

# **Negotiating History: The Chinese Communist Party's 1981**

**“Resolution on certain questions in the history of our party  
since the founding of the People’s Republic of China”**



**Robert L. Suettinger**

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## About the Author

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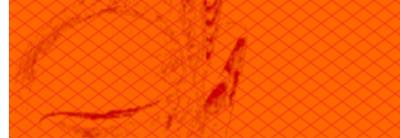
Suettinger retired from federal government service in 1998, after nearly 25 years in the intelligence and foreign policy bureaucracies. He joined the Central Intelligence Agency in 1975, and spent his entire career in the analysis of Asian affairs. After several years as an analyst and manager in the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, he was assigned as Director of the Office of Analysis for East Asia and the Pacific in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Subsequently, he served for five years as Deputy National Intelligence Officer for East Asia on the National Intelligence Council (NIC). Beginning in March 1994, Suettinger was Director of Asian Affairs on the National Security Council, where he assisted National Security Advisors Anthony Lake and Samuel R. Berger in the development of American policy toward East Asia. He returned to the NIC as National Intelligence Officer for East Asia in October 1997. Suettinger holds an M.A. from Columbia University and a B.A. from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. He served in the U.S. Army in the then Republic of Vietnam in 1969-70.

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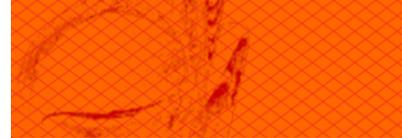
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Cover Image: Hua Guofeng in 1976, at his first public appearance as China's leader. Credit Xinhua, via Associated Press



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## **“Resolution on certain questions in the history of our party since the founding of the People’s Republic of China.”**

“In Chinese history, there is a custom, which says that the winner becomes king, while the loser becomes a bandit, but a modern, civilized country is not like this.” (“中國歷史上有一習慣，所謂成則為王，敗則為寇，但近代文明國家，不是如此。”)

—*Sun Yat Sen - Speech to the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Kuomintang, January 1924.*

“All history is contemporary history.”

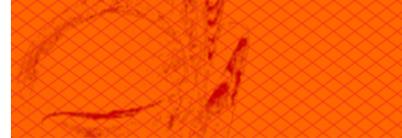
— *Benedetto Croce*

“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.”

— *George Orwell*

### **Introduction**

Early in the morning of September 9, 1976, Mao Zedong—founder, builder, shaper, leader, and near-destroyer of the Communist Party of China (CCP)—died of complications of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and heart disease, surrounded by his personal medical staff and several members of the Party’s leadership.<sup>1</sup> Although his passing was not a surprise, given his age (nearly 83) and lengthy illness, very few preparations had been made for the treatment of his remains, the obsequies to follow, or for the political succession within the Communist Party. Everyone had been afraid he might awaken, discover the plans, and accuse people of plotting against him. Paranoid and delusional for the last few years of his life, Mao had carefully manipulated those who had hoped to succeed to his position as paramount leader of the CCP, pitting them against each other, favoring, then turning on them with little consistency or warning. As a result, the Party leadership upon his death was divided, wary, uncertain, and

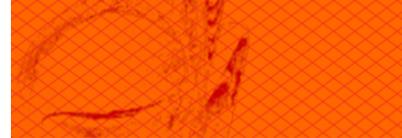


conspiratorial. And they would discover again, as they gathered to make decisions about important issues, that they could hardly hold a routine Politburo meeting without rancorous arguments.

Hua Guofeng, who had been appointed “First Vice-Chairman” of the CCP less than six months earlier, suspected that some members of the Politburo, including Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, were planning some kind of action to seize Party leadership, and decided to act first. Reaching out to two elders—senior economic administrator and Vice Premier Li Xiannian, and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) veteran and Military Commission Vice Chairman Ye Jianying—along with Wang Dongxing, the head of the security forces protecting Zhongnanhai, Hua persuaded them to support him in carrying out a pre-emptive strike.

On the evening of October 6, 1976, Hua called a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee in the Huarentang office in Zhongnanhai. There, Wang Dongxing used hand-picked members of the Central Guards Regiment (also known as the 8341 Unit) to arrest Party Vice-Chairman Wang Hongwen and Shanghai ideologue and PLA General Political Department Director Zhang Chunqiao when they arrived for the meeting. Jiang Qing was arrested in her quarters, while Yao Wenyuan, a member of what became known as the “Gang of Four” but not a Politburo Standing Committee member, was arrested when he arrived at Huarentang by car. Several other associates, including Mao Zedong’s nephew, were subsequently detained in a bloodless, but successful coup d’état.<sup>2</sup>

Military units directly under Defense Minister Geng Biao took over the major Party broadcast and print media, ensuring that only an approved message was conveyed to the public. At a Politburo meeting held immediately after the coup, Hua Guofeng was unanimously declared Chairman of the Party and the Military Commission, as well as Premier of the State Council, a position he had taken over shortly after the death of Zhou Enlai in January 1976.<sup>3</sup> In



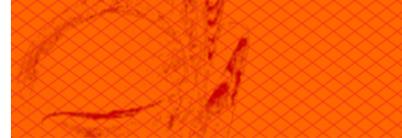
the next few days, massive crowds flooded the streets of all major cities in China, celebrating the end of a ten-year political nightmare called the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.”

### **The Struggle for Power after the Struggle for Power**

Despite the bloodless takedown of Mao’s wife and her extreme “leftist” colleagues, Hua Guofeng faced enormous challenges in succeeding Mao’s power. He had been a sub-provincial party leader in Mao’s home prefecture in Hunan, whom Mao had brought to “the Center”<sup>4</sup> in the early 1970s to assist the ailing Zhou Enlai and replace the Minister of Public Security, Li Zhen, who had died under suspicious circumstances. Hua became Premier after Zhou died in January 1976 and Mao purged Deng Xiaoping for a second time in April. In one of his last acts while still sentient, Mao named Hua “First Vice Chairman” of the CCP and wrote him a note (Lou Gehrig’s disease had made Mao’s speech unintelligible) stating, “With you in charge, my heart is at ease,” and as a set of policy guidelines, instructing him to “Act according to principles laid down.”

Hua faced a daunting situation. China’s economy was in parlous condition with many factories having been closed due to factional struggles during the previous ten years. A powerful earthquake had destroyed the industrial city of Tangshan in Hebei Province in July 1976, leaving more than 240,000 dead and much of the city and the surrounding area in rubble. Many ministries and party bureaucracies were closed or under-staffed. Schools and universities were shuttered. Provincial and sub-provincial CCP committees had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, replaced by “revolutionary committees” or by reconstructed but still badly divided Party groupings.

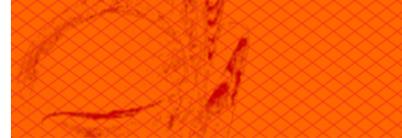
Furthermore, Hua had no real support, other than Mao, when he came to Beijing. Although he had eliminated his most hostile opposition with the “smashing of the Gang of Four,” he still faced a Politburo that was factionalized, ideologically browbeaten, and of limited competence. There were a few People’s Liberation Army (PLA) officers who had survived Mao’s



1971-72 purge of his defense minister and chosen successor, Lin Biao.<sup>5</sup> There were regional officials who had scrambled their way to prominence through the political chaos of the Cultural Revolution. There were party elders too ill to attend meetings and “masses representatives” who had nothing to offer when they did. Ye Jianying and Li Xiannian, however, rallied to Hua’s side, providing both substantive policy guidance and symbolic legitimacy along with Wang Dongxing, Mao’s longtime bodyguard who had provided the “muscle” to secure Hua’s position.

But there remained a major problem—what to do about Deng Xiaoping. Deng had been a Party stalwart since the late 1920s, political commissar of one of the most successful Field Armies in the Civil War, “liberator” and iron-fisted ruler of Southwest China after 1949, and a resourceful and trustworthy *apparatchik*, whom Mao had brought to Beijing in 1952 to be General Secretary of the Party. Deng had been a loyal supporter of Mao’s political and economic policies until they went catastrophically wrong during the “Great Leap Forward,” when tens of millions of Chinese peasants died of starvation and maltreatment. By the early 1960s, Deng was working with Mao’s successor, Liu Shaoqi, to try and undo disastrous policies and restore economic health and political stability to China.<sup>6</sup>

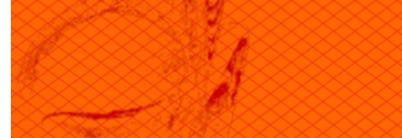
But Mao was incensed at being sidelined and ignored. After plotting for several years, he unleashed the Cultural Revolution in August 1966, suspending from office many of his perceived opponents—especially Liu, Deng, and their allies—and exposing them to ruthless and often violent struggle at the hands of youthful “Red Guards” fanatically loyal to him. Over the next ten years, thousands of senior Party cadres were arrested and jailed on trumped up charges, many dying or committing suicide in custody, including Liu Shaoqi. Rival Red Guard factions fought pitched battles with thousands of casualties in numerous cities and provinces. Eventually, Mao called in Lin Biao’s PLA to restore order and oversee the “sending down to the countryside” of millions of youth, as well as guard the hundreds of thousands of party and government functionaries who had been sent to special labor camps.



However, after Lin Biao's treachery and flight, Mao called Deng Xiaoping back to Beijing in 1973 to restore some semblance of a functioning government, and appointed him 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Premier to Zhou Enlai and Chief of Staff of the PLA. But he never trusted Deng fully, and supported Jiang Qing and her associates in hampering his work and perpetuating the idea that the Cultural Revolution was a brilliant political and ideological success. Sinking deeper into isolation and dementia, Mao succumbed to Jiang's rumor campaign against Deng and purged him again in April 1976.<sup>7</sup>

When the Gang of Four was purged six months later, Deng was still under house arrest, waiting to see what the Hua regime would do. He wrote a letter through Wang Dongxing, supporting Hua's decisive action and his selection as Mao's successor. And he waited. Deng underwent surgery and in January 1977 was informed that the Politburo had approved his return to work. But still he waited. Deng watched as Hua solidified his position and even began to enjoy a degree of public adulation similar to Mao's as China's "wise leader." In early February, Deng reacted in anger when the *People's Daily* published an editorial containing the following phrase (which almost immediately was referred to as the "two whatevers"): "Whatever policy that Chairman Mao decided, we will resolutely uphold; whatever instruction from Chairman Mao, we will unswervingly follow..." (凡是毛主席做出的决策，我们都坚决维护；凡是毛主席的指示，我们都始终不渝地遵循).<sup>8</sup> Deng's path back to power would not be easy; the new leadership had just pledged to carry out all of Mao's disastrous policies and affirm his often-arbitrary personnel decisions, including Deng's purge.

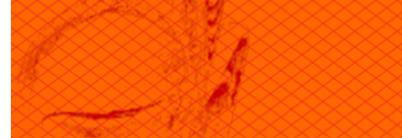
At a Central Committee work conference in March, Hua was hesitant about Deng's return to office, despite growing support for him among the CCP rank-and-file. Afterward, Deng wrote a letter to the Central Committee through Ye Jianying, promising to abide by the "Party Center's" arrangements for his work, and to support Hua Guofeng. However, he pointedly refused to endorse the "two whatevers."<sup>9</sup> Finally, on July 17, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum of the 10<sup>th</sup> Central



Committee passed a resolution approving Deng's return to work, and he was formally restored to all his former positions at the ensuing 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in August 1977.<sup>10</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to document in detail the complex political struggle that ensued between Deng and Hua Guofeng over the next four years, which involved convoluted ideological questions (such as 'what is the criterion of truth?'), political imagery and control of propaganda media, personnel issues, and the role of party elders and officials purged in the Cultural Revolution, and the occasional brandishing of military influence. Ideology, particularly the continuing role and relevance of Mao Zedong Thought, was a key battleground, and divisions were deep and broad. Deng and his growing support base had taken offense at Hua Guofeng's 11<sup>th</sup> Congress report, at which he had extolled the "great victory of the Cultural Revolution" and pledged to "uphold the continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat," (*jianchi wuchanjieji zhuanzheng xia de jixugeming* 坚持无产阶级专政下的继续革命).<sup>11</sup>

Hu Yaobang, who had been recommended by Ye Jianying and appointed by Hua Guofeng to the Central Party School in early 1977, took a lead role in attacking these ideological shibboleths through the school's ideological journal, "Theoretical Trends" (*lilun dongtai* 理论动态), which was widely circulated among Party leaders in Beijing. Then in 1978, Hu was appointed to head the Central Organization Department, where he initiated a sweeping reversal of verdicts on hundreds of thousands of "unjust, false, and mistaken cases" (*yuanjiacuo an* 冤假错案), not just from the Cultural Revolution, but from all of Mao's previous political "campaigns" (*yundong* 运动), dating back to the early 1950s. Some of Deng's strongest supporters were among those released from custody or house arrest by reversals of verdicts that Mao had approved.

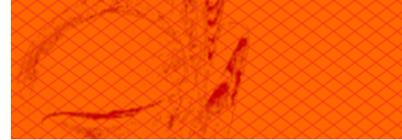


By the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee in December 1978, the balance of power between Deng and Hua had shifted sharply in Deng's favor, due in part to a growing recognition by many party leaders that it was time to reevaluate the Communist Party's overall direction. In a month-long "work conference" that preceded the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum, there had been voluminous criticism of the Cultural Revolution and calls for a full historical account of its causes, including Mao Zedong's role.<sup>12</sup> Deng had tried to steer a middle course between Hua and those who wished to preserve Mao's ideological line and ignore his errors, and others who wanted far more radical change and open criticism of the Chairman's mistakes and excesses. In his speech to the assembled delegates on December 13, Deng struck a cautionary note, insisting that the Party would not have prevailed without Mao's leadership and that it still needed Mao Zedong Thought. As for the Cultural Revolution, he acknowledged there was a need to "sum up" and "learn from" history, including the shortcomings and mistakes of the period, but there was "no need to do so hastily."<sup>13</sup>

### **The Debate Over Party History**

In the end, however, the recounting of Chinese Communist Party history played an important role in determining, or at least solidifying, the outcome of the power struggle. Professor Wu Guoguang, once a member of Zhao Ziyang's reform-minded bureaucracy in the mid-1980s, now a professor at the University of Victoria, has written insightfully about contemporary politics in the People's Republic of China. In his 2005 book, *Anatomy of Political Power in China*,<sup>14</sup> Wu devotes an entire chapter to what he calls "documentary politics," a facet of CCP decision-making that seldom gets much attention in the West. He writes:

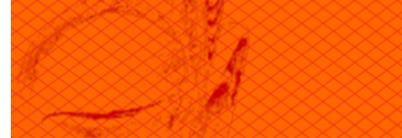
"The Chinese Communist regime operates by directives from the top, which are mainly given expression in documents, in contrast to Western democracy, which operates through constitution and law. Chinese politics in this sense is 'documentary politics,' in which a group of leaders—an oligarchy—builds consensus, formalizes personal



preferences, and gains ideological legitimacy by means of formulating a political document...” “The only way leaders have to establish legitimacy, even such hegemonic leaders as Deng and Mao, remains the transfer of their own personal preferences into collective decisions, regardless of the methods they may use. The major symbol of collective approval is the formulation of a document.”<sup>15</sup>

Wu lays out the complex and time-consuming process by which a major CCP document is formulated, be it a Central Document (or *zhong fa* 中发), a Central Committee directive, notification or resolution, a major leadership speech or report, or even, in some cases, the eulogy for a senior leader who has passed away. The process has seven stages: 1) initiation by the relevant Party authority; 2) selection of the drafter or drafting team; 3) top-down directives on the general parameters of the document from the senior leader responsible; 4) research and writing; 5) revision, in consultation with the senior leader, his representative, or his secretary (*mishu* 秘书); 6) approval, usually by the Politburo and/or its Standing Committee; and 7) dissemination through Party channels, with distribution specified by the approving authority.<sup>16</sup>

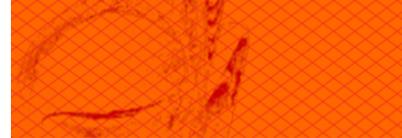
At the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee in late September, 1979, the Politburo Standing Committee presented a work plan for the remaining three years before the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, including the drafting of a formal party history resolution to be called, “Resolution on certain questions in the history of our party since the founding of the People’s Republic of China” (*Guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi* 《关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议》).<sup>17</sup> In October, Deng called together a small group to discuss how to proceed with the Resolution, including Hu Yaobang, Yao Yilin, and Deng Liqun. Despite his earlier reluctance to have a Resolution, Deng Xiaoping grabbed control of this endeavor immediately, and never ceded overall control to anyone.<sup>18</sup> The Central Committee formally issued a notice establishing a supervisory group for the effort in late January 1980, with most of the Politburo as members, including Hua Guofeng. The Central notice specified Hu Qiaomu to oversee the drafting team,



with Deng Liqun to manage research and materials.<sup>19</sup> But the work had already begun back in October, and for twenty months after, the drafting group and Deng Xiaoping would hold at least 13 major meetings (other sources say 16), at which Deng made speeches, nine of which were included in his *Selected Works*. The drafting group varied in size and composition from time to time, but included several senior propagandists and journalists.<sup>20</sup>

By far the most important person in the process was Hu Qiaomu (胡乔木), one of the CCP's most celebrated and controversial scribes (*bi ganzi* 笔杆子, literally, 'pen-holder'). A history graduate of Tsinghua University, Hu made his way to Yan'an in the late 1930s and came to Mao's attention as a talented researcher. Eventually, he became one of Mao's secretaries and worked closely with the Chairman on drafting and editing the first "History Resolution" in 1944-1945.<sup>21</sup> After 1949, Hu was head of the Xinhua News Agency and a Deputy Director of the Propaganda Department, but he did not achieve prominence until after Deng Xiaoping's second return to power in 1973. After Deng's third return in 1977, he frequently used Hu Qiaomu as a speech-writer and propagandist, ultimately promoting him to the Politburo and Central Secretariat. Not fond of ideology and theory himself, Deng relied on Hu to put his pragmatic ideas on economic and political development into the proper theoretical format for public presentation. Hu wrote many of Deng's speeches, helping him return to full prominence. Some of the more liberal-minded CCP reformers in the 1980s, such as Hu Yaobang, Wu Jiang, Hu Jiwei, and Li Honglin, however, considered Hu Qiaomu and his accomplice, Deng Liqun, to be dogmatic, ideologically hidebound, and devious.<sup>22</sup>

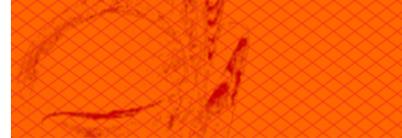
Early in the research and materials collection phase of the work on the Resolution, Hu Qiaomu told his team they needed to answer two questions: 1) Why did the Cultural Revolution happen? and 2) What is the essence of Mao Zedong Thought?<sup>23</sup> However, before they could deliver their first draft outline, the CCP's power configuration changed dramatically again. At the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee, held February 23–29, 1980, Hua Guofeng suffered



another setback with the addition of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang to the Politburo Standing Committee, and Hu as the Secretary General (*zong shuji* 总书记) of a restored Central Secretariat. Additionally, four of Hua's erstwhile supporters and fellow-beneficiaries of the Cultural Revolution "resigned" from the Politburo, and the 1968 Central Committee resolution expelling Mao's successor Liu Shaoqi from the Party was rescinded.

In late February, the drafting group delivered its first proposed outline to Deng and Hu Yaobang, consisting of five parts, including one on the Cultural Revolution and one on Mao. After reading it, Deng summoned Hu Yaobang, Hu Qiaomu and others to his office on March 19 to discuss the outline. He demanded three "principles" be incorporated into the Resolution: 1) Establish the historical status of Comrade Mao Zedong, and adhere to and develop Mao Zedong Thought (this was the *core*, most important principle); 2) Conduct a realistic analysis of the great events in the 30 years since the founding of the PRC, determine which were correct, which were wrong, and make a fair evaluation of the merits and demerits of other responsible leaders, including himself; 3) The Resolution should make a basic summary of the past, enabling the Party to guide everyone to unite and look forward, unify thinking, and put historical controversies to rest.<sup>24</sup>

That perspective may have been persuasive to Hu Qiaomu, who, like Deng, was protective of Mao and reluctant to reopen old controversies. But the first full draft, delivered in late June, infuriated Deng, who rejected it on grounds that it was too focused on the mistakes of Mao's later years, did not comport with Deng's instructions, and was boring.<sup>25</sup> After engaging in self-criticism at a Central Secretariat meeting in early July, Hu Qiaomu put his own hand to writing the segments of the draft on the Cultural Revolution and how to account for Mao's bizarre decisions in his later years. He devised the novel explanation that Mao Zedong's launch of the Cultural Revolution and other erroneous ideas had been the result of Mao departing from the "scientific system" of Mao Zedong Thought. In other words, Mao Zedong had not been



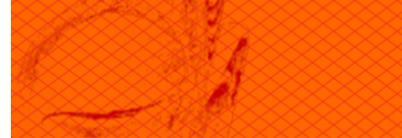
adhering to Mao Zedong Thought when he incited the Red Guards, purged his colleagues, relied on Lin Biao and Jiang Qing, and nearly destroyed the Party.<sup>26</sup>

During the summer of 1980, as more revisions of the preliminary draft were completed in coordination with comments from Deng and members of the Secretariat, a rumor started in Beijing that the Resolution would be scrapped and a full-fledged “de-Maoification” campaign would ensue. Deng called in Hu Yaobang to discuss the issue, and made his own decision to be interviewed by Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci in late August, which helped to quell the rumor campaign.<sup>27</sup>

In mid-September, the next draft of the Resolution underwent discussion by a forum of provincial, municipal, and autonomous region Party first secretaries in Beijing. Immediately afterward, the Politburo decided that, after further revision, the Resolution would be sent in October to 4,000 senior cadre from central party departments and state ministries, high-level PLA commands, and selected provinces for further discussion. They would be divided up into separate groups, each of which would summarize its discussions and send briefing reports back to the Party Center for reference purposes.<sup>28</sup>

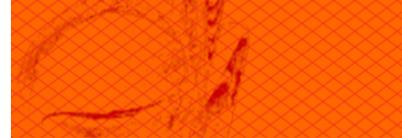
At about this same time, Hu Qiaomu drafted a new section of about 2,500 Chinese characters, evaluating the Party’s record in the four years *after* the fall of the “Gang of Four,” that is, evaluating the chairmanship of Hua Guofeng. When the draft addition was sent to the Politburo Standing Committee for approval, Hua Guofeng objected, and Hu Yaobang was willing to withhold the additional verbiage until after the 4,000-person discussion. Ultimately, a brief description of the section was included in the materials sent out for discussion, asking participants for opinions as to whether it should be elaborated upon in the final Resolution.<sup>29</sup>

The discussions took place from mid-October to the end of November, with over 5,600 people participating. The discussions were lively, and many welcomed the ‘democratic’



atmosphere in which ideas were exchanged. Over 1,000 briefing reports were sent back to Beijing, and members of the drafting group had travelled to several provinces to participate. Of course, full records of those reports have never been made public, but memoirs of some of the participants have indicated that the discussions were heated, and the draft Resolution was thoroughly criticized. For example, the description of the first seven years after 1949 was faulted for being too cautious and defensive of Mao; the Great Leap Forward (1957-1959), mildly described in the draft Resolution as having “caused serious losses to our country and people,” was denounced in one meeting as being “in fact, a great famine, in which tens of millions of people died.”<sup>30</sup> Mao Zedong Thought evoked divided opinions, with some senior cadre defending it as necessary and others dissecting its logical and ideological flaws at great length. Hu Qiaomu’s proposal of separating Mao Zedong Thought from “Mao Zedong’s Thinking” in his late years won little praise, and some even suggested the Resolution be rewritten to include a comprehensive accounting of Mao’s “leftist” errors.<sup>31</sup>

Although Deng Xiaoping had probably expected some of the negative reaction to the draft Resolution, he was not receptive to major changes. Hu Qiaomu wrote him a long letter examining the various critiques, and they decided to push ahead to complete the Resolution, despite the continuing controversy. Deng was obdurate about limiting the criticism of Mao Zedong. On October 25, he told Hu Yaobang and Hu Qiaomu, “When we write about [Mao’s] mistakes, we should not exaggerate, for otherwise we shall be *discrediting Comrade Mao Zedong, and this would mean discrediting our Party and state*. Any exaggeration of his mistakes would be at variance with the historical facts.” Even though the discussions among the 4,000 cadres would continue for several weeks, Deng had decided that criticism of Hua Guofeng would be included in the Resolution. “Many discussion groups want a section in the draft to be devoted to the period following the smashing of the Gang of Four. It seems we shall have to write one.”<sup>32</sup>

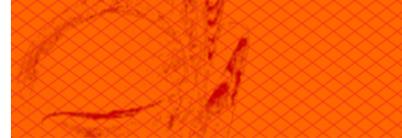


## **The Last Act**

Although Deng probably still intended the history Resolution to be a culmination of his effort to remove Hua Guofeng from power, the controversy the draft had stoked within the Party may have made it necessary to advance his plans. In a series of nine joint Politburo-Secretariat meetings held from November 11 to December 5, 1980, the Party's new leadership arrangements were decided, a full six months ahead of the scheduled 6<sup>th</sup> CCP Plenum. According to unofficial but consistent accounts of those meetings,<sup>33</sup> the Politburo passed three resolutions, which were then circulated secretly to Party cadres above the provincial CCP standing committee level: 1) It would propose at the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum to accept Hua Guofeng's request to resign the positions of Central Committee Chairman and Military Commission Chairman;<sup>34</sup> 2) It would propose electing Hu Yaobang as Chairman of the Central Committee and Deng Xiaoping as Chairman of the Military Commission; 3) Prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, Hu would take charge of the daily work of the Politburo and Standing Committee, and Deng would take charge of the work of the CMC. Hua would continue to carry out ceremonial duties as Chairman, and be retained as the lowest-ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee after the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum.<sup>35</sup>

Now that the leadership situation had been resolved, the draft history Resolution seemed to be a mess that needed to be cleaned up, and Deng was eager to get it done. After Hu Qiaomu had fallen ill from exhaustion during this period, Deng Liqun took over the drafting team and delivered a new draft to the Politburo on February 11, 1981 that incorporated some of the recommendations from the 4,000-person meeting. However, Hu Yaobang, in his new role as Party Chairman, called the drafting team together again on February 17 and suggested making an entirely new start, by retitling the Resolution, and having it focus more on current and future tasks and responsibilities. He even prepared a new outline.<sup>36</sup>

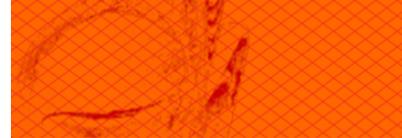
On March 9, 1981, Deng Xiaoping called in Deng Liqun and condemned the latest draft for being too critical of Mao and not sufficiently praising his major contributions to the



revolution. He also told Deng Liqun not to pay attention to Hu Yaobang's proposal for an entirely new draft. This was a striking demonstration of the relative authority of Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping, despite Hu's new elevation to the position of acting Party Chairman.<sup>37</sup> Deng Xiaoping's eagerness to finish the Resolution was evident not only in the rough handling of Hu Yaobang, but also in Deng's personal visit to Chen Yun in the hospital to seek his advice on how to find the right balance in judging Mao. Chen suggested expanding the historical scope of the Resolution all the way back to the Party's founding in 1921 to include Mao's leadership of the Party and his contributions to its ideological foundations in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>38</sup> That would balance out the more negative evaluation of Mao for the period after 1949. Deng welcomed the suggestion and told the drafting team to incorporate it into the next draft.

For the 7<sup>th</sup> draft of the Resolution, Hu Qiaomu had come out of recuperation from gall bladder inflammation to edit it for 10 days. Chen Yun's suggestions resulted in the addition of a lengthy foreword about the 28 years prior to 1949. Deng accepted Hu Yaobang's suggestion that the draft be given to 40 or so veteran Party leaders for discussion and further changes before being finalized for the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, which was scheduled for late June. But even though the meeting was 'packed' with trusted old veterans, it became highly contentious, with more accusations against Mao and insistence on radical changes to the draft.<sup>39</sup>

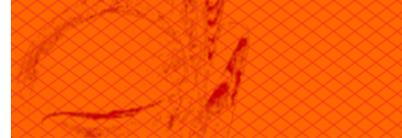
Deng rejected most of the critiques, but sent the draft back for more changes, insisting the drafters stay true to his original instructions from the year before. On April 7, he summoned Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun for a talk, and made clear that he would approve further minor improvements, but would not accept further substantive changes to the draft. He said some of the recent comments were "unacceptable." He also ruled out further mass discussions, but suggested a selected group of senior cadres attend another discussion at an expanded Politburo meeting prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum. The Politburo Standing Committee met on May 19 and



approved the draft Resolution “in principle,” pending further discussion at the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum.<sup>40</sup> Available biographic materials on Hu Yaobang indicate that he did *not* attend the meeting.

The Preparatory Meeting prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee opened on June 15, 1981 and spent ten days in further discussion of the draft. On June 22, Deng delivered a forceful speech defending the process and the product. “This ‘Resolution’ is a good Resolution,” he insisted, “and this draft is a good draft,” because it was “written on the basis of the three basic requirements put forward at the outset.”<sup>41</sup> He made several points in his lengthy commentary, which is included in his *Selected Works*. One pertained to the decision to include criticism of Hua in the Resolution, which he defended rather weakly: “Comrade Hua Guofeng’s name must be mentioned because that is in keeping with reality. If he were not mentioned by name, there could be no apparent reason for changing his post. That is the primary question: was the decision of the Political Bureau correct and should Comrade Hua Guofeng’s post have been changed?” In support of the otherwise somewhat flimsy depiction of Hua’s errors, Deng made vague reference to “the banner of Hua Guofeng” being “waved by remnants of the Gang of Four and others who have ulterior motives.”<sup>42</sup>

After Deng’s speech, there was little further substantive discussion. A few Central Committee members registered dissatisfaction with the description of Mao’s “mistakes in his later years,” but there were only a few editorial changes to the “Resolution” before it was presented to the actual 6<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee, which met in Beijing on June 25-27, 1981. The Central Committee on June 27 unanimously approved the “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China,” and the personnel changes that accompanied it, although many members probably did so with serious reservations.<sup>43</sup> Hu Yaobang lightly praised the Resolution in his brief closing speech to the Plenum, and the document was disseminated publicly through the People’s Daily



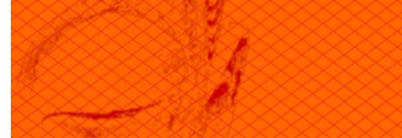
(*Renmin Ribao*) on July 1, 1981, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

### **Concluding Observations**

Readers who would like to see the final product of this lengthy political process can find the original Chinese-language text of the Resolution on the Communist Party of China's official website at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64563/65374/4526448.html>. An English-language full-text version can be found at <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/history/01.htm>.

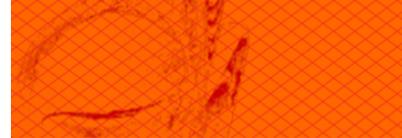
Examining the document in detail and pointing out its breakthrough judgments, corrections of errors, and recognition of faults and strengths of the CCP's history, as well as its numerous distortions, flaws, omissions, obfuscations, and misjudgments would require another paper of equal length to this one. But a few summary observations can be made as follows:

- Although it is nominally about “certain questions in the history of our [CCP] party,” the Resolution is not about history; it is a propaganda document. It is not a presentation of facts so much as a reinterpretation of selected events in the CCP's past in light of changed political circumstances (namely the removal of certain leaders). It is a series of carefully worded judgments that are intended to be accepted as the Party's official stance.
- The Resolution was not so much an attempt to be accurate as it was an attempt to be final. Even Deng himself admitted in 1993 that some of the facts in the Resolution were “inaccurate” (*bushi de* 不实的), and the harsher judgments of Mao, made by other senior leaders, were correct.<sup>44</sup> But Deng Xiaoping had wanted the Resolution to settle the Party's judgment on Mao, to preserve Mao Zedong Thought as a sterilized ideological foundation for his own pragmatic policies, and put an end to various splits and quarrels. The Resolution was certainly final with respect to Hua Guofeng. Although he remained



on the Politburo Standing Committee until the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1982, Hua withdrew from public life after the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, and remained reclusive until his death in 2008.

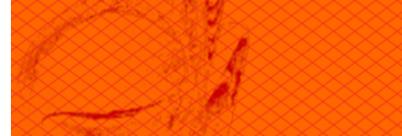
- The Resolution went through a detailed, intense, and rather heated deliberation process involving thousands of senior CCP members exchanging strong opinions. But the end product was not the outcome of a ‘negotiation’ or collaboration so much as a directed process dominated by Deng Xiaoping and facilitated by his loyal scribe, Hu Qiaomu. Deng initiated the document-formulation process, chose the drafters, set the directions and the outline, regularly edited and corrected the drafts, settled disagreements, and overrode the objections. The force of his will prevailed over all personal and institutional obstacles.
- Deng emerged from the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum and the history Resolution process as the dominant leader of the Party, just as Mao Zedong had done in comparable circumstances in 1945. Not only had he eliminated Hua Guofeng as a potential rival or successor, but he also drove away Ye Jianying, one of his peers who had played a major role in his return in 1977. Ye had supported Hua and withdrew to Guangzhou after the 1980 Politburo meetings, remaining there except for a few ceremonial occasions until his death in 1986.<sup>45</sup> Hu Yaobang, whom Deng had placed in the No. 1 position as Party Chairman, a decision ratified by the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, made very clear in his speeches and actions at the time that he considered Deng Xiaoping to be the party’s most experienced and deserving leader, and that he would not challenge him. Hu may have been dissatisfied with the tone and substance of the “Resolution,” but he was not in a position to challenge Deng’s preeminent position at that point, or subsequently thereafter.
- The Resolution has not held up well as a historical document. Several Chinese scholars have done studies of some of the issues mentioned briefly in the Resolution, such as the “Great Leap Forward” and the 1957 “Anti-Rightist Campaign,” and have come down more harshly than the Resolution in faulting Party policymakers. Party-approved



symposiums were held on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Resolution, which of course validated its findings. But participants and other observers have also voiced views that the Resolution did not go far enough in its critical judgments, especially with respect to the Cultural Revolution.<sup>46</sup>

- One notable exception to the cautious response of later observers to the shortcomings of the Resolution came from Yang Jisheng, controversial editor of the now-closed *Yanhuang Chunqiu* magazine and author of *Tombstone*,<sup>47</sup> a shocking study of the Great Leap Forward famine of 1958-1962. In a mordant speech to a forum on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Resolution in 2011, Yang credited the Party and government for abandoning the disastrous economic policies of the 1950s, even though they had affirmed them in the Resolution, but said too many places in the document were “contrary to historical facts.” Yang titled his speech, “A nation that cannot face its history has no future” and called for a thorough and accurate review of the Party’s performance over its then 60-year history.<sup>48</sup>

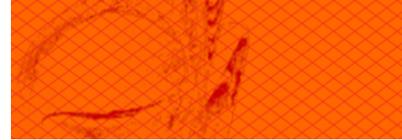
The Xi Jinping regime, has not only rejected Yang’s challenge, it has attempted to silence further discussion of the 1981 Resolution and its judgments. In April 2013, the Central Committee circulated a key document, entitled “Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere,” sometimes referred to as “Document Number 9.” The communiqué specified that in order to communicate General Secretary Xi Jinping’s powerful and positive ideas (e.g. the “China Dream”) better, Chinese media should avoid covering Western philosophical and political concepts, including “universal values,” constitutional democracy, a free press, and so on. Among the seven topics to be avoided, the communiqué included “historical nihilism” (*lishi xuwu zhuyi* 历史虚无主义), which it defined, *inter alia*, as “rejecting the accepted conclusions on historical events and figures, disparaging our Revolutionary precursors, and vilifying the Party’s leaders.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, the 1981 Historical Resolution, for all its



faults, inaccuracies, lies, and compromises, remains the “final word” on the tumultuous history of the Chinese Communist Party from 1921 to 1981.

Subsequent to the dissemination of Document 9, there has been substantial tightening of central controls over all media in China, including the public discussion of historical issues, especially those pertaining to the CCP. Most Party and government archives are still closed, and Party authorities still scrub memoirs, speeches, articles and books written by Party elders to ensure they are consistent with the CCP’s “delivered wisdom.” In addition, some of the issues that had been openly discussed in the course of developing the 1981 Resolution are not welcomed (e.g. Mao’s “late years” and the “Cultural Revolution”). Charges of “historical nihilism” have caused some Internet websites with a focus on modern history to be blocked, while others have engaged in self-censorship, withholding publication of potentially controversial articles. Even books by retired Party leaders are sometimes rejected for publication in the PRC and can only be published in Hong Kong or Taiwan. Recently, several Hong Kong publishers of controversial books have been arrested or threatened in China.

In his 1949 classic novel, *1984*, George Orwell has two of his characters consider the notion, inculcated by “the Party,” that “Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”<sup>50</sup> Although the totalitarian nightmare of Orwell’s imagination is far from the reality of today’s China, the control of CCP history has undeniably become a tool of power in the People’s Republic of China, and all are the poorer for it.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, translated by Tai Hung-chao, (Random House Publishing, New York, 1994), page 9. Li, who was Mao's personal physician for many years, wrote a controversial account of Mao's private life, but while some have charged that the material was overly sensational, there is no particular reason to doubt his version of Mao's death and its immediate aftermath.

<sup>2</sup> Because no official records of the events leading up to the October 6 arrest of the "Gang of Four" have been released, the details of who initiated the plan, who was included in it, and even how the actual arrests were carried out all remain rather fuzzy. The memoirs or oral interviews of several participants have been published, including: Zhang Gensheng (张根生), "Hua Guofeng Talks About Smashing the 'Gang of Four,'" (华国锋谈粉碎"四人帮"), published in *Yanhuang Chunqiu* magazine 炎黄春秋杂志, Issue 4 of 2004, available online at

<http://www.yhcqw.com/html/qsp/2008/414/084141542557B93I117642DHAAJ035DIHF0.html>,

accessed April 4, 2014; Wu Jianhua (武健华), "Ye Jianying and Wang Dongxing Had Secret Talks on Taking Care of the Gang of Four" (叶剑英汪东兴密谈处置四人帮), in *Yanhuang Chunqiu* Issue 2 of 2013, available at <http://www.yhcqw.com/html/wsl/2013/23/OAJ0.html>, on July 21, 2014; and Ji Xizhen (纪希晨), "A Panoramic Description of Smashing the 'Gang of Four,'" (粉碎"四人帮"全景写真(parts 1 and 2)), in *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, Issues 10 and 11 of 2000, available at

<http://www.yhcqw.com/html/cqb/2008/326/0832615365J4KH3235C857IBKJ27953AC.html>, accessed

March 6, 2015. These articles, poorly sourced, take some liberty with facts and are filled with fanciful, almost Chinese operatic speeches, but provide a generally consistent account of a very tense series of events. *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, unfortunately, has suspended publication due to government pressure, but as of February 1, 2017, the above articles were still accessible online.

<sup>3</sup> Ji Xizhen, *op.cit.*

<sup>4</sup> The "Center" (*zhongyang* 中央) or "Party Center" (*dang zhongyang* 党中央) is a shorthand reference to the Chinese Communist Party's topmost leadership and its affiliated bureaucracies, located in Beijing, the ultimate deciding authority in the People's Republic of China.

<sup>5</sup> The real story of what happened to Lin Biao is another example of the CCP's propensity for 'manufactured' history. Lin and members of his family are said to have died in the crash of a military transport aircraft in Mongolia on September 13, 1971, while fleeing to the Soviet Union after his plot to overthrow Mao failed. A delay of several months before the Party released any details of the "9-13 Incident," during which time many senior PLA officers were purged, and numerous factual inconsistencies in the official account have left many doubts among Chinese and foreign historians about what really happened. See, for example, Zhou Zhixing (周志兴), "The Riddles of 9-13 and Lin Biao—Legends, Jokes and Lies" (9-13 说林彪留下的谜团—神话、笑话和鬼话), September 15, 2015 in Consensus Network (共识网), online at <http://www.hybsl.cn/beijingscankao/beijingsfenxi/2015-09-15/54341.html>, accessed September 15, 2015; one of the more careful analyses was done by Wang Haiguang (王海光), "The 9-13 Incident Minute-by-Minute ("九一三"事件的分分秒秒)", originally on Tencent Thought Meeting (腾讯思享会), reposted at <http://www.hybsl.cn/beijingscankao/beijingsfenxi/2014-09-15/48236.html>, accessed February 9, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Pantsov and Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping—A Revolutionary Life*, (Oxford University Press, London, 2015), parts 2 and 3; Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2011), Chapters 2-5.

<sup>7</sup> Vogel, *op.cit.*

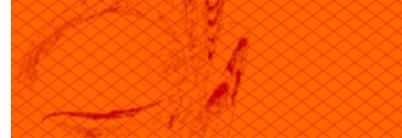
<sup>8</sup> *Renmin Ribao*, February 7, 1977 (*author's translation*). Noted Chinese historian Han Gang (韩钢) published a thorough discussion of the origin of the editorial in the 2016 Issue 2 of *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, entitled, "The Case of the 'Two Whatever,'" (*Liangge fanshi' de yiduan gongan*, "两个凡是"的一段公案) online at <http://www.hybsl.cn/beijingscankao/beijingsfenxi/2016-02-14/56973.html>, accessed February 16, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Vogel, *op.cit.*, pages 196-197; Pantsov & Levine, *op.cit.*, page 327.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> See the "Communique of the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Chinese Communist Party," (中国共产党第十一次全国代表大会新闻公报), August 18, 1977, online at

<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64563/65449/4441886.html>, accessed February 8, 2017.



<sup>12</sup> Pantsov & Levine, *op.cit.*, pages 337-338.

<sup>13</sup> Deng Xiaoping, "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts and Unite as One in Looking to the Future," Speech delivered to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee on December 13, 1978, from *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Volume 2*, available online at [https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.1/Deng02\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.1/Deng02_djvu.txt), accessed February 17, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Wu, Guoguang, *The Anatomy of Political Power in China*, Marshall Cavendish, Singapore, 2005

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 99-100

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 102-109.

<sup>17</sup> Zhen Shi (甄实), "Hu Yaobang and the 'Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China,'" (*Hu Yaobang yu 'guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi'*, 胡耀邦与《关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议》), originally in *General Review of the CCP (Dangshi bolan 党史博览)* of 2012, Issue 2, online at <http://www.hybsl.cn/ybsxyj/shengpingyusixiang/2012-09-04/30794.html>, accessed January 31, 2017.

The name assigned to the Resolution was not coincidental. In 1945, just prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> CCP Congress, at which Mao's thorough domination of the Party was secured, the Party passed a "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party," which rewrote the Party's history since 1921, stressing Mao's correct thinking at every turn, and finalizing the disgrace of his principal political opponent at the time, Wang Ming. See Gao Hua (高华), *How Did the Sun Arise Over Yan'an? (Hong taiyang shi zenyang shenqi de 红太阳是怎样升起的)*, The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 2011), pages 626ff.

<sup>18</sup> Zhen, *op.cit.*; Interview with Li Honglin (李洪林), "In Theory, Seek Truth; In Turbulence, Seek Debate," (*Lilun qiu zhen, fengyun tu bian 理论求真 风云图辩*), published in *Master (Dashi 大师) Magazine* on June 21, 2016, online at <http://www.chinainperspective.com/ArtShow.aspx?AID=22022>, accessed February 19, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Sheng Ping (盛平), editor, *A Chronology of Hu Yaobang's Thought, (Hu Yaobang sixiang nianpu 胡耀邦思想年谱)*, Hong Kong, Taide Shidai Publishing (秦德时代出版有限公司), 2007, page 472).

<sup>20</sup> Chen Donglin (陈东林), "Deng Xiaoping and the Shaping of the 'Historical Resolution,'" (*Deng Xiaoping yu 'guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi' de xingcheng 邓小平与《关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议》的形成*), in *General Review of the CCP (Dangshi bolan 党史博览)* of 2013, Issue 6, online at [http://www.wxyjs.org.cn/wxzj\\_1/dbzb/201311/t20131120\\_146195.htm](http://www.wxyjs.org.cn/wxzj_1/dbzb/201311/t20131120_146195.htm), accessed February 3, 2017.

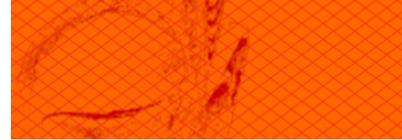
<sup>21</sup> Cheng Zhongyuan (程中原), "Hu Qiaomu and the CCP's Two 'History Resolutions,'" (*Hu Qiaomu yu zhongguo gongchandang de liangge 'lishi jueyi'* 胡乔木与中国共产党的两个《历史决议》), originally in *Party Literature (党的文献)* on April 25, 2014, online at <http://study.ccln.gov.cn/fenke/lishixue/lspjwz/lssjs/71161.shtml>, accessed February 20, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Li Honglin, *op.cit.*; Former Editor-in-chief of *People's Daily* and prominent political reform advocate Hu Jiwei entitled the 1<sup>st</sup> volume of his 7-volume memoirs, *My Decade-long Dispute with Hu Qiaomu (胡绩伟自选集(一)我与胡乔木的十年论辩*. See also Wu Jiang (吴江), *Ten Year Road: Days With Hu Yaobang (十年的路: 和胡耀邦相处的日子)*, (Mirror Publishing, Hong Kong, 1995), pages 56-57.

<sup>23</sup> Huang Li (黄黎), "The Full Story Behind the Drafting of the 'Resolution on Party History,'" (*Guanyu 'jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi' qicao de taiqian muhou*, 《关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议》起草的台前幕后), published April 2, 2009 in *Chinese Communist Party News Network (中国共产党新闻网)*, online at <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/85040/9070755.html>, accessed February 2, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Huang Li, *op.cit.*; Chen Donglin, *op.cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Jiang Yongqing (蒋永清), "Deng Xiaoping Oversaw the 'History Resolution': Scientifically Evaluating Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought," (*Deng Xiaoping zhuchi qicao "lishi jueyi": kexue pingjia Mao Zedong he Mao Zedong sixiang*, 邓小平主持起草《历史决议》: 科学评价毛泽东和毛泽东思想), originally published in the *Chinese Communist Party News Web (中国共产党新闻网)*, published online March 18, 2014 at <http://www.hybsl.cn/beijjngcankao/beijjngfenxi/2014-03-18/45345.html>, accessed February 21, 2017, also at [http://news.china.com/history/all/11025807/20161116/23889703\\_all.html](http://news.china.com/history/all/11025807/20161116/23889703_all.html), under another title.



<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*; Cheng Zhongyuan, *op.cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Huang Li, *op.cit.*; Chen Donglin, *op.cit.*; Jiang Yongqing, *op.cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Chen Donglin, *op.cit.*; Guo Daohui (郭道晖), "Once Asked Four Thousand Old Cadre for a Democratic Appraisal of the Party's History," (*Xiang si qian laoganbu dui dangshi de yici minzhu pingyi* 问四千老干部对党史的一次民主评议), *Yanhuang Chunqiu Magazine*, Issue 4 of 2010, online at <http://www.yhcqw.com/html/qlj/2010/49/F998.html>, accessed July 31, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Sheng Ping, *Chronology, op.cit.*, page 542; Deng Liqun (邓力群) presented a slightly different version in his autobiography, asserting that Deng Xiaoping also agreed to not disseminate the section evaluating Hua, and that Deng Liqun himself wrote the brief summary to include with the discussion draft, asking discussants for comments. See Deng Liqun, *Autobiography, Twelve Seasons (Deng Liqun: shi'er ge chunqiu* 邓力群自述:十二个春秋), (*Dafeng Publishing* 大风出版社, Hong Kong, 2006), pages 168-171.

<sup>30</sup> Guo Daohui, *op.cit.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* Not surprisingly, Chen Donglin's account, published in an official CCP history magazine, asserted there was a great deal of cadre support for the draft resolution, but noted that several well-known veteran cadre suggested suspending the drafting process until various disagreements could be resolved.

<sup>32</sup> *Emphasis added.* Deng Xiaoping, "Talk with some leading comrades of the Central Committee, October 25, 1980," *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol. 2*, online at [https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.1/Deng02\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.1/Deng02_djvu.txt), accessed February 20, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous, "The Inside Story of Hua Guofeng's Resignation as Central Committee Chairman: Chen Yun Suggested His "Stepping Aside" (*Hua Guofeng ciqiu zhongyang zhuxi neiqing; Chen Yun jianyi qi 'rangjian'* 华国锋辞去中央主席内情: 陈云建议其"让贤"), version published in Hong Kong's mainland-controlled *Ta Kung Pao* on November 13, 2013, online at <http://news.takungpao.com/history/wengu/2013-11/2045316.html>, accessed February 7, 2017. Identical versions of this account have appeared on numerous PRC websites, and while it can by no means be considered authoritative, it appears to be the 'accepted version' of the story of Hua Guofeng's ouster. See also Sheng Ping, *Chronology, op.cit.*, pages 558-559; Deng Liqun, *op.cit.*, pages 171-173.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* Hua was cited for five "errors" in his work: Promoting the "two whatevers," continuing to praise the Cultural Revolution, obstructing the return of veteran cadre [i.e. Deng], fostering his own personality cult, and "subjective idealism" in economic policies.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* Identical versions can be found at various PRC social media websites, such as <http://weibo.com/ttarticle/p/show?id=2309404019608792231628>, and [http://history.sohu.com/20150812/n418648526\\_1.shtml](http://history.sohu.com/20150812/n418648526_1.shtml). The story of the nine meetings contains many dramatic details, including a teary self-criticism by Ye Jianying, and Deng Xiaoping declining to be Party Chairman and strongly recommending Hu Yaobang.

<sup>36</sup> Chen Donglin, *op.cit.*, suggests that Hu Yaobang actually oversaw the drafting team's work, but this is not clear. See also Sheng Ping, *Chronology, op.cit.*, page 604; Deng Liqun, *op.cit.*, pages 173-174.

<sup>37</sup> Deng Liqun, *op.cit.*, page 174. Worse still for Hu, as he told Shandong Province secretaries at a May 4 meeting, he had been ordered by the Politburo Standing Committee in late March to take a "forced rest" (*qiangpo xiuxi* 强迫休息), although he did not specify the reasons. See Sheng Ping, *Chronology, op.cit.*, page 623.

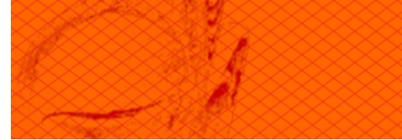
<sup>38</sup> Chen Donglin, *op.cit.* For Deng to seek help from Chen Yun, even to the extent of paying a call on him, is an indication of his exasperation and desperation in trying to finish the resolution. The two men were wary rivals who seldom met with each other. See Yang Jisheng (杨继绳), "The 'Twin Peaks Politics' and 'Two Point Collision' of China's Reform Era," (*Zhongguo gaige niandai de 'shuangfeng zhengzhi he liangdian pengzhuang* 中国改革年代的"双峰政治"和"两点碰撞"), published July 30, 2015, online at [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_68e5ed0f0102vr5l.htm](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_68e5ed0f0102vr5l.htm), accessed February 23, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Zhen Shi, *op.cit.*; Chen Donglin, *op.cit.*

<sup>40</sup> Jiang Yongqing, *op.cit.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Deng Xiaoping, "Speech during the preparatory meeting for the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, June 22, 1981," in *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol. 2*, online at [https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.1/Deng02\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/SelectedWorksOfDengXiaopingVol.1/Deng02_djvu.txt), accessed February 26, 2017.



<sup>43</sup> Chen Donglin, *op.cit.*, Jiang Yongqing, *op.cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Huang Jiachang (黄家杨), “Deng Xiaoping: The ‘Historical Resolution’ Drafting Was Limited by the Situation at the Time,” (*Deng Xiaoping: lishi jueyi qicao shou shiju suoxian*, 邓小平: “历史决议”起草受时局所限), from *Tencent History Channel* (腾讯历史频道), March 15, 2012, online at <http://www.hybsl.cn/beijjngcankao/beijjngfenxi/2012-03-15/28976.html>, accessed February 10, 2017. Deng made these comments in a speech to the Politburo Standing Committee in Shanghai in January 1993, and recommended that another resolution might do a better job.

<sup>45</sup> Pantsov & Levine, *op.cit.*, page 376.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, “Stick to the Bottom Line, Push for Change—Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Publication of ‘Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China Party History Resolution,’” (*Jianshou dixian, tuijin biange—jinian “guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi” fabiao 30 zhounian*, 坚守底线 推进变革——纪念《关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议》发表 30 周年), published in the August 27, 2011 issue of *China Reform* (中国改革), online at <http://www.hybsl.cn/beijjngcankao/beijjngfenxi/2011-11-14/27510.html>, accessed January 31, 2017. See also Hu Shuli, “The Future Begins with Remembering the Past, from *Caixin Online*, originally posted March 15, 2012, online at <http://cmp.hku.hk/2012/03/15/why-did-wen-mention-the-resolution-on-history-twice/>, accessed February 28, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> Yang, Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962*, translated by Stacy Mosher and Guo Jian, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Yang Jisheng (杨继绳), “A nation that cannot face its history has no future,” (*Buneng miandui lishi de minzu shi meiyou weilai de*, 不能面对历史的民族是没有未来的), published in various social media on September 21, 2011, including [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_1455c7a270102vjy7.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_1455c7a270102vjy7.html) on May 28, 2017, accessed May 15, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> English translation of Document 9 by ChinaFile at <http://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation>, accessed May 12, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> George Orwell, *1984* (numerous publishers and editions), from Book 3, Chapter 2.