

---

## CHRONOLOGY

---

# The return of the Chou-Deng group

Jan. 9, 1976

**Death of Premier Chou En-lai.**

April 5, 1976

**Tien An Men incident**, in which tens of thousands of Chinese demonstrate in memory of Chou, in support of Deng, and against the Gang of Four. Demonstrators are suppressed, hundreds reported killed.

Sept. 9, 1976

**Death of Mao Tse-tung.**

Oct. 10, 1976

**Gang of Four arrested** climaxing a turbulent period that followed the death of Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung, of factional jockeying for power. Deng Xiaoping, under intense media attack in the north, fled to Guangdong and remained there under the protection of General Xu Shiyou until after Gang of Four's arrest.

July 16-21, 1977

**Third Plenum of the Tenth Party Central Committee.** Resolution passed formally restoring Deng Xiaoping to all his posts and officially expelling Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan, and Wang Hongwen from all their posts.

Aug. 12-18, 1977

**Eleventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.** Anti-Gang of Four theme prevailed throughout congress. Cultural Revolution still praised as a success. Hua Guofeng legitimized as Mao's rightful successor. Central Committee selected.

Aug. 19, 1977

**First Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee.** Main business concerned election of high-level officials. Central Committee posts:

Chairman: Hua Guofeng

Vice-Chairman: Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, Deng Xiaoping, Wang Dongxing\*

Politburo Standing Committee:

Hua Guofeng, Li Xiannian, Ye Jianying, Deng Xiaoping, Wang Dongxing\*

Politburo members:

Wei Guoqing, Ulanfu, Fang Yi, Deng Xiaoping, Ye Jianying, Liu Bocheng, Xu Shiyou, Ji Dengkui\*, Su Chenhua, Li Xiannian, Le Desheng, We De\*, Yu Qiuli, Wang Dongxing\*, Zhang Tingfa, Geng Biao, Ni Zhifu, Peng Chong, Chen Yonggui\*, Chen Xilian\*, Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen

Feb. 11-23, 1978

**Second Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee.** No officials chosen or dismissed. Business dealt primarily with preparations for the convocation of the Fifth National People's Congress (China's legislative body) including compilation of reports and drafted documents to be submitted to the NPC for examination and approval. A list of candidates for State Council and NPC Standing Committee was approved by the plenum.

Feb. 26-March 5, 1978

**First Session of the Fifth National People's Congress.** Component members of State Council chosen, ministerial posts filled.

State Council posts:

Premier: Hua Guofeng

Vice-Premier: Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiangqian, Ji Dengkui\*, Yu Qiuli, Chen Xilian\*, Geng Biao, Chen Yonggui\*, Fang Yi, Wang Zhen, Gu Mu, Kang Shien, Chen Muhua

Dec. 18-22, 1978

**Third Plenum of Eleventh Party Central Committee.** Deng associate Chen Yun elected additional vice-chairman of the Central Committee and member of Politburo Standing Committee. Hu Yaobang, Wang Zhen, and Deng Yingzhao (widow of Chou En-lai) elected additional members of the Politburo. Past criticism of Mao opponents Peng Dehuai and Tao Chu judged erroneous. Bo Yibo and Yang Shangkun also officially rehabilitated.

June 18-July 1, 1979

**Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress.** Peng Zhen elected vice-chairman of NPC Standing Committee. Formerly disgraced officials Chen Yun, Bo Yibo, and Yao Yilin appointed vice-premiers of the State Council. Vice-Premier Fang appointed president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

---

\*currently purged

September 25-28, 1979

**Fourth Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee.** Criticism of the Gang of Four remains prevailing theme. Zhao Ziyang and Peng Zhen elevated to Central Committee Politburo.

Feb. 23-28, 1980

**Fifth Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee.** Main business entailed elevation and dismissal of certain officials and discussion of the upcoming Twelfth Party Congress. Party Secretariat reestablished and filled with Deng supporters.

General Secretary: Hu Yaobang

Those appointed to Secretariat included: Hu Yaobang, Wan Li, Hu Qiaomu, Yao Yilin, Peng Chong, Yang Dezhi, Fang Yi, Gu Mu, Song Renqiong, Yu Qiuli, Wang Renzhong.

Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang appointed to Standing Committee of the Politburo.

“Whateverist” faction of Chen Xilian, Wu De, Wang Dongzong, and Ji Dengkui removed from their posts. Liu Shaoqi posthumously rehabilitated.

Plenum decided to propose to the National People’s Congress that the right to “speak out freely, air their

views fully, hold great debates, and write big character posters,” as stipulated in Article 45 of the Constitution, be deleted.

Aug. 30-Sept. 10, 1980

**Third Session of the Fifth National People’s Congress.** Resignations, appointments, and reshuffling highlighted this session of Congress.

Resigned:

Premier Hua Guofeng, replaced by Zhao Ziyang  
Vice-Premiers Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiannian, Chen Yun, Wang Zhen, Wang Renzhong, Xu Xiangqian, Chen Yonggui.

Elected:

Premier: Zhao Ziyang  
Vice-Premiers: Yang Jingren, Zhang Aiping, Huang Hua

Vice-Chairmen of the NPC Standing Committee: Peng Chong, Zi Zhongxun, Su Yu, Yang Shangkun, Bainqen Erdini Qoigy Gyaincain

Deng and his associates resigned from their posts as vice-premiers but retained their high-level party posts. This was done to make room for younger Deng supporters.

## The leader reassessed

*The Deng group’s campaign to reassess Mao and place the blame for Mao’s misdeeds on the Gang of Four and the Lin Biao group has been carried out with increasing intensity in all the organs of the Chinese media. One important example is a two-part article entitled “The Leader and the People,” published on September 18-19, 1980, in the party organ People’s Daily. The author, Li Honglin, has been previously identified as the author of significant “theoretical” articles transmitting the line of the Deng group; the name may be a pseudonym for a person or persons associated with the Academy of Social Sciences. Excerpts follow.*

During those “unprecedented” 10 years [referring to Cultural Revolution—D.S.], feudal morality was openly advocated. . . . Practice has proven that the principle “The people should be loyal to the leader” has seriously impeded the development of our society and should therefore be jettisoned and replaced by the principle “The leader should be loyal to the people.” . . .

But in those 10 years, practicing the personality cult was the sign of utmost revolutionary spirit. To clean up this garbage today, a considerable amount of work has to be done. We must particularly guard against some people’s attempts to highlight the “pol-

itics” of personality cult under new historical conditions. When others want to reduce publicity on individuals, they accuse them of “belittling the leader” because people “with deep proletarian sentiments” like them cannot stand it. . . . They are just bent on finding fault because they disagree with the principles laid down during the Third Plenary Session of the Central Committee.

Seeking truth from facts and recognizing that the leader grows up in practice and that he has made indelible historical contributions and also has unavoidable shortcomings and mistakes—this is the only way to really defend the leader’s image that will not dampen the masses’ faith in him. . . .

Since the leader’s own power is given to him by the people, of course he has no power to designate his “successor” because the position does not belong to him. [This is a clear reference to Mao’s designation of Chairman Hua Guofeng as his successor—D.S.] . . .

If the party’s principle of collective leadership is always upheld, then the departure or staying of individual leaders will not affect the stability of the group of leaders. In other words, it will not affect unity and stability. If we can uphold this principle in the political life of the party and the country, such heavy feudal legacies as “one leader,” the “lifetime tenure system,” and “the individual designating his successor” can all be put in the museum of history.