

Record: 1

Title: Cultural Revolution.

Source: Current Events; 9/29/2006, Vol. 106 Issue 4, p2-2, 1/2p

Document Type: Article

Subject Terms: COMMUNISM -- China
STUDENT movements
COLLECTIVISM
CHINA -- History -- Cultural Revolution, 1966-1969

Geographic Terms: CHINA Report Available

Abstract: The article discusses the historical background of spread of communism in China, with specific reference to the Cultural Revolution spearheaded by Chinese politician Mao Zedong, popularly known as Mao Tse-tung. Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to get rid of all anticommunist influences. Zedong urged thousands of students at the start of the revolution to energetically destroy China's old customs, habits, culture, and thinking.

Lexile: 1010

Full Text Word Count: 330

ISSN: 00113492

Accession Number: 22490462

Database: MAS Ultra - School Edition
Section: Time Trip

Cultural Revolution

In his later years, Mao Zedong was concerned that China was becoming "soft" on communism. He wanted to light a "single spark [that would] start a prairie fire" to get rid of all anticommunist influences. In 1966, he launched the Cultural Revolution to achieve that goal.

At the start of the revolution, Mao urged thousands of students, who came to be known as the Red Guards, to energetically destroy China's "four olds" — old customs, habits, culture, and thinking. The assault of the Red Guards was relentless and brutal. They arrested people on the accusations of a neighbor or even a child, dragging people to jail or beating them senseless for being "capitalist readers."

Red Guards raided homes, destroying what they felt were remnants of traditional Chinese culture. They took over schools and offices, humiliating and torturing teachers, scientists, and anyone else they suspected of not being a true communist.

In November 1966, about 200 teachers and students from Beijing Normal University headed to Qufu, the birthplace of Confucius. There they destroyed 6,618 priceless cultural artifacts, including many paintings and thousands of books.

Investigations of 85 of China's top universities and schools after the Cultural Revolution produced evidence that at each one, students tortured teachers. At 12 of the schools, students beat some teachers to death.

Historians estimate that Red Guards persecuted more than 700,000 people between 1966 and 1976. More than 35,000 were murdered or forced to commit suicide. The Cultural Revolution also ruined China's economy. Economic production dropped by 40 percent in 10 years. Thousands of schools also lay empty. Chinese people who were 15 to 25 years old during the revolution are today called the "lost generation" because they missed out on so much schooling.

By 1972, Mao had realized that the revolution had gone too far, and he ordered the Red Guards to disband. But many persecutions continued until Mao's death in 1976.

PHOTO (COLOR)

Copyright of Current Events is the property of Weekly Reader Corporation and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.