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BOMBARD THE HEADQUARTERS!

The Cultural Revolution
in China

LINDA JAIVIN

'Essential ... A tour de force'
—Jianying Zha, author of
China Pop

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Pop

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‘Jaivin’s may be the shortest history of China; it’s also one of the best... an absorbing, wonderful book.’

RICHARD BERNSTEIN, author of *China 1945*

Also by Linda Jaivin

NON-FICTION

The Shortest History of China (2021)

Beijing (2014)

Found in Translation (2013)

The Monkey and the Dragon (2000)

Confessions of an S&M Virgin (1997)

New Ghosts, Old Dreams: Chinese Rebel Voices
(1992, co-edited with Geremie Barmé)

FICTION

The Empress Lover (2014)

A Most Immoral Woman (2009)

The Infernal Optimist (2006)

Dead Sexy (2000)

Miles Walker, You're Dead (1999)

Rock 'n' Roll Babes from Outer Space (1996)

Eat Me (1995)

BOMBARD THE HEADQUARTERS!

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For Geremie

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Acknowledgements

A CULTURAL REVOLUTION TIMELINE

1949	People's Republic of China founded	End of civil war; Chiang Kaishek flees to Taiwan
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1958	Great Leap Forward	Economy collapses
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1958–61	Mass famine across China	Tens of millions die; President Liu Shaoqi sidelines Mao
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May 1964	'Little Red Book'	Soldiers get their copies first
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Nov. 1965	Yao Wen Yuan critiques play by Wu Han	Sparks culture war at the heart of the Cultural Revolution
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1966

16 May	16 May Circular	Official start of the Great
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Proletarian Cultural Revolution

27 May	First Red Guards	Students swear loyalty to Mao
5 August	Mao pens 'Bombard the Headquarters'	Attacks Liu Shaoqi and other Party leaders
August	Red beginning revolutionary 'link-ups'	August, of Beijing alone, get free travel across China to spread revolution
Late 1966	Workers join the Cultural Revolution	Zhou Enlai concerned about impact on economy
1967		
January	Shanghai Commune	Short-lived experiment in 'direct democracy'
January	Army joins Cultural Revolution	Violence ramps up

January– July	Wuhan Counter- Revolutionary Incident	Factional violence involving the army peaks in Wuhan
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Sept. 1967– March 1969	Campaign against ‘Inner Mongolian People’s Party’	Persecution of non-existent party results in up to 100,000 deaths
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1968

April–July	‘Hundred Day War’	Battles between rival Red Guard factions at Tsinghua University. Workers help end the fighting, becoming the new revolutionary vanguard
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May	‘Cleansing the Class Ranks’ begins	Entire families killed in rural slaughter
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December	‘Rustication’ youth begins	of 1968–1976, 16 million students are exiled to the countryside
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1969

March	Border war with USSR	Fear of nuclear war
April	Ninth Party Congress	Cultural Revolution declared over; the killing continues
Jan. 1970	One Strike, Three Antis	New campaign that will eventually claim 200,000 lives
April 1971	'Ping Pong diplomacy'	Warming of Sino-US relations
Sept. 1971	Death of Lin Biao	Mao's successor dies in mysterious plane crash
Oct. 1971	UN recognises PRC	China in, Taiwan out
Feb. 1972	Nixon visits China	Rising trade with West
May 1975	Mao criticises 'Gang of Four'	Mao's wife Jiang Qing and her radical associates chastised

8 Jan. 1976	Death of Zhou Enlai	Nationwide mourning
April 1976	Tiananmen Incident	Mass protests
9 Sept. 1976	Death of Mao	Gang of Four soon arrested
Nov. 1978	Democracy Wall movement	Brief period of free expression
Dec. 1978	Reform Era begins	Deng Xiaoping, twice purged in Cultural Revolution, is now paramount leader
1981	Trial of Gang of Four	Jiang Qing and associates imprisoned; relatively few others held to account
1981	The Party declares Cultural Revolution a mistake	Official resolution says Mao misled by 'counter-revolutionary cliques'
2012–	New Era of Xi Jinping	Discussion of Cultural Revolution increasingly censored

CAST OF CHARACTERS

* * *

Party Leadership in Early 1966

Mao Zedong | Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, founder of the People's Republic of China

Liu Shaoqi | President of the People's Republic, Mao's chief political target in the Cultural Revolution

Lin Biao | Marshal of the People's Republic, Vice Chairman and Mao's chosen successor

Zhou Enlai | Premier of the People's Republic and first foreign minister

Deng Xiaoping | Vice Premier, Liu Shaoqi ally. Will survive purges to lead the Reform Era

Tao Zhu | Head of Central Propaganda Department, fourth in Party hierarchy in May 1966, soon purged

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Gang of Four

Jiang Qing | Mao's fourth wife (m. 1939), political operator and advocate for radical revolutionary culture

Wang Hongwen | Youngest member, worker. Reaches third place in Party hierarchy in 1973

Yao Wenyan | Author of 1965 attack on playwright Wu Han that paves way for Cultural Revolution

Zhang Chunqiao | Member of the Cultural Revolution Group, 1967 Shanghai Commune organiser

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Red Guards and Rebels

Kuai Dafu | Influential leader of Tsinghua Uni Red Guard faction

Nie Yuanzi | Author of big-character poster at Peking Uni that inspires 'Bombard the Headquarters'

Song Binbin | Leader of high-school Red Guards who murder their teacher in August 1966

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Other Notables

Chen Boda | Head of Cultural Revolution Leading Group, Mao's political secretary, ally of Lin Biao

Chen Zaidao | Regional PLA commander, leader of Million Heroes in Wuhan Incident

Kang Sheng | Mao's trusted and powerful head of security, leading member of Central Case Investigation Group

Hua Guofeng | Mao's successor, ends Cultural Revolution with help of Ye Jianying and Wang Dongxing

Qi Benyu | Propagandist, member of Cultural Revolution Leading Group,
aide to Jiang Qing

Wang Dongxing | Military commander, chief of Mao's personal bodyguard

Xie Fuzhi | Minister for Public Security from 1959–1972, member of radical
faction

Ye Jianying | Defence Minister from 1975, supports Hua Guofeng in coup
that ends Cultural Revolution

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Prominent Victims

Lao She | Beloved novelist and dramatist, People's Artist, victim of Red
Guard violence

Ulanhu | First Party Secretary of Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region

Wang Guangmei | Wife of Liu Shaoqi, Party veteran humiliated at mass
struggle session on Jiang Qing's orders

Wu Han | Deputy mayor of Beijing, historian. Author of the controversial
Hai Rui Dismissed from Office (1961)

Yu Luoke | Activist and author of 'On Class Origins', executed in 1970

Zhang Zhixin | Party member and strident critic of Mao and the Cultural
Revolution, executed in 1975

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