CHAPTER 11

Deng Yingchao (1904–1992): A Feminist Leader in the Chinese Communist Party

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Deng Yingchao began her feminist activism in the May Fourth movement in 1919, when she was only fifteen years old. Her feminist commitment followed her long journey through the vicissitudes of the Chinese Communist Revolution in the first half of the twentieth century and socialist state-building after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) became the state power holder in 1949. This chapter discusses historical moments in which this preeminent communist leader of the Chinese women's movement played a crucial role in advancing women's social, cultural, economic, and political progress, highlighting Deng's political talent and explaining how in the early 1980s she came to occupy the highest position a woman ever held in the People's Republic of China. Deng's accomplishments and frustrations will be analyzed as part of a broader examination of the relationship between feminism and the Communist Revolution in China. The chapter is based on Deng's own writings throughout her long revolutionary journey, official documents that record her role in various policy-making processes, and recollections of her comrades as well as biographies and documentary films of her life.

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A Young Feminist Joined the Communist Party

Deng Yingchao was only seven years old when her father, a military commander of the late Qing Dynasty stationed in Nanning, Guangxi, died of illness in banishment. Her widowed mother raised and educated Deng with income from her employment as a Chinese herb medicine doctor, an elementary school teacher, and a private tutor at various locations while migrating from the south to the north of China. Insisting on self-reliance and courageously maintaining dignity in poverty and hardship, Deng's mother was her first and the most beloved role model in Deng's life. At a tender age Deng became a little helper to her mother, demonstrating a maturity above average child. In 1915, an eleven-year-old Deng passed the entrance exam with excellent scores and was admitted to the preparatory course of the No. One Women's Normal School in Tianjin with full scholarship. In the following years Deng was ranked among the top five students and was a lively activist for student affairs in this prestigious school training women teachers for elementary schools. It was in her senior year when the May Fourth movement broke out.[1]

A major historical event in modern China, a nationwide student movement emerged after learning of the great powers intention to sign the Versailles Treaty after World War I, stipulating the transfer of all of Germany's rights in Shandong province in China to Japan. The news agitated Beijing students and citizens to protest on May 4, 1919, and sparked subsequent mass demonstrations against imperialism nationwide. The news reached Tianjin, a coastal city adjacent to Beijing, the following day. Deng Yingchao and some of her schoolmates immediately responded to Beijing students' call for "punishing the traitors" (the officials of the warlord government who were inclined to sign the treaty) and "rejecting the Versailles treaty" by organizing their own mass demonstrations as well as forming the Association of Tianjin Students and The Society of Tianjin Women Patriots. Deng played a leading role in various actions, including confronting police violence in protests, giving public speeches, publishing newspapers, and staging public performances as a new form of disseminating new ideas. With the active participation of female students, the patriotic movement acquired a distinctive gender dimension instantly. As Deng recalled in her recollections of the May Fourth written in 1949:

> Along with the May Fourth patriotic movement, a women's emancipation movement occurred that played a major part in the May Fourth demonstration movement. It raised issues like "equality between men and women," "opposition to arranged marriage," "open socializing between men and women," "freedom to love," "freedom to marriage," "coeducation in universities," "all institutions open to female employment," and so on. In Tianjin, the first thing we did was to combine previously separate organizations of male and female students into one and work together.[2]

What Deng described in this short passage were the major demands of the May Fourth feminism that built on the critiques of traditional gender practices and norms by the New Culture Movement launched by Chinese culture radicals in 1915. Now arranged marriage, gender-segregated social space and institutions, and chastity as the highest value for women were all rejected by the May Fourth feminists. As the first large cohort of educated women, approximately in the thousands living mostly in big cities, they demanded autonomy in their personal lives and equality in education, employment, and political participation. The patriotic student movement served as a vehicle for young women students to trespass into the male space legitimately. Deng was among those brave young feminists who recognized the historical opportunity of crossing gender boundaries and the mixed-gender student union they formed was the first one in China. By mid-1922, the high tide of May Fourth feminist agitations witnessed the rise of a nationwide organized feminist movement in the context of the parliamentary preparation for a national constitution. Deng became the head of the Tianjin branch of *Nüquan yundong tongmenghui* (the Feminist Movement Association, FMA) and was elected as one of the two representatives of the branch to send a feminist petition to the parliament in Beijing in December. The petition included the seven demands in the nationally publicized Declaration of the Feminist Movement Association:

1. Open all the educational institutions in the country to women.
2. Ensure that women and men equally enjoy the rights of the people in the constitution.
3. According to the principle of equality between men and women, revise civil laws relating to husband and wife, parents and children, inheritance, property, and behavior.
4. Base the marriage law on the principle of equality between men and women.
5. Add to the criminal law clauses about "the age of consent" for marriage and stipulate that "taking a concubine is bigamy."
6. Prohibit prostitution, the sale of maids, and binding women's feet.
7. Make protective legislation for working women according to the principles of equal pay for equal work and protecting women.[3]

The FMA's goals reveal an affinity with socialist feminist ideas circulating globally at the time. Different from a culturally specific emphasis on addressing Chinese gender norms (gender segregation and foot-binding) and marriage system (arranged marriage and polygamy), protecting working women's rights and demanding equal pay for equal work were two issues that did not originate in a largely agrarian Chinese society in 1922 but were obvious imports from abroad. Indeed, the Chinese Communist Party had just been founded in secrecy in 1920 with the assistance from the Russian Communist Party, and

disseminating socialist and Marxist texts was one of the CCP's major efforts in this early stage of its inception. Socialism increasingly attracted the attention of many May Fourth student activists who were disillusioned with Western imperialist countries and began to take the Soviet Union as the model for China's future. Deng Yingchao was among these student activists who became left-oriented in this period. In addition to condemning the patriarchal family and arranged marriage, concern for the misery of working-class people in an exploitative capitalist economic system began to appear in Deng's writings. In April 1923, Deng and her feminist friends established a new society, *Nüxingshe* (Society of Women Stars), advocating socialist ideas about women's issues by publishing a bi-weekly journal, *Nüxing* (Women Stars). Deng served as the head of the executive office of the society and an editor of the journal as well. The mission statement of the society declared:

(a) Make locally grounded efforts to rescue oppressed women.
(b) Propagate the revolutionary spirit that women should have.
(c) Make great efforts to seek awakened women to join the proletarian revolutionary movement.[4]

The Introduction to the inaugural issue of *Nüxing* further elaborated the goal of a "proletarian revolution" as envisioned by the founders of the journal, that is, pursuing equality of both gender and class:

> All the people with revolutionary ideas must understand the necessity to support the oppressed to oppose the oppressor. The laborers provide the human race clothing, food, and housing but are abused and degraded. All should know this is inequality. Women constitute half of the human race but do not have any rights that they should enjoy. They are only used, manipulated, and confined. Where is "equality" here?

After these impassioned opening statements, the authors then noted the emerging labor movement and feminist movement since the previous year and acknowledged the existence of powerful reactionary forces that oppressed labor and women. Articulating the rationale for centering on women's oppression in *Nüxing*, interestingly, the authors emphasized that "besides being preyed upon by the propertied class, women are simultaneously oppressed by the old ethical norms and patriarchal system. Therefore, the pains women have suffered are more than doubled in comparison to that of laborers." Such pains were substantiated by the authors' authentic subjective experiences as they claimed in the next sentence, "because we have constantly felt such pains in various forms, we have long been driven by the conscience of wanting to do something significant."[5]

Gender oppression grounded in the Chinese patriarchal system, therefore, not only intersected with class oppression but also served as the foundation for these educated young women to desire a "proletarian revolution" that

held the promise of a radical transformation of the "old society." Here Deng and her feminist friends echoed the critiques and visions of He Yingzhen (ca. 1884–1920?), a Chinese feminist theorist who had advocated socialism, feminism, and anarchism in the first decade of the twentieth century. He Yingzhen emphasized the foundational nature of gender hierarchy in the Chinese hierarchical system and power relations and insisted on the necessity of a feminist revolution accompanying an economic revolution that would eliminate private ownership in order to achieve women's emancipation.[6] A generation apart, Deng and her friends who founded *Nüxing* did not seem to be aware of feminist forerunner He Yingzhen, with whom they nonetheless shared a strikingly similar set of ideas and terminology. Their writing illustrates how the Chinese patriarchal system and gender constraints in the early twentieth century prepared educated young women's eager embrace of socialist ideas in the context of rising socialist movements globally.

Deng joined the Socialist Youth League in January 1924 and a year later became a CCP member. By this time she had risen to be a nationally recognized feminist leader with the publications of *Nüxing* and a women's daily, running schools for training women activists, and organizing various gatherings and mass demonstrations ranging from demanding legal punishment for perpetrators of domestic violence, a memorial service for Soviet leader V.I. Lenin, who died in January 1924, promoting women's participation in the National Assembly, commemorating March 8, International Women's Day, and May 1, Labor Day, protesting against imperialism after the massacre of Shanghai worker protesters by British police on May 30, 1925, and so on. All these activities were conducted while she worked as a school teacher since her graduation from the Women's Normal School at age sixteen. After Deng led the eight hundred thousand Tianjin people's mass demonstration against British and Japanese imperialist violence, calling for a citywide strike of all walks of Tianjin citizens in support of Shanghai workers' resistance in June 1925, she was blacklisted by the Tianjin authority. Leading this large-scale demonstration in support of Shanghai workers revealed Deng's political identity since this nationwide anti-imperialist campaign had been organized by the underground CCP. Wanted by the police, Deng had to escape from Tianjin in early July 1925.

Feminist Efforts in the Communist Revolution

On an order from the CCP, Deng Yingchao left Tianjin for Guangzhou, the center of the National Revolution launched by the first alliance between the Nationalist Party (NP) and the CCP in 1924. Upon arriving in Guangzhou, Deng married the young man she had fallen in love with back in 1919 when both were student activist leaders in Tianjin: Zhou Enlai (1898–1976). Zhou Enlai had just returned from a work and study program in France where he joined a small overseas Chinese communist group in 1921, and was now the director of the political department of the Military Academy founded in the

National Revolution that aimed to unify a China divided by warlords. The young couple began their life-long companionship that would endure many political crises and life-threatening episodes in the following half century. Deng became a career revolutionary in Guangzhou, where she was assigned to assist He Xiangning, a senior female NP member in charge of the Women's Department (in Russian, *Zhenotdel*), to lead the women's movement in the National Revolution. Modeling after the Russian Communist Party that supported the National Revolution, the NP was restructured under the supervision of Comintern agent Mikhail Markovich Borodin. The *Zhenotdel*, a creation by the leader of the Soviet women's movement, Alexandra Kollontai, was thus transplanted in the NP's structure. A budgeted Women's Department at all levels of Party branches was established to lead the women's movement.

Besides training local women activists and mobilizing women workers and peasants to participate in the National Revolution, Deng played a major role in drafting "The Resolution on the Women's Movement" by the Second National Congress of the NP in 1926, that provided guidance to the women's movement nationwide during the coalition of the NP and the CCP.[7] The Resolution blended the May Fourth feminist agenda with the priorities of the National Revolution, that is, it called on women from all walks of life to join the National Revolution while reiterating the May Fourth feminist demands for women's emancipation, with additional emphasis on the needs of women workers and peasants. The inclusive nature of the Resolution combined with the resources from institutionalized Women's Departments effectively expanded the scope of women's participation in various programs organized by feminists in both the CCP and the NP. Deng Yingchao actively reached out to non-party affiliated feminist organizations in Guangdong province, such as the Feminist Movement Alliance and Guangdong Women's Liberation Association, as collaborators in this period. Working closely with feminists of all political shades, Deng rapidly extended her social networks and further honed her leadership capacity.[8]

The breakup of the NP-CCP alliance in 1927 drastically changed the political environment for a booming women's movement in the regions affected by the National Revolution. The NP began a violent purge of CCP members, who all suddenly became political fugitives. Deng Yingchao went into hiding in Guangzhou after a difficult labor resulting in her baby's death, while Zhou Enlai was placed on the top of the NP's wanted list after he led a workers' uprising in Shanghai in 1927. In the decade following the failure of the coalition, the couple either conducted underground work in cities now under the NP's rule or went to the CCP's newly established military bases in the rural mountains, sometimes working together, sometimes apart with different assignments from the Party. When the CCP's military retreated from their southern Base Areas in 1934, Deng was very ill with tuberculosis. Being carried on a stretcher or on a horseback, Deng miraculously survived the Long March, a torturous military retreat that lasted a year. It was not until

the second coalition of the NP and CCP formed in 1937 when Deng recovered her health and resumed her political activities as a leader of the women's movement on the national stage.[9]

The NP and CCP formed their second alliance to fight against the Japanese invasion that seriously threatened China's national survival by 1937. It was legitimate for CCP members to openly engage in resistance efforts now both in its rural Base Areas and in the NP-controlled urban areas. Deng resumed her national prominence by working together with leading feminists in the urban areas in and outside the NP to form coalitions for mobilizing women to join the national salvation efforts. Wartime activities such as setting up a national Children's Protection Committee to rescue refugee children, running night schools for women workers, creating workshops for women activists' capacity trainings, and so on, not only responded to the wartime humanitarian needs but increased the CCP's reach and presence nationwide. Many a young women joined the CCP in the resistance efforts and many were personally identified by Deng for leadership positions when the CCP took over the state power in 1949.[10]

By the time of Japan's defeat in August 1945, the CCP, assisted by the Soviet Union, had risen as a formidable political and military rival of the NP with the rapid expansion of Red Base Areas during the war. To gain further support from the peasantry in the Base Areas, the CCP began land reform in 1946.[11] Astutely sensing the historical opportunity to insert women's equal rights into the CCP's central agenda of land redistribution, Deng strategized a series of maneuvers behind the scenes to ensure the acceptance of her proposal by the CCP's all-men leading body convening at the National Conference on Land in the summer of 1947. Although a Women's Committee in charge of the women's movement had long been institutionalized in the CCP, this branch of the Party's work was defined as an advisory unit without either policy-making or executive power. It would gain some resources and support from the male party officials usually when women were needed for the CCP's prioritized agenda, or, in the CCP's terminology, "the central task." Fully aware of the existence of gender hierarchy and sexism in the CCP, Deng at this point consciously developed strategies to integrate a pro-women item in "the central task" in order to promote women's rights and benefits. In a talk to the Central Women's Committee on May 25, 1948, Deng elaborated on this strategy of integrating women's interests in the central task. The detailed minutes that record Deng's important talk enable the historian to catch a glimpse of her crucial maneuvers at this critical moment when land reform policies were being developed. Deng instructed the Women's Committee to assist with general policies and ongoing campaigns and issues; only in this way "will our suggestions be timely and be considered by *others*" (italics mine, WZ). Timing was especially important.

> In general, we should proceed with a consideration of the effect, not with our subjective enthusiasm. When we estimate that a suggestion will not be accepted,

> we should rather postpone it. At the same time, we should grab the right moment. That is, we should be cooperative, have a focus, foster, and prepare for the right moment. A suggestion will be effective only when the time is ripe and we calculate *others* may accept it.

Following these instructions, Deng gave a concrete example of an effective intervention by the Women's Committee. The resolution of the land reform conference in 1947 included the importance of women-work after a long period of silence on this subject by the Central Committee. Deng explains how that happened:

1. At the time of the retreat from Yan'an, assisting in land reform, [we] asked the Central Committee in its telegraph to local branches to request that they pay attention to women-work and collect material on women.
2. Before the opening of the land reform conference, [we] first sent a notice to each representative, asking if they brought the material on women and telling them [we] hope they would include women-work in their land reform work report to the conference.
3. [We] organized talks by representatives. Therefore, of twenty-nine people reporting on their work, nineteen talked about their women-work and mentioned the importance of women-work.
4. [My] own speech was after the nineteen representatives' talks. This is much more powerful than if I had shouted and yelled all by myself.
5. After the land conference, [we] held a meeting of the Women's Committee, sent out a telegraph drafted by five WC members, and published a newspaper editorial on the subject.
6. To further improve and consolidate our work, [we] proposed to hold a conference on women-work in December.[12]

Significantly, in the Chinese text the sentence describing each action is without a subject, which I note in my translation with square brackets. Intentionally or not, the speaker was covering up her role behind the scenes by leaving out the subject of action. Agency is nevertheless expressed in the Chinese text in conveying a clear sense of careful plotting, a tone of secrecy, and a marginalized subject engaged in a subversive act. Similarly revealing in Deng's language is that she often used "others" to refer to male power holders. Even though the whole talk was "politically correct," in the sense that Deng emphasized that women-work had to be a part of the whole of the Party's central work, the use of "others" obviously indicates the presence of a gender awareness of "us" vs. "them."

Deng Yinchao's political moves behind the scenes during the land reform policy-making process, an example of what I have referred to elsewhere as "politics of concealment," succeeded in the inclusion of women in the CCP's prioritized agenda.[13] The Base Areas witnessed a drastic increase in rural

women's participation in land reform and obtaining equal rights in land redistribution. Many rural women acquired a formal name for the first time in their life during the land reform process when they were required to register the land deeds in their own name rather than that of a father or husband. As her detailed instruction illustrates, Deng also consciously transmitted an important strategy to generations of Communist women in the Women's Committee, or later, the Women's Federation, on how to make effective feminist demands in a male-dominated power structure. A *politics of concealment* as a conscious CCP feminist strategy originated in this key feminist strategist's stunning intervention in land reform on behalf of rural women.

Functioning as a Socialist State Feminist in the Early PRC

The founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, witnessed the ascendance of many previously fugitive CCP members to positions of power in the newly established state. Deng Yingchao's husband Zhou Enlai became the Premier of the PRC and stayed in that position until his death in 1976. With her Party seniority and capability, Deng should at least have been given a cabinet position in the central government, like many other CCP members of similar credentials. But Zhou Enlai vetoed such suggestions on the ground that it would be inappropriate for his wife to be his subordinate at work.[14] Deng thus remained in her role as a leader of the CCP's women-work branch until after Zhou's death in 1976 and became the Vice President of the National People's Congress in 1978, a member of the Political Bureau of the CCP in 1982, and the Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1983. Before 1978, without formal executive or legislative power, Deng forged ahead with her informal power accumulated through her decades-long revolutionary career that had built an expansive social and personal network.

The Party Central Committee considered giving some power to the Women's Committee on at least one occasion. In September 1948, more than a year before the founding of the PRC, the CCP Central Committee assigned the Central Committee of Women-Work the task of drafting a Marriage Law for a new socialist China. Of all kinds of laws the Communists were busy drafting for the new state, this was the only law regarded as in the realm of women-work. Chairing a group of six CCP feminists, Deng Yingchao provided strong leadership in drafting the Marriage Law, the first law of the PRC, which was eventually passed on May 1, 1950. This was a euphoric moment for the CCP feminists since they finally got to materialize their feminist dreams of gender equality in a new China with the hard-won state power. The May Fourth feminist agenda that had shaped their subjectivity became enshrined in law. Women's equal rights and personal autonomy in marriage, including keeping their own surnames to signify women's independent personhood, were unambiguously written into the marriage law. Unexpectedly, one issue

generated heated debate among the members of the drafting committee, namely, freedom of divorce. Some CCP feminists supported restrictions on divorce in order to deter male CCP officials from replacing their "old" wives with young urban-educated women, once they moved from the rural bases to the major cities and assumed privileged positions in the new state. But Deng Yingchao opposed these restrictions on the ground that the law should prioritize the interest of the vast majority of women, that is, rural women. Poor rural women who were sold to men or endured an abusive marital life needed a divorce law that could assist their escape from their predicament. She also argued that CCP women were revolutionaries who should be able to live an independent life in the case of being deserted by an unfaithful official husband. The Central Committee of the CCP accepted Deng's proposal of freedom to divorce. Once in effect, the Marriage Law proved to enable hundreds and thousands of rural women's escape from their abusive marriages while many male officials also utilized the unrestricted divorce to abandon their rural wives.[15]

After the passage of the Marriage Law, the All-China Democratic Women's Federation (ACDWF, later ACWF)—established in April 1949 under the leadership of Deng Yingchao and Cai Chang (1900–1990), a Communist woman who had joined the CCP in 1923, and had long been in charge of the CCP's Women's Committee[16]—turned the promulgation and enforcement of the Marriage Law into a powerful mass campaign promoting women's equal rights and personal freedom. The state feminists of all administrative levels coordinated support from multiple branches of different levels of government, including film and other fields of cultural production, to produce a dominant official gender discourse in socialist China. During this period, the May Fourth language of "anti-feudalism" as an expression of women's equal rights and independent personhood was widely circulated among China's vast population, and the Chinese term "feudalism" (*fengjian zhuyi*) quickly became a gender-inflected key word encompassing everything we today call sexism, masculinism, patriarchy, male chauvinism, and/or misogyny. Even illiterate women in rural areas could deploy the term effortlessly.[17] "Equality between men and women" (*nannü pingdeng*) and "women's liberation" (*funü jiefang*), popularized via state-owned media and cultural production, became household slogans intimately connecting gender equality with the authority of the new socialist state. The feminist Marriage Law promulgated with socialist state power, although encountering ferocious resistance in its implementation, significantly transformed not only the institution of marriage but also gendered cultural practices and discourses (Fig. 11.1).[18]

On the international front, Deng Yingchao and her colleagues in the ACDWF were devoting much energy to the preparation of the first international women's conference in China. On December 10, 1949, only two months after the founding of the PRC, a "Congress of the Women of Asia" was convened in Beijing, attended by 197 international representatives from twenty-three countries. The ACDWF organized this conference in

Fig. 11.1 Three top women leaders in the early PRC—Cai Chang (left), Deng Yingchao, and Soong Ching-ling (right)—on occasion of the Congress of the Women of Asia in Beijing, December 1949 (Courtesy of Hung Liu and Wang Zheng)

its new role as a member of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). For Deng, this meeting with the leaders of the WIDF had been delayed for three years. Back in 1946, she had received an invitation from the newly established WIDF to attend its first Executive Committee meeting in Paris in June, as she had been recently elected as a Committee member. Because the NP government refused to issue Deng a passport, she was unable to make the trip, an event she utilized to expose to the media people's lack of freedom and the undemocratic nature of the NP government.[19] Now Deng was the leading organizer of the Congress and head of the Chinese women's delegation of 110 delegates. As the deputy chair of the ACDWF she gave the keynote speech, entitled "Asian women fight for national independence, people's democracy and world peace." She shared with the international participants the experiences of the Chinese women's movement and Chinese Communist Revolution, emphasizing the symbiotic

relations between women's liberation and national liberation for Asian countries.[20] The success of the Chinese Communist Revolution granted additional authenticity to the speech by this Chinese feminist revolutionary leader. Deng, as well as her message, ascended to the international spotlight of socialist feminist communities. In 1951, Deng went to Berlin to attend the sixth Executive Committee meeting of the WIDF, carrying ten thousand U.S. dollars dispensed by Premier Zhou as the ACDWF's membership fee for the WIDF.[21] Besides attending meetings abroad, Deng spent a lot of time receiving foreign women visitors at home. Just in 1951 and 1952, she met with diverse women's delegations from forty-five countries, introducing to them the experiences of the Chinese women's movement in the Communist Revolution and in the new socialist state.[22] Though we still need to know much more about the influence of Chinese socialist state feminists internationally, it is clear that the influence of Deng Yingchao and her colleagues at the ACDWF was not limited to the PRC but also had international dimensions.

Under the leadership of Deng and her colleagues, socialist state feminists in the euphoric early PRC displayed extraordinary exuberance in multitasking. Besides their prominent accomplishments of the Marriage Law and the Congress of the Women of Asia, they also worked on a whole range of other issues, from the institutional development of the Women's Federation system nationwide, training and promoting women cadres, running free literacy schools for women, setting up grassroots medical services to reduce infant mortality and enhance women's reproductive health, to promoting women's participation in gainful employment. Indeed, guided by Friedrich Engels's theory of women's liberation in a socialist country—as developed in his 1884 *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*—the ACDWF's main agenda was to promote women's participation in social production. However, tremendous obstacles and resistance awaited state feminists on this front. In the early 1950s, the Chinese economy was only just beginning to recover from the devastation of decades of war and depletion of capital. The unemployment rate was high. Urban unemployed women, especially lower-class women who desperately needed a wage to support their families, wanted to be gainfully employed in socialist construction. However, the road to women's liberation via participating in social production, to implement Engels's theory, was blocked by Communist officials who adhered to the traditional notion of a gendered division of labor that also maintained a gendered spatial arrangement: *nan zhuwai*, *nü zhunei* (men in charge of affairs outside the home, with women exclusively managing domesticity). The problem was so rampant that Deng Yingchao had to make a strong appeal to the Party Central to redress it. At a national conference on ideological advocacy work hosted by the Central Committee in July 1951, Deng pointed out the seriousness of "feudal thinking" by Party members and officials:

> The primary view is that "women can do nothing." [People with such a view] use every possible means and from every possible aspect to restrict women.

> Its manifestation in society is discrimination against women, or using all kinds of excuses to refuse or restrict the opportunities for women to participate in employment or education. They would even distort government policies and decrees in order not to give women equal rights.[23]

To address this grave situation, Deng proposed that the Party's ideological advocacy work should "use Marxist Leninist theory and Mao Zedong thought to engage in the struggle against feudal thinking, against its various forms of restricting and confining women, resolutely break the notion that 'women can do nothing,' and replace it with the view that 'women can do everything.'" She emphasized that such educational work should first be conducted among Communist Party officials:

> Only after the feudal remnants among the officials are eradicated, will they then be able to play a better leading role among the people, and will they be able to effectively implement the Party's policies on the women's liberation movement, to bring into play boundless initiatives of the women masses and enable them to participate in all kinds of construction work for the people's motherland.[24]

The sharp critical tone used here illuminates the prestige Deng enjoyed as a respected senior Party member whose husband was Premier Zhou Enlai. But her critique also demonstrates the fissured nature of the Communist Party. Although conceptually women's liberation had been part of the Party's platform from its inception, institutionally male officials blocked women's entry into the public domain as they usually held positions of power in various branches of the government where they could decide whom to hire, whereas the WF officials could only advocate. And, obviously, a deeply entrenched gender regime based on differential labor and a spatial division between women and men did not simply evaporate upon the CCP's assumption of state power. On the contrary, as Deng exposed, the gender regime remained ingrained in the minds of many CCP officials. A cartoon entitled "Three women are not equivalent to one man" published in the ACDWF's magazine *Women of China* in 1956, five years after Deng's talk to the Party's Central Committee, vividly captures how women often encountered dismissals. An arrogant male official tells the first woman: "You have too much housework. You should resign and go home!" He says to the second woman, who holds a sick leave request: "No, you cannot ask for rest. You should resign!" To the third woman, who is pregnant, he says: "Pregnancy affects production. You should resign!" He is relieved when he succeeds in maintaining an all-male working environment. "Now we can guarantee our work."[25]

It was in her important 1951 talk that Deng Yingchao articulated a tenet that would become a guideline for the ACDWF's advocacy: "Educating women about society and educating society about women." Party officials became an important part of "the society" that state feminists proceeded to educate and transform. It was obviously a difficult mission to accomplish,

judging from the many exposés of discrimination against women published in *Women of New China* in the first half of the 1950s. On March 6, 1957, Deng went to the CCP's national conference on ideological work to call again on Party officials to "establish the notion that the whole Party should be involved in women-work; to establish the notion that 'women can do everything' in ideological and educational work."[26]

In order to trace state feminists' discursive maneuvers, we should learn to decode political language in the specific historical context. The intense gender struggle Deng Yingchao and her colleagues were engaged in was represented in the framework of a teleological battle between rising socialism and declining feudalism. "Feudalism" in the CCP's understanding of Marxist historical materialism was a historical stage to be superseded by capitalism and socialism in a linear historical development. Among the CCP's revolutionary goals, "feudalism" was one of the three "big mountains" that the Party avowed to overthrow. After 1949, the Party could claim the accomplishment of toppling the other two, "imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism," and Deng legitimately highlighted the remaining one.

Deng's critical speeches targeting male officials indicate gender negotiations within the Party power structure. Indeed, tracing her performance in multiple settings, it becomes clear that every pro-woman policy or legislation in the early PRC resulted from Deng's and her colleagues' successful maneuvering behind the scenes, rather than from some favor granted by a benevolent patriarch. The CCP's on-again-off-again emphasis on women's interests, observed by many feminist scholars in the English-speaking world, was not the result of the Party being unable to make up its mind, as scholars previously suggested, but of successful or failed feminist maneuvers within the Party.[27] As the following section will demonstrate, in the least congenial political circumstances, feminists adopted an inactive stance on promoting women's interests and withdrew to the bottom line of protecting the ACWF by following the dominant Party line in 1957. When the political atmosphere changed and new opportunities emerged, as in the Great Leap Forward in 1958, when the CCP needed women's labor for its drastic programs of increasing agricultural and industrial productivity, they would swiftly jump at the opportunity to raise women's issues and to expand and consolidate women's organizations. What we know of the work and efforts of feminist strategist Deng Yingchao exemplifies this pattern in Chinese politics most distinctively.

Retreat and Resurgence

The action of pursuing a feminist agenda in the CCP was always embedded in historically contingent dynamics that defy any abstract theorization. In other words, the relationship between feminism and the Communist Revolution in China has always been grounded in concrete historical contexts, with the independent variable of the degree of masculinist domination or masculinist power struggles shaping the Communist Party. Deng Yingchao's daring critiques of

"feudalism" within the CCP were repeatedly articulated in the setting of the Party officials' meetings and publications in the early 1950s,[28] which is illuminating in several ways. First, it demonstrates Deng's intimate knowledge of the profound saturation of patriarchal norms and mentality in a political party claiming to fight for equality for all. Second, it reveals her vision of a comprehensive socialist feminist transformation of patriarchy in and outside the CCP as an integral part of building a socialist China. Third, it shows that the veteran revolutionary, who was by now addressed by her comrades as "elder sister Deng," a revered term reserved for only a few first cohort of female CCP members, was quite confident of her political security in the early days of the PRC. Unfortunately, Deng's sense of security and her dream of a feminist offense on "feudalism" would soon be derailed by an unexpected political storm launched by her Party's supreme leader, Chairman Mao.

In May 1957, Mao Zedong shifted the CCP's policy of encouraging criticism of Party officials in the opposite direction with the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Hence, anyone who criticized Party officials, as Deng had done with her indicating of feudal thinking within the Party, was in danger of being labeled as a "rightist" who opposed the CCP. The Anti-Rightist Campaign, unlike previous campaigns that simply required women's participation, not only diverted the ACWF's energy and resources from women-work, but also posed serious challenges to the women's organization. Since the founding of the ACWF, the rationale for the necessity of such a gender-based organization could be summarized in two points: first, socialist revolution and socialist construction require women's participation, and the ACWF was to organize and mobilize women to work for the Party's general tasks; second, there were still feudal remnants in socialist China that oppressed women, so women needed such an organization to help them break free from feudal bondage to achieve equality between men and women. In a sense, the two-faceted rationale worked like a tacit pact between the Communist feminists and the male-dominated Party, in that each side agreed on their mutual support and mutual benefit.

In ACWF official talks, publications, and training workshops for women activists, terms such as feudal bondage, women's oppression, equality between men and women, and women's liberation were most frequently articulated as a way to raise gender consciousness and to shape a sense of sisterhood in a common struggle for women's liberation, and as a result "women's liberation" quickly entered the new China's public discourse, deployed not just by women leaders but by illiterate women as well. In the early 1950s, when their efforts to set up grassroots women's organizations were questioned or resisted by local male officials, ACWF officials could always invoke such familiar statements framed in a legitimate denouncing of feudalism, emphasizing the reality of gender inequality or even abuses of women so as to stress the necessity of a women's organization for the ultimate goal of women's liberation.

But after the internal circulation of Mao Zedong's article dated May 15, 1957, entitled "Things are beginning to change" and signaling his offense

over "bourgeois rightists," the political climate changed rapidly. In the new context, merely talking about problems in socialist China could qualify one as a rightist. ACWF officials were quick to realize that they could no longer say women in socialist China were still oppressed or not yet liberated. But if so, what should be the tasks of the ACWF? Or, a logical but even more troubling question could be whether there was any need for a gender-based organization, if there was no more gender oppression? Confronted with this huge dilemma in 1957, when the ACWF was preparing its third National Congress of Women, Deng Yingchao played a key role in securing the survival of the official women's organization with a compromise. Astutely sensing the new political taboo, she advised the ACWF officials who were drafting the work report for the Congress, to drop "pursuing equality between men and women" in the report's title.[29] Then she solicited support from Party leader Deng Xiaoping, who helped design a conservative gender-specific theme for the ACWF's third National Congress of Women[30]: "The principle of women-work in the period of socialist construction should be diligently, frugally building the country, and diligently, frugally managing the family in order to strive for the construction of socialism." The double-diligence instructed by Deng Xiaoping thus replaced "pursuing equality between men and women," or "pursuing women's thorough liberation" with an emphasis on women's efforts in building the country and managing the family, to become a safe guideline of the ACWF, steering the gender-based organization through rough political waters.[31]

There is no record of how Deng Yingchao felt about this tremendous regressive compromise in comparison with what she had pushed for as part of a feminist revolution just barely a year before. Significantly, Deng's involvement in the major compromise in 1957 was her last traceable participation in ACWF decision making in her role as the organization's Vice Chair. Deng's biographer Jin Feng claims that because Deng was ill, she did not participate in the Anti-Rightist Campaign of the ACWF, which is a disclaimer for the subsequent persecutions of "rightists" within the ACWF system.[32] In the mid-1950s, Deng was suffering from a difficult menopause in addition to other health issues. Her absence due to sickness could be entirely genuine, only that the condition of her physical health seemed to fluctuate quite in tandem with the rapidly shifting political environment. In July 1959, she went up to the Lu Mountain together with Zhou Enlai to attend a CCP Politburo expanded meeting. When Mao began attacking the Minister of Defense, Peng Dehuai, who had sent Mao a letter criticizing Mao's Great Leap Forward policies, the meeting became a venue for intense political battles. Deng Yingchao hurriedly left the meeting site because of a worsening heart condition caused by the ferocious internal fights.[33] It seems that either her mind or her body, or both, precluded her from involvement in masculinist power struggles.

During the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, Deng consciously stayed in seclusion to avoid any political trouble since her husband was right

in the middle of treacherous political hurricanes. She only appeared on occasions of receiving foreign heads of state when these visited China with their wives. Her extreme cautiousness was quintessentially displayed in an interview in 1972 with U.S. historian Roxane Witke, who went to Beijing to collect oral histories of the first cohort of female revolutionaries. Deng gave a long introduction about the Party's history, without a single word about herself. Her superb performance, which must have disappointed Witke, received high appraisal from all the officials and staff who were present. In their eyes, elder sister Deng was a highly virtuous Communist Party member who was always modest and selfless, never claiming any credit for herself or flaunting her own accomplishments and contributions to the Communist Revolution.[34] In short, Deng was exactly the opposite of Mao's wife Jiang Qing, who granted Witke multiple interviews packed with personal stories and exaggerated claims of her part in the history of the CCP. Jiang Qing's personal stories were so rich and colorful that they eventually became the material for the biography *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing* penned by Witke.[35]

The story of Deng Yingchao's and Jiang Qing's different interview styles did not end there. The transcripts of Jiang Qing's interviews incensed her political enemies, who had long been holding grudges against this self-aggrandizing woman with tremendous power, second only to her husband's. As soon as Mao died in 1976, a political coup brought down Jiang Qing from her position as a leader of the Cultural Revolution. Her interviews were listed as one of her charged crimes that resulted in a sentence of life-long imprisonment. Contrarily, Deng Yingchao gained popularity after her husband Premier Zhou Enlai's death in January 1976. Following the coup that removed Jiang Qing and her supporters, the new Party Central Committee appointed Deng as the Vice President of the People's Congress in December 1976, a gesture suggesting the tacit understanding among the top echelon that this senior Party member's overdue promotion had been suppressed by her late husband, and a manifestation of the new leading body's adroit tactic to tap into the tremendous political assets of Zhou Enlai, who maintained a saintly image after his death. To say the least, Deng's discreet pattern of not involving herself in male power struggles paid off in the sense that she did not have political enemies, unlike Jiang Qing. The feminist strategist and paragon (either in the sense of exemplifying the "womanly" virtues of modesty and selflessness or in the sense of demonstrating the revolutionary virtues of loyalty, devotion, discipline, and perseverance), Deng Yingchao at age seventy-two finally ascended to the power center of the PRC. Deng's successful survival attests to her tremendous intimate knowledge of the patriarchal power structure and superb wisdom and political skills in working the system. Deng entered the Politburo in 1978 and became the President of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1983, the highest position a woman ever held in the PRC. Deng retired from that position in 1988.[36]

During the years that she conducted state affairs in the center of power, Deng Yingchao kept contacts with the ACWF leaders and provided support to their work. One of the issues on which she resumed her efforts was writing a history of the women's movement before the PRC was founded, a project the ACWF first started in 1964 and abandoned because of the Cultural Revolution. When the ACWF recommenced its function after the Cultural Revolution in 1978, Deng gave two talks in 1979 and 1981, respectively, to ACWF officials, providing detailed instructions on collecting source materials and the writing of this history.[37] While the main theme of such a history should be the women's movement led by the CCP, Deng also encouraged collecting primary source materials of all feminists active in pre-1949 China, regardless of their political affiliation. With her instruction, older women across China who had worked for the women's movement led by the NP, or who had run non-party affiliated feminist organizations or journals, were all encouraged to write memoirs of their life and work. Indeed, her strong push literally resulted in a nationwide campaign for writing histories of women's movements locally and nationally throughout the 1980s. Both the ACWF officials and academics nationwide participated in this campaign that produced many valuable volumes of primary source materials and empirically grounded histories, mostly published by the Chinese Women Press which is affiliated with the ACWF. A strategist who initiated and perfected a politics of concealment in which feminist maneuvers in the Party had to be camouflaged and the actors had to be self-effaced in order to make their agenda work, Deng Yingchao in her old age strove hard to resist the erasure of Chinese feminist endeavors in the first half of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

After Deng passed away in 1992 at age eighty-eight, there was a surge of publications about her life, in the form of biographies, volumes of reminiscent essays by her colleagues and friends, and documentaries that collected visual materials of her life and work. Such publicity is commonly sponsored by the state as it is the CCP's normal practice to honor deceased top Party/state leaders. Although the number of publications on Deng Yingchao is minuscule in comparison with the publications about her husband, Deng easily surpasses other female CCP leaders, partly because her high political position late in her life qualified her for the Party's honorary treatment, and partly because she was Zhou Enlai's spouse. Some publications are about the relationship of the couple or the correspondence between them. And some TV series about the CCP history also include Deng when featuring Zhou Enlai. Among the top CCP leaders, they were among the very few couples who had remained in their only marriage until the end of their lives.

Deng Yingchao has enjoyed more visibility than any other Communist woman leader in the post-Mao period largely due to the massive media coverage of her frequent diplomatic activities as a state leader. However, for

the general public she is mostly remembered as Zhou Enlai's wife and school textbooks only tell the story of how she sewed clothes for Zhou Enlai. Few Chinese citizens have any knowledge about her feminist activism. Deng has received recognition of and respect for her role as a dedicated CCP leader of the Chinese women's movement only from members of the CCP leading body and officials in the Women's Federation system. Indeed, even after she had left her official post in the ACWF, she continued to show involvement with women-work and even attended some ACWF-run activities. When she participated in the ACWF's workshop on compiling a history of the Chinese women's movement in 1981, she explained as follows why she would be there: "As a woman, especially as a female Communist Party member, I could not do otherwise than care about women-work. We should shoulder this responsibility till the end of our life."[38] Deng Yingchao was a conscious feminist since her teens and remained so until the end of her life, even though later, constrained by the politics in the CCP, she would never use the word "feminist" (*nüquan zhuyizhe*) to define herself. Instead, she consistently and proudly identified with the CCP's official category "women-worker" (*funü gongzuozhe*), the one specialized in working to promote women's interests and women's liberation in the CCP.

Among the first cohort of the CCP women in the People's Republic of China, Deng was recognized as one of the two top leaders of the Chinese women's movement. The other is Cai Chang, Deng's long-term comrade-in-arms in founding and leading the ACWF, just briefly mentioned above, and also included on the 1949 picture (Fig. 11.1). They, and many other communist women of their cohort, shared the same value of self-effacing and sacrifice, which has eventually contributed to erasing from public knowledge their efforts for Chinese women's social advancement in the PRC.

Deng Yingchao's impeccable reputation was tarnished in the Tiananmen Incident of 1989. Deng Xiaoping's decision to send troops to suppress the student movement was made with consent from some senior Party leaders, among whom was Deng Yingchao. And the much-hated Premier Li Peng who supported the violent suppression of the students was one of Deng Yingchao's adopted children, mostly orphans of martyred communists whom Deng took into her care in the course of the Communist Revolution. There is no record showing how Deng Yingchao felt about the suppression, or if she discussed the operation with her adopted son. In any case, since the CCP has successfully erased the brutal violence from the public memory in China, not many Chinese have enough knowledge to care about what Deng Yingchao did in 1989, similar to how few people would care about what she did for Chinese women in much of the twentieth century. History is frequently erased in the PRC for various reasons. For a historian of Chinese feminist history, excavating Deng Yingchao's tremendous efforts to promote Chinese women's rights and her strategies in engendering cultural transformation in a patriarchal society from a location in a male-dominated Party/state is an important part of building a feminist genealogy to inform anyone who shares similar feminist aspirations.

Recommended Documents	
Deng Yingchao	**"Deng Yingchao tongzhi zai zhongfuwei huiyi shangde fayan"** [Comrade Deng Yingchao's Talk at the Meeting of the Central Women's Committee]. In *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945–1949* [Historical documents of the Chinese women's movement, 1945–1949], 238–243. Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1991 **Description**: The document is a talk by Deng Yingchao to the Central Women's Committee in 1948. She clarified the nature of the Women's Committee. It was to be an advisory unit with full freedom to do research and make suggestions, rather than a governmental policy making executive branch. However, she gave a detailed description of a successful intervention by the Women's Committee in 1947 that resulted in the Party's resolution of the land reform conference including the importance of women-work after a long period of silence on the subject by the Central Committee; due to that intervention, the land reform policies included women's equal rights in the land distribution. The talk was later circulated among the women-work officials after the All-China Women's Federation was founded, as a way to pass Deng's strategy on how to work on the Party's central task while simultaneously promoting women's equal rights. The internal circulation of the document indicates the ACWF officials' recognition of Deng's central role as a strategist who operated within a male-dominated power machine
Deng Yingchao	**"Wusi yundong de huiyi"** [Recollections of the May Fourth Movement]. In *Wusi shiqi funü wenti wenxuan* [Selected works on the women question in the May Fourth period], compiled by All-China Women's Federation, 1–7. Beijing: Chinese Women's Press, 1981 **Description**: Deng Yingchao wrote this essay in 1949, recalling the May Fourth Movement in 1919, when she started to be involved in student activism and rise as a feminist leader. She described in detail how students in Tianjin began to organize for a range of public activities, from demonstrations to publishing journals, and how female and male students broke gender segregation to form the first student organization to include both sexes and to practice gender equality internally and advocate women's liberation in the society. She also traced the process in which these anti-imperialist students began to be attracted to socialism and eventually became early members of the Chinese Communist Party
Deng Yingchao	**"Yazhou funü wei minzu duli, renmin minzhu yu shijie heping erdouzheng"** [Asian Women Fight for National Independence, People's Democracy, and the World Peace]. In *Yazhou funü daibiao huiyi wenxian* [Documents of the Congress of the Women of Asia], edited by the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, 33–69. Beijing: Xinhua Bookstore, 1950 **Description**: This document is the keynote speech given by Deng Yingchao to the Congress of the Women of Asia convened in Beijing, December 10–16, 1949. Deng elaborated on the process of Chinese women's liberation movement in the context of the Chinese Communist Revolution and emphasized the shared goals of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism among women of Asia in their struggles to achieve national independence and women's liberation

Notes

1. Jin Feng, *Deng Yingchao Zhuan* [A Biography of Deng Yingchao] (Beijing: Remin chubanshe, 1993), Chapter 1.
2. Deng Yingchao, "Wusi yundong de huiyi" [Recollections of the May Fourth Movement], in *Wusi shiqi funü wenti wenxuan* [Selected Works on the Women Question in the May Fourth Period], compiled by All-China Women's Federation (Beijing: Chinese Women's Press, 1981), 5.
3. "Nüquan tongmenghui cheng guohui qingyuanshu" [The Petition to the Congress by the Feminist Movement Association], in *Deng Yingchao yu Tianjin zaoqi funü yundong* [Deng Yingchao and the Early Stage of the Women's Movement in Tianjin], edited by the Historical Sources Collection Committee of the Tianjin Municipal Party Committee and Tianjin Women's Federation (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1987), 256–257. For the original declaration of the Feminist Movement Association, see "Nüquan yundong tongmenghui xuanyan" [Declaration of the Feminist Movement Association], *Funü zazhi* [The Ladies' Journal] 8, no. 9 (1922): 126–127.
4. "Nüxingshe de jianzhang" [Regulations of the Society of Women Stars], in *Deng Yingchao yu Tianjin zaoqi funü yundong*, 302.
5. "Fakanci" [Introduction to the Inaugural Issue], in *Deng Yingchao yu Tianjin zaoqi funü yundong*, 306–307.
6. Lydia H. Liu, Rebecca E. Karl, and Dorothy Ko, eds., *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). The final years of He Yingzhen's life have remained unclear. One speculation is that she might have ended up in a Buddhist monastery.
7. The arrangement of the coalition between the NP and CCP was that the NP, then led by the President of the Republic of China Sun Yat-sen, who was pro-Soviet-Russia, allowed individual CCP members to join the NP. Stalin approved of the coalition and sent Mikhail Markovich Borodin to serve as Sun's top adviser. The documents produced in this coalition were all listed as NP documents even if the drafters might be CCP members.
8. Jin Feng, *Deng Yingchao Zhuan*, 113–116.
9. Jin Feng, 116–206. About Deng's experience on the Long March, also see Hou Zheng, "Deng dajie zai changzheng 'teshu liandui'" [Elder Sister Deng in the "Special Company" on the Long March], in *Yi Dengdajie* [Remembering Elder Sister Deng], edited by the editorial committee of *Yi Dengdajie* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1994), 59–65.
10. See *Yi Dengdajie*, and *Womende Dengdajie* [Our Elder Sister Deng], edited by the second research department of the Archival Research Institute of the CCP Central Committee (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 2004). The two volumes collect reminiscences of Deng's comrades and friends about their interactions with Deng in her long revolutionary career. Some contributors recall how Deng persuaded them to work in the All-China Women's Federation for the goal of Chinese women's liberation.
11. See William H. Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966), for an account of the Land Reform by an American observer; and Jack Belden, an American journalist's reporting on the civil war between the CCP and NP, *China Shakes the World* (New York: Harpers, 1949).

12. "Deng Yingchao tongzhi zai zhongfuwei huiyi shangde fayan" [Comrade Deng Yingchao's Talk at the Meeting of the Central Women's Committee], in *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945–1949* [Historical Documents of the Chinese Women's Movement, 1945–1949] (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1991), 239–240. A copy of Deng's 1948 talk is included in the Shanghai Women's Federation's file compiled in 1957, which indicates the conscious transmission of Deng's strategy in the WF system in a volatile time. Shanghai Municipal Archive, C31-1-169.
13. Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1964* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 17–18.
14. Liu Chunxiu, *Zhou Enlai he Deng Yingchao* [Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao] (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2004), 397. In the biography, the author notes Zhou Enlai's reply to a visiting friend's inquiry in 1963 on why Deng was not placed in a cabinet position. After explaining that it was not beneficial to the revolutionary cause to conflate the conjugal relationship with the official relationship, Zhou emphasized: "As long as I am the Premier, Xiaochao can never have a position in the government!".
15. For discussions of the impact of the Marriage Law on rural women, see Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), Chapter 4. For cases in which CCP officials replaced their old wives after entering the cities, see Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State*, 94–96.
16. For a brief biography of Cai Chang in English, see *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Cai Chang (1900–1990)," by Jeffrey G. Barlow, accessed June 10, 2021, https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/cai-chang-1900-1990.
17. See documentary film *Small Happiness*, directed by Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon (Long Bow Group, 1984).
18. Episode seven in the documentary *A History of Chinese Women in the Twentieth Century* (CCTV, 2010) features the process of drafting the Marriage Law and its impact on rural women: https://tv.cctv.com/2010/05/21/VIDE1355583714735420.shtml?spm=C55924871139.PY8jbb3G6NT9.0.0.
19. Deng Yingchao, "Wei chuxi guoji funü huiyishi dui jizhe fabiao tanhua" [A News Conference in Regard to My Attending International Women's Conferences], September 6, 1946, in *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian* [An Anthology of Source Material on the Chinese Women's Movement], edited by Chinese Women Cadres Management School (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1988), 1:441–443. The NP government also refused to issue her a passport to attend a women's conference in New York in October 1946 organized by the UN and initiated by Eleanor Roosevelt.
20. Deng Yingchao, "Yazhou funü wei minzu duli, renmin minzhu yu shijie heping erdouzheng" [Asian Women Fight for National Independence, People's Democracy, and World Peace], in *Yazhou funü daibiao huiyi wenxian* [Documents of the Congress of the Women of Asia], edited by the All-China Democratic Women's Federation (Beijing: Xinhua Bookstore, 1950), 33–69.
21. Jin Feng, *Deng Yingchao zhuan*, 451–453. When the ACDWF was founded, Cai Chang was the chair and Deng Yingchao was the deputy chair. In the early 1950s, Cai Chang was not in good health and Deng shouldered major responsibilities in the ACDWF.

22. According to her biographer Jin Feng, just in May and June of 1952 Deng met foreign visitors twenty-three times, and in September and October of the same year she met foreign visitors twenty-four times. See Jin Feng, *Deng Yingchao zhuan*, 483. Frequent interactions between foreign women visitors and Deng and other leaders of the ACDWF are also recorded in *Zhongguo funü yundong bainian dashi ji: 1901–2000* [Major Events in a Century of the Chinese Women's Movement: 1901–2000], edited by All-China Women's Federation (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 2003). The ACDWF dropped "Democratic" in its name in 1957, hence, the acronym became ACWF. In the early period of the People's Republic of China, the ACDWF served as a major channel for the CCP's interactions with the outside world because only very few countries established formal diplomatic relations with the new socialist state.
23. Deng Yingchao, "Guanyu funü xuanchuan jiaoyu wenti" [On the Issue of Women's Advocacy and Education Work], in *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 1:115.
24. Deng Yingchao, 1:115.
25. *Zhongguo Funü* [Women of China] 8, 1956, 8–9.
26. Office of ACWF, ed., *Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui sishi nian* [Forty Years of the All-China Women's Federation] (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1991), 94.
27. For an influential book in this regard, see Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang, ed., *Spaces of Their Own: Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
28. For example, Deng Yingchao, "Xin Zhongguo funü qianjin zai qianjin" [Women of New China March On and On], an article written in 1951 for the magazine *Women of New China*, collected in *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 1:130–133; "Sinianlai Zhongguo funü yundong de jiben zongjie he jinhou renwu" [A Summary of the Chinese Women's Movement in the Past Four Years and Future Tasks], the work-report given at the Second National Congress in 1953, collected in *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 1:171–178.
29. Deng's role in suggesting compromised titles for the report was recorded in the minutes of the ACWF report-drafting committee's meeting. "Zhang Yun tongzhi chuanda Cai dajie he Deng dajie de zhishi" [Comrade Zhang Yun Conveys Instructions from Elder Sister Cai and Elder Sister Deng], ACWF archives. Since I was not allowed to access the ACWF archives, I asked friends who had access to photocopy documents relating to the preparation of the Third National Women's Congress. The dates and file numbers are unclear.
30. Luo Qiong and Duan Yongqiang, *Luo Qiong fangtan lu* [Interviews with Luo Qiong] (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 2000), 144–145. Luo Qiong, who was one of the report drafters, recalls elder sister Deng's key role in soliciting Deng Xiaoping's help in revising the report.
31. For a detailed discussion of how Deng and the ACWF endured the political perils in 1957, see Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State*, Chapter 2.
32. Jin Feng, *Deng Yingchao Zhuan*, 552.
33. Jin Feng, 555.
34. Zhao Wei, Deng's personal secretary, interview by Wang Zheng, August 8, 2005, Beijing. Zhao kept the transcript of the recording of Witke's interview of Deng.

35. Roxane Witke, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing* (Boston: Little Brown, 1977).
36. Baidu Baike, "Deng Yingchao," accessed April 22, 2021, https://baike.baidu.com/item/邓颖超/116019?fr=aladdin. Deng Yingchao's good relationship with Deng Xiaoping certainly played an important role in her political ascendance in the era when the latter became the top leader of the CCP. Showing respect to Deng Yingchao was also Deng Xiaoping's way of appropriating Zhou Enlai's lasting prestige in a time when the late Mao was reviewed by Chinese intellectuals as well as party officials in a largely negative light with wide circulations of exposés of his wrongdoings.
37. "Deng Yingchao tongzhi zai zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao bianzuan weiyuanhui diyici huiyi shangde jianghua" [Comrade Deng Yingchao's Speech at the First Conference of the Editorial Committee on Collecting the Chinese Women's Movement Historical Source Materials], 1978, in *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 1:502–503; and Deng Yingchao, "Zhenfen geming jingshen, zuohao fuyunshi gongzuo: yijiubayi nian jiuyue shierri zai quanguo fuyunshi zuotanhui shangde jianghua" [Boosting Our Revolutionary Spirit, Doing a Good Job of the History of the Women's Movement: A Speech at the National Workshop on the Women's Movement History on September 12, 1981], in *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 1:677–681.
38. *Deng Yingchao*, 677. Similar expressions of her commitment to women-work are recorded abundantly in the eight-episode documentary series *Deng Yingchao* (Nanjing Audiovisual Publishing House, 2004), which is a massive visual biography produced jointly by the CCP Central Committee's Research Institute of Historical Sources, the CCP committee of Nanjing, and Nanjing TV station to commemorate the centennial of Deng's birth. Deng Yingchao is lauded here as a magnificent Chinese woman of the twentieth century.

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