Bill of Rights in Action

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THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 AND THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

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President Lyndon B. Johnson shakes hands with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

IT TOOK 100 YEARS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR ENDED BEFORE CONGRESS PASSED A FEDERAL LAW EFFECTIVELY STOPPING VOTING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACE OR COLOR. THAT LAW, THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965, WAS THE SUBJECT OF A SIGNIFICANT U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION IN 2013: *SHELBY COUNTY V. HOLDER*.

Enacted following the Civil War, the 15th Amendment banned racial discrimination in voting (see "Amendment XV"). Protected by federal troops during Reconstruction (1865–1877), newly freed slaves in the South voted in large numbers. African Americans were elected to serve in Congress and in state and local governments in the South. But when Reconstruction ended, white domination returned. Whites prevented African Americans from voting, and whites took control of state and local governments.

The Southern states passed laws that effectively prevented African Americans from registering to vote and from casting ballots. Many places in the South required citizens to pay a poll tax to vote, which poor African Americans could not afford to pay.

Many states and local governments set up additional barriers. Many required potential voters to pass a literacy test. Invariably, African Americans failed the test, while uneducated or illiterate whites passed it. Governments also enacted laws that allowed someone to vote if his grandfather was qualified to vote before the Civil War. In addition, they imposed moral character tests for voting or required a prospective voter to have existing voters vouch for him.

These discriminatory tests and devices along with violence, intimidation, and economic coercion prevented black citizens from voting in much of the South.

The Civil Rights Movement

Following World War II, the modern civil rights movement began. Massive

THE 1960s

This edition of *Bill of Rights in Action* explores issues related to the 1960s. The first article looks at the Voting Rights Act of 1965, its success, and the 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down its extraordinary enforcement mechanism. The second article examines U.S. policy toward Cuba, which since the 1960s has meant no diplomatic relations and a trade embargo, but which seems to be changing. The last article looks at China's turbulent Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.

U.S. History: The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the U.S. Supreme Court

Government: Cuba at the Crossroads

World History: Mao Zedong and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

Guest writer Gail F. Frommer, Esq., wrote the article on the Voting Rights Act. Our longtime contributor Carlton Martz wrote the other two articles.

Amendment XV (Ratified in 1870)

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

and sprawling, the movement battled for equal rights in court, pushed Congress to pass civil rights legislation, and conducted peaceful protests, demonstrations, and boycotts. One goal of the movement was to gain voting rights for African Americans in the South.

After years of attempts to register voters and to get an effective federal voting rights act, a shocking episode in Selma, Alabama, led directly to the passage of a new voting law. A local campaign to register black voters had met fierce resistance from white officials and police. Prominent national civil rights leaders and civil rights organizations joined the campaign in January 1965. Protests led to massive arrests, including the arrest of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The protests, arrests, and brutality of the police made national news.

The leaders of the Selma Voting Rights Movement called for a march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery, about 50 miles away. Their purpose was to draw attention to the need for federal voting-rights reform. On Sunday, March 7, 1965, about 600 marchers left downtown Selma and crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Television cameras recorded what became known as "Bloody Sunday." As the non-violent marchers left the bridge, they were brutally attacked by state troopers and local police, some on horseback, armed with bullwhips, night sticks, and tear gas. More than 50 marchers were injured. People everywhere witnessed the brutality that African-Americans faced when seeking the right to vote.

One witness was President Lyndon B. Johnson, who made passing civil rights legislation a priority. As a Texas Democrat, Johnson was uniquely able to stand up to the Southern Democrats in Congress, who opposed all civil rights legislation. A masterful politician who had controlled the Senate when he was its majority leader, Johnson was the right leader, at the right time, to push for passage of a federal voting rights law.

About a week after Bloody Sunday, President Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress and called for a voting-rights law. A bill was introduced in Congress. After extensive hearings and debates, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Two days later, on August 6, 1965, Johnson signed the bill into law.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was not the first law to prohibit voting discrimination based on race or color — it was simply the most effective.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964 had outlawed voting discrimination based on race or color, but these statutes did not stop the pervasive voting discrimination against African Americans by state and local officials. These laws failed because they depended on lawsuits brought in federal court (by the U.S. attorney general or others) to stop the discrimination.

The Voting Rights Act was not the first law to prohibit voting discrimination . . . it was simply the most effective.

It took years for federal courts to resolve a case. In the meantime, election cycles passed without justice. If the lawsuit was successful and a court ruled that an election test, rule, or procedure was discriminatory and could no longer be used, white officials simply replaced it with a new discriminatory measure. A new lawsuit would have to be brought, and the long cycle would begin again.

When Congress passed the Voting Rights Act (VRA), members of Congress knew the weaknesses of the prior civil rights acts. The VRA was designed to avoid these weaknesses.

Section 2 of the VRA expresses the fundamental principle that underlies the statute. In its original version, Section 2 stated:

> No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.

Other provisions specifically prohibited some of the most heavy-handed discriminatory practices. For example, Section 11 banned state or local officials from willfully refusing to allow someone who is eligible to vote from registering to vote.

The VRA authorized civil and criminal penalties (fines and imprisonment) against any person who deprived others of their voting rights.

It empowered the U.S. attorney general to sue in federal court to enforce the provisions of the VRA, or to enforce the provisions of any statute protecting the 15th Amendment right to vote. These lawsuits would be more effective than the cases brought under earlier civil rights acts. For instance, when a suit was filed by the attorney general, the court could immediately order the discriminatory rule or test be suspended. The court could also order the state or locality not to change any of its election rules or practices until the court determined that the change was not discriminatory.

Section 2 of the VRA applied throughout the nation. It was permanent, with no expiration date.

Before passing the VRA, Congress held extensive hearings and found voluminous evidence of voting discrimination against African Americans. For almost 100 years, African Americans had been prevented from exercising electoral power by "an insidious and pervasive evil which had been perpetuated in certain parts of our country through unremitting and ingenious defiance of the Constitution." Recognizing that lawsuits could not end discrimination, Congress provided exceptional remedies in Sections 4 and 5 of the VRA of 1965. These provisions targeted only certain states and localities and were set to expire in five years.

The Coverage Formula of § 4

According to the original version of the VRA, a state or locality is covered by Section 4 (and therefore subject to exceptional remedies) if it met **both** of these requirements:

1. It used a "test or device" on November 1, 1964. A "test or device" meant that to register to vote, people must pass a literacy test or a knowledge test, or establish that they have "good moral character" or have other registered voters vouch for their qualifications.

2. Less than 50 percent of the voting-age population was registered to vote on November 1, 1964 or less than 50 percent of the voting-age population voted in the presidential election of November 1964.

In 1965, six states met the coverage formula: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia. (In 1975, three more states were added: Alaska, Arizona, and Texas.) In addition, a number of counties and cities were covered in other states, including states outside the South.

Bailout Procedure in § 4

Section 4 provided a "bailout" procedure for a state or locality to terminate coverage under the section's formula. The state or locality would have to prove to a federal district court in the District of Columbia that it had not discriminated in voting, or had not used a specified discriminatory "test or device" (like a literacy test) in the preceding five years. The attorney general has the power to consent to the bailout.

Over the years as Congress amended, extended, and reauthorized the VRA, the basis for getting a bailout changed. After Congress' last reauthorization in 2006, a state or locality applying for bailout must prove that it has not discriminated for the preceding 10 years. It must also show that it has taken affirmative steps to increase minority voter participation.

§ 5 Preclearance

Section 5 of the VRA provided that the states and localities covered by Section 4 would have to get approval from federal officials before changing any election law (such as voting qualifications, procedures, requirements, etc.). No change may take effect unless approved either by the U.S. attorney general or by a three-judge federal district court in the District of Columbia. Approval can be given only if the state or locality shows that the new law does not discriminate.

This legal requirement for obtaining approval is called "preclearance." Preclearance is exceptional because it requires state and local officials to seek approval from federal authorities before changing their election laws. Ordinarily, under our Constitution, states and localities have broad power to determine how to conduct their elections.

The Success of the VRA

The VRA of 1965 has been very successful — especially the remedies in Sections 4 and 5. The act has eliminated barriers to African Americans being registered to vote, turning out to vote, and having their votes counted. These are called "first generation barriers" to voting.

In the six states originally covered by Sections 4 and 5, the number of African-American elected officials increased by approximately 1,000 percent between 1965 and 2004. By the 2004 election, the rate of black voter turnout exceeded that of whites in five of the six states.

As more African-Americans voted, however, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) accused state and local officials of finding ways to dilute the voting influence of African-Americans (and other minorities). The department took action against "second generation barriers," which weaken the electoral power of minorities. Some examples of second-generation barriers are:

- Racial gerrymandering: drawing legislative or voting districts to prevent minorities from having a majority of voters in a district.
- Adopting a system of at-large voting instead of district-by-district voting in city or county elections. In at-large voting, everyone votes for all the candidates. It gives control of the election to the majority population.
- Situating a polling place so that it is inconvenient for minority voters but close to white voters.

Sections 4 and 5 have been used thousands of times to prevent discriminatory laws from taking effect. Between 1982 and 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice blocked more than 700 voting changes it considered discriminatory. In the same period, states and localities withdrew or changed 800 proposed laws that were in the preclearance process. Presumably, the proposed changes would not have been approved by the DOJ.

After holding hearings and voting, Congress extended the exceptional remedies in Sections 4 and 5 four times: in 1970 (for five years), in 1975 (for seven years), in 1982 (for 25 years), and in 2006 (for 25 years). The Section 4 coverage was updated by adding references to voter registration and election participation in 1968. Signed into law by President George W. Bush, the 2006 Reauthorization Act did not change the coverage formula in Section 4 from what it had been in the 1975 and 1982 reauthorizations. It still referred to discrimination, voter registration, and voter turnout in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lawsuit Against §§ 4 and 5

Although each reauthorization of the VRA sailed through Congress on near unanimous votes, many jurisdictions covered by Sections 4 and 5 chafed at the federal intrusion into their elections. They complained that they had to "either go hat in hand to Justice Department officialdom to seek approval" of any changes in their procedures or "embark on expensive litigation in a remote judicial venue" to bail out of the coverage.

When it was first passed, and after each reauthorization, the VRA faced court challenges. Prior to the 2006 Reauthorization Act, the U.S. Supreme Court had upheld Sections 4 and 5 as a constitutional expression of Congress' power under the 15th Amendment.

After Congress passed the 2006 Reauthorization Act, Shelby County, Alabama, sued U.S. Attorney General Holder in federal District Court in Washington, D.C. Shelby County asked the court to declare both Sections 4 and 5 unconstitutional. Officials in Shelby County saw the lawsuit as the only way it could avoid preclearance. It could not meet the conditions for a bailout because of its long history of voting discrimination. Shelby County is the home of Selma, where the Bloody Sunday march took place in 1965. Alabama had been covered continuously by Section 4.

The District Court ruled against Shelby County and upheld the 2006 Reauthorization Act. The court determined that Congress had gathered sufficient evidence of discrimination to justify the reauthorization. When the federal Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit also upheld the 2006 Reauthorization Act, the county appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Shelby County v. Holder

In *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013), the U.S. Supreme Court held that Section 4, as reauthorized in the 2006 Act, is unconstitutional. The court expressly declined to decide whether Section 5 (preclearance) is constitutional.

Chief Justice Roberts wrote the court's opinion, joined by Justices Scalia, Kennedy, Thomas, and Alito. According to the court, the exceptional remedies of the VRA had to be justified by current information, but Congress had failed to update the formula in Section 4. It was therefore no longer constitutional.

The court emphasized the exceptional nature of the remedies in Sections 4 and 5, which depart from two basic constitutional principles. The first principle is federalism: "[T]he Framers of the Constitution intended the States to keep for themselves, as provided in the Tenth Amendment, the power to regulate elections." Yet the VRA

> suspends all changes to state election law — however innocuous — until they have been precleared by federal authorities in Washington, D.C. . . . States must beseech the Federal Government for permission to implement laws that they would otherwise have the right to enact and execute on their own . . . .

The second principle is "equal sovereignty among the states."

> [D]espite the tradition of equal sovereignty, the Act applies to only nine States (and several additionalcounties). While one State waits months or years and expends funds to implement a validly enacted law, its neighbor can typically put the same law into effect immediately, through the normal legislative process

Considering these two constitutional principles, the court stated that Section 4's coverage formula must be justified by a showing of current needs, but Section 4's formula is based on "decades-old data and eradicated [discriminatory] practices" from the 1960s and 1970s.

> [A] statute's "current burdens" must be justified by "current needs," and any "disparate geographic coverage" must be "sufficiently related to the problem that it targets." . . . The coverage formula met that test in 1965, but no longer does so.

The court noted that the current problem is not the first-generation barriers to registering and voting, but the second-generation barriers (dilution of minorities' voting power). Although Congress held hearings before passing the 2006 Reauthorization Act,

> Congress did not consider the record it compiled to shape a coverage formula grounded in current conditions. It instead reenacted a formula based on 40-year-old facts having no logical relation to the present day.

The court emphasized the purpose of the 15th Amendment:

> The Fifteenth Amendment commands that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race or color, and it gives Congress the power to enforce that command. The Amendment is not designed to punish for the past; its purpose is to ensure a better future. . . . To serve that purpose, Congress — if it is to divide the States — must identify those jurisdictions to be singled out on a basis that makes sense in light of current conditions. It cannot rely simply on the past.

The court stated its reluctance to invalidate a statute passed by Congress. But the court pointed out that it had expressed concern about the coverage formula in *Northwest Austin v. Holder*, a 2009 case. It concluded that Congress' failure to update Section 4's coverage formula left the court

> no choice but to declare §4(b) unconstitutional. The formula in that section can no longer be used as a basis for subjecting jurisdictions to preclearance.

Justice Thomas joined the court's opinion, but wrote a separate concurring opinion. He wrote that the court should have decided that both Sections 4 and 5 are unconstitutional. He stated that the circumstances (pervasive voting discrimination in parts of the nation) that justified the extraordinary provisions of Sections 4 and 5 no longer exist.

Amendment X (Ratified in 1791)
The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

The Dissent

Justice Ginsburg wrote the dissenting opinion, joined by Justices Breyer, Sotomayer, and Kagan. They would have upheld the 2006 reauthorization of Sections 4 and 5. The dissenters' main argument is that the reauthorization of Sections 4 and 5 is a matter for Congress to decide, not the court. The 15th Amendment gives Congress power to enforce it with "appropriate legislation."

> [T]he Constitution vests broad power in Congress to protect the right to vote, and in particular to combat racial discrimination in voting. This Court has repeatedly reaffirmed Congress' prerogative to use any rational means in exercise of its power in this area.

The dissent emphasized that the court should defer to Congress.

> The Court has time and again declined to upset legislation of this genre unless there was no or almost no evidence of unconstitutional action by States. . . . No such claim can be made about the congressional record for the 2006 VRA reauthorization. Given a record replete with examples of denial or abridgment of a paramount federal right, the Court should have left the matter where it belongs: in Congress' bailiwick.

According to the dissent, the court ignored the extensive fact-finding by Congress. For example, the Katz study reported to Congress on all the Section 2 lawsuits between 1982 and 2004.

> Although [Section 4] covered jurisdictions account for less than 25 percent of the country's population, the Katz study revealed that they accounted for 56 percent of successful §2 litigation since 1982. . . . Controlling for population, there were nearly *four* times as many successful §2 cases in covered jurisdictions as there were in noncovered jurisdictions. . . . The Katz study further found that §2 lawsuits are more likely to succeed when they are filed in covered jurisdictions than in noncovered jurisdictions. . . . From these findings — ignored by the

Court — Congress reasonably concluded that the coverage formula continues to identify the jurisdictions of greatest concern.

The dissent recognized that real progress has been made in voting rights, but argued that Congress had a lot of evidence that Section 4 coverage should continue.

> Volumes of evidence supported Congress' determination . . . . Throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet.

As to the doctrine of equal sovereignty among the states, the dissent argued the court was misusing and expanding it. In prior cases, that doctrine simply meant that states had to be admitted to the Union on equal terms.

The dissent concluded with a lament about the court's decision.

> The sad irony of today's decision lies in its utter failure to grasp why the VRA has proven effective. The Court appears to believe that the VRA's success in eliminating the specific devices extant in 1965 means that preclearance is no longer needed. . . . With that belief, and the argument derived from it, history repeats itself. The same assumption — that the problem could be solved when particular methods of voting discrimination are identified and eliminated — was indulged and proved wrong repeatedly prior to the VRA's enactment. Unlike prior statutes, which singled out particular tests or devices, the VRA is grounded in Congress' recognition of the "variety and persistence" of measures designed to impair minority voting rights. . . . In truth, the evolution of voting discrimination into more subtle second-generation barriers is powerful evidence that a remedy as effective as preclearance remains vital to protect minority voting rights and prevent backsliding.

What's Next?

The court's opinion only affected Sections 4 and 5 of the VRA. Section 2 (prohibiting voting discrimination based on race or color and protecting minority-language voters) is still enforceable by lawsuits filed in federal court.

The court's opinion suggests that Congress may pass a valid Section 4 if the new coverage formula is based on current conditions and targeted to current problems of discrimination (such as second generation barriers to voting). A bipartisan proposal has been introduced in both houses of Congress to update the Voting Rights Act. As of April 2015, the bills have not advanced to be considered.

Following the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, many jurisdictions that used to be subject to preclearance have put new voting laws into effect, such as laws requiring voters to show an approved photo-ID before voting. State officials point out that these laws are similar to those of other states and their purpose is to prevent fraud at the polls. Opponents argue that fraud is not a widespread problem and the laws' purpose is to suppress minority voting. The Department of Justice has filed lawsuits in some jurisdictions to overturn the new laws as discriminatory. Some of the lawsuits have succeeded, and others are still pending.

DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. What is the 15th Amendment? Why do you think it was enacted?
2. How did Southern states in the Jim Crow era prevent African Americans from voting?
3. How did the Voting Rights Act get enacted? How does it work? Why did it work so well?
4. What was the ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*? What was the argument of the court? The dissent?
5. What has been the effect of the ruling so far? Do you think Congress should pass a new reauthorization law? Explain.

ACTIVITY: Rehearing of *Shelby County v. Holder*

Imagine that the U.S. Supreme Court has decided to rehear the *Shelby County v. Holder* case. In this activity, students will role play attorneys and members of the U.S. Supreme Court and argue and decide the case. The court will decide this issue: **Did Congress have the power under the Constitution to enact the 2006 Reauthorization Act?**

1. Form groups of three. Assign one person in each group the role of attorney for Shelby County, attorney for the Department of Justice, or justice of the Supreme Court.
2. Regroup so that all Shelby County attorneys are together, DOJ attorneys are together, and justices of the Supreme Court are together. The attorneys should develop arguments for their side and the justices should create questions to ask both sides. To develop arguments and questions, use the material in the article including the sidebars.
3. When the groups are ready, return to the original groups of three. The justice in each group should allow each side to speak and can ask questions of each side.
4. When the presentations in each group are over, the justice should stand.
5. Each justice should vote and explain his or her reasons.
6. Debrief with a discussion of the strongest arguments that students made.

Each student should do the following writing activity: Imagine you are a Supreme Court justice assigned to write the opinion for the court, stating how you think the case should be decided. The opinion should have the following:

a. A statement of the facts.
b. The issue before the court (see above).
c. Your decision.
d. Your reasoning behind your decision. This should be the bulk of your opinion. Cite evidence from the article (including sidebars), refute arguments that the other side makes, and make clear why your decision is the right one.

When you finish, check it carefully. Look for grammar and spelling mistakes. Read it aloud to yourself and others to make sure it flows.

CUBA AT THE CROSSROADS

COMMUNIST CUBA'S ECONOMY NEVER HAS SERVED ITS PEOPLE ADEQUATELY. NEITHER HAS CUBA STRAYED FROM THE DICTATORSHIP OF FIDEL AND RAUL CASTRO. BUT RECENT CHANGES ARE OPENING UP NEW CHOICES FOR CUBA'S FUTURE.

Cuban News Agency (ANC)

Fidel (left) and Raul Castro appear together before Cuba's National Assembly in 2001.

Fidel Castro and his Cuban Revolution fighters marched into Havana on January 1, 1959. Soon after, he began to abolish privately owned property and establish a socialist economy. The government took possession of most farms, industries, businesses, banks, housing, and other properties.

Before long, even small private businesses like restaurants were government-owned. This meant that virtually all Cubans worked for the government.

The government set the wages so there was not much difference between the earnings of a store clerk and a teacher. To compensate, the government dictated low prices for food and consumer goods and created free education and healthcare systems.

In 1960, the Castro government confiscated all American and other foreign-held property. U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower issued an executive order for a partial trade embargo on Cuba that restricted American exports to the island nation. In January 1961, Eisenhower cut diplomatic relations with Cuba.

By this time, capitalism was dead in Cuba. About 250,000 Cubans, mostly former property owners, left the country. Many of them settled as political refugees in the Miami area of Florida.

In April 1961, newly elected President John Kennedy approved a plan that originated in the Eisenhower administration for Cuban exile fighters to invade the island at the Bay of Pigs to overthrow the Castro regime. The invasion was a disaster and strengthened Castro's popularity as the defender of the Cuban Revolution.

At the end of 1961, Castro declared Cuba to be a communist nation. No competitive elections were necessary, he said, because "the Cuban people have already spoken." He was unanimously elected president by Cuba's National Assembly where only the Communist Party held seats. (See "Capitalism — Socialism — Communism: What's the Difference?" on p. 7.)

In February 1962, President John F. Kennedy issued an executive order that expanded the Eisenhower trade embargo to prohibit all American exports and imports to and from Cuba. The order also gave the Treasury and Commerce departments the authority to make exceptions for the sale of such goods as food and medicine. The following year, Kennedy prohibited most American travel to Cuba.

Cuba and the Cold War

After the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro was convinced he needed the Soviet Union as a military ally. But he soon found himself a pawn in a Cold War conflict between the Americans and Soviets. When the Soviets put nuclear missiles on the island, 90 miles from the U.S., the Cuban Missile Crisis erupted. After a tense showdown, the two sides reached an agreement that resulted in the removal of the Soviet missiles.

Castro felt betrayed by the Soviets at the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis. But he had a reason for remaining in the Soviet's Cold War camp. His socialist economy had faltered, and he needed help to save it.

When Castro combined private agricultural land into large collective farms where everyone worked for the government, food production declined sharply. Castro was forced to impose rationing, which limited how much food Cubans could buy. Cuba also lacked oil and many manufactured goods since the island's pre-revolution economy had been almost entirely based on sugar production.

To save Castro's Cuba, the Soviet Union agreed to buy Cuba's sugar at above world prices. The Soviets also agreed to sell Cuba food, oil, chemical fertilizers, machinery, trucks, and other goods at below world prices.

The Soviet Union's economic subsidies together with low interest loans and technical advisers kept Cuba's socialist economy from crashing and Castro's communist regime in power. By becoming so dependent on this foreign aid, however, Castro failed to develop Cuba's economy to become more self-sufficient and diversified. Then, in 1991, the Soviet Union and its communist empire in Eastern Europe fell apart.

The 'Special Period'

After the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, its aid to Cuba ended. This plunged the country into a deep economic depression that the Cubans call the "Special Period." During this time, Cuba's economy shrank by a third. The government budget deficit tripled as the national debt soared. Imports fell by 75 percent. The education and healthcare systems, the only real successes of Cuba's socialism, suffered from lack of funding.

Many of Cuba's farmers had left the land to work in the cities since the supply of cheap Soviet agricultural products took care of Cuba's food needs. But the food supply fell drastically after the Soviet Union collapsed. The food crisis caused malnutrition, which led to outbreaks of disease and a higher death rate.

As the Cuban people struggled to survive, Castro declared, "Socialism or death!" He attempted to end Cuba's economic collapse by decree. He froze salaries, closed factories, and reduced funding for healthcare and education. He resumed food rationing and ordered unemployed city workers and the army into the countryside to grow crops.

Disillusioned with Castro and his communist regime, many Cubans boarded small boats to cross the 90-mile stretch of ocean between Cuba and Florida. In 1993, a major riot took place in Havana when a rumor spread about a ship coming to take desperate Cubans to the U.S.

President Bill Clinton adopted a "dry-foot, wet-foot policy." Cubans who managed to reach American soil were welcomed as political refugees. Those intercepted at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard, however, were returned to Cuba.

To curb growing criticism of his regime, Castro ordered provincial and national elections. But only "official" candidates with no competition appeared on the ballots. The only political party permitted was Castro's Communist Party. Protesters, demanding more political freedom, were beaten and jailed.

By the mid-1990s, even Castro realized socialism was not going to solve the disaster that Cuba had become after the Soviets ended their economic support. Finally, he agreed to some temporary capitalist reforms.

The government granted farmers land to cultivate, but not to own. They were then permitted to sell for personal profit any surplus crops beyond the quota owed the government.

Workers could pay a license fee and taxes to work for themselves rather than the government in jobs like bike repair and selling things at flea markets. The government also licensed and taxed certain small businesses such as restaurants that had to be operated within a home by family members.

Foreign investors were allowed to buy land, primarily to develop tourist resorts. Foreign corporations had to pay the government in U.S. dollars for the right to hire Cuban workers. The government then paid the workers' wages in Cuban pesos, which had less value.

Back to Socialism

Despite all the restrictions, the capitalist free market reforms made a big difference in the recovery of Cuba from its "Special Period." But Castro soon began to undo the reforms in order to strengthen the socialist economy. He added an amendment to the Cuban constitution that declared, "Cuba will never return to capitalism."

A new foreign backer, Venezuela's socialist President Hugo Chavez, helped Castro get Cuba back to socialism. In 2000, Chavez agreed to sell deeply discounted oil to Cuba. In exchange, Castro sent many of his well-trained doctors and nurses to work in Venezuela's impoverished areas.

Venezuela became Cuba's biggest trading partner, lender, and source of aid and subsidies, filling the role the Soviet Union once played.

As Cuba's economy recovered, Castro felt more confident about quashing dissent against his regime. He depended on neighborhood surveillance agents to report any disloyalty. In 2003, when a group of dissenters circulated a petition for more political freedom, Castro had them arrested and imprisoned.

By 2006, Fidel Castro was 79, ill, and weak from several surgeries. In July, he handed over temporary power to his brother, Raul. Two years later, Fidel announced he would step down as president. The rubber-stamp National Assembly then elected Raul Castro, 76, as Cuba's new president.

New Era of Reforms

When Raul Castro took over as president in 2008, the terrible suffering of the "Special Period" was in the past. But Fidel Castro's return to socialism depended heavily on food imports, rationing, and money, called "remittances," sent by Cuban Americans in the U.S. to their relatives on the island. Workers complained about low government wages. "We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us," Cubans often joked.

Unlike his brother, Raul Castro was more open to free market reforms. He believed they were necessary to improve the economy and assure the survival of Cuba's communist regime.

Several months after he became president, the new Castro leader stated his ideas for changes in a speech before Cuba's National Assembly. In communist Cuba, an average government worker earned $20 a month while a highly skilled one typically earned only a little more. Wage increases were necessary, Castro admitted, but must be selective based on a worker's "personal contribution based on performance." ▶

Capitalism – Socialism – Communism | What's the Difference?

Capitalism is an economic system based on private property in which most industries, businesses, farms, and other such enterprises are owned and operated by private individuals or corporations.

- Capitalism operates on the free market principle where privately owned enterprises compete with one another to make a profit.
- Prices and wages are determined by supply and demand.
- Most workers are employed by private enterprises or are self-employed, although others work for different levels of government (in public schools, police departments, national parks, and other public agencies).

Socialism is an economic system based on government ownership of the major means of production such as the steel and oil industries. Private enterprises may be permitted, but usually are heavily taxed.

- The object of socialism is to share the wealth in order to create a more economically equal society.
- The government operates many services such as education, healthcare, child care, and public pensions that are free or nearly free to the public and paid for by progressive taxes.
- The government regulates prices and wages.
- Most workers are employed by the government.

Communism is an economic and political system based on the writings of Karl Marx, who envisioned a society where capitalists are eliminated and replaced by economic equality. The government owns and manages all property, including farms, industries, businesses, housing, and public services.

- Communists see socialism as a stage on the way to the ideal communist society.
- Prices and wages are set by the government that develops plans to dictate the uses of economic resources and establish the economic priorities of the nation.
- All workers are employed by the government and earn nearly the same wage regardless of their skill or productivity.
- The political system is controlled by the Communist Party that rules in the name of the workers. There are no competing political parties or competitive elections. Freedom of expression is limited to supporting the policies of the Communist Party.

Name one element of capitalism, socialism, and communism that exists in Cuba today.

Castro went on to say, "We must return to the land." He called for an increase in food production by granting Cubans the right to farm government land and keep the profits of at least some of their labor. He also proposed that city dwellers should plant vegetable gardens in every available plot of ground. "We must bring the countryside to the city," he declared.

Castro understood that many parts of Cuba's socialist economy (such as employing virtually all workers) had been too costly and inefficient. His ideas for change seemed to undercut basic socialist principles necessary for a pure communist society as envisioned by Karl Marx. (See "Raul Castro and Karl Marx on Worker Pay.")

Over the next several years, Castro announced that Cubans could be self-employed at hundreds of jobs such as taxi driving, cellphone repair, carpentry, shoemaking, and running small retail shops. Privately owned restaurants could hire up to 20 non-family members.

By the end of 2011, well over 300,000 Cubans were self-employed. Castro then announced that a half-million government employees would eventually be laid off, forcing more to seek self-employment. The permits, licenses, and taxes paid by Cubans in business for themselves produced much-needed revenue for the government.

In communist Cuba, most people were allowed to occupy their houses, but not own them. For the first time, Castro's reforms allowed Cubans to own, buy, and sell up to two homes. Both the buyer and seller had to pay a sales tax. Fortunate Cubans used remittances from relatives in the U.S. to finance home buying.

Starting in 2011, those who owned cars, including Havana's famous 1950s vintage American autos, could buy and sell them. Meanwhile, Castro eased the regulation of foreign investment to increase tourism, which created private jobs and brought more money into the economy and government.

Human Rights in Cuba

By 2012, Raul Castro's selective capitalist reforms had changed the economy for the better, at least for some Cubans. But some changes Castro refused to make.

Castro was following the "China model," which accepted the idea of free market reforms, but only under Communist Party rule. In Cuba, this meant no free elections among competing political parties and no tolerance of dissent against the regime or Castro's leadership.

International organizations like Human Rights Watch reported that Castro has continued his brother's repressive laws and imprisonment of dissenters. Most objectionable is Cuba's "dangerousness" law, which enables police to jail anyone they suspect may commit a crime. The Cuban constitution itself prohibits any protest against the goals of the socialist state.

Anyone caught handing out human-rights materials, writing articles critical of the regime, participating in peaceful protest marches, and other such actions are often beaten up by Communist Party thugs and then arrested. Many are denied a defense lawyer and held for long periods without trial as political prisoners.

The Catholic Church has recently had a moderating effect on Castro's political repression. To gain support from Cuba's 6 million Catholics, Castro has permitted the televising of Christian holiday masses and the opening of religious instruction schools for adults, but not children.

In February 2013, Castro was unanimously re-elected president by the National Assembly. He surprised many, however, when he announced he would step down as president when his term was up in 2018. He already has picked his successor, Miguel Diaz-Canel, who has worked his way up the ranks of the Communist Party and is currently Cuba's first vice president.

Raul Castro and Karl Marx on Worker Pay

In short, each should be paid according to their performance. . . . Socialism means social justice and equality but equality of rights and opportunities, not salaries. Equality does not mean egalitarianism. This is, in the end, another form of exploitation, that of the exploitation of the responsible worker by the one who is not, or even worse, by the slothful.

– Raul Castro, in a speech before the Cuban National Assembly (July 11, 2008)

From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.

– Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875)

How does Raul Castro seem to differ with Karl Marx on worker pay?

Restoring Relations

For decades, U.S. politicians have favored Florida's Cuban American refugees, who strongly oppose the Castro regime. The votes of these naturalized American citizens could make a difference in winning Florida's electoral votes for president.

Over time, however, younger Cuban Americans born in the U.S. have become more open to restoring normal relations with Cuba. In addition, American business and agriculture groups have complained about the sales they were losing to other countries because of the trade embargo.

On December 17, 2014, after 18 months of secret negotiations mediated by Canada and Pope Francis I, President Obama and President Castro agreed for the first time in more than 50 years to establish diplomatic relations. They also agreed to increase business relations and ease travel restrictions.

Obama said at the time of the historic announcement, "These 50 years have shown that isolation will not work. It's time for a new approach." Cuban American members of Congress strongly opposed Obama's action, arguing that it rewarded the brutal Castro dictatorship. For his part, Raul Castro, speaking to the Cuban people, said the U.S. trade embargo, which "causes enormous damage to our country, must end."

During the negotiations, Castro pressed Obama to remove Cuba from the U.S. state sponsor of terrorism list. Cuba was first put on the list in 1982 when it supported armed revolution in several Latin American countries. Obama initiated a review of this issue and announced in April 2015 that Cuba no longer matched the criteria for a sponsor of terrorism. He declared his intention to take Cuba off the list unless Congress disapproved.

Cuba at the Crossroads

Raul Castro and his regime now face important questions. First, will they finally break away from Cuba's

history of economic dependence on other countries by developing a free market economy as China has done? Venezuela, Cuba's latest foreign economic supporter, has suffered from a drastic drop in world oil prices and will probably be unable to continue its subsidies and aid to Cuba.

If Cuba becomes more capitalist, Cubans wonder what will happen to their socialist benefits: government jobs, pensions, free education, and healthcare for all. Resistance from within the regime by those dedicated to socialism has already slowed down the reforms. For example, if a privately owned restaurant becomes too successful and profitable, government officials can impose more strict regulations or even close it down on the grounds of too much "personal enrichment."

Another question relates to the political system. Will Castro and the regime give up Communist Party and one-man rule for free multi-party elections and human rights? Castro and regime leaders have shown no desire to head in this direction. The only political reforms so far are term limits and the election of a new younger generation to make up Cuba's Communist Party Congress.

A key indication of Cuba's political future may occur in 2018 when Raul Castro steps down and is succeeded by Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel, 54. He possesses little of the authority of the Castro brothers, who have ruled Cuba for more than 50 years, outlasting 10 U.S. presidents.

The U.S., too, is at a crossroads regarding Cuba. If diplomatic relations are firmly established, Americans may have to choose whether to continue or end the long-lasting trade embargo.

The original presidential proclamations against exports, imports, and travel to Cuba were first established in the early 1960s. Since then, Congress and various presidents have enacted a complex set of laws, executive orders, regulations, and exceptions to the embargo.

Both Congress and the president have authority over the embargo. For example, a 1996 law requires the embargo to remain in effect until the president certifies that a transition government or a freely elected government is in power in Cuba.

In addition, the president has authority to issue executive orders on a wide range of embargo matters. This happened recently when President Obama opened up American travel to Cuba except for purely "tourist activities," which are banned by laws passed by Congress.

Only Congress can completely repeal the embargo. But the president can weaken or strengthen its regulations and exceptions.

DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Why did Cubans suffer so much during the "Special Period" after the fall of communism in the Soviet Union?
2. Why do you think Raul Castro has introduced free market reforms?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the decision to restore diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba? Why?

ACTIVITY: Should Congress Continue or Repeal the U.S. Trade Embargo Against Cuba?

1. Students read both editorials below on the trade embargo and pick one to respond to by writing a letter to the editor. (These editorials have been developed for the purposes of this activity and are not from actual publications.)
2. In their letters, students may agree or disagree with the viewpoint of the editorial they have picked. They may also partly agree and disagree as well as propose ideas not mentioned in the editorial.
3. Students should support their views in their letters by using facts and information from the article.
4. When the letters are finished, students will meet in small groups to discuss their letters and try to persuade the group to their point of view on the activity question.

The groups will finally report the results of their discussions to the class.

The Trade Embargo Should Be Continued

Repealing the embargo would reward and prop up the Castro dictatorship with its terrible record of human-rights violations.

Socialism has proven disastrous for the Cuban people, who work for poverty wages and must deal daily with rationing of food and other consumer goods.

Proof of the brutal dictatorship and poor economic conditions is demonstrated by the long history of Cubans risking their lives to escape the island.

Despite President Obama's recent decision to take Cuba off the list of state sponsors of terrorism, the Castro regime harbors terrorists from other countries as well as criminal fugitives from the U.S.

Raul Castro's "reforms" are limited and designed to help the regime's finances by requiring high license fees and taxes from private businesses.

The embargo should continue as long as Cuba maintains its impoverishing socialist economy and its brutal communist regime. Continuing the embargo will pressure Cuba to observe human rights and adopt meaningful economic and political reforms for its long-oppressed people.

The Trade Embargo Should Be Repealed

The embargo has failed to end the Castro communist regime, but it has contributed to the economic suffering of the Cuban people.

The U.S. has diplomatic and trade relations with Communist China and Vietnam. Both countries fought us in wars and have human-rights records as bad as or worse than that of Cuba.

The embargo has put Cuba, only 90 miles from Florida, off limits to American businesses, which has benefited our global economic competitors.

For years, the Castro brothers have kept themselves in power by blaming the embargo for the failures of socialism.

Nearly every country in the world, including nearly all of America's allies, vote every year in the United Nations against the embargo.

The embargo should be repealed since it has failed to bring change to Cuba for more than a half-century. The best way to move Cuba toward economic and political freedom is to repeal the embargo and flood the country with American investors, businesspeople, and tourists.

MAO ZEDONG AND THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Wikimedia Commons

A poster from the Cultural Revolution reads, "The Chinese People's Liberation Army is the great school of 'Mao Zedong Thought.' " Mao's image hovers over those waving his Little Red Book.

IN 1966, MAO ZEDONG, THE LEADER OF COMMUNIST CHINA, LAUNCHED HIS CULTURAL REVOLUTION. HE SAID ITS PURPOSE WAS TO ROOT OUT THOSE WHO WERE LEADING CHINA BACK TO CAPITALISM. ANOTHER UNSTATED PURPOSE WAS TO STRENGTHEN HIS GRIP ON POWER, WHICH HE FEARED WAS SLIPPING AWAY TO OTHERS.

After China's civil war ended in 1949, Mao Zedong made the Communist Party the sole source of political power. He made himself lifelong chairman of the party's Central Committee. Chairman Mao ruled as the supreme authority over both the Communist Party and China's government. (In China, a family name like Mao is the first name listed.)

Among his first acts, Mao ordered the government to confiscate the private property of capitalist business owners and landlords. From then on, the government owned all Chinese factories, farms, and other enterprises.

In foreign affairs, Mao admired the communist dictator of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin. But shortly after Stalin died in 1953, the new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, denounced Stalin for promoting a "personality cult" that demanded absolute loyalty to him. Mao, who enjoyed the hero worship of the Chinese people, began to worry that someday Communist Party rivals might denounce him for encouraging his own personality cult.

In 1958, Mao decided to put new life into the Chinese Communist Revolution by speeding up economic development. He ordered the formation of large agricultural communes where hundreds of families were forced to work the government-owned land and share the income from the crops. Mao also shifted much industrial production from large-city factories to smaller operations in towns and villages throughout China.

The "Great Leap Forward," as Mao called his program, ended in disaster. His methods to quickly advance communism in China resulted in huge declines in industrial and food production. Millions died of starvation and disease.

Mao blamed the failure of the Great Leap Forward on natural disasters like floods and local cadres responsible for carrying out his orders. Others, however, like Defense Minister Peng Dehuai, blamed Mao's radical changes.

Mao angrily refused to accept any responsibility for the failure of the Great Leap Forward. He accused his critics of being "revisionists" who questioned the communist teachings of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and himself.

To help quash his critics, Mao fired

Defense Minister Peng and replaced him with People's Liberation Army Marshal Lin Biao, one of Mao's key army leaders during China's civil war. Lin soon became the chief cheerleader for Mao's personality cult.

In 1964, the army published *Quotations From Chairman Mao,* a small book designed to fit into the pockets of military uniforms. Later published with a red plastic cover, the "Little Red Book" contained more than 400 Mao quotations. It quickly spread beyond the army to the Chinese people, greatly adding to Mao's personality cult.

The Launch

In 1964, Khrushchev was demoted by other Soviet Communist Party leaders. Mao began to fear that his own grip on power inside his Communist Party was threatened. He especially distrusted Head of State Liu Shaoqi and Party General Secretary Deng Xiaoping, who were trying to adopt some free market economic reforms to repair the damage of the Great Leap Forward.

Mao slowly grew convinced that many leaders in the Communist Party and government were revisionists, working to take China back down the road to capitalism. He also believed they were plotting to push him aside. He looked for incriminating words in their speeches and writings and began to call them "capitalist roaders."

On May 16, 1966, everything came to a head at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. The Central Committee issued a document, known as the "May Notification," that declared revisionists were infiltrating the party and government (see "The May Notification"). The document specifically accused the mayor of Beijing and his supporters of "errors," "anti-party activities," and "revisionism." They were soon purged.

This was just the beginning. Defense Minister Lin Biao, Mao's closest ally, defended his attack on the revisionist "capitalist roaders."

"Whoever opposes him," Lin said of Mao in a speech, "the whole party will punish and the whole nation will suppress." Lin declared that anyone who questioned "Mao Zedong Thought" must be suspected of treason. Thus, the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" began.

Mao needed a mass movement to denounce the revisionists, who posed a potential challenge to him. He first recruited Beijing University faculty members and students. They put large posters on university walls, attacking university officials for not being loyal to "Mao Zedong Thought."

The Red Guards

The turmoil at Beijing University soon affected high school and even elementary school students. They demanded that their regular studies be suspended and replaced by the Little Red Book and other writings of Chairman Mao. The students memorized Mao's quotations and wrote their own posters with slogans such as "We will smash whoever opposes Chairman Mao!"

Students at a Beijing high school put up a poster praising "Mao Zedong Thought" and signed it "Red Guards." This name quickly caught on in other schools and universities.

Red Guards, especially in the high schools, began to criticize their teachers and local authorities for failing to follow Chairman Mao. Mao cheered them on, approving their right to rebel "against those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road." As Red Guard activity exploded around the country, the government suspended classes in high schools and universities.

Mao saw the Red Guards as a powerful force to attack those whose loyalty he doubted. Mao organized a series of massive Red Guard rallies in Beijing, which drew millions of youth from all over China, each proudly carrying the Little Red Book. Mao attended but did not speak at these rallies. Speakers proclaimed him to be China's "Great Leader, Great Teacher, Great Helmsman." The huge crowds shouted back, "Long Live Chairman Mao."

Defense Minister Lin Biao, Mao's most devoted supporter, gave the Red Guards their marching orders. He called for them to destroy the "Four Olds": "old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits" of "class enemies."

The energized Red Guards left Beijing to return home and destroy the "Four Olds." Their first targets were anything foreign like Western hair styles, clothing, and high-heeled women's shoes.

The Red Guards went on a campaign to change the names of roads, hospitals, schools, and even their own names to more revolutionary ones like "Defending Mao Zedong." Some wanted to change traffic lights so that the revolutionary color red meant "go."

The young rebels invaded homes to search for evidence of disloyalty to Mao. They confiscated antiques, jewelry, art, anything that would show a family was a "class enemy."

The excited youths vandalized and destroyed anything "old," such as paintings, books, religious statues, historical monuments, and even grave stones. They wrecked libraries, temples, and the birthplace of Confucius. They nearly invaded the Forbidden City, China's ancient royal residence, but were stopped by troops ordered by the government to protect it.

Before long, the Red Guards targeted individuals. They started by accusing many teachers and university professors of being disloyal to Chairman Mao. The rebel youths then went on to persecute writers, scholars, artists, scientists, doctors, and others.

Most of the Red Guard victims ▶

The May Notification

The following paragraph from the May Notification was written by Mao himself. He explained his justification for launching the Cultural Revolution.

Those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, the government, the army, and various spheres of culture are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once conditions are ripe, they will seize political power and turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Some of them we have already seen through; others we have not. Some are still trusted by us and are trained as our successors, persons like Khrushchev, for example, who are still nestling beside us. Party committees at all levels must pay full attention to this matter.

1. According to Mao, who was the enemy threatening Communist Party rule in China?
2. What method did Mao say this enemy was using to achieve its goal?

China News Agency Archives

As part of the campaign to replace the old with the new, the Red Guards in 1967 changed the name of the street in front of the Soviet Embassy to Fanhsiu Road (which means "Anti-Revisionism").

endured humiliating verbal abuse and beatings before jeering crowds at "denunciation meetings." They were forced to criticize themselves and confess to not following "Mao Zedong Thought." Some were locked up and tortured. Hundreds were killed. Mao ordered the police not to interfere. Lin Biao assured the young people at another mass Red Guard rally, "You have done the right thing!"

'Seize Power' Campaign

In early 1967, Mao called for the Red Guards and growing numbers of rebel workers and peasants to "seize power" from capitalist roaders within the Communist Party and government.

What followed were mass purges of local and provincial party leaders and cadres as well as government officials. They were often taken to sports fields where the crowds denounced and abused them. The Chinese people had long resented their arrogance and corruption, so they gladly participated in denouncing them. People tried to settle personal hatreds by accusing each other of opposing "Mao Zedong Thought."

Mao replaced the purged party and government officials with local Revolutionary Committees dominated by the military. Their top priority was to purge real or imagined enemies of Mao from government and Communist Party ranks.

Mao cult fever reached its peak in 1967. His pictures and statues appeared everywhere. Everyone wore a Mao button and joined together in "loyalty dances."

By the end of 1967, the youth of the country were out of control. Education was halted. Massive witch hunts and purges disrupted the functioning of the government and the economy. Fighting among numerous factions, each claiming greater loyalty to Mao, engulfed the nation.

Even Mao realized that social order had to be restored. He told Defense Minister Lin Biao to use the army to disband the Red Guards. The high schools and universities were reopened. But many of the older high school and university Red Guards along with purged adults were sent into the countryside to be "re-educated." This meant laboring in the fields alongside the poor peasants who Mao said were China's true revolutionaries.

The Cultural Revolution's End

Mao had long believed that Head of State Liu Shaoqi was the "leading capitalist roader." Liu, who had once been designated Mao's successor, was purged from his office and expelled from the Communist Party in 1968. Seriously ill, he was neglected in his sick bed and denied needed medicine. He died in 1969.

Earlier, Communist Party General Secretary Deng Xiaoping had been purged from his office but not expelled from the party. Deng, the "second biggest party-person in power taking the capitalist road," was exiled to work in a tractor factory. By 1968, Mao had succeeded in purging numerous other high party and government officials who he believed posed a threat to him.

Defense Minister Lin Biao was China's rising star. He was promoted to vice chairman of the party and designated the new successor to Chairman Mao.

In 1971, either Lin Biao or his son devised a plot to overthrow and assassinate Mao. When the plot failed, Lin or his son planned to meet with top military officers to form a rival government. Before this happened, however, Lin decided to escape by flying his family out of China to the Soviet Union. But the plane crashed in Mongolia, killing all aboard.

The Chinese people reacted in shock that the man Mao himself had picked as his successor had betrayed him. They wondered how the all-wise Chairman Mao could have been duped.

Disillusionment with Mao, the Communist Party, and the Cultural Revolution began to take hold among many who had previously deeply believed in them.

Premier Zhou Enlai, in charge of the daily operation of the government, persuaded Mao to bring back some of those he had purged. Among them was Deng Xiaoping. Zhou was desperately trying to overcome the damage to the economy done by Mao's Cultural Revolution and needed Deng to help him.

When Zhou Enlai's health began to fail, Deng Xiaoping took on more responsibility for carrying out his moderate reform program to modernize China's economy and defense. While Deng's efforts largely succeeded, Mao grew suspicious of his ambition. Meanwhile, Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, became Deng's deadly enemy.

During the Cultural Revolution, Jiang Qing, a former actress, took on the role of bringing the spirit of revolution to the arts. She banned traditional operas, ballets, plays, films, paintings, music, novels, and other forms of artistic expression. She re-

placed them with revolutionary models of art, most notably operas, that served as a form of propaganda.

Jiang became the most radical supporter of Mao's Cultural Revolution. She put Deng Xiaoping at the top of her list of capitalist roader traitors. She and three close allies, soon called the "Gang of Four," accused Deng and the modernization reforms as an attempt to destroy the Cultural Revolution and return China back to the capitalists and landlords.

Premier Zhou died in January 1976. Large unexpected public demonstrations of grief occurred in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Thousands shouted "Long Live Premier Zhou," which many interpreted as support for Zhou and Deng's moderate reforms rather than Mao's radical Cultural Revolution. Mao finally sent the army to clear out Tiananmen Square where most of the huge rallies of Red Guards had once shouted "Long Live Chairman Mao."

Jiang Qing and her Gang of Four then unleashed a propaganda campaign to get rid of Deng Xiaoping and have Mao choose one of them to replace Zhou as premier and deputy chairman of the party. But Mao did not trust the Gang of Four. So he approved the appointment of Hua Gofeng, someone he thought would not be a threat to him. As for Deng, Mao purged and exiled him for a second time.

On September 9, 1976, Mao Zedong died at age 79. Unlike the large demonstrations of sorrow after Zhou's death, no great public expression of grief broke out over Mao's passing. Instead, a power struggle — between Premier Hua Gofeng and Jiang Qing's Gang of Four — erupted over who would replace Mao as chairman of the Communist Party.

While the Gang of Four controlled the media, Hua had the backing of the army. On October 6, Hua ordered the army to arrest the Gang of Four for "crimes against the party." They were eventually tried and sentenced to prison.

A few days after the arrest of the Gang of Four, Hua was appointed the new chairman of the Communist Party. With the death of Mao and the arrest of the Gang of Four, the Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976.

The Return of Deng Xiaoping

As part of a deal he made with the army, Hua Gofeng recalled Deng Xiaoping to his posts in the party and government. Most viewed Deng as the successor to Zhou Enlai's moderate path forward. Hua, Mao's successor as party chairman, was gradually stripped of all power until Deng became the real leader of China by the early 1980s.

In 1981, the Communist Party Congress denounced the Cultural Revolution and Mao's role in starting it. He was portrayed as a great leader who had been led astray by mistakes.

Some good came out of the Cultural Revolution. For example, the students and professionals forced into the countryside improved the health and education of the peasants they worked with.

Nevertheless, the costs to China far outweighed the gains. The vast majority of those purged during the Cultural Revolution were falsely accused. Millions were driven from their jobs, physically abused, forced to work in "re-education camps," and imprisoned. The government estimated that 35,000 (probably many more) were killed. Students lost an entire year or more of education. The economy stalled.

Mao set out to renew the communist revolutionary spirit in China. But he ended up severely damaging the Communist Party and his own personality cult.

China under Deng Xiaoping adopted a market economy that has improved the standard of living of most Chinese. His revolution transformed China into the world economic powerhouse it is today. But it still remains under the thumb of the Communist Party, as China continues to deny due process to those arrested, hold political prisoners, and suppress free speech and other liberties.

Mao and the Gang of Four got one thing right. Deng Xiaoping did turn out to be a capitalist roader.

Glossary of Cultural Revolution Terms

bourgeoisie Middle-class capitalists such as landlords, business owners, bankers, and merchants that the communists said economically mistreated workers and peasants; called "class enemies" during the Cultural Revolution.

cadres Trained Communist Party workers given the task of carrying out party and government policies such as promoting "Mao Zedong Thought."

class struggle The struggle or war by the worker and peasant class (the proletariat) to defeat the capitalist bourgeoisie class in order to achieve the ideal communist society; Mao believed this class struggle was not yet complete in China.

communism An economic and political system developed by Karl Marx in which all property is owned by the government in the name of the people; in an ideal communist society, each person would work according to his ability and be paid according to his needs.

"dictatorship of the proletariat" The Communist Party rules with absolute power in the name of the proletariat.

"Mao Zedong Thought" The collected writings and speeches of Mao, including his quotations in the Little Red Book.

"personality cult" Extreme and unquestioning loyalty to a leader; Mao's personality cult reached its peak in China during the Cultural Revolution.

purge The process of getting rid of revisionists suspected of disloyalty to "Mao Zedong Thought" and Mao himself.

reactionaries What Mao called former capitalists and their sympathizers who wanted China to return to capitalism.

revisionists What Mao called those who wanted to change Marxism and the economy by adopting some capitalist ideas; Mao also called them capitalist roaders.

DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. What do you think was Mao Zedong's main motive for launching the Cultural Revolution? Give evidence for your answer from the article.
2. Why do you think the Red Guards acted the way they did during the Cultural Revolution?
3. Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping wanted China to take different "roads." How were the roads similar? How were they different?

ACTIVITY: 'Mao Zedong Thought'

In this activity, five groups will each analyze two "Mao Zedong Thought" quotations from the Little Red Book. The groups will complete the following tasks for each of their two quotations.

1. Put the main idea of each quotation in your own words. You may need to look up the definition of some words.
2. Decide if the main idea of each quotation was or was not followed in the Cultural Revolution.
3. Back up your decision on each quotation with evidence from the article.
4. Take notes on your decision and reasoning.
5. As a homework assignment, each student should write an essay analyzing the two quotations. The essay should include each Mao quotation, the main idea of it, your decision whether Mao's words were followed or not, and the evidence to back up your decision.

Group 1

Quotation A

"After the basic victory [in 1949] . . . there are still a number of people who vainly hope to restore the capitalist system and fight the working class on every front. . . . Moreover, their right-hand men in this struggle are the revisionists."

Quotation B

"Therefore, before any action is taken, we must explain the policy, which we have formulated in the light of the given circumstances, to party members and to the masses. Otherwise, party members and the masses will depart from the guidance of our policy, act blindly, and carry out a wrong policy."

Group 2

Quotation C

"As we say, dust will accumulate if a room is not cleared regularly; our forces will get dirty if they are not washed regularly. Our comrades' minds and our party's work may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing."

Quotation D

"We should be modest and prudent, guard against arrogance and rashness, and serve the Chinese people heart and soul. . . ."

Group 3

Quotation E

"[Our purpose is] to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind."

Quotation F

"Anyone should be allowed to speak out, whoever he may be, so long as he is not a hostile element and does not make malicious attacks, and it does not matter if he says something wrong. Leaders at all levels have the duty to listen to others."

Group 4

Quotation G

"In treating an ideological or political malady, one must never be rough and rash but must adopt the approach of 'airing the sickness to save the patient,' which is the only correct and effective method."

Quotation H

"How should we judge whether a youth is a revolutionary? How can we tell? There can be only one criterion, namely, whether or not he is willing to integrate himself with the broad masses of workers and peasants and does so in practice."

Group 5

Quotation I

"A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."

Quotation J

"We are not only good at destroying the old world; we are good at building the new."

Standards Addressed

VRA

National High School Civics Standard 18: Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights. (3) Knows historical and contemporary events and practices that illustrate the absence or breakdown of the rule of law (e.g., . . . interfering with the right to vote . . .).

National High School Civics Standard 25: Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights. (5) Knows major documentary sources of personal, political, and economic rights such as . . . court decisions.

National High School Civics Standard 28: Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals. (5) Understands the importance of voting as a form of political participation.

National High School U.S. History Standard 29: Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties. (4) Understands significant influences on the civil rights movement . . . .

National High School U.S. History Standard 31: Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States. (5) Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved.

California History-Social Science Standard 11.10: Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights. (2) Examine and analyze the key events, policies, and court cases in the evolution of civil rights . . . . (6) Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., . . . Voting Rights Act of 1965) . . . with an emphasis on equality of access to . . . the political process.

California History-Social Science Standard 12.5: Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments. (2) Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades . . . . (4) Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights . . . .

Common Core Standard WHST.9-10.11-12.1: Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific* content.

Common Core Standard WHST.11-12.1.b: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

Common Core Standard WHST.11-12.1.c: Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

Cuba

National High School World History Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world. (2) Understands rates of economic development and the emergence of different economic systems around the globe (e.g., systems of economic management in communist and capitalist countries . . .). (14) Understands how specific countries have implemented social and cultural changes. . . .

National High School U.S. History Standard 27: Understands how the Cold War . . . influenced domestic and international politics. (1) Understands U.S. foreign policy from the Truman administration to the Johnson administration (e.g., . . . Kennedy's response to the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile crises . . .).

National High School U. S. History Standard 30: Understands developments in foreign policy and domestic politics between the Nixon and Clinton presidencies. (5) Understands the influence of U.S. foreign policy on international events from Nixon to Clinton (e.g., the U.S. role in the evolving political struggles in . . . Latin America; foreign policy in the post-Cold War era; . . . how human rights has been used in American foreign policy).

National High School Civics Standard 22: Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy. (3) Understands the major foreign policy positions that have characterized the United States' relations with the world (e.g., isolated nation, imperial power, and world leader). (6) Understands how and why domestic politics may impose constraints or obligations on the ways in which the United States acts in the world (e.g., long-standing commitments to certain nations, lobbying efforts of domestic groups, economic needs).

California History-Social Science Standard 10.9: Students analyze the international developments in the post-World War II world.

California History-Social Science Standard 11.9: Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II. (3) Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including. . . The Bay of Pigs Invasion. . . Latin American Policy.

California History-Social Science Standard 12.9: Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles. (5) Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth century . . . Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.

Common Core Standard WHST.9-10.11-12.1: Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific* content.

Common Core Standard SL.9-10.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10/11– 12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Common Core Standard SL.11-12.4b: Plan and present an argument that: supports a precise claim, provides a logical sequence for claims, counterclaims, and evidence; uses rhetorical devices to support assertions . . . ; uses varied syntax to link major sections of the presentation to create cohesion and clarity; and provides a concluding statement that supports the argument presented.

Cultural Revolution

National High School World History Standard 43: Understands how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up. (6) Understands factors that influenced political conditions in China after World War II . . . .

National High School World History Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world. (14) Understands how specific countries have implemented social and cultural changes (e.g., . . . what the Cultural Revolution meant for Chinese people in the late 1960s . . .).

California History-Social Science Standard 10.9: Students analyze the international developments in the post-World War II world. (4) Analyze . . . political and economic upheavals in China (e.g., . . . the Cultural Revolution . . .).

Common Core Standard RH.6-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. . . .

Common Core Standard SL.9-10.1n: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions . . . with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

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