

# The chairman's "little red book"

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This would have happened in any case, but Ghana Yummy (who directed last year's Opening Ceremony and will be choreographing the Pro's 60th birthday part in October) is doing something to make doubly sure that the commentaries flow. As fond of sequels as any Hollywood director, he'll be back at the Bird's Nest On 08/08/09 putting On a lavish version Of 'Tornado,' the same Puccini opera that he once staged at the Forbidden City. But instead of waiting for another six months to pass and the first arias to be sung in the Bird's Nest Stadium (where the surreal soundtrack on my visit as a tourist last November was nothing but soft-rock Carpenters' tunes), I'm getting a jump on things by irking the half-year anniversary of the Games (it's been just over six months since the August 24 Closing Ceremonies) with this preliminary effort to consign the 2008 Olympics to history. I'll stress two things that stand out about its international aspects six months on. (For those interested in its important domestic impact, see the longer version of this essay that appeared earlier this week at the invaluable-to professional historians and also simply the historically-minded-History News Network website. ) My first point is that the Games should be seen as a part of an ongoing, ambitious, ND so far partially successful rebinding effort on the part of the ICP. China's leaders had varied goals visas-;-visas the Games, including many that were purely designed to play to constituencies within the PRE, but clearly they hoped to convince the world that the country they rule: a) can pull off thoroughly modern events (hence the high-tech stadiums); b) does not pose a threat to the international order (hence the "One World, One Dream" slogan); and c) is a place ethnic Chinese living elsewhere should feel free to identify with-however they felt about Mao

(hence the use of a quote from the Analects" of Confucius but nothing from the Chairman's " Little Red Book" during the Opening Ceremony). Why consider this drive only partially successful? Well, the Games definitely left many television viewers around the world convinced that Beijing can put on a thoroughly modern show, but not necessarily sure this is a comforting development.

The lines of drummers drumming on 08/08/08, for instance, had their worrying side to many viewers—as illustrated, satirically, in an October episode of the cartoon show " South Park" (now a popular download) that incorporates images from the Opening Ceremonies into a character's nightmares about an impending Chinese invasion of the United States. The Olympics certainly did help encourage overseas Chinese to identify with the country, due partly to the nods toward " traditional" imagery on 08/08/08. It is important, though, to place this into a long-term perspective that began well before the start and is lasting beyond the conclusion of the Games. At least as important as anything in Ghana Whimsy's show has been Begging's establishment of " ConfUCiUS Institutes" in different parts of the world, and Huh Jingo's oft-repeated claim that promoting social ' harmony" is the new watchword of a Party that under Mao emphasized the importance of class struggle. The second thing that stands out six months on is that commentators paid too little attention last year to one illuminating historical analogy: that between the Beijing Games and the Tokyo Games of 1964. Similarities between China and Japan's first Olympics harmonistically mentioned last year, but much more was said about other analogies for Beijing 2008, especially Seoul 1 988 (the favored point of reference of those

who thought it good China was hosting the Games) and Berlin 1936 (the favored point of reference of those who thought it was bad for such an authoritarian country to have gotten the nod from the International Olympic Committee). The Seoul and Berlin analogies had some explanatory value, but in retrospect neither seems nearly as apt as Tokyo 1964—especially since there are no indications that China's now moving toward either political liberalizing a la South Korea (there's actually been a post-Olympic tightening of political controls) or military expansion under a charismatic leader a la Nazi Germany (keeping control at home seems enough of a challenge at present, especially with the global economic downturn). Like Japan in the past, on the other hand, the PRC is rising in global economic importance, lacks a clearly articulated and consistent official ideology, and has leaders eager to convince the world to focus on their country's current aspirations and abilities and forget a dark period in its recent past (hence no allusions to the Great Leap Forward or Cultural Revolution in the upbeat Opening Ceremonies).

There's also a nice parallel between Japan and China relating to symbols of modernity: the Tokyo Games are associated with the first bullet trains, the Beijing ones with a state-of-the-art airport. And an even nicer one regarding each country's efforts to use a second mega-event to carry forward the rebinding drive showcased at its first Summer Games. Just as 1970 Osaka Expo (Japan's first World's Fair) followed on the heels of the Tokyo Games, the upcoming Shanghai Expo (China's first World's Fair) is coming soon (something that, as with the Beijing Games before it, though generally without the same

level Of excitement or outrage, some are looking forward to and others viewing with great skepticism).

And est.. Anyone miss the connection between the Beijing and Shanghai mega- events, the latter has its own countdown clocks and its own rosy slogan (" Better City, Better Life"), and it is being billed as an " Economic Olympics" that, like the athletic one of six months ago, will show off the sleek new look of a thoroughly modern metropolis.

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Features HEN Videos Student Shortcuts Sunday, March 1, 2009 - 18: 25 The Beijing Games Six Months On Jeffrey N. Wassermann Mr...Wassermann is a Professor of History at US Irvine whose recent books include, as author, *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010: A History in Fragments* (Rutledge) and, as co-editor, *China in 2008: A Year of Great Significance* (Rowan & Littlefield), which comes out in March and deals at length with the Beijing Games.

Predictions relating to China are notoriously dangerous to make. Still, here's a safe one: come August 8, the one-year anniversary of the Beijing Games, lots of commentaries will appear that ask questions like these: What did the Games mean for China? Did they alter the country's global image? Should London even try to compete with the glitz and grandeur of venues like the Bird's Nest and spectacles such as Ghana Whimsy's 08/08/08 extravaganza? These questions would have been asked no matter what, but there's a special reason we'll hear them next summer. On 08/08/09, at the Bird's Nest, Ghana Yummy will stage a lavish version of "Tornado," the Puccini opera he's put on before, most famously across the capital at the Forbidden City.

Rather than wait for the August arias, I want to beat the retrospectives rush by marking the half-year anniversary of the end of the Games (the Closing Ceremonies took place last August 24) with a preliminary stab at consigning the Olympics to history. Here are five things that stand out 6 months on: 1) The Games already seem part of a bygone era. So much has happened since that it is hard to believe sometimes that it was just six months ago that the world's attention was riveted on Beijing. We've seen Lehman Brother's fail, stock markets tumble, Obama elected, Haiti attacked. There's been a

tainted milk crisis in China, a tainted peanut butter scandal in the U. S. , and clashes between police and protesters in Iceland and Thailand.

And above all, growth rates have plummeted, unemployment rates soared, stimulus plans debated and implemented. The Opening Ceremonies of last August, which began with nods to Confucius and other symbols of the distant past, now can feel like ancient history. 2) And yet, in other ways, the Games stubbornly refuse to recede from view. In China, conversely, it can feel in some settings as though the Olympics haven't really ended. The cutesy mascots known as Fu-wei remain on display in a Bird's Nest that has become a major tourist draw. Many nearby buildings with less dramatic ties to the Games still boast banners touting their Olympic roles (or at least did when I was there in November).

And in Shanghai (where only a few soccer matches took place last August, there's been a concerted effort to make the 2008 magic last through 2010. That's when the city gets its own mega-event, a World Expo, which will be China's first World's Fair but is mostly being touted to under that catchy title but as an " Economic Olympics" instead. The Expo to come is also being promoted through uses of mascots, emblems, countdown clocks, and educational materials that bring to mind the pre-08/08/08 lead-up to the Beijing Games.

In other parts of the world, though memories of the Games certainly aren't as fresh as in China, popular culture has been keeping them alive in some curious ways. Sega's " Mario ; Sonic at the Olympic Games," created for Nintendo's Wii game system and replete with eye-catching images of the

Bird's Nest, for example, has sold well in Europe, North America, and Japan. Exactly two months after the Opening Ceremonies, the cult cartoon "South Park" aired "The China Problem" (now a popular download from the web), an episode in which iconic images from 08/08/08 (like lines of drummers drumming) figure centrally in a character's nightmares of a Chinese invasion. And U. S.

Promos for the latest edition of the "Amazing Race" reality television show are featuring shots of the Bird's Nest where the Great Wall or Forbidden City would previously have appeared. 3) The Games were an ambitious, partly successful, international rebinding effort. The Chinese government had varied international goals vis-a-vis the Games. Three key ones were to present the PRE as the following things: modern, not to be feared, and a place that ethnic Chinese living in different countries can identify with—however they once felt about Mao or now feel about the Chairman's successors. The Games and subsequent global commentary point to the need for a mixed assessment of this three-pronged effort. The venues and spectacles definitely left many viewers around the world with a powerful sense that Beijing definitely can do modern. The event was less successful at creating a sense that this is not a source of concern— as it was not only "South Park" characters who found nightmarish some parts of the "One World, One Dream" Olympics, and many things happened before and during the Games (acts of censorship and repression, for example) that reinforced negative ideas about the PRE as a highly controlled, oppressive state.



As for encouraging overseas Chinese to identify with the country, the Games probably had some positive impact. This was due in part to the nod toward "traditional" imagery (though it is easy to think of reasons Chinese women, inside and outside of the PRC, would be hesitant about warming to a revival of Confucianism, given its patriarchal past tendencies). But it is important to think of this side of the rebinding drive in a long-term way: the process began before the Games, via efforts such as Beijing establishment of "Confucius Institutes" in different parts of the world, and was evidenced more by support for the torch run than by anything that happened last August. ) The Olympics were also part of a domestic rebinding drive. The Chinese government was even more concerned with using the event to burnish its reputation at home.

Here, a different sort of reputation effort is underway. In this undertaking, the until-recently-officially-despised but now-again-celebrated Confucius figures as well. The goal is to encourage the populace to see the Communist Party as returning China to world power status, overseeing economic growth which has already benefited some and will eventually benefit all citizens, and has leaders who care about ordinary people (à la Confucian ideals).

The Olympics helped with the first part of this goal, through bringing so many world leaders to the Bird's Nest and so forth. As for the other parts, the situation is much more mixed. Just as there were hinges that took place during the Olympics that breathed new life into enduring negative foreign ideas about China's political system, many events that occurred around the time of the Games that inadvertently reinforced domestic images of the

country's leaders as out of touch with the concerns of ordinary people (such as those displaced to make room for Olympic venues), corrupt, and unwilling to come clean quickly when they make mistakes. In the end, how the regime weathers the current economic storms will matter more than anything Olympic-related in determining whether the Communist party pulls off its latest effort at domestic repositioning. Most dangerous for it will be if a widespread feeling develops that those who have not already benefited from high growth rates, rather than still waiting their turn, will never get the chance to do so. 5) Of all the historical analogies in play around 08/08/08, the Tokyo 1964 one is best.

During the lead-up to the Chinese Games, it sometimes seemed that there was someone, somewhere ready to compare the Beijing Games to each previous Olympian. Those hopeful about the impact of the Olympics liked to refer to Seoul 1988, arguing that just as South Korea had democratic around the time of its Games, China would do the same. Critics, meanwhile, brought up the specter of Berlin 1936. When there was talk of possible boycotts, this inspired analogies with Moscow 1980 and LA. 1984. The notion that a dramatic protest would take place in the Bird's Nest brought Mexico 1968 to mind. And so on.

Many of these points of reference had some explanatory value, but in retrospect the analogy that stands out most is Tokyo. This is because Japan in 1964, like China in 2008, was a country rising rapidly in global economic importance, with political leaders eager to convince the world to focus more on their country's current aspirations and abilities than on a dark period in its

relatively recent past. And there is a neat parallel between the most enduring symbol of the Tokyo Olympics, the Bullet Train, and hypermedia Beijing structures linked to 2008, including the capital's state-of-the-art new airport. A final parallel, which underscores the need to think of the Chinese Olympic effort as not really having ended, has to do with what Japan did to follow up and extend the impact of Tokyo 1964.

In 1970, it hosted the Osaka World Expo, the first World's Fair held in Asia— completing a two-step relay of just the sort that China will conclude when the countdown clocks for the Shanghai World's Fair hit zero on May Day of 2010.

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Olympian | The “ Dancing Beijing” emblem, depicting Chinese seal inscribed

with the character ‘ citing” from the name of the host city, in the form of a

dancing figure. | Host city | Beijing, China | Motto | One World, One Dream

Nations participating 204 No's | Athletes participating 10, 942 (4, 637

women, 6, 305 | Events | 302 in 28 sports | Opening ceremony | August 8 |

Closing ceremony | August 24 | Officially opened by | President Huo Weimin |

Athlete's Oath | Ghana Wining | Judge's Oath Hang Living | Olympic Torch |

Lie Inning | Stadium Beijing National Stadium | This article contains

Chintziest.

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Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other consolidated of Chinese characters. I Part off series on I 2008 Summer Olympics[show] The 2008 Summer Olympic Games, officially known as theses of the XIX Olympian, was a major international mufti-sport event that took place unbending, China, from August 8 to 24, 2008. [a] A total of 1 0, 942 athletes from 204 National Olympic Committees (No's) competed in 28 sports and 302 events (a total of one event more than the schedule of the 2004 Games). China became the 22nd nation to host the Olympic Games and the 1 8th to old a Summer Olympic Games. It was the third time that the Summer Olympic Games were held in Asia, after Tokyo, Japan, in Andean Seoul, South Korea, in 1988.

The equestrian events were held in Hong Kong, making it the third time the events Of the same Olympics were held under the jurisdiction Of two different No's[b], while sailing was contested in Kingdom, and footballers took place in several different cities. Beijing was awarded the Games over four competitors on July 1 3, 2001, having won an absolute majority of votes from members of the International Olympic Committee (OIC) after two rounds of vote Eng. 2] The Government of the People's Republic of Compartment the Games and invested heavily in new facilities and transportation systems. A total of 37 venues were used to host the events, including 12 constructed specifically for use at the Games. The official logo of these Olympic Games, titled " Dancing Beijing", featured a stylized calligraphic character jinn (H, meaning capital), referring to the host city. Media outlets reported unprecedented audience interest in the Games, and

these Olympics had the largest television audience in Olympic history to date,[3] an achievement later surpassed by the 2012 Games.

4]Some politicians and non-governmental organizations criticized the choice of China as Olympic host because of the country's human rights and protests by pro-Tibetan independence activists and critics of China's human rights record marred the international portion of the Olympic torch relay. There were 43 world records and 132 Olympic records set at the 2008 Summer Olympics.