

Understanding the Violence During the Cultural Revolution Years and the Function It Served

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INTRODUCTION:

2016 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, which provides an important occasion to critically reflect on what happened during the Cultural Revolution years and what lessons can humanity learn from it. Ever since Deng Xiaoping came back to power in 1978, the Chinese Government has officially condemned the Cultural Revolution as a ten-year national holocaust. In order to provide documentation for the Chinese Government's official verdict, the Chinese intellectual elite, the supposed victims of the revolution, have written tremendous amount about their sufferings during the revolution. In the scar literature and memoirs of the Culture Revolution, violence often depicted to be meaningless, uncalled for and unnecessary. They never see the violence in the context of a revolution. As a revolution to transform the old values and political orders, violence is inevitable and often serve important purposes. Old values and old political orders die hard. The beneficiaries of the old value and old political order wanted to defend the system that underlay their privileges by whatever means possible, including violence. The promoters of the new value and new political order by necessity had to fight back with violence. Violence was an important part of a revolution and was used by both the defenders of the old values and old political orders and the supporters of a new value and new political order.

We live in class societies. In a class society, violence by the dominant groups against common people are common place. The problem with the critics of the Cultural Revolution is that they often discount the violence by the elite against the common people as violence and only see the rebellion by the oppressed as violence. They often fail to see that violence by the rebels against the elite is justified, and is necessary in order to establish new values and new political order favorable to the majority of society. This paper is an attempt to analyze and understand the Cultural Revolution violence and the function it served in the progress toward real democracy in China during the Cultural Revolution years. Violence of the Cultural Revolution must be seen as the result of the intensified class struggle, no more and no less. Because of the intensified class struggle during the Cultural Revolution years, Chinese working class made tremendous gains politically, socially and economically, surpassing any period in Chinese history.

THE DIFFERENT KIND OF VIOLENCES DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

When the Chinese elite condemn the Cultural Revolution violence, they never differentiate the different kinds of violence and the causes behind these different kinds of violence. They intentionally confuse the different nature of violence occurred during the Cultural Revolution in order to create an impression that the Cultural Revolution was simply a mess of violence, to counter many common people's perception that the Cultural Revolution resulted in *yebubihu lubushi*, (people did not need to lock up

their door at night, and things left on the roads were not taken), a desirable society by common perception. But the violence during the Cultural Revolution years, like violence in any society and any period of time, varies in nature and consequences, and should be analyzed in order to be understood. In general, the violence during the Cultural Revolution can be divided into at least five main categories. 1. Official violence against people who rose to criticize government officials, organized by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, 2. Violence against officials by rebel red guards following Mao's big character poster on August 5, 1966, 3. Violence by High Officials' children in Beijing and elsewhere against other people 4. Violence against intellectual elite including some important figures of letters, 5, Violence against officials whose policies and actions with serious social consequences before the Cultural Revolution. There are many kinds of violence, like violence by Chinese military against rebel red guards, and factional violence among different red guard groups, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore all of them. This paper is an attempt to analyze these five main kinds of violence in order to understand them, and the function it served for the progress of Chinese society.

ALL THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE ARE ILLEGAL

There is no legal ground for the above mentioned violence during the Cultural Revolution years. Chairman Mao, the main leader of the Cultural Revolution, never sanctioned violence as a form of struggle during the Cultural Revolution years. Beside repeatedly stressing using civil and nonviolent means of struggle, Chairman Mao reiterated in his personal letter to Premier Zhou Enlai on December 27, 1966 that the Cultural Revolution is a revolution to change people's mind, therefore only civil means should be used. Everybody should reason, argue with each other in order to let people see things clearer. He argued that violence could only inflict physical pain on people's body, but would not persuade people in the end. Chairman Mao specifically pointed out that parading Government officials who were considered capitalist roaders and other targets of struggle with tall paper hats and painted faces should be viewed as violence and should be specifically disallowed. Anybody who beat people should be dealt with according to the law. He asked Premier Zhou Enlai to pass his instruction to the red guard representatives.¹ In the most important document of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP Central Committee's May 16 Notice, Mao was responsible in drafting, which launched the Cultural Revolution, it repeatedly stressed that only civil and peaceful means should be used during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party and its leaders have learned the lessons from its history about the negative consequences of extortion and other violent means of forcing people to accept criminal charges. Chairman Mao had condemned the practice of extortion as early as 1940. During the Cultural Revolution, he reiterated CCP's policy of forbidding torture and using violence in extorting confession from people at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and again in 1972.²

¹ Mao Zedong, "Gei Zhou Zongli de Qinbixin," (A personal letter to Premier Zhou), December 27, 1966. China net, June 23, 2013.

² Gong'anbu, "Gong'anbu Guanyu jianjuezhizhi gonganganjing xingxunbigong de jue ding", Public Document No. 2, 1992.

Lin Biao, the other most important leader of the Cultural Revolution, also repeatedly argued against any forms of violence during the Cultural Revolution. In his speech at Tiananmen Square to the representatives of red guards from different parts of China on August 31, 1966, he repeatedly called upon the red guards to follow Chairman Mao's instruction of using only civil means, refraining from using violence against anybody including people who held different and opposite opinions.³ There was no evidence to suggest that Lin Biao, a hardened soldier of the revolutionary wars, ever sanctioned violence among the people during the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution Small Group, which exercised institutional leadership for the Cultural Revolution, and which has been accused by the post Cultural Revolution Chinese Government for inciting violence during the Cultural Revolution, never sanctioned violence of any kind. To the contrary, the newspapers and magazines, and other forms of means of mass media, under the control of the Cultural Revolution Small Group, constantly carried editorials and commentaries that argued against violence of any kinds.⁴

The post Cultural Revolution Chinese Government and critics of the Cultural Revolution have been trying to blame Jiang Qing, the deputy leader of the Cultural Revolution Small Group, and Chairman Mao's wife, for the wide spread violence in China because she was the first to tell rebel red guards at an audience with red guard representatives from Henan Province that armed self defense was justified on July 22, 1967.⁵ The critics intentionally ignore the social context of wide spread violence by the Chinese army and government officials against the rebel red guards throughout China at the time. On June 6, 1967, the CCP Central Committee, the State Council, and Central Military Commission and the Cultural Revolution Small Group jointly issued the June 6 Order to stop violence throughout China, and the July 3 Pronouncement to stop violence of all kinds at the time. Firearms had been first used by the army in defense of government officials who were besieged by the rebel red guard organizations in Qinghai, Yunnan, and other provinces. At the time, government officials in collaboration with local military leaders started to arm the mass red guard groups organized by government officials to defend the government officials under attack of the rebel red guards. It was the government officials and military leaders, who violated the repeated orders of the CCP Central Committee, the State Council, the Central Military Commission and the Cultural Revolution Small Group, and the spirit of Chairman Mao's instruction forbidding violence during the Cultural Revolution. They should be responsible for starting violence in China, not Jiang Qing. The reason that Jiang Qing advocated "wengong wuwei (attacking with civil means, and use armed means for self defense) in the context of repeated violence against the

³ Lin Biao's speech on August 31 on Tiananmen Square at mass rally, reviewing the red guard representatives from different parts of China.

⁴ People Daily Editorial, "Yao wendou buyao wu dou (engage in non violent struggle, and reject violence), *People's Daily*, September 5, 1966.

⁵ Xu Shanbin, *zhengzhao Zhongguo 1966-1976, (China 1966-1976 through Coupons and Signs)*, Beijing: Xinhua Press, 2007.

unarmed rebel red guard groups by the officials in power, who refused to give up their authorities to use violence against unarmed people in order to stay in power. When unarmed rebel red guards were being slaughtered by the criminal elements inside the government who had the control of guns, what should be done and what should be the rational reaction? If ever there was a time to use violence as a last resort for self defense, that was the time. Blaming Jiang Qing, or anybody else other than a small groups of hardened government officials who tried to stay in power by whatever means available to them represent one of the biggest injustice in the study of the Cultural Revolution. The guilt for the violence of the Cultural Revolution should be squarely placed on the shoulder of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping at the Center and their supporters and their followers throughout China.

When most high government leaders, like Ye Jianying, deputy Chairman of Chinese Military Commission, Li Xiannian, vice premiere, Tan Zhenlin, vice premiere, were praising and encouraging violence against intellectual leaders and ordinary people in Beijing by Xijiu, which was mostly made up of high officials' children, Chen Boda, leader of the Cultural Revolution Small Group, Jiang Qing, deputy leader of the Cultural Revolution Small Group, and Qi Benyu, member of the Cultural Revolution small group, struggled against Xijiu's violence against common people. Chen Boda demanded that Xijiu should be disbanded. Jiang Qing denounced Xijiu as a group of spoiled reactionaries, acting like royalties and looking down upon other people.⁶ Blaming Jiang Qing and the Cultural Revolution Small Group for inciting violence during the Cultural Revolution was the typical conventional political tactics of thief crying catching thief. It was exactly those who were praising and promoting violence by the high officials' children who later on blamed on the Gang of Four, particularly Jiang Qing, for the violence occurred at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution after they got back to power in 1978.

VIOLENCE BY LIU SHAOQI AND DENG XIAOPING AGAINST CRITICS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The original objective of CCP Central Committee's decision to launch the Cultural Revolution was to empower and enable the Chinese people to criticize the Chinese government officials' mistakes, to purge the capitalist roaders to make sure that China would stay on the socialist path and also help them correct their mistakes. The Chinese Government and Chairman Mao realized that there were serious bureaucratic tendencies among Chinese officials, who had become vested interests in Chinese society, who were gradually alienated from the masses, and if these tendencies were not corrected, capitalism would be restored in China. The rationale of the CCP Central Committee and Chairman Mao for launching the Cultural Revolution was to create a new social climate where ordinary people were empowered to exercise their democratic rights to supervise and criticize the government officials without worrying about retaliation by the government officials, which had become the common practice since the Anti-rightist movement in 1957, when more than half a million of people was branded rightist for speaking out against government officials. The objective of the Cultural Revolution was to mobilize the masses to purge the capitalist roaders inside the party and to help the government officials mend

⁶ Wen Bai, "Wenge Zhong Fengkuang Yishi de Xijiu" (The Crazy Police Unit of Western City District during the Cultural Revolution, January 16, 2014).

their ways, and help them return to the CCP's original goal of creating a government with the sole purpose of serving the people, through criticism and self criticism, debate and struggle.

Liu Shaoqi, the president of the Chinese Government, and Deng Xiaoping, the General Secretary of Chinese Communist Party at the time of the Cultural Revolution, could not effectively resisted the party's decision to launch the Cultural Revolution, therefore tried to lead the Cultural Revolution in their own way in order to make sure that they and their followers inside the party were not attacked by the masses. When young people throughout China rose in response to the CCP Central Committee's call for the Cultural Revolution to criticize the mistakes of the government officials, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping regarded these young people as counter revolutionaries and rightists who were mounting an attack on the party, and organized retaliation against those who dared to speak out against the government officials. On June 3, 1966, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping decided to entrust the leadership of the Cultural Revolution in middle schools in Beijing to the Central Committee of Communist Youth League under the leadership of Hu Yaobang. Hu Yaobang, who was the General Secretary of Chinese Communist Youth League, the leader of the young people, instead of supporting the young students, sent out 1800 government officials and sent out 300 work teams to the middle schools in Beijing. In a very short time, these work teams organized a coordinated campaign against middle school students who spoke out against the school authorities, resulted labeling of tens and thousands middle school students as counter revolutionaries.⁷ Hu Yaobang was the first in the Communist Party's history in suppressing young middle school students.

At the same time, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Communist Party's Beijing Municipal Committee also sent out work teams to universities and colleges in Beijing, where the criticism of the government officials was more serious. These work teams, with the help of the university authorities began to suppress young people and their criticism against the Government officials. In a matter of fifty days, more than ten thousand college students and more than one thousand young faculty members in Beijing alone were branded counter revolutionaries and were thrown into prison by the work teams sent out by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Throughout China, the same fate fell on hundred and thousand young people simply because they spoke out against government officials of their universities and middle schools.⁸ Like the rightists who were branded rightists for speaking out against the individual government officials and had their life and career ruined forever, the young students and faculty members of the 1966 would have had the same fate like their predecessors had not Chairman Mao put a stop to Hu Yaobang, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's authoritarian policies of suppressing disagreements and criticism in Chinese society. Unchecked, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping would have turned the people's government into a reactionary, Jiang Jieshi type of Government. Wide spread

⁷ Yu Jiaxu, "Hu Yaobang, ni shige qiji," (Hu Yaobang, you are a Miracle," April 16, 2013. Utopia.

⁸ Wang Nianyi, dadongluan de niandai (The Era of Great Chaos), (Zhengzhou, Henan People's Publishing House, 1988)

official corruption taking place after Deng Xiaoping's return to power in 1978 would have occurred much earlier. What happened in the former Soviet Union would have happened in China, even earlier.

Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's mistakes, if not crimes, of suppressing young students and faculty were serious. As Chairman Mao stated, only Jiang Jieshi and Beiyang Warlords had suppressed students. The Beiyang Warlords and Jiang Jieshi's reactionary government opened fire at students amid national crises, and only killed and injured a few students. But Hu Yaobang, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's suppression of young students and college faculty happened at a peace time, and in a much larger scale. Hundred and thousand young people's careers and life were being ruined at the whim of these leaders. It is an indication of their attitude toward people and people's criticism about individual government officials, and their willingness to suppress a large number of young people who were dedicated to the socialist cause in order to protect a small number of high officials who were going down a capitalist path in China. If Chairman Mao and other Communist leaders did not remove Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping from power in 1966, and mobilized the Chinese people to struggle against the Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's reactionary line of suppressing the majority to protect a small minority, what happened on June 4, 1989, would have happened much earlier in China.

After Deng Xiaoping came back to power in 1978, he and his followers started blaming Chairman Mao and Gang of Four for the violence of the Cultural Revolution. If anybody should bear the blame for the violence of the Cultural Revolution, it should be Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang and other capitalist roaders, who initiated the systemic violence of the Cultural Revolution, not anybody else.

RED GUARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPRESSING CRITICISM OF THE PEOPLE.

On August 5, 1966, Chairman Mao published his big character poster "Bombard the Headquarters", which effectively put an end to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's reactionary line of suppressing the young people and their criticism in order to protect the small number of officials in trouble. The hundred and thousands of young people who were imprisoned by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping and their followers throughout China were all set free, and ready to fight back at the responsible government officials who threw them into prison in the first place.

With Chairman Mao's support, the young students who were persecuted by the capitalist roaders inside the government started to fight back against their persecutors. These former power holders were struggled against at the mass rallies, and were forced to apologize for their wrong doing. For the first time in Chinese history, the people who ruled over the masses were humiliated. In some cases, they were manhandled and beaten by some radical red guards. Quite a few of these officials could not handle these rough treatments by the common people, and chose to commit suicide as a way out. In the eyes of most government officials, the Cultural Revolution violence against these government officials represent the most serious injustice of the Cultural Revolution. It is beyond most of them to see that justice is being served in these popular violence.

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao's famous quotation: Zaofan you li (rebellion is justified, and nali you yapo, nali jiuyou fankong (where there is oppression, there will be resistance)

became popularized among the Chinese people, which served to create a new social climate in China, encouraging the Chinese people to fight for social injustices in their society and to build a more just and fair society. Chinese people, particularly, the young, overcame their traditional fear of officials and began to rebel against them. In Beijing and throughout China, workers, farmers, students wrote big character posters to criticize officials, denounced government officials' wrong policies, and forced the government officials to apologize for their wrong doings. Their rebellion against the government officials created a new social climate for China. In the eyes of the Chinese people, their rebellion against the officials are completely justified.

I was eleven years at the time of the Cultural Revolution, a third grader in a rural primary school. I participated in the Cultural Revolution with my classmates. We wrote big character posters against our teachers. We organized a red guard group, and published our pamphlets. We went to the market place to distribute our pamphlets. We listened to the debate between the red guards and government officials. We sung Chairman Mao's quotation songs, and read Chairman Mao's works to farmers and workers at the night. The Chinese people were never mobilized to such an extent as during the Cultural Revolution. Everybody talked about the Cultural Revolution, about the direction of the country, about world affairs and about the future of the socialism.

The violence against officials are justified because most of the violence at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution was initiated by the officials under Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. The mass rallies and the struggle against these high officials helped create a new political culture and new social climate for Chinese people, where the common people's fear of official oppression and retaliation were generally overcome. On the other hand, common people's willingness to speak out against official misconducts and official arbitrariness also forced the government officials to learn an important lesson that there were consequences if they suppressed people. They could no longer ignore common people's opinions like they used to. It is reasonable to say that the red guard's struggles against Chinese officials changed Chinese officials' behaviors in general, and began to change some officials' attitude toward the common people as well.

In July, August and September, 1967, Chairman Mao toured North, Central South and South China to inspect the new developments of the Cultural Revolution through talking with local officials, military leaders and red guard representatives. He commented that the situation of the Cultural Revolution was not just good, but excellent, better than ever before. The indicator of the excellent situation was that the masses were fully mobilized. People had never been so fully mobilized like this before. In factories, countryside, government offices, schools and in the military, people were engaged in discussing the Cultural Revolution and the state affairs.⁹ This wonderful situation was created mainly by the red guards' action in struggling against the government officials.

Before the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Government officials enjoyed high salaries, resided in big houses, riding in imported cars, and putting on big airs, looking down upon common people. They did

⁹ Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Notice, "Chairman Mao's Important Instruction during his tour of North, Central and Southern China," October 7, 1967.

not consult with people when there were problems. They liked to lecture people and curse people, and they were seriously separated from the people. People were not happy with their work style, but they were not able to speak out. The Cultural Revolution provided the people the opportunity to speak out. When the people spoke out, it made great changes in officials' behavior.¹⁰

Following the Cultural Revolution, most Chinese Government officials mended their ways. They tended to consult with people more. They learned to improve relations with their subordinates and masses, and started to spend more time with the masses at the grass roots. During the Cultural Revolution years, many places developed policies and practices that responsible government officials would work a designated number of days each year in the countryside and factories with workers and farmers. In some counties, the county level government leaders were required to work two hundred days a year with farmers in the countryside, commune leaders were required to work two hundred and fifty days with farmers, and village leaders had to work at least three hundred days with farmers a year. Production team leaders had to work with farmers every day. Most universities and government offices set up May 7 Cadre schools in the countryside, where government officials took turns to work there. In the post cultural revolution's scar literature, many former government officials and professors regarded their experiences at the May 7 Cadre school as a form of persecution against government officials and intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution. In fact, the founding of the May 7 cadre school and other changes in the official behaviors were an important contribution of the Cultural Revolution in building a more just and better society where government officials were better integrated with ordinary people.

During the Cultural Revolution, officials lived among common people, and their children went to school with ordinary people's children, and after graduation from high school most of them went to the countryside to work with farmers like everybody else. I came from an ordinary farmer's family. During the Cultural Revolution, I went to primary school, middle school and high school with county and commune government officials' children. After high school, I worked with them in the fields in my village for five years. Only after the Chinese Government condemned the Cultural Revolution and restored the privileges for government officials, their children left the rural areas to become government officials again. If Deng Xiaoping did not condemn the Cultural Revolution, we should have reason to believe that the Chinese society would have been very different from what it is today in China where the relationship between government officials and common people are very tense.

VIOLENCE BY HIGH OFFICIAL'S CHILDREN TO DERAIL THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Violence by some high officials' children in Beijing, the capital and throughout China was an important part of the violence of the Cultural Revolution. Many high officials' children, including Deng Xiaoping's daughter Deng Rong, Chen Yi's son, Chen Xiaolu, Kong Yuan's son Kong Dan, He Long's son He Pengfei and others were important student leaders of their middle and high schools and colleges and universities at the time of the Cultural Revolution. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, they actively collaborated with school authorities and the work teams sent out by Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang to suppress students, teachers and faculties who spoke out against school officials.

¹⁰ Ibid.

They victimized so many people, partly to derail the intended course of the Cultural Revolution to target the capitalist roaders inside the party, and partly to accumulate political capital for their personal career. In order to keep the Cultural Revolution on track, their role in suppressing other students and teachers at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution were never fully investigated and dealt with by the Chinese Government at the time for the purpose of focusing on the main targets of the Cultural Revolution, who were capitalist roaders inside the party.

After Chairman Mao dismissed Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping for suppressing students, many high government officials were under fire. The children of these high officials realized that their parents were under attack, and began to organize Xi Jiu (a semi police unit of Western City District) Dong Jiu (a semi police unit of East City District) Hai Jiu (a semi police unit of Haidian district) in August, 1966. And in December 1966, they set up Liandong (The United Action Committee of the Red Guards in the Capital). With the support of their parents and other high officials like Ye Jianying, Deputy Chairman of Central Military Committee, Zhou Rongxin, general secretary of State Council and many others, they began to act like a de facto police force in the capital. They attacked other red guard groups who were attacking their parents for their role in suppressing students who were criticizing the government at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. They even organized several attempts to storm the Ministry of the Public Safety in Beijing, injuring several government employees there. They searched people's houses, stealing people's books, property and money in the name of destroying the four olds in Beijing. They set up private jails to torture people who were innocent but disagreed with them. They promoted the slogan that the children of the heroes were likely to be heroes, and children of the bad people were likely to be bad people as well. (Laozi yingxiong, erhaohan, Laozi fandong, erhundan). Because, they were the children of high official, they demonstrated a strong sense of superiority, and behaved like they were above the law. People who were from landlords and other unfavorable family backgrounds were victimized by them randomly. They beat their teachers, and attacked famous writers and authors in Beijing. They also attacked many people in Beijing who did not have official registration in Beijing and forced tens of thousands of them to leave their home and relocate in the countryside. They proudly called their brutality in the Capital the red terror.¹¹

These high officials' children engaged in violence because they felt that they were entitled to. They had very little respect for the law and other people's life and property. Their violence was mostly motivated by selfish reasons. In the beginning they were working in collaboration with school authorities and work teams to suppress student dissent as a way to accumulate political capital for their career. Later, as their parents were under attack, they were using violence to defend their parents and their own privileges. They were the most reactionary and darkest force at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. They were responsible for some of the most hideous violence in Beijing at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. They killed their teachers, and humiliated famous authors like Lao She to the extent that many eventually committed suicide.¹² But for some political reasons, these high officials'

¹¹ Wen Bai, "Wenge Zhong Fengkuang Yishi de Xijiu" (The Crazy Police Unit of Western City District during the Cultural Revolution, January 16, 2014).

¹² Ibid.

children's crimes were never seriously investigated or dealt with according to the law, partly because they were under age at the time, and partly because the Chinese Government officials showed them mercy because of their parents. That was some of most serious injustice of contemporary China.

Some of the perpetrators of these hideous crimes became officials in Deng Xiaoping's post Cultural Revolution government, who blamed Mao and the Cultural Revolution for the violence they committed against other people at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. On the internet, there was an accusation in the form of self confession by Hu Yaobang to Yang Shangkun. In his last talk with Yang Shangkun, Hu Yaobang admitted how much he did for Deng Xiaoping. He incited the students and workers' demonstration on April 5, 1976 with Deng Xiaoping's instigation to fight against Chairman Mao and the Gang of four. He also carried out the execution of twenty-four police officers working in China's Ministry of Public Safety who were involved in investigating Deng Xiaoping's daughter Deng Rong's involvement in the murder of some teachers in Beijing at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang's involvement in the April 5 incident in 1976. These people were summarily executed in Yunnan Province by the order of Deng Xiaoping accusing them as elements of the "three categories of bad people during the Cultural Revolution" after he came back to power in order to protect his daughter.¹³

But Deng Xiaoping and his followers carried out an eight-year political campaign, from 1978 to 1986, to incriminate the rebel red guard leaders. Millions of the Chinese rebel red guards who answered Chairman Mao's call to struggle against corrupt officials were arbitrarily investigated, purged and imprisoned by the Deng Xiaoping Government during this political campaign.

While Deng Xiaoping were persecuting the so called three categories of people in China, they also exonerated and rehabilitated all the high officials' children who were members of Xijiu and Liandong first in 1979 by Beijing Municipal Bureau of Public Safety, and again in 1984 by Chinese Central Government under the leadership of Hu Yaobang.¹⁴ They just blamed all the violence committed by these former high officials' children on the Gang of Four and Lin Biao and use it as the ground for condemning the Cultural Revolution. It was a clear indicator that what happened during the Cultural Revolution was simply a matter of intensified class struggle. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and their children were fighting to hold onto their power and privileges using violence. The rebel students and other people were fighting to empower themselves at the expense of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping and the class they represented. With the support of Chairman Mao, they were able to crush Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping and their children during the Cultural Revolution years. Once Chairman Mao died, Deng Xiaoping and the class he represented managed to come back. They retaliated at their challengers

¹³ Xiang Dong, "On 'Yang Shangkun Diary: Hu Jintao's Confession at the End of his Life'", November 15, 2015. China Wenxuecheng Net.

¹⁴ Wen Bai, "Zhong Fengkuang Yishi de Xijiu" (The Crazy Police Unit of Western City District during the Cultural Revolution, January 16, 2014.

fiercely. The people who committed the most hideous violence during the Cultural Revolution not only escaped punishment completely, but also held powerful positions in China and continued to rule China like their parents in the old days.

VIOLENCE AGAINST INTELLETTUAL ELITE

Many intellectual elites were targeted in the first round and second round violence by the work teams sent out by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and the high official's children first in collaboration with school authorities and work teams and later with some encouragement of the government officials in an effort to derail the Cultural Revolution from its objective to purge the capitalist roaders inside the communist party. Many famous authors and writers' home were searched by different red guard groups in an effort to demonstrate their revolutionary zeal. Some of these famous writers, like above mentioned Lao She, committed suicide after being harassed by the red guards and their colleagues. Wen Bai made a list of famous intellectuals who committed suicide in August and September 1966. On the list were famous playwright Bai Xin, archeologist Chen Mengjia, Director of Literary Department of People's Daily Chen Xiaoyu, and History Professor He Ji, Educator Huang Guozhang, famous author Kong Jue, Wuhan University President Li Da, famous conductor Yang Jiaren, Educator Yu Dayin, and famous translator Fu Lei and his wife. In a matter of two months, quite a few famous people died, giving people the impression that the Cultural Revolution was a revolution against the intellectual elite, which was exactly what many top leaders like Tan Zhenlin, Ye Jianying, and so on wanted the Cultural Revolution to be.¹⁵

At the time of Cultural Revolution, most Chinese educated elite were trained by the old China or abroad. They held a very different values from the Communist Party and from the Chinese working class. China was taking a socialist path, and in order for these old educated elite to serve the socialist cause, they would have to be reformed. The Chinese Communist Party had made many efforts to reform these intellectual elites before the Cultural Revolution, like the Thought Reform movement in the 1950s. In fact, many famous Chinese intellectuals demonstrated that they were also making great efforts to transform themselves in the new socialist climate in China.¹⁶ Famous author like Lao She, embraced socialism eagerly, and wanted to be part of Cultural Revolution before he was manhandled by some of his colleagues and red guards.¹⁷ Chinese society like many other societies has a tendency to worship and idealize famous people. But the famous people just like ordinary people have their weakness. Apart from their accomplishment in their respective fields, they just like ordinary people had another

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Li Mingming, "zhishi fenzi zai jianguo chuqi sixiang gaizao qianhou zhi zhudong zhuanbian ji yuanyin" (Intellectuals' effort to conform to the New Culture and their reasons before and after the thought reform movement at the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China) Forum on Social Science, 2010, No. 6

¹⁷ Zheng Shi, "lao she zhisi de liangzhong shuofa" (Two versions of Lao She's Death), China. Com cn. January 16, 2009.

side in their lives. During the Cultural Revolution years, when the not so bright side of their life were exposed, these people did not know how to handle. The contrast between their lofty images people attributed to them and the reality of their lives were so great that they did not know how to face the realities. Or they might have something they fear that would be exposed. Under such circumstances, these people tended to commit suicide. I do not understand the psychology of these people. The truth of the matter was that they did not need to commit suicide. If they had not, nothing would have happened to them. It was the weakness of these people who were held in too high a status for so long that they did not know how to deal negative circumstances.

My primary school principal attempted suicide at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. This principal had always lectured the teachers and students about morality on a weakly basis. He had been the authority person in the whole school. But at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, people found out that he had adultery with one of the teachers. When the secret was out, they were so ashamed that both the principal and teachers attempted suicide. They both survived. But at the time, people did not have much sympathy for either the principal or the teachers. But they both became tougher people, and they learned that their weakness as well in the process.

Many of these famous intellectuals held positions of responsibility. They were not just intellectual elite. They also held powerful positions in Chinese government, like Lao She, who was deputy chairman of the Association of Chinese Writers. Ji Xianlin, who published a memoir to denounce the Cultural Revolution recently was not just a professor either.¹⁸ He was head of Teachers and Staff Union, Head of the Institute of Asia and Africa, and Chairman of Department of Eastern Languages at Beijing University. He was an authority figure, exercising great power in his every day work. He might think that he was exercising his power and authorities very fairly and justly, but in the eyes of the teachers and staff under his control, he might have abused his power. He was under attack during the Cultural Revolution years for abusing his power. It was retribution in a way. One of the objectives of the Cultural Revolution was to teach people like Ji Xianlin that there were consequences if you abused your power. But Mr. Ji Xianlin apparently did not learn the lesson.

I had a classmate whose father was the department chair of foreign language department at Shandong University. She told me that her father was lame because he jumped off a building after he was struggled against by the faculty and students at a mass rally at the beginning of Cultural Revolution. He did not intend to kill himself because he jumped off legs down first. He was in great pain because he broke his leg. One of the young faculty member of the department who happened to pass by did not help him. Instead, he picked up a brick and struck his head with it. His father fainted. He was later sent to the hospital and survived. She and her four siblings wanted to know who was that person striking her father after the Cultural Revolution. But her father refused to tell his children because he did not want his children to hate that person because he was unfair to that person first. I had great respect for my classmate's father because of this. In the social climate of the 1980s when the Chinese Government under Deng Xiaoping tried to purge the people who was involved in the violence of the

¹⁸ Ji Xianlin, *The Cowshed*, New York: New York Review Books, 2016, translated by Chenxin Jiang.

Cultural Revolution, he refused to implicate the person who struck him with a brick. He really learned the lesson from his past, and her daughter, my classmate also learned the lesson as well.

In 1980, the foreign language department of the University I was studying at was promoting some teachers. The department leadership did not want to promote our teacher. Instead of telling the teacher why he was not being promoted, they called the students in my class in a secret meeting to criticize the teacher's work. Many students including myself spoke against the teacher, which the department leadership used as reasons not to promote our teacher. But my classmate, the daughter of former department chair of Shandong University, did not say anything at the meeting. She told me after the meeting that what the department leadership was doing was wrong. They singled out only one teacher, and asked only his students to criticize him, but not other teachers. That was unfair and unjust. If they wanted to use student feedback as ground for promoting or not promoting anybody, then it should be applied to every teacher, not just one teacher. It was also unfair for them to have a secret meeting like that because the information could leak out and students who spoke at the meeting would be hurt in some way. She also said that if there were another Cultural Revolution, our teacher and the students could use what the department leadership did to struggle against them.

The Cultural Revolution has done a great job in modernizing Chinese people's mindset. It showed that people who were in high positions of society were not necessarily all good. They made mistakes, even stupid mistakes in their lives, and they needed popular supervision in order to avoid making mistakes, which were exactly the rationale for democracy. The people who had accomplished great things in their special fields were fallible as well, like everybody else. People can not have blind faith in them. They needed to be watched and supervised in order to prevent corruption and abuse of power for a fair and just society where everybody was treated well.

VIOLENCE AGAINST OFFICIALS WHO MADE MISTAKES IN THE PAST

During the Cultural Revolution, many former officials who made mistakes before the Cultural Revolution were struggled against by people. Some of these people were no longer officials at the time of the Cultural Revolution and some were transferred to other places. But the Cultural Revolution created a social climate to struggle against these people. In the villages, many former village leaders were struggled against for their wrong doings during the Great Leap Forward when they ate more than their fair share amid the grain shortage. I witnessed the struggle against the former village leaders in my village. Everybody in the village could speak out their grievances against these leaders.

Wu Zhipu, former Party Secretary of Henan Province during the Great Leap Forward, who were promoting ultra left policies in Henan which led to severe grain shortages in some parts of Henan Province. Later he was removed from office and was transferred to Guangdong Province. Li Jingquan, the Party Secretary of Sichuan Province, who was responsible for causing grain shortage in Sichuan Province because he inflated the grain production figures in Sichuan Province. As a result of his inflated production figure, the Central Government procured more grain from Sichuan Province. When others accused him of causing starvation, he said that China was so big, there would always be somebody starving to death throughout Chinese dynasty. Every dynasty had starvation. What an attitude! But

because of Deng Xiaoping's protection, people like Wu Zhipu and Li Jingquan, did not face up their mistakes and crimes at the time. During the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards from Henan and Sichuan, finally got Li Jingchuan and Wu Zhipu to face the people in Henan and Sichuan whom they betrayed during the Great Leap Forward. They were made to stand on the stage to bow to the people they had hurt. On some occasions, they were beaten by the red guards on stage and in public.

In the post Cultural Revolution political jargon, all the officials and important people who were criticized and struggled against by the masses were said to be persecuted by the Gang of Four or Lin Biao, as if these people were innocent and as if they were incapable of wrong doings. All the officials who were removed from power and criticized by the masses during the Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated by the post Cultural Revolution Chinese government under Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang. In the eyes of the Common people justice had been done, and they deserved what they got during the Cultural Revolution. By rehabilitating these former officials and elite despite all their wrong doings before and during the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping Government violated the sense of justice held by the majority of the Chinese people.

THE CLASS DIFFERENTIATIONS IN RESPONSE TO CULTURAL REVOLUTION VIOLENCE

While the Chinese government and elite have been condemning the Cultural Revolution, many ordinary Chinese people were reacting to the increased official corruption and crimes in Chinese society since Deng Xiaoping's opening up and reform in exactly the opposite manner. In the last thirty years, I have interviewed hundreds of ordinary Chinese farmers in Henan, Shandong and Anhui Province. Of the several hundred people I interviewed, no one farmer expressed sympathy for the officials who were being struggled against by the red guards and masses during the Cultural Revolution. What was more, several ordinary people regretted that they were too gentle and civilized during the Cultural Revolution because Chairman Mao did not want them to use violence against the officials. If there were another Cultural Revolution, they would not allow these bastards to survive to retaliate again, some of them said.¹⁹

I have interviewed one county government official in Henan Province. He admitted to me that by Chairman Mao's criteria, he should be shot ten times for what had done during the opening up and reform. He was sincerely concerned that if there was another Cultural Revolution, he simply could not survive. He said that blood would flow like rivers if there were another Cultural Revolution.²⁰

Farmers in a Henan village beat a deputy township government head to a comma. A pregnant woman needed to go to hospital. Villagers stopped the deputy township government head's car, and asked him to take the pregnant woman to the hospital. But the deputy township government head refused, saying that not everybody could ride in his car. Farmers who were watching were so exasperated by what he said that they came up and beat him up right there. He was in a comma for a couple days. He

¹⁹ Interview with farmers in Henan, 1998.

²⁰ Interview with local officials in Henan Province, 2000.

survived, and the government transferred him to another post without arresting anybody. After investigating what happened, the government could not blame anybody who beat him up. He was literally inviting people to beat him up with his inhuman comments. He forgot who he was, and where his car came from.²¹

In a different township, the head of the township government head arbitrarily decided to relocate a market from one village to another. Villagers had been upset with him for many different things, like enforcing the one child policy, forcing pregnant women indiscriminately to have abortions and imposed very high land taxes on the farmers. Now his decision to relocate the market became the last straw. Farmers stormed his office and put a bag over his head and tied him up. They dragged him through the market place and allowed everybody to beat him. He was left in a comma in the market place. He survived the mass attack. The government transferred him to another place, because he could not continue to work there any more. He completely lost his credibility among the masses there. But the government did not arrest anybody for beating him up either.

Since Deng Xiaoping government condemned the Cultural Revolution, and promised the Chinese Officials that there would never be another mass movement like the Cultural Revolution, Chinese officials and Chinese elite, have been fearlessly abusing their power. They have abandoned the CCP's traditional value of serving the people. They stole obscene amount of public fund and extort hundreds of millions briberies. But they deprived the Chinese people of free education and free medical care in the name of reform while increasing the medical and retirement benefit for the officials. The officials and their families can stay in the exclusive hospitals free of charge for as long as they want, while the poor farmers and workers could not afford basic medical care any more. While officials sent their children abroad to study, many farmers' children lost access to basic education.

WERE THERE MORE VIOLENCE IN CHINA DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION YEARS

If one listens to the post Cultural Revolution Chinese Government and Chinese elite, one would think that there was more violence in China during the Cultural Revolution years than before and after the Cultural Revolution years. The truth was that there was much less violence during the Cultural Revolution years than other times. Apart from a few elite and high officials committed suicide when their skeleton was out of the closets, there were less murder and other violence in Chinese society during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Government has admitted crimes after the Cultural Revolution had rocked twenty times on several occasions. Deng Xiaoping had to introduce the Yanda measures to deal with crimes, and allowed the county level court to have the authority to execute prisoners in a quick manner, which was never the case in Chinese history. According to some people's estimate, hundred and thousands with petty crimes were executed. While doing research in the Chinese countryside, I found during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, there never had been one arrest in many of the villages I have studied. But since the reform era, the crimes in these villages high rocketed. In one village of two thousand people in Henan Province, no one was arrested for ten years

²¹ I saw the incident in summer 2002, while doing research in Henan Countryside.

during the Cultural Revolution. But since 1982 to 1992, about two hundred people from this village ended up in prison.²²

In this village, four villagers were arrested for stealing fertilizers from passing trucks on the highway near their village in 1983. These were honest villagers before. But Deng Xiaoping forced farmers to divide up the land to farm on their own. These farmers did not have money to buy fertilizers and even if they had the money, they would not be able to buy fertilizers because it was in short supply and was controlled by the state. These four farmers who were the bread winners of their respective families, and they had to make sure that their family had enough grain. Desperate, they went to steal a few bags of fertilizer from the passing trucks on the highway. Many other villagers did it as well. They would not have to do that if the collective were still in operation because the collective would be able to get fertilizer through the state supply system. In the name of reform, many officials and official's children were taking over the distribution of the scarce production materials to make a profit buying at a low price from the state, and selling to the farmers at an inflated price.

The four farmers were caught in the spring of 1983, and the leader of the group were sentenced to six years in prison for two bags of fertilizer. The other three were sentenced to two to four years in prison for two bags of fertilizer each. The ring leader accepted his sentence. The other three felt that their punishment were too severe, and appealed. But in August of 1983, Deng Xiaoping began to introduce the Yanda measures.²³ Two of the three people who appealed their sentences were sentenced to execution right away, and one was sentenced to life in prison. The state wanted to make an example of these two young people and they were executed on the village ground in the fall of 1983. Most farmers felt that their lives were no longer valuable in the eyes of Deng Xiaoping Government. They would be executed at the whim of the elite, for the price of two bags of fertilizers. Before and during the Cultural Revolution years, the Chinese government always announced the death penalty and other crimes publicly. But during the reform era, the number of people executed by the government became a state secret, and it was not easy to know how many people were executed by the government.²⁴ Did any Chinese elite showed any sympathy for these farmers?

Before and during the Cultural Revolution years, safety at work place at the state owned enterprises were given top priority. I did my practice teaching at a state owned coal mine, there workers enjoyed the best food, job security, and free medical care. Accidents were rare because the government put workers' safety before the production figures. But in the reform areas, when private coal mines took over, accidents became widespread. Some owners of coal mines kidnapped people to work in the coal mines as slaves. When their workers died, they simply buried them underground, and nobody knew

²² Interview with farmers in Henan, Summer, 1998.

²³ Yanda measures were introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1983 to severely punish criminal elements and quickly. And was used repeatedly in China to control the rising crime rate.

²⁴ Interview with farmers in Henan, Summer 1998.

what happened to them. Chinese coal mine accidents rocketed in the reform era.²⁵ Did any Chinese elite talk about this kind violence toward the workers?

In the age of reform, many migrant workers came to work for Taiwan and Hong Kong capitalists, often were not paid on time, and some times were unpaid at all, and some became slave labor. In some worst case seneroes they lost their freedom to leave. At the night, doors of their dormitory were locked, and there were watch dogs and thugs patrolled the premises. There were cases where hundreds of workers were burned to death when the dormitories were on fire. In 2012, 13 employees at a Foxconn facility in Shenzhen committed suicide by jumping off buildings. Guo Taiming, president of Foxconn cooperation, said at the company meeting that they should learn from the zoo keepers, because basically, they were dealing with the same crowd. In the winter of 2015, I happened to travel with two high level managers of Foxconn from Taiwan. I asked them why they think so many workers commit suicides at Foxconn. They said that because the company gave its employees good benefits. These young employees commit suicide in order to enrich their families with the settlement money from the company. What was a shameless logic? Did any Chinese elite ever say anything on behalf of the Chinese workers? Did the Chinese Government do anything to protect Chinese workers against the foreign exploiting class?

WHAT WERE THERE BESIDE VIOLENCE DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

When the post Cultural Revolution Chinese government and Chinese and foreign elite talk about the Cultural Revolution, they only talked about the violence of the Cultural Revolution, as if there were nothing else. But the Cultural Revolution created a brand new social climate in China which gave rise to a new educational philosophy and medical care philosophy, which in return made free education and free medical care for farmers throughout China possible. Urban doctors would take turns to travel to the rural areas to provide service to farmers free of charge. Urban doctors and hospitals would train barefoot doctors for the rural areas free of charge. Every village in China would have their own school and own clinic staffed with locally trained teachers and barefoot doctors. As result, China's literacy rate rocked in a matter of ten years. Chinese people's life expectancy increased from 35 years in 1952 to 69 years in 1976, 19 years ahead of that of India whose life expectancy in 1952 was the same as China, but whose life expectancy was only 50 in 1976.

Chinese officials during the Cultural Revolution lived the similar life with farmers and workers. Their children went to the same school with their workers and farmers. Their children went to work in the countryside after graduation from high school, like everybody else. Official and professors went to work with farmers during the busy seasons. Chen Yonggui, deputy premiere in charge of agriculture, continued to earn work points from Dazhai village. When he had to live in Beijing, he only received 1.2 yuan subsidy from the government a day to help cover his living expenses in Beijing. Wang Hongwen, deputy chairman of CCP, former worker, continued to be paid 68 yuan a month salary with only a monthly subside of 15 yuan from Shanghai to cover his living expenses in Beijing. Wu Guixian, vice premiere in charge of industry, continued to be paid her monthly salary of 67.2 yuan. When she

²⁵ Interview with farmers in Henan, Summer 1998.

learned that she had to pay ten cents for the tea she drank at the Great Hall of People during meetings, she started drinking plain water instead of tea. It was a brand new type of officials trained during the Cultural Revolution years, working hard for the people but enjoyed no special privileges. The Cultural revolution created a society where officials and common people were working for a common goal.

The Cultural Revolution created the best possible society in human history. Everybody was doing something meaningful to themselves and to society. There were no unemployment and no homelessness. Education and medical care were largely free for everybody. Social vices, like prostitution, drug trafficking, drug abuse and addiction, children and women trafficking disappeared, which were harassing the rest of the world. There were no profiteering and no poisonous foods and products in Chinese society. Doctors were working hard to serve the people, not for the profit. Famous singers and performers were singing to serve the people, not for money. There were no millionaires and billionaires and everybody had enough to live on. The Cultural Revolution created the most equal society in human history, both in terms of people's income and people's political status. Chairman Mao, supposedly the most powerful person in China, has a salary comparable to a second grade college professor at the time. He did not own a piece of land, a single tile over his head. Even the furniture he used were rented from the government, and he had to pay rent for them. When he passed away, he did not leave any money for his wife and his children. He did not need to because he knew that with the socialist system in place, everybody would be able to make a living with his or her own hands.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION WILL ALWAYS BE AN INSPIRATION FOR THE WORKING CLASS

The post Cultural Revolution Chinese Government betrayed Chairman Mao, betrayed Chinese working classes by introducing the capitalist reforms which enslaved the Chinese working classes. Chinese Government officials and their children collaborated with foreign capitalists to enslave the Chinese working class in order to enrich themselves. They themselves have become the new exploiting classes with billions of dollars while the Chinese working class lost access to free education, medical care and affordable housing. They simply do not have the caliber and ability to inspire the Chinese people to work together to build a better society. The only thing they were good at was to pedaling their soul and dignity in order to get foreign capital.

They used lie and fabrication to tarnish the image of the Chairman Mao, the gang of four and the Culture Revolution. They said that Chairman Mao made mistakes in his later years. The Chinese people disagree. In the eyes of the Chinese working class, Chairman Mao made no mistakes in his later life. Those who said Chairman Mao made mistakes in his later life need to ask themselves if they were on the wrong side of the history, the side of exploiting classes and corrupt officials.

They blamed Chairman Mao and the Gang of Four for the violence of the Cultural Revolution. Who should they blame for the Yanda Measures that killed hundred and thousand people with petty crimes, and the millions who were executed and imprisoned during the campaign to purge the three categories of people who rose to criticize the corrupt officials during the Cultural Revolution? Who should they blame for the blood shed in Beijing during the students' riots in June 1989?

The post Cultural Revolution Chinese Government, which condemned the Cultural Revolution, a revolution to build real democracy and real socialism, had been morally bankrupt. Despite of their lies and fabrications to tarnish the images of Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution, more and more Chinese people in China, and working class elsewhere in the world, began to cherish the accomplishments of the Cultural Revolution and socialist China. Lies and fabrications will not change history for ever. History does end with lies and fabrications. Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution and its accomplishments will continue to inspire the Chinese people and the people elsewhere in the world for a better and just world ahead.