

# A Critique of J. Chang and J. Halliday's Book Mao, the Unknown Story

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## Introduction

China's economic development is one of the most significant events in recent times. It is at least partially the consequence of her social and political evolution/revolution in the past century. If the west wants to understand modern China, it is essential not to misunderstand her founder, Mao. However, the book of J. Chang (JC) and J. Haliday, *Mao, the unknown story*, is misleading the Western public into profound misunderstanding of Mao, China's modern history and China itself.

The central theme of the book is to condemn Mao as an evil monster, "*as bad as or worse than Hitler*". This claim was immediately accepted by the western media. When the book was first published in UK in June 2005, it was hailed by all major media with great enthusiasm, involving many well known China experts from polity (e.g., the last British governor of Hong Kong, C. Pattern), journalism (e.g., the Time's East Asia editor, J. Mirsky) and academia (e.g., the chairman of the Department of International Relation, London School of Economics, M. Yahuda). According to these experts, everyone with a reasonable mind should be totally convinced by the book beyond any doubt. On this issue there is a rare harmony in which the voice of the *Guardian* is indistinguishable from that of the *Daily Mail*. Within one week, the book jumped to the top position of the non-fiction best selling list. Jung Chang has become the authority on the Chinese history. A person, who asked challenging questions during one of her seminars, was deemed by others as "*an obvious Maoist*" and could not finish his questions. Some western readers condemned a less complementary comment regarding the book on the Amazon web site as "*ugly Chinese propaganda*".

The supporters have such unlimited confidence partially because the book is supposedly the outcome of 10 years of intensive research, based on secret archives and hundreds of interviews in many countries. Unfortunately, a careful reader can see clearly that there are huge gaps between its sensational claims and vast references. Moreover, the evidence in

the book often contradicts, rather than supports, the claims. This review will point out these contradictions and inconsistencies which may have escaped most Western readers' eyes and ignored by the Western media.

To reveal the overall quality of the book, we take on its 17 major claims, which are evenly distributed across Mao's life. Instead of picking up its weaknesses or minor points, we focus on those issues, which tarnish Mao's character the most and are praised most highly in the Western media as solidly proven. These issues are dealt with in 17 sections:

1. The Purge in the Ruijin Base,
2. Chiang Let the Reds Go (I)
3. Chiang Let the Reds Go (II)
4. The Fake Battle at the Luding Bridge,
5. Mao Carried through the Long March,
6. Mao Did Not Fight Japanese,
7. The Trap for the New 4<sup>th</sup> Army,
8. Mao Sacrificed His Brother Tse-min,
9. The Rectification Campaign,
10. Opium Sale,
11. 3 Million Deaths in 1950-51,
12. 27 Million Deaths in Jails/Labor Camps,
13. The Superpower Program,
14. 38 Million Deaths in 1958-61,
15. 3 Million Deaths in 1966-76,
16. Mao's Aim of the Cultural Revolution,
17. Mao Compared with Hitler.

This review has been sent to several Western media since early August, but received no response of any kind. Nevertheless, it is not the only negative review on JC's book. Four months after its first publication, critical voices began to emerge from outside of Europe. For instance, in an article in the *New York Review*, J. Spence of Yale University singles out two false stories in the book. In the *New York Times*, a former correspondent in Beijing N. Kristof reveals that one of alleged interviewees listed in the book, Zhang Hanzhi denies that she had ever been interviewed by the authors. An Australian H. McDonald in his *The Age* article reveals that a recent visit by reporters to Luding Bridge confirms the battle 70 years ago, which JC claims to be a complete invention. He quoted from T. Bernstein of Columbia University that "*the book is a major disaster for the contemporary China field*". Also, "*Princeton's Perry Link have felt compelled to criticise*" JC's "*factual errors and dubious use of sources*". Moreover, "*many scholars point out that much of what Chang and Halliday present as a previously 'unknown story' has in fact been exposed long ago. . . . But no credit is given to these earlier writers*". In *London Review of Books*, A. Nathan of Columbia University provides plenty of evidence showing that "*Chang and Halliday are magpies: every bright piece of evidence goes in, no matter where it comes from or how reliable it is*".

This review differs from those of Western writers in two aspects. First, it shows the total fallacy of the book, instead of just a few inaccuracies. Secondly, it demonstrates the book's major flaws without substantial references regarding Chinese history, only using the information of an elementary level. In fact the information and references mainly come from the book itself. In so doing, the review raises a further question: why did all media and experts in the UK fail to see these obvious inconsistencies and contradictions in the book? If it cannot be excused by the ignorance of Chinese history, it has to be explained by the profound pride and prejudice towards China.

Although this review met absolute silence in the west, it has drawn some attention from overseas Chinese. One of the web sites which published this review, Duowei, interviewed Jung Chang in New York in October, and asked her to answer some of my questions (see [http://www7.chinesenewsnet.com/gb/MainNews/Forums/BackStage/2005\\_11\\_20\\_20\\_15\\_3\\_643\\_3.html](http://www7.chinesenewsnet.com/gb/MainNews/Forums/BackStage/2005_11_20_20_15_3_643_3.html)). This is what Jung Chang said about this review: *“I have read it, and read carefully. Some questions are quite good. I do hope to have opportunities to answer them. I think it is very important. However, there are many issues, I do not know either he did not understand English, or did not look at the references provided at the back of the book. There are many details, the origins of the figures, all in the back of the book. Among 800 pages, there are 150 pages of references, the sources of the references. One has to read those sources from the references. I think he either did not understand English, or did not read references carefully. I have looked at his questions, and can give easy answers to all of them”*.

In the interview, Jung Chang indeed responded to three of my 17 questions, namely, (2), (3) and (4). A reader can look at the paragraphs marked by \* signs below, in each of the three sections to appreciate her *“easy answers”*.

After the appearance of this review, Jung Chang's brother, Pu Zhang (a translator for the Chinese version of the book), claim in October 2005 on the Duowei web site that, my Chinese translation seriously distorted JC's words, and he would post the direct comparison of the original text and my translation on the web for readers to see the difference. However, despite readers repeatedly asked him to keep his promises, his English-Chinese comparison has not be seen anywhere so far.

## 1. The Purge in the Ruijin Base

JC's first major accusation against Mao is that his purge in the Ruijin base, the first Red State in China, caused more than 350,000 deaths, or 10% of the total population. Her figure is grossly exaggerated because she assumes the reduction of 0.7 million in Ruijin's population was the result of people either being killed in battles or dying of persecution under Mao. She ignores civilian deaths and emigration completely.

From 1931–35, *“the population of Red Jiangxi fell by more than half a million. . . . The fall in Red Fujian was comparable. . . . Altogether some 700,000 people died in the Ruijin base”* (p. 113). JC apparently deduces this figure from the population ratio of Red Jiangxi to that of Red Fujian. But from her *“half a million”* population reduction in Jiangxi, we should get Ruijin's 700,000 population reduction, not deaths.

Then, as *“238,844 people in Jiangxi were counted as ‘revolutionary martyrs’, i.e., people who had been killed in wars and intra-party purges”* (p. 114 fn), JC uses the population ratio again to get the total number of martyrs in the whole of Ruijin, which is  $238,884 \times 700,000 / 500,000 = 334,438$ . The rest of the reduction in population,  $700,000 - 334,438 = 365,562$ , i.e., *“More than half”*, she concludes, *“were murdered as ‘class enemies’, or were worked to death, or committed suicide, or died other premature deaths attributable to the regime”* (pp. 113-114).

This calculation is not professional. First, it ignores civilian deaths caused by the war, through killing, illness, economic hardship and starvation etc, which often account for a larger part of the loss of life in long lasting wars. During that period Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek launched five “annihilation expeditions” against Ruijin, one of which involved *“half a million troops”* (p. 125). At one time the Ruijin base *“had been reduced to a mere several dozen square kilometers”* (p. 103) from *“50,000 sq. km”* (p.104). So most of the area of the base had been occupied by Chiang's army.

Many people cooperated with the communists, even *“children were used as sentries, and formed into harassment squads, called ‘humiliation teams’ to hound people into joining the army”* (p. 110). Chiang's army was not known for treating civilians with

mercy. Even before the Red state came into existence, *“tens of thousands of Communists and suspects were slaughtered”* during Chiang’s campaign in 1927 (p. 47). Given all these factors, civilian deaths must have been significant.

Secondly, JC’s calculation ignores emigration out of the Ruijin area, which should be expected after five annihilation expeditions in five years. Especially, we are told that Mao’s policy in the Red base *‘was to confiscate every last single thing’* (p. 111), and *“China’s first Red state was run by terror and guarded like a prison.”* (p. 113). In that case, people should have escaped from Mao’s hell when Chiang’s army liberated them five times. So the number of refugees must have been significant too.

If we assume that the sum of civilian deaths and refugees together is roughly the same as the number of martyrs, there would be far fewer left who were *“murdered as ‘class enemies’, or were worked to death, or committed suicide, or died other premature deaths attributable to the regime”*. The number would be  $700,000 - 334,438 \times 2 = 31,124$ , less than 10% of JC’s figure.

## 2. Chiang Let the Reds Go (I)

JC’s second major discovery is to deny Mao’s contribution to the Red Army’s survival during the Long March. She argues that, it is Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek who let the Red Army go because he wanted an excuse to send his own army into Guichou and Sichuan. She gives no evidence for this. Instead, by her own account, Chiang did not need to use Mao’s army as his excuse because a strong Red Army had already been settled in Sichuan for nearly three years before Mao’s arrival.

*“There can be no doubt that Chiang let the CCP leadership and the main force of the Red Army escape”*. *“He wanted to drive the Red Army into these hold-out provinces, so that their warlords would be so frightened of the Reds settling in their territory that they would allow Chiang’s army in to drive the Reds out”* (p.137).

JC’s reference does support the well known fact that Chiang considered his entry into Sichuan as a beneficial by-product of his pursuit of the Red Army. But it does not imply Chiang let the Red Army escape. On the contrary, in the autumn of 1932, another CCP

leader Chang Kuo-tao had *“moved to northern Sichuan, where he built a new and bigger base within a year, and expanded his army to over 80,000. Kuo-tao was undoubtedly the most successful of all the Communists”* (pp. 147-148). At the time of Mao’s arrival in Sichuan, Chang Kuo-tao’s 80,000 soldiers *“were well fed, well equipped with machine-guns and mortars and ample ammunition, and superbly trained”* (p. 163). On the other hand, Mao’s army *“was down to some 10,000, . . . The surviving remnant was on the verge of collapse”* (p.163).

It seems odd that *“the most successful”* Chang Kuo-tao’s army of 80,000, after having settled down there for three years, still could not frighten the Sichuan warlords, and Chiang had to use Mao’s army which *“was on the verge of collapse”*. Why? Without an explanation one certainly has reasons to *“doubt that Chiang let the CCP leadership and the main force of the Red Army escape”*.

\* Facing this question in her interview with Duowei, Jung Chang replied: *“This is a good question. But we have studied it already. When Chang Ku-tao entered Sichuan, he was in the north, Chiang Kei-shek indeed wanted to follow. But Sichuan had a regional defense system then, each region had its own warlord, not together, all divided. Chiang Kei-shek drove the Central Red Army from the south into Sichuan. He wanted to conquer the south, the west, the north, also conquer the warlord in the east.”*

Then, why did not Chiang Kai-shek drive Chang Kuo-tao from the north to the west, east and south, but had to drive the Central Red Army far away from Jiangxi? JC’s answer immediately leads to almost the same question again. It does not explain anything. Isn’t it too easy to *“give easy answers”* just like this?

### **3. Chiang Let the Reds Go (II)**

To deny Mao’s contribution in the Long March, JC offers another theory to explain why Chiang let the Red Army go: he did it to get his son back from Russia. JC’s evidence only shows that Chiang wanted his son back, but does not show he let the Reds go. On the contrary, she shows that for his same beloved son, Chiang was not even willing to release two unknown spies.

According to JC, for Chiang Kai-shek's decision of "*letting the Reds go, . . . there was another, more secret and totally private reason. Chiang's son Ching-kuo had been a hostage in Russia*" (p. 138). "*Chiang had devised a carefully crafted swap: the survival of the CCP for Ching-Kuo. It was not an offer that could be spelt out. He executed his plan in subtle ways*" (p. 140).

It was so subtle that no record was left for JC to prove that Chiang did it, or even intended to do so. The only evidence is that Chiang worried about his son and asked Moscow to let him back. No swap was mentioned anywhere, not even in Chiang's diary. But there was another swap which was spelt out. According to JC, Chiang's "*sister-in-law, Mme Sun Yat-sen (nee Soong Ching-ling), who was another Soviet agent*", "*speaking for Moscow*", *spelt out a proposal of "swapping Ching-kuo for two top Russian agents who had recently been arrested in Shanghai. Chiang turned the swap down"* (pp. 139-140).

Since Chiang was unwilling to let two Russian agents go in exchange for his son's release, it is unlikely that he let the Red Army of tens of thousands armed men escape. If he did, one would wonder what kind of agents could be so important. Actually, the "*two top Russian agents*" are the Chinese couple Niu Lan and his wife. JC does not even tell their names, though a dozen other Russian agents are named in her book. Why? Maybe JC has some "*more secret and totally private reason*".

\* During her interview with Duowei, Jung Chang said: Chiang Kai-shek "*wanted to trade the Reds' survival for his son's return. How did we get the references? There are many, many references. The first comes from the Russian Archive, how Chiang Kai-shek negotiated with the Russians. There are also many records in Chiang Kai-shek's diary. Chiang Ching-kuo had an own account of the event, it contains such information as well. Moreover, as how Chiang Kai-shek let the Red Army go, there are many historical materials regarding the Long March, the telegraphs between the Kuomintang armies. We have given detailed explanations for all of them in the book.*"

Of course I have read all of these detailed explanations. Precisely because of this, I wrote: "JC's evidence only shows that Chiang wanted his son back, but does not show he let the Reds go". JC just repeats what she wrote in the book, but still fails to show any evidence

of how Chiang let the Reds go. Why didn't she simply quote one sentence from her "*many, many references*", which indicates that Chiang let or wanted to let the Reds go? Isn't this an easier answer than to list many, many circumstantial references?

#### **4. The Fake Battle at the Luding Bridge**

JC's claim of the nonexistence of the battle at the Luding Bridge has been widely publicized in the west as a fatal blow to the Red Army legend. In the official account, the CCP and Red Army were close to destruction near the Dadu River. If they had failed to secure the Luding Bridge, they would have been eliminated. The Luding Bridge battle is famous for its historic significance, not the scale.

Instead of disproving existing accounts, JC makes her claim mainly based on her interview with a 93-year-old woman. But, even according to that account, the Red Army did fire heavy weapons at the Bridge. JC does not explain why. Given the Reds' limited ammunitions, it was unlikely they would have wasted them with no enemy in sight.

According to JC, the battle at the Luding Bridge "*is complete invention. There was no battle at the Dadu Bridge*". "*There were no Nationalist troops at the bridge when the Reds arrived*" (p. 159). A 93-year-old woman lived there at the time. "*She remembered the Communists firing as 'only Yin a shell, and Yang a shot' --- a Chinese expression for sporadic. She did not remember her side of the river being fired on at all*" (p. 159).

JC does not clarify whether her definition of "*Nationalist troops*" includes the troops of Sichuan warlords which did not belong to the Nationalist regular army. Her source of reference suggests it does not. If so, her proof is flawed, because according to the official story, it was exactly the warlord's army which defended the bridge.

On the other hand, JC acknowledges that the Red Army "*shelled and fired across the river at Luding on the opposite side*" (p.159), and "*there was a fire in the town itself, caused, most likely, by Red Army shelling*" (p. 160). The Red Army could not have used their gunfire as fireworks because their ammunition was very scarce. Just a month later, without any serious battle, it had "*lost all its heavy weapons, leaving it only with rifles,*

*with an average of five bullets each*” (p.163). Its heavy weapons would have been used only if absolutely necessary. JC does not explain why the Reds shelled at all.

The shelling was unlikely due to a reconnaissance failure either. As *“the bridge was not reduced to bare chains”* (p. 160), sending a man over could have been done in a few minutes, probably more quickly than setting up the firing position. If it were a reconnaissance failure, the invention of the battle must have been used to cover it up. In that case, Mao, as one of the top commanders, was the cheated, not the cheater.

The only possible explanation left for the shelling is that it was to fake a battle for propaganda purposes, as seemingly suggested by JC. In this case, the Reds did not need to fire at all, unless they had a video camera then. Moreover, they would not have undertaken extra efforts which make it more likely that the sham would be exposed. But they held *“a celebration immediately afterwards”*, presenting each of 22 fake heroes with *“a Lenin suit, a fountain pen, a bowl and a pair of chopsticks”* (p. 160). Then the myth could have been exposed easily by any of these specifically identified fake heroes.

Furthermore, JC does not explain why the Nationalists did not expose this lie for 70 years. Their propagandists, not knowing Chiang’s plan to set the Reds free, should have no reason to keep the sham as an *“unknown story”*.

Finally, who could benefit from this lie? According to JC, as Mao had just led the Red Army through a disastrous *“2,000-kilometre detour”* (p. 162), *“a deep resentment grew towards Mao. . . . Everyone was furious with Mao”* (p. 155). If Mao could have let the Red Army cross the Dadu River without firing a bullet, his image as a military genius and his popularity would have shot up the most. A fabricated battle could only have reduced his reputation, not enhanced it. Whoever made up the battle story was more likely Mao’s enemy, not his friends or himself.

\* In her interview with Duowei, she answered my question this way: *“Many of his arguments are because he did not read our references, even not our texts”*. She said that her main evidence is not from the 93 years-old lady, *“the main references are written documents, one of them shows that the 22 Red Army soldiers crossed the bridge first, these 22 men did not suffer any injury, and held a ceremony after crossing. Each of them got a bowl and a pair of chopsticks, and a pen. . . . He did not read our*

*references, not even the text, but made comments, I do not know why. We also conducted a lot of research on which Kuomintang army defended the bridge, and explain in details in the book. We find that this army was moved away from here before the Red Army arrived. There was a telegraph from that time. Our references contain the origin of the telegraph. He does not mention this at all, it is not reasonable. Answering such questions would waste too much time”.*

Sorry, it is exactly having read her text and reference sources, I could possibly write: “JC does not clarify whether her definition of ‘Nationalist troops’ includes the troops of Sichuan warlords which did not belong to the Nationalist regular army. Her source of reference suggests it does not. If so, her proof is flawed, because according to the official story, it was exactly the warlord’s army which defended the bridge””. From JC’s reply, we still cannot see “whether her definition of “*Nationalist troops*” includes the troops of Sichuan warlords”. Apparently, she does not want to waste her time to read a few words of my question, just “*give easy answers*”. But she said not only she had read my review, but also “*read carefully*”. “*I do not know why*”.

JC emphasizes that her major evidence that no battle existed is no death. I indeed did “*not mention this at all*”, because it is simply not an evidence. Even if “*these 22 men did not suffer any injury*”, we can only doubt the intensity of the battle, but cannot rule out the possibility of its occurrence. The warlord army which defended the bridge was called “double gunners”, one rifle and one opium gun, lack of basic training and experience. The mere fact of no Red Army death cannot prove that the battle “*is complete invention*”.

## **5. Mao Carried through the Long March**

JC’s other sensational allegation is that Mao was carried by a litter throughout the Long March. But none of her references suggests that Mao was carried regularly. The closest “evidence” is a statement by Mao himself which was published in one of the most authoritative and tightly controlled Chinese official presses.

According to JC, from the start of the Long March, Mao, Lo Fu and Wang Jia-xiang formed a trio. “*The trio traveled together, usually reclining on litters. . . For much of*

*the Long March, including the most grueling part of the trek, most of them were carried.*” (p. 144)

Very oddly, for such a sensational accusation, JC does not provide any reference to support this particular sentence. Several questions arise. The first question is whether the trio of Mao had the power to obtain such a privilege. “*Lo Fu, the only member of the trio who was in the Secretariat*” (p. 145), said “*I felt I was put in a position completely without power*” (p. 144). It was even worse for Mao, who “*was isolated and miserable*” (p. 132). Before the Long March he was worried that he might be abandoned, and went everywhere he thought the Red Army might go, hoping to be picked up mercifully as he stood on the side of the road (p. 128). With such a position, Mao’s litter was less likely for his comfort, but due to the fact that “*days before the planned departure, his temperature shot up to 41°C and he grew delirious with malaria*” (p. 132).

Another question is Mao’s desire to be carried. As the trio of Mao was plotting a coup in the Red Army (pp. 144–6), they should have been keen to boost their popularity. “*Aversion to privilege was particularly strong in the army because many had originally been attracted to join by the lure of equality, which was the Party’s main appeal*” (p. 77). It is unlikely that the trio of Mao could grab the leadership while lying in litters. Why didn’t the opponents complain about this? This would be possible only if they were also carried. But then it would be unthinkable that the Red Army could stick together and endure the hardship, e.g. in the swampland as JC describes (pp. 167 - 169).

JC’s other evidence is the existence of a “*charge --- Mao and the other leaders had ‘sat in sedan chairs’ all through the March*” (p. 165). The only quoted part of this charge is ‘*sat in sedan chairs*’, without a subject. This reference comes from Mao’s arch rival Chang Kuo-tao, writing long after he defected from the Red Army to the Nationalists. Chang and Mao met in late June 1935 and departed in early August (p. 166). As indicated on the map of the book, they shared a common path only from Fubian to Maoergai, a minor fraction of the March. Chang’s charge of Mao sitting “*in sedan chairs’ all through the March*”, even if true, had to come from others’ testimony. Whose testimony? Neither Chang Kuo-tao nor JC gives any clue.

The closest “evidence” of Mao being carried regularly is: “*Mao himself told his staff decades later: ‘On the March, I was lying in a litter. So what did I do? I read. I read a lot.’*” (p. 144). Mao’s words do not necessarily imply he was carried regularly. Let’s see how reasonable JC’s interpretation is. Mao’s words appear in his personal secretary Ye Zilong’s memoirs, published by *The Press of the Central Archive* (2000). It is one of the most authoritative and tightly controlled government presses. JC accuses the Chinese government of covering Mao’s secrets. But a crucial part of her story comes from an official press. Even if Mao’s loyalist Ye betrayed him, and the government was ahead of JC in denouncing Mao, it is hard to believe that such an accusation, according to JC’s interpretation, generates no awareness in China and remains an “*unknown story*”.

## **6. Mao Did Not Fight Japanese**

To discredit Mao among the Chinese, JC claims that Mao had no interest in fighting Japan, but only in starting a civil war against Chiang Kai-shek. But, her evidence shows that Mao’s strategy was the only feasible way for the Reds to fight Japanese effectively.

In a chapter entitled: “*Fight Rivals and Chiang --- Not Japan*” (p.218), JC writes: “*Mao had no strategy to drive the Japanese out of China*” (p. 211). “*He bombarded his military commanders with telegrams such as ‘Focus on creating base areas . . . . Not on fighting battles’ . . . all the time, Mao was urging them to stop fighting the Japanese and concentrate on taking over territory*” (pp. 212-213).

What if the Reds had followed an opposite strategy, i.e., fighting the Japanese head on? In August 1937 a war between the Japanese and Chiang’s armies broke out. “*In Shanghai, 73 of China’s 180 divisions --- and the best one-third --- over 400,000 men, were thrown in, and all but wiped out. . . . The Japanese suffered much fewer, though still heavy, casualties: about 40,000*” (p. 209).

“*At this time, the Chinese Red Army had some 60,000 regular troops*” (p. 211). Let’s assume they were just as efficient as the best part of Chiang’s troops, although their equipment, supply and training were much inferior. Then, if they had fought the Japanese head on, they could hardly have inflicted on the Japanese more than 6,000 casualties

before they were “*all but wiped out*”. That is less than one sixth of what Chiang achieved in Shanghai, certainly insufficient to defeat Japan. If Japan had secured its rear, Chiang’s force would most likely have not resisted much longer.

Fortunately, the Reds followed Mao’s strategy. The result: “*By mid-November (1937), the first new Communist base in the Japanese rear was formed, near Peking, called Jinchaji, with a population of some 12 million*” (p. 213). “*By January 1940, the 8RA, under Zhu De and Peng, had grown to at least 240,000 (from 46,000 at the beginning of the war). And the N4A, operating under Liu Shao-chi near Shanghai and Nanking, had tripled, to 30,000. A score of sizeable bases sprang up in the Japanese rear. The base of Jinchaji alone, only some 80 km from Peking, expanded to control a population of 25 million*” (p. 225). This evidence suggests Mao indeed had a “*strategy to drive the Japanese out of China*”.

## 7. The Trap for the New 4<sup>th</sup> Army

According to JC, not only did Mao avoid fighting the Japanese, but he also set up his own troops, the New 4<sup>th</sup> Army with 9,000 men to be killed by Chiang Kai-shek in order to start a civil war. Instead of offering any evidence for this accusation, JC provides facts which suggest Mao had neither the incentive nor the ability to do so.

During the Sino-Japanese war, Chiang’s army destroyed the head quarters of the N4A. JC explains why Mao wanted this to happen. In July 1940, Chiang called “*the Red N4A to move out of the Yangtze region*” (p. 233). “*By December 1940, Xiang Ying’s group was the only part of the N4A south of the Yangtze. . . . That month Mao set Xiang Ying’s group up to be killed by the Nationalist army, in the hope that the massacre would persuade Stalin to let him off the leash against Chiang*” (p. 236). “*Mao was asking Moscow to endorse him starting a full-scale civil war, in the thick of the Sino-Japanese War*” (p. 234). According to JC, Mao achieved his plan by telling the N4A to take a path vetoed by Chiang earlier, but did not inform Chiang. “*A much larger Nationalist force*” did not know the N4A “*was only passing through, and thought this was an attack. Fighting broke out . . . . During the most critical period of bloody fighting, the four days from 6 to 9 January, Mao claimed he received no communication*” (p. 237). Thus,

the N4A's plea to call off the Nationalist encirclement did not reach Chiang before it was wiped out (p. 238).

Let's first look at how likely that Mao wanted "*a full-scale civil war*". His main force, the 8RA of 240,000, "*only some 80 km from Peking*" and the N4A of 30,000 "*near Shanghai and Nanking*" were both "*in the Japanese rear*" (p. 225). Where was Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek? He had "*moved his capital to Chongqing, further inland*" (p. 223). If the Reds were let off the leash against Chiang, they would have to savage the Japanese first before reaching Chiang. Their arms were no match for Chiang either. While at the beginning of the war, Chiang had received "**1,000 planes, plus tanks and artillery**" from the Russians alone (p. 209), "*the Communist 8<sup>th</sup> Route Army had had only 154 pieces of heavy artillery*" even near the end of the war (p. 295).

Secondly, let's see if Mao's communication break-down could have accomplished his plan. First, for anyone with military training, it is not difficult to distinguish whether a troop of 9,000 is moving to somewhere or attacking someone. JC's story implies the Nationalist generals unable to do so. Moreover, Mao's plan would have failed if the Nationalist generals had sent an inquiry to the N4A before destroying them, or during "*the four days*" of "*bloody fighting*". Even if the generals were so dumb headed, they must have informed the Generalissimo and asked his permission to slaughter this huge fellow Chinese army, unless their communications were also broken down. Since "*the Generalissimo had vetoed*" the N4A's route earlier (p. 236), he would have realized what was going on immediately. If "*Chiang was desperate to avoid a total civil war in the middle of the war against Japan*" (p. 240), he certainly could have sent a cable to the N4A, as he did three days earlier (p.237), ordering them to stop, return or switch to another route etc, instead of authorizing his generals to "*exterminate the Reds*" (p.237). Then Mao's plan would have definitely failed.

After the event, Chiang was criticized by the governments of the U.S. (JC blames President Roosevelt's informant, marine officer Evans Carlson,) and the UK (JC blames British ambassador Clark Kerr), as well as the Soviet Union (p. 241). JC argues that this is because Chiang "*presented his case poorly*" (p. 241). But most of the information JC presents now was available at that time, such as the N4A's unauthorized route and

Chiang did not receive their plea etc, though probably not Mao's dubious radio breakdown. But Mao's radio problem only concerns who should be blamed within the Reds, Mao or the N4A, not between the Reds and the Nationalists. Even if Chiang had used JC's argument in his defense then, he would still have "*presented his case poorly*".

## **8. Mao Sacrificed His Brother Tse-min**

Even Hitler did not kill his family members. But Mao did, according to JC. She claims that Mao let his brother Tse-min be killed by Chiang Kai-shek in order to start a civil war. The only evidence is Mao's failure to repeat his instruction to Chou Enlai asking Chiang for Tse-min's release within two days during his nine months of imprisonment. This accusation is funny, and typifies JC's contradictory style.

*"To stir up anti-Chiang fervor in the CCP, Mao cogitated another 'massacre' by the Nationalists. . . This time the sacrificial victims included his only surviving brother, Tse-min. . . . Tse-min had been working in Xinjiang. . . . In early 1943, Tse-min and more than 140 other Communists and their families . . . were imprisoned"* (p. 259). *"The CCP leadership collectively (in the name of the Secretariat)"* (p. 260) told *"the CCP liaison, Chou En-lai to ask for their release"* (p. 259). *"Two days later, on the 12<sup>th</sup> (February), Mao sent Chou a separate cable. . . . The release of the Xinjiang group was not on it. Chou, by now taking orders from Mao alone, did not raise the matter. . . Tse-min and two other senior CCP figures were executed on 27 September on charges of plotting a coup. But with so few deaths – only three – Mao was unable to cry 'Massacre'. He did not make any announcement condemning the executions, either, as this might raise questions about whether the Communists were indeed guilty as charged"* (p. 260).

It is too funny to be treated seriously. Let's consider an imagined conversation in a court:

*Prosecutor: Sir, I find Mao guilty of cogitating a massacre, sacrificing his brother T.*

*Judge: What was his motivation?*

*Prosecutor: He wanted to stir up anti-Chiang fervor.*

*Judge: How did he do it?*

*Prosecutor: He did it by not telling Chou to plea for T's release.*

*Judge: But he did it two days earlier. How did his failure to repeat kill T?*

*Prosecutor: Chou then knew Mao wanted T dead, did not raise the matter with Chiang.*

**Judge:** *I do not understand Chou's thinking. Did Mao condemn the killing of T?*

**Prosecutor:** *No, because this would reveal T was indeed guilty.*

**Judge:** *If so, how could Mao use T's death to stir up anti-Chiang fervor?*

**Prosecutor:** *He expected Chiang to kill many more.*

**Judge:** *But only 3 were killed. I do not see why Mao could have expected that.*

**Prosecutor:** *Because other 140 communists were also guilty of plotting a coup.*

**Judge:** *Do you mean that Chiang not only killed T legitimately, he was also entitled to kill many more?*

**Prosecutor:** *Yes, sir.*

**Judge:** *Then, why are you so sure that Mao could have saved T by his second order?*

If one believes in fair trials and hears this kind of conversation, he would most likely “*raise questions about whether*” Mao is “*indeed guilty as charged*”.

## **9. The Rectification Campaign**

During the Sino-Japanese war, many young and radical students flocked to Mao's base in Yen-an. To consolidate his political control and clean up this new blood from the Nationalist or Japanese territories, Mao launched the Rectification Campaign in 1942–1943. JC claims thousands of people died, as suspected Nationalist agents or spies. But she offers no references to support her claim of the number of death. The most famous victim, described by JC as Mao's personal target, did not die during the Campaign. It is unlikely many suffered more than he did.

During the Rectification Campaign, according to JC, “*the number who perished was in the thousands, at least*” (p. 257). No reference supporting this statement can be found in the book. To make a reasonable guess about the extent of loss of life, we may look at the most famous victim, Wang Shi-wei, personally targeted by Mao as “*the champion of the young volunteers*” (p. 250). After reading his article in *Liberation Daily*, Mao “*slammed the newspaper on the desk and demanded angrily: ‘Who is in charge here? Wang Shi-wei or Marxism?’*” (p. 251). It became more personal when Mao saw “*Shi-wei's enormous popularity. He said at once: ‘I now have a target.’ He later complained: ‘Many people rushed from far away to . . . read his article. But no one wants to read mine!’ ‘Wang Shi-wei was the king and lord master . . . he was in command in Yen-an . . . and we were defeated’. . . He denounced him as a Trotskyist. . .*

*Trotsky, Shi-wei had said, was ‘a genius’, while Stalin was ‘an unlovable person’ who had ‘created untold countless evils’”* (p. 252).

Hardly anyone could have faced a more serious threat to his life than Wang. But he survived four years after the campaign, and was only killed in 1947, when the Nationalist army led by General Hu Tsung-nan forced the Reds to evacuate Yen-an, not by Mao’s order. Given this typical example, one really needs evidence to believe *“the number who perished was in the thousands”*.

Moreover, the Rectification Campaign should be seen in its historical context. As JC tells us, Mao’s moles played decisive roles in all ensuing major military campaigns, from Hu Tsung-nan in Yen-an (pp. 312-318), Wei Li-huang in Manchuria (pp. 318-319), associates of Fu Tso-yi in Peking-Tianjin (pp. 319-320) to Liu Fei and Kuo Ju-kui in Huai-Hai (pp. 320-321). In strong contrast, *“indeed, during the civil war, while the Nationalists were penetrated like sieves, they had virtually zero success infiltrating the Communists”* (p. 258). The difference meant millions of lives or deaths. This probably could not have happened without the Rectification Campaign.

By the way, JC’s does not give any evidence for her allegation that General Hu Tsung-nan was a communist agent, except for his apparent military blunders and earlier links to some communists in 1920’s. This leads to a strong protest by Hu’s son, Hu Wei-zhen, an Taiwanese representative in Singapore. According to JC’s brother Pu Zhang, JC’s reply is to ask Hu Junior to *“provide the relevant evidence to show his father is not a red spy”* ([http://www2.chinesenewsnet.com/gb/MainNews/Opinion/2005\\_11\\_30\\_20\\_33\\_19\\_572.html](http://www2.chinesenewsnet.com/gb/MainNews/Opinion/2005_11_30_20_33_19_572.html)). What kind of evidence can prove someone NOT a spy? From such an episode, one may suspect that, if it was not Mao, but JC who was in charge in Yen-an that time, many young volunteers would be asked to *“provide the relevant evidence to show”* they are not spies, then, *“the number who perished”* would be indeed *“in the thousands, at least”*!

## 10. Opium Sale

JC accuses Mao of selling opium on a scale of \$60 million in 1943 alone. The Western media is pleased to see Mao condemned as a drug lord. However, if JC’s number and her

accounts of Mao's heavy taxation in Yenan were true, Mao's opium market would have had to cover a major part of China or even beyond. Unfortunately, there was no historical record about Yenan's opium sale on such a scale.

*“In 1943 the Russians estimated Mao's opium sales at 44,760 kg, worth an astronomical 2.4 billion fabi (roughly US\$60 million at then current exchange rates, or some US\$640 million today)”* (p. 287).

In that year, Yenan *“had accumulated savings . . . worth 250 million fabi. . . . This sum was six times the official Yenan region budget for 1942”* (p. 287). Hence, the opium sale in 1943 was almost 58 times (2.4billion×6/250million) the Yenan budget for 1942. Since the tax revenue should not be much higher than the budget, we have to conclude that the opium sale was 58 times the annual tax from Yenan region.

At that time, according to JC, the Reds levied very heavy taxes in Yenan. *“Sometimes . . . ‘almost equals the entire year's harvest’; . . . For many, ‘there was no food left after paying the tax’”* (p. 284). Hence, the region's tax must be close to its entire disposable income. So Mao's opium sale was equal to 58 times of Yenan people's entire disposable income. But Mao did not sell opium in Yenan region, because *“a drug-addicted peasantry was no use to him”* (p. 290). So the money had to come from outside of Yenan.

If the surrounding area of Yenan had the similar population density and income level, to get opium sales of 2.4 billion *fabi*, Mao had to suck in the entire disposable income from an area 58 times of Yenan, *“which was roughly the size of France”* (p. 284). 58 France is more than three Chinas! If Yenan's average income was just one third of that of China, we still need all Chinese to spend their entire disposable income on Mao's opium. Yenan had to be the Golden Triangle of China. This could not have remained as an *“unknown story”* at that time, not mention for 60 years till now.

## **11. Three Millions Deaths in 1950-1951**

At the beginning of the book, JC writes: *“Mao Tse-tung . . . was responsible for well over 70 million deaths in peacetime”* (p. 3). This is her main justification of comparing Mao with Hitler. We will examine each of the alleged death cases. Her first account of

these 70 million deaths is three million deaths in 1950-51. In fact, this figure is grossed up from 0.7 million by JC's arbitrary multiplication. These 0.7 million deaths, though a big loss of human lives, were related to the final stage of the civil war and the then on-going Korean War. It is questionable to classify them as deaths in peacetime.

During the "*campaign to suppress counter-revolutionaries*" in 1950–51, "*some 3 million perished either by execution, mob violence, or suicide*" (p. 337). The calculation is explained in the footnote: 700,000 were executed, "*those beaten or tortured to death . . . would at the very least be as many again. Then there were suicides, which, based on several local inquiries, were very probably about equal to the number of those killed*" (p. 337 fn). Hence we get  $700,000 \times 2 \times 2 = 2.8$  million, roughly 3 million, as claimed by JC. There is no explanation why "*those beaten or tortured to death . . . would at the very least be as many*" as those executed. Her claim that suicides "*were very probably about equal to the number of those killed*" is based on "*several local inquiries*", with no detailed information.

To generalize an execution/killing ratio or a suicide/killing ratio from "*several local inquiries*" to the whole nation is hardly professional. Even if we apply this kind of generalization based on large samples, the result can be very unreliable. For instance, let us take 700,000 executions out of the total population of 550 million as a national ratio, and apply it to the "*major target of Mao's – the Roman Catholic Church*" (p. 340). As "*China had about 3.3 million Catholics at the time*" (p. 340), we should expect at least a total number of execution of  $700,000 \times 3.3\text{m} / 550\text{m} = 4,200$ . But JC assures us only "*hundreds of Chinese Catholics were executed*" (p. 340).

It is also questionable to call all of 700,000 peacetime deaths. When the People's Republic of China was established in October 1949, almost half of its territory had yet to be liberated. Military campaigns continued into 1950 and even 1951 in certain parts of China. The Campaign to Suppress Counter-revolutionaries and "*the land reform in the newly occupied areas, where some two-thirds of China's population lived*" (p. 337) were closely related to the last stage of the bloody civil war. Many, if not most, of the 700,000 people were executed for their military actions during the war, and cannot accurately be described as victims in peacetime. In a large part of China, bandits existed

since the time people could remember. Mao's army cleaned them up almost instantly. Killing, unfortunately, was necessary to provide Chinese the "peacetime" then.

Moreover, "*China was hurled into the inferno of the Korean War on 19 October 1950*" (p. 380). The war lasted three years till "*an armistice was finally signed on 27 July 1953*" (p. 394). During this period, especially at the early stage, Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan called on his loyalists in the mainland to rebel against the Communists in every way possible to welcome the forthcoming liberation by the U.S. army and his own. Many answered, carrying out acts of subversive organization, propaganda, espionage, explosion, poison, arson, murder and even armed uprising etc. These acts also account for a significant part of these 700,000 executions.

## **12. 27 Millions Deaths in Jails/Labor Camps**

JC's second large group of Mao's peacetime victims is those who died in Chinese government custody. The number is actually thrown out with a magic formula, in which the number of inmates and their annual death rate are not estimated professionally. Mao's responsibility is not discussed, just assumed.

During Mao's 27 years rule, "*the number who died in prisons and labour camps could well amount to 27 million*" (p. 338). The proof: "*China's prison and labour camp population was roughly 10 million in any one year under Mao. Descriptions of camp life by inmates, which point to high mortality rates, indicate a probable annual death rate of at least 10 per cent*" (p. 338fn). So  $10m \times 10\% \times 27 = 27$  million.

JC accuses Mao of killing a number of people  $x = a \times b \times c$ , where  $a =$  "*China's prison and labour camp population*",  $b =$  "*annual death rate*", and  $c =$  the years of his rule. She does not explain why  $a = 10$  million. Her justification of  $b = 10\%$  is based on "*descriptions of camp life by inmates*". If we apply this magic formula to Deng Xiaoping, taking his reign as 1978–89, we get his responsibility for 12 million deaths. His successor Jiang Ze-min (1990-2003) gets 14 millions. JC does not show why Mao was responsible. It seems she simply blames Mao for every Chinese death whatsoever.

### 13. The Superpower Program

Throughout a large part of the book, JC repeated alleged that Mao started a secret “Superpower Programme” in 1953 and continued up to his death to pursue his dream of world dominance. This definitely sounds very alarming to the Western world, echoing the theory of “China threat”. But she does not provide any evidence such a program ever existed. The word *program* should mean an explicit plan, not someone’s hidden ambition. The word superpower did not even exist in the Chinese language in 1953.

In Ch. 36, titled “*Launching the Secret Superpower Programme*”, we read: “*in May 1953, Stalin’s successors in the Kremlin agreed to sell China ninety-one large industrial enterprises. . . . It was in effect Mao’s Superpower Programme. Its utterly military nature was concealed, and is little known in China today*” (p. 396). Right after that, Mao forced through “*collectivization of agriculture*” and “*ordered the nationalization of industry and commerce in urban areas, to channel every single resource into the Superpower Programme*” (p. 412). During the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, Mao realized that the only thing he could offer Egypt were “*small arms such as rifles*”, and hence became “*more impatient to speed up his Superpower Programme*” (p. 425). Later he silenced dissent through the Anti-Rightist Campaign and launched the Great Leap Forward “*to accelerate his Superpower Programme*” (p. 444). In spite of the setback during the famine, “*becoming a superpower had remained Mao’s dearest dream. This was partly why he had carried out the Purge – to install new enforcers who were more in tune with his demands. After this process was complete, he started to accelerate the Programme*” (p. 573). Even to the Western world, “*Mao began seeking relations with America, in order to gain access to Western technology for his Superpower Programme*” (p. 601).

Mao’s superpower ambition, even if it truly existed, is not the same as a program. According to Webster’s New World Dictionary, the word Program means: (i) “*a proclamation*”, which means “*something that is proclaimed, or announced officially*”; (ii) “*a prospectus*”, which means “*a statement outlining the main features of a new work or business enterprise*”, (iii) “*a plan or procedure for dealing with some matter*”. In one word, a program is something proclaimed, announced or stated explicitly regarding

concrete features, objectives or procedures of certain undertakings. It is not something completely hidden in one person's head but never expressed either in papers or in words.

Within the whole book, we cannot find any record, written or spoken by Mao or his colleagues, referring to a Superpower Programme. Its name is dubious, because Mao maintained China belonged to the third world (p. 650) and would never seek to be a superpower (declared by Deng Xiaoping at UN in 1974). Even if he had a plan to become a superpower, he could hardly use that name. In fact, the word "superpower" did not exist in the Chinese language until the 1970s. How could Mao have "*first outlined his Superpower Programme*" in 1953 (p. 432)? If Mao used another name or just a code, what was it? "It"? "That"? "The Thing"? Without a name or even a code, how could Mao and his colleagues discuss and implement it?

Without evidence of its existence, JC gives two examples as components of Mao's Superpower Program. One is the "*ninety-one large industrial enterprises*" sold by the Soviet Union to China in 1953. She does not explain what kind of the "*utterly military nature was concealed*" in these hydro-power plants, dams, tractor factories, mines, steel mills, truck factories, oil refineries, machine-tool factories etc.

Her other example is of course the atom bomb. Several nations have possessed such weapons before China and after. JC offers no explanation as to why China's possession of them must be a part of a Superpower Program. She does remind us though that, "*In March 1955 the US said it would use nuclear weapons under certain circumstances. Eisenhower very deliberately told a press conference on the 16<sup>th</sup> that he could see no reason why they should not be used 'just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else'. . . China seemed to be in real danger of a US nuclear strike*" (p. 414). She does not mention that before Eisenhower, during the Korean War, General McArthur requested to drop 20+ atom bombs on Beijing and other Chinese cities, and his plan was only vetoed by President Truman after a long and hotly contested discussion. Nor does JC mention that, after Eisenhower and before China had its atom bomb, "*JFK was ready to use nuclear bomb on China*" too (*The Independent* 27 Aug. 2005). But she knows that "*China seemed to be in real danger of a US nuclear strike*" by "*bombing and strafing more Nationalists-held islands*", which are within China's own territory (p. 414). JC

probably knows whether other nuclear nations faced the same nuclear threat. At the moment of its first bomb exploded, China pledged never to use nuclear weapons first. JC probably knows if other nuclear nations did the same. Does JC think they all have Superpower Programmes?

#### **14. 38 Million Deaths in 1958 – 1961**

The famine is no doubt the biggest disaster to the Chinese people under the CCP and Mao in particular. JC is entitled to choose the highest estimated death toll to condemn Mao. But her claim that Mao intentionally made this famine cannot be substantiated by her evidence which suggests the opposite.

JC writes: *“Close to 38 million people died of starvation and overwork in the Great Leap Forward and the famine. . . . Mao knowingly starved and worked these tens of millions of people to death”* (pp. 456–457).

The number of deaths claimed in the book is not JC’s finding, but to insert the word *“knowingly”* is definitely her innovation. She gives no evidence that Mao knew that millions of people were dying and did not take actions to stop it. Her strongest argument is: *“During the two critical years 1958–9, grain exports alone, almost exactly 7m tons, would have provided the equivalent of over 840 calories per day for 38 million people – the difference between life and death”* (p. 457).

The Chinese government had to make its export plans for 1958 and 1959 about one year earlier, mainly based on the grain production in 1957 and 1958 respectively. The bad news had not emerged then. Mao could not know that millions of people would die. The large scale of grain export in 1959 reflected Mao’s false estimate of the grain production one year earlier, which led him to *“announce that the harvest figure for 1958 was more than double 1957’s”* (p. 461), which he apparently believed. This unreliable estimate in turn was based on a nationwide misreporting. For example, as cited by JC, *“in September (1958), People’s Daily reported that ‘the biggest rice sputnik’ yet had produced over 70 tons from less than 1/5<sup>th</sup> of an acre, which was hundreds of times the norm”* (p. 446). Mao should be condemned for his bad judgment and responsibility for creating the

political atmosphere conducive to such misinformation. He could also be blamed for not abolishing grain export contracts earlier, possibly in part due to his national pride. But these are different from “*knowingly starved . . . tens of millions of people to death*”.

To judge whether JC’s word “*knowingly*” is valid, we should not underestimate the difficulty of getting accurate information at that time. A convincing example is related to JC herself. According to her autobiography, *Wild Swans*, her father was the minister of Sichuan’s Department of Propaganda (she coined a special name for her father’s unit, “*Department of Public Affair*”). His main job was to visit peasants and provide needed help. According to JC, 7 million people die in Sichuan during the famine. No one should know this better than her father. If he reported what he saw, it is extremely unlikely that he could hide it from his wife (another “*Public Affair*” official – propagandist) for more than a decade. It is even more unlikely that his wife could hide it from JC for the next three decades. However, in neither *Wild Swans* nor this book can one find any information that JC’s father knew about the famine in Sichuan. Even the figure of 7 million deaths, was told to JC more than a decade after her departure from China. If the top “*Public Affair*” official in the province did not know it, how could Mao in Beijing “*knowingly starved . . . tens of millions of people to death*”?

In fact, it should not be so difficult for JC to prove her word “*knowingly*”. She could simply present evidence that the Sichuan government had reported to Beijing that people were starving to death and asked for urgent food relief, but got no immediate response. If JC claims the absence of such evidence was because of Mao’s terror, she should offer at least one example that Mao had punished anyone for asking food relief. Her story of Peng Dehuai (p. 468–70) does not fit here, because he did many other things, e.g., he “*contemplated something akin to a military coup*” (p. 464) and during the party congress in Lushan he publicly asked why he could not fuck Mao (p. 273 for a partial quote).

Why does JC fail to give such evidence? The fact is, the Sichuan party leadership concealed millions of death in Sichuan very well. When the news of mass starvation reached Beijing, most famine stricken provinces saw their party bosses sacked for not reporting people’s suffering in time (Wu Zhifu of Henan, Zeng Xisheng of Anhui, Shu Tong of Shandong, Zhang Zhongliang of Gansu etc). The only exception is the Sichuan

boss Li Jingquan who was promoted instead. Li put all the blames on his inferiors, at county or commune levels, accusing them of “*knowingly starved . . . people to death*”. Most people in Sichuan believe that Li just used them for scapegoats. The issue may be debatable. But it seems fair to say that if we use word “*knowingly*” on Li, the same has to apply to those local officials, unless their plea for help was ignored by the provincial authority. For the same reason, if JC accuses Mao of “*knowingly starved . . . people to death*”, the same charge must apply to Li and his colleagues, unless their plea for help was ignored by Beijing.

For Li to conceal starvation and his own responsibility there was a crucial and necessary condition: the full cooperation of the Sichuan media, which was under the absolute control of the *Department of “Public Affair” – Department of Propaganda*, led by JC’s father. Let’s stop here.

Moreover, for readers’ information, the death toll of 38 million is the highest among many widely varying estimates. It is, astonishingly, as high as the estimated total Chinese deaths during the Sino-Japanese war in 1937–45. To convince readers its validity, JC provides the death rates and population numbers, backed up by *China Statistics Year Book 1983* in her references. However, neither of these data cited by her agrees with those published in the yearbook. Without telling readers those disagreements, JC argues, “*The official statistics published in 1983 are recognized as partly defective, because local policemen understated the number of deaths in the years 1959-61*” (p. 457 fn). If Chinese statisticians are professional, they should have corrected such obvious defects in the yearbook, unless JC proves the otherwise. JC does not explain how her “corrected” data come out, though the correction is not minor. For instance, her 1960 death rate is 4.34%, while the official one is 2.54%. This alone generates extra deaths of 12 million, almost one third of her total death toll.

Furthermore, whatever the true figures should be, the abnormal deaths, as explained by JC (pp. 456–7 fn), include all deaths related but not directly caused by starvation or overwork, such as deaths caused by illness partially due to malnutrition, and those caused by various injuries and senile problems due to poor medical and social care. These deaths may account for a larger part of the “abnormal deaths” shown in statistic data, but were

not considered “starved to death”, and did not draw immediate attention from the society and government. This is probably why there is no widespread evidence of large scale starvation in China, nearly compatible to JC’s claim. If we apply JC’s method to the Russian population data after the shock therapy, the abnormal death rate would be higher than those during China’s famine. Yeltsin could be blamed for genocide, as some Russians (unfairly) alleged.

Finally, let us see how JC shows that Mao even intended to let tens of million people die. She wrote: *“We can now say with assurance how many people Mao was ready to dispense with. . . . On 21 November 1958, talking to his inner circle about the labour-intensive projects like waterworks and making ‘steel’, and tacitly, almost casually, assuming a context where peasants had too little to eat and were being worked to exhaustion, Mao said: ‘Working like this, with all these projects, half of China may well have to die. If not half, one-third, or one-tenth --- 50 million --- die.’ Aware that these remarks might sound too shocking, he tried to shirk his own responsibility. ‘Fifty million deaths’, he went on, ‘I could be fired, and I might even lose my head . . . but if you insist, I’ll let you do it, and you can’t blame me when people die’.”* (p. 457 – 458)

In her interview with BBC, Jung Chang uses this quotation to show that Mao knew that half of the population would die under his policy and he “*deliberately*” starved tens of millions of people to death. It is worthwhile to check where this sinister quotation comes.

These words are taken from Mao’s speech in the politburo meeting in Wuchang, 21 November 1958. The honest translation including the context should be as follows:

*“Do not pursuit the vanity, and get a disaster. We should reduce the amount of our task. On the waterworks, the whole nation accomplished 50 billion cubic meters of earth in the last winter and this spring, but for this winter and the next spring, the plan is 190 billion, three times more. There are various other tasks, steel, iron, copper, aluminum, coal, transport, machinery, chemicals, how much labor and financial resource needed? Working like this, I am afraid that, half of China may well have to die. If not half, one-third, or one-tenth --- 50 million deaths. 50 million deaths, if you are not fired, at least I will be. Should we do so much? It is ok if you really want, but the principle is no death. If you insist, I cannot stop you, but I should not be killed when people die. Next year’s plan*

*is to produce 30 million tons of steel, should we plan so much? Can we do it? How many people must work for it? Will people die? We should lower our tone in this meeting, cool the air down. The string of the Huchin (a Chinese instrument) should not be pulled too tightly. There is a risk of breaking down.”*

After seeing the true text, indeed, ***“we can now say with assurance how many people Mao was ready to dispense with.”***

### **15. Three Million Deaths in 1966-76**

The last occurrence of deaths on a large scale under Mao took place during the Cultural Revolution. JC adds three million to Mao’s record. Her number is not based on professional research. Her evidence points to Mao’s general responsibility for launching the Cultural Revolution, but not direct involvement or encouragement of violence and brutality, which caused most deaths in some, mostly remote, provinces.

***“In the ten years from when Mao started the Purge until his death in 1976, at least 3 million people died violent deaths. . . . The killings were sponsored by the state”*** (p. 569).

The number of 3 million is much higher than the official estimate. JC’s main reference for this number was from an article published in *China Spring*, a fervent anti-Chinese government magazine in the U.S., not well known for its neutrality and objectiveness.

There were 29 provinces/regions in China at that time. The worst case on JC’s list is Guangxi, where ***“killing claimed some 100,000 lives”*** (p. 566). To get a total 3 million nationwide we must have the same figure for all provinces following Guangxi. In JC’s second and third positions, however, we find Yunnan where some ***“seventeen thousand of them were executed or beaten to death, or driven to suicide”***, and Inner Mongolia where ***“16,222 died”*** (p. 567). If we count every province except Guangxi with 20,000 deaths, the total number would be 0.66 million. The rest of the 2.34 million claimed by JC, have to remain her ***“unknown story”***.

Now let us consider Mao’s responsibility. JC’s No. 1 case of Guangxi indeed offers ***“the clearest illustration”***, where ***“one faction refused to recognize the authority of Mao’s***

*point man, General (Wei) Guo-qing*” (p. 565). So the killing was mainly due to faction fighting. JC provides the following evidence for Mao’s attitude towards such violence. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, “*Mao had Chou En-lai announce to a Red Guard rally on Tiananmen on 31 August (1966): ‘Denounce by words, and not by violence’*” (p. 540). “*In 1968, factional clashes with firearms had shown little sign of abating, despite a flood of commands from Peking. One man who was being conspicuously unruly was Kuai Da-fu, the Qinghua University student whom Mao had used to torment Liu Shao-chi and his wife. Kuai had by now become the most famous ‘leftist’ in the country, and he was determined to bring his opponents in the university to their knees. He ignored repeated orders to stop. . . Mao had to step in personally to get him to toe the line, and simultaneously made an example of him to send a warning to the whole country that faction wars had to stop*” (pp. 564-5). Since Mao personally stopped his most favorite ‘leftist’ using violence in faction fighting, he would unlikely have supported other provincial leftists doing so. The real story was probably what JC tells us: “*Mao had unleashed a dynamic that was undermining his own power. He had to abandon his attempt to identify factions as Left and Conservative, and called for all groups to unite. But his orders were ignored*” (p. 564).

According to JC’s evidence, Mao was guilty of miscalculation, without evil intention.

## **16. Mao’s Aim of the Cultural Revolution**

This issue is important as Mao considered the Cultural Revolution one of the two major achievements in his life. JC claims that Mao “*had intended the Great Purge to install much more merciless enforcers*” for his Superpower Program (p. 558), his real target “*was the old enforcers who had shown distaste for Mao’s extremist policies. Mao aimed to get rid of them en masse*” (p. 543). However, her evidence not only contrasts to her claim, but also supports Mao’s proclaimed aim of the Cultural Revolution, i.e., “*a move to rid China of Soviet-style ‘revisionists’*” (p. 570).

In particular, we will show how her evidence demonstrates: (i) Mao did not need to replace merciful officials to enforce his plan for JC called Superpower Programme. (ii) Mao neither targeted merciful officials nor promoted merciless ones during the Cultural

Revolution. (iii) Mao's approach of mobilizing the masses to topple officials seriously damaged the very basis of any enforcement, and was totally unnecessary if his goal was "*to install much more merciless enforcers*". (iv) JC believes that there was a pro-Russian faction within the Chinese government before the Cultural Revolution. We will explain each of these points in details below.

(i) JC's evidence shows Mao did not need the Cultural Revolution to "*install much more merciless enforcers*", because there existed no serious resistance to his so called Superpower Programme at the top level. In 1964 Mao started his biggest project after the Great Leap Forward, the Third Front. "*It cost an astronomical 200 billion-plus yuan, and at its peak it sucked in at least two-third of the entire nation's investment. The waste it created was more than the total material losses caused by the Great Leap Forward*" (p. 503). In spite of that, "*Liu Shao-chi and Mao's other colleagues put up no resistance to this lunacy. . . . For Mao to forgo deaths and political victimization seems to have been the best his colleagues thought they could expect – and enough to make them feel they might as well go along with him*" (p. 504).

(ii) If Mao's aim was to replace merciful enforcers with merciless ones, he would have targeted the former and promoted the latter during the Cultural Revolution. But JC's evidence shows the opposite. She first gives an example: one of the outspoken opponents of the Cultural Revolution was "*Mao's old follower Tan Zhen-lin, who had been in charge of agriculture during the famine (showing how far he was prepared to go along with Mao)*" (p. 546). Later, JC puts it more flatly: "*Mao did not differentiate between disaffected officials and those who were actually totally loyal to him and had not wavered even during the famine. In fact, there was no way he could tell who was which. So he resolved to overthrow them all first, and then have them investigated by his new enforcers*" (p. 543). This is not the way to find merciless enforcers. If Mao could not "*tell who was which*" among his old followers after years of scrutiny, how could he trust those totally unknown rebels out of his party system? In fact, merciless enforcers were more likely to be thrown out first by rebels, who might have suffered under them for years. For instance, the Sichuan boss Li Jingquan and his associates (including "*Public Affair*" officials), who cooperated quite well to cover the famine, could not escape this time.

(iii) Mao's approach of mobilizing masses to push the party apparatus into chaos contradicts JC's theory. If Mao's goal was merciless enforcement, the last thing he wanted should have been to destroy the very basis of any enforcement, the authority of his government, without which no enforcers can enforce anything regardless of how merciless they are. Mao's approach can only be consistent with JC's theory if it was necessary "*to install much more merciless enforcers*". Unfortunately, JC's evidence convincingly rules this possibility out.

JC shows Mao could get rid of his enemies without mobilizing masses. For instance, let's consider "*the first list of victims of the Great Purge, four big names described as an 'anti-Party clique': Mayor Peng, Chief of Staff Luo, Yang Shang-kun, the liaison with Russia and the tape-recording suspect, and old media chief Lu Ding-yi. Mao did not bother to come to the occasion*". The meeting "*was actually chaired by Liu Shao-chi, who knew he was chairing an event that was ultimately going to bring him to ruin*". "*Liu then asked all in favor to raise their hands. All did, including Mayor Peng and Liu*" (p. 531).

The Red Guards were involved in toppling the President Liu Shao-chi, but JC shows their contribution was merely nominal. After citing the words of Kuai Da-fu, who was the Rebel leader in condemning Liu, JC writes: "*This is a good self-confession of how the Rebels really worked; they were tools, and cowards, and they knew it*" (p. 550). To formally purge Liu, "*Mao had Chou En-lai telephone Liu and tell him to stop meeting foreigners, or appearing in public, unless told to do so. That day, Mao wrote a tirade against Liu which he himself read out to the Central Committee two days later, in Liu's presence, breaking the news of Liu's downfall*" (p. 548).

"*Out of his remaining top echelon, there came only one burst of defiance. In February 1967, some of the Politburo members who had not fallen spoke up, voicing rage at what was happening to their fellow Party cadres*" (p. 546). "*But these elite survivors were either devoted veteran followers of Mao's, or men already broken by him. Faced with his wrath, they folded. . . . The mini-revolt was easily quelled*" (p. 547). Masses were not needed against the challenge which involved some of the country's top military leaders. Clearly JC cannot explain the essential feature of the Cultural Revolution.

(iv) Now let's look at how JC's evidence supports a totally different goal of the Cultural Revolution, proclaimed by Mao himself, who "*had presented the Cultural Revolution as a move to rid China of Soviet-style 'revisionists'*" (p. 570).

*"On 14 October 1964, Khrushchev was ousted in a palace coup. . . Within days, Chou was telling Soviet ambassador Chervonenko that it was Mao's 'utmost wish' to have a better relationship. Chou requested an invitation to the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow on 7 November" (p. 510). "At the reception in the Kremlin on 7 November, . . . Soviet defense minister Rodion Malinovsky approached Chou. . . Out of the blue, Malinovsky said to Chou: 'We don't want any Mao, or any Khrushchev, to stand in the way of our relationship'. . . Malinovsky then turned to Marshal Ho Lung, China's acting army chief: 'We've got rid of our fool Khrushchev, now you get rid of yours, Mao'" (p. 511).*

Moreover, JC reveals secret moves within the Chinese leadership. In "*February (1966), with the backing of Liu Shao-chi, Mayor Peng issued a 'national guideline' forbidding the use of political accusations to trample on culture and the custodians of culture. Moreover, he went further, and actually suppressed Mao's instructions aimed at starting a persecution campaign. . . . As soon as he issued the guideline, Mayor Peng flew to Sichuan, ostensibly to inspect arms industries relocated in this mountainous province. There he did something truly astonishing. He had a secret tete-a-tete with Marshal Peng. . . judging from the timing, and the colossal risk Mayor Peng took in visiting a major foe of Mao's, without permission, in secret, it is highly likely that they discussed the feasibility of using the army to stop Mao. . . Marshal Ho Lung, the man to whom Soviet defense minister Malinovsky had said 'Get rid of Mao', soon also went to Sichuan, also in the name of inspecting the arms industries. . . . And there was more that was gnawing at Mao's mind. It seems that Mayor Peng was contemplating getting in touch with the Russians, and may have thought of seeking Russian help to avert Mao's Purge" (p. 528).*

After seeing JC's evidence, one has hardly any choice but to view Mao's "*Cultural Revolution as a move to rid China of Soviet-style 'revisionists'*".

(v) The mass mobilization not only contradicts JC's theory, it also fits Mao's declaration of "*denouncing those power-holders inside the Party pursuing a capitalist road*". Mao believed that the capitalism would benefit officials at expense of ordinary people. His proclaimed goal is also consistent with China's reality today. Few people doubt China is capitalist, at least economically. The transformation was coincidentally guided by the then No. 2 capitalist-roader Deng Xiao-ping (p. 553). Since Mao foresaw capitalist forthcoming, and even anticipated its top campaigner, it seems logical that he would launch the Cultural Revolution to prevent that from happening.

## 17. Mao Compared with Hitler

Finally, we discuss JC's central theme in the book: Mao is at least as bad as Hitler. Based on JC's book, we will show the following conclusions: (i) Mao did not invade many nations and kill their people en masse as Hitler did. (ii) There was no evidence that Mao intentionally killed millions of civilians under his rule as Hitler did. (iii) Mao had more serious political opponents than Hitler did, but he did not kill any one of them, while Hitler killed all of his. Hence, a person with a reasonable mind may not agree with JC's comparison of Mao with Hitler. We now give a more detailed comparison between Mao and Hitler in these three aspects.

(i) Their offence against other countries: Hitler invaded the major part of Europe in the WWII in which tens of millions of people perished.

Let's look at Mao's record. Mao sent Chinese troops to Korea in the 1950s and Vietnam in the 1960s, invited by the North Korean and North Vietnamese governments to fight a superpower from thousands miles away. In 1962, China had a brief war with India, because "*China had refused to recognize the boundary that had been delineated by the British in colonial times*" (p. 486). "*As border clashes worsened*" (p. 486), Mao sent troops into India. Then after a quick victory, he ordered all the troops to return home in days. JC's words also imply that China was adjacent to the British India (the boundary "*had been delineated by the British in*" 1903) well before Mao sent troops to Tibet in 1950. Hence Mao's troops did not invade Tibet (it was the Ching Dynasty's army who did so two hundred years earlier and made Tibet a part of China). In 1969, China clashed

with the Soviet Union. On “*a small uninhabited island . . . Chinese laid an ambush that left 32 Russians dead*”, while “*Russia’s claim to the island was far from established*” (p. 570). During his reign Mao never annexed any piece of land into Chinese territory.

(ii) Brutality against their subjects: Hitler intentionally killed millions of Jews, communists and leftists, homosexuals, Jehovah witnesses, Gypsies, and others.

The last mass killing under Mao took place in 1950–51 and led to 700,000 executions. However, this was at the end of the civil war and during the Korean War. Many, if not most, victims were executed for their military roles as we explained in section 11. During his reign, many must have died in prisons, but no evidence suggests this was nearly bad as Gulag in the Soviet Union, as discussed in section 12. Millions of people died during the famine because of Mao’s mismanagement, but there was no proof of his intention or indifference to let people die, as seen in section 14. Several political campaigns, such as the Cultural Revolution, caused many deaths due to persecution or maltreatment, but no direct order came from Mao, as we argued in section 15.

(iii) Treating political challengers: This is probably the most relevant comparison because both dictators’ personal responsibilities are irrefutable. There are few examples of how Hitler treated his political rivals because he hardly had any. But we do know that he ordered his fellow Nazi leader Roehn to be killed for alleged homosexual behavior and forced the best German general Rommel to commit suicide for his role in a suspected coup. Of course he also executed von Stauffenberg and his co-conspirators for the assassination attempt.

Now let’s look at Mao’s record. According to the book, Mao’s first challenger was Chang Kuo-tao, who defected to the Nationalist side in 1938 (pp. 220-221). The second rival Wang Ming stayed in the CCP and even praised Mao after being defeated (p. 357), and later died in Russia in 1974. The third victim was Gao Gang, who committed suicide in 1954 (p. 405). The fourth un-cowed man, Peng De-huai “*was put under house arrest*” (p. 470) after his fight with Mao in 1959, and died of a rectum cancer in 1974 (p. 557). The fifth was Liu Shao-chi, who died in 1969 in much neglected conditions due to persecution (p. 556). The sixth, Lin Biao died in an airplane crash in Mongolia in 1971 (p. 582). The last one was Deng Xiao-ping to whom “*Mao had had to give in and let him live in the*

*comfort of his own home, among his family*” (pp. 649-650) till his own death in 1976. None of his political challengers was executed. Nor were any of the co-conspirators associated with each case in this long list executed either. In the case of the most deadly and militant coup plot of Lin Biao, *“incredibly, given that an attempted assassination – of Mao, no less – was involved, not a single person was executed”* (p. 586).

Among those cases, let’s look at *“Mao’s persecution of the man he hated most”* (p. 548), Liu Shao-chi. The *“report, which was delivered to the Central Committee by Mao’s faithful slave, Chou En-lai, called Liu a ‘traitor, enemy agent and scab’, and recommended the death sentence. But Mao rejected it, as he did for Mme Liu. He preferred a slow, lingering death”* (pp. 555-556). However, it was *“in April 1969, when the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress convened”*, and Liu’s *“death came . . . on 12 November 1969”* (p. 556). It was not very slow. On the other hand, Mme Liu, Wang Guang-mei’s *“slow, lingering death”* not only lasted 10 years under Mao, but has still not been completed today, nearly 40 years later. A little bit too slow. If Mao really wanted her dead, whatever form that took, her health after 10 years of prison would not have allowed her such longevity.

Now let’s see how Mao obtained his evidence against Liu. *“Mao had told it (Liu’s case team) he wanted a spy charge. . . . A large number of other people were imprisoned and interrogated, to try to turn up evidence against him. . . . Shi Zhe, who had interpreted for Liu with Stalin . . . was pressed to say that Liu was a Russian spy. . . American Sidney Rittenberg, . . . had known Mme Liu in the 1940s. Pressure was put on him to say that he had recruited her, and Liu, for American intelligence.”* (p. 555). JC does not mention any torture being used. *“The team . . . found itself in a Catch-22 situation, as concocting evidence could be as dangerous as failing to unearth it. On one occasion, the team claimed that Liu had wanted American troops to invade China in 1946, and that Liu had wanted to see President Truman about this. ‘Making such a claim’, Mao said, ‘is . . . to treat us like fools. America sending in troops en masse: even the Nationalists did not want that’”* (p. 555). The result: Liu was not charged as a spy.

JC does not show in any case Mao allowed his team use torture to obtain evidence or imposed his charge without evidence, though his evidence was often proven to be wrong.

The points made in this section are sufficient to refute JC's comparison of Mao with Hitler. In fact, it is easy to find counter-arguments to most, if not all, of JC's claims in the entire book. It just takes careful reading and reasoning. We leave them as interested readers' exercises, for fun.

In revealing the numerous contradictions and inconsistencies in JC's book, we do not need any specific knowledge or information regarding China. Now the question is: why cannot those Western journalists and those China experts see? It is hard to believe that none of them is capable of logic thinking, or has read the book carefully. The most plausible explanation is their profound pride and prejudice towards China.

The first version, Aug. 7, 2005, the newest revision, Dec. 4, 2005.

## Appendix A:

### Jung Chang, the well-known story

According to her bibliography *Wild Swan*, JC was sent to a rural area in the western Sichuan after her graduation from high school in 1969, an unfortunate fate shared by millions of Chinese youths that time. What made JC special is that she only stayed there 26 days. She was then transferred to the suburb of Chengdu by forging several documents, an act most Chinese youths would not even contemplate, especially those whose families were allegedly under “persecution”.

While officially living in Chengdu suburb, JC stayed there only about one third of the time, during which she seldom joined other fellow city youths and peasants in farm work.

In 1971, JC’s mother used her connection to bring her into a state owned firm in Chengdu, the best option a Sichuan youth could hope for that time.

When the door of entering a university was opened in 1973, JC’s mother arranged a slot for her in the Sichuan University’s Department of Foreign Language, an ideal place particularly for those no good at science. Such behavior of “going through back doors” marked the beginning of the Communist corruption in China.

As she graduated, JC’s mother helped her to get a job at the university by blocking her normal destiny --- returning to the company which sent her to study.

Finally, the opportunity of studying abroad came the first time in 1978, and JC’s mother used her influence to make the chance available to JC, who would not have been qualified otherwise.

## Appendix B:

### Miscarriage of the Chinese version of “Mao, the unknown story”

Quoted from Wanwei web site 2006-04-23

(<http://news.creaders.net/china/newsViewer.php?language=gb2312&id=652625>)

- The Yuanliu Publisher in Taiwan has decided to cease its original plan of publishing the Chinese version of Jung Chang’s book, “Mao, the unknown story”.
- The president of Yuanliu, Mr. Wang Rongwen says that the editor and authors cannot reach an agreement to modify the book to make its descriptions more neutral. He expects that the evidence in the book to be reliable, while that provided in Jung Chang’s book is insufficient to convince him.
- The publication was originally planned to be around the end of 2005, later postponed to April and to May 2006.
- Historian Li Yongzhong from Taiwan and bibliographer Hu Zhiwei from Hong Kong claim that the failure of the book’s publication “represents a victory of the true history over the false one”.
- A fellow of Social Science Academy of China in Taiwan, Xu Zhuoyun says that the book is not an academic one, but was unfortunately regarded as such. He even considers the book basically garbage, and believes it is not necessary to publish garbage in order to protect the freedom of press.
- The director of the History Institute of SSAC, Chen Yongfa says the relation between Jung Chang’s conclusions and her evidence is weak, hence the book cannot be treated as an academic work. He thinks of Jung Chang’s book “Mao” as “a popular book with academic background”.