/HILE SHORING UP Mao, Lin Biao also attended to some personal usiness. Apart from Chief of Staff Luo, there was another member of ıe four-man "clique" he hated: media chief Lu Ding-yi, and for a rather nusual reason. Lu Ding-yi's wife was a schizophrenic who was fixated n Mrs. Lin, and had written the Lins over fifty scabrous anonymous :tters claiming that Mrs. Lin had had a string of affairs, including one ith Wang Shi-wei, the dissident leader of the young volunteers in Yenan, ıd that Lin might not be the father of their children. Some of the letters ere addressed to the Lins' children, with lewd descriptions of their .other's alleged sex life, some signed with the name of Dumas' avenger, Monte Cristo." Instead of receiving mental treatment, which was what ıe clearly needed, Mrs. Lu was arrested on 28 April 1966, and went ırough hell for the next twelve years.

At one session of the May Politburo gathering, Lin had a document aced in front of the participants. It read:

I solemnly declare:

1. Ye Qun [Mrs. Lin] was a pure virgin when she married me. Since then, she has always been proper;
2. Ye Qun had no love relationship whatsoever with Wang Shi-wei;
3. Tiger and Dodo are blood son and daughter of mine with Ye Qun;
4. Everything written in the counter-revolutionary letters by [Mrs. Lu] is rubbish.

Lin Biao
14 May 1966.

was the first time such a colorful text had ever come before the Politburo. Although this behavior seems ludicrous, it had a practical aim. Lin was aring his wife's name, as she was now to be a fixture on the political :ne, acting as his representative. He himself disliked attending meet-gs, or seeing people.

Mrs. Lin was a rather batty woman, a bundle of energy who received le love from the marshal and lived in a state of unremitting sexual stration. She grew to be erratic, and managed to drive her own daugh-. Dodo, to attempt suicide more than once, the first time in 1964. Like ne Mao, who was also hysterical from frustration, Mrs. Lin now sought npensation and fulfillment in political scheming and persecution, ıough she was less awful than Mme Mao. She acted as her husband's istant, and issued orders on his behalf.

Mao's Great Purge was rolling thanks to a horse-trade with his crony . Biao.

THE GREAT PURGE

(1966–67 * AGE 72–73)

AT THE END of May 1966, Mao set up a new office, the Cultural Revolution Small Group, to help run the Purge. Mme Mao headed it for him, with Mao's former secretary, Chen Bo-da, its nominal director, and purge expert Kang Sheng its "adviser." This office, in addition to Lin Biao and Chou En-lai, formed Mao's latest inner circle.

Under the new cabal, the cult of Mao was escalated to fever pitch. Mao's face dominated the front page of *People's Daily*, which also ran a column of his quotations every day. Soon, badges started appearing with Mao's head on them, of which, altogether, some 4.8 billion were manufactured. More copies of Mao's *Selected Works* were printed—and more portraits of him (1.2 billion)—than China had inhabitants. It was this summer that the Little Red Book was handed out to everyone. It had to be carried and brandished on all public occasions, and its prescriptions recited daily.

In June, Mao intensified the terrorization of society. He picked as his first instrument of terror young people in schools and universities, the natural hotbeds for activists. These students were told to condemn their teachers and those in charge of education for poisoning their heads with "bourgeois ideas"—and for persecuting them with exams, which henceforth were abolished. The message was splashed in outsize characters on the front page of *People's Daily*, and declaimed in strident voices on the radio, carried by loudspeakers that had been rigged up everywhere, creating an atmosphere that was both blood-boiling and blood-curdling. Teachers and administrators in education were selected as the first victims because they were the people instilling culture, and because they were the group most conveniently placed to offer up to the youthful mobs, being right there to hand.

The young were told that their role was to "safeguard" Mao, although how their teachers could possibly harm "the great Helmsman," or what perils might beset him, was not disclosed. Nevertheless, many responded enthusiastically. Taking part in politics was something no one had been

ved to do under Mao, and the country was seething with frustrated
ists who had been denied the normal outlets available in most soci-
, even to sit around and argue issues. Now, suddenly, there seemed
: a chance to get involved. To those interested in politics, the prospect
tremendously exciting. Young people began to form groups.
)n 2 June, a group from a middle school in Peking put up a wall
er, which they signed with the snappy name of "Red Guards," to show
they wanted to safeguard Mao. Their writing was full of remarks
"Stuff 'human feelings!' " "We will be brutal!" "We will strike you
o's enemies] to the ground and trample you!" The seeds of hate that
had sown were ready for reaping. Now he was able to unleash the
gery of these infected teenagers, the most malleable and violent
ıent of society.
'o make sure that students were fully available to carry out his wishes,
ordered schooling suspended from 13 June. "Now lessons are
ped," he said, and young people "are given food. With food they have
gy and they want to riot. What are they expected to do if not to
" Violence broke out within days. On 18 June, scores of teachers and
es at Peking University were dragged in front of crowds and manhan-
, their faces blackened, and dunces' hats put on their heads. They
: forced to kneel, some were beaten up, and women were sexually
ested. Similar episodes happened all over China, producing a cascade
ıicides.

O ORCHESTRATED THESE events from the provinces. He had
the capital the previous November as soon as he had set the Purge
ıotion. Peking was no longer safe: it was full of foes he wanted to
ge, and uncomfortably close to Russian troops on the Outer Mongolia
ler. For more than eight months, Mao stayed way down south, trav-
ıg incessantly.
He was also relaxing and storing up energy for the coming tempest.
took walks in the misty hills along the lake at Hangzhou, and flirted
is twice-weekly dancing parties. That June, while mayhem was rising,
pent some time in a particularly serene villa that he had never been
)utside his home village of Shaoshan. He had ordered this villa built
ing his previous visit seven years before. While swimming in a reser-
there, he had been much taken by the secluded beauty of the
:oundings, and said to the provincial boss: "Mm, this place is pretty
et. Would you build a straw hut here for my retirement?" As the man
soon purged, nothing was done until Mao brought it up again a year
:r, in the depth of the famine. So began "Project 203," the building of
ant steel and cement edifice called Dripping Grotto. The whole moun-
ı range was sealed off, and the local peasants evicted. A helicopter pad

and a special railway line were planned, and an earthquake- and atom-bomb–proof building, with shock-absorbers, was later incorporated. Altogether, Mao stayed here for all of eleven days in that violent June, and never again.

This grey monstrosity was surrounded, incongruously, by soft green hills alive with blazing wildflowers, and the back abutted onto the Mao family's ancestral burial ground. Its front door faced a peak called Dragon's Head, auspicious in the view of geomancy. This delighted Mao, who chatted jovially with his entourage about the *feng shui* assets of the place.

Though he was just on the edge of his native village, Mao did not meet a single villager. On his way, a little girl had caught a glimpse of him in his car, and told her family. Police descended at once, and warned the family: "You didn't see Chairman Mao! Don't you dare to say that again!" Meetings were called to warn the villagers not to think that Mao was there. Mao spent most of his time reading and thinking. He did not even go swimming, although the reservoir was right on his doorstep.

By the end of June, he was ready to head back to Peking and start the next stage of his Purge. En route, he stopped at Wuhan, where on 16 July he swam for more than an hour in the Yangtze, watched by tens of thousands of people. Like his swim a decade before, this was to send the message to his foes that, at the age of seventy-two, he had the health, the strength and the will for a gigantic fight. And this time the symbolic gesture was also intended for the population at large, especially the young. The message was distilled into one slogan: "Follow Chairman Mao forward through high winds and waves!" Chanted repeatedly from the now ubiquitous loudspeakers, it fanned the flames in many restless heads. Having cranked up his media to ballyhoo this swim to the maximum, even making it famous abroad, Mao returned to Peking on 18 July. He immediately adopted a hands-on approach, frequently chairing meetings with the Small Group that ran the Purge, and meeting every day with Chou En-lai, who was in charge of day-to-day business.

Mao did not go back to his old house, claiming he did not like the way it had been redecorated. Instead, he moved into unexpected quarters in another part of Zhongnanhai—the changing-rooms of the swimming pools, which he made his main residence for the next ten years. He did not move there to swim. He was taking precautions against the possibility that bugging devices—or worse—had been installed during his absence.

IT WAS IN these nondescript changing-rooms that Mao created the terror of "Red August," with the aim of frightening the whole nation into an even greater degree of conformity. On 1 August he wrote to the first group of Red Guards, who had vowed in their posters to "be brutal" and

'trample" Mao's enemies, to announce his "fiery support." He circu-
:d this letter, together with the bellicose Red Guard posters, to the
ntral Committee, telling these high officials that they must promote
Red Guards. Many of these officials were actually on Mao's hit list,
: for now he used them to spread terror—one that would soon engulf
mselves. Following Mao's instructions, these officials encouraged their
ldren to form Red Guard groups, and these children passed the word
their friends. Red Guard groups mushroomed as a result, invariably
.ded by the children of high officials.

Learning from their fathers and friends that Mao was encouraging
lence, the Red Guards immediately embarked on atrocities. On
ıugust, in a Peking girls' school packed with high officials' children
ıich Mao's two daughters had attended), the first known death by
ture took place. The headmistress, a fifty-year-old mother of four, was
ked and trampled by the girls, and boiling water was poured over her.
: was ordered to carry heavy bricks back and forth; as she stumbled
t, she was thrashed with leather army belts with brass buckles, and
h wooden sticks studded with nails. She soon collapsed and died.
:erwards, leading activists reported to the new authority. They were
: told to stop—which meant carry on.

A more explicit incitement to violence soon came from Mao himself.
ı 18 August, dressed in army uniform for the first time since 1949, he
od on Tiananmen Gate to review hundreds of thousands of Red
ards. This was when the Red Guards were written about in the national
ss and introduced to the nation, and the world. A leading perpetra-
of atrocities in the girls' school where the headmistress had just been
ed was given the signal honor of putting a Red Guard armband on
.o. The dialogue that followed was made public: "Chairman Mao asked
: 'What's your name?' She said 'Song Bin-bin.' Chairman Mao asked:
it the "Bin" as in "Educated and Gentle?" ' She said: 'Yes.' Chairman
.o said: 'Be violent!' "

Song Bin-bin changed her name to "Be Violent," and her school
ınged its name to "The Red Violent School." Atrocities now multi-
:d in schools and universities. They started in Peking, then spread
oss the country, as Peking Red Guards were sent all over China to
nonstrate how to do things like thrash victims and make them lick
:ir own blood off the ground. Provincial youngsters were encouraged
visit Peking to learn that Mao had given them enormous destructive
:nse. To facilitate this process, Mao ordered that travel be made free,
;ether with food and accommodation while traveling. Over the next
ır months, 11 million young people came to Peking and Mao made
'en more appearances at Tiananmen Square, where they gathered in
ıssive, frenzied, yet well-drilled crowds.

There was not one school in the whole of China where atrocities did not occur. And teachers were not the only victims. In his letter to the Red Guards on 1 August 1966, Mao singled out for praise some militant teenagers who had been dividing pupils by family background and abusing those from undesirable families, whom they labeled "Blacks." Mao announced specifically that these militants had his "fiery support," which was unequivocal endorsement for what they were doing. In the girls' school where the headmistress was tortured to death, "Blacks" had ropes tied around their necks, were beaten up, and forced to say: "I'm the bastard of a bitch. I deserve to die."

With models set up by Mao, this practice then spread to all schools, accompanied by a "theory of the bloodline," summed up in a couplet as ridiculous as it was brutal: "The son of a hero father is always a great man; a reactionary father produces nothing but a bastard!" This was chanted by many children of officials' families, who dominated the early Red Guards, little knowing that their "hero fathers" were Mao's real targets. At this initial stage, Mao simply used these children as his tools, setting them upon other children. When the Sichuan boss returned from Peking, he told his son, who was organizing a Red Guard group: "The Cultural Revolution is the continuation of the Communists against the Nationalists . . . Now our sons and daughters must fight their [Nationalists'] sons and daughters." This man could not possibly have given such an order unless it had come from Mao.

AFTER TERROR IN SCHOOLS, Mao directed his Red Guards to fan out into society at large. The targets at this stage were the custodians of culture, and culture itself. On 18 August, Mao stood next to Lin Biao on Tiananmen while Lin called on Red Guards throughout the country to "smash . . . old culture." The youngsters first went for objects like traditional shop signs and street names, which they attacked with hammers, and renamed. As in many revolutions, puritans turned on the softer and more flamboyant. Long hair, skirts and shoes with any hint of high heels were pounced on in the streets, and sheared by scissors-wielding teenagers. From now on, only flat shoes, and uniform-like, ill-fitting jackets and trousers, in only a few colors, were available.

But Mao wanted something much more vicious. On 23 August he told the new authorities: "Peking is not chaotic enough . . . Peking is too civilised." As Peking was the trail-blazer and the provinces all copied the capital, this was a way to pump up terror nationwide. That afternoon, groups of teenage Red Guards, many of them girls, descended on the countryard of the Peking Writers' Association. By then, a "uniform" was firmly in fashion for the Red Guards: green army-style clothes, often ordinary clothes dyed army green, or sometimes real army uniforms

nded down by parents, red armband on the left arm, Little Red Book hand—and a leather belt with brass buckles. Thus attired, the Red ıards rained blows with their heavy belts on some two dozen of the ıntry's best-known writers. Large insulting wooden plaques were hung thin wire from the writers' necks, as they were thrashed in the scorch- ; sun.

The victims were then trucked to an old Confucian temple, which ısed Peking's major library. There, opera costumes and props had been ›ught to make a bonfire. About thirty of the country's leading writers, ›ra singers and other artists were made to kneel in front of the bonfire d were set upon again with kicks and punches, sticks and brass-buck- belts. One of the victims was the 69-year-old writer Lao She, who d been lauded by the regime as "the people's artist." The following day, drowned himself in a lake.

The site, props and victims had all been chosen to symbolize "old ture." The selection of the victims, all household names, was unques- nably done at the very top, since till now they had all been official rs. There can be no doubt that the whole event was staged by the horities; the loosely-banded teenage Red Guards could not possibly ›e organized all this on their own.

Mao had also cleared the way for the atrocities to escalate by issuing ›licit orders to the army and police on the 21st and 22nd, saying t they must "absolutely not intervene" against the youngsters, using ›ommonly specific language such as "even firing blanks . . . is absolutely bidden."

To spread terror deeper and closer to home, Mao got the young thugs make violent raids on victims selected by the state, which gave their nes and addresses to the Red Guards. The boss of Sichuan, for instance, ered the department in his province that looked after prominent ›ural figures to hand out a list to his son's Red Guard organization— ıething he could only have done if Mao had told him to.

On 24 August, national police chief Xie Fu-zhi told his subordinates ›ass out such information. Clearly responding to questions like "What he Red Guards kill these people?," Xie said: "If people are beaten to th . . . it's none of our business." "Don't be bound by rules set in the t." "If you detain those who beat people to death . . . you will be making ig mistake." Xie assured his reluctant subordinates: "Premier Chou ports it."

It was with the authorities' blessing that Red Guards broke into homes ›re they burned books, cut up paintings, trampled phonograph records musical instruments—generally wrecking anything to do with ture." They "confiscated" valuables, and beat up the owners. Bloody se raids swept across China, which *People's Daily* hailed as "simply splen-did." Many of those raided were tortured to death in their own homes. Some were carted off to makeshift torture chambers in what had been cinemas, theaters and sports stadiums. Red Guards tramping down the street, the bonfires of destruction, and the screams of victims being set upon—these were the sights and sounds of the summer nights of 1966.

There was a short list of notables to be exempted, drawn up by Chou En-lai. This later brought Chou totally unmerited plaudits for allegedly "saving" people. In fact, it was Mao who got Chou to draw the list up, on 30 August, and the purpose was purely utilitarian. The only reason Chou had charge of it was because he was running the whole show, not because he stepped in to save people. The list comprised a few dozen names. By contrast, later official statistics show that in August–September, in Peking alone, 33,695 homes were raided (which invariably involved physical violence), and 1,772 people were tortured, or beaten, to death.

To cover himself, Mao had Chou En-lai announce to a Red Guard rally on Tiananmen on 31 August: "Denounce by words, and not by violence." This announcement allowed most Red Guards to opt out of violence by saying that Mao was against it. Some victims were also able to protect themselves by quoting this back to their persecutors. But as perpetrators of atrocities went unpunished, violence raged on.

One of Mao's aims with the house raids was to use the Red Guards as proxy bandits. They confiscated tons of gold, silver, platinum, jewelry, and millions of dollars in hard currency, which all went into the state coffers, as well as many priceless antiques, paintings and ancient books. The looting, along with mindless on-site destruction, cleaned virtually all valuable possessions out of private hands. Some of the plunder was exported to earn foreign currency.

The top few leaders were allowed to take their pick of the booty. Mme Mao selected an 18-carat gold French pendant watch, studded with pearls and diamonds, for which she paid the princely sum of 7 yuan. This was in line with the Maoist leadership's "un-corrupt" practice of insisting on paying for paltry items like tea leaves at meetings, but paying nothing at all for their scores of villas and servants, and having the de facto private use of planes and trains and other expensive perks. Kang Sheng, an antiques lover, privatized some house raids by sending in his own personal looters disguised as Red Guards. Mao himself pilfered thousands of old books. Sterilized by ultraviolet rays, they lined the shelves of his enormous sitting room, forming the backdrop to photographs of him receiving world leaders and impressing foreign visitors. The room, Kissinger mused, looked like "the retreat of a scholar." In fact, unknown to the American visitors, it had more in common with one of Goering's mansions adorned with art seized from victims of Nazism.

The regime squeezed something else out of these raids: housing space. he housing shortage was acute, as virtually no new dwellings had been ıilt for ordinary urban residents under the Communists. Now the ıttered families who had been raided were squeezed into one or two oms, and neighbors were moved into the rest of the raided houses, ten resulting, not surprisingly, in excruciatingly bitter relations.

Some families who had been raided were exiled to villages, escalating process which Mao had already initiated in order to turn cities into ure" industrial centers. In Peking, nearly 100,000 were expelled in less an a month from late August. One eyewitness saw the vast waiting om at Peking railway station crammed with children waiting to be exiled ith their parents. Red Guards ordered the children to kneel down, and en walked around aiming blows at their heads with brass-buckled belts. ɔme even poured scalding hot water over them as a farewell souvenir, hile other passengers tried to find a place to hide.

N SUMMER 1966 Red Guards ravaged every city and town, and some eas in the countryside. "Home," with books and anything associated ith culture, became a dangerous place. Fearing that the Red Guards ight burst in and torture them if "culture" was found in their posses-ɔn, frightened citizens burned their own books or sold them as scrap ıper, and destroyed their own art objects. Mao thus succeeded in wiping ıt culture from Chinese homes. Outside, he was also fulfillling his long-ɛld goal of erasing China's past from the minds of his subjects. A large ımber of historical monuments, the most visible manifestation of the ıtion's civilization, which had so far survived Mao's loathing, was demol-hed. In Peking, of 6,843 monuments still standing in 1958, 4,922 were ɔw obliterated.

Like the list of people to be spared, the list of monuments to be ɛserved was a short one. Mao did want to keep some monuments, like iananmen Gate, where he could stand to be hailed by "the masses." The ɔrbidden City and a number of other historical sites were put under ɛotection and many were closed down, thus depriving the population ɛ access even to the fraction of their cultural inheritance that survived. ot spared was China's leading architect, Liang Si-cheng, who had ɛscribed Mao's wish to see "chimneys everywhere" in Peking as "too ɔrrifying a picture to bear thinking about." Now he was subjected to ıblic humiliation and abuse, and brutal house raids. His collection of ɔoks was destroyed, and his family expelled to one small room, with ɛoken windows and ice-covered floor and walls. Chronically ill, Liang ed in 1972.

Contrary to what is widely believed, the vast majority of the destruc-on was not spontaneous, but state-sponsored. Before Mao chided the Red Guards for being "too civilized" on 23 August, there had been no vandalism against historical monuments. It was on that day, only after Mao spoke, that the first statue was broken—a Buddha in the Summer Palace in Peking. From then on, when important sites were being wrecked, official specialists were present to pick out the most valuable objects for the state, while the rest were carted off and melted down, or pulped.

It was Mao's office, the Small Group, which ordered the desecration of the home of the man whose name was synonymous with Chinese culture, Confucius. The home, in Shandong, was a rich museum, as emperors and artists had come there to pay homage, commissioning monuments and donating their art. The locals had been ordered to wreck it, but had responded by going slow. So Red Guards were dispatched from Peking. In their pledge before setting off, they said that the sage was "the enemy rival to death of Mao Tse-tung Thought." Mao did, indeed, hate Confucius, because Confucianism enjoined that a ruler must care for his subjects, and as Mao himself put it, "Confucius is humanism . . . that is to say, People-centred-ism."

In the annihilation of culture, Mme Mao played a key role as her husband's police chief for this field. And she made sure there was no resurrection of culture for the rest of Mao's life. Partly thanks to her, for a decade, until Mao's death in 1976, old books remained banned, and among the handful of new books of general interest that were published, all of them sported Mao's quotations, in bold, on every other page. There were a few paintings and some songs around, but they all served propaganda purposes, and eulogized Mao. Virtually the only performing arts allowed were eight "revolutionary model shows" and a few films that Mme Mao had had a hand in producing. China became a cultural desert.

BY MID-SEPTEMBER 1966, the country was thoroughly terrorized and Mao felt confident enough to start stalking his real target: Party officials. On 15 September, Lin Biao instructed a Red Guards' rally on Tiananmen Square that they were to shift their target and "focus on denouncing those power-holders inside the Party pursuing a capitalist road," known as "capitalist-roaders." What Lin—and Mao—really meant was the old enforcers who had shown distaste for Mao's extremist policies. Mao aimed to get rid of them en masse, and the call went out to attack them right across China.

For this job, new groups were formed, who sometimes called themselves Red Guards but were generally known as "Rebels," because they were taking on their bosses. And these Rebels were mostly adults. The original Red Guard groups, most of them made up of teenagers, now fell apart, as they had been organized around the children of those same high officials who now became targets. Mao had used the young Red Guards

:errorize society at large. Now he was moving against his real enemies, ·ty officials; and for this he used a broader, mainly older force.
With Mao's explicit support, Rebels denounced their bosses in wall :ters and at violent rallies. But anyone who thought the Party dictator- ɔ might be weakened had their hopes dashed fast. People who tried to access to their own files (which the regime held on everyone), or to abilitate those the Party had persecuted, were instantly blocked. Orders ıred out from Peking making it clear that, although Party officials were ler attack, the Party's rule was not to be loosened one bit. Victims of t persecutions were banned from joining Rebel organizations.
After some months to generate momentum, in January 1967 Mao ed on Rebels to "seize power" from their Party bosses. Mao did not ferentiate between disaffected officials and those who were actually ally loyal to him and had not wavered even during the famine. In fact, re was no way he could tell who was which. So he resolved to over- ow them all first, and then have them investigated by his new enforcers. e population was told that the Party had been in the hands of villains ne black line") ever since the founding of the Communist regime. It ; an index of how deeply fear had been embedded that no one dared ask the obvious questions, like: "In that case, why should the Party go ruling?," or "Where was Mao all these seventeen years?"
The Rebels' basic assignment was to punish Party cadres, which is what .o had been longing to do for years. Some Rebels hated their Party ·ses, and jumped at the chance to take revenge. Others were hungry power, and knew that the only way to rise was to be merciless towards pitalist-roaders." There were also plenty of thugs and sadists.
Stalin had carried out his purges using an elite, the KGB, who swiftly ·tled their victims out of sight to prison, the gulag or death. Mao made e that much violence and humiliation was carried out in public, and vastly increased the number of persecutors by getting his victims mented and tortured by their own direct subordinates.
A British engineer who was working in Lanzhou in 1967 caught a npse of life in one remote corner of the northwest. Two nights after ng entertained at an official dinner, he saw a corpse strung up from a ıp-post. It was his host of two nights before. Later, he saw two men ng deliberately deafened into unconsciousness by loudhailers—"so that more reactionary remarks enter their ears," his minder told him.
The first senior official tortured to death was the minister of coal, on January 1967. Mao hated him because he had complained about the eat Leap Forward—and about Mao himself. He was exhibited in front organized crowds, and had his arms twisted ferociously backwards in : form of torment known as being "jet-planed." One day he was shoved onto a bench, bleeding, shirtless in a temperature well below freezing, while thugs rushed forward to cut him with small knives. Finally, a huge iron stove was hung around his neck, dragging his head down to the cement floor, where his skull was bashed in with heavy brass belt buckles. During all this, photographs were taken, which were later shown to Chou—and doubtless to Mao.

Photographing torture had hitherto been rare under Mao, but it was done extensively in the Cultural Revolution, especially where Mao's personal enemies were concerned. As Mao's usual practice was not to keep records for posterity, let alone proof of torture, the most likely explanation for this departure from his norm is that he took pleasure in viewing pictures of his foes in agony. Film cameras also recorded gruesome denunciation rallies, and Mao watched these displays in his villas. Selected films of this sort were shown on TV, accompanied by the soundtrack of Mme Mao's "model shows," and people were organized to watch. (Very few individuals had TV in those days.)

Mao was intimately acquainted with the types of ordeal visited on his former colleagues and subordinates. Vice-Premier Ji Deng-kui later recalled Mao doing an imitation for his entourage of the agonizing "jet-plane" posture which was routine at denunciation meetings, and Mao laughing heartily as Ji described what he had been through.

Eventually, after two or three years of suffering in this manner, millions of officials were exiled to de facto labor camps which went under the anodyne name of "May 7 Cadre Schools." These camps also housed the custodians of culture—artists, writers, scholars, actors and journalists—who had become superfluous in Mao's new order.

THE REPLACEMENTS FOR the ousted cadres came mainly from the army, which Mao ordered into every institution in January 1967. Altogether, over the next few years, 2.8 million army men became the new controllers, and of these, 50,000 took over the jobs of former medium- to high-ranking Party officials. These army men were assisted in their new roles by the Rebels and some veteran cadres who were kept on for continuity and expertise. But the army provided the core of the new enforcers—at the expense of doing its job of defending the country. When one army unit was moved away from the coast opposite Taiwan to take control of a province in the interior, its commander asked Chou En-lai what would happen if there was a war. Chou's answer was: "There will be no war in the next ten years." Mao did not believe Chiang would invade.

In March, with the new enforcers in place, pupils and students were ordered back to their schools—although, once there, they could only kick

heels, as the old textbooks, teaching methods and teachers had all condemned, and nobody knew what to do. Normal schooling did xist for most young people until after Mao's death, a decade later. society at large, the economy ran much as usual, except for rela- minor disruptions caused by the personnel changes. People went ›rk as before. Shops were open, as were banks. Hospitals, factories, s, the post, and, with some interruptions, transport, all operated normally. The Superpower Program, far from being paralyzed, as ten thought, was given unprecedented priority in the Cultural lution, and investment in it increased. Agriculture did no worse than :e.

/hat changed, apart from the bosses, was life outside work. Leisure ›peared. Instead, there were endless mind-numbing—but nerve- ng—meetings to read and reread Mao's works and *People's Daily* arti- People were herded into numerous violent denunciation rallies ıst "capitalist-roaders" and other appointed enemies. Public brutal- ecame an inescapable part of daily life. Each institution ran its de › prison, in which victims were tortured, some to death. Moreover, e were no ways to relax, as there were now virtually no books to read, ıagazines, or films, plays, opera; no light music on the radio. For enter- ıment there were only Mao Thought Propaganda Teams, who sang ›'s quotations set to raucous music, and danced militantly waving the le Red Book. Not even Mme Mao's eight "model shows" were ormed for the public yet, as their staging had to be under draconian ıral control.

E TASK OF the new enforcers was to screen the old cadres to explore ther they had ever resisted Mao's orders, even passively. Each of the ions of ousted officials had a "case team" combing through his or her :. At the very top was a Central Special Case Team, a highly secret ıp chaired by Chou En-lai, with Kang Sheng as his deputy, and staffed middle-ranking army officers. This was the body that investigated ple personally designated by Mao. Since he especially wanted to find whether any of his top echelon had been plotting against him with Russians, the key case in the military was that of Marshal Ho Lung, unlucky recipient of Russian defense minister Malinovsky's remarks ıut getting rid of Mao. All Ho's old subordinates were implicated in ; case, and Ho himself died as a result.

The Central Special Case Team had the power to arrest, interrogate— l torture. They also recommended what punishments should be meted t. Chou's signature appeared on many arrest warrants and recommen- tions for punishment, including death sentences.

While suspects were being interrogated under torture, and while his old power base endured unprecedented suffering, Mao cavorted. The dancing still went on at Zhongnanhai with girls called in, some to share his large bed. To the tune of "The Pleasure-Seeking Dragon Flirts with the Phoenix," which was deemed "pornographic" by his own regime, and long banned, Mao danced on. One by one, as the days went by, his colleagues disappeared from the dance floor, either purged, or simply having lost any appetite for fun. Eventually, Mao alone of the leaders still trod the floor.

Out of his remaining top echelon, there came only one burst of defiance. In February 1967, some of the Politburo members who had not fallen spoke up, voicing rage at what was happening to their fellow Party cadres. Mao's old follower Tan Zhen-lin, who had been in charge of agriculture during the famine (showing how far he was prepared to go along with Mao), exploded to the Small Group: "Your purpose is to get rid of all the old cadres . . . They made revolution for decades, and end up with their families broken and themselves dying. It is the cruellest struggle in Party history, worse than any time before." Next day, he wrote to Lin Biao: "I have come to the absolute end of my tether . . . I am ready to die . . . to stop them." Foreign Minister Chen Yi called the Cultural Revolution "one big torture chamber."

But these elite survivors were either devoted veteran followers of Mao's, or men already broken by him. Faced with his wrath, they folded. With the critical duo of Lin Biao and Chou behind him, Mao had the dissenters harassed; then, when they had been suitably cowed, he extended them an olive branch. The mini-revolt was easily quelled.

Not cowed as easily as the Politburo members was a brigadier called Cai Tie-gen, who even contemplated organizing a guerrilla force, making him the only senior cadre known to have thought of trying to "do a Mao" to Mao. He was shot, the highest-ranking officer executed in the Purge. Saying farewell to a friend who was nearly shot with him, he encouraged him to continue the fight, and then went calmly to the execution ground.

There was other truly heroic resistance from ordinary people. One was a remarkable woman of nineteen, a student of German called Wang Rong-fen, who had attended the Tiananmen rally on 18 August 1966, and whose reaction to it showed astonishing freshness and independence of spirit, as well as courage. She thought that it was "just like Hitler's," and wrote to Mao posing a number of sharp questions: "What are you doing? Where are you leading China?" "The Cultural Revolution," she told Mao, "is not a mass movement. It is one man with the gun manipulating the masses. I declare I resign from the Communist Youth League . . . "

One letter she wrote in German, and with that in her pocket she got

ɔld of four bottles of insecticide and drank them outside the Soviet nbassy, hoping the Russians would discover her corpse and publicize :r protest to the world. Instead, she woke up in a police hospital. She ɜs sentenced to life imprisonment. For months on end, her hands were ɡhtly handcuffed behind her back and she had to roll herself along the ɔor to get her mouth to the food that was just tossed onto the floor of :r cell. When the handcuffs were finally removed, they had to be sawn f, as the lock was jammed with rust. This extraordinary young woman rvived prison—and Mao—with her spirit undimmed.

UNSWEET REVENGE

(1966–74 * AGE 72–80)

IN AUGUST 1966, Mao toppled Liu Shao-chi. On the 5th, after Liu met a delegation from Zambia in his capacity as president, Mao had Chou En-lai telephone Liu and tell him to stop meeting foreigners, or appearing in public, unless told to do so. That day, Mao wrote a tirade against Liu which he himself read out to the Central Committee two days later, in Liu's presence, breaking the news of Liu's downfall (the general population was not told). Just before this, on the 6th, Mao had had Lin Biao specially fetched to Peking to lend him weight, in case there was unmanageable opposition. Lin Biao formally replaced Liu as Mao's No. 2.

Mao's persecution of the man he hated most could now begin. He started with Liu's wife, Wang Guang-mei. Mao knew that the two were devoted to each other, and that making Guang-mei suffer would hurt Liu greatly.

Guang-mei came from a distinguished cosmopolitan family: her father had been a government minister and diplomat, and her mother a well-known figure in education. Guang-mei had graduated in physics from an American missionary university, and had been about to take up an offer from Michigan University to study in America in 1946 when she decided to join the Communists, under the influence of her radical mother. People remembered how at dancing parties in the Communist base in those civil war days, Liu would cross the threshing-ground that served as a dance floor with his characteristic sure steps and, bowing, ask for a dance, in a manner unusual for a Party leader. Guang-mei had elegance and style, and Liu was smitten. They were married in 1948, and the marriage was an exceptionally happy one, particularly for Liu, who had had a string of unsuccessful relationships (and one wife executed by the Nationalists).

From the moment it was clear that Mao was coming after Liu, from the Conference of the Seven Thousand in January 1962, Guang-mei encouraged her husband to stand up to Mao. This was in vivid contrast

:he behavior of many leaders' wives, who urged their spouses to kowtow.
the ensuing years, she helped Liu to entrench his position. In June
56, when Mao was fomenting violence in schools and universities, Liu
de a last-ditch attempt to curb the mayhem by sending in "work teams,"
l Guang-mei became a member of the one sent to Qinghua University
Peking. There she came into collision with a twenty-year-old militant
led Kuai Da-fu. Kuai's original interest in politics had been sparked
a sense of justice: as a boy of thirteen in a village during the famine,
had petitioned Peking about grassroots officials ill-treating peasants.
t when, in summer 1966, the Cultural Revolution was presented by
: media as a "struggle for power," Kuai developed an appetite for power
l led riotous actions to "seize power from the work team." He was put
ler dormitory arrest by the work team for eighteen days, which Liu
:horized.

In the small hours of 1 August, Kuai was woken up by cars screech-
; to a halt to find before him none other than Chou En-lai. Kuai was
npletely overwhelmed. He could not make himself sit properly on the
'a, but perched on the edge. Suavely putting him at his ease, Chou told
n he had come on behalf of Mao, and quizzed him about the work
.m—and the role of Mme Liu. Even though he had a stenographer with
n, Chou took notes himself. The session lasted three hours, until after
'0 AM, when Chou invited Kuai to come to the Great Hall of the
ɔple that evening. There they talked for another three hours. Mao used
ıai's complaints as ammunition, and from now on Kuai was Mao's point
ın against the Lius.

On 25 December, the eve of Mao's seventy-third birthday, on the
lers of the Small Group, Kuai led 5,000 students in a parade through
king with trucks fitted with loudspeakers blaring "Down with Liu
ao-chi!" This unusual demonstration was a step towards preparing
ɔple for the fact that the president of China was about to become an
emy, and even though it was not announced in the media, it made
ı's fall known to the nation. Kuai and his "demonstration" also enabled
ıo to make it seem that Liu's downfall was by some sort of popular
mand.

From here on, the Lius were tormented in countless ways. At dawn
New Year's Day 1967, Mao sent New Year greetings to his old colleague
getting staff in Zhongnanhai to daub giant insults inside the Lius'
use. Similar menaces followed, all choreographed—except one.

This was on 6 January, when Kuai's group seized the Lius' teenage
ughter, Ping-ping, and then telephoned Guang-mei to tell her that the
l had been hit by a car and was in a hospital, which needed consent
perform an amputation. Both parents raced to the hospital, which
ıcomfited the Rebels. Kuai recounted:

> The students never thought Liu Shao-chi would come, and they were all frightened. They knew they couldn't touch Liu Shao-chi . . . the Centre had given no instructions [about handling Liu in person]. We dared not be rash . . . We knew this kind of "Down with" in politics could well turn to "Up with" . . . Without clear and specific instructions from the Centre, when it came to blame, we would have had it. So my pals asked Liu to go back, and kept Wang Guang-mei.

This is a good self-confession of how the Rebels really worked; they were tools, and cowards, and they knew it.

As this stunt had not been centrally orchestrated, soldiers descended on the hospital within minutes. The students scurried nervously through the motions of denouncing Guang-mei in just half an hour. While this was going on, Kuai was called to the phone, which, he remembered,

> gave me a big fright when the voice on the line said. "This is Chou En-lai." Chou told me to release Wang Guang-mei: "No beating, no humiliation. Do you understand?" I said: "I understand" . . . He hung up. Less than a minute later, another call came. It was from Jiang Qing—my only call ever from her. As I took the phone, I heard her giggling. She said: "You got Wang Guang-mei. What's all this? Are you fooling around? Don't beat her, don't humiliate her." She repeated Chou En-lai's words and said: "The premier is anxious, and asked me to telephone you. As soon as you finish denouncing Wang Guang-mei, send her back."

So ended the only spontaneous move by the Rebels against the Lius. Chou's order to spare Guang-mei was not made out of the kindness of his heart. Kuai's action was unauthorized, and did not fit in with Mao's timetable.

Mao's next step was to have Liu brought to Suite 118 in the Great Hall for a tête-à-tête in the middle of the night on 13 January. Mao showed he was well aware of the hoax played on the Lius by inquiring: "How are Ping-ping's legs?" He then advised Liu to "read some books," mentioning two titles both having the word "mechanical" in them, which Mao claimed were by Heidegger and Diderot. This was a way of advising Liu to be less stiff-necked, meaning he should do some kowtowing. Liu did not grovel, but repeated the offer he had made many times: to resign and go and work as a peasant. He asked Mao to stop the Cultural Revolution and punish only him, and not to harm anybody else. Mao waxed non-committal, and merely asked Liu to look after his health. With this he saw Liu, his closest colleague for nearly three decades, to the door for the last time—and to a slow and agonizing death.

WITHIN DAYS THE Lius' telephones were cut off. House arrest was now total, with the walls covered with enormous insulting posters and

gans. On 1 April, Mao made Liu's purge official to the general public having him condemned as "the biggest capitalist-roader" in *People's ly*. Right after this, Kuai organized a rally 300,000 strong to humil- and abuse Guang-mei. Chou discussed the details with Kuai before- id, and on the day itself Chou's office kept in constant contact by ne with Kuai's group. Mme Mao added her personal touch by telling ai: "When Wang Guang-mei was in Indonesia, she lost all face for the inese. She even wore a necklace!" Mme Mao also accused Guang-mei wearing traditional Chinese dresses "to make herself a whore with carno in Indonesia," and told Kuai: "You must find those things and ke her wear them." Mme Mao had been bitterly jealous of Guang-mei ng able to wear glamorous clothes when she went abroad as the pres- nt's wife, while she herself was cooped up in China, where these things re not allowed.

Kuai recalled that Mme Mao "was telling me explicitly, in effect, to niliate Wang Guang-mei . . . We could insult her any way we wanted." a traditional Chinese tight dress was forced on to Guang-mei, over padded clothing, making her body appear bulging and ugly. A string ping-pong balls was hung around her neck to signify a pearl necklace. e whole rally was filmed by cameramen, undoubtedly for Mao, as it uld not have been done without his authorization.

But the Maos failed to break Guang-mei. During the pre-rally inter- ation, she showed extraordinary fearlessness—and a quick wit—and ended her husband eloquently. When she was hauled onto the stage face the crowd's blood-curdling screams and upthrust fists, her inter- ators asked her: "Aren't you scared?" Her calm answer impressed them: o, I am not."

Decades later, Kuai spoke with admiration about Guang-mei: "She s very strong . . . She stood straight, and refused to bow her head when lered to. The students went at her with force, great force. She was hed down to her knees . . . but instantly she stood up straight. Wang ang-mei would not be cowed. She was full of bitterness against Mao -tung, only she could not say it straight out." Afterwards, she wrote Mao to protest.

Liu did likewise, again and again. Mao's response was to ratchet up punishment, leaving detailed instructions with the Small Group ore he left Peking on 13 July. The moment he was gone, several hundred usand Rebels were summoned to camp outside Zhongnanhai, blast- insults like "pile of dog shit" at the Lius through scores of loudspeak- . Liu's subordinates were dragged outside the walls of Zhongnanhai to denounced in a sort of grotesque road show.

At the height of this, Liu was presented with a demand to "bow your id obediently and admit your crimes to Chairman Mao." This was purportedly in the name of some Rebels, to pretend that it had come from "the masses." But it was presented to Liu by Mao's chamberlain and chief of the Praetorian Guard, Wang Dong-xing, which left no doubt who was the puppeteer. Liu turned the demand down flat. Anticipating the worst after this defiance, Guang-mei held up a bottle of sleeping pills in front of her husband, offering to commit suicide with him. Neither spoke a word for fear of bugging, which would almost certainly have led to the pills being confiscated. Liu shook his head.

Knowing how much Liu's strength had come from his wife, Mao ordered the couple separated. On 18 July, they were told they would be denounced at separate meetings that evening. More than three decades later Guang-mei wrote about the moment:

> I said: "It looks as if it really is goodbye this time!" I just couldn't stop my tears falling . . .
>
> . . . For the only time in our lives, Shao-chi did my packing for me, and he folded my clothes neatly. In the last few minutes, we sat gazing at each other . . . Then he who rarely cracked a joke said: "This is like waiting for a sedan-chair to come and carry you off [to be married]!" . . . We burst out laughing.

After brutal denunciation meetings, the Lius were put in separate virtual solitary confinement. They met again only once, when they were dragged in front of a kangaroo court as a couple, on 5 August, the first anniversary of Mao's written tirade against Liu. Mao's point man Kuai had prepared a big event at Tiananmen Square, where a stage had been specially constructed for the Lius to be paraded in front of an organized crowd of hundreds of thousands. In the end, Mao vetoed the idea. He could not risk this being seen by foreigners. If they were to witness the savagery towards his former closest colleague, here in the heart of Peking, i.e., clearly backed by him, the whole charade could easily backfire. Not least, this could affect foreign Maoists, many of whom had already been alienated by Mao's Purge.* Nor could Mao risk the Lius speaking. Mao could count on the Lius to produce sharp rebuttals, as they had done in letters to himself and in their retorts to Rebels. Mao did not dare risk a Stalin-type show trial. So the Lius ended up receiving their salvo of abuse only inside Zhongnanhai, from Praetorian Guards dressed in mufti and from Zhongnanhai staff.

On that day, 5 August, the "capitalist-roaders" Nos. 2 and 3, Deng Xiao-ping and Tao Zhu (Liu was the "No. 1"), were denounced outside their own houses too. They had both fallen into disgrace, like many other

* The Belgian Communist Jacques Grippa, the most senior Maoist in Western Europe and a man who had himself been tortured in a Nazi camp, now wrote to Liu, as president, in Zhongnanhai. The letter was returned marked "Does not live at this address."

Mao favorites, because they had declined to cooperate with Mao's :at Purge. But as Mao did not hate them as much as he did Liu, they 'e treated less fiercely. Tao Zhu's wife, Zeng Zhi, was an old friend of o's, and was spared. She recounted a telling episode which reveals how cise Mao's control was. While her husband was being beaten up, she allowed to sit down. A militant woman was about to set upon her :n Zeng Zhi noticed a man in the audience shaking his head at the nan, who promptly backed off.

Zeng Zhi knew that Mao's "friendship" and protection could vanish oon as she did anything that displeased the Great Helmsman. Later, :n her terminally ill husband was sent into internal exile, she was given option of accompanying him. Both she and her husband knew that he did so she would lose Mao's goodwill, which would ruin her and ir only daughter. So the couple decided she should not go with him, l he died in exile alone.

At the kangaroo court inside Zhongnanhai on 5 August 1967, Liu stood ground and gave succinct answers; but as soon as he tried to say more, tle Red Books rained down on his head, and he was shouted down by crowd yelling mindless slogans. The Lius were punched, kicked, "jet-ned," and had their hair pulled ferociously back to expose their faces photographers and a film crew. At one moment, the meeting was ourned and an order was given by a Mao point man to make it more ocious for the cameras. The film shows Liu then being trampled on ground. In a supreme act of sadism, the Lius' six-year-old daughter l their other children were brought to watch their parents being ıulted. The whole vile episode was also attended by Mao's special erver—his own daughter Li Na.

Mao may have derived satisfaction from the Lius' ordeal, but he can dly have failed to register that they were not crushed. At one point, ang-mei tore free and clung to a corner of her husband's clothes. For :w minutes, under a rain of kicks and punches, the couple held each .er's hands tight, struggling to stand up straight.

Guang-mei was to pay a hefty price for her courage. A little over a nth later, she was charged with spying for America—plus, for good asure, Japan and Chiang Kai-shek. For twelve years, until after Mao's ıth, she was locked up in the top-security prison, Qincheng, where for g periods she was not allowed even to walk, so that years later she still ıld not stand up straight. She remained undaunted. Her case team led for her execution. Mao said "No." He did not want her put out of : misery so soon.

Guang-mei's siblings were incarcerated, as was her septuagenarian ıther, who died in prison a few years later. The Lius' children became meless, and were subjected to beatings and imprisonment. One son of Liu's from a previous marriage committed suicide. Meanwhile, Liu's house, a short walk from Mao's, was turned into a uniquely Maoist slow-death cell.

LIU WAS NEARLY seventy, and his health deteriorated fast. One leg became paralyzed, and he was in a state of permanent sleep deprivation, as the sleeping pills on which he had been dependent were now withheld. He was kept alive, barely. On 20 December 1967, his jailers recorded that they were "only keeping him alive, just short of starvation." "Tea has been stopped . . ." His life-threatening ailments, pneumonia and diabetes, were treated, although, in a further Maoist turn of the screw, the doctors would curse him while patching him up. But his mental health was deliberately allowed to collapse. On 19 May 1968, his jailers reported that he "brushed his teeth with a comb and soap, put his socks on over his shoes and his underpants outside his trousers . . ." And in the cruel style that was the order of the day, they wrote that Liu "plays the idiot, and makes one disgusting fool of himself after another."

That summer, Mao twice gave orders through Wang Dong-xing to the doctors and the guards that they must "keep him [Liu] alive until after the 9th Congress," when Mao planned to have Liu expelled from the Party. If Liu was dead, this rigmarole would not provide Mao with the same satisfaction. Once the congress was over, the clear implication was that Liu should be left to die.

By October 1968, Liu had to be drip-fed through the nose, and it seemed he might die any minute. Mao was not ready for the congress, so the Central Committee—in fact, a rump minority which contained only 47 percent of the original members, the rest having been purged—was hastily convened to expel Liu from the Party. It also removed him from the presidency, an act that did not even pretend to follow constitutional procedure.

Liu's case team had signally failed to come up with a case. Mao had told it he wanted a spy charge, which was a way of avoiding any policy issues, and of steering the investigators away from Liu's links with himself. In fact, Mao was so nervous about Liu speaking to anyone that the team investigating Liu was forbidden even to set eyes on him, let alone ask him any questions. Instead, a large number of other people were imprisoned and interrogated, to try to turn up evidence against him. It was partly to accommodate key detainees in the Liu case that Qincheng, the prison for the "elite," which had been built with the help of Russian advisers in the 1950s, was expanded by 50 percent. Its first inmate in the Cultural Revolution was Shi Zhe, who had interpreted for Liu with Stalin and who was pressed to say that Liu was a Russian spy. Also imprisoned here was the American Sidney Rittenberg, who had known Mme Liu in

ɛ 1940s. Pressure was put on him to say that he had recruited her, and
ɯ, for American intelligence. (Rittenberg observed that the interroga-
ɾs, while going through the required frenzied motions, did not seem to
lieve their own case.) Attempts were also made to get former
ɑtionalist intelligence chiefs to say that Guang-mei had spied for them.

Most of those detained and called upon to tell blatant lies tried their
rdest not to comply. Among those who paid dearly for sticking to their
ns were two former Party chiefs, Li Li-san and Lo Fu. Their families
ɛre thrown into prison, and the two men themselves were both to meet
eir deaths. Li-san's Russian wife, who had stood by him through the
ɪrges in Russia in the 1930s when he had been imprisoned there for
ʼo years, now spent eight years in Mao's prison.

Even some of the members of the Lius' case team declined to fabricate
ɨidence. As a result, the team itself had to be purged three times, and
ʼo of its three chiefs ended up in prison. It found itself in a Catch-22
ɕuation, as concocting evidence could be as dangerous as failing to unearth

On one occasion, the team claimed that Liu had wanted American
oops to invade China in 1946, and that Liu had wanted to see President
ɕuman about this. "Making such a claim," Mao said, "is . . . to treat us
ĸe fools. America sending in troops en masse: even the Nationalists did
ɔt want that." In the end, the team just piled up a list of assertions, one
ɛing that Liu "married the American spy Wang Guang-mei who had
ɛen sent to Yenan by the American Strategic Intelligence." Its report,
hich was delivered to the Central Committee by Mao's faithful slave,
hou En-lai, called Liu a "traitor, enemy agent and scab," and recom-
ɪended the death sentence. But Mao rejected it, as he did for Mme Liu.

Mao was kept fully informed about Liu's last sufferings. Photographs
ɛre taken showing Liu in such agony that he had squeezed two hard
lastic bottles right out of shape. In April 1969, when the 9th Congress
ɔnvened at last, Mao announced in a voice devoid of even a show of
ity, that Liu was at death's door.

In his lucid hours, Liu had maintained his dignity. On 11 February
968 he had written a last self-defense, in which he even had a go at Mao
bout his dictatorial style from back in the early 1920s. After that, Liu
ʼent totally silent. Mao's whole modus operandi depended on breaking
eople, but he had failed to make Liu crawl.

On a cold October night, half-naked under a quilt, Liu was put on a
ɨlane to the city of Kaifeng. There, local doctors' requests for an X-ray
ɪr hospitalization were denied. Death came within weeks, on 12 November
969. Altogether, Liu had endured three years of physical suffering and
nental anguish. He was cremated under a pseudonym, his face wrapped
n white cloth. The crematorium staff had been told to vacate the prem-
ses, on the grounds that the corpse had a deadly infectious disease.

The extraordinary coda to Liu's story is that his death was never made public during Mao's lifetime. This seemingly anomalous behavior (most dictators like to dance on their enemies' graves) was an indication of how insecure Mao felt. He was afraid that if the news got out, it would arouse sympathy for the dead man. In fact, the vilification of Liu continued for the rest of Mao's life, with never a hint to the public that Liu was dead. Mao had got his revenge by making Liu die a painful and lingering death. But it cannot have tasted very sweet.

NOR DID MAO emerge a victor vis-à-vis his second-biggest hate, Marshal Peng De-huai. The first Rebel leader sent to Sichuan in December 1966 to haul Peng back to detention in Peking was so moved by Peng after he talked to him that he started to appeal on Peng's behalf. The Rebel ended up in prison, but said he had no regrets for having stuck his neck out. Another Rebel leader who manhandled Peng expressed deep remorse later for what he had done. There is no question where people's feelings lay when they knew what Peng stood for, or met him.

In Peking, Peng was dragged to scores of denunciation meetings, on Mao's orders, at each one of which he was kicked by Rebels wearing heavy leather boots and beaten ferociously with staves. His ribs were broken, and he passed out repeatedly.

Unlike Liu, Peng was interrogated, some 260 times, as Mao genuinely feared he might have had some connection with Khrushchev. In solitary, Peng's mind began to crack, but his redoubtable core never did. He wrote a lucid account of his life, refuting Mao's accusations. The ending, written in September 1970, proclaimed: "I will still lift my head and shout a hundred times: my conscience is clear!"

Peng was a man of rugged constitution, and his ordeal lasted even longer than Liu's—eight years, until 29 November 1974, when he was finally felled by cancer of the rectum. Like Liu, he was cremated under a pseudonym, and his death, too, was never announced while Mao remained alive.