

## **EIR** Special Report

# When will Deng's dynasty collapse?

by Richard Katz

China is crossing the threshold into the most violent era of political turmoil since the "ten terrible years" of Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution.

Back in November 1980—as the Carter administration and Kissingerites in the Reagan camp joined in a chorus of praise for the new China of Deng Xiaoping—*EIR* wrote, "the myth will fail . . . the reality of China is not a future of stability and unity but of broad-scale instability and increasing tension within the leading circles of the Chinese leadership . . . The crucial factor is the economic strategy presently pursued by Deng: at best a short-term boost in living standards, a boost that will soon be undermined by the failure to improve the basic productivity of the Chinese economy. . . . At that point Deng's incapacity to actually eliminate the other centers of power in China . . . will assert itself. That point may come sooner than many expect."

Little more than a year later, that point has arrived. Abandoning his previous careful easing out of opponents, the 77-year-old Deng is now feverishly trying to purge all opponents. Any person or institution opposing Deng's pogroms against industry or his "de-Maoization" campaign is a target. In the first weeks of the purge that began in January, 1,000 top officials and army officers were ousted. 200,000 officials and upwards of 2 to 3 million party members (out of 39 million) are on the chopping block. Entire commissions (super-ministries) devoted to capital construction, energy, machine-building and agriculture will simply be dissolved. The army, a bastion of anti-Deng factions still committed to China's industrialization, has already had its personnel reduced by 800,000, a full 20 percent.

This purge cannot succeed. Should Deng survive long enough to push the purge as extensively as he plans, China may very well see once again the tank, jet, and infantry battles that marked the Cultural Revolution. Ten million people were killed in that power struggle. Rumors that Deng has already lost and been put on the shelf are premature at the time of this writing, but this is the most likely ultimate outcome.

If China's political crisis were the result of a simple power struggle, one might expect China to return to a phase of relative "stability and harmony" following some factional bloodletting. What makes the current factional



*Deng's adherence to 2,000-year-old labor-intensive methods has brought China to economic catastrophe.*

crisis more fundamental is that it intersects with, and arises out of, a profound economic and social crisis reminiscent of the cataclysmic "dynastic cycle" collapses China has experienced over the millennia.

Though, up to now, Deng has opposed Mao's method of constant political upheaval, he has made the disaster of Maoist economics even worse. Deng's factory shutdowns have caused absolute drops in the production of goods essential for industry and modern agriculture. At a time of severe floods and droughts, Deng has outlawed additional water control projects. Deng is now planning to cut the state's consumer subsidies, which have kept 250 million people on the level of mere malnutrition rather than starvation.

The Deng faction is quite aware that its policies make it impossible for China to support its population. Deng's answer is a steadfast commitment *to reduce China's population by 300 million by the middle of the next century.* This population reduction is to be carried out through the one-child per family law, and the regime does not shirk forced abortion or even murder to implement it.

Yet, just as in the case of the depopulation of Kampuchea under Peking-puppet dictator Pol Pot, the population drop in China is much more likely to occur in a chaotic whirlpool of famine, disease, and social breakdown, than as a result of disciplined "family planning." Peking estimates that 20 million people died in the 1958-61 famine caused by Mao's Great Leap Forward. The tally of the coming years could dwarf that.

Economic policies resulting in mass depopulation are the hallmark of the dynastic cycle collapses China experienced in previous eras. As then, the Chinese population

now is responding with resistance to the regime. For the first time since the 1976 rampage of the Gang of Four, workers' strikes have broken out. Mutinies have occurred among both veterans and active duty soldiers, including the formation of "secret armies." Reports of a wave of organized crime, drug-peddling, terrorism, looting of mines and factories, and prostitution now dominate the Chinese press. Sometimes Communist Party members lead the crime wave.

This social unrest has created alarm among both orthodox Communists and more rational civilian-military coalitions favoring heavy industry. Both are trying to stop Deng before his actions threaten the very basis of Communist rule. In turn, Deng is frantically trying to destroy them before the social rebellion against his policies gives his opponents the opportunity to remove him.

If Deng's opponents had a viable policy, the social crisis could be resolved simply with the ouster of Deng and his replacement by the heavy industry faction. However, as shown by the 1977-79 era under Hua Guofeng, it is not clear that they know how to manage China.

China faces a crisis as serious as any of the great social cataclysms of past centuries precisely because all factions of its leadership adhere to the same anti-technology, anti-urban ideology that marked virtually every previous regime. There is no clear alternative in the wings. The future seems to hold nothing but more misery for that unhappy land. One side effect is that the China Card, if it ever existed, is dead.

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*This special report was prepared with the indispensable collaboration of one of the world's leading China watchers.*