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Introduction by Yafeng Xia

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**Introduction by Yafeng Xia, Long Island University, Brooklyn**

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Deng Xiaoping was born in 1904, in the waning years of the Qing dynasty and six decades after Western powers forced the opening of China. He died in 1997, after China had been ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for five decades, including the last two decades under state capitalist-inspired economic reforms that he promoted. As CCP General Secretary from 1956 to 1966 and China's paramount leader from the late 1970s through the early 1990s, Deng was one of the world's pre-eminent leaders of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Much has been written about Deng as a politician, economist, social reformer, soldier, and statesman,<sup>1</sup> including numerous biographies in English.<sup>2</sup> The one under review is the latest. The author claims that his is “*the only complete and objective biography of the most important political leader in the late twentieth-century history of China.*” [italics in original] (8) What do our three distinguished reviewers have to say about the book?

Though our three reviewers largely positively assess the Pantsov biography, which was condensed and translated into English by Steven Levine, they note sharp differences between this volume on Deng and that of Ezra Vogel, which deals almost entirely with Deng's career after the Cultural Revolution – the Deng era. That is a better book for getting a fuller understanding of Deng's role in that period. The Pantsov volume is “a complete biography,” which Joseph Esherick calls “the best available biography of Deng Xiaoping.” Thomas Bernstein is not so positive, arguing that “this is a valuable biography but one that is marred by lapses in judgment.” He argues that “a book claiming to be objective should not include *ex cathedra* judgments about Deng's motives, often pejorative, especially if the author does not offer other possible motivations that might have been at play.” Bernstein also faults Pantsov for explaining “the politics of the reform period by positing a Deng quest for ‘unlimited power’.” Niu Jun notes that Vogel's Deng has “several identities, including ‘revolutionary,’ ‘builder of socialism,’ and ‘reformer,’” and that Vogel's volume highlights Deng's role as a reformer. By contrast, Pantsov focuses on Deng as a revolutionary – Deng's most prominent identity throughout his life. Niu Jun also contends that both the Pantsov's volume and Vogel's book fail to give enough treatment of Deng as “an outstanding Chinese nationalist.” He concludes, “The author's account informs the reader that Deng was a colorful and very complex historical figure.” Our three reviewers also praise the author for utilizing previous untapped archival sources in Russian as well as Chinese.

Although Deng has been dubbed “the un-Maoist giant of post-Mao China,”<sup>3</sup> from the mid-1930s to the 1960s, he was Mao's protégé. As many Chinese observe, there would have been no ‘Deng’ without ‘Mao.’ A

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<sup>1</sup> See David Shambaugh, ed., *Deng Xiaoping: Portrait of a Chinese Statesman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> A short list of important ones: Deng Rong (Maomao), *My Father Deng Xiaoping* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Richard Evans, *Deng Xiaoping and the Making of Modern China* (New York: Penguin Books Ltd, 1997, Rev. ed.); Benjamin Yang, *Deng Xiaoping: A Political Biography* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998); Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011); Michael Dillon, *Deng Xiaoping: The Man Who Made Modern China* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Yang, *Deng Xiaoping*, ix.

biography of Deng's could not avoid his relationship with Mao, and a comparison of Mao and Deng is fitting. In the Introduction of the book (5-7), Pantsov touches on this. In his opinion, until Mao was near the end of his life in early 1976, "Deng was a true disciple of Mao Zedong, extremely loyal to the Great Helmsman notwithstanding the persecution he himself suffered during the Cultural Revolution at the hands of Mao." (5) But could Deng even have survived to the post-Mao era if he had done otherwise? Were other leading Chinese politicians, most prominently Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao, also slavishly serving Mao? I made a preliminary attempt to answer these questions in one of my recent publications <sup>4</sup> and would like to highlight some of my findings here:

In appearance, Mao and Deng could not have been more different. Mao was eleven years older than Deng and much taller, 5'11" to Deng's 4'11". While Mao was handsome, powerfully built, and a charismatic and romantic revolutionary, few ever complimented the diminutive and stocky Deng on his looks. Nor did the dissimilarities end there. Deng has been remembered as a pragmatic statesman. Throughout his entire political career, Deng neither read much nor wrote extensively, but once involved in actual work, he demonstrated extraordinary determination and enthusiasm.

In domestic policies, Mao guarded against capitalistic economic practice, advocating 'Continuous Revolution.' Deng believed that, as the party in power, the CCP's main task was to develop the economy by any means possible. Both Mao and Deng have been regarded as outstanding international strategists, but again, there were significant differences. Mao was interested in exporting revolution and serving as the mentor of world revolution. Deng focused on improving China's relations with other countries in order to create a harmonious environment for China's economic development. Deng substantially reduced China's aid and support to its former allies and Third World countries. He warned his colleagues that China should never 'take the lead' in international affairs.

Mao knew very little about the workings of modern capitalist society. Throughout his years in command, Mao denigrated materialism and economic incentives, preferring economic development propelled by voluntarism – spontaneity of the masses. I disagree with Pantsov's observation that "Like Mao, Deng acknowledged that he did not really understand economics; yet also like Mao, he still imposed his economic views on the party and society." (6) In my opinion, Deng had a better understanding of the role of economic incentives, wider capitalist economic principles, and the utility of linking China to the global liberal economic order. His reforms aimed at integrating the Chinese economy with the Western capitalist economy. His purpose was to make China rich and powerful and the Chinese people affluent. Nevertheless, Mao's decision in the late 1960s and early 1970s to improve relations with the United States and to gradually open China to the West provided Deng with the foundation to open up China more widely.

Mao had a higher regard for Deng than for Lin Biao. Lin had been Mao's anointed successor in 1969 until he died in a mysterious plane crash in September 1971. Lin had a dark side to his psyche and promoted himself by toadying to Mao, shamelessly repeating what he apparently thought Mao would like to hear. Deng was mentally brighter, and had a less complicated relationship with Mao. When he and Mao saw eye to eye, he wholeheartedly carried out Mao's policies. When he disagreed with Mao, he attempted to avoid Mao. Deng also sang Mao's praises, but only as one of the crowd. He never demeaned himself in dealing with Mao before

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<sup>4</sup> Yafeng Xia, "Deng Xiaoping," in Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright, eds., *Mental Maps in the Late Cold War* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2015), 137-155.

the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, however, Deng made many efforts to secure his rehabilitation, even to the point of humiliating himself. Panstov is not sympathetic to Deng on this score. How should we explain Deng's motivation? I agree with Bernstein's assessment that the answer is "Deng's burning ambition, determination, and impatience to be returned to a position where he could put his abilities to work on the task of building China into a modern state."

Deng's childhood years had bequeathed him a strong and positive sense about what he wanted out of family life. Mao had had to fight his father to get an education, because the elder Mao had intended his son to work in the fields. Deng's mother and nurses had taken care of his daily needs, while his father had pressed Deng to achieve something loftier than his own local business and activities.<sup>5</sup> Mao kept concubines and ceased living with his third wife, Jiang Qing, in the 1950s. Deng, by contrast, truly enjoyed family life with his wife, children, and numerous grandchildren. During difficult times, these warm and close relations with his wife and family helped to sustain him. At work, Deng was also far more approachable than Mao, who could only be addressed as "Chairman Mao." Ordinary citizens could call Deng by his first name, "Xiaoping." Deng's favorite hobby was to play bridge, and he believed this helped his mental health. While Deng played bridge and fraternized with his colleagues, Mao was a loner.<sup>6</sup> Mao, moreover, could be rather emotional, while Deng was steady.

Still, it was politics, not personality, that caused the rupture in their relations between Mao and Deng during the 1960s. Deng's personal role in the anti-rightist movement and the Great Leap Forward, together with his role in implementing the Sino-Soviet split, made him a liability to Mao. In a 1980 interview with the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, Deng claimed, "We will not do to Chairman Mao what Khrushchev had done to Stalin."<sup>7</sup> So despite all their differences, Deng shied away from any prospect of de-Maoisation. This position was demonstrated when Mao's legacy was being reassessed in the early 1980s. Deng was at great pains to stress "that Mao Zedong's policy in foreign affairs had been correct and highly successful."<sup>8</sup> Although Deng moved in different policy directions than Mao after 1978, he did so without repudiating Mao.

Deng cared not just about personal power, but also about public policy, and this constituted another important part of his political philosophy. Deng shared Mao's vision of China's basic role in the world. Both men saw China as a great nation with a long history. Both believed that China should be restored to its rightful place in international affairs. And both thought that this could only be realized under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Yet there were also key differences. In Deng's mental map, China could attain the prosperity and power enjoyed by France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and

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<sup>5</sup> Yang, *Deng Xiaoping*, 19-20.

<sup>6</sup> Shambaugh, ed. *Deng Xiaoping*, 73; and Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping) (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), vol. 2, 347.

<sup>8</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Deng Xiaoping sixiang nianpu, 1975-1997* (Chronology of Deng Xiaoping Thought) (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1998), 147-150, 164-165; and Li Yuan, *Mao Zedong yu Deng Xiaoping* (Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping) (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangshi Chubanshe, 2008), 141-147.

Japan only through reforms and openness, not ‘Continuous Revolution’ and class struggle. His greatest legacy was to elevate China’s status in the world of nations.

**Participants:**

**Alexander V. Pantsov** is Professor of History and the holder of the Edward and Mary Catherine Gerhold Chair in the Humanities at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. He received his Ph.D. in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He has published numerous scholarly works including seventeen books. Among them are *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution 1919-1927*, *Mao: The Real Story*, and *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life* (the latest two were edited and translated by Steven I. Levine). His new book on *Karl Radek on China* is coming out this year with Brill. He is currently working on a new biography of Chiang Kai-shek.

**Steven I. Levine** is Research Faculty Associate in the Department of History at the University of Montana. He is co-author with Michael H. Hunt of *Arc of Empire: America’s Wars in the Pacific from the Philippines to Vietnam* and he assisted Alexander Pantsov in his biographies *Mao: The Real Story* (2012) and *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life* (2015).

**Yafeng Xia** is Professor of History at Long Island University in New York. He is also guest professor at the Center for Cold War International History Studies, East China Normal University in Shanghai. He was Research Fellow (September 2011-June 2012) and Public Policy Scholar (June-August 2010) at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC. He is the author of *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972* (2006), coauthor of *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership, 1945-1959: A New History*, with Zhihua Shen (2015), and *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1960-1973: A New History*, with Danhui Li (2016), as well as many articles on Cold War history. He is completing a book manuscript (with Zhihua Shen), tentatively entitled, “A Purported Friendship: Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung, and the Myth of Sino-North Korean Relations, 1949-1976”.

**Thomas P. Bernstein** specializes on Chinese politics and on comparative communist systems. He has written extensively on rural China, including Chinese and Soviet collectivization, and on the great famines in the two countries. He presented a paper on Mao’s role in the GLF famine at a conference in China in 2014. He has also written on Chinese youth and reform politics. A co-edited book, *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present* was published in 2010 by Lexington Press. He retired from Columbia in 2007.

**Joseph W. Esherick**, Professor emeritus of the University of California, San Diego. His research focuses on the intersection of social and political history of modern China, and major publications include *Reform and Revolution in China: the 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei*, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, and *Ancestral Leaves: A Family Journey through Chinese History*.

**Niu Jun**, a Professor in School of International Studies, Peking University, received his Ph.D. from People’s University of China in 1988. His research is focused on China’s foreign policy making since 1949, and the United States foreign policy and the Sino-U.S. relationship. His main recent publications include: *From Yan’an to the World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist foreign Policy* (Norwalk: Eastbridge, 2004); 牛軍著、真水康樹訳『冷戦期中国外交の政策決定』（東京：千倉書房，2007年）(*China’s Foreign Policy Decision Making during the Cold War*) *The Introduction of Foreign Relation of PRC since 1949*

(Beijing: Peking University Press, 2010); *The Cold War and the Origins of PRC's Foreign Relations 1949-1955* (Beijing: Sheke wenxian Press, 2012); *The Cold War and Chinese Foreign Decision Making* (Beijing: Jiuzhou Press, 2013); and *China's Foreign Policy Analysis: Theory, History and Prospect* (Beijing: Shijie zhishi Press, 2013).

**Review by Thomas P. Bernstein, Columbia University**

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China's emergence in recent decades as a genuine great power is a development of world-historical significance. Between the years 1978-1992, China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping laid the foundation for China's astonishing rise. He led in breaking with the radical Maoist framework in which the country found itself trapped, substituting modernization, growth, and markets for preoccupation with class struggle. He charted a new course of opening China to the outside world in unprecedented ways, as by inviting foreign investment, encouraging Special Economic Zones in which China could take advantage of its comparative advantage of cheap labor, and learning science and technology as well as management methods from the advanced world. Deng also played the leading role on major foreign policy issues. Landmark events such as the normalization of relations with the U.S. in 1978, the brief war against Vietnam in 1979, the 1984 agreement with Britain on the handover of Hong Kong in 1997, and the end of Sino-Soviet hostilities in 1989 bear his imprint.

Deng was committed to the maintenance of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) monopoly of power and therefore opposed liberalizing political reforms that would give a real voice to society. When the CCP's monopoly was in his view threatened, as in 1989, Deng did not hesitate to use lethal force. But he transformed Mao Zedong's totalitarianism into milder authoritarian rule in which, with tragic exceptions, a more relaxed political atmosphere prevailed together with increasing social pluralism.

Deng's remarkable career spans China's revolutions and the life of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to 1997. The book under review follows the author's excellent study, again translated and condensed by Steven Levine, of Mao Zedong, *Mao: The Real Story*.<sup>1</sup> Similar to the Mao volume, it is exhaustively researched, based on "unique" access to Soviet archives and on a wide range of other primary and secondary sources, as well as on numerous interviews. It is vividly written. It offers much colorful, anecdotal detail about the locales where Deng lived and worked, as well as about his family, including the tragic fate of his son Pufang, who, after Mao purged Deng in 1966, was paralyzed after having his back broken by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution (CR).

Alexander Pantsov claims that his is the "only complete and objective" biography of Deng (8). He does so explicitly in relation to another, major biography that appeared in 2011 by Ezra Vogel,<sup>2</sup> and he views Vogel's work as that of a "policy analyst interested only in the reforms" and as "quite uncritical and lacking in objectivity" (7). He charges him with downplaying Deng's responsibility for his "undeniable, large-scale crimes" (433). But this is done tendentiously: "Even Ezra F. Vogel, a writer [not a scholar?] sympathetic to Deng, was forced to acknowledge that 'Deng treated people like useful tools'" (357). Forced by whom? He does praise Deng for his enormous accomplishments. But a book claiming to be objective should not include *ex cathedra* judgments about Deng's motives, often pejorative, especially if the author does not offer other possible motivations that might have been at play. For instance, he explains only that Deng "rather cynically" approved of the exploitation of labor in the Special Economic Zones (368).

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander V. Pantsov with Steven I. Levine. *Mao: The Real Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

The two books, it is worth noting, differ sharply in focus and coverage: Pantsov devotes 309 pages to Deng's life from his birth in 1904 to 1977, a year after Mao Zedong's death, when he returned to office, having been purged by Mao for a second time in 1976. The bulk of the book thus provides extremely valuable and comprehensive coverage of Deng's pre-reform history. This is followed by 109 pages on the period from 1978 to his death in 1997. Vogel, on the other hand, devotes only 34 pages to Deng's life from 1904 to 1969 but 168 pages to the 1969-1977 period, and 497 pages to his activities during the reform era to his death in 1997. The Pantsov volume necessarily compresses analysis of the years in which Deng had his greatest impact on China and the world. For a full understanding of Deng's role in the reform era, Vogel's book is essential reading.

The central theme of the book is Deng's relationship with Chairman Mao. This is relevant even after Mao's death, because Deng and others had to decide how to present Mao's legacy to the country. As the author emphasizes, Deng was a loyal, obedient and extremely capable implementer of the will of the supreme leader until the early 1960s. From 1961 on the story of the relationship becomes more complex, as shown by the fact that Mao purged his protégé twice in the belief that Deng had not carried out Mao's preferences. It was during the years of his dismissal that he probably rethought the foundations of his views of the Communist system. The extent to which Deng broke not just with radical Maoism but also with key aspects of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, such as the centrally planned economy, is truly astonishing and could not have been predicted before the reform era. Unfortunately, there are almost no sources that reveal Deng's hidden thoughts, such as private papers, diaries, or indiscretions that might lead one to suspect that Deng had his own opinions during the Mao years.

By time of the PRC's establishment in October 1949, Deng had emerged as a powerful figure, with deep roots in the military and the Party, and long experience in leadership, in political infighting, and in exercising political judgment. For the next decade, until the catastrophe of the Great Leap Forward (GLF), Deng's relations with Mao were excellent. There were a few exceptions but these did not impede Deng's steady rise in the hierarchy.

Deng's first major appointment was as First Party Secretary of the huge Southwestern Region. He carried out the major take-over campaigns through which the CCP consolidated its hold on the country. This included campaigns to suppress counterrevolutionaries and land reform, which aimed at uprooting the landlord-based local elite and to redistribute land. The author emphasizes that Deng called for more executions than even Mao thought appropriate. Mao admonished Deng and told him to use the death penalty more sparingly.

Called to the Center in July 1952, Deng became deputy Premier in 1952 and a year later Minister of Finance. China at that time still had a mixed economy. Mao had attacked the previous Minister of Finance and Politburo member, Bo Yibo, for having proposed that capitalist and state enterprises be taxed at the same rate. Deng replaced Bo as Minister and enforced Mao's policy. In December 1953, Mao entrusted Deng with the handling of a politically explosive affair, that of the purge of Gao Gang, then head of State Planning, and Rao Shushi, then head of the CCP's Organization Department. In April 1954, he was made chief of the CCP's Secretariat and Organization Department, and a year later, joined the Politburo.

1956 saw the first discordant notes in the Mao-Deng relationship. This stemmed from a point the author emphasizes, namely that subordinates had to be able to sense what Mao really wanted, given that his preferences were often couched in indirect and cryptic terms. Deng's political instincts are said to have failed him twice in that year. The first time he didn't grasp the underlying message of a major speech by Mao, "On

the Ten Great Relationships,” which called for more balanced development but which also contained Mao’s call for “more, faster, better, and more economical” development. This became dogma during the Great Leap Forward two years later. Deng missed this signal of Mao’s intentions and later criticized himself for this error.

The second was in September 1956, at the Eighth Party Congress. Pantsov sees Mao as concealing his real views in order to learn how his lieutenants would respond. At issue was a phrase in the previous Party Constitution, namely that the ‘CCP is guided in its entire work by Mao Zedong Thought.’ Deng’s “blunder” was to have omitted this phrase from the revised version. Before the Congress, Liu Shaoqi, Mao’s second in command, had agreed to this excision. Deng had not voiced objections. He should have understood that for Mao, omitting this phrase from the Party Constitution was more important than earlier excisions by Mao himself from his own writings and another, lesser document. Also, Pantsov dismisses as “pathetic” Deng’s later excuse that others who helped draft his report had inserted a favorable reference to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s anti-Stalin speech of February 1956. In the speech Khrushchev exposed Stalin’s crimes and ‘cult of the personality,’ thereby causing tensions in Sino-Soviet relations. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao charged that both Liu and Deng had ignored him at the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress.

If Mao felt aggrieved at the time, he did not show it. Instead, he praised Deng: “Do you think he’s good at everything? No, he’s just like me. He makes mistakes on many issues, and not a few of his judgments are incorrect...But overall, this is a worthy man, a rather good man, who solves problems more or less fairly and is strict about his own mistakes....He has been tempered in intraparty struggles” (176). When talking with Soviet leaders, Mao predicted a bright future for his protégé, perhaps as his successor. Deng was promoted to top positions: General Secretary of the Central Committee, membership on the Standing Committee of the Politburo, appointment as one of four deputy Party chairmen. He rose to number six in the hierarchy. As the author concludes, Mao “could not do without him” (163).

Deng continued to serve Mao wholeheartedly. His devotion was displayed during the “100 Flowers” episode. In 1956 and early 1957, de-Stalinization, the Hungarian Revolution, and the Polish demonstrations had caused a crisis in the Soviet Bloc, while in China, disturbances also occurred. In this atmosphere, Mao encouraged people outside the Party to let off steam by criticizing the Party’s bureaucratic shortcomings. After some prodding, in May 1957, a remarkable outpouring of systemic accusations against Party rule erupted among intellectuals, students and the leaders of the small “democratic parties.” An angry Mao ordered a crackdown and charged Deng with leading an anti-rightist rectification campaign. According to a Soviet source, the CCP had actually informed Moscow beforehand that the real purpose of free speech was to smoke out true opponents (184).

Deng displayed remarkable zeal in a campaign to “squeeze the pus out of the abscess.” The author claims that “the label of ‘rightist bourgeois elements’” was pinned on “millions of educated people.” About half a million were sent to reform-thru-labor camps (185). According to other sources most were sent to the countryside to do manual labor but not as prisoners.<sup>3</sup> The campaign earned Deng the hatred of many victimized intellectuals

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<sup>3</sup> See Andrew Walder’s recent authoritative account, *China under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Harvard 2015), uses the widely cited number of 550,000 who were labelled rightists, of whom “large numbers” were sent to labor camps (150).

while severely hurting the country's modernization effort. In 1980, Deng admitted that the campaign had been carried to excess but had nonetheless been necessary because of 'vicious' attacks on the CCP.

The Great Leap Forward, 1958-1962, was an all-out attempt to achieve both developmental and ideological breakthroughs. Gross mismanagement led to an immense disaster. A famine ensued that consumed an estimated 30 million lives, caused largely by state requisitioning of grain based on huge but imagined increases in output. Deng enthusiastically supported the GLF. He had long admired Mao as a leader who had proven right in the past and could be counted on to continue to be right. An additional reason for Deng's support was that Mao shifted power from the State Council, which was dominated by cautious planners, to the Party Secretariat and hence to Deng. "From then on," the author writes, "the political apparatus led by Deng was deeply involved in all the major economic plans drafted and implemented during the Great Leap."<sup>4</sup>

When the Leap ran into trouble in the fall of 1958, Mao himself sought to rein in excessive zeal so as to keep the Leap going but along more rational lines. In line with Mao's new realism, Deng also voiced a need for a more cautious approach. In April 1959 Mao praised Deng as his "vice marshall." In July 1959 the Leap was attacked at a Party gathering as a case of "petty-bourgeois fanaticism," prompting Mao, who felt vulnerable, to counterattack against alleged rightists and to relaunch the Leap. Deng backed another vicious anti-rightist campaign. The result was that the excesses of the previous year, to the extent that they had been curbed in the spring 1959, resurfaced in even more damaging form, leading to mass famine. Dire grain shortages forced requisitioning of even more grain to save the cities, a priority for the regime. Deng did so knowing that it might come at the expense of peasant lives.<sup>5</sup>

Only in late autumn of 1960 did Chinese leaders, Mao and Deng included, begin to recognize the full extent of the disaster caused by the Leap. As the Leap was dismantled a debate ensued as to who should be blamed and how far the retreat should go. Liu Shaoqi, now head of State, was horrified by the conditions that he found in his native village. He apologized to the local people, took the famine to heart and criticized Mao. Deng echoed his views, "the first sign of disobedience" (217). In 1961-62, household contracting, in which family farms assumed the responsibility for growing crops, effectively restoring incentives, was very popular, spread widely, and presaged the rural successes of the reform period. Mao initially gave grudging support to household contracting as a temporary emergency measure. A number of top leaders, Liu and Deng included, favored retaining the practice for a longer period. Deng famously said in summer of 1962 that the color of a cat didn't matter as long as it was good at catching mice; in other words, if household contracting raised output, it should be supported. In a remarkable encounter at about the same time, Liu Shaoqi told Mao: "History will record the role that you and I played in the starvation of so many people. That people were eating human flesh will also be memorialized."<sup>6</sup> Mao didn't react to Liu's anguished remark about famine but berated him for not energetically preserving socialism in the countryside. He then vehemently and authoritatively rejected household contracting as a form of capitalist restoration. He was particularly disappointed by Deng's having affirmed family contracts. Henceforth he eyed his protégé with a measure of

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<sup>4</sup> Yen-lin Chung, "The CEO of the Utopian Project: Deng Xiaoping's Roles and Activities in the Great Leap Forward," *The China Journal*: 69 (January 2013), 154-173.

<sup>5</sup> Yen-lin Chung, 172.

<sup>6</sup> Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux), 507.

distrust, which was to culminate in Deng's purge during the Cultural Revolution four years later. His lieutenants caved in to Mao's demand. Household contracting was outlawed in 1962, only to return in 1978-79 with Deng's behind-the-scenes support.<sup>7</sup>

Pantsov unfairly ridicules Deng and other "romantics" for tilting at "windmills" by again misjudging Mao's mood (223, 227). He does not mention that the unprecedented famine touched the conscience of at least some leaders, as indicated by Liu's remark about cannibalism. The practical-minded Deng did not evidently go as far as Liu but he too was shocked by rural conditions, which helps explain his support for household contracting. More broadly, the disaster sharply contradicted the CCP's early promise that there would be no more famines.

The Sino-Soviet conflict, which began in 1956 over Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, escalated over many issues of both ideology and national interest from 1958 on, leading to bitter polemics. The record is quite clear that Mao kept aggravating the dispute, provoking Soviet retaliation such as the abrupt withdrawal of Soviet experts and blueprints in July 1960, just as China's GLF came crashing down. Deng played a major role implementing the Chairman's will. Deng confronted the Soviets with his "exceptional energy and ability to engage in witty and tough-minded polemics" (228), earning Mao's admiration. Deng felt that he again enjoyed Mao's unlimited trust.

Hurt national feelings played a central role in China's uncompromising hostility. Most Communist leaders, including Deng, had joined the Party in the 1920s because they were nationalists and believed the CCP would lead China back to national greatness. Failure to consult China about so momentous an issue as downgrading Stalin was one grievance. During a visit in 1954, Khrushchev had promised that China would now be treated as an equal, in sharp contrast to Stalin's behavior during Mao's visit in late 1949-50. Yet, Soviet "great power chauvinism" remained. In Deng's talks with Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989 on normalization of relations, he said "let bygones be bygones" but still insisted that Khrushchev had humiliated China and that Russia had inflicted "cruel injustices" on China. Deng acknowledged his role in the conflict but also said that "both sides contributed a lot of empty talk" (413).

When the Cultural Revolution (CR) broke out in 1966, Deng ran afoul of Mao's project to upend China and purify the elite and society. In the first stage of his venture, Mao trapped the leaders of the powerful Beijing City Party Committee over an issue of literary interpretation, implicating Deng, who was their superior. When the Red Guard student movement began in the summer of 1966, Deng, together with Liu Shaoqi, sought to control it from the top down along Leninist lines, thereby violating a key precept of Mao's new revolution. He purged both, putting them through much torment, including violent 'struggle meetings.' But he saw to it that Deng survived but not Liu. Deng wrote endless self-criticisms and confessions. An official investigation exonerated him from counterrevolutionary charges but not of rightism. In 1969 he was exiled to Jiangxi, a southern province, where he had time to ponder China's future. In 1972-3 he was rehabilitated, and returned to office in Beijing. Mao thought of him as the one person most capable of restoring normalcy in the

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<sup>7</sup> Vogel reports that Deng "personally supervised the process of decollectivization," but did not endorse it publicly until 1980, waiting to be sure that it worked (Vogel, 445). He did say early on that in places where people lacked food, any remedial method was acceptable. Pantsov faults him for not expressing public support earlier.

wake of the destruction caused by the CR upheaval and by the growing incapacity of the cancer-stricken Premier Zhou Enlai.

Back in office, Deng was faced with the unenviable task of ‘bringing order out of chaos.’ He sought to repair damaged Party and military institutions, restore vital economic functions such as railroads paralyzed by leftist factions, and restore higher education and science and technology that had suffered enormous damage. He scored major achievements in these realms in 1974 and 1975. Mao to a certain degree understood and supported Deng’s efforts. But the increasingly feeble Chairman, who retained absolute power, also wanted to preserve the legacies of his Cultural Revolution, a goal in deep conflict with what Deng and his supporters wanted.

Balancing the competing imperatives of modernization and revolution was made much more difficult by the continued power of the leftist leaders (the so-called “Gang of Four”) who were determined to undermine Deng. Deng put all his political skills to work to do what he could to stay in the good graces of the Chairman. But increasingly Deng came under attack, as courtiers who had Mao’s ear, especially his radical nephew, persuaded Mao that Deng was sabotaging the “achievements” of the CR. Mao pressured Deng to affirm that the Cultural Revolution was a success, but Deng courageously and tenaciously evaded this demand. Giving in would have undercut his determination to chart a new course for China after Mao.<sup>8</sup> Premier Zhou died in early 1976 and Deng was again purged. Four months later, he and others were blamed for mass demonstrations on behalf of the popular Zhou Enlai. He was formally dismissed from all his posts but retained his Party membership on the Chairman’s insistence. Mao still had hope for him.

Pantsov is contemptuous of Deng’s many efforts to secure rehabilitation. Deng humiliated himself to the point of self-abasement. He proclaimed his loyalty to Chairman Mao and claimed to have reformed himself. Of Mao, he writes, “How he loved it when people abased themselves before him” (255). But there is a larger point to be made about Deng which seems to have eluded the author, and this was Deng’s burning ambition, determination, and impatience to be returned to a position where he could put his abilities to work on the task of building China into a modern state. This may well have been a major motivation as he submitted to Mao’s torments.

Mao chose a former provincial official, Hua Guofeng, instead of a member of the leftist ‘Gang of Four,’ as his successor. Shortly after Mao died in September, Hua led in their arrest. He initially resisted elite pressures to secure Deng’s second rehabilitation but gave in by the spring of 1977. Deng could now fight for the opportunity to set China on a different course. To achieve this he sought to ‘emancipate the minds’ of Chinese, many of whom strongly believed in Mao. As a cold realist, Deng put aside the cruelties that Mao had inflicted on his family and himself. He decided that Party rule could not be maintained if Mao’s reputation were demolished. There was no Chinese Lenin that could replace Mao. And besides, he himself retained a lasting respect for Mao the revolutionary and state builder.

Gradually, Deng and his supporters demolished the image of the radical, destructive Mao and replaced it with an image of Mao whose corpus of writings contained slogans that Deng could use to justify doing away with leftism, such as ‘truth through facts’ and ‘practice is the sole criterion of truth.’ Deng and his colleagues emphasized his revolutionary leadership, his unification of China, and his state-building achievements but

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<sup>8</sup> Cf Vogel, 146ff.

without the GLF and the CR. The official 1981 evaluation of Party history blamed Mao for the two twin disasters. This legacy of upholding the ‘good Mao’ continues to prevent an open reckoning with the past, including Mao’s crimes, about which many educated people know.

Deng was determined not to foster a repetition of Mao’s arbitrary and despotic one-man rule. He promoted term limits and a compulsory retirement system. He eschewed Mao’s title of Chairman of the CC and confined himself to the post of Vice Premier. The author questionably quotes “some observers” as claiming that Deng’s “only” motivation for invading Vietnam in 1979 was to “establish total control over the military in order to gain unlimited power” (350). Deng already chaired the Party’s powerful Military Commission. His authority in the military ran deep. He used it for the Vietnam war. And he used it in the 1980s to persuade the military to accept painful cuts in the military budgets because economic growth had to be given priority and because the People’s Liberation Army needed to be streamlined and retrained before it could absorb modern weapons.

It is difficult to explain the politics of the reform period by positing a Deng quest for “unlimited power,” as the author does. He did not foster a personality cult or make claims to infallibility, contrary to the author’s view (422). The fact that he did not seek to become a totalitarian dictator had the very important consequence of enabling his colleagues to contest his preferences. While they never challenged his position, they engaged in disputes in which he often won but sometimes lost. He first was opposed by diehard Maoists and then in the 1980s by conservatives, such as the influential but cautious economic planner Chen Yun, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Chen thought of high growth rates as destabilizing, and he wanted to maintain a much greater role for state planning than for markets, contrary to Deng’s wishes. When in 1988 economic reforms, especially of prices, ran into trouble, conservative politicians gained enough strength to curb economic reformers. After the 1989 Tiananmen Movement was crushed, Deng himself lost influence and conservatives succeeded in blocking further economic reforms until Deng, in his last foray into politics, succeeded via his ‘Southern Journey’ in early 1992 to overcome opposition to renewed reforms and rapid growth, a turnabout expressed in the slogan of the “socialist market economy.”

Deng, as the author rightly emphasizes, was no liberal. He maintained an unchanging commitment to the Party’s monopoly of power. He believed that if the Party fell from power, chaos would ensue. Although sharply critical in 1980 of stifling, abusive, and “patriarchal” party secretaries, he was not prepared to engage in liberalizing political reform that would empower the people. He first encouraged the “Democracy Wall” movement of late 1978 to April 1979 but only as long as the wall posters served his purposes and did not call for democracy. When some did, his crackdown was in the “best tradition of Chairman Mao. Chinese intellectuals were again shamelessly and cynically manipulated in the service of high politics” (356). In 1986, when students supported by intellectuals demonstrated for democratic change, Deng again cracked down and fired General Secretary Hu Yaobang, whom he blamed for showing leniency towards liberal forces. And in 1989, he fired Zhao Ziyang, Hu’s successor, again for softness in the face of the mass student demonstrations.

While Deng opposed “bourgeois liberalization,” he sought to limit the impact of anti-liberal campaigns. The reason was that conservatives believed that markets, foreign investment, private enterprise, and Special Economic Zones were bound to lead to just that and hence wanted to use an anti-liberal crackdown to curtail the capitalist economy. In contrast, Deng supported economic liberalization but shared conservative views about political liberalization. When campaigns on liberal tendencies among intellectuals and students spilled over into attacks on private entrepreneurs, Deng sought to protect the latter. Deng was above all concerned with maintaining the opening to the outside world as part of the reform effort. To this end, he saw that

learning from the capitalist world was essential. From the late 1970s, he sent politicians and top managers abroad to see for themselves what modern factories looked like. He encouraged sending students abroad, and inviting foreign investment. Also, he understood that a degree of academic freedom, a more open media, and a more relaxed political atmosphere were essential to gain the cooperation of the scientific and technical intelligentsia. Thus Deng fought on two fronts. In 1992 he identified conservatism as a greater danger than economic liberalism.

Deng had a very limited understanding of western democracy. He thought of the separation of powers as a recipe for paralyzing inaction or as making it difficult for presidents to make credible binding commitments. After the U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, which legalized and required US arms sales to Taiwan, he asked “how many governments do you have?” His hopes for unification were thus frustrated. His view of Gorbachev’s political liberalization was also contemptuous. His younger son quoted Deng as “thinking that Gorbachev is an idiot,” because he put political liberalization ahead of economic reform. Therefore “he won’t have power to fix the economic problems and the people will remove him.”<sup>9</sup>

Opposition to political liberalism, not just the Tiananmen tragedy, represents his negative legacy. As prosperity grew and as proliferation of social and economic interests gave rise to demands for political pluralism, China’s rulers steadfastly opposed liberal reforms, following Deng’s precedent. This is China’s greatest unsolved problem.

In sum, this is a valuable biography but one that is marred by lapses in judgement.

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Vogel, 423.

**Review by Joseph W. Esherick, University of California, San Diego, Emeritus**

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The same collaboration that recently brought us what is arguably the best biography of Mao Zedong<sup>1</sup> has now produced a fine biography of Mao's authoritarian reformist successor, Deng Xiaoping. The author immodestly claims that this is "*the only complete and objective biography of the most important political leader in the late twentieth-century history of China.*" [italics in original] (8) This hype is presumably necessary to compete with Ezra Vogel's much acclaimed 875-page tome, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011). The author joins others in criticizing Vogel's generally positive assessment of Deng's contribution to China's modernization, calling it "quite uncritical and lacking in objectivity" (7). The contrast between the two books is evident from the start: Pantsov opens his book with a discussion of the young man with his grocery bags, standing against a line of tanks on Chang'an Boulevard following the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989, while Vogel sounds almost apologetic in describing the incident as no worse than the February 28, 1947 Incident in Taiwan or Kwangju in Korea.<sup>2</sup>

Most readers will be interested in the period in which the two books overlap, the reform era and the last three decades of Deng's life. I shall leave comparative assessment of that portion of the two accounts to others more qualified to pass judgment. However, in his claim to a "complete" biography of Deng, the author does highlight the most important contrast to Vogel's book. The explicit intent of *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* was to help Americans understand China's recent rise as an economic superpower, and Vogel devoted only thirty pages to the period before 1970. By contrast, Pantsov divides his account into three sections: "The Bolshevik" (1904-31), "The Maoist" (1931-72), and "The Pragmatist" (1972-97). While the final section is longer than the others, it still consumes less than one-half the book. This is a true biography of the entire career of a transformative figure and in that sense it adds significantly to our understanding.

My own expertise (such as it is) lies in the period before 1949, so I shall confine most of this review to that portion of the book. I would nonetheless note the critical importance of the long discussion of Deng "The Maoist." In that section Pantsov stresses early commonalities in Deng's and Mao's more pragmatic policies from their initial encounters in Jiangxi, Deng's rise as essentially Mao's man with the 129<sup>th</sup> Division in the Taihang mountains during the war, his aggressive pursuit of 'counter-revolutionaries' in the Southwest during the early years of the PRC, his central role in the anti-rightist campaign of 1957, and his firm support of the Great Leap Forward's first two years. Finally, in Pantsov's compelling account of the Sino-Soviet dispute, he clearly documents Deng's key role and his close following of Mao's lead. This is of great importance in understanding Deng's return to power in 1972—not so much as a pragmatist to revive the economy but as a diplomat and Marxist polemicist equipped to deal with the Soviet threat. Through all of this we see the danger of alternative approaches that read back from the Cultural Revolution and reform period to imagine some consistent contrast between Mao the utopian ideologue and Deng the Marxist pragmatist.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander V. Pantsov with Steven I. Levine, *Mao: The Real Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 2011), 634.

Turning to the revolutionary era that I know the best, one has to be impressed by the quality of Pantsov's research and the range of sources cited. The Introduction claims that the book "is based on formerly secret archives of the Chinese Communist Party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the international communist movement" (3). But a cursory scan of the footnotes reveals that original archival sources are most important for Deng's brief period of study in Moscow (1926-27) and to a lesser degree for aspects of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Far more important are published documents and scholarship from Russia and by official party historians in China and the extensive Chinese memoir literature. The most frequently cited source is certainly the 2010 edition of the official three-volume *Deng Xiaoping Nianpu* (chronological biography) by Yang Shengqun and Yan Jianqi.<sup>3</sup> Though the claims of unique insight from archival access may be exaggerated, the forty-three page bibliography leaves no doubt that this is an extraordinary work of painstaking scholarship.

In the first section of the book, we are introduced to Deng's youth in a prosperous Sichuan family with a number of literati ancestors in the late imperial period. Deng's father was a progressive member of the late Qing local elite, with the telling name Deng Wenming (Deng the Civilized). When the anarchist-inspired movement for work-study in France arose, Wenming supported his son's participation. Deng Xiaoping arrived in Paris in 1920, but lacking any talent for foreign languages, by his own admission he "learned nothing" in the five months of schooling that he endured (25). There followed brief periods of industrial employment before Deng turned to radical politics, meeting and working with the early CCP leader and later PRC Premier Zhou Enlai, and distinguishing himself in propaganda and publishing for the Socialist Youth League. In April 1925 he joined the Communist Party, then traveled to Moscow for further study in the following year. In Moscow he studied Russian and Marxism, and Pantsov argues forcefully that the New Economic Policy (NEP), then in full bloom, had an enduring impact on Deng's understanding of socialist economics. (6-7, 38-9, 370-3) This is certainly an intriguing insight, and one is tempted to speculate that the reform-era debates between Deng and Chen Yun were perhaps related to the timing of their respective periods of study in the USSR: 1926-27 vs. 1935-37.

Deng stayed in Moscow only a little over one year before being sent back to China to work with the warlord Feng Yuxiang, then based in Xi'an and flirting with the Soviets in search of military aid. This Xi'an episode quickly went sour, and Deng moved to Shanghai, where he again worked (and for a time lived) with Zhou Enlai before being dispatched to Guangxi in 1929. There, again, the Communist Party was seeking to infiltrate a local warlord's army and turn it to revolution, and also ally with a Zhuang-based local soviet movement. After some success, the effort again failed and Deng fled back to Shanghai in 1931, just as the rebellion was being crushed. Deng's departure in the heat of battle was a distinct black mark on his career, and the Red Guards made much of it in their Cultural Revolution attacks on the "No. 2 Capitalist Roader." But Zhou Enlai seems to have protected him in Shanghai, and before long he was dispatched to the Central Soviet in Jiangxi.

In Jiangxi he held local party secretary positions and in 1933 again came under attack, along with Mao's brother, Mao Zetan, for supporting the so-called 'Luo Ming' line. This was certainly a low point in Deng's career, made worse when his wife turned against him and went to live with his attacker, Li Weihai. Deng was demoted to editorial work, which continued into the Long March period. He served as note-taker at the

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<sup>3</sup> Yang Shengqun and Yan Jianqi., eds., *Deng Xiaoping nianpu: 1904-1974* [Chronological biography of Deng Xiaoping, 1904-1974] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2009).

Zunyi Conference of January 1935, which has conventionally been taken as the point at which Mao began his ascent to supremacy in the party. Shortly after the Party Center established its base in northern Shaanxi, Deng was appointed to political officer positions in First Army Group of the Red Army. His real ascent to prominence came with the War of Resistance when he served as political commissar of Liu Bocheng's 129<sup>th</sup> Division. The 129<sup>th</sup> had its origins in Zhang Guotao's Fourth Army Group and Deng's role as political commissar was to ensure that it remained loyal to Mao and the new Party Center. In this he was certainly successful, and Mao noted and appreciated his efforts. Unlike most CCP leaders, Deng was never recalled to Yan'an for the Rectification Campaign, and his flight before the enemy in 1931 was passed over lightly. Then during the Civil War, the Liu-Deng Army, as it was called, played a critical role when it executed a daring advance across the Yellow and Huai rivers to the Dabie Mountains in 1947, threatening both Wuhan and Nanjing and forcing the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek to withdraw the troops chasing Mao through the mountains of northern Shaanxi.

Pantsov tells this story in a crisp and clear narrative style, and there is no question that the account presents a far more complete and useful overview of Deng's entire career than does Vogel's brief treatment of everything before the Cultural Revolution. But Vogel's book is hardly the only English-language study of Deng, and it is instructive to compare the current Pantsov volume to two other academic biographies of Deng, David Goodman's *Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese Revolution: A Political Biography* and Benjamin Yang's *Deng: A Political Biography*.<sup>4</sup> It is notable that both of these earlier studies are termed *political* biographies, while Pantsov makes the effort (constrained, of course, by his sources) to give us glimpses of Deng the man. In addition, the Goodman and Yang biographies are much earlier and shorter works, and anyone wishing a full treatment informed by recently published sources will certainly want to start with the Pantsov study. Still, in contrast to Pantsov's basically narrative account, I was struck by the more analytical style of Goodman's study and by Yang's attention to historiography and the political background of our sources on Deng's life. For these reasons, scholars wishing to do further research on Deng's career might still find reason to consult those earlier works. Let me give two small examples.

Deng's service as representative of the Party Center in the Guangxi uprising of 1929-31 was a critical moment in his early career. Deng's hurried departure in the heat of battle was a black mark that dogged him for much of his life. Pantsov provides a substantial account of the uprising, with much more attention to local context and Zhuang minority participation than the other studies. But Yang tellingly notes that CCP historians have been at pains to both exaggerate Deng's role in the uprising and absolve him from responsibility for its failure;<sup>5</sup> and Goodman tellingly observes that Deng Rong's biography of her father devotes disproportionate attention to the Guangxi episode.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, Yang tells us that soon after one of the Guangxi generals, Li Mingrui, led the remnants of his army to the Central Soviet in Jiangxi, he was executed in a purge of former Guomindang officers. Yang, whose biography is certainly the most critical of Deng, suggests that

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<sup>4</sup> David S. G. Goodman, *Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese Revolution: A Political Biography* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Benjamin Yang, *Deng: A Political Biography* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Yang, *Deng*, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Goodman, *Deng Xiaoping*, 32. The Deng Rong biography is Deng Maomao (Deng Rong), *Wo de fuqin Deng Xiaoping* [My father, Deng Xiaoping] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1993).

Deng Xiaoping may have supported the purge, despite Deng Rong's denials.<sup>7</sup> What is notable, however, is that Pantsov makes no mention of Li Mingrui's fate—preferring to sidestep what is clearly a delicate issue still shrouded in mystery.

Deng's wartime service in the Taihang Mountains with Liu Bocheng's 129<sup>th</sup> Division was a pivotal moment in his long career. Though his post was political commissar, it was here that Deng established his military credentials. Pantsov's account is workmanlike and includes a good deal of national and international context. But it is Goodman (very much a Taihang expert himself)<sup>8</sup> who notes the importance of connections formed in this area for one's career in the PRC. More Politburo members in the period 1949-89 served in the Taihang region than in Yan'an during the war. In addition to Deng himself, the list of PRC leaders from the Taihang base included a group as diverse as Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Bo Yibo, Xie Fuzhi, Ji Dengkui, Yang Shangkun, Zhao Ziyang, Wan Li and many more.<sup>9</sup> Analyses of Deng's return to power in 1977 always stress his good relations with senior military leaders and it was during this period that those connections were formed. Most of these facts are available in Pantsov's volume, but Goodman's brief but more analytical approach highlights them more directly.

To sum up, Pantsov has clearly provided the best available biography of Deng Xiaoping. The scholarship is thorough, the narrative clear. Mostly from family sources, we get some taste of Deng's personal life, which is absent from the earlier political biographies. While those interested in Deng's role in the post-Mao reforms will probably want to consult both Vogel and Pantsov, for a complete biography, the latter is clearly the place to turn.

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<sup>7</sup> Yang, *Deng*, 69.

<sup>8</sup> See, especially, David S. G. Goodman, *Social and Political Change in Revolutionary China: The Taihang Base Area in the War of Resistance to Japan, 1937-1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Goodman, *Deng Xiaoping*, 44-45.

**Review by Niu Jun, School of International Study, Peking University**

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In China, Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine are well-known scholars. The book on which they previously collaborated, *Mao: The Real Story*,<sup>1</sup> has already been translated into Chinese and published in April 2015. It quickly attracted attention. As soon as I received this new collaborative work, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, my first thought was: Could a Chinese edition be published in China? I began my reading with this question in mind. I should say that I had already helped an editor from a Chinese publisher contact the author about the possibility of publishing a Chinese version of the book. The result of this effort remains to be seen.

Another important factor stimulating my interest in this book is that recently Harvard Professor Ezra F. Vogel's new work *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*<sup>2</sup> was published in a Chinese version and attracted considerable attention. Ezra F. Vogel was invited to China on a number of occasions to introduce his book and also discuss with Chinese scholars various aspects of research on Deng Xiaoping. From this we can see the strong desire of Chinese readers to know more about the historical figure of Deng Xiaoping.

Different authors writing about the same historical figure will inevitably have many differences, even fundamental differences. This is partly because of subjective factors, including their different perspectives, experiences, and insights, and partly due to objective factors – on what historical grounds their arguments are based, including interviews with the relevant contemporaries of their subject as well as with relatives of the subject, available historical documents, and particularly important historical archives. As a scholar long engaged in historical research, I myself lay special emphasis on historical archives. Vogel's work is based more on interviews, including those with Deng Xiaoping's relatives and large numbers of his contemporaries. This makes for a vivid and readable narrative. But as Pantsov notes in the introduction, the book is based more on historical archives preserved in Russia, especially the dossiers of communist leaders such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Chen Yun and others. Therefore, the author confidently asserts, "We are the first biographers of Deng to make use of all these materials"<sup>(4)</sup>. How different a Deng Xiaoping can such a book, based on different types of historical documents and materials, give us? This is just what whetted my curiosity and that of many Chinese readers.

Ezra F. Vogel's Deng Xiaoping is a historical figure with several identities, including "revolutionary," "builder of socialism," and "reformer."<sup>3</sup> Of course, due to the fact that the subject must cope with different environments and deal with different people during different historical periods, one identity may be more prominent than others at different times. Vogel focuses his narrative on China's era of reform and opening, highlighting Deng's historical role as a reformer. By contrast, Pantsov's Deng has the distinctive features of a revolutionary, an identity which was the most prominent throughout his life. This book is divided into three parts and presents a more comprehensive narrative of Deng's whole life. Indeed, readers of this book will be impressed that Deng Xiaoping experienced a rich and colorful life. Therefore, if a thorough understanding of this great figure in Chinese history is desired, it is surely insufficient to emphasize or just sketch only a certain

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander V. Pantsov, with Steven I. Levine, *Mao: The Real Story*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and The Transform of China*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, 1.

period of his life. It is all the more necessary to interpret Deng Xiaoping's actions, his thought, and the historical influence he exerted on Chinese history from the perspective of his entire lifespan.

Based on his readings, interviews, and understanding, Pantsov defines Deng's most prominent identity as that of a revolutionary. This judgment is not only embodied in the title of this book, but also pervades his narrative logic. This must certainly have influenced the narrative and selection of documentary materials. Be that as it may, I am convinced that after finishing the book, readers will conclude that this definition is fully justified. This perspective will prove enlightening for readers hoping to understand Deng Xiaoping.

In China, many writings about Deng quote Chairman Mao Zedong's well-known comment that Deng was "a needle concealed in cotton."<sup>4</sup> According to the memoirs of certain persons, during the November 1957 Moscow Conference, Mao first gave him this kind of appraisal during a conversation with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.<sup>5</sup> But this book reveals a different detail. In August 1958, when Khrushchev was visiting Beijing, during Mao's first meeting with him, Deng Xiaoping was the only one of his comrades-in-arms whom he brought along. At the subsequent meeting, Khrushchev, in order to relieve the tense atmosphere, pointed to Deng Xiaoping and jokingly said to Mao, "Your little fellow has frightened me most of all." The author observes that "perhaps the diminutive Deng reminded Khrushchev of the voracious blood-sucking mosquitoes that had spitefully bitten him during the humid Beijing nights."<sup>6</sup> Regarding this well-worn story, the author adds the illuminating observation that whether or not Deng was disgusted with Khrushchev, we may only speculate to what degree this influenced Deng's persistent negative feelings toward the Soviet Union. This lively description also reveals a basic fact that to write about the whole life of Deng Xiaoping, one cannot avoid dealing with another question. The relationship between him and Mao Zedong, China's leader who influenced that era, must be made clear. This is also true when writing about all other Chinese figures of that period.

It is evident that Pantsov's account is more faithful to the actual historical setting of that time during which all Chinese politicians without exception were in Mao's shadow and influenced by him. Whenever they made decisions they had to consider how to deal with Mao, especially when their thinking and decisions diverged from his views and standpoint. Deng was certainly no exception. Mao occupied the key position in the complex network of relations surrounding Deng. Therefore, the first half of this book devotes a lot of space (from Chapter 7 to Chapter 17) to Mao Zedong's various policies as well as his personality. This content is vital, especially to readers who are insufficiently conversant with Chinese history. It also demonstrates the author's in-depth understanding of Chinese history.

According to the author's train of thought, during the long era of Mao, Deng Xiaoping was a firm supporter and executor of all of Mao's policies, including the Anti-Rightist Movement of 1957, which has since been proven to be mistaken, and the catastrophic Great Leap Forward which led to millions of deaths from famine.

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<sup>4</sup> Institute of CPC Central Literature Research edited, *Mao Zedong Chronicle 1949-1976* (Mao Zedong Nianpu), vol. 6, (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Press, 2013), 512.

<sup>5</sup> Yan Mingfu, *Yan Mingfu Memoir* (Yan Mingfu huiyilu), vol 1, (Beijing: Renmin Press, 2015, p. 433; Li Yueran, *Witnessed the China and Soviet Diplomacy* (Zhongguo waijiao qinliji), (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Press, 2001), 169.

<sup>6</sup> Pantsov and Levine, *Mao: The Real Story*, 193.

The book describes how, after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Deng rapidly ascended the pyramid of power in China. The author argues that sometime in early April 1959, Mao himself clearly defined Deng's position in the party. Using the saying "Mao Sui volunteered himself," Mao called himself "commander-in-chief," and named Deng, as the Secretary of the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Central Committee, as "the deputy commander-in-chief" with the right to issue orders (200-201). Later, during the Cultural Revolution which was initiated by Mao, Deng was ousted from power twice. The first time was at the start of the Cultural Revolution, the second was in 1975 during the Movement to Criticize Deng Xiaoping. Both were the result of Mao's personal decisions (Chapter 17).

Deng Xiaoping's several ups and downs naturally give rise to the question of when he began to diverge from Mao? The book describes and analyzes the process of divergence between Deng and Mao. This is seldom done in works published inside China. The author argues that the initial divergence began in the early 1960s; the book specifies the time period as January to May 1961. At that time, divergences and discussions occurred in the Chinese Communist Party concerning the serious negative results of the Great Leap Forward. Deng stood on the side of Liu Shaoqi, PRC' Chairman and the second figure in the CPC. In a speech he delivered in May, Deng clearly expressed his support for Liu Shaoqi's proposals, that is, not to continue Mao's policies which were wholly divorced from reality. The author says that Deng's speech in May enraged Mao Zedong, and Deng, as a highly experienced politician, certainly must have known that he was "playing with fire." Still, he chose to stand with Liu. Therefore, he had to conclude that "the Utopian Maoist model of socioeconomic development had to be reformed." (216) The author's assertion is significantly revealing in informing the reader that the source of the policy of "reform and opening up" which Deng followed after Mao's death was connected with his earlier reflections after the complete failure of Mao's radical Great Leap Forward policy. As the author points out, Deng's reflections at the time were directed toward certain concrete policies and were extremely tentative; moreover, as the author also indicates, "only shortly before Mao's death in 1976 did he manifest disobedience." (5)

To my way of thinking, Deng was more of a distinctive personality who was essentially a pragmatist in the political tradition of China. Deng had no doubt regarding the idea that "Practice is the sole criterion of truth,"<sup>7</sup> even though some philosophers in China, engaging in scholastic debates, tried to prove this was only a slogan. As this book asserts, like many famous politicians, Deng was not enamored of reading and studying all kinds of doctrines and theories. After experiencing Chinese social and economic reality and having paid a heavy price, he was the kind of person who preferred to face reality and make new choices. Many of his colleagues in the late 1970s who, together with him opted for reform, had similar characteristics and experience.

The author demonstrates that early on Deng clearly manifested these individual traits. Deng's personal history shows that unlike Mao Zedong and other early Chinese Communist leaders like him, Deng did not read many theoretical works or traditional Chinese classics, nor did he come to believe in Soviet Leninism only after exploring various doctrines. While in France on the 'Diligent Work and Frugal Study' program, Deng, pretty much from his own experience and without any hesitation chose 'communism.' In his words, "I was never exposed to the influence of other ideas...I came to communism directly" (30). For many people this is almost impossible to imagine. After all, it is by no means easy to understand Marxist theories. But very likely

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<sup>7</sup> Deng Xiaoping, "Concentrate on economic development," September 18, 1982, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, edited by The CPC Central Committee Document Editing, Volume three, (Beijing: Renmin Press, 1993), 10.

it was this characteristic that led him to adopt the cat theory (i.e., the color of the cat does not matter so long as it does its job) as his standard for political practice and implement it after he assumed the highest position of power. Speaking of Deng's character, the aforementioned examples reveal his working style and extremely steadfast character (See Chapter 13). Therefore, the author emphasizes that Deng was a revolutionary who believed in Marxism-Leninism. But judging from his conduct in life, I prefer to think of him as someone who followed the Chinese philosophy of pragmatism.

The author devotes two chapters in the book to discussing a proposition which deeply influenced the course of Chinese history in the ten years from 1979 to the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, namely, the relationship between “‘form and opening’ and democracy. This question stretches from that era to the present, and there is still a huge controversy about it in Chinese politics so that Chinese leaders must frequently give clear and definite responses to it. Moreover, whatever the concrete results of one round of the controversy, not long afterward they become the source of a new round of debate.

What arouses people's curiosity is that, on the one hand, Deng promised to give society more freedom and what he considered ‘democracy,’ and he engaged in what even today may be considered rather profound reflections and criticism of the results of the extreme concentration of power during the Mao era. He himself also made great efforts in the sphere of political reform. Some of these efforts exerted far-reaching influence, such as the abolition of lifetime tenure for the supreme leader of the Chinese Communist Party. These efforts exerted, and will continue to exert, profound and lasting influence. In fact, it was the reform and opening led by Deng which engendered the praiseworthy “ideological emancipation movement,” and in both the Chinese Communist Party and among the public gathered a good deal of support, broke the ideological and institutional obstacles put in place by conservative political forces, and became a symbol of an era. Even today it remains a hallmark of ‘political correctness.’

On the other hand, at the same time that Deng was calling on people to liberate their thinking, and boldly try out all sorts of unprecedented reforms, he was also resolutely criticizing all kinds of proposals and thoughts that might threaten the Chinese Communist Party's exclusive leading position. He lumped together everything and condemned it as “bourgeois liberalization,” and advocated firm adherence to the “Four Cardinal Principles,”<sup>8</sup> that is, the socialist path, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the communist party, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Summing up the history of the twentieth century socialist movement, these four principles taken together virtually add up to the ‘Soviet model,’ yet Deng's reforms negated the ‘Soviet model.’ How could this contradiction coexist in Deng's mind? Or had he never considered this a contradiction? These questions must be studied further in order to produce a convincing answer.

According to the author, in his approach to dealing with these fundamental contradictions Deng displayed his distinctive characteristics. As stated in the Introduction, Deng was essentially a revolutionary. All revolutionaries, striving to fulfill their self-defined missions, frequently cannot be choosy about means, including shedding blood as the price that has to be paid. Therefore, “History is full of blood” (5). The era of

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<sup>8</sup> Deng Xiaoping: “Strengthening the four cardinal principles of education, Persist in reform and opening-up policy”, January 20, 1987, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3, 201-202.

Deng was no exception. He indeed said, “Reform is also revolution.”<sup>9</sup> That generation of people’s political experience is one of revolution with a clear goal, but there is no single, unchanging path toward reaching that goal. Nor is there a fixed model. This is particularly true of China. They can only “cross the river by feeling the stones”. In the process of advancing toward their goal, anything in the way or any destructive actions must be thoroughly smashed irrespective of what methods are used to do this, including employing the army and resorting to bloodshed. History will make the final judgment on events of their era, some of which have shocked the world.

I think that *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life* pays insufficient attention to another prominent facet of Deng’s identity. Vogel’s book does likewise. If one is assessing Deng’s life, one should state that he was an outstanding Chinese nationalist. There were not many such among his generation of Chinese communist comrades-in-arms. This year, “The Nine-Day Whirlwind” [aka *Mr. Deng Went to Washington*], a documentary film screened in China, included an interview with former U.S. National Security Adviser [Zbigniew] Brzezinski. Facing the camera, he recalled one of Deng’s talks during his January 1979 visit to the United States. Deng remembered his sojourn in France as a young man on the ‘Diligent Work Frugal Study’ program. Deng said that when he arrived in Paris, what impressed him most deeply was how backward China was in comparison. So he resolved to save his motherland and help it become a powerful country. This was the key to his becoming a Communist, because he saw this as the only way forward. *A Revolutionary Life* demonstrates the youthful Deng’s nationalist inclination during his sojourn in France even though its emphasis is somewhat different. The author tells us how Deng was the target of discrimination during his ‘Diligent Work Frugal Study’ program in Paris. This was not simply because he was a student, but also because he was one of the “yellow men” (26).

Deng’s nationalism was manifest above all in his dealing with Sino-Soviet relations. In writing about Deng’s foreign policy activity, Vogel focuses on Deng’s role in handling Sino-American relations. This is connected with the author’s emphasis on Deng’s role as a reformer which was closely linked with Sino-American relations. It was the “Soviet model” that was the target of reform. An outstanding contribution of *A Revolutionary Life* is its treatment of Deng’s role in managing Sino-Soviet relations during the 1950s and 1960s. His firmness and resoluteness in the anti-Soviet struggle not only impressed Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders, but also was an important element in his gaining Mao’s trust.

After the founding of the PRC, Deng’s role in “international affairs” began with the management of the Polish and Hungarian revolts in the autumn of 1956. He was a member of a high-level Chinese Communist delegation headed by Liu Shaoqi which visited Moscow for two-party Sino-Soviet talks on how to deal with the crisis inside the Soviet camp. Afterward he took part in the summer 1958 talks that Mao Zedong held with Soviet Ambassador Pavel Yudin and Mao’s subsequent meetings with Khrushchev. At that talk, Mao specifically informed Khrushchev of Deng’s special position within the Chinese Communist Party. In effect, Mao was saying that in dealing with the Soviet Union, Deng could best represent and express Mao’s own thoughts and proposals (192-193). Mao’s unique method must have influenced Deng Xiaoping. In fact, Deng became the main figure on the Chinese side, or at least one of the main figures, in the Sino-Soviet polemics that erupted later on. Grounding himself firmly in Mao’s theories and policies, he unleashed fierce attacks against the Soviet communists, especially against Khrushchev’s revisionism. Deng took a firm stand,

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<sup>9</sup> Deng Xiaoping, “We reform as a revolution”, October 10, 1984, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3, 81-82.

notably in the high-level two-party talks in the summer of 1963. It was these talks which basically signaled the end of consultation between the two parties and led to open polemics. It is well-worth probing deeply into the degree that Deng's experience, from helping to manage the 1956 crises in Poland Hungary to taking part in the Sino-Soviet polemics, influenced Mao's handling of Sino-Soviet affairs.

Deng's method of dealing with the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations after Mao demonstrates, on the one hand, that in the Sino-Soviet theoretical debates, he was a firm supporter and executor of Mao's policies. On the other hand, he also had important differences with Mao. In comparison with him, Deng was more of a nationalist. Put simply, Mao's opposition to Soviet 'revisionism' was rooted in a more utopian way of thinking. He thought that Khrushchev's reforms were to take the capitalist road.

Of course, Mao loathed so-called Soviet chauvinism that was displayed toward the "fraternal countries," but replacing the Soviet Union as the leader of the international Communist movement and continuing to promote the world revolution were obviously more important to him.

Deng's subsequent words and actions show that he was more inclined to oppose the Soviets for having humiliated China and for posing a threat to China's security. His 'anti-revisionism' was more a matter of following and implementing Mao's thought while his 'anti-Sovietism' accorded more with his own nationalist inclinations and was a distinctive feature of his foreign policy once he was in power.

In his talks with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in May 1989, Deng stated that both sides were at fault with regard to the theoretical dispute, but more important was that the Soviet Union had not accorded China equal treatment. This had been a problem through several periods from Tsarist times to the Soviet era. Deng stated that the humiliation inflicted on China from Russia and the Soviet Union was almost as serious as Japan's aggression from the same era and was extremely detestable.<sup>10</sup> This talk marked the normalization of relations between the two countries thirty years after they had fallen out with each other. Deng's lengthy speech was the result of very long deliberation on his part. For Deng the theoretical dispute was not significant; it was the Soviet attitude and the harm and threat it posed to China that were the real sources of the deterioration of relations between the two countries. It is appropriate to note here that studying the evolution of Deng Xiaoping's role in Sino-Soviet relations is an important field of inquiry, and it is indispensable to understanding the entirety of his life.

The story told in *A Revolutionary Life* leaves one with a deep impression. The author's account informs the reader that Deng was a colorful and very complex historical figure. This, in part, is intimately connected to the several great changes in Chinese history he lived through. The constantly changing Chinese society is what created the revolutionary who was Deng Xiaoping. Speaking objectively, it is very difficult for me to make a thorough assessment of this book, because as a critic I try my best to understand the author's intentions and logic; on the other hand, I am also a Chinese reader who wants to better understand this historical figure by reading this book. The author's philosophical remark speaks profoundly not only to me, but I believe other Chinese readers as well: "It is we, not these long-dead leaders, who require the truth" (5).

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<sup>10</sup> Deng Xiaoping: "Put the Past Behind and Open Up the Future," 16 May 1989, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3, 292-295

**Author's Response by Alexander V. Pantsov, Capital University, Ohio**

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First of all, I want to express my deep appreciation to Professors Thomas B. Bernstein, Joseph W. Esherick, and Niu Jun who found time to review the book. I am pleased that all three reviews are overall positive.

Since I did all the research and writing, whereas Steven Levine translated my Russian book in its entirety into English and cut the manuscript to comply with publisher's requirements, all the errors are mine not of my collaborator. I am glad that the reviews arrived in time to let me make corrections in the forthcoming Taiwanese translation of the book.

Many ideas expressed by the reviewers are thought provoking. I am especially impressed with Niu Jun's assertion that Chairman "Mao's opposition to Soviet 'revisionism' was rooted in a more utopian way of thinking" than Deng Xiaoping's. This is true. In his relations with the USSR, Deng was indeed "more of a nationalist" than Mao, who initially focused on the Soviet "distortion" of Leninism. However, we should also keep in mind that it was Mao Zedong who authored the Three World Theory that in fact was aimed not against Soviet 'revisionism,' but against Soviet imperialism. Also, it was the nationalist Mao who began putting forward territorial claims to the Soviet Union.

I also agree with Joseph Esherick that I should have mentioned Benjamin Yang's accusation of Deng being involved in Li Mingrui's execution, but I sidestepped it purposefully<sup>1</sup>. Yang's book is sometimes unfairly critical of Deng; in some instances it is even biased. Quite often Yang's assertions are not supported by sources. That is why I did not rely on his judgment.

On the same token, I accept Thomas Bernstein's remark that "a book claiming to be objective should not include *ex cathedra* judgments about Deng's motives, often pejorative, especially if the author does not offer other possible motivations that might have been at play." Perhaps, I should have been more cautious. However, I have to dispute Bernstein's other strong assertions.

First, I do not think that Bernstein is fair when he criticizes me for allegedly "tendentious" treatment of Professor Ezra F. Vogel's work. Vogel, of course, is a scholar as well as a writer, an author, and a policy analyst. In addition, he is also a very nice man and colleague. But Vogel is not an icon. It is unfair to suggest that my reference to Vogel as a "writer" meant that I do not think that he is a "scholar." Bernstein asks who "forced" Vogel to acknowledge that "Deng treated people like useful tools." Although Vogel is indeed very sympathetic to Deng, he must have been "forced" to do so by facts.

Second, I do not believe that Deng broke "with key aspects of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, such as the centrally planned economy." First, "the centrally planned economy" is not a key aspect of Leninism (consider Lenin's New Economic Policy). Second, under Deng the People's Republic of China's (PRC) economy was

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<sup>1</sup> See Benjamin Yang, *Deng: A Political Biography* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 69.

still centrally planned. Deng tried to combine plan and market but he never “broke” with plan. “The planned economy is our foundation and exists in combination with the market,” he asserted.<sup>2</sup>

Third, I do not understand how Bernstein can say that I did not mention that “the unprecedented famine touched the conscience of at least some leaders” since I did write that Deng and other investigators of the rural situation, “were shaken by what they saw and heard” (213).

Fourth, I do not think that I “ridicule Deng and other ‘romantics’ for tilting at ‘windmills’ by misjudging Mao’s mood.” On the contrary, I praised Deng, comparing him to the romantic Don Quixote. Deng indeed did not notice that in late 1961 Mao’s attitude towards the household contracts changed to negative because Mao did not make himself clear. That’s why Deng came up with his famous cat statement. If Deng on July 7, 1962 indeed consciously wanted to challenge Mao, he would not have cowardly called Hu Yaobang on the next day, July 8, requesting that he quickly delete a sentence about cats from the stenographic report of his speech. But he did call Hu after his meeting with Mao as soon as he learned that the Chairman in fact raged against the contract system. As I wrote in the book, the art of politics in totalitarian China, the Soviet Union, and everywhere that powerful personalities dominated the state was to understand what the ‘Boss’ really wanted at any given moment.

Fifth, I did not “fault” Deng for not expressing public support for decollectivization before May 1980. How can I fault him for this? I just tried to explain why he had not supported the peasants before. I wrote: “Deng and his supporters in Beijing remained cautious, not wanting to hand Hua and his supporters a weapon to strike them” (363). Bernstein’s statement distorts my words and meaning.

Sixth, I do not think that Bernstein is correct when he writes that in 1974-75 “Mao to a certain degree understood and supported Deng’s efforts.” (Emphasis mine.) Deng could do nothing if Mao understood and supported his efforts only “to a certain degree.” As Bernstein himself acknowledges, “the increasingly feeble Chairman . . . retained absolute power.” Niu Jun also mentions that “whenever they [Deng and other leaders] made decisions they had to consider how to deal with Mao, especially when their thinking and decisions diverged from his views and standpoint.” So in 1974-75 Mao must have supported Deng entirely, otherwise Deng could not have been successful.

Seventh, Bernstein accuses me of being “contemptuous of Deng’s many [self-humiliating] efforts to secure rehabilitation” during the Cultural Revolution. He writes: “there is a larger point to be made about Deng which seems to have eluded the author, and this was Deng’s burning ambition, determination, and impatience to be returned to a position where he could put his abilities to work on the task of building China into a modern state. This may well have been a major motivation as he submitted to Mao’s torments.” Yes, perhaps Deng indeed slavishly begged Mao to forgive him because he did want to “put his abilities to work on the task of building China into a modern state.” But then, what happened to him in 1975 when he “courageously and tenaciously evaded. . . [Mao’s] demand [to affirm that the Cultural Revolution was a success]?” Did not he any longer want to “put his abilities to work on the task of building China into a modern state?” Moreover, if we accept Bernstein’s point of view, we will go too far. Should we approve the efforts of many Old Bolsheviks to secure Stalin’s rehabilitation by all means including the betrayal of their

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<sup>2</sup> Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping wenzuan* (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping), vol. 2. (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1994), 236.

friends and family members? After all, they might also have only wanted to be returned to a position where they could put their “abilities to work on the task of building” Russia “into a modern state?” Then, should we believe that Leon Trotsky was wrong when he refused to follow their suit?

Eighth, contrary to Bernstein’s assertion, I did not write that Deng fostered “a personality cult.” I simply observed that “like many elderly leaders, he stubbornly believed in his own infallibility.” My observation is supported by people who knew Deng.

Finally, Bernstein makes a mistake writing that in 1979 “Deng already chaired the Party’s powerful Military Commission.” In fact, until June 28, 1981, the Chairman of the Central Military Commission had been Hua Guofeng. Thus Bernstein’s attempts to refute my claim that in 1979 Deng still tried “to establish total control over the military in order to gain unlimited power” hangs in the air.

At the end, I want again to thank all the reviewers as well as the H-Diplo for this very useful discussion.