

Name: _____

Background

After winning power by defeating the Chinese Nationalists in 1949, Mao Zedong and other Communist leaders set out to reshape Chinese society. The Communists were not gentle in establishing their regime. In the first years of the People's Republic, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, were executed as landlords or capitalist exploiters. Millions more were imprisoned or tortured for real or imaginary crimes against the revolution, or simply for having a privileged background. Rigid ideological controls were imposed on educators, artists, and the press.

- **Great Leap Forward:** In an attempt to break with the Russian model of Communism and to catch up with more advanced nations, Mao proposed that China should make a "**great leap forward**" into modernization. He began a **Five Year Plan** to promote technology and agricultural self-sufficiency. Overnight, fertile rice fields were ploughed over, and factory construction work began. Labor-intensive methods were introduced and small farms. The campaign created about 23,500 communes, each controlling its own means of production. But former farmers had no idea how to actually use the new factories and what was once fertile crop land went to waste on a disastrous scale. Mao decreed an overnight transition from family or small cooperative farms to vast People's Communes, while calling for absurdly high increases in grain production. The results were devastating. From 1959 to 1961, as many as 30 million Chinese died as a direct or indirect result of Great Leap policies.
- **Cultural Revolution:** The Great Cultural Revolution was a ten-year political campaign - a social experiment aimed at rekindling revolutionary fervor and purifying the party. Mao Zedong and his wife, Jiang Qing, directed popular anger against other members of the party leadership. While others were removed from office, Mao was named supreme commander of the nation and army. Ideological cleansing began with attacks by young Red Guards on so-called "intellectuals" to remove upper class influences. Millions were forced into manual labor, and tens of thousands were executed. The result was massive civil unrest, and the army was sent in to control student disorder.
 - **Red Guard:** Mao urged China's youth to rise up against the party bureaucracy and against the "four olds": old habits, old customs, old culture, and old thinking. The Red Guard was comprised of people in their teens and 20s who supported the shake-ups within the Communist Party in the Cultural Revolution. Clutching the Little Red Book of quotations from Chairman Mao, they terrorized "closet capitalists". As Mao urged workers to turn on their managers, he also encouraged students to turn against their teachers. Anyone who held a position of authority was at risk - from CCP figures to influential university professors accused of putting "technical expertise" ahead of "correct political thinking". Entire schools were closed by units of Red Guard students, and the movement soon spread from the classroom out onto the streets. Chinese people who were between the ages of 15 and 25 during the period of the Cultural Revolution are now referred to as the "lost generation", having missed out on a proper education.
 - **Up to the Mountains:** The Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement was a policy instituted in the People's Republic of China in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Mao Zedong declared certain privileged urban youth would be sent to mountainous areas or farming villages in order to learn from the workers and farmers there. Many fresh high school graduates, who became known as the Rusticated Youth of China, were forced out of the cities and effectively exiled to remote areas of China. While some 1.2 million urban youths were sent to the countryside between 1956 and 1966, no less than 12 million were relocated in the period 1968-1975; this amounts to an estimated 10% of the 1970 urban population.

Source: BBC and ABC-CLIO



The poster above was created during 1969, at the height of the Cultural Revolution. It shows Mao watching over a group of Chinese soldiers, most of whom are holding a copy of the so-called “Little Red Book” - a collection of Mao’s writings and political ideas. The Chinese characters at the bottom of the poster translate as “The Chinese People’s Liberation Army is the great school of Mao Zedong thought.”

Background Information: The songs were written by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. Young people sang them in school and at rallies, and they were played over the radio throughout China.

**“We Are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards” and “Red Guards Battle
Song,” 1968.**

“We Are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards” 2
Red Guards, Red Guards,
Burning with revolutionary zeal,
Tested by the storm of class struggle,
Tempered for battle our hearts are red,
Standing firm, direction clear,
Our vigor for revolution strong,
We follow the party with full devotion,
We are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards
Red Guards, Red Guards,
We want to be the successors to Communism.
The revolutionary red banner passes on from generation to generation,
We want to carry on the glorious tradition.
Loving the country, loving the People, loving the Collective,
loving to work.
Connecting with the workers and the peasants,
We are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards.
We are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards,
We steel our red hearts in great winds and waves.
We arm ourselves with Mao Tse-Tung’s thought
To sweep away all pests.
We are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards,
Absolutely firm in our proletarian stand,
Marching on the revolutionary road of our forbears,
We shoulder the heavy task of our age.
We are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards,
Vanguards of the cultural revolution.
We unite with the masses and together plunge into the battle
To wipe out all monsters and demons.
[Refrain] Dare to criticize and repudiate, dare to struggle,
Never stop making revolutionary rebellion.
We will smash the old world
And keep our revolutionary state red for ten thousand generations

Background Information: Liu Xiaoqing is an actress from Sichuan. Liu's memoir, from which this excerpt is taken, was written at the height of the Mao cult. Its sentiment was shared by many of Liu's generation as they looked back a youth spent in the thrall of Cultural Revolution zealotry.

“Everyone says that you never forget your first love. I can't really say that I ever had a first love, for in my childhood and youth the man I loved and admired most of all was Mao Zedong. I gave him everything I had: my sincerest love, as well as all my longing and hopes. He was an idol I worshipped with all my heart. Chairman Mao, you were my first object of desire!

The first song I learnt to sing was "The East is Red". I knew what Chairman Mao looked like from the time I could recognize my parents. When I was a Red Guard I could recite all of his quotations word perfect. My brain was armed with Mao Zedong Thought. During the unprecedented Cultural Revolution I used Chairman Mao's words as my weapon to parry with opponents. My prodigious memory and quick tongue always meant that my "enemies" would retreat in defeat.

If I ever had any problems I would search Chairman Mao's writings for an answer. When we lost one of our chicks I looked for help in his works. When, not long after, the chick reappeared, I knew it was due to the intercession of our Great, Wise and Correct Chairman Mao.

When, as a child, I played games with my friends our pledge of honour was: "I swear by Chairman Mao". If someone said that, even if they prefaced it by claiming that they'd just come from Mars, we'd believe it without question. Naturally, no one ever took this oath lightly.

I worshipped and loved Chairman Mao so utterly that there was absolutely nothing extraneous or impure in my feelings for him. When I grew a bit older and learnt the secret of how men and women make babies I had the most shocking realization: "Could Chairman Mao possibly do that as well?" Of course, I immediately banished this sacrilegious thought from my head...Then Chairman Mao set the revolutionary blaze of the Cultural Revolution alight. It also ignited our youthful enthusiasm. We were like moths drawn to a flame and we threw ourselves into the inferno en masse. We were in frenzy and utilized every ounce of energy at our disposal.

We would give anything to protect Chairman Mao, including our very lives. Our love for the Chairman consumed us body and soul. If anyone had dared to try and harm our beloved Chairman we would have pounced on him, bitten his hand off, and gouged out his eyes, screamed in his ears until he was deaf, spat on him until he drowned in a lake of spittle and would have happily died in the effort...

On 18 August 1968, Chairman Mao reviewed the Red Guards for the first time. I was too young to become a Red Guard, but I spent all my time dreaming of joining the organization that was sworn to protect Chairman Mao. After making extraordinary efforts I was finally allowed to take part in a peripheral grouping called the "Red Brigade". They gave me a red armband too. It was like a dream come true. Although it wasn't the same as the Red Guards, but the difference was only one word. I wore it so the word "Brigade" was hidden under my arm. I stuck out my chest and, just like a real Red Guard, strutted around the school yard incredibly proud of myself.

...We imitated the Red Guards of Beijing... When we got on a bus we would take out Quotations from Chairman Mao and start reading in really loud voices. "Revolution is not a tea party. It is not like writing an essay, painting or embroidering flowers,... revolution is an act of violence, and it is the violent overthrow of one class by another..." We did our best to make our heavily-accented Sichuan voices sound as much like Beijing dialect as we could. We'd read one quotation after another right to the end of the trip...

I will never forget August 31, 1966. On that day I joined all the Red Guards who had come from throughout China to be in Beijing to see him, to see Chairman Mao, the leader we dreamt of and thought of 24 hours a day..."

Source: *STAR REFLECTS ON THE SUN* by Liu Xiaoqing

Background Information: the early 1950s, China chose to model its socialist economy after that of the Soviet Union. Mao Zedong (1893-1976) believed the best way to implement a communist style state was to create a “Cultural Revolution” and change the culture of China. The Red Guard formed as a student movement to support the Cultural Revolution and author Mo Bo served in the Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution. He published this article in 1987 reflecting on his youth during the Cultural Revolution.

“When the Cultural Revolution reached my school in 1966 I was 14...Overnight, wall posters appeared everywhere. We all took it for granted that the senior students wrote the posters and that the only thing we could do was admire them. Most of the posters were just empty slogans but one depicted our geology teacher as a 'dirty bourgeois intellectual' because he would make sure that the water temperature was exactly the same as that of his body whenever he washed.

...Then, following the example of the students in Beijing, we formed an 'Organization of Red Guards'. Everybody wanted to join the Red Guards because nobody wanted to be 'unqualified', 'backward' and 'non-revolutionary'. I was one of the first to join because, being from a poor peasant's family, my background was supposed to be 'clear'....

In the past our teachers had been intimidating. Now the situation was reversed: whenever teachers came across a student they would lower their heads. This kind of experience was so intoxicating that some of us went off our heads. But like most of the Red Guards I never appreciated the beating-people-up business. The farthest we went was when the most unpopular teacher was made to kneel down and confess his 'crimes' to the students. One student hit the teacher's heels with a brick - I couldn't bear to look....

Then I was selected as one of the representatives to go to Beijing to see Chairman Mao. I was very proud and excited. We saw him in Tiananmen Square when his car passed us like the wind. Some Red Guards cried with joy - 'the happiest moment in my life', said one. But I just felt nonplussed: I could see Chairman Mao better by looking at his portraits. Then we went to Beijing and Qinhua universities to copy posters. We were supposed to 'learn revolutionary experience and then to spread the revolution all over the country'. After a fortnight several of my notebooks were full of slogans and posters. But I had no better understanding of what was going on....

Nobody understood Marxism. After all who would bother? The only things we believed were that Chairman Mao was the great banner-carrier of Marxism-Leninism...We also believed that Western society was rotten and decadent and that the only way to create a new society was to destroy the old one in China first. The 'academic authorities' in the fields of philosophy, history, literature and art (not science!) had to be re-educated because they stood for the Old Ideology. Temples were destroyed because they were thought to be part of feudal superstition.

I think I believed all this. But that did not lead me to beat people up or to destroy buildings. I wrote hundreds of posters but I never attacked anyone in them whom I knew personally. Some people destroyed things simply because they liked being vandals. Later on, when things were getting chaotic, the whole of society got involved, whether they were Red Guards or not. By then nobody could tell who did what - let alone for what reasons.

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution I feel the ordinary people were exhilarated by their new right to criticize and even to attack their bosses...”

I Was a Teenage Red Guard by Mo Bo, 1987

Background Information: After seeing her parents sent to a “reeducation camp” and serving as a leader of the Little Red Guard in elementary school, at the age of 17, Anchee Min was sent to work on a collective farm. At 17, Min joined millions of other city-dwelling teenagers to become a peasant and work in rural areas of China. This program, is called "educated youth go up to the mountains and down to the countryside." Discovered in China, Min moved to the United States in 1984 to continue her acting and writing career. The excerpt from the article was published 15 years after the end of the Cultural Revolution after the fall of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War.

“The school’s party secretary, a man named Chain, was a workers’ representative from the Shanghai Shipping Factory. In the first week of November 1970, he called me into his office. I was thirteen. He told me that the committee had finally rooted out a hidden class enemy, an American spy. He said, “We are going to have a meeting against her, a rally that two thousand people will attend. You will be the student representative to speak against her.” I asked who it was. Wrinkling his eyebrows, the secretary said a shocking name: Autumn Leaves, my teacher.

Autumn Leaves was a thin, middle-aged woman. She loved Chinese, mathematics, and music. She never seemed to tire of teaching. When she knew that I wanted to improve my Chinese, she brought me her own books to read. She was this way with all of her students. For the next two hours, Secretary Chain worked to convince me that Autumn Leaves was a secret agent of the imperialists and was using teaching as a weapon to destroy our minds. He told me the fable of “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing.” He said Autumn Leaves was the wolf. He told me that Autumn Leaves’ father was a Chinese-American who was still living in America. Secretary Chain said, “The capitalist sent his daughter back to China to educate our children.” I told Secretary Chain that I would speak at the rally. He nodded and said, “Mao would be very proud of you.”

Two strong men escorted Autumn Leaves onto the stage. Her arms were twisted behind her. Her hair had suddenly turned gray. Her face was colorless. A rectangular board reading “Down With The American Spy” hung from her neck. The crowd shouted, Confess! Confess! Autumn Leaves kept silent. When kicked hard, she said that she had nothing to confess. I stood up and felt dizzy. The crowd began clapping. The sunlight was dazzlingly bright and hurt my eyes. I moved to the front of the stage.

I told the crowd that Autumn Leaves was the wolf in sheep’s clothing. I took out the books she loaned me and showed them to the crowd. Comrades, I said, now I understand why Autumn Leaves was so kind to me. She was trying to turn me into an enemy of our country, a running dog of the imperialists! The crowd shouted, Confess! Confess! Autumn Leaves began to speak slowly to the crowd with her hoarse voice. She said that she would never want to turn any of her students into the country’s enemy. She broke into tears. Secretary Chain took over the microphone. He ordered Autumn Leaves to shut up and accept the criticism of the revolutionary masses with a correct attitude. Autumn Leaves said that she could not accept any lies. Autumn Leaves demanded to speak to me. Secretary Chain told her to go ahead. Autumn Leaves asked if I really believed that she was an enemy of the country. My head felt like a boiling teapot. “Just be honest!” she said, her hoarse voice raised to its extreme. I turned to Secretary Chain. He was smiling scornfully. “Think about the snake,” he said. It was a story Mao told in his book. It was about a peasant who found a frozen snake lying in his path on a snowy day. The snake had the most beautiful skin the peasant had ever seen. He felt sorry for her and decided to save her life. He picked up the snake and put her into his jacket to warm her with the heat of his body. Soon the snake woke up and felt hungry. She bit her savior. The peasant died. I turned to look at the wall-size portrait of Mao. I was reminded of my duty. I must fight against anyone who dared to oppose Mao’s teaching.”

Source: Edited from “Red Azalea” by Anchee Min, *Harper’s Magazine*, February, 1994

Background Information: In 1966, Wang Rongfen, then a student, wrote a letter to Mao Zedong condemning the newly launched Cultural Revolution as "a mass movement launched from the barrel of a gun."

Because of the letter which directly challenged Mao's judgment in unleashing the self-destructive frenzy of his young vigilantes, she was imprisoned for life. Released after 17 year, in.

2006, she sent a letter to Chinese President Hu Jintao, who was part of her same generation, calling for China to accept the "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court" and establish a tribunal for crimes against humanity committed during the Cultural Revolution.

"Dear Mr. Hu Jintao:

..Mr. Hu, you personally experienced the Cultural Revolution while at Tsinghua University, so you are naturally aware of the influence of that August 18 event, when Mao Zedong for the first time reviewed the Red Guards and wore their armband. After that, Song Binbin changed her name to Song Yaowu -- "be violent" -- and the Girl's Middle School attached to the Beijing Normal University was renamed "Red Yaowu Middle School" after becoming the first school in China to beat its principal to death. Statistics of the New Beijing Municipal Party Committee at that time identified 1,772 teachers, principals and ordinary residents in Beijing were beaten to death by Red Guards from August 20 until the end of September. Even Tsinghua University was unable to escape this fate; you must remember the red terror that took place on Tsinghua's campus on August 24...

...The Cultural Revolution was a humanitarian disaster. In terms of duration, the range and number of its victims and the severity of its methods, it constitutes a unique episode in the history of humanity....

... In June this year, the Cultural Revolution will reach its 42nd anniversary. It's time to bring this historical case to a close. Left unresolved, it will only bring more trouble in the future. If the Party really wishes to accelerate reform and openness, it should draw a lesson from history and move ahead with the times by respecting the human rights of the people, abandoning violent tactics, thoroughly repudiating Mao Zedong Thought, becoming party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, establishing a court for crimes against humanity, declaring the Red Guards an anti-humanitarian violent organization, putting on trial those who committed crimes against humanity during the Cultural Revolution and those seeking to revive the Cultural Revolution, and punishing them according to law. Only in this way can there be consolation for the victims of the Cultural Revolution and a winning back of the people's confidence to establish a harmonious society and promote reform and openness..."

Respectfully yours,

Wang Rongfen

January 12, 2008, in Germany

Source: Wang Rongfen, "Urging Hu Jintao to Punish Crimes Against Humanity in the Cultural Revolution"

Document 1

Resolutions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (August 1-12, 1966)

http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/classics/mao/cpc/cc_res_11p.html

A. To overthrow a political power, it is always necessary . . . to create public opinion, [and] to do work in the ideological sphere. This is true for the revolutionary class as well as for the counterrevolutionary class. This thesis of Comrade Mao Zedong's has been proved entirely correct in practice. Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavor to stage a come-back. The proletariat must do just the opposite: it must meet headon every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society. At present, our objective is to struggle against and crush those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic 'authorities' and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, art and literature and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.

B. In the great proletarian Cultural Revolution, the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves, and any method of doing things on their behalf must not be used. Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative. Cast out fear. Don't be afraid of disorder. Chairman Mao has often told us that revolution cannot be so very refined, so gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement and learn to distinguish between right and wrong and between correct and incorrect ways of doing things. Make the fullest use of big-character posters and great debates to argue matters out, so that the masses can clarify the correct views, criticize the wrong views and expose all the ghosts and monsters. In this way the masses will be able to raise their political consciousness in the course of the struggle, enhance their abilities and talents, distinguish right from wrong and draw a clear line between the enemy and ourselves.

C. In the great proletarian Cultural Revolution a most important task is to transform the old educational system and the old principles and methods of teaching. In this great Cultural Revolution, the phenomenon of our schools being dominated by bourgeois intellectuals must be completely changed. In every kind of school we must apply thoroughly the policy advanced by Comrade Mao Zedong, of education serving proletarian politics and education being combined with productive labor, so as to enable those receiving an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and to become laborers with socialist consciousness and culture. The period of schooling should be shortened. Courses should be fewer and better. The teaching material should be thoroughly transformed, . . . beginning with simplifying complicated material. While their main task is to study, students should also learn . . . industrial work, farming and military affairs, and take part in the struggles of the Cultural Revolution as they occur to criticize the bourgeoisie.

Document 2

Mao's Letter to the Red Guards of Tsinghua University Middle School (August 1, 1966)

Source: *Long Live Mao Tse-tung Thought* (<http://www.marxist.org>)

I have received both the big-character posters which you sent on 28 July as well as the letter which you sent to me, asking for an answer. The two big-character posters which you wrote on 24 June and 4 July express your anger at, and denunciation of, all landlords, bourgeois, imperialists, revisionists, and their running dogs who exploit and oppress the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and revolutionary parties and groupings. You say it is right to rebel against reactionaries; I enthusiastically support you. . . . I want to say that I myself as well as my revolutionary comrades-in-arms all take the same attitude. No matter where they are, in Peking or anywhere in China, I will give enthusiastic support to all who take an attitude similar to yours in the Cultural Revolution movement. Another thing, while supporting you, at the same time we ask you to pay attention to uniting with all who can be united with. As for those who have committed serious mistakes, after their mistakes have been pointed out you should offer them a way out of their difficulties by giving them work to do, and enabling them to correct their mistakes and become new men. Marx said: the proletariat must emancipate not only itself but all mankind. If it cannot emancipate all mankind, then the proletariat itself will not be able to achieve final emancipation. Will comrades please pay attention to this truth too.

Document 3

***The New York Times* Reports on the Cultural Revolution in China:**

“Peking Age Teen-Agers Widen Harassment,” August 12, 1966

“Young people in Peking’s streets publicity cut off their long hair and slashed their narrow trousers tonight. . . they were obeying orders given by hundreds of teen-agers to give up with what the youngsters called bourgeois trends. . . Organized into group of “Red guards for the cultural revolution,” the teen-agers pasted up countless slogans in the city. . . Hundreds of drumming and gong-beating “Red guards” also demonstrated today in the street leading to the Soviet embassy. . . The teen-agers invaded the streets with evident official approval. They shouted anti-Soviet slogans last night around a huge portrait of Mao Tse-Tung in the middle of the street about a mile from the Soviet embassy. . . New notices in tailor’s shops offered speedy alteration of Western-style clothes if their wearers could not afford to replace them.”

“Chinese Communists Close Peking’s City Newspaper and Purge Its Staff,” September 4, 1966

“China’s “cultural revolution” claimed new victims today with an announcement that Peking’s local newspaper was being shut down and its staff purged. . . Today’s announcement by the party’s Peking city committee said the newspaper was under “temporary suspension” to “allow a complete cultural revolution.” The action came in the midst of the campaign by militant Red Guard teen-agers to wipe out Western influences in Chinese culture and way of life.”

http://people.hofstra.edu/alan_j_singer/CoursePacks/ChinasGreatProletarianCulturalRevolution.pdf

Document 4

Communist Party Newspapers Question Excesses of the Red Guard

Source: *The Cultural Revolution in China* (1967).

Red Flag, February 27, 1967: “A misconception has emerged among some people that all those in authority are no good and unreliable and should therefore without exception all be overthrown. This viewpoint is completely wrong Cadres who have committed mistakes should be given the opportunity to admit, criticize, and correct them. So long as they make a self-criticism, correct their mistakes, and come over to the side of the Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line, they can still be given appropriate leading posts. Many of them can even be drawn into the provisional organs of power by the proletarian revolutionaries. Even cadres who have committed very serious mistakes should be handled leniently after they are criticized” (40).

People’s Daily, June 18, 1967: “The contradiction between the proletariat and the handful of top party persons in authority taking the capitalist road is the principal contradiction and an antagonistic one. . . .Some comrades are actually directing the spearhead of their struggle against their own comrades-in-arms or the masses. . . . It is necessary to handle correctly the contradictions among the people, unite with all forces that can be united, and bring about a most extensive revolutionary alliance with the Left as its core” (48).

http://people.hofstra.edu/alan_j_singer/CoursePacks/ChinasGreatProletarianCulturalRevolution.pdf

Document 5

The Cultural Revolution’s Goal

The document below is from a June 7, 1966, editorial in the People’s Liberation Army Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese military.

The current great socialist cultural revolution is a great revolution to sweep away all monsters and a great revolution that remolds the ideology of people and touches their souls. What weapon should be used to sweep away all monsters? What ideology should be applied to arm people's minds and remold their souls? The most powerful ideological weapon, the only one, is the great Mao Tse-tung's thought.

In this great, stormy cultural revolution, the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers are playing the role of the main force -this is the result of their efforts in creatively studying and applying Mao Tse-tung's thought and arming their ideology with it.

Chairman Mao is the radiant sun lighting our minds. Mao Tse-tung's thought is our lifeline. Those who oppose Mao Tse-tung's thought, no matter when they do so and what kind of "authorities" they are, will be denounced by the entire Party and the whole nation.

<http://ncta.osu.edu/lessons/china/history/Ahrens-China.pdf>

Document 6

Violence Against Teachers

This excerpt from a 1966 paper written by historian Youqin Wang describes the violence against teachers that was common during the Cultural Revolution.

In the afternoon of August 5, 1966, some tenth grade students at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University started [beating]... a group comprised of three vice principals and two deans... Many students came to join them. The students... forced them to kneel on the ground, hit them with nail-spiked clubs, scalded them with boiling water, and so on. After three hours of torture, the first vice principal, Bian Zhongyun, lost consciousness and was put into a garbage cart. Two hours later she was sent to the hospital across the street. There, she was later found to have been dead for some time...

In most cases, beatings were a collective activity, conducted not by single students but by a group of Red Guards. A group of Red Guards acted together, inciting each other and encouraging hostilities. Sometimes, a beating happened in front of hundreds of people... Bian Zhongyun, the first victim of the violence of 1966, died after being beaten by many students. During the several hours of torture, no one at this school of more than 1,600 students tried to dissuade the beaters from these inhuman actions... at the student dining hall some talked loudly about how they forced her to eat dirt from the toilet or how they fetched hot water to scald her. There was no sense of guilt, but rather an excited, giddy atmosphere.

<http://ncta.osu.edu/lessons/china/history/Ahrens-China.pdf>

Document 7

The Song of Ox-Ghosts and Snake Dreams c. 1966

This song was composed by a Chinese student and quickly spread throughout the country during the Cultural Revolution. The Red Guards punished certain teachers in part by forcing the teachers to sing this song several times a day. If the singing was unsatisfactory, the teachers would be beaten or otherwise punished.

I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon.
I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon.
I am guilty. I am guilty.
I committed crimes against the people,
So the people take me as the object of the dictatorship.
I have to lower my head and admit my guilt.
I must be obedient.
I am not allowed to speak or act incorrectly.
If I speak or act incorrectly,
May you beat me and smash me,
Beat me and smash me

<http://ncta.osu.edu/lessons/china/history/Ahrens-China.pdf>

Document 1



Document 2

In the early 1950's China chose to model its Socialist Economy after that of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Model called for capital-intensive development of heavy industry, with the capital to be generated from the agricultural sector of the economy. The state would purchase grain from the farmers at low prices and sell it, both at home and on the export market, at high prices. In practice, agricultural production did not increase fast enough to generate the amount of capital required to build up China's industry according to plan. Mao Zedong (1893-1976) decided that the answer was to reorganize Chinese agriculture by pushing through a program of cooperativization (or collectivization) that would bring China's small farmers, their small plots of land, and their limited draught animals, tools, and machinery together into larger and, presumably, more efficient cooperatives. The farmers put up resistance, mostly in the form of passive resistance, lack of cooperation, and a tendency to eat animals that were scheduled for cooperativization. Many of the Communist Party leaders wanted to proceed slowly with cooperativization.

Asia for Educators, Columbia University

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/mao_zedong_agricultural_cooperation.pdf

Document 3

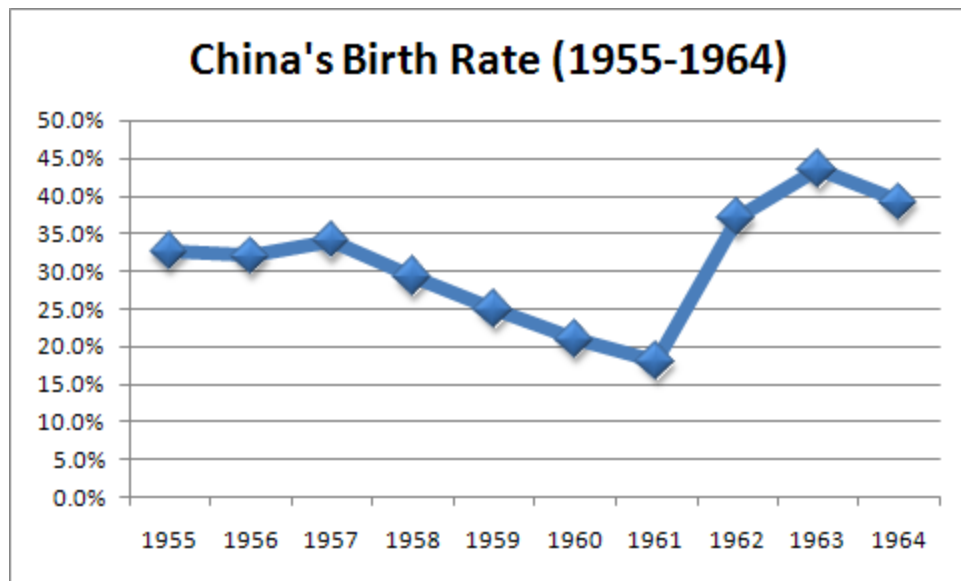
Mr Dikötter, who has been studying Chinese rural history from 1958 to 1962, when the nation was facing a famine, compared the systematic torture, brutality, starvation and killing of Chinese peasants to the Second World War in its magnitude. At least 45 million people were worked, starved or beaten to death in China over these four years; the worldwide death toll of the Second World War was 55 million.

Mr Dikötter is the only author to have delved into the Chinese archives since they were reopened four years ago. He argued that this devastating period of history – which has until now remained hidden – has international resonance. "It ranks alongside the gulags and the Holocaust as one of the three greatest events of the 20th century....members of the rural farming communities were seen by the Party merely as "digits", or a faceless workforce. For those who committed any acts of disobedience, however minor, the punishments were huge.

State retribution for tiny thefts, such as stealing a potato, even by a child, would include being tied up and thrown into a pond; parents were forced to bury their children alive or were doused in excrement and urine, others were set alight, or had a nose or ear cut off. One record shows how a man was branded with hot metal. People were forced to work naked in the middle of winter; 80 per cent of all the villagers in one region of a quarter of a million Chinese were banned from the official canteen because they were too old or ill to be effective workers, so were deliberately starved to death.

Source: "Mao's Great Leap Forward 'killed 45 million in four years", *The Independent*, April 2013

Document 4A



Document 4B

