

Everything You've Been Told about Communism IS WRONG

CAPITALISM IS A FAILURE, REVOLUTION IS THE SOLUTION

Think you know about communism and capitalism?

Then take this quiz...and think again (see other side for answers)

1. During the Mao years from 1949–1976, life expectancy
 - A) got worse, declining from 58 years to 52 years.
 - B) improved greatly, doubling from 32 to 65 years.
 - C) stayed the same at 58 years.
 - D) there is no data.
2. Mass protest occurred throughout the world in the 1960s. Which was the only government that encouraged criticism and rebellion against people in power carrying out oppressive and elitist policies?
 - A) U.S.
 - B) France
 - C) China
 - D) Australia
3. In 1949, when China's revolution took place, only about 15% of the people could read or write. When Mao died in 1976, the literacy rate was about
 - A) 80%
 - B) 60%
 - C) 40%
 - D) Mao was anti-intellectual and didn't care if the people could read or write.
4. In the last 20 years, governments in the Third World opened up their economies to high-tech agribusiness, bought grain and food goods on the world market instead of producing it themselves, and exported specialty agricultural products. These were policy prescriptions of the U.S. and other major capitalist powers, and of the IMF/World Bank. What is the situation today?
 - A) World output of food has kept ahead of population growth and hunger has been reduced.
 - B) The growth rate of food production has actually fallen below population growth and the number of hungry in the world is now at a historic high of 1 billion.
 - C) There has been no change in the situation since 1990.
 - D) Hunger has fallen because of Western aid programs to poor countries.
5. In which of the following countries was the expected social role of women in the 1950s to be mothers who did domestic chores and to be subordinate to men. (Hint: there is more than one right answer.)
 - A) India
 - B) Japan
 - C) U.S.
 - D) China
6. Before the Holocaust, the majority of the world's Jews lived in east-central Europe. What was the only country in this region during the 1930s and World War 2 where Jews were not persecuted, deported, or exterminated—and where official government policy was to outlaw anti-Semitism and protect the rights and safety of Jews?
 - A) Poland
 - B) Soviet Union
 - C) Romania
 - D) Hungary
7. In 1927, with government backing and resources, a massive campaign was launched to free women from having to wear the veil that had been forced on them for centuries and to empower them to challenge traditional gender roles. Where was this?
 - A) Egypt
 - B) Morocco
 - C) Iraq
 - D) Soviet Union
8. When asked publicly if the death of half a million children from economic strangulation of a country following an invasion was justifiable—this government leader replied, "This is a very hard choice, but we think the price is worth it." Who was this person?
 - A) Adolph Hitler's foreign minister
 - B) Joseph Stalin's foreign minister
 - C) Bill Clinton's secretary of state
 - D) Slobodan Milosevic's foreign minister

Set the Record Straight 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 textbook on political theory or modern history. There’s a highly distorted narrative of socialism in the 20th century, and it goes largely unanswered.

The truth is that the first socialist revolutions—in the Soviet Union from 1917 until the defeat of that revolution in 1956, and in China from 1949 until the defeat of socialism in 1976—marked a breakthrough for humanity. These were the first attempts in modern history to build societies free from exploitation and oppression. And they accomplished extraordinary things against enormous obstacles.

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, and to bring to light the overwhelming achievements of these revolutions as well as their real problems and shortcomings. Our mission is to reveal the actual history and experience of these revolutions, 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 of continuing imperial wars, massive global hunger, planetary environmental emergency—and at a time of new stirrings of resistance and questioning—the intellectual landscape needs to change. 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.

Visit Set the Record Straight at ThisIsCommunism.org

- Learn the truth about China’s Cultural Revolution, a revolution *within* the revolution: not a fanatical purge but a mass struggle to transform society further and to prevent the restoration of capitalism.
- Hear the voices of people who grew up in Maoist China, who took part in the Cultural Revolution as activists and who went to the countryside to spread revolution and to learn from the life experiences of peasants.
- Study the facts and get into historical controversies: Stalin and the Soviet experience in the 1920s and 1930s, what actually happened during the Great Leap Forward of 1958-60 in China...and more.

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ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. **(B)** Penny Kane, *The Second Billion* (New York: Penguin, 1987), chapter 5.
2. **(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).
3. **(A)** Ruth Gamberg, *Red and Expert* (New York: Schocken, 1977), p. 41.
4. **(B)** Andrew Martin, “So Much Food. So Much Hunger,” *The New York Times*, September 20, 2009.
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. **(B)** The Russian Revolution of 1917 had brought political and social emancipation to Jews in a country with a history of virulent anti-Semitism and violent anti-Jewish pogroms. Equality of rights for Jews continued under Joseph Stalin during the 1930s and World War 2. By contrast, Jews in Hungary, Romania, and Poland faced organized fascist movements and institutional anti-semitism in the 1930s—and, later, death camps. See Arno Mayer, *Why Did The Heavens Not Darken* (New York: Pantheon, 1988).
7. **(D)** This took place in the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union as part of the larger struggle for women’s liberation in the 1920s and 1930s. A recent documentation is Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).
8. **(C)** Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made this statement in an interview on the CBS news show 60 Minutes (May 12, 1996) in response to a question about the suffering caused by U.S. sanctions imposed on Iraq following the U.S.’s invasion. On the humanitarian cost of these sanctions, see Unicef, *Information Hotline*, “Iraq surveys show ‘humanitarian emergency,’” Wednesday, 12 August 1999 (www.unicef.org).