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Mao Zedong's Rise to Power: How One Man Changed the Future for the Better; then Changed it for Himself

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**Mao Zedong's Rise to Power: How One Man Changed the Future for the Better, then
Changed it for Himself**

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Asian Studies
Of Bard College

By
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Have We not opened your breast for you?
And We removed from you your burden,
Which weighed down your back?
And We exalted for you your reputation?
**So verily, with the hardship, there is relief,
Verily, with the hardship, there is relief**
So when you have finished, then stand up for Allah's worship
And to Allah turn your invocations.*

- Surah 94;596 Al-Inshirah (The Opening Up)

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Introduction

China has a long and intricate history that goes all the way from being leaders in the globalization and silver/gold production to heavy taxation and colonization by other western powers. All of this change, like that America, lead toward a revolutionary war within China. This was would not only determine the fate of China till modern times but how other international powers would perceive China. The result of this war is something completely unknown to that of the US, instead of a capitalist society and free democracy being formed, we see a communist system arise, something only a few countries had experimented with. Even to this day, China is one of five communist countries still remaining in the world. So it is safe to say that China, coming from a system heavily oppressed by western capitalist powers, and transforming into a self sustaining nation is astounding. The question is at what cost was this possible? History is remembered by the winners, even in U.S. history we talk about how during political turmoil they are tough decisions to be made that may not always be popular with the citizens of the country. A good example of this would be Richard Nixon, to this date he is known to have one of the more successful elections of our time. But his stances on certain issues such as race would today be hateful and uncommon. In addition to this he was also the only president in US history to resign from office due to an ongoing investigation later, known as Watergate. The investigation looked into unethical activities of acquiring information via coercion, wiretapping and other methods. And this wasn't just a private issue but highly publicized and well known amongst the people to the point where it became a social dispute that resulted in his resignation. In times of unrest and blatant negligence for humane and ethical regulations are still upheld by not only the government but also the people who make up the country.

But how can we relate this too the China? During this change in system of government we see China take on a huge burden of how to rebuild a country. During this time there was close to zero economic production, political unease and social chaos. Mao Zedong who was not only one of the founders of the CCP and bringing China into this new era had a huge task ahead of him if he want to essentially rebuild a country. Mao even before the outcome of the war was known as the leader of the CCP and Chinese Communism as a whole. And he took this name and job reluctantly; you could tell during his speeches and texts that he fully believed that the Communism in China was the way to bring it back to their rightful spot as world leaders. This power was also embodied by the millions of Chinese that followed him and together they had driven invaders and the opposition out of the country giving them the space to create such a system. This also gave a name for Mao globally, foreign and western powers became weary after the revolution for they feared that this communist fervor was a threat to their own capitalistic system. Everything about Mao Zedong during this time gave him a name that would not only be important for years to come but will be remember forever in history and being one of the founders of communism in the world. But at the same time all of this happening the beginnings of one of the worst man made atrocities in human history would occur over a period of 10 years. It is recorded that anywhere from 25 to 30 million people had died of starvation over this time period. Some of the highest death estimates being closer to 45 million (Holmes 21). To put this number in perspective Adolf Hitler during his reign had a death toll of 17 million during the period of occupation in Europe by the Nazi's from th periods of 1939 to 1945. (Niewyk 35) Another example of mass loss of human life would be World War II where the highest estimates of casualties would be around 85 million affected worldwide (Fink 40).

The decisions made that resulted in the deaths of these 30 million people weren't split second decisions but a collective of choices made over a period of what I have consolidated to 10 years. It was during these 10 years that one after another, Mao Zedong made poor decisions that drastically hindered China politically, socially and economically. After a few poor decisions you would believe that they're would be some sort of change within the communist government, But there were steps that Mao had personally taken during this 10 year period that not only solidified his position as not only a permanent leader of the communist party but also a lingering power even after he stepped down. Even today, Mao is still the face and known face when anyone talks about the foundation and liberation of China.

So this raises the question, of why is Mao; despite all of the given facts we have now about this era of the rise of communism, still considered a hero amongst the people of China in being the force that had brought them back to not only modernity but economic, political and social prosperity? Also how did one person accumulate so much power within what is supposed to be a powerless system. Below I will explain in detail about how this rise to power actually occurred and also bring raise the question of the motivation behind Mao and could he still be considered this leader to China despite the terror and horror caused under his rule of the Founder of modern China.

Chapter I: Government Breakdown, Economic Policy and Social Campaigns

Before we understand the power that Mao had within the CCP we must first breakdown the governmental system during this time--how decisions and policies were made and what type of system this would prevail under a communist-ruled country. The system in place had to be completely re-done during the radical change from a Kuomintang state/capitalist political system to a communist state. The new government of the CCP would be a communal system of government that would not only cater to the forward development of China but also equalize power and resources. The first and most important group within the CCP during its founding was the Politburo's Standing Committee. This first generation of leaders during the founding of the people's republic of China consisted of Mao Zedong--Chairman of the Party Central Committee-- and the Four Vice Chairman of the Party Central Committee: Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun. Another very important member during this time and even in the later years of Mao's rule was Peng Dehuai, who was Communist Party's Organization Department head and later General Secretary of the Central Committee.

The breakdown of how this system was enacted and who was doing what is best described as a triangle, where a small number (top of the triangle) controlled and made executive decisions and laws. For the sake of understanding the different conferences and plenums we need to distinguish the different roles and players at the top. Within the top chinese leadership known as the Politburo they can be anywhere from 20 to 30 elected leaders by the lower officials. The politburo itself includes multiple positions, these include; the Preeminent leader who at this time would be Mao Zedong. Mao was the first assumed Chairman of the Communist Party of China and Chairman of the People's Republic of China marking the first generation of Chinese

communist leadership. Later Mao would also hold the title of Chairman of the Central Military Commission which essentially gave him control over all branches of the government making him leader of all branches of the government. It wasn't until the passing of Mao and the redistribution of power that molded a new ranking within the Politburo. The second most important figures within the Politburo are known as party Elders that assisted in and influenced decisions that are made at any given time. Despite some of these people holding lesser positions because of the history and knowledge of political structure these Elders were sometimes the only people that could respectively challenge decisions being made by the current Preeminent leader. Formed and most influential during the post-Mao rule, party Elders wasn't much of a position until the 1980s. Underneath both the leader and later, party Elders were a group of prominent officials, similar to the description of prime ministers or chiefs of staff, this group's main focus is to dispute and solve and influence major bureaucratic disputes. This role and its players in relation to the preeminent leader; Mao is the main focus of how the events leading to the Lushan Conference ended with Mao turning into the proclaimed leader of the CCP. The key leaders in this group are Zhou Enlai, Li Xiannian, Deng Xiaoping, Lin Biao and Liu Shaoqi. Despite each of these people holding a different role their decisions and input can greatly sway the tides of how certain legislation is passed within the party. Now that we have established a very loose background of how the hierarchy works in the upper most important level of the CCP we can talk about specifically how what what policies were passed during the time of the Mao rule. From the timespan of 1949 to 1975 they were exactly 298 recorded meetings pertaining to everything that is known as "Housekeeping" meetings. These meetings were held and took place for the following reasons:

1. Policy X was adopted pragmatically to solve new policy problems pressing upon the leaders; 2. Policy X was promulgated in order to keep alive the ideological vision of its proponents; 3. Policy X was adopted as a tactical ploy of one or several temporarily allied leaders to rebuff a challenge from rivals; or 4. Policy X was adopted by a dominant and enduring faction for the rewards it bestows upon its network of loyalists.¹

Lieberthal et.al

Now that we can categorize and identify the reasons these meetings/conferences took place, we can now analyze them and place each one of these meetings into two groupings. Reasons 1 and 2 from the quote above were to maintain and move forward the communist ideals and morals some which were set forth by Mao Zedong's speeches during the period of the Hundred Flowers Campaign. During this time as stated in the previous chapter these speeches were the groundwork and influence of how certain policies were enacted in the party. Despite everyone not fully knowing about each and every policy that as put into place and how to enforce them, the power of Mao's speeches and publishing during this time became law. For example, the speech "On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" was given to 1900 officials at a supreme State Conference in February of 1957 (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 119). The message in this speech was to outline and summarize specific ideals and systems in which the country of China would be running. Specifically this meeting spoke a lot about counter

¹ Lieberthal, Kenneth, et al. "Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes." *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes*, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 3–31.

revolutionaries and how to deal/combat backlash from the radical switch from a capitalist society to that of communism. In the speech Mao gave he stated:

Among students and intellectuals there has recently been a falling off in ideological and political work, and some unhealthy tendencies have appeared. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern themselves with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideals of mankind. It seems as if Marxism, once all the rage, is currently not so much in fashion. To counter these tendencies, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard. In addition to the study of their specialized subjects, they must make progress ideologically and politically, which means they should study Marxism, current events and politics.

Tse-Tung 406

In this lengthy section from the speech, we again see like in other texts during this time, despite the progress being made there was always a sort of impending thought that was seen before in previous Mao speeches. There was always the constant threat of anti-communists and backlash from both within the party and with people within society. But certain laws and policies would of never passed if it wasn't for the gridiron support Mao and others had within their branches of government.

Referring back to the previous quote, we see in both reasons 3 and 4 that leaders can call a meeting to forward and reassert their positions of power. Policies and even meetings during this time had taken place to solidify and confirm positions with allies in the upper ranks of the CCP. In addition to the Lushan Conference being an obvious use of this power and strategy;

another example of this would be the near following years after this conference when there was a shift in people who Mao could trust. December 30th 1964 there was a Supreme State Conference where Liu Shaoqi and other prominent leaders such as Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and one hundred and seventy others came together to talk about both international and nation issues in the country at the time. It was also at this conference where Liu Shaoqi used the time to talk about proposed new members to join the ranks, preparing for larger conferences taking place later that month. Beyond this, based on the notes we have recorded from this meeting, we know that Liu Shaoqi used this time as well to advocate and explain his views on an early stage of what is known as the “Later Ten Points.”² (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 220) This movement would be the groundwork for a later Socialist Education Movement, the problem with all of this was that at the same time Liu Shaoqi had held this conference, Mao himself was refining a social movement draft known as “Twenty-three points.”³ (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 221) This is just one of many examples based on the conference summaries where we see Liu Shaoqi have opposing points and calling out for a separate route of action because the current way things were was not working:

They are not rightists, but they are on the verge of becoming rightists. They are still thirty kilometres away from the rightists. The rightists very much welcomed the trend of what they had to say and it would be surprising if they didn't. These comrades' brinkmanship is rather dangerous. If you don't believe me, wait and see what happens. I am saying these things before a big audience. Some of what I

² Lieberthal, Kenneth, and Michel Oksenberg. A Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China 1949-1975.” *International Journal of Politics*, vol. 5, no. 2/3, 1975, pp. 220-223. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27868827.

³ Lieberthal, Kenneth, and Michel Oksenberg. A Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China 1949-1975.” *International Journal of Politics*, vol. 5, no. 2/3, 1975, pp. 220-223. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27868827.

say may hurt people. But if I remained silent now, this would not be in these comrades' interest.

Tse-Tung

This was one of the most famed phrases that had come out of the Lushan Conference itself and one of the reasons why Mao had assumed so much power. It was at this time that elected leaders who had more moderate ideals such as Liu Shaoqi and the author of the original letter Peng Dehuai were immediately vilified by Mao. Despite the criticism being accurate in that the failures of the Great Leap Forward being disastrous, it was interpreted by Mao as being a personal attack on himself as a leader. This also goes against the original structure of how the Politburo Standing Committee and Politburo as a whole. We see this second type of policy making happening more and more after the pivotal Lushan Conference. As the fate of Liu Shaoqi, on the official announcement of the Cultural Revolution in August of 1966; we see a demotion as his title as Vice chairman of the CCP, and moved from Second to eighth place Within the Politburo.⁴ (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 261)

Now that we have the basics of the Chinese communist government works and a general breakdown on how legislation gets passed we can talk about actual economic and social policies that were passed during this time. On an international level, China also had to make and meet certain goals when it came to exports and production if they wanted to accomplish such goals set forth by the Great Leap Forward. Mao, the now current leader of the CCP, realized that to do so money or aid in some form was needed; the wars essentially halted all forms of production and

⁴ Lieberthal, Kenneth, and Michel Oksenberg. "A Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China 1949-1975." *International Journal of Politics*, vol. 5, no. 2/3, 1975, pp. 260-263. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27868827.

income for China. This is when the first of many negotiations happened between both the Soviet Union and China. Mao who derived a lot of his ideals for Maoism from Marx and Lenin realized that creating economic and militaristic trade deals between the two would help them both thrive. This is when in December of 1949, Mao traveled to China and worked out the treaty known as the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, (Silbergard and Young) an agreement that would last all the way until their fallout in the 1960s. The specifics of this relation was that the Soviet Union would receive a variety of agricultural products and access to parts of China in exchange for 300 Million Yuan and other supplementary necessities such as experts and machines to help them rebuild. The immediate intentions and power this had was amazing. It helped kick start a multitude of projects that China had planned such as the backyard furnaces and mass agricultural collectivization.

With this communist new ally and economic support, this gave way to the introduction of the first Five-year plan. Starting in 1953 and ending in 1957, Mao believed that the two most important forms of economic growth were Grain and Steel. This was known as the launch of Industrial production within China. As some numbers state during the time period of 1958 they were 21 million Chinese workers registered in non-agricultural positions⁵ (Duan et. al. 20) in charge of producing light industry. Steel was very essential both for catching up from a military standpoint but also to make amends for the amount of metal lost during the previous wars and their current battle with Taiwan. This was also an incentive of motivating both people and the communes that they were directly affecting and helping efforts toward the are and the country. But in the long run such emphasis on industrial production would end up hurting not only the

⁵ Duan, C., Gao, S., & Zhu, Y. (n.d.). The Phenomenon of Internal Migration in China. In Chinese Migration and Families-at-Risk (pp. 14-36). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

economy but the people as well. Because of such intense focus on industry the outcome of the mass agricultural collectivization failed. Throughout the remainder of this first Five-year plan we see many mitigations being made and to focus on light industry to restart the country. To me, this is the first decision made by Mao that ultimately lead to the starvation and deaths of 30 million people. Following the first Five-year economic plan; The Great Leap Forward which started in 1958 and prior campaigns such as the backyard furnace campaign where just contributing plans that were made to salvage prior decisions that ended up hurting China as a whole. As an attempt to help change the doomed path China was taking in 1957 Mao gave a speech calling all intellectuals and others who could help steer China in the right direction to speak up. This speech and movement in 1957 was marked as the Hundred Flower Movement. This is an important event when it comes to how or when there was opportunity for change within the CCP. During the height of the preparations and execution of the Great Leap Forward Mao signified the exact date on the launch by giving a speech. Known as the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1957 Mao talks about the process a country has to go and get through and outlining rules of the Great Leap Forward. One of the most important and memorable lines from this is "Let a hundred flower blossom let a hundred schools of thought contend" and "Long-term coexistence and mutual supervision"⁶ (Hudson et. al. 38) the launch of this idea as to get and start to open up the ideas of communism and that exactly needs to be done to the audience of intellectuals during this time. This speech and movement gave different people the platform to talk and directly contribute their ideas about how the government should be run. In light of everything else that was going on and what had been done previously, this was a huge change of perspective for Mao when it came

⁶ Hudson, Geoffrey Francis, et al. "The Hundred Flowers." *The Hundred Flowers*, Stevens and Sons, 1960.

toward being open about opinions and decisions he had made. But before he officially accepted any sort of ideas he made clear within this speech a preface about the difference between that of people who help and those who want to hurt the revolution and communism itself:

Since they are different in nature, the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and the contradictions among the people must be resolved by different methods. To put it briefly, the former entail drawing a clear distinction between ourselves and the enemy, and the latter entail drawing a clear distinction between right and wrong. It is of course true that the distinction between ourselves and the enemy is also one of right and wrong.

Tse-Tung

These distinctions that Mao talked about in his Hundred Flowers speech are things that appear to be drastically radical in comparison to the motive behind this. By this time Mao knew that some ideas and campaigns he made during this time were unpopular. But the gap between what is said in the speech and what happened in reality show two different pictures. Within the speech there are two sections that really define how and what the process was of letting intellectuals speak their mind. These two sections are titled “The Question of Eliminating Counter-Revolutionaries” and “The Question of Intellectuals” separately these two topics seem to be of two different topics but when closely analysed you can see the amount of overlap these two sections have.

The first section “The Question of Eliminating Counter-Revolutionaries” talks heavily about refining and getting rid of old system supporters from when the KMT was in power. Throughout this section he talks about how bad and backwards counter revolutionaries are to the

new communist system. Mao even goes as far as to associate them with western imperialists (Tse-Tsung), and how their main goal was not to only undermine communism but ruin the communist fervor as a whole. Another important point to make is that he talks about these counter revolutionaries as being hidden:

The fact is, there still are counter-revolutionaries (of course, that is not to say you'll find them everywhere and in every organization), and we must continue to fight them. It must be understood that the hidden counter-revolutionaries still at large will not take things lying down, but will certainly seize even opportunity to make trouble.

Tse-Tsung

This means even though they might not be open to critiquing the radical Socialist system, they still too themselves aren't fully convinced of the process. Based on this inference you can make the distinction that this is specifically pointed toward intellectuals that were still remaining in China after the communist rise. Majority if not all businessmen/landlords/KMT and majority of other people who had thought the same were criticized in previous campaigns. Leaving only one threat left to the communist system, quiet intellectuals that were not convinced.

The following section within the Hundred Flowers speech is “The Question of Intellectuals.” In this section of the speech he talks about a similar type of person that is still wary about the socialist system being implemented during this time. But the difference between this section and “The Question of Eliminating Counter-Revolutionaries” is the tone about how China as a whole can benefit from intellectuals and their importance in growing the economy:

China needs the services of as many intellectuals as possible for the colossal task of building socialism. We should trust those who are really willing to serve the cause of socialism and should radically improve our relations with them and help them solve the problems requiring solution, so that they can give full play to their talents. Many of our comrades are not good at uniting with intellectuals. They are stiff in their attitude towards them, lack respect for their work and interfere in certain scientific and cultural matters where interference is unwarranted. We must do away with all such shortcomings.

Tse-Tsung

Mao continues as stated in the quote above how they help educate and teach others who have no clue what they are doing. Even people above them powerwise (officials and comrades) need to release their biases held from the old system and accept that everyone is needed to move the communism forward. This also gives intellectuals an opportunity to become part of the communist movement. Education and making sure that everyone understands the correct way to either run or control a job within the government seems to take top priority over your past association as an intellectual with the old system. Another important idea from this chapter is the future he has for intellectuals. That the necessity on teaching the younger generation about the communist ideas is very crucial. He states this in this speech but also in other that the children and the younger generations are the future of maintaining this communist passion.

There is a very thin line that separates the differences between an intellectual and a counter revolutionary, and this changes as we see as he continuously redefines the definition. The difference between the two is an intellectual is someone wholeheartedly agrees with the

communist ideals and systems versus a counter revolutionary who is in disagreement with one part or the whole system. Another difference is that this is not just an opinion on a issue but life or death decision people made when coming forward to talk about these issues:

After liberation, we rooted out a number of counter-revolutionaries. Some were sentenced to death for major crimes. This was absolutely necessary, it was the demand of the masses, and it was done to free them from long years of oppression by the counter-revolutionaries and all kinds of local tyrants, in other words, to liberate the productive forces.

Tse-Tsung

Death, or the thought of loss of life because of an idea you didn't agree with or the realization that something about the programs was wrong could result in the end of your life. Statements like this really defined and silenced people who were questioning decisions and choices Mao had made. The safest option was to quietly abide by rules and decisions despite what you believed. For you were not only being judged by Mao and the rules but by the people who could assume and get you in trouble for doing so. The next major time a situation such as counter revolutionaries and questioning decisions being made by Mao would be that of the Lushan Conference. In August of 1959 The Lushan Conference was held in order to talk about the failures and shortcomings of the Great Leap Forward and prospectively the previous campaigns and Five-year plans it as also during this conference we see a similar tone and language used by Mao himself talking about how to suppress people saying or trying to dethrone his decision made during the Great Leap Forward.

Chapter II: The Great Leap Forward

The Great Leap Forward took place from 1958 and officially ended in 1962. It was known as one of the most prominent things the newly founded Communist People's Republic of China had done over the victory against both the KMT and Japanese during the revolution. At the beginning of the communist rule in China, they had adapted a Soviet plan to kick start the country's economic and political process; these 5 Year Plans and other campaigns' purpose was to recover China's losses from the previous wars against both the KMT which ended in 1949 and Japanese occupation in 1945⁷ (Hsiung and Levine 40). With the country in shambles; economic, political and social reform needed to take place in order to fit the new ideology of Communism, the intellectual ideology that made such change possible.

Now that we have a general history of the 10 years from the declaration of the PRC in 1949 to the pivotal conference in 1959 we can talk about the specific programs and the downfalls of each one of them. The first and most radical change is the new agricultural difference from the old system. Before, the system in place was private ownership, meaning farmers would sell to private business for a personal profit. So the only people that were profiting from this system would be private buyers and the farmers that were selling to them. The main change from this system to that of Mao's new policy was that the ruling party would control and own all of the exports and production in China. This was a radical way of getting to rid the Chinese people of owning private property, this being a part of an agenda of moving from a

⁷ Hsiung, James C, and Steven I. Levine. *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan, 1937-1945*. Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1992. Print.

capitalist system to a communist or Maoist model. Certain messages like this were also reinforced by aggressive tactics to make sure and suppress any sorts of private property/assets:

We must oppose the tendency towards selfish departmentalism by which the interests of one's own unit are looked after to the exclusion of those of others. Whoever is indifferent to the difficulties of others, refuses to transfer cadres to other units on request, or releases only the inferior ones, "using the neighbor's field as an outlet for his overflow", and does not give the slightest consideration to other departments, localities or people - such a person is a selfish departmentalizer who has entirely lost the spirit of communism. Lack of consideration for the whole and complete indifference to other departments, localities and people are characteristics of a selfish departmentalist. We must intensify our efforts to educate such persons and to make them understand that selfish departmentalism is a sectarian tendency that will become very dangerous, if allowed to develop.

Tse-Tsung

This change in system moving from selfish departmentalism to a communal mindset was not only economically positive but also benefited the feeling and teaching of what a communist society should look like. The Chinese agricultural system/experimentation that was proposed based on Mao's vision seems almost impossible at first. No other communist country during this time had a safe strategy of how to attempt to attain such grain goals. In addition to this producing large yields of grain was a task that even overseers and administrations within the CCP have never done before. Instead of looking and listening to specialist and analyst whose job it was to oversee the best way to tackle mass agricultural reform, he decided to listen to a Soviet promoted

agronomist Trofim Lysenko. Lysenko was considered a radical in his belief in mass agricultural production. His thought was that it was not only possible to produce such a massive grain yield but too have a surplus after all exports and distributions were made. Lysenko's knowledge behind this was that in order to do this is more of a matter of how you plant the seeds rather than how to tend them. He believed that by planting seed; and disregarding types of seed, if planted close together would benefit the production of how much grain each of the plots would yield. In addition to this, deep irrigational tilling would also be employed in order to make sure that the roots were long enough and could produce denser yields. This theory and his ideals were known even in the Soviet Union were considered factless, because of the numerous amounts evidence that countered and nullified his findings:

But some of our comrades, tottering along like a woman with bound feet, are complaining all the time, "You're going too fast, much too fast." Too much carping, unwarranted complaints, boundless anxiety and countless taboos -- all this they take as the right policy to guide the socialist mass movement in the rural areas.

Tse-Tsung

Mao himself defended not only the reason he had followed Lysenko's ideas but at the same time his decision to ignore other specialist warnings. For the top concern for Mao during this time was speed and efficiency due to the demands China had to meet in terms of grain production. So despite the warnings Mao had commissioned and ordered millions of people to do such as Lysenko said. This would lead toward causing irreparable damage to both the environment and

crops due to weather and human error made later on. All over the countryside workers deep irrigated and densely planted crops everywhere.

The reasoning behind such immediate change was because of Maoist ideology about how a communist system should be run. The amount of grain that needed to be produced had to be met because there was no other option or reversal of what was already done. Now currently bound to a contract of exports via Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance (Silbergard and Young). China itself needed to find radical ways such as Lysenko to produce such a yield of grain:

These comrades fail to understand that socialist industrialization cannot be carried out in isolation from the co-operative transformation of agriculture. In the first place, as everyone knows, China's current level of production of commodity grain and raw materials for industry is low, whereas the state's need for them is growing year by year, and this presents a sharp contradiction. If we cannot basically solve the problem of agricultural co-operation within roughly three five-year plans, that is to say, if our agriculture cannot make a leap from small-scale farming with animal-drawn farm implements to large-scale mechanized farming, along with extensive state-organized land reclamation by settlers using machinery (the plan being to bring 400 to 500 million mou of waste land under cultivation in the course of three five-year plans), then we shall fail to resolve the contradiction between the ever-increasing need for commodity grain and industrial raw materials and the present generally low output of staple crops, and we shall run

into formidable difficulties in our socialist industrialization and be unable to complete it.

Tse-Tsung

This above is a segment from a report given during the 106th Conference on July 31st of 1955. The preface and meaning behind this conference was to bring to attention the possibilities and shortcomings of undergoing such a strenuous task. This shows or puts an importance on the success of large scale mechanized farming in future plans and projects across China. The one mistake that ultimately set up and led toward poor yields of grain leaving many both hungry and without food was how specifically they produced grain. In addition to that the amount of grain that was planted needed a large workforce to tend and harvest such a huge amount. Many report of crops dying and being unharvested due to lack of main power was also a huge factor to why many people starved. Mao had many options/ reports to choose from about how to tackle such a task. Many of them, predicted that in order for this to happen they would first need to be a halt in both industrial production and a smoother more gradual transition into this communist way. The fact that information such as this was out there way before it had even gotten to the dire levels shows how Mao was very ardent in not only his beliefs but his words and how his words were not only truthful but never wrong or slow.

The next part in this vision of moving toward this communist China Mao had set forth a group of policies to form what would later be known as People's communes. By having these communes it would solve many of the outstanding problems that the communist administration faced with how to govern and monitor the working class population. From the period of 1949 to

the late 1950s the communes started out small original anywhere from 5-20 families eventually and gradually moving to anywhere from 200-300 families. These greater populations were encouraged and eventually achieved because of their ease to maintain. Another major factor of this was that with the greater population of people you can have the commune itself have different uses. These work teams ranged from agriculture, industry, other economic functions and many other positions within the communist system. Another important thing about this is that whatever the role you had within the worker's unit is that you would hold this position for life. At first glance a system like this may seem fruitless but when you look at the surface problems about things that needed to be fixed it had seemed to cover all bases.

This economic campaign was an introduction to the people of China about what the communist way of life was like. This way of life includes knowledge of mass agricultural collectivization, backyard furnaces/collective production and communal living. something that had not previously been widespread in around the world let alone in China. But even before any of this could take place, the first thing China had or needed in order to essentially re-launch China was capital to support industrial development.

Now that we have laid out both the outline and the transition to this communist system we can go in depth about specific things that these people communes jobs were during the Great Leap Forward. Two important things that truly defined the mindset of the Great Leap Forward is backyard furnaces and communal kitchens. With general basis of the communist breakdown and the structure of the Great Leap Forward, we can now talk about how each of these specific process failed when placed into implementation. There is a trend within these failures that are neglected in order to protect these original Maoist ideals. So much to the fact that we all know it

resulted in the deaths of 30 million Chinese people. These issues wouldn't even be addressed until the pinnacle Lushan Conference.

First and more important was the problem with the backyard furnaces was fuel was important to turn iron into steel. This program really took off during 1958 when these massive furnaces started being set up within these communes. An important thing to note about this steel production and process was that workers running these steel furnaces had little to no knowledge about how to do their jobs. Because of this one of the first jobs put into place was to compile all metal in order to make steel. The downside to this was because the families in communes originally didn't have many metal items; most of the items that were melted down were of extremely poor quality metal. Things like pots, bikes, old stoves and many other miscellaneous things were melted down in order to try and forge steel.

The net result of this was a lot of materials and extreme amount of effort for what should have produced a lot more steel. Instead they were left with lots of undefined iron known as pig iron which needed to be re-smelted and refined to even become usable. In addition to the wasted effort of scrapping old metal, the amount of fuel that was put into these furnaces to make steel was pretty steep. Whole acres of forests were cut just to support the need for these furnaces as well as anything made of wood that workers could find which often or not was scrap, parts of houses and antiques. Similar to that of how they found the metal it was recorded that these workers used whatever they could to keep the furnaces burning. The reasoning behind this wasn't because the science or math behind the actual production of steel, it was the fact that Mao had believed that he himself and the workers were capable of finding and meeting these goals.

From this point onward Mao and his rules and ideologies had set forth what would be a slow and deadly disaster. At an initial high economic cost, it was very hard for the population of China to maintain anything toward the latter half of the 1950s poor outcomes of the metal produced from the backyard furnaces that needed even more time and effort to ever to become usable. The poor yield of grain after the preliminary harvests, and inability to maintain the fields ready planned due to soil erosion caused by Lysenko's methods. On top of this they still had to pay off the bought machinery from the Soviets with grain leaving none for millions of the people in China. And finally, there was miscommunication between cadres and officials about how much grain was being produced and how much each village actually had. To this day, even in China the reasons why what had seemed to be an airtight plan failed was due to natural outside factors. Certainly things such as flooding of the Hunan⁸ (Dikotter 178), in combination of other natural disaster were not the cause, but they were outside factors that quickened the process. But how and why was such a spiral possible under the eyes of so many people whose job it was to solely prevent things like this from happening? To understand this we first need to go back and understand the concept and political translation of how a system for communism works.

Toward the latter half of the 1950s there was a decision that had to be made by each of the members of the CCP Politburo and more generally voices within the CCP. This decision would determine which side they would choose. These two sides, were weather to agree with Mao or do what was right for the people and citizens within China. For many this was a tough choice These two sides would also be a defining factor of pro communist or signals of being a

⁸ Dikotter, Frank, and Frank Dikotter. "Nature." *Maos Great Famine: the History of Chinas Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, Walker & Company, 2011, pp. 175–181.

right thinker. This decision could also be a life or death choice later on. Many, despite what facts were out there believed that Mao had the best intentions at heart and looked at a greater picture of maintaining the view and ideals of the original communist fervor.

Chapter III: The Lushan Conference

Now that we have spoken about the political side of how the bureaucracy works in how policies are made and the public history of what happened during the Great Leap Forward in the previous chapters we can use this knowledge to fully understand the events of the Lushan Conference and how a letter from Peng Dehuai solidified Mao as being an unstoppable force in the CCP.

Before the “Speech At The Lushan Conference” , the original speech that Mao had given at the pivotal conference in LuShan, we need to analyze the personal letter Peng Dehuai had written to Mao during the initial proceedings at Lushan. The purpose of this conference as to address the shortcomings and failures of the Great Leap Forward and Five-year plans. Before the conference outlining concerns that were not only brought up by him but other senior party members such as Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping. The letter itself is short and concise when talking about specific short comings and policies during the Great Leap Forward. The best way to analyze this letter I believe is to take the same approach we did when understanding how policies were passed. This power versus policy categorization accurately understands the breakdown and true intention behind this letter Peng had sent to Mao. The letter as a whole in itself symbolized and embodies the validity that Peng (thought) he had with Mao Zedong, this private letter as meant for Mao’s eyes and Mao’s eyes only. If Peng wanted this letter to have been public he could have easily brought it to the attention to majority of the Politburo and Standing Committee without the approval of Mao. Now when looking at the contents of the letter before Peng Dehuai even begins to talk about the critiques of specific aspects during the era of the Great Leap Forward, he prefaces the letter with an

excerpt/description on what his position is by writing this specifically that he doesn't want this letter to be perceived as personal attack:

But I am a simple man like Chang Fei [a hero in the 14th-century historical novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms] Though I have only his roughness without his cautiousness. For this reason, whether this letter is of reference value or not is for you to decide. If what I say is wrong, please correct me.”⁹ (Dehuai 88)

Zhang Fei, in the novel “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” played a prominent role as a military general under the rule of Liu Bei. This is important because Zhang Fei and Guan Yu were known as very important military leaders under the reign of Liu Bei during this time. Even though they weren't the leaders of the faction Zhang Fei and Guan Yu are very prominent figures within the history of the romance of the Three kingdoms. In addition to the comparison between Peng and Chang Fei, we also see him referring to Mao as Cao Cao a leader during the time of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Cao Cao despite him being against all odds was an amazing military strategist, leading not only his faction to victory but at one point in time Unifying all of northern China under his rule. Cao Cao as a figure was known for not forgetting his roots of what is the basics of creating a society. He was known as someone who was from the people that worked for the people. So, similarly to the perception Mao has during the rise of the PRC and during the war against the Nationalist you can understand why this comparison isn't just accurate but also a very respected thing to say. Just this reference goes back to the overarching idea of that it was not in any way shape or form an attack on the current leadership but specifically talking about general

⁹ “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

ideas that had needed to be changed during the Great Leap Forward and how those things have could of been executed better.

The crux of what I would like to discuss next is that of the specificities that Peng Dehuai brought up within the same letter specifically it was the prominent features during that of the Great Leap Forward. Specifically he brings up the main points or problems that Mao and the party had run into during this era and that is agricultural collectivization, communal kitchens and areas such as the prominent backyard furnaces and finally the yield and false recordings of the Cadres of specific areas. As Peng Dehuai is talking about these sections in question he starts and notes two things before he brings any criticism. The first is that the result of the Great Leap Forward is not the fault of anyone specific, but the fault of the CCP failing the people of China and lack of understanding of socialist ideals. The second being that the Great Leap Forward had brought some success for not only China but China's international standing. The three main setbacks said before (Agricultural failure, importance on industrialization and mismanagement of crop numbers); Peng carefully states and addresses the CCP as a whole and makes sure not to implement anyone in specific. But the overall outcome of the Great Leap Forward still stands, that a lot of the elements were very rushed, ultimately leaving the country in a worse state and resulting in the deaths of 30 million people:

It now seems that some projects for capital construction in 1958 were too hasty or excessive with the result that a portion of capital was tied up and essential projects

were delayed...We had not understood this sufficiently, and when we understood it it was too late.¹⁰

Dehuai

Having to physically state this was necessary despite the risk it has, But what as interesting was the way that this phrase and others were meticulously worded in order to cause little to no harm. As someone who has been right when Mao was preaching about Anti-rightist ideals this was a important to do because Peng was well aware of the consequences of outright opposing Mao and his ideals. Responses such as this are stated throughout the letter after each of the paragraphs never once was the word “I” or the name of another put under the guise of causing such an atrocity to happen. It's a different approach that eases the reasoning of the letter but also states it in the most respectful way. In some ways it is interesting reading and hearing a letter like this from one elected official to another. On the surface we hear and read about the strictness of the ranks of the CCP but rarely get to see the personal side of these leaders such as Peng Dehuai and other vice premiers during this party. This also goes to show the type of relationship these vice premiers had behind doors to Mao and how much they influenced and helped Mao with many of the decisions. The next overarching point I would like to talk about in the letter sent to Mao is the ending and the tone it set. After going over the specifics of what needed and the negatives that happened during this during the time of the Great Leap Forward the next issue at hand as to find a way to move forward from everything that happened:

I feel that it could be quite useful to make a systematic summing up of the achievements and lessons gained in our work since the second half of last year so

¹⁰ “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

that comrades of the whole Party can be further educated. The aim is to distinguish the right from the wrong and raise our understanding.¹¹

Dehuai

Now that we have gone through the general discussion in the letter, we can talk about what I believe is the most important part which is the legitimacy of each of each of the components presented to see if the arguments were valid that were being made in the letter. Throughout the letter we see good mixed with the bad it seems almost of a list of a recap and mutual understanding of how and what exactly happened during the previous years of the Great Leap Forward. Starting off with industrial production, he talks about its general increase from previous years, and that each year there is a gradual increase in both revenue and production. Below is a quote about the specific outputs of grain and other production in China during this time. You can see a pattern starting to unfold when looking at it and other examples:

Gross output industry and agriculture in 1958 rose by 48.4 per cent as compared with 1957. Industry grew by 66.1 per cent and agriculture and subsidiary production by 25 per cent (the increase in grain and cotton output being definitely 30 per cent). State financial receipts increased by 43.5 per cent. Such a rate of growth has never been achieved in other parts of the world. Norms set for the speed of socialist construction have been surpassed.”¹²

Dehuai

¹¹ “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

¹² “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

Despite this statement being true we see Peng doing something very interesting which is relevant throughout the entire piece and in other examples. He groups the terrible, with the good to create a statement or figure that is normal or mundane. As stated previously, agricultural yields did increase from before the communist takeover in 1949 to that of the preliminary stages of the Great Leap Forward the peak being 1955, after that we see a almost one quarter total loss of grain yields from the years of 1957 to 1958¹³ (Jowett 383). But when paired with the numbers and yields of a less produced and easier growing crop we see that the overall statistics of production were on a positive upward moving trend. But interestingly enough, after each of these patterns a solution is offered. For the example a general statement of this would be:

It now seems that some projects for capital construction in 1958 were too hasty or excessive... However these construction projects were after all needed for national construction, and in the next year or to or even a little longer they will gradually yield returns”¹⁴

Dehuai

Again, the reassurance that despite setbacks and after inserting a seed or idea of change that everything in the end will be alright. And it did play out that way but not under the ideas and power of Mao it was others who had stepped up and decided to make change. One of the original people Deng Xiaoping pushed for more of an economic reform versus that of ideological law. But laws like this and being able to freely think about how to recover from such loss didn't happen until the late 80's when majority of the Mao feror had died down after his death in 1976.

¹³ Jowett, A. J. “China's Foodgrains: Production and Performance, 1949—1981.” *GeoJournal*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1985, pp. 373–388. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41143848

¹⁴ “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

One of the only times I Peng really presses on what Mao's decisions and ideals were are when he talks about specific production and the honesty behind his ideals. As stated before in a speech mentioned in the first chapter "On The Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture", Mao talks about how anything that is possible can be done under the ideals and guise of Communism. Another very important part of this speech comes later on when he says:

As for the inspection of the progress of the co-operative movement, the Central Committee and the provincial, autonomous region, municipal and prefectural committees of the Party must take it firmly in hand and make sure that it is done not once but several times every year. Whenever a problem crops up, tackle it right away; don't let problems pile up and then try to settle them all at one go. Make criticism in good time; don't get into the habit of criticizing only after the event.

Tse-Tsung

What Mao says here is so ironic during this and countless other speeches he had made during this time. That if a problem arises "tackle it right away," a message that reassured the people and workers during the time of the Great Leap Forward but slowly lost its validity especially in the higher positions within the CCP as the disasters started to unfold. This quote also transitions very well into the next major part and problem of the Great Leap Forward, that being false reports of grain and product yield during this time. As stated by a high official of the CCP Politburo there is a forward admittance to falsified production output. Similar to the previous example, the

blame of this is somewhat obscured. How it is no ones direct fault because it was in good faith or as he states in his letter “[c]aused not a few Comrades to become dizzy”¹⁵ (Dehuai 92) as we know we know that this is yet again not fully the truth. Actual yield outcome as we know was forged in order to make sure and confirm that the Mao certified Lysenko process was a success. Later he then goes on to explain that the failed crop yield was solely based on poor weather conditions during that time.

After analysing the whole letter I think this paints a pretty clear picture about not only the motives but the intentions behind a message such as this. The way that Peng writes gives it the feeling that it is specifically criticism toward the movement, and specific radical decisions made by Mao that resulted in the failure of the Great Leap Forward and “indirectly” the deaths of 30 million citizens of China. The reason this letter from Peng seems so optimistic we can derive from the end of his letter. It says:

To overcome them with thoroughness, we still have to work hard for a time. Just as the chairman has pointed out at this meeting: ‘The achievements are tremendous, the problems are numerous, the experience is rich and the future is bright’. We must take the initiative to unite the whole Party and work hard.”¹⁶

Dehuai

Unlike many of the other people who came forward during the time of the Great Leap Forward saying all of the bad things that would occur, many of them didn't go upon it the way Peng had.

¹⁵ “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

¹⁶ “Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal.” *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

In addition to this he made sure that at the end of this letter that he didn't undermine the authority and power Mao had still within the party. By recognizing this, it implied that Peng understood his position of being of lesser power than that of Mao and that the CCP was on a position to turn around the setbacks they had during the Great Leap Forward. And we see this in the last lines of this letter when he quotes Mao by saying that "the achievements are tremendous, the problems are numerous, the experience is rich and the future is bright"¹⁷ (Dehuai 94)

Now that we have an understanding of Peng's letter and a background on the previous 10 years prior to the Lushan Conference we can analyze from an objective the speech Mao Zedong gave in response to Peng Dehuai's "Letter of Opinion". The result of Mao's letter would ultimately lead to the purge of Peng and place other party members that supported a change under fire. As stated in the original letter, it was not intended to criticize the shortcomings of the Great Leap Forward; but simply a letter about how to move forward from the setbacks. After reading this letter, Mao the next day had written a lengthy speech that he then gave in front of everyone in attendance of the Lushan Conference. In addition to this when he looked at and breakdown his speech part by part it paints a different picture than that of what Peng's thoughts were. This turned the Lushan Conference which was originally a time meant to discuss the shortcoming and setbacks from the Great Leap forward into a resurgence of an anti-rightist witch hunt.

Mao's speech from a general sense directly addresses parts of the letter but does not address problems brought up within the letter. Similar to Peng's letter, and a common theme

¹⁷ "Speech at the conference of provincial and municipal." *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy*, St. Martins Press, 1989, pp. 88–94.

throughout most of Mao's speeches, he uses metaphors and analogies to get a point across but to also paint a picture of the situation and strain he is under. Throughout the piece we see a main difference from Peng's Letter and Mao's Lushan letter and that is the tone when he talks about himself, his comrades and the people. Peng uses phrases and words such as, The people, "the government" and "us" being careful never to single out one person. We look at Mao's speech, it is riddled with phrases opposite to this. For example, "I would advise comrades", "I ought not to make excuses, but I shall too, because I am not the head of the Planning Commission." and "other people should also take some of the responsibility." (Tse-Tsung). His speech is littered with making sure that there is a distinct line between his ideas and faults and those of others. This, would eventually work out in his favor based on the premise and reasoning behind making this distinction because the speech's outlining ideals would be about a rising anti-rightist sentiment.

If we now go into detail about the specific points he is making within the speech we can closely find out if the reasoning behind the points he makes and see if he addresses any of the core points that we have discussed or even points he brings up from the Peng letter. When we read Mao's speech more in depth we see that the premise of this writing is more catered toward the specific people in charge of cadres and officials who were supposed to oversee many of these programs:

It was mainly the cadres who had not understood that this kind of wealth was [not] ill-gotten. They could not make the distinction between the two kinds. They had not properly studied political economy. They had not clearly understood the

laws of value, exchange of equal values, and remuneration according to work done. In a few months they were convinced and stopped doing it.

Tse-Tsung

This emphasis on the fault of Cadres is persistent throughout this piece and is also something to be noted. In the above quote we see that Mao is placing blame on the Cadres and who were appoint to do as such. Throughout the rest of this piece we see Mao trying to paint a picture about how regulations were clear, and assignments were clear, but when it came to the education about how to get certain things done and the education of what communism was there as a disconnect between that and of the cadres of China. He then continues to advocate and pressure this idea of education that Peng, and even some historians understood to be a downfall but with a twist. In the middle of his speech he gives an interesting example about how education or understanding specific communist values isn't a reason to why specific tasks cannot be completed. The analogy he uses two examples of historical figures, one is a general named Ts'ao and the other was a Prime Minister called Ch'en Fa-chih,¹⁸ neither of these men had knowledge of how to read or write but both were still able to do their job and more over still indulge in written arts such as poetry:

If an illiterate can become a prime minister, why can't our commune cadres and peasants listen to some political economy? I think they can learn it. If it is explained to them, they can learn some political economy even if they can't read. Explain it to them and they will understand it. In fact they can understand things

¹⁸ Tse-tung, Mao. *Speech At The Lushan Conference*,
www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm.

better than intellectuals. I myself have not read the textbooks, and I have no right to discuss them until I have. We must squeeze out some time; the whole Party should run a study campaign.

Tse-Tsung

We see also in the above quote that Mao still was in this realization, especially in this post-Hundred flowers speech that not only was there no reason why specific people couldn't learn or understand the education and also the fact that anyone can become an intellectual. We learned from the previous chapters that Mao's original outreach program to encourage intellectuals and critiques was changed into a purging of negative or non-constructive ideals. The result of this was punishment or banishment of the people who stood up as we had discussed earlier, in addition to this and the consequences Mao continues to go on to even taunt or push thoses who have a problem with the methods and plans to step forward and say something:

During the first half of the month people had a lot of worries. Now these worries have all come out into the open. If you have anything to say, say it and it will all be written down in the minutes. Spoken evidence has to be written down. If you have things to say, then say them. If you find faults in me, then you should correct me. Don't be afraid if your shoes pinch. I said at the Chengtu Conference that one should not fear the guardroom. One should not even be afraid of execution or expulsion from the Party. If a communist and senior cadre has so many inhibitions it is because he is afraid of saying the wrong thing and being corrected.

Tse-Tsung

The next important thing within this letter I say is when he directly addresses the letter Peng had sent to him. Out of all of the things that Peng had spoken about within his letter the only time he really addresses any of it is toward the end. Toward the end of this speech he talks mainly about what he calls “his decision” to have such an emphasis on steel production. In this section he says that it was his fault to overestimate the amount of work that could be produced at the time and the means of making such goal possible, was impossible. Besides that, the remainder of the questions posed by Peng were addressed as faults of others. Moreover at the end, similar to Peng’s letter he talks about how others should come forward about the reasons or why specific programs and systems failed during the First 5 Year Plan and the Great Leap Forward.

In the end of this whole process of first analyzing what was being said and addressed publicly versus what was actually known about the rise and choices being made in the government during this time is black and white. Shortly, after this Lushan Conference Peng Dehuai was removed from power along with other people that had supported him or criticized Mao and his policies. It was also after this conference that Mao had decided to take a back seat in-terms of policy making and leading the CCP and instead decided to let other party members lead. But the example of how much Power Mao had within the CCP Politburo was already realized.

Even well after both the conference and his step down from power the lingering influence he had on the people in China was apparent. He had successfully got rid of all those who had opposed communism, which in turn was getting rid of everyone that had opposed him. The following event after this era was not any better, Mao still believed after multiple Anti-rightist movements that there was still a threat to his legacy and what he had created; this Cultural

Revolution would bring more of the same disastrous results silumular that that of the beginning of the Hundred Flowers Campaign.

Conclusion

In conclusion we see that on a historical level there were multiple faults during this ten year period from the beginning of the PRC to the Lushan Conference. Throughout this time there were multiple realizations by a number of people during this time warning not only Mao but other strong voices within the CCP about the risks and predictions brought upon by these economic and social changes. I think the only way to fully understand the reasoning behind everyone's allegiance and dedication to Mao's rule is the previous history and hardships they had gone through. Post-war during the founding of the PRC things were rushed due to the fact that things had to be done or there was a threat they would lose everything they had fought for. So, the members of the CCP gave Mao free reign because he was the only constant factor between the CCP and the people. And it was from there on that he solidified himself as the one and only face of China. When people started to realize that he might not have been the best choice he perceived this as a threat to not only himself but all of the effort he had put into getting China where it is today.

We see this within the analysis of the letters by both Mao and Peng. The intentions of Peng were not malicious in anyway; both him and other political leaders and intellectuals had the same vision; but realized that the current method of getting there was too costly. On the other hand Mao had more than just economic plans on the line but an ideology that he himself created and did everything to protect. The ideology that if attacked then the only possible outcome was to remove things or people that are in the way of progress. Because of the amount of power they allowed Mao to accumulate over this 10 year period it turned this supposed communist government into a Totalitarianistic system ruled solely by Mao Zedong

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