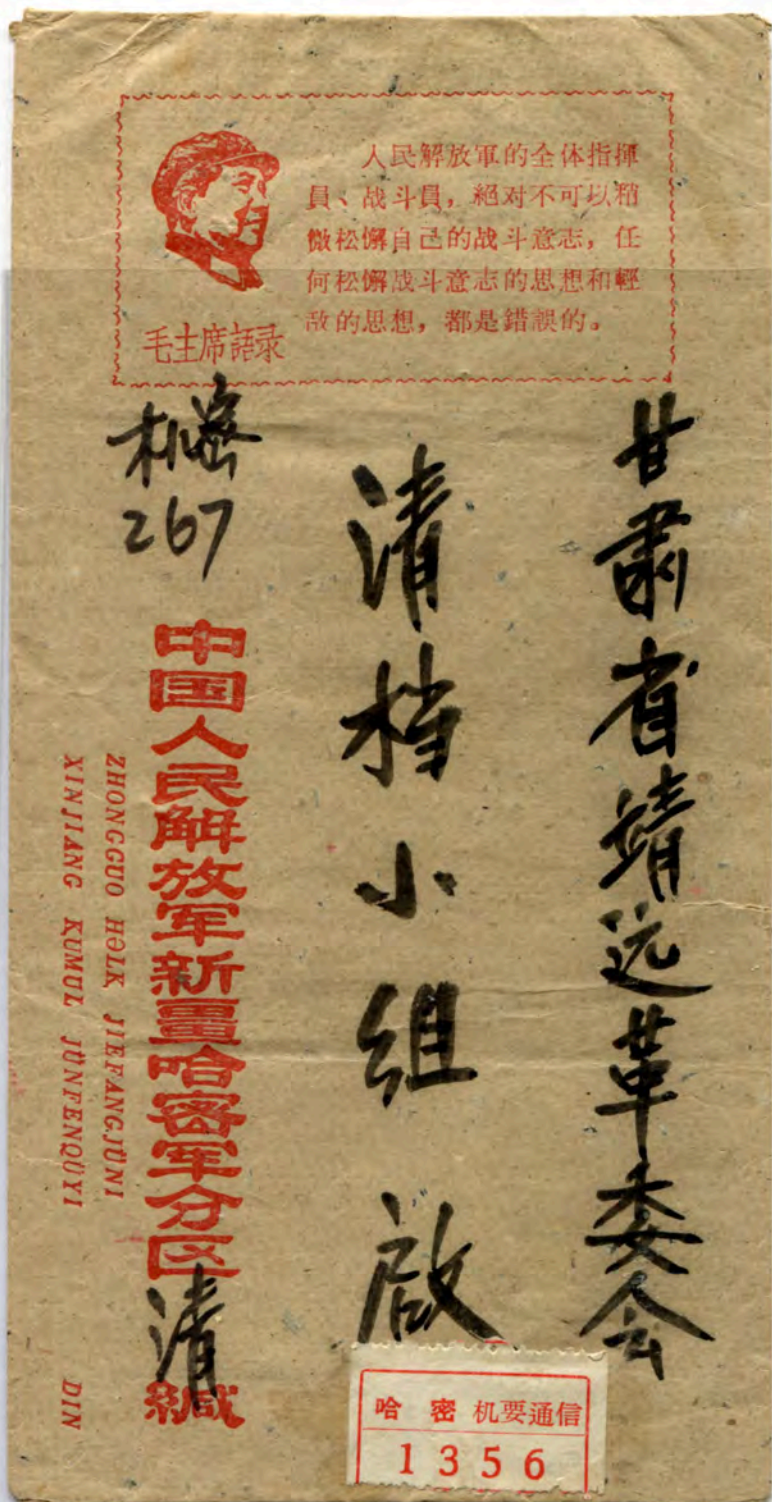
"Defend and Promote Mao's Thought"



Workers, Peasants, Army in Unity



Registered Letter (Hami Confidential Communication) from New Military sub-district of China's People Liberation Army to Gansu province, Jingyuan Revolutionary Committee with postal fee of 24 Fen.



The Consolidation of power by the Military and Lin Biao IV

1970 Cultural Revolution Sketches Book



*1970 Cultural Revolution Sketches Book
Mao Zedong's Thought Publicity Group
published by Shanghai Revolution Group
first edition May 1970*

"Support the Army and Love the People"



拥军爱民

The Consolidation of power by the Military and Lin Biao V

Following his failed plot against Chairman Mao in September 1971, Lin Biao tried to escape to the Soviet Union. That incident alarmed Mao and his already negative view of the Soviet Union developed to apparently hostile. Common slogans of this period was "Prepare for War", promote "National Unity" and Economy "

Iconography :

"Red Sun and agricultural Goods".

"Prepare for War, Prepare for Famine
and Serve the People".



Ration Coupon for purchase of
6,66m Cloth Material, Jiangsu Province 1971

Mao's Quotation

"Grasp the Revolution,
Promote Production.

Promote Work and War Preparedness "



毛主席语录

抓革命，促生产
促工作，促战备。

挂
号

377

銀行掛號信

掛
號

西安 支

中國人民銀行

北京
樊桃園

市縣支行
辦事處
營業部
服務所

啟

緘

聯行結算憑証		一般結算憑証	
收報筆數	/	托收憑証	
付報筆數		拒付理由書	
查詢復書		報告表	
對帳表		結算憑証第四聯	
		回單	

中國人民銀行
西安市分行

Registered Letter from China People's Bank, Xian Branch arrived on 26.2.1972 in Beijing
with "Postage Paid" cancellation on back side.

The final power struggle and the Gang of Four I

Mao during the 1942 Yan'an Forum on Art and Literature, declared that all art was for the masses and it should reflect the life of the working class and it should also serve the advancement of socialism.



Old Reactionary vs Revolutionary Art

It was during the Cultural Revolution, that Mao's wife Jiang Qing and her three ideological partners –later labelled as the Gang of Four– implement their plans of staging only revolutionary performances which were one Symphony, two Ballets and five Model Operas to replace the old, reactionary art.



These promoted class struggle and glorified the People's Liberation Army and the Communist Party displaying examples of good revolutionary behaviour. The technical characteristics were unadorned and easily understood by all viewers with heroes presented as "*bright, shining, and red*" (紅, 光, 亮) and villains portrayed as dark and ugly.

Mao's Quotation

"Our Literature and Art are for the people, Especially for workers, peasants and soldiers and used by them".

Postage Paid Cancellation



Stampless with "Postage Paid" Cancellation
Letter From Hangzhou to Shanghai, arrived 25.9.1971

The final power struggle and the Gang of Four II

The initial phase of the Cultural Revolution had a clear anti-American orientation with such slogans appearing on postage stamps. From 1971 talks between top level government official started culminating with Nixon's official visit to China in February 1972.

From 1966 US imperialism...

"The struggle of people all over the World against US imperialism and lackeys will surely achieve even greater victories".



...to 1972 Sino-American rapprochement.

During Nixon's visit to China, Mao used the lines of his poem "Reply to Comrade Guo Moruo" said to Nixon "*Seize the day, seize the hour*".

POEM stamp Mi 1018



"Seize the day, seize the hour"



Richard Nixon, assisted by an interpreter, discusses current events with a Chinese acquaintance in Peking.

Published by Cobra-Lee

C31759-Colorphoto : Atkins/Contact

Nixon's visit was the first step to China's openness, in 1974 it was organised again the Guangzhou International Fair with thousands of foreign visitors.



The final power struggle and the Gang of Four III

The iconography of this period had been modified to images associated with the economy without aggressive, revolutionary words and images.

Textile Factory illustration



1974 Ningxia Autonomous Region Ration Coupon for half kilo of grain.

Since summer 1972 Premier Zhou was diagnosed with cancer and tried to reappoint many of the purged cadres in the power struggle with the radical faction of Jiang Qing. Mao health was also very fragile due to Parkinson's disease and sclerosis.

In 1975 Jiang Qing staged an ideological attack to ailing Premier Zhou through a philatelic issue named "*Criticise Lin, criticise Confucius*". Lin Biao was an indifferent target since he was killed in 1971, but as the "contemporary" Confucius was identified Premier Zhou.



Military and Civilian Criticism of Lin and Confucius
Photograph by Wu Yide and Chen Jiading

The final power struggle and the Gang of Four IV

Premier Zhou, before he passed away in January 1976, had brought back to a number of purged cadres to their previous positions.



From heated Political Slogan to Sports and Smiles

The images on postage stamps of this period are revealing a cooling down of the Cultural Revolution.

A sportsman is at the foreground and a worker, a farmer and a soldier at the background.



and smiling China's national minority group people

One of the major social setbacks the Cultural Revolution was the total educational disruption. Now it is time for people of different ages after a long period to return to schools & universities.

"A warm welcome to worker-peasant-soldiers to university"



"Welcome college graduates preparing to be a civilian"



Premier Zhou Enlai passed away in January 1976...



The Epilogue

The official end of the Cultural Revolution comes with the death of Chairman Mao in September 1976, eight months after Premier Zhou's death. Chairman Mao had appointed Hua Guafeng as his successor.

Hua with the aid of the then Defense Minister Marshall Ye Jianying arrested the Gang of Four who were later put to trial.



During the trial of the Radical Factions –labelled as the Gang of Four– their leader Jiang Qing, Mao's wife repeatedly stated that “ *I was Mao's dog, he was telling me to bite and I bit* ”.

Jiang Qing, widow of Mao Zedong, during trial of “Gang of Four” in Peking, UNISLIDE # 9634. Jan. 21. 1981.



Photo from Original Slide



The epilogue of tumultuous period of the Cultural Revolution came through the words of Deng Xiaoping assessing Chairman Mao as “ *70% good and 30% bad* ” aiming to protect the legitimacy of China's Communist Party. In 1999, a new series of banknotes with Mao's portrait was issued and many people called the creator of the Cultural Revolution with the affectionate nickname as “ *Grandad Mao* ”.

The 1999 banknote issue consisted of 6 values of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Yuan.

