

When Chinese Trash saved the world: Western lies about the Cultural Revolution



HELP ENLIGHTEN YOUR FELLOWS. BE SURE TO PASS THIS ON. SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON IT.



Mao is genuinely popular and loved by many Chinese, and statues are not uncommon nor regarded as a sign of "cult of personality"

adoration, as intimated in the West.

Of the West's three main "Reasons Why Red China is Evil and the West is Morally & Ideologically Superior" propaganda campaign, the Cultural Revolution outranks the Great Leap Forward and the legacy of Mao for being far and away the most difficult for non-Chinese to truly get a handle on.

Most leftists won't even touch it, much less defend it an inch...and thus they have completely ceded the entire era to socialism's Western ideological enemies. Thus, it should be easily admitted and quite clear that we necessarily have been left with a completely one-sided portrayal of the Cultural Revolution.

And that's when we have one at all: I would imagine that 9 out of every 10 Westerners can't truly say anything even a bit substantial - even allowing for the West's negative view - about the Cultural Revolution.

I encourage you to finish this article, because it seeks to understand, to de-mythologize, to contextualise - historically, culturally, politically and relative to the rest of the 1960s world - and to defend the many ignored, obscured and simply unknown aims and achievements of the Cultural Revolution.

It's a revolution which truly needs a revolution in analysis; like all popular revolutions of the modern era - it has things to teach us about our own societies and everyone's modern times.



Visually stunning, the work of a great artist, Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* (1987), does not escape the Western biases about the Cultural Revolution, which is presented as harsh, chaotic, and gratuitously cruel. (Photo: John Loane as emperor Pu Yi, in a re-education camp.)

From the West's point of view there was certainly nothing to defend: Their view of the Cultural Revolution is that all free-thinking was attacked; supremely moral people were tarred and feathered; perfectly-intentioned and chaste schoolteachers were forced to wear dunce caps while sitting atop dunk tanks; chaos was official government policy; legislation entailed lunacies such as forcing compasses to rest pointing at south; cats and dogs were ordered to live together; and it only ended after the jaws of life were able to pry China from Mao's cold, dead hands.

The good news for the West is that their ignorance is not a risk, because such an event is culturally untranslatable - such a thing could never happen here, right? Sure, the West acknowledges the Chinese are capable in some ways - they

aren't Blacks or Muslims - but...there's just something. In the [2nd article of this 8-part series](#), on the Great Leap's Famine, that *je ne sais quoi* was determined to be the natural "docility" of the Chinese, according to the West's "doyen" and premier university textbook-writer on China, John King Fairbank.



In the case of the Cultural Revolution his exceptional, Harvard-backed acumen determined that the special something, the true culprit was - in what some may view as a profound and deft intellectual summation of a lifetime of studying the Middle Kingdom - the fundamentally, intractably, universally "passive" character of the Chinese. He posits in his opening remarks in his chapter on the Cultural Revolution:

"In looking at the Cultural Revolution (CR) in China, we are therefore obliged to imagine a society that can be run by a Great Leader and a party dictatorship simply because the citizenry are passive in politics and obedient to authority."

They have no human rights because they have been taught that the assertion of human rights (such as due process of law) would be selfish and antisocial and therefore ignoble."

It's tough to be a Chinese...docile, passive, obedient, apparently totally lawless, and even uncomprehending of human rights (any of them). I would have thought that every society contained at least *one single* human right...but no - Harvard's Fairbank says they have "*no human rights*".



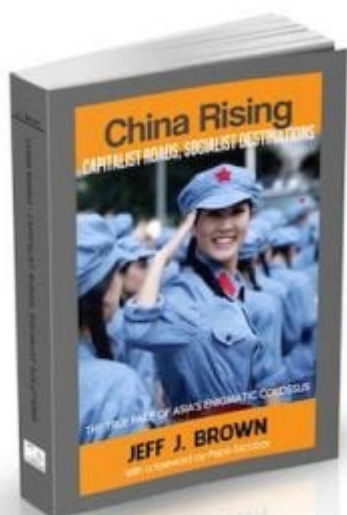
Fairbank's [New York Times obituary](#) impressively begins: "*John K. Fairbank, the Harvard history professor who was widely credited with creating the field of modern Chinese studies in the United*

States..." His book [China: A New History](#) is a comprehensive overview which is standard reading across US universities. And yet there can be no doubt that his above-quoted paragraph is pure nonsense, clearly racist and terribly unacademic. It could be considered a success in one view: it's excellent propaganda, as it inspires shock, abhorrence, self-pride, anti-intellectualism and extremism.

When a culture's most esteemed teachings about China's Cultural Revolution are based on a foundation of - "first we must envision the Chinese as humans who do not appreciate humanity" - we must read such teachings with extreme caution, and then search for better analysis of this important modern historical period.

But let's not forget how standard these faulty foundations are in Western academia: read their studies of Mao, Stalin, Khomeini, Khamenei, the Castros or any anti-imperialist and -

from the base of their pyramid to their “doyens” - these heroes to billions are consistently reduced to being non-humans. That is why anyone who publicly says “I understand them” *must be screwed up in the head*. Open sympathy will land you in jail, or fired.



This is the 3rd part of an 8-part series which compares mainstream Western scholarship on China - typified by Fairbank - with modern, humane scholarship, typified by Jeff J. Brown's groundbreaking new book [China is Communist, Dammit! \(and also his equally formidable China Rising, Capitalist Roads, Socialist Destinations\)](#). By comparing these books, and adding in my own idea or two, we can replace the faulty inherited knowledge on supremely important Chinese events like the Cultural Revolution.

Or, you can keep blindly accepting the mainstream nonsense about China's recent socialist past, and fail to learn about possible Chinese solutions to universal problems. That would make you rather “*docile*” and “*passive*” - perhaps you are part Chinese?

The true educational aim of the Cultural Revolution: Finally, give Chinese Trash a chance

[dropcap]W[/dropcap>e have no choice but to start at zero with primary sources:

“The task of the Cultural Revolution is to reform the old education system and education philosophy and methodology.” - Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, May 16 Directive (1966), which initiated the Cultural Revolution.

Due to its total historical exclusion in the West, I must

first address the primary yet studiously ignored aspect of the Cultural Revolution: granting mass rural education for the first time. Above all, the explicit “task” of Cultural Revolution was a revolution in education, and it is this new inclusion of rural voices which naturally revolutionised the urban-dominated post-1949 culture, causing inevitable friction.

Indeed, this is the thesis from which to operate: By opening up China’s overall national education / culture to rural Chinese Trash, that necessarily produced conflict with the hitherto urban-dominated communist culture, and the hard-won victory of Chinese Trash is what is now appropriately termed a “Cultural Revolution”.

Another, more universal, thesis is this: If one fails to acknowledge the intensity of the urban-rural divide - which is a universal byproduct of the industrial era - one cannot understand the Chinese Cultural Revolution, nor recognise its immediate necessity for a parallel overhaul in the West.

But this original aim must be hidden: Denying that the Cultural Revolution actually represented a *vast increase* in education is a primary propaganda tactic of the West on this issue.



Thusly, Fairbank denigrates one of the Cultural Revolution’s totally ignored yet absolutely primary programs - the rural

education program - as mere "indoctrination"...and he leaves it at that! (Similarly, you can find plenty of Western propaganda about the alleged "failure" of socialist Cuba's famous literacy drive.)

But demanding equal education opportunities is surely the sign of a modern democrat, and Brown refuses Fairbank's dishonesty, willful blindness and baseline suspicion:

"The other aspect about the Cultural Revolution was Mao's ardent desire to bring rural education out of the dark ages. After 1949, the education system improved dramatically for urbanites, as well as for illiterate adults....But for farm folk, the education system changed little after liberation. It was still controlled by urban, intellectual elites, who largely scorned the hundreds of millions of peasants in the countryside....The Cultural Revolution changed all that."

The invaluable thing about sympathetic, open-minded, 21st-century scholars like Brown is that he is open to the Chinese view of China's history, rather than rewriting it to fit Western ideology.

Furthermore, Brown can use modern local sources, such as [Dongpin Han](#), whereas Westerners mostly talk to those who fled China and bear a grudge (It's the same thing when it comes to Iran, but I shouldn't complain - the anti-Castro faction has far more political power in Florida.). We must remember the extreme paucity of new ideas and facts on the Cultural Revolution: this is a context where Western leftists have long since fled, and where Chinese expat leftists have not been present in the West long enough to raise their voice or to be heard.

Han's facts are undeniably weighty, and must be accounted for when discussing the Cultural Revolution: in 1966, the start of the Cultural Revolution, his village of 1,300 students had 8

middle schools and 2 high schools. When it was over, his county had 249 middle schools and 89 high schools. In 1966, 65 percent of all rural schools had no desks and chairs, but by the end of the Cultural Revolution, per Brown, *"To say that the Cultural Revolution radically improved the educational foundation of rural China would be a gross understatement."*

And to *"radically improve the educational foundation of rural"* society, is thus to improve all of society. However, it must be retained in mind that mass rural education was seemingly unknown to humanity for our 5,000 years of recorded history, and thus this modern development can affect a national culture in unpredicted ways.

If there's one thing a capitalist is, it's impatient. They are simply appalled that any Socialist-inspired revolution has taken more than one week to succeed...and this is why capitalists are such bad political leaders - real changes take longer than a financial quarter. But if we look at a timeline of China Communist Party governance: After reversing foreign domination and exploitation (1927-49), then assuring domestic security (Korean War, 1950-53), and then having boosted urban education and teaching the illiterate, the time came to raise up the rural areas via education.

Of course, when rural people are on equal educational levels they will insist and deserve equal say in the overall national culture...and, spoiler alert, Chinese peasants did NOT want a gradual return to capitalism via "revisionism".

In a very real sense, which Iranians will understand easily: rural "conservatives" in China had very often become truer revolutionaries. Urbanites became increasingly viewed as the more easily corruptible cadres, more easily swayed from the revolutionary path and more easily swayed from the national / cultural morality. The explanation is partially due to class: the rural area was a class segment which still had not been assured of basic needs (education, empowerment)...and they

wanted them!

This is the polar opposite of the West, where urbanites view rural areas as useless, dead-weight, burdensome trash (note my lack of a capital 'T'). A "hillbilly progressive", much less a "hillbilly revolutionary" is an oxymoron to the West, but this is not a "universal value", and it is clearly wrong to assume this was the case in mid-60's China.

And yet, how many Western White Trash view their urbanites quite similarly to conservative-yet-revolutionary 1960s-era Chinese?

I hope we are beginning to see the scope of the problem - just how universal and modern it is...and also how China addressed this issue 50 years earlier!

Acknowledging this problem - that the only democratic choice is to force rural citizens onto a cultural / educational / societal par with urbanites - is a major step to realising the major goal of the Cultural Revolution: ending the urban / rural divide.

And this is a good place to remind us that "Cultural Revolution" is a Western abbreviation: *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* is the official Chinese name, because this is when Maoism became Maoism *culturally* by making the rural people at least the equal of those Soviet godmen-proletariat: factory workers. In 1968 the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was placing rural on par with urban, uniting the proletariat in greater emphasis than ever before in a *cultural sense*.

The reality - still unperceived by many leftists today - is that urban factory workers having significantly higher education (and thus higher possible capability for modern political intelligence) than the average person totally ceased after WWII. Factory workers were a vanguard in 1917 Russia, but times change, and often rapidly. In 2018 it is a totally,

totally, totally outdated concept that rural people are culturally or politically stupid, because we are all watching the same TV, internet, books, newspapers, media, etc. A huge step in ending rural isolation / increasing equality of media goes all the way back to [Rural Free Delivery](#) of mail in 1902 - it may not seem like much today, but we must remember what conditions prevailed before, and for so long; and we must remember that politics and economics are moral and easily understandable, certainly not technocratic. On top of it all, the idea that knowing how to run a machine is "education" but how to run a farm is *not*...is a stupid, uniformed and prejudiced idea (and farmers are happy to watch you try and make it look easy).

Anti-rural prejudice is truly as weighty and as burdensome upon human society as is our long history of anti-female discrimination...and that is big. The Cultural Revolution was - whether one condones or condemns it - certainly at least an effort to right this perpetual historical wrong.



Culturally decontextualised, not to mention invidiously interpreted, pictures like these were widely circulated (still are) throughout the West. Original caption reads: "The staff of the Heilongjiang Daily accuses Luo Zicheng, head of the work group designated by the provincial Party committee, of following the capitalist line and opposing mass movement. His dunce cap announces his crimes, and on the wall behind him are portraits of Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Chen Yun, Lin Biao, and Deng Xiaoping (from left to right). Harbin, 25 August 1966."

“White Trash Revolution”, a common theme of mine, is not an insult but a call to arms. Trash Revolutions - unless you are in the 1%, or perhaps the (so-called) “talented 10th” - are simply what popular, modern revolutions *truly are*, as Iran, Cuba and others have shown.

Returning to education, it is certainly true that China did rob Peter to pay Paul: urban areas schools were closed for intermittent periods in 1966-70, but it was not the decade the West falsely describes often. Regardless, the urban closures *must be mitigated* by the undeniable fact that always too-limited education resources were poured into the rural areas.

It is not a coincidence that today we see that this is the exact opposite of French President Emmanuel Macron’s education plan, which [will close rural classes](#) to put the money towards urban areas. French Trash is up in arms, of course, but what is never admitted is Macron’s true goal, which is the same as the ruling elite’s has always been: only being bothered to create a technocratic, self-censoring, self-aggrandising, urban elite in order to protect the elite of the elite. Rural values are the opposite of Rothschild banker values; the 1% only own the land (and the homes), they don’t have to work it like a j-o-b.

Furthermore in France, and showing the top-to-bottom American-style changes Macron is rapidly forcing through (often by decree, despite controlling parliament, to avoid public debate), is the...no, not the labor code rollback, the right-wing immigration bill, the normalisation of the state of emergency, the rail privatisation but his... university education changes. It’s rarely getting reported internationally so far in France’s “May ’68, 50 Years Later”, but there have been more than 2 dozen universities closed by massive university protests in the past 7-10 days (another day of nationwide student protests will take place tomorrow, May 10).

Students, teachers and unions (and parents) are upset that, to lazily quote a protester from one of my [PressTV reports](#): *“Macron’s university reforms are going to create a system where people from the rich, elite high schools in Paris are going to go to university more often than those from small cities and rural areas. It will mark the end of our system of equally encouraging everyone to pursue higher education.”* The French say “Once does not make a custom”, but this is two clear steps towards (re)creating an aforementioned technocratic urban elite and away from democratising higher education for everyone.

(I’m sure American students are protesting as well, but probably against things like the usage of facts to bully people, and how [“Transgender Bathrooms are the Selma of My Generation!”](#))

What is undeniable is that, as Brown repeatedly relates, the rural people of China remember the CR fondly, even if urbanites do not; and even if the urban elites who fled the Cultural Revolution do not, when speaking to journalists in their new adopted countries.

But the West does not relay these voices - they only decry the mistakes of the Cultural Revolution, while steadfastly refusing to acknowledge the solutions and great leap-advances, such as in rural education.

The true reforming aim of the Cultural Revolution: Admitting revolutionary failure

[dropcap]W[/dropcap]e must realize that the 1949 Communist Revolution can be fairly called “merely” an anti-imperialist one, much like the 1776 US Revolution: even if a new elite drawn from the regular People replaced the old - the same feudal mentality existed among the mass of the People.

China's Cultural Revolution changed all that. Indeed, it is truly the case that China's Trash Revolution did not fully arrive until their Cultural Revolution. The reason is something no Westerner will object to: corruption and mismanagement in Red China.

Clearly, the West's "talented tenth" is terrified of such a thing happening. The idea that they could be toppled from their comfortable perch - and maybe even tried for actual crimes - is necessarily something they have to resist. Their power is based on their exclusivity and their alleged exceptionalism - just like a corrupt Chinese communist cadre - not on a broad social ideal or actual democratic mandate, formal or informal (although I guess Maddow has gotten good ratings - once she switched to nightly Russophobia).

By the mid-1960s the Communist Party had been in charge for 15 years, and yet utopia was not quite at hand (surely the capitalists would have implemented that by 1960, had they been given the chance). From Fairbank:

"As this effort continued (the building up China), however, Mao became concerned about the seemingly inevitable buildup of the institutions of the central government and its many levels of officials and cadres who seemed to be taking the place of the local elite of imperial times. He feared a revival of the ruling-class domination of the villagers. Given the modern tendency for expert management, and the irrepressible tendency toward personal privilege and corruption among China's new ruling class, it would be hard to prove him wrong."

(Obviously, we should ignore his parenthetical implication that only China's new ruling class had a tendency towards corruption - he gives no proof or reason why the Chinese are more corrupt than anywhere else.)

What is truthful is that modern 20th century history shows that technocratism - "expert management" - is indeed a major threat to the average person: Hillary was the "most qualified president ever", while Brussels is built on the altar of technocratism. What is never said in Western media is the

primary fault with these oh-so "qualified" people: their neoliberal, neo-imperialist ideology is terrible and unwanted democratically.

But Fairbank makes clear - and you wouldn't believe me if I hadn't quoted him - the basis of Mao's Cultural Revolution was to preserve the most anti-oligarchic aspects of the 1949 Revolution, because exchanging one minor gentry for another ("imperial" replaced by "communist") is no revolution at all but a brand change - it's Dubya to Obama.

Brown confirms Mao had the same goal, but with more honesty and without implications. Brown notes that Mao had already launched 7 anti-corruption campaigns between 1951-65, and yet he was quoted in 1964 as openly saying: *"At present you can buy a Party branch secretary for a few packs of cigarettes, not to mention marrying a daughter to him."*

Westerners assume that such honesty cannot exist in socialist-inspired countries: those places are all totalitarian spy states, right? They have no conception of the range of government critiques in Iranian papers, either. But the Chinese know better, and they knew that in the mid-60s, which is why Mao openly admitted it. Back to Fairbank:

"The (August 1966 Eleventh) plenum also put forward Mao's general vision of the moment against revisionism, which was intended to achieve a drastic change in the mental outlook of the whole Chinese people. Spiritual regeneration, as he put it, was to take precedence over economic development."

Fairbank, as a Western intellectual, must of course cast doubt on the very idea that the Eleventh plenum was possibly the product of a democratic discussion process which involved more than just Mao's ideas, but far more important is his Western academic duty to cast proper doubt on anything known as *"spiritual regeneration"*, much less a socialist-inspired one. What another crazy idea of that soulless monster Mao -

spiritual development over economic development!

Regardless, the core of the problem was the Communist Party being so ineffective. Therefore, the Cultural Revolution was Mao's (along with the many honest revolutionaries of the Party, of course) appeal to grassroots power, instead of the Party or even the People's Liberation Army. Per Brown:

"So the Cultural Revolution was Mao's exasperated ploy to clean up and clear out the Party, with the help of the citizens, by giving them the authority to stand up, be heard and punish and/or remove the millions of rotten local cadres who were mostly making their lives miserable and poorer."

Fairbanks and the West are incapable - or unwilling - to view the Cultural Revolution from this perspective: the bottom, the 99%, the People. If they did, they clearly would see that Brown's analysis - that the Cultural Revolution empowered the average person over the establishment of the Communist Party - exonerates the Cultural Revolution in terms of its democratic aims.

Part of Fairbank's problem is that the Chinese take corruption (good governance) very seriously and without that *film noir* cynical tolerance of Western modernity - they execute people over it (like Iran). The West views governance as a path to self-enrichment, or an obstacle to self-enrichment, and thinks they are more moral than the Chinese because their bribery is done in the sunshine (lobbying). Despite all the scandals during France's administrations of Sarkozy and Hollande - nobody has ever gone to prison, nor likely will.

It is also not unfair to point out that when the West says that the Cultural Revolution was an attempt to consolidate power, factionalism, or the killing off of dissidents, it must be remembered that many of these dissidents were the West's ideological allies, as they composed the ones who did not want corruption to be rooted out - *they were* the corrupt ones, in

what surely must have been a significant percentage of cases.

They say that everyone in jail claims to be innocent - I can promise you that every Iranian regime refugee says they were pure angels and the most devoted of public servants.

What were the "show trials" of the Cultural Revolution - they were, apart from the top-level ones - mostly "trial by your peers": if you were a small-time cadre running a small-time factory in a small-time town...your workers and the townspeople knew by your years of actions if you needed to be tarred and feathered and run out of town or not, no? Are small-town hicks even so stupid that they don't know what is really going on in their own hick town? I doubt it but, regardless of what I think, the Cultural Revolution empowered locals to make these decisions *with a base question of: "Corrupt, or not corrupt?"*

Did unjust things happen in the Cultural Revolution? Yes. Simply Google that term and you will find plenty of examples, some of which are likely true, so you don't need my input on that subject. This article is to provide balance to the critics of the Cultural Revolution, which is all that exists in the West.

Was it all Mao or the Communist Party's fault? No, and that's even according to Fairbank: *"To be sure, as the situation got increasingly out of control and into violence, Mao made various efforts to rein it in, but seldom successfully."*

[dropcap]I[/dropcap] appreciate Fairbank's even-handedness here, but mismanagement is still a crime...in China at least. However, mismanagement is not the same as a "policy of genocide / fear / chaos" that the West usually portrays as the motivation for the Cultural Revolution. We should not be surprised - when we see the propaganda basis of their top scholarship - that the humble of aim of combating a *total propaganda* view of the Cultural Revolution is still a

necessary first step for most.

Given that rural education was nonexistent and that the Party had become non-revolutionary, how does a culture change?

The true societal aim of the Cultural Revolution: A revolution in mentality, or it's not 'revolution'

[dropcap]H[/dropcap]ow did Mao give the people "*the authority to stand up*"...?

There is another reason this dramatic policy had to occur, which Fairbank describes but Brown gets at much better: the Cultural Revolution undermined the Confucian-inspired ideals which were the longtime basis of Chinese culture.

Why was this needed? For those who are unfamiliar with Confucius...let's just say that the emphasis is on knowing your role and fulfilling your duties, and not "damn the societal costs-individualism" of the West.

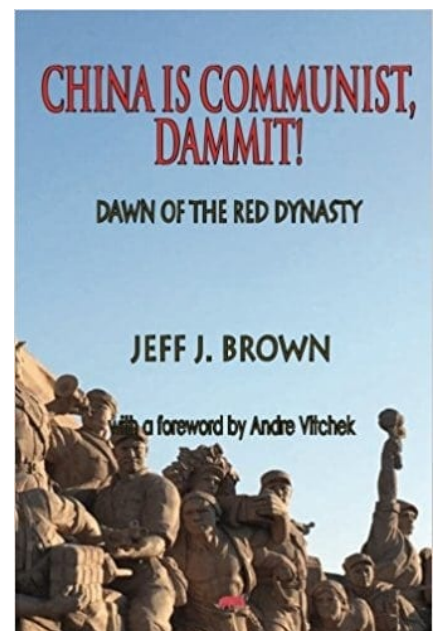
We can debate all day about how much more "*obedient*" the Chinese are than, say, the Germans, who seem to follow authority pretty darn blindly to me...but isn't it already clear what an absurd discussion this is? It's clear to intelligent people that one nation is not more or less obedient than another - such discussions are reactionary and full of inaccuracies. Therefore, obedience to undeserved temporal authority is something which requires a revolution *everywhere*.

We have seen that even Mao openly insulted the corruption of Communist Party cadres, but China - just like *seemingly everywhere* in the 1950s - was a rather conservative place. People did not buck established postwar authorities, and the Communist Party had earned the right to become "established".

Indeed, the idea that China's postwar experience - and China was the 2nd-biggest victim of WWII, and closely behind the USSR - was somehow radically different from the rest of the

world's even *amid* an increasingly connected globe is, I think, a common blind spot for the West, and quite typical of their tendency to view other races as totally different species of humans.

But it is this *very encouragement* of bucking authority which is when we are reminded yet again what an intensely true revolutionary - what a true friend of the People - Mao really was. Brown neatly elucidates the Chinese cultural context as well as the political context of a revolution threatened by a lack of revolutionary ideals (continuing with Brown's last quote, from the previous section, about giving the People the authority to stand up to corruption.):



"They were the victims of this official abuse and they were the ones who could fix the problem. If only they could overcome their fear and feudal subservience, then the crooks could be overwhelmed and not be able to protect each other and themselves.

Westerners scoff at Mao's backers supporting the anti-Lin Biao & Confucius campaign as being frivolous, but they completely miss the point. Mao was giving hundreds of millions of timid,

cowed masses the opportunity to stand up and vocally criticise two of the country's icons, one modern and one ancient. It was a set piece for the people to practice throwing off their feudal mindset and speak with a collective voice of authority and conviction."

In the mid-1960s it was clear that - were the Revolution to not just survive but to keep advancing to greater equality, justice and individual empowerment - removing corrupt government workers / societal leaders was a must. So there's no doubt why corrupt Party leaders, bad teachers, etc. lost their privileged status: actions were to be judged, not status, job titles, degrees, etc.

The West focuses on the miscarriages of justice, which is admirable, but certainly not the whole picture of the Cultural Revolution; also, Western culture is one capitalist miscarriage of justice after another *against the under-privileged*.

Perhaps Westerners prefer to hear it in their own terms:

[dropcap]J[/dropcap]ust imagine if Henry Kissinger or Rachel Maddow had to face a crowd of everyday people who were judging their ideological and real crimes? They'd never get exonerated, that's for sure. Who wouldn't love to see Maddow cleaning latrines - why is she above an immigrant cleaning lady? Why is cleaning bathrooms a demeaning job, to begin with - hasn't Maddow been paid enough yet? Maybe Obama has never been paid to clean toilets and thought "Where's MY bailout?", but I have and it certainly shaped my political views for the better. Maybe the perspective of the West's "talented tenth" would improve if they changed their cultural throne for the porcelain one for a long spell?

Clearly, the West's "talented tenth" is terrified of such a thing happening. The idea that they could be toppled from their comfortable perch - and maybe even tried for actual

crimes - is necessarily something they have to resist. Their power is based on their exclusivity and their alleged exceptionalism - just like a corrupt Chinese communist cadre - not on a broad social ideal or actual democratic mandate, formal or informal (although I guess Maddow has gotten good ratings - once she switched to nightly Russophobia).

Above all, this is why the Cultural Revolution is covered in propaganda - what cultural / social leader is going to green-light this version, much less take this angle in every news item mention? This is why we never hear the positives of the Cultural Revolution, but we can now, thanks to people like Brown:

"The leadership should be rightfully fearful of the people, not the other way around; a great definition of participatory democracy...Thus, the Party had better work its butt off to make sure those who would sell out the communist revolution for a few crumbs of Western empire, are rid of, or at least neutralised.

In the West, it is depicted that this went on for years. In fact, the majority of the vandalism happened during a brief six-week period in the summer of 1966. They did do a lot of damage in such a short period of time and the leadership quickly sent out the People's Liberation Army to stop it. It was one of the big reasons that Mao, soon thereafter, sent these city youths into the countryside, for rural education...It was a great way to get these overzealous kids out of the cities and take some starch out of them. In fact, it worked like a charm. The rural education program for city slickers is still highly valued in China."

The 1960s were a crazy time worldwide...but I think we can say that the May 1968 protests in France or the anti-Vietnam War protests in the US did have some positive societal effects, no? Yet China's domestic uprisings were 100% negative? Obviously a case of one weight, two measures (to improve on a

bad French proverb).

Again, would it be fair of the Chinese to say - "There can be no doubt that the West's 1960s protests were all an abominable, undemocratic atrocity" - as the West does about China? Of course not...but this is more proof of the false reality promoted by Western media and academics on the Cultural Revolution.

A revolution in mentality was needed, or the revolution would have been short-lived...and the Chinese are fond of their Revolution. Per Brown:

"To this day, knowledgeable people inside and outside China say that the Cultural Revolution brought long lasting, badly needed changes to the mindset of the Chinese masses."

The true political aim of the Cultural Revolution: Reducing, not increasing, Mao's power

I hope we are beginning to see the devolution of power away from the powerful, in a fulfilment of socialist ideals...yet Westerners are told that it was all an effort by Mao to sideline his competition.

Perhaps more than any of these false Western claims, I am rather boggled at the preponderance of evidence against this idea.

Yet the idea that an establishment party would wilfully threaten itself with destruction via self-criticism is impossible for the West to comprehend - truly, for a Western politician threatened with losing re-election there is no political deal too shady. Perhaps that is why the Cultural Revolution is portrayed as the misguided whim of a dictator. The underlying theme is: "Lacking reasons or justifications is simply what socialists always do, because they are totalitarian".

On cue, Fairbank: *"Only if we regard him (Mao) as a monarch in succession to scores of emperors can we imagine why the leadership of the CCP, trained to be loyal, went along with his piecemeal assault and destruction of them."*

Fairbank believes that the Cultural Revolution is just "the Chinese being Chinese".... It's lazy and racist, but it's also historical nihilism because it posits that there can be no new, revolutionary ethical / political motivations despite the changing circumstances of life / culture.

And yet Fairbank, because he is writing a text book, must make a cursory list of the facts. These facts clearly prove the progressive, democratic, egalitarian nature and aims of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party and Mao himself - which I will list because if I paraphrased I would not have been believed:

(To avoid grammatical alterations to the quote, please keep in mind that Fairbank is writing to illustrate Mao's dissatisfied view of China in the mid-1960s.)

"But what did Mao think he was doing? Perhaps it can be summed up as an effort to make 'democratic centralism' more democratic and centralist. He saw the new bureaucracy following the ancient pattern of autocratic government from the top down. This would leave the peasant masses where they had always been, at the bottom of society, being exploited by a new elite...Local decisions should not all depend on Beijing bureaucrats. The aim of government should be the welfare and indoctrination of the local peasant masses...."

Fairbank again shows his urban snobbery: he assumes that rural people are so easy to "indoctrinate"....

I pity Fairbank, because somewhere in his mind he knew that Mao's aim was clearly to promote democracy, clearly against the consolidation of power in Beijing via centralization, clearly for the "welfare" of rural citizens...and yet to say

that openly would have been career and social suicide. Yet Fairbank has to mention Mao's true aims, as he is a historian, even if he refuses to expound on them or take them seriously.

Mao took on the establishment in a myriad of ways - he did not strengthen the establishment. Mao encouraged the Red Guards (the newly created revolution student organization) to take on the "capitalist roaders" in the army. Truly, what kind of "dictator" sides with students over soldiers?

Furthermore, this shows how democratic and not dictatorial Mao was: if he had lost control of the army, he surely risked being victimised by a military coup.

By taking on the People's Liberation Army, Mao was able to create revolutionary committees everywhere to allow local, democratic reassessment of revolutionary progress. When the Red Guards had shocked the stagnant urbanites sufficiently, he sent them to the country, and Fairbank's Western urban snobbishness is again in full view: *"The dispersal of the Red Guards led to their being sent down in large numbers to the countryside, casting them from the heights of political importance to the depths."*

One is sure that the fake-leftists of the West still view the countryside as *"the depths"* today. Again, the urban / rural divide is not new - what *is new* is Mao's placing the mantle of proletarian leadership upon them. (Let's remember, Chinese elevation of farmers is not at all new to them, even if it is a foreign concept in the 21st-century West.)

By 1969 a new wave in the PLA had replaced the old bureaucrats. Many Westerners believe this was regression of some sort: I say better a modern, socialist-inspired soldier than a corrupt bureaucrat who acts like an entrepreneurial merchant and creates an undemocratic Deep State.

But I hope we are in agreement: it is almost absurd *just how very democratic and socialist* the Cultural Revolution truly

was: Decentralization, democratization, taking on the Party establishment, taking on the intellectual class, the urban class, the *nouvelle riche* class, the army class - all were attacked with demands to reform politically and morally. I have barely mentioned his relationship with the student / youth class, which requires serious re-assessment!

So how can the Cultural Revolution be Mao's dictatorial power grab when he is siding against all the entrenched classes? I'll tell you how: only by rewriting history and forbidding dissenting views, which is what the West has done.

What was the West doing in the 1960s? Dropping out & corrupting in - repressing, not unchaining, the youth

[dropcap]F[/dropcap]or me the defining motif of the Cultural Revolution is this absolutely incredible and supremely admirable fact: In 1966 - at a time when Mao likely could have grabbed more power for himself due to his success, experience and stature - he willingly threw in his lot with the youth!

He actually devolved and decentralised power down to the youth and told them that *they should* guide and motivate the revolution now, and not his generation! What a romantic revolutionary, no?! Who in the West - what leader actually in power - did that in the 1960s? None did - it was always the opposite!

Mao has provided an example which truly forces one to re-evaluate their concept of revolutionary commitment in myriad ways.

Furthermore, the Cultural Revolution actually proved Mao to be the most in-tune popular leader of his time: he saw that the youth were rebelling, understood the reasons why and what they wanted, and he was *the only top leader* who encouraged them in a positive political direction.

Mao did this in 1966, when the concept of a Great Proletarian

Cultural Revolution was being debated and formulated by China's intellectuals. Following the May 16 Directive and in the same month, a female 45-year old philosophy teacher at Beijing University - surely along with sympathetic teachers and students - put up on campus the first-ever large font poster: it openly condemned university leadership for being revisionists, anti-socialists and oppressors of students.

Maybe in the West one wouldn't be fired or expelled for this...but only "maybe". What's unthinkable is that a Western head of state would promote this attack on such an entrenched class of the establishment. Yet the protest sign came to Mao's attention and that's exactly what he did.

Mao rebroadcast it widely, and responded to the "hip" new communication method by joining it - with his own famous large-font poster, "[Bombard the Headquarters](#)". (I imagine "Bombard" is a wilfully-bad English translation, much as chants in Iran of "Death to...(America, England, secessionists & Israel, usually) are better translated as "Down with...") Mao emphatically supported the students and their new ideas based on revolutionary purity and virtue.

By July millions had spontaneously created and joined the newly-formed Red Guards, all without central organisation. Clearly, the Red Guards had a grassroots, democratic beginning. August 1966 saw the first of eight million-person rallies at Tiananmen Square in favor of launching the Cultural Revolution. Mao donned *their* uniform and joined them there. Fuelled with Mao's seemingly unthinkable anti-establishment slogans like "It is Right to Rebel", the Cultural Revolution was off and running.

If this all seems completely foreign to the Western historical experience, that's because it is: I am totally unaware of a top leader - not a fringe intellectual, not an occasional professor - telling his Western nation's students that it is right to rebel, LOL. I'd be surprised if Western baby boomers

do not feel slightly jealous at the way this Chinese generation of youth and students were empowered, trusted, given prominence and given the power to effect real political change.

It should be really quite startling, the scope and the revolutionary risk of it all - trusting students to help topple a corrupted chunk of the establishment. But to Mao and the true Party members it was not a risk but a duty, because - as the grassroots, democratic nature of the Cultural Revolution movement cannot be questioned - socialist democracy means that true believers join such non-rightist movements.

Frankly, I would have loved to have had the chance to challenge my teachers - I did, but that just earned me a LOT of detention. I'd like to have seen how they did *without* the answer key in the back of the textbook. Certainly, if some reactionary abuser had beat me - and I'm assuming that corporal punishment was used in China - I sure would have liked to have returned the favor. Did your leaders give you the go ahead to do that? China's did.

The idea of handing power to the students is indeed revolutionary - this is why France suppressed the 1968 May revolt and why Iran's mullahs encouraged their students: one did not want revolution, the other did.

The 1960s, we see, were "The '60s, man!" in China as well as in the West...but what very different courses they began on, and how very differently they have finished:

While the West was experiencing rebellion against what they perceived as puritanism - hating their parents, using drugs to gain cheap spirituality, being promiscuous - their Chinese peers were experiencing a rebirth of revolutionary puritanism. The West's results, several decades later, appear evident: even more rampant drug use with even stronger pharmaceuticals, self-centred spirituality instead of rule-based, society-

centered religion, while in the US 40% of children are born to unmarried mothers with 25% of children raised without a father. The Chinese baby boomers are not without sin, but they don't have these society- and culture-destroying phenomena - the Communists ended their Opium Wars, after all...

And how quickly did the West become apolitical after *their ruckuses* in the 1960s? Did that generation of youth not quickly embrace neoliberal capitalism and support the rollback of decades of socialist-inspired achievements by their ancestors? And yet how enduring has Chinese socialism been?

How different the West might be today if they had empowered their revolutionary baby boomer youth? That is a useless question, sadly, but the Chinese have their answer, and it is thanks to the revolutionary commitment of Mao and his colleagues. Indeed, comparing Chinese and Western baby boomers is not a fair race: the Chinese had such a huge head start, in terms of political intelligence...

Cultural wars aside, we simply need to remember that China does not live in a cultural vacuum - the 1960s were crazy worldwide - and that China does not live in a political vacuum either. Few consider the Cultural Revolution in the context of a response to the recent and very threatening Americanisation of the Vietnam War: Without the revolutionary spirit needed to galvanise Chinese support...well, China is obviously next.

It's important to recall that in 1965 the US was also significantly aiding the destruction of the world's largest communist power not in power - in Indonesia, even though it meant the death of 3 million people. Extremist anti-socialists in Washington were obviously hell-bent on massacring as many as possible to restore capitalist imperialism worldwide in the new US order.

Given this very real threat, who can say the Cultural Revolution was not needed, and also far less bloody than a

1960s China without the Cultural Revolution?

It is the journalist in me which rejects Monday-morning quarterbacking and which repeatedly asks: What *actually* were the realistic possibilities at the time when decisions were forced to be made by the politicians we are watching closely? Invasion certainly appeared realistic in 1960s China. (Invasion in 2018 America, for example, is not remotely likely, so anyone who talks about that is spouting nonsense.)

Therefore, the Chinese were absolutely right to re-revolutionize in order to prevent another "century of humiliation", as they call their 110 years of Western colonialization.

The situation among China's political allies is also rarely considered in discussions of the necessity of the Cultural Revolution, but they were also just as bad in the mid-1960s: Mao declared his independence from the USSR a decade earlier with the Great Leap's new economic focus, but he rightly perceived that corruption was taking root in the birthplace of socialism. Even Fairbank has to give a grudging approval to Mao's obviously democratic view:

"In the USSR Mao saw 'revisionism' at work, that is, a falling away from egalitarian concern for the people and their collective organisation and instead the growth of a new ruling class of specially privileged, urban-centred, and technically educated people who were kept in line, like the populace in general, by the powerful secret police. Given the West's general appraisal of the Soviet dictatorship, Mao's distrust can hardly be faulted."

It's a common and credible belief - both in 1968 and in 2018 - that the USSR ultimately failed because of their Communist Party's failure to have a corruption-weeding Cultural Revolution. Instead of a Cultural Revolution, they had the calm-but-regressive Brezhnev era. Stagnation produces creeping

counter-revolutionaries, as evidenced by the toleration and then promotion of people like Gorbachev, with a Yeltsin the inevitable step.

The Cultural Revolution's legacy: More proof today's success is because of it, not in spite of it

"Living here for 13 years and knowing that these days there are 300-500 daily public protests against the system, in reality, against the CPC, this kind of popular vigilance would never have reached fruition without the Cultural Revolution's baptism by populist fire."

If that level of participatory democracy is present because of the Cultural Revolution...it obviously succeed beyond Mao's grandest hopes, no? That is the exact opposite of *"At present you can buy a Party branch secretary for a few packs of cigarettes,"* because the Chinese people are vigilant, demanding and bold now.

Simply put: Read Brown's book. Such statistics will never get past Western editors. France has 10 protests per day, for example, and it is considered the most protest-happy nation by the Anglo-Saxon world. (Of course, [as part 1 of this series](#) proved, China is a continent, while France is just a nation.)

Economic policy is *always cultural* - this is why it's absolutely false to believe the West's assertion that the era of the Cultural Revolution *made no contribution* to China's current economic success, military security and stability. Per Brown:

"Just as Mao Zedong's amazing socioeconomic miracle from 1949-1978 was critical for Deng Xiaopeng's later reforms to succeed, it can be persuasively argued that the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution was just as necessary, for the Chinese people to develop the attitude and sense of social justice needed to implement these incredible changes and make them happen."

Contrary to the water cannons I routinely see at Paris demonstrations - workers bringing problems to attention *actually increases* efficiency by rectifying wrongs, increasing satisfaction and giving management the truth from the factory floor. Capitalists only truly care about profits, especially stockholder capitalism.

But China gave up on winning Western capitalists over...they know they have already won.

In a very clear way the Cultural Revolution proved to Washington that they had no chance to win back the China they had "lost" - the Communist Party was firmly in charge, and nothing was going to change that anymore: not Vietnam, not Korea and no longer domestic subversion. Nixon restored relations in 1972, and China has not looked over their shoulder in fear since.

This article has focused on the technical, historical and analytical aspects of the Cultural Revolution, but I think it's obvious just how applicable their situation is to the West today. There is no question that populism has risen greatly today in the West, and hopefully this article shows that it is of a sort with many obvious, if unexpected, cultural parallels to 1960s China.

But those are issues to be raised in future parts of this series.

Beijing officially admits the Cultural Revolution was a mistake...not because it was *in toto*, but because that is the only way to move on - every good parent knows this. They have officially apologised to all the victims and instituted reparations programs. China clearly has few problems discussing it openly.

In the end, the Cultural Revolution was an anti-1%, Trash Revolution - no wonder the West cannot discuss it with anything but 100%-negative extremism.

This is the 3rd article in an 8-part series which compares old versus new Western scholarship on China.

Here is the list of articles slated to be published, and I hope you will find them useful in your leftist struggle!

[Old vs. new scholarship on the continent of China - an 8-part series](#)

[Daring to go beyond Western propaganda on the Great Leap Forward's famine](#)

When Chinese Trash saved the world: Western lies about the Cultural Revolution

Mao's legacy defended, and famous swim decoded, for clueless academics

The Cultural Revolution's solving of the urban-rural divide

Once China got off drugs: The ideological path from opium to 'liberal strongman' Macron

Prefer the 1% or the Party? Or: Why China wins

China's only danger: A 'Generation X' who thinks they aren't communist

About the author

RAMIN MAZAHERI, Senior Correspondent & Contributing Editor, *Dispatch from Paris* • Mazaheri is the chief correspondent in Paris for Press TV and has lived in France since 2009. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in the US, and has reported from Iran, Cuba, Egypt, Tunisia, South Korea and elsewhere. His work has appeared in various journals, magazines and websites, as well as on radio and television.



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I don't want to be ruled by hypocrites, whores, and war criminals.

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And its multitude of minions and lackeys.
