

From *Set the Record Straight*, Lies the System Tells You

You Think Communism Is a Good Idea but Doesn't Work?...

Take This Quiz, and Think Again

1. During the Mao years of 1949–1976, life expectancy
A) got worse, declining from 58 years to 52 years.
B) improved greatly, more than doubling from 32 to 65 years.
C) stayed the same at 58 years.
D) There is no data.
2. In 1949, when China's revolution took place, only about 15 percent of China's population could read and write. When Mao died in 1976, the literacy rate was about:
A) 80 percent.
B) 60 percent.
C) 40 percent.
D) Mao was anti-intellectual and didn't care if people could read or write.
3. Mass protest occurred throughout the world in the 1960s. What was the only government that encouraged criticism and rebellion against people in power carrying out oppressive and elitist policies?
A) United States
B) France
C) China
D) Australia
4. The infant mortality rate in Shanghai in the early 1970s was
A) much worse than New York City's.
B) the same as New York City's.
C) better than New York City's.
D) Communism has no regard for human life and records were not kept.
5. In which of the following countries in the 1950s was the expected social role of women to be mothers who took care of domestic chores and to be subordinate to men? (Hint: there is more than one right answer.)
A) India
B) Japan
C) United States
D) China
6. Since the overthrow of proletarian rule and the restoration of capitalism in 1976, the percentage of the Chinese population covered by public health programs has
A) increased from 50 percent to 70 percent.
B) stayed the same at 50 percent.
C) There is no longer a public health system in China.
D) plummeted from 90 percent to 4 percent.

1. (B) Penny Kane, *The Second Billion* (New York: Penguin, 1987), chapter 5.

2. (A) Ruth Gamberg, *Red and Expert* (New York: Schocken, 1977), p. 41.

3. (C) At the start of the Cultural Revolution, Mao raised the slogan "it is right to rebel against reactionaries" and called on people to "bombard the headquarters" of capitalist roaders who were carrying out elitist and oppressive policies. Providing resources for posters and newspapers, free use of trains for students, and encouragement in the press were some key ways in which mass criticism and struggle were promoted. See "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (Adopted on August 8, 1966), in *Important Documents on the Cultural Revolution in China* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970).

4. (C) Ruth and Victor Sidel, *Serve the People: Observations on Medicine in the People's Republic of China* (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1973), pp. 255-256.

5. (A, B, C) In socialist China women were encouraged to and did participate in all levels of the government, educational system, economy, and other aspects of society. And Maoists led the struggle to break further with the legacy from the old society of women's oppression and tradition's chains.

6. (D) Beijing Review, March 3-9, 1997, cited in Eva Cheng, "China: Is Capitalist Restoration Inevitable?" *Links*, no. 11 (January-April 1999), pp. 62-63. According to the World Health Organization, China now rates last among developing countries in terms of equal access to medical care. See Elizabeth Rosenthal, "Without Barefoot Doctors," *China's Rural Families Suffer*, *New York Times*, March 14, 2001.

MISSION STATEMENT

From a thousand different directions, we are bombarded with the message that communism was a “nightmare” and “failure.” Go into a bookstore and look at the current titles on Mao, the Cultural Revolution, or socialism in the Soviet Union. Take a listen when commentators on TV and radio say something about communism. Leaf through a standard-issue textbook on modern history. There’s a highly distorted narrative of socialism in the 20th century and it goes largely unanswered.

The mission of Set the Record Straight is to factually refute the lies spread in the media, mass-market books, and mainstream scholarship about the Soviet and Chinese revolutions—upholding the overwhelming achievements and pointing to problems and shortcomings.

We seek to open up a two-sided debate about socialism and communism and to promote a conversation about why a radically different and liberating world is possible. In all of this, we are bringing forward Bob Avakian’s exciting vision of a vibrant communism for the 21st century. At a time when the world is in great peril, the intellectual landscape needs to change—and a new generation of students and scholars needs to engage the question of communism’s past and communism’s future in a whole new way.

Set the Record Straight seeks to challenge the paralyzing conventional wisdom about communism that has seeped so deeply into popular understanding and to raise people’s sights to a far better future for humanity.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Let us know what you think about this project and ways to increase its impact. Invite Set the Record Straight to your college or university. Help set up programs on campuses and in communities. Contact us for interviews in the media. Strategize with us about rebutting high-profile anticommunist memoirs and studies. Use the informational materials available on the Set the Record Straight website. Make donations so that we can carry on the work of the project.

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