

# Student Attacks Against Teachers: The Revolution of 1966\*

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*The author investigated the so-called "Red August" of 1966, the start of large-scale violent persecution during China's Cultural Revolution. She interviewed hundreds of teachers and students from ninety-six schools and reviewed all available written materials. This article provides a detailed description of how educators were insulted, tortured, and even killed by their students. Mobilized as members of a new youth organization named "Red Guards," the students attacked the educators for being "capitalist intellectuals." In those schools, twenty-seven educators were murdered; more committed suicide subsequent to torture. Cruel oppression silenced resistance. Stories about bloody campus persecutions were too politically sensitive following the Cultural Revolution, so have heretofore received scant attention in the historical narrative. As the author shows, given the high regard China has traditionally held for education, the brutalizing of educators in China was an unprecedented act. The objective of this article is to reveal the texture and significance of this underreported and underappreciated part of China's history. Causes and ramifications are discussed and analyzed.*

**KEYWORDS:** Cultural Revolution; Red Guards; violence; mass movement; Maoism

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\*The author owes a great debt to all interviewees, who gave generously of their time, often relating painful memories, while supplying data for this paper. Thanks also to John Kieschnick, who helped me with the survey on the Internet.

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There is a longstanding tradition of reverence for teachers and of respect for the institutions of education throughout Chinese history. The events of the summer of 1966, in which students tortured teachers in Chinese schools, are therefore unusual and can be considered a "revolution," if we define a revolution merely by the degree of departure from accepted custom. Eventually, these events played an important role in the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (無產階級文化大革命) that Mao Zedong (毛澤東) launched and led from 1966 until he died in 1976.

Over the past several years, this author has conducted interviews and collected documents in an attempt to understand how the events of 1966 played out in schools across China. In the summer of 1966, in all ninety-six schools<sup>1</sup> covered by this research, students physically attacked teachers. A total of twenty-seven educators were identified as being beaten to death by students. In other cases, teachers were seriously injured and some committed suicide after suffering humiliation and torture. In addition, at two of these schools, two students were beaten to death by their classmates. Shortly after the rise of campus violence, even people off campus were murdered by students as well.

These violent attacks on campuses, however, have not been reported for various reasons. In the summer of 1966, when these events occurred, not a word concerning the violence was ever mentioned in the Chinese media, despite the fact that the media enthusiastically hailed the "Red Guards" (紅衛兵)—which had arisen nationwide in early August of 1966—and reported their activities as headline news almost every day. From the newspapers, magazines, and documentary films published by Chinese authorities at that time, we can see pictures in which millions of teenagers wearing Red Guard armbands march through Tiananmen Square (天安門廣場), with some Red Guard leaders applauding Mao Zedong who stands atop Tiananmen Gate. Against the red background of the red wall of Tiananmen Gate, Mao's little red books, red flags, and red slogans, stood

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<sup>1</sup>See the list of the ninety-six schools in appendix 1.

thousands of young, jubilant Red Guards forming a powerful, distinctive image of the Cultural Revolution. The bloody side of the Cultural Revolution was lost in the spectacular, uplifting image the media created. Nor were the deaths or torture reported by the Red Guard publications of that period. Aside from these two kinds of materials, there are scarcely any private records left from this important period of China's history. Unfortunately for today's scholars, government-controlled media and the writings of Red Guards have become the primary and, in fact, almost the only source for research on this period of the Cultural Revolution.

Not only were the stories of violence not reported by the media at the time of their occurrence, but thirteen years later, in 1979, with the repudiation of the Cultural Revolution reaching the highest circles of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Chinese media only cautiously began to mention the victims as a way of "restoring" their reputation. This sort of publicity was limited to a small number of purged high-ranking cadres, victimized celebrities, and a few ordinary people who were considered "heroes" or "heroines" for resisting the "Gang of Four" (四人帮). The teachers who were victimized in 1966 were not so much as mentioned.

None of the three published general histories of the Cultural Revolution (printed in 1986,<sup>2</sup> 1988,<sup>3</sup> and 1995<sup>4</sup> respectively) covers the brutality against teachers in the summer of 1966. One reason why authors of the three books neglected the subject is probably that they mainly relied on the written materials from that period, and have done little in the way of oral history. For instance, Gao Gao (高杲), the author of one of these histories, says in the preface that her book relies on three kinds of sources: publica-

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<sup>2</sup>Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi, *Wenhua dageming shinian shi* (Turbulent decade: A history of the Cultural Revolution) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1986). In fact, this book cannot be considered as having been "published." Because of the complaints of Tan Lifu (谭力夫), a head of the Red Guards of Beijing Industrial University, Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦), CCP general secretary, ordered the publishing house not to distribute the book that had just been printed "in order to maintain stability and unity" in October of 1986. This book was not sold in bookstores but was sold "internally."

<sup>3</sup>Wang Nianyi, *Da dongluan de niandai* (The years of huge turmoil) (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1988).

<sup>4</sup>Jin Chunming, *Wenhua geming shigao* (A draft history of the Cultural Revolution) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1995).

tions of the authorities and of Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution and publications after the Cultural Revolution.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that many of the events of the Cultural Revolution have not been reported has affected research on the period not only by Chinese but also by Western scholars. For instance, two books considered the best works on this period<sup>6</sup>—*The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*<sup>7</sup> and *Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou*<sup>8</sup>—as well as the dissertation of the author of the latter book—*The Origin and Development of the Red Guard Movement in China*,<sup>9</sup> while providing many details on the activities of the Red Guards, made no mention of the violence against ordinary people by the Red Guards in the summer of 1966. This despite the fact that these studies employed not only careful reading of large amounts of both government and Red Guard publications, but also made use of interviews with former Red Guards. One first-hand account, *The Revenge of Heaven*,<sup>10</sup> reported that a teacher was beaten to death by students during the violence at Xiamen Eighth Middle School (廈門第八中學), but did not give the real name of the teacher or the actual date of death. Among studies published in the 1980s, *Children of Mao* (Anita Chen, 1986) mentions, in passing, violence in schools as related by the interviewees; *Enemies of the People* (Anne F. Thurston, 1986) is based on forty-one interviews as well as published documents, and has a chapter "The Specter of Deaths: Murder, Suicide, and the Refusal to Grant Medical Aid" but does not provide the names of people who were beaten to death in the summer of 1966.

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<sup>5</sup>Gao and Yan, *Wenhua dageming shinian shi*, 3.

<sup>6</sup>William A. Joseph, Christine P.W. Wong, and David Zweig, eds., *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 285.

<sup>7</sup>Hong Yong Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>8</sup>Stanley Rosen, *Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982).

<sup>9</sup>Stanley Rosen, *The Origin and Development of the Red Guard Movement in China* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1979), printed in 1984 by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.

<sup>10</sup>Ken Ling, *The Revenge of Heaven* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1972). This English-language version was prepared by Miriam London and Ta-ling Lee based on a draft submitted by and subsequent interviews with the original author.

While researching this paper, this author was repeatedly shocked by the gap between what has been reported and what had actually transpired. Many basic facts have been neglected, either intentionally or unintentionally. This case is a classic example of the success of Chinese authorities in controlling both the mass media and public opinion, and reveals the extent to which key elements in an important part of history can elude even persistent historians. In this paper, the author attempts to reconstruct the violent attacks against teachers as a part of the unreported side of the Cultural Revolution.

### **Investigating Absent History: Methods and Sources**

The fact that many stories of the Cultural Revolution were not reported forces an exploration beyond the extant printed or filmed materials that historians usually employ for their studies. My investigation on this issue began in 1980. Since then I have interviewed more than five hundred people who experienced the Cultural Revolution while they were in school. Most of the interviewees were students in 1966, but some were teachers. Several were relatives of the victims. They related stories that occurred in ninety-six schools, both in Beijing and in the provinces—including colleges, middle schools, elementary schools, and a kindergarten.

In addition to written correspondence and face-to-face and telephone conversations with the interviewees, I conducted two surveys via the Internet in 1994. In the first round I asked if teachers were beaten in schools the users attended during the Cultural Revolution. Most Internet users were too young to have been a witness to those events, but I still received the names of seven schools where physical attacks against teachers occurred. In the second round I asked for names of schools where there was no violence against teachers. No response ensued. In fact, up to now I have found no school where students did not beat teachers during the Cultural Revolution.

In order to avoid errors of memory, some interviewees helped me check personal and school records for the dates of deaths and events that I mention below. Also, I cross-checked the stories that interviewees told in

order to make the descriptions of the facts as accurate as possible.

Most interviewees were willing to tell me what they witnessed. Some interviewees who were involved in the beatings refused or were reluctant to talk to me. It is regrettable, though understandable, that those who best know the details have been the most adamant in refusing to disclose them.

A more surprising phenomenon is that some teachers who were beaten also would not provide details of torture. For these teachers, the memories of this period are too humiliating and painful to relive. For instance, it was not the teachers but the middle school students who provided me with the lyrics for the "Song of Ox-Ghosts and Snake-Demons"<sup>11</sup> (牛鬼蛇神歌) recorded below. All teacher interviewees who were on the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" (牛鬼蛇神隊) during the Cultural Revolution told me that they had forgotten the lyrics of this song except the first line, "I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon," even though they were forced to sing this ode of self-condemnation many times.

I reviewed putatively relevant materials published by the authorities or distributed by student organizations during the Cultural Revolution. The media, under strict direction of the Central Cultural Revolution Group (中央文革小組), purposely ignored facts. While the government newspapers praised the Red Guards without mentioning their violence, the number of deaths escalated. These deaths were not mentioned in the flyers of student organizations, according to some interviewees, because such brutalities were considered at most "trivial mistakes" or "unavoidable radical behavior" for such a "great revolution." In late 1966 and early 1967, when new student organizations supported by the leaders of the Cultural Revolution began to criticize the earliest Red Guard organizations in their publications, violent persecution was not their emphasis. Although thousands of people were murdered by the Red Guards in Beijing alone during the summer of 1966, only three victims<sup>12</sup> were named even in the most dis-

<sup>11</sup>After the Cultural Revolution was launched, the phrase "ox-ghosts and snake-demons" was frequently used to refer to those who should be struggled against. The editorial of the *People's Daily* on June 1, 1966 was entitled "Fiercely Sweep Away All the Ox-Ghosts and Snake-Demons." This phrase, which was from a poem from ancient times and referred originally to characters in a masked parade, was not clearly defined as a criminal title. In fact, the ambiguity of the title caused many teachers to be beaten arbitrarily.

<sup>12</sup>The three victims were Zheng Zhaonan (鄭兆南), a teacher of Beijing Fifty-second Middle

sident tabloid during that period, *Zhongxue wenge bao* (中學文革報). This publication was banned by the authorities in April of 1967 with Yu Luohe (遇羅克), the major author of this tabloid, being condemned to death in 1970. For all of these reasons, written materials from the ten years of the Cultural Revolution were not a major source for this paper. In the following sections, I cite written sources for my examples when available. The stories for which I do not cite footnotes are from my own interviews.

## How the Students Attacked the Teachers

### *The Scale and Degree of Violence Against Teachers*

In the afternoon of August 5, 1966, some tenth-grade students at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University (北京師範大學) started "beating the black gang" (or *da hei bang* 打黑幫), a group comprised of three vice-principals and two deans (there was no principal). Many students came to join in. The students splashed ink on the clothes of these five, forced them to wear "high hats," hung boards with their names crossed out by red X's on their necks, forced them to kneel on the ground, hit them with nail-spiked clubs, scalded them with boiling water, and so on.<sup>13</sup> After three hours of torture, the first vice-principal, Bian Zhongyun (卞仲耘), lost consciousness and was put into a garbage cart. Two hours later she was sent to the hospital across the street. There, she was later found to have been dead for some time. Another vice-principal, Hu Zhitao (胡志濤), suffered bone fractures. The others were also severely injured. Bian Zhongyun, fifty years old, who had been working for this middle school for seventeen years, was the first educator to be beaten to death by students in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>14</sup>

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School; Wang Guanghua (王光華), a student of Beijing Sixth Middle School; and Xu Peitian (徐霽田), a custodian of Beijing Sixth Middle School.

<sup>13</sup> The symbolic significance of some of these actions will be explained further on in the article.

<sup>14</sup> An essay about this tragedy was included in my book *Xiaoyuan suibi* (Campus essays) (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1988), 30-43.



Large-scale violence had, however, begun earlier at the Middle School attached to Beijing University (北京大學). Liu Meide (劉美德) was a vice-principal and a chemistry teacher at this middle school. On July 31, on the day the "working group" that was in charge of the school in June and July received the order to withdraw from school but had not yet left, a group of students launched a violent action against her. They hacked Liu's hair, put dirt into her mouth, and beat her. Liu was forced to crawl on the playground and repeatedly say: "I am Liu Meide. I am a poisonous snake (毒蛇)." One day in August, she was ordered by the students to climb on a table and kneel there. A student placed one foot on her back, posing as per Mao Zedong's description of how to struggle against landlords: "force them down on the ground and then place one foot on them."<sup>15</sup> After a journalist of the *Beijing Daily* (北京日報) took a photograph, the student kicked Liu from the table to the ground. Liu was pregnant at that time. Her baby died from prenatal injuries soon after the birth. Many teachers at this school were tortured during the same period.

On August 4 at Beijing Fourth Middle School, more than thirty teachers and administrators were attacked on the playground. Students poured ink on them, beat them, kicked them, and tore their clothes. After this incident, two teachers who were insulted committed suicide.

At the Middle School attached to Qinghua University (清華大學), the birthplace of the Red Guards, Wan Bangru (萬邦儒), the principal, and his vice-principal, Han Jia'ao (韓家鼈), were forced to put a piece of black cloth on the front of their shirts, on which were written in white characters: "first head of the black gang" and "second head of the black gang," respectively. Beginning from early August, they were beaten black-and-blue many times. Their hair was cut raggedly. Wan's kidneys were seriously damaged. One day the students of class 6401 (the eighth grade) forced Han Jia'ao to kneel on the floor of their classroom and took turns beating him, one after another, with a club, whip, or leather belt for more than an hour, and then burned Han's hair. Some teachers were forced to beat each other

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<sup>15</sup>See Mao's "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (March 1927), in *Mao Zedong zhuzuo xuandu*, vol. I (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986), 16. This article by Mao was widely read by middle school and college students in June of 1966.



and were told, "If you don't beat each other, we will beat you both." A female staff member, Gu Hanfen (顧涵芬), not only had half of her head shaved, but was also blinded in one eye as a result of being beaten. In late August, the violent beatings expanded to younger teachers, and even to some students. At midnight of August 26, 1966, having been beaten and insulted for the whole evening at a "struggle meeting" (鬥爭會), a twenty-six-year-old chemistry teacher named Liu Shuhua (劉樹華) committed suicide by jumping from the top of the school's chimney.

On August 17, 1966, at Beijing 101st Middle School, students tortured more than ten teachers. They forced teachers to crawl on a path paved with coal cinders until knees and palms bled. They whipped their instructors with copper-buckled belts. Some female teachers suffered having half of their heads shaved, in a hairstyle called "yin-yang head" (陰陽頭). The painting teacher, Chen Baokun (陳葆昆), was beaten badly and then drowned in a fountain.

On August 19, 1966, the students of Beijing Fourth, Sixth, and Eighth middle schools held a "struggle meeting" in the Zhongshan Concert Pavilion at Zhongshan Park (中山公園), which is next to Tiananmen Square. On a stage in front of an audience of thousands they whipped and kicked more than twenty "members of the black gang" from the three schools and the city's Education Bureau. Sun Guoliang (孫國樑), the head of the Beijing Municipal Education Bureau, suffered three fractured ribs. Wen Hanjiang (溫寒江), the vice-principal of the Eighth Middle School, lost consciousness as he bled on stage. According to an interviewee, all were so severely beaten that they "no longer looked human" (不像人樣).

On the evening of August 19, 1966, at the Middle School attached to Beijing Foreign Languages College (北京外國語學院) the Red Guard students beat Zhang Furen (張輔仁), a Chinese teacher, and Zhang Fuzhen (張福臻), an administrative staff, to death. In mid-August 1966, the students of Beijing Sixth Middle School (which is one kilometer from Tiananmen Gate and across the street from Zhongnanhai [中南海], where the party center is located) made the former music classroom into a jail, with a watchtower and a spotlight on the roof. They wrote "Long Live the Red Terror" on the wall and later dipped brushes into the blood of victims to repaint the characters of the slogan. This jail existed for three months

until November 19, 1966. Nine teachers were jailed there during the entire time span. Some teachers, students, and "class enemies" from outside the school were also imprisoned there for various periods. A deputy dean of the school who had been imprisoned there for three months died less than a month after being released. Three men—a custodian, Xu Peitian (徐霈田); a student, Wang Guanghua (王光華); and a man who owned houses for rent near the school, He Hancheng (何漢成)—were beaten to death in the jail.

On August 22, 1966, Sha Ping (沙坪), the principal of Beijing Third Girls Middle School, was beaten to death. On the same day, Hua Jin (華錦), the head of Beijing Eighth Middle School, died in the room where she was imprisoned and tortured. After a serious beating, vice-principal Han Jiufang (韓九芳) developed a bad case of septicemia. The beating left her permanently handicapped. Shen Xianzhe (申先哲), a teacher of Chinese, committed suicide after a beating.

On August 25, 1966, the students of the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University beat three people to death on their campus: Jin Zhengyu (靳正宇), a literature teacher; Jiang Peiliang (姜培良), the party secretary, the highest-ranking cadre at this school; and Fan Ximan (樊希曼), a student's mother. The principal, Gao Yun (高雲), was ordered to stand under the hot sun, while boiling water was poured on him and thumbtacks were stuck in his forehead. Gao came close to dying several times that summer. On that same day, Liang Guangqi (梁光琪), the head of Beijing Fifteenth Girls Middle School, was beaten to death when she was jailed on campus.

At Beijing Fifty-second Middle School, Zheng Zhaonan (鄭兆南), a Chinese teacher, was tortured and jailed in her school and died on September 8, 1966. Chen Yuanzhi (陳沅芷), a Chinese teacher of Beijing Twenty-fifth Middle School, was beaten to death on September 8, 1966 when she had been jailed in the school for ten days. Chen Yuanzhi was forty-two years old when she died. A custodian of this school was killed during the same period. Zhang Bingjie (張冰潔), the head of Beijing Baizhifang (白紙坊) Middle School, was beaten to death. Sun Di (孫迪), thirty-six years old, teacher of Beijing Tenth Girls Middle School, was beaten to death on campus in the summer of 1966. Yang Jun (楊俊), a teacher of the Middle

School attached to Chinese People's University (中國人民大學) in his forties, was beaten to death in August 1966. Zheng Zhiwan (鄭芝萬), a female teacher of this school, committed suicide after being tortured. At Beijing Jingshan School (景山學校), Li Jinpo (李錦坡), a custodian in the receptionist office, who allegedly had "historical problems," was beaten to death by students.

At the Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers College (北京師範學院), Yu Ruifen (喻瑞芬), a female biology teacher, was knocked to the ground and beaten in her office. In broad daylight, she was dragged by her legs through the front door and down the steps, her head bumping against the cement; a barrel of boiling water was poured on her. Although she died after approximately two hours of torture, this did not satisfy the students; all other teachers on the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" were forced to stand around Yu's corpse and take turns beating her.

In general, the brutality of students in colleges and in elementary schools was not as severe as in middle schools, but it was nevertheless serious. At Beijing University, hundreds of people on the "labor reform team of ox-ghosts and snake-demons" were forced to clean the campus with irregularly shaved heads, while wearing boards with their name and title (such as "member of the black gang" or "reactionary academic authority") around their necks and receiving gratuitous insults from many students who came to "learn revolutionary experiences from Beijing University." For example, Zhu Guangqian (朱光潛), professor of aesthetics, had his head shaved and then was forced every day to pick up garbage with other "enemies" in front of the convenience store near the student dormitories. On August 4, when Professor Wu Xinghua (吳興華) of the English Department was cleaning the lawn, some students forced him to drink polluted water from a ditch containing waste from a chemical factory near the university. Immediately, he became very sick. He died that night, at age forty-four. On August 24, students from the Department of Biology used a copper-buckled leather belt to whip one of their lecturers, Hu Shouwen (胡壽文), at his home. His bloody shirt stuck to his skin, requiring his wife to use warm water to soften the shirt for removal. Hu's neighbor Cheng Xiance (程賢策), the party secretary for the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, was also beaten that day. On September 2, Cheng

Xiance committed suicide by drinking two bottles of insecticide after suffering a long period of torture, which included being beaten and having an X-shape shaved on his head. On October 9, Shen Naizhang (沈乃章), professor of psychology, committed suicide after suffering various humiliations.

On August 24, 1966, the Red Guards of the Middle School attached to Qinghua University transported truckloads of Red Guards from twelve middle schools to Qinghua campus, where they beat the administrators and professors. After several persons at the Department of Electronic Engineering were beaten, their blood stained the ground. Someone marked a circle around the blood and wrote "dog blood." That day Red Guards ordered those on the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team," under the lashes of whip, kicks, and punches, to pull down a white marble monument which was built in 1905 to commemorate the founding of the school. That night, all school-level cadres at both the university and the attached middle school were detained in the Science Building, and there in a small room, a beating was inflicted upon each of them. No one escaped without serious injury.

In elementary schools, the oldest students were thirteen years old. At Beijing Lishihutong (禮士衚衕) Elementary School, a teacher surnamed Ye (葉) was forced to swallow nails and balls of excrement. The students of Beijing Yuquan (玉泉) Elementary School shaved half of the heads of four female teachers. At Beijing Sanlihe (三里河) Third Elementary School, after students shaved half of her head, the music teacher, Ms. Zhang Jiamin (張家敏), and her husband, the painting teacher, Mr. Zhang Jiaji (張家冀), were forced to slap each other's face in front of many of their students. Zhao Qianguang (趙謙光), the dean of Beijing Zhongguo-Guba Friendship Elementary School (中國-古巴友誼小學), committed suicide by jumping from a chimney after being insulted and beaten. Zhao Xiangheng (趙香衕), the principal of Beijing Shijiahutong (史家衚衕) Elementary School, committed suicide by jumping from a high building. On August 27, Guo Wenyu (郭文玉), the principal of Beijing Kuanjie (寬街) Elementary School, died after being beaten and pushed face down into dirty water. Lu Zhenxian (呂貞先), the dean of Guo Wenyu's school, was beaten to death on the same day. Meng Zhaojiang (孟昭江), Guo Wenyu's husband, was tortured at the same time and died two days later. Qiu Qingyu

(邱慶玉), the principal of Beijing Jixianghutong (吉祥衚衕) Elementary school, died of a beating administered on October 1, 1966.

Even kindergarten teachers could not escape the violence. Some teachers of Beijing Zhongshan Gongyuan Kindergarten and several kindergartens in Beijing's Dongcheng District (東城區) were denounced and beaten in the Zhongshan Concert Pavilion; there, students from middle schools beat them and shaved their heads.

Attacks against teachers also occurred in the provinces. In Shanghai, on the evening of August 4, students of Huadong Teachers University (華東師範大學) arrested more than 150 professors and administrators at their homes, put "high hats" on their heads, hung boards with words such as "member of the black gang" and "reactionary academic authority" around their necks, paraded them through the campus, and then forced all of them to kneel on the "Communist Youth Square" for a "struggle meeting." Afterwards, the "Shanghai Writing Group" (上海寫作小組), which played a leading role in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution, encouraged students in other colleges to take similar actions. At the Middle School attached to Huadong Teachers University, eighteen teachers were forced to crawl several laps around the sports ground. The female teachers among them were given "yin-yang heads." Students of Fuxing (復興) Middle School struck some teachers on the head with hammers, and one teacher's skull was broken. Jin Zhixiong (金志雄), a librarian of the school, committed suicide. Xue Zheng (薛正), the principal of Shanghai Third Girls Middle School, was forced to eat excrement while cleaning toilets, and some students used thumbtacks to fix a "big-character poster" (大字報) on her back. Lin Xiuquan (林修權), a teacher of Tongji (同濟) Middle School, was beaten to death on campus.

In Tianjin (天津), students of Nancang (南倉) Middle School put garbage baskets on the heads of teachers, drew black X's on their shirts, and shaved the female dean's head. A custodian named Yao Fude (姚福德) at Tianjin Hongqiao District (紅橋區) Jinzhongqiao (金鐘橋) Elementary School committed suicide by jumping into a river near the school after he was badly beaten.

In Changsha (長沙), the capital of Hunan province (湖南省), after returning from the first meeting of Red Guards with Mao Zedong in Tian-

anmen Square on August 18, 1966, the Red Guards of Changsha First Middle School started beating teachers and students from "bad families." The person beaten most seriously was a female vice-principal, who was openly religious. In addition, she had half of her head shaved.

In Sichuan province (四川省), a female teacher Zhong (鍾) at Luzhou (瀘州) Third Middle School suffered bloody knees after being forced to kneel on coal cinders in the pouring rain of August. In Fujian province (福建省), students of Xiamen Eighth Middle School beat their physics teacher, Huang Zubin (黃祖彬), to death. Having being tortured throughout the night, teacher Sa Zhaochen (薩兆琛) jumped from a classroom on the fourth floor in the early morning after the students who beat him were tired and went to bed. He died soon thereafter. Another teacher hanged himself but did not die from the attempt. When he was denounced at a "struggle meeting" after the attempted suicide, people could see the dark scar around his neck.

In the city of Guangzhou (廣州), at Guangzhou Railway Middle School some students forced a teacher, Gao Benqiang (高本鏘), to drink a bottle of ink and then hit him in the abdomen. During the beating, Gao vomited first the ink and then blood. Gao committed suicide in September of 1966. At Guangzhou Seventeenth Middle School, Pang Chengfeng (龐乘風), a staff member, was beaten to death by a group of Red Guards of this school in September of 1966.

At Xi'an (西安) Thirty-seventh Middle School, Wang Leng (王冷), a female teacher of Chinese, and Wang Bogong (王伯恭), a retired teacher of Chinese, were beaten to death at a "struggle meeting" in the summer of 1966. In Nanjing (南京), Zhu Qingyi (朱慶頤), a history teacher of Nanjing Second Middle School, was beaten to death in August of 1966.

In the summer of 1966, among the ninety-six schools listed in appendix 1, seventeen schools had one educator beaten to death; at five schools, two educators were beaten to death. In all, twenty-seven educators were murdered. The number of people who committed suicide is difficult to estimate with any accuracy.

### *The Origin and Spread of the Physical Attacks*

*The first stage—from verbal abuse to physical abuse:* On May 25,

1966, at Beijing University, Nie Yuanzi (聶元梓) and six others put up a "big-character poster" attacking the authorities of Beijing University for being "members of a black gang," putting out a call to "firmly, thoroughly, cleanly, and totally eliminate any ox-ghosts and snake-demons."<sup>16</sup> On the evening of June 1, 1966, the Central People's Radio Station broadcast the text of this poster. The poster sent a shock wave throughout the country. Students took Beijing University as their example and started attacking the authorities of their schools with the same set of words.

In early June in Beijing, the "working groups" were sent to schools to replace the authorities of the schools and to lead the Cultural Revolution there. In order to conduct the Cultural Revolution full time, all colleges and middle schools ceased their regular curriculum, which had been accused of being a part of the "feudal, capitalist, and revisionist educational system." In many schools, those who verbally attacked teachers earliest drew support from the "working group" and became members of the new "Revolutionary Committee" (革命委員會).

Beginning in early June of 1966, educators in general became the target of the Cultural Revolution. When students encountered teachers, they no longer greeted them. When they did address teachers, they rudely called them by their whole name instead of "Teacher + family name" as is the traditional way. Students were encouraged by the "working groups" to write "big-character posters" to "expose" (揭發) their teachers. In addition to political terms such as "counterrevolutionary," "anti-party, anti-socialist, anti-Maoist," and so on, they also used derogatory words (such as "pig" or "poisonous snake") to condemn their teachers.<sup>17</sup> Almost every teacher was attacked verbally on the "big-character posters" or at the "exposing and denouncing meetings." The teachers who were accused were not allowed to defend themselves.

The "working groups" organized sessions to expose and to criticize teachers and divided all teachers into four categories: good, fair, those with

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<sup>16</sup>*People's Daily*, June 2, 1966, front page.

<sup>17</sup>See, for example, the "big-character posters" posted on the front wall of the apartment of Bian Zhongyun by some students from her school in June of 1966. Her family copied those posters.



serious errors, and anti-party/anti-socialist "rightists" (右派份子). For example, the working group at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University led an "exposing and denouncing meeting" against vice-principal Bian Zhongyun on June 21 at which all students attended. According to the working group's record of July 3, 1966, the group put two out of six leading cadres of this school into category IV (the worst one), two in category III, and two in category II. Some teachers, unable to bear the pressure and insults, committed suicide. For example, at Beijing University, students pasted a poster on the door of history professor Wang Zhuqian (汪竹錢). There are two versions of what occurred next. One says that the poster was blown away by the wind; another says that Wang was angry and tore it down. Some students accused Wang of hating the Cultural Revolution and wrecking the poster intentionally. The "working group" ordered Wang to apologize and to paste it up again. Wang did what they asked him to do, but then committed suicide that night (June 11, 1966) by drinking insecticide. In the same school, Dong Huaiyun (董懷允), a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics, committed suicide in late June after the "big-character posters" criticized him and the "working group" ordered him to clean the dining hall with a group of people who were considered the targets of the Cultural Revolution.

Some students started to physically attack teachers in June. At Qinghua University, June 11-12, 1966, some students organized a "dog-beating team" to beat those who had been accused of being "members of the black gang" or other enemies. They insisted that those people were "dogs" and not human. On June 18, 1966, at Beijing University, some students launched violent actions against those who had been verbally attacked. For example, the party secretary in the Chinese Department mentioned above, Cheng Xiance, was chased and beaten. Some students took a garbage basket from the latrine, put it on the head of the vice-chair of the department, Xiang Jingjie (向景潔), and then poured ink on him. In the evening, Xiang went home, where his wife put herb paste on the bruises on his back. Hu Shouwen, a lecturer in the Biology Department mentioned above, was dragged by a rope around his neck, leaving him half-conscious. More than sixty people from departments were violently attacked. Having been beaten and insulted, Yu Dayin (俞大綱), an English professor and a

co-author of the most widely used English textbook, committed suicide at her home that night.

In middle schools, similar events took place. On June 8, 1966, at the Middle School attached to Beijing University three students in her chemistry class beat Liu Meide, the vice-principal, with a club two inches in diameter, which broke after three hours of fierce beating. Bian Zhongyun, the vice-principal of the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University mentioned above, described how she "was tortured for over four hours" during the "struggle meeting" of June 21 in her letter of June 29, 1966 to the higher authorities of the party. Bian wrote, "I was forced to wear a high hat, lower my head (eventually, bending over at a ninety-degree angle), and kneel on the ground. I was beaten and kicked. My hands were tied behind my back. They hit me with a wooden rifle that was used for militia training. My mouth was filled with dirt. They spat in my face."<sup>18</sup> She appealed to the higher authorities of the party to protect her but they made no reply.

Officially, however, the "working groups" stated that students should not use violence against teachers, even though the "working groups" encouraged students to verbally attack teachers and planned to send those who had been placed in category IV to labor reform camp (勞改營). The "working group" at Beijing University tried to stop the violent actions on June 18, 1966. Two days later, on June 20, 1966, Liu Shaoqi (劉少奇), the president of the state, approved the promulgation of *Brief Report No. 9* by the "working group" at Beijing University to all schools in order to restrain the "phenomenon of violence" (亂鬥現象) on campus.<sup>19</sup>

*The second stage—from beating to fatal torture:* On July 28, 1966, according to Mao Zedong's instructions, the Beijing Municipal Party Committee issued a "Resolution on Withdrawal of the Working Groups from Colleges and Middle Schools." After this, student organizations, most of which called themselves "Red Guards," filled the power vacancy created

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<sup>18</sup>From a copy of this letter provided by her husband, Wang Jingyao (王晶堯).

<sup>19</sup>Wang Nianyi, comp., *Wenhua dageming yanjiu ziliao* (The research materials for the Cultural Revolution), 3 volumes (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1988), 1:49.

by this withdrawal. It is at this time that large-scale beatings of teachers occurred. As I reported above, all the people who were beaten to death by students died after the withdrawal of the "working groups."

On the evening of August 5, 1966, after Red Guards at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University beat their vice-principal, Bian Zhongyun, to death, Song Binbin (宋彬彬) and other heads of the Red Guards personally reported the news to Wu De (吴德), the second secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee.<sup>20</sup> The cadres from Zhou Enlai's (周恩来) office went to the school and asked Bian's husband, Wang Jingyao (王晶焘), "to have a correct attitude toward the revolutionary masses." Nothing about how the circle of high officials discussed the deaths of Bian and others has since leaked out. Obvious, however, is that no measures were taken by the highest circle of leaders to stop the killing. On the contrary, they highly praised the rapidly spreading Red Guard movement, and Mao met with a million Red Guards in Tiananmen Square on August 18, 1966. At that meeting, Song Binbin presented a Red Guard armband to Mao Zedong; Peng Xiaomeng (彭小蒙), a student at the Middle School attached to Beijing University, where the students first started using violence against teachers, gave a speech from the top of Tiananmen Gate. In the following days, the violence escalated. As a result, more and more teachers were beaten and many died. According to an article on the middle and elementary schools in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution published in 1991,<sup>21</sup> during two weeks in August 1966 alone, almost one hundred teachers, administrators, and staff died of torture in Beijing's Xicheng District (西城區), which lies in the center of Beijing city. Countless others were injured or handicapped. The section of the article regarding this period was very short and did not give exact numbers or name victims. Nor did the article tell how many of the dead were beaten to death or how many committed suicide after being attacked.

*The third stage—from inside schools to outside, from Beijing to the*

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<sup>20</sup>One of the heads of the Red Guards of this school confirmed this at the interview with me on September 10, 1993.

<sup>21</sup>Wang Jian, "The Secondary and Elementary Schools in Beijing During the Cultural Revolution," *Beijing jiaoyu congkan* (Beijing Education Series), 1991, no. 4:22-31.

provinces: On August 22, 1966, the CCP Central Committee approved the Public Security Ministry's "Regulations on Strictly Restraining from Sending out the Police to Suppress the Revolutionary Student Movement."<sup>22</sup> At that time in Beijing, student violence had spread from schools to the streets at large. The victims were not only the "old enemies" like the former factory and store owners and "rightists," so labeled in 1957, but also famous artists, writers, and so on. For example, on August 24 the eminent writer Lao She (老舍) committed suicide after he and about twenty others were seriously beaten by Red Guards from middle schools. At the Middle School attached to Beijing University, the Red Guards killed Chen Yanrong (陳彥榮), a worker whose home was located close to the school, on August 27, 1966. At Beijing First Middle School, the Red Guards changed the school's vegetable cellar into a beating site where thirteen people were beaten to death. According to an interviewee, a former Red Guard of Beijing Forty-seventh Middle School, located in the distant outskirts of the city, they not only beat their teachers in their school but also "liquidated" (or *xiaomie* 消滅, i.e., beat to death) almost all the people from the villages around the school who had been categorized as "enemies." In Daxing county (大興縣) of Beijing, from August 27 to September 1, 1966, 325 people who belonged to the so-called "four categories of enemies," or were the children of such people, were killed. Among the victims, the youngest was a thirty-eight-day-old infant.<sup>23</sup>

In August and September 1966, in Beijing 1,772 people were killed, according to the *Beijing Daily*.<sup>24</sup> In a long newspaper article published in 1980 about the former director of the Beijing Municipal Revolutionary Committee, Xie Fuzhi (謝富治), who was denounced at that time, the number of people killed in the summer of 1966 was mentioned in passing. The article did not tell who these people were or how they died. In addition, the author(s) used the passive voice of the verb "beat" and did not tell who murdered the 1,772 people. Actually, these victims were not shot to death

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<sup>22</sup>Wang, *Wenhua dageming yanjiu ziliao* 1:91.

<sup>23</sup>"Completely Repudiating the Cultural Revolution," a special issue of *Xuanchuan shouce* (Propaganda Handbook), by the editorial office of the *Beijing Daily*, February 1985.

<sup>24</sup>*Beijing Daily*, December 20, 1980.

but tortured by teenage Red Guards. According to an unpublished "internal document" (內部文件), from August 26 to September 1 hundreds of people were beaten to death every day in Beijing: on August 26, 126 people; on August 27, 228 people; on August 28, 184 people; on August 29, 200 people; August 30, 224 people; on August 31, 145 people; on September 1, 228 people. In the summer of 1966, 333 people were beaten to death in Xicheng District alone, which is the most central and developed area in Beijing. The statistics for the number of victims may be from the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau, which is in charge of the registration of residents. Actually, there were some people who could not be counted because they were beaten to death in the trains leaving Beijing for the countryside when their registration as residents of Beijing had been canceled.

At the height of the violence in late August 1966, in the middle schools in Beijing a phrase began to circulate which went: "It is just a matter of 28 *yuan* to beat a person to death." Twenty-eight *yuan* was the price of cremation for one corpse. The cremation fees for those who were beaten to death were paid by their families, who did not dare to say a word of protest.

Beginning from August 1966, Red Guards received free train tickets to travel anywhere in the country and practice "great revolutionary networking" (革命大串連). The Red Guards of Beijing brought the violence to the provinces. In Shanghai, for example, on August 27 three Red Guards of Beijing Twenty-eighth Middle School engaged in "networking" by telling some Red Guards of the Shanghai Middle School (上海中學) to "struggle against the landlords" and their children on the Zhuxing Production Brigade (朱行生產大隊) of Meilong People's Commune (梅隴人民公社). As a result of this action, one former landlord was killed.<sup>25</sup> At the Shanghai Foreign Languages School, after the Red Guards from Beijing came and beat teachers there one day in August, during the next day students of this school followed the example of Beijing students and beat their teachers. After some teachers were wounded and bled, they forced the

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<sup>25</sup>This story is from an unpublished document written by the "writing group of history of the Cultural Revolution in Shanghai," provided by Zhang Guoliang (張國良).

teachers to lick the blood on the ground. One interviewee, a former Red Guard of the Shanghai Middle School, said:

Red Guards from Beijing in army uniforms with leather belts put on grand airs. They asked us: "How come you are still so refined? There is no revolutionary atmosphere here at all." I couldn't understand what "revolutionary atmosphere" meant. Then a female Red Guard member from Beijing took off her leather belt and started demonstrating how to whip. This was the earliest image I have of the Red Guards from Beijing.

The list of the schools in appendix 1 clearly shows that violent attacks occurred everywhere. Those attacks caused many deaths. For example, in Wuhan (武漢), capital of Hubei province (湖北省), in 1966 the Red Guards beat sixty-two people to death and caused another thirty-two people to die after being tortured.<sup>26</sup> However, the violence began in Beijing and later spread to small cities. In Changzhou (常州), Jiangsu province (江蘇省), Chu Mengheng (褚孟衡), the principal of the Twenty-sixth Middle School, was publicly humiliated (or *shi zhong* 示眾) by having a wooden board hung from his neck, and was denounced many times in early 1967. One day some students came and blindfolded him with a black cloth. They led him into a room that they filled with smoke, keeping him inside until he fainted. Then they used a club as thick as a person's arm to hit him until the club broke. Bruises covered his whole body and he could not lie on his back or sit. However, no doctor in the hospitals dared to give him medical treatment. One day when he was called to school for a "meeting," which obviously would include torture, he attempted to hang himself. Fortunately, his family found him and untied the rope in time. He survived, but at the elementary school of Wantou Commune (灣頭公社), Yangzhou (揚州), Jiangsu province, vice-principal Zhang Yun (張筠) was beaten badly and jailed in a classroom. She drowned herself in a river and died, leaving her young children orphaned. This occurred just before the eve of the Chinese New Year's Day, February 7, 1967. Before she died, her seven-year-old son heard some students exchanging their views on how to whip "enemies" with a copper-buckled belt.

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<sup>26</sup>*Zhonggong Wuhan dangshi dashiji* (CCP Wuhan chronicle of events), by the Office for the History of the Wuhan CCP Committee, July 1987.

According to the interviewees, who come from different provinces, the beating of teachers occurred across the entire country. Even though I could not obtain complete statistics for the educators who were beaten to death in 1966, from the attached list of the schools covered by this research, one can see that of the twenty-seven incidences where educators were beaten to death, twenty-one occurred in Beijing. This fact may tell us that the degree of violence against teachers was most serious in Beijing, which was called the "center of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."<sup>27</sup>

### *Major Methods of Torture*

(1) Physical punishment: Beating (including by fists or with clubs) and kicking.

(2) "High hats" and parading through campuses or streets: Mao Zedong described this method which peasants used to attack the landlords in his essay, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (March 1927), printed in a popular edition<sup>28</sup> of Mao's works and read by many students.

(3) A "black board" (or *hei pai* 黑牌) hung on the front of the person who was labeled as an "enemy": On the board were written titles such as "member of the black gang," "counterrevolutionary," "reactionary academic authority," and so on. Below the title was the person's name with a red "X" over it. This symbol was used because outside a court of justice there was usually placed an announcement on a bulletin board with a red "X" over the name of the person who had been condemned to death. Many teachers were forced to wear such a self-condemnatory board whenever they appeared in public.

At the beginning most boards were made of cardboard. But later some students made heavy boards in order to add to the physical insult. At Beijing First Middle School, which was near the ruins of the old city wall, some students even took a huge brick from the city wall and hung it from a

<sup>27</sup>Premier Zhou Enlai, for example, used this phrase in his speech at a rally on September 15, 1966. See the *People's Daily*, September 16, 1966.

<sup>28</sup>Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong zhuzuo xuandu* (jiazhong ben) (Selected readings of Mao Zedong's works, version A) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1964).



thin wire around the neck of their principal, Liu Qiming (劉啓明), while denouncing her.

(4) The "aircraft" (坐飛機) or "jet plane style" (坐噴氣式) position: At the "struggle meetings," people who were "struggled against" were forced to stand on the stage, lowering their heads, bending their bodies toward the ground, and raising their arms backwards, stimulating the shape of an aircraft or a jet. The "struggle meeting" could last several hours. This pose is difficult and painful to maintain for long periods of time, especially for the elderly.

These two terms became commonly known after the summer of 1966 because of their use in the increasingly frequent "struggle meetings" throughout the country. Han Zuoli (韓作黎), the deputy chief of the Beijing Municipal Education Bureau, was denounced at approximately four hundred "struggle meetings" between 1966 and 1969. He was forced to assume the "aircraft" or "jet plane style" position each time. Han fainted twice during these sessions.

(5) "Yin-yang head," resembling the "yin-yang" pattern from ancient times: Students shaved half of the heads of their teachers, hence the name. It was usually used as a special punishment for the female teachers.

(6) Whipping with copper-buckled leather belts: The typical outfit of Red Guards was a yellow military uniform with a leather belt, plus a red armband. The belts were also used to whip people. The copper buckle could cause serious damage. It was said that using the belt required special skill. Several interviewees mentioned the fact that some Red Guards talked about and exchanged their experiences on how to use the belt, including the direction and angle of the whipping.

(7) Ransacking the home (or *chao jia* 抄家): Students would go to the teachers' homes and search their private belongings without a warrant. The Red Guards' "destroying the four olds"<sup>29</sup> (or *po si jiu* 破四舊) campaign occurred in August and September of 1966. Although teachers usually did not have many precious things (such as antique and jewelry), they had many books. At that time almost all literary books were condemned as part

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<sup>29</sup>The term "four olds" refers to the old ideas, culture, customs, and habits.

of the "four olds" and were taken away or burned. One teacher interviewee had a large collection of books on Chinese chess, all of which were confiscated and destroyed.

(8) "Ox-ghost and snake-demon team" or "labor reform team" (勞改隊) (also called the "team of the objects of dictatorship" 專政隊): Every school had some teachers in this kind of team on campus. The team was considered a collection of "enemies." The members had to do some dirty or heavy work such as cleaning toilets, carrying trash, and the like. They had to wear the "black board" all the time. Those on such teams could be insulted or beaten anytime.

Many interviewees estimate that in 1966 the percentage of teachers who were formally put onto the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" was more than 10 percent. Booklets, written around 1985, giving brief histories of five middle schools in Beijing, reveal that at Beijing Twenty-sixth Middle School, forty-six teachers were put onto the "team" and beaten brutally.<sup>30</sup> At Beijing 101st Middle School, sixty-three teachers were on the "team."<sup>31</sup> At Beijing Yuying School (育英學校), more than twenty teachers were forced into a "labor reform team."<sup>32</sup> At Beijing Yucai School (育才學校), sixteen administrators and teachers on the "team" were struggled against and beaten badly as "members of the black gang."<sup>33</sup> At Tong County (通縣 a suburb of Beijing) First School, students shaved half the heads of four female teachers, and fifty-three of seventy-six teachers were put onto the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team," working fourteen to fifteen hours a day under the whip.<sup>34</sup>

(9) Sing the "Song of Ox-Ghosts and Snake-Demons": This was also

<sup>30</sup>*Beijing diershiliu zhongxue xiaoshi* (History of Beijing 26th Middle School), printed by Beijing Institute of Education (北京教育研究所) in 1986.

<sup>31</sup>*Beijing diyilingyi zhongxue xiaoshi* (History of Beijing 101st Middle School), printed by Beijing Institute of Education in 1986.

<sup>32</sup>*Beijing Yuying xuexiao xiaoshi* (History of Beijing Yuying School), printed by Beijing Institute of Education in 1986.

<sup>33</sup>*Beijing Yucai xuexiao jianshi* (Brief history of Beijing Yucai School), printed by Beijing Institute of Education in 1986.

<sup>34</sup>*Beijing Tongxian diyi xuexiao xiaoshi* (History of Beijing Tong County First School), printed by Beijing Institute of Education in 1986.

called the "Howling Song" (嚎歌) because the teachers who were forced to sing the song were considered more animal than human. The teachers on the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" had to sing this song together several times per day. If their singing was unsatisfactory, they would be beaten or punished. The song was composed by a student of Beijing Fourth Middle School and spread throughout the country. The song goes as follows:

| 1 5 1 2 | 3 1 |

我是牛鬼蛇神

[I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon]

| 1 5 1 2 | 3 1 |

我是牛鬼蛇神

[I am an ox-ghost and snake-demon]

| 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 |

我有罪 我有罪

[I am guilty I am guilty]

| 6 5 3 3 | 2 1 |

我對人民有罪

[I committed crimes against the people]

| 3 3 2 3 | 5 5 |

人民對我專政

[So the people take me as the object of dictatorship]

| 6 5 3 3 | 2 2 |

我要低頭認罪

[I have to lower my head and admit to my guilt]

| 3 3 2 3 | 5 5 |

只許老老實實

[I must be obedient]



| 6 5 3 3 | 2 1 |

不許亂說亂動

[I am not allowed to speak or act incorrectly]

| 3 3 3 2 3 | 5 5 |

我要是亂說亂動

[If I speak or act incorrectly]

| 6 5 3 3 | 2 1 |

把我砸爛砸碎

[May you beat me and smash me]

| 5 5 6 6 | 0 7 7 | - - ||

把我砸爛 砸碎

[Beat me and smash me]<sup>35</sup>

These nine methods of persecution were adopted at almost every school on the attached list. In addition, other methods were also used in some schools. One of the methods was to establish a jail in schools for the detention of teachers. For example, at Beijing First Middle School, a physics teacher, Mr. Gong (龔), was detained on campus for several weeks and beaten so severely that one of his students could not recognize him. At Beijing Fifth Middle School, the principal, Lu Qinghuan (呂清寰), was jailed in a small, dark room under the staircase for months. In Beijing Sixth Middle School, Red Guards built a jail on campus and locked up many teachers and others there for over three months as mentioned above. In the summer of 1966, Red Guards of many schools came to the Sixth Middle School to learn "revolutionary experiences." According to a Red Guard visitor from Beijing Jingshan School, blood stains covered the floor of the jail.

Various methods of torture were employed. In the Middle School at-

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<sup>35</sup> Provided by Xiao Weiping (蕭衛平), an eighth-grade student in Beijing in 1966, and Tan Fu (譚馥), a ninth-grade student in Tianjin in 1966.

On August 18, 1966, after Red Guards in Beijing beat some people to death, Mao met in Tiananmen Square with a million Red Guards who came to Beijing (having been provided with free train tickets) to celebrate the Cultural Revolution. Song Binbin, a Red Guard of the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, put a Red Guard armband on Mao Zedong's sleeve. Their photograph was published, thus symbolizing Mao's support of the Red Guards. On learning her name ("Binbin" means "refined and courteous"), Mao said: "*Yao wu ma!*" (要武嘛 Be violent!). Then Song published an article relating the story of how, after meeting Mao, the girl changed her name to Yaowu.<sup>45</sup>

Actually, Bian Zhongyun's death was reported immediately to high-level authorities,<sup>46</sup> and the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau reported the number of deaths in an "internal report" every day, but Mao never specifically criticized the violence that was spreading rampantly and instead he openly expressed his "enthusiastic support" for the Red Guards. Mao's wife Jiang Qing even called the Red Guard students "little suns" (小太陽). In Beijing, the violence escalated rapidly in August and reached the peak in late August, between the first and second of Mao's meetings with millions of Red Guards in Tiananmen Square, August 18 and 31. No one who was close to Mao has provided any information about Mao's reaction to the huge number of deaths in August, but from the published instructions above we know the violence was the result of his leadership and encouragement.

In early August of 1966, Mao demoted Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平), while Lin Biao, the highest leader of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), had become second in power with a new title "Mao's closest comrade-in-arms." In addition, the college entrance examination system had already been abolished two months previously, in June of 1966. For the political goal that Mao Zedong claimed, namely taking back power from the "capitalists in the party" and having an educational revolution, there was no need to use violence to attack teachers—a powerless group—

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<sup>45</sup>*People's Daily*, August 20, 1966.

<sup>46</sup>One of the heads of the Red Guards of this school confirmed this at the interview with me on September 10, 1993.

gaged in natural sciences or social sciences. At average colleges, a lecturer could be labeled a "reactionary academic authority" simply because there were few people with a higher title. Eventually, in almost every middle school, elementary school, and even kindergarten, teachers who were relatively high-ranking were attacked as "reactionary academic authorities." Each school needed its own targets for the Cultural Revolution.

(3) Those who were considered to have "political problems," such as having connections to the Kuomintang (KMT 國民黨) in Taiwan, having a "bad family background," being labeled a "rightist" or on the verge of being "rightist" in 1957, being religious, and so on. Although teacher ranks had been purged several times before the Cultural Revolution, there were always some people who, by various excuses, could be taken as the new targets, even though they did not intentionally oppose the party or Mao. The three categories above were the designated targets of the Cultural Revolution and they were attacked accordingly.

(4) Teachers who had offended a student who happened to be a violent Red Guard. At Beijing Fifteenth Middle School, a female teacher crawled on the ground and howled miserably while being beaten by an eighth grader whom she had criticized when she once substituted for one hour of class before the Cultural Revolution. At the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, an old but healthy custodian in his seventies, who had been tough and coarse to students, was beaten black-and-blue to the degree that he could not get out of bed for weeks. At the Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers College, a young female teacher, who had published several poems and was pretty, was "struggled against," according to interviewees, out of jealousy. At Nanjing Second Middle School, on the other hand, a teacher who was ugly was beaten by students who thought he looked like the villain from the movies.

At middle schools, each class had a teacher called "class director" (班主任). Disciplining the students was a major part of this job. In the summer of 1966, this kind of teachers was more likely to be beaten than others, even though they were neither the head of the school nor "academic authorities." For example, in Beijing Eighth Middle School, some students shaved half of the head of the "class director" of the seventh grade, Zhao Zunrong (趙尊榮), a single woman in her twenties. In Beijing Second

Middle School, some students shaved half of the head of a "class director" of the twelfth grade, a woman in her fifties. For similar reasons, quite a few teachers who had given some students poor grades were beaten. Even teachers fortunate enough not to be labeled as "enemies" also lived in terror. According to several interviewees, in the summer of 1966 at Beijing 101st Middle School and the Middle School attached to Beijing University, some teachers had to stay in the farm fields near the schools and did not dare return to their homes until midnight in order to avoid harassment from students.

### *Who Beat Teachers?*

In the summer of 1966, beating teachers was considered to be a "revolutionary action," and as such was not restricted by law, regulation, or convention. However, only the members of the organized "Red Guards," not all the students, were allowed to participate in violent actions against teachers in school or against "enemies" outside school.

At that time, participating in a beating was considered an honor or a privilege. An interviewee, a former student of Beijing Fourth Girls Middle School, said: "My mother is a 'revolutionary cadre' but my father was labeled as a 'rightist' in 1957. Because of this I was not qualified to become a Red Guard or to search the enemies' homes. I really felt sorry for myself at that time."

The Red Guard organization stipulated that only students from five categories of families were qualified to become members. The five were "revolutionary cadres," "revolutionary military men," "revolutionary martyrs," "factory workers," and "poor and middle-low peasants." Only cadres who joined the CCP before 1945 could be considered "revolutionary cadres." In the city of Beijing there were neither peasants, who were absolutely not allowed to move into the cities according to the government policy before and during the Cultural Revolution, nor were there many factory workers. In this case, from the very beginning the children of high-ranking cadres acted as the leading force and constituted the major part of the Red Guards in Beijing. Only around 20 percent of middle school students were allowed to become Red Guards in districts such as Xicheng, Dongcheng, and Haidian (海澱區), where the Red Guards arose earlier and



were more active than in the rest of Beijing. For example, at the Middle School attached to Qinghua University (Haidian District), the birthplace of the Red Guards, the number of Red Guards was less than three hundred in a school of more than fifteen hundred students. The ratio of Red Guards to other students in other schools, such as the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University (Xicheng District) or Beijing Fifth Middle School (Dongcheng District), was about one-fifth, and was even less in Beijing Thirty-first Middle School (Xicheng District). These four schools include two elite schools (重點中學), as well as two ordinary schools, and the ratio of the Red Guards was to a certain extent representative.

Students from families which could be considered neither "red" nor "black," such as store clerks, average office workers, technicians, engineers, and teachers (if they had not become the "ox-ghosts and snake-demons"), who constituted the largest part of the population of the city, were allowed to join only the organization called the "Red Periphery" (紅外圍), established to support and assist the Red Guards. At Beijing Sixth Middle School, for example, Red Guards established a jail on campus and sometimes assigned students who were not qualified to be Red Guards, but were members of an organization entitled "Red Allied Force" (紅聯軍), a kind of "Red Periphery" organization, to serve as the jail guards at night. Students from "bad family backgrounds" were called "children of dogs" (狗崽子) and many of them were physically humiliated or tortured (see next section).

In each school, the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" was placed under the charge of a student, who usually was one of the leaders of the Red Guards at the school. This person, whose age was between fourteen and twenty-four years old, had the power to control the fate of many teachers. To a certain extent, the degree of the torture, which Red Guard students could decide arbitrarily, depended on the strength of this person's moral or psychological character.

Both boys and girls participated in the beatings. According to Han Jia'ao, the vice-principal of the Middle School attached to Qinghua University, a co-ed school, the male students were much fiercer than the female when both female and male students beat him and other teachers. However, there were quite a few female Red Guards who were very fierce,

cruelly beating and whipping teachers. The first victim, Bian Zhongyun, was murdered by a group comprised entirely of female students. From the list of schools in appendix 1, four deaths in four girls middle schools in Beijing occurred at the hands of female Red Guards. At Beijing Third Girls Middle School, students not only beat the principal, Sha Ping, to death, but also invented various ways to torture the other thirteen teachers who were put onto the "labor reform team," including bending the body to the floor, kneeling on the slotted washboard, crawling on the ground, slapping the face with a plastic shoe sole, and so on. At Beijing Eighth Girls Middle School, some students ordered teachers considered "ox-ghosts and snake-demons" to line up, and then used a hammer to strike their heads one by one. Some Red Guards at Beijing Fifth Girls Middle School used a rope to tie the principal, Li Yiru (李一茹), and hang her from a tree to beat her. They loosened the rope so suddenly that Li fell to the ground heavily. Three of Li's ribs were broken during the beating.

The degree of violence varied among schools. According to the interviewees, in the main cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, the earliest and most serious violence took place in the middle schools attended by the children of high-ranking cadres—such as Fuxing Middle School and Nanyang Mofan Middle School (南洋模範中學) in Shanghai; the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University (two people were beaten to death on campus), the Sixth Middle School (three were beaten to death on campus), and the 101st Middle School (one was beaten to death on campus) in Beijing; Bayi School (八一學校), Guangzhou Sixteenth Middle School, and the Middle School attached to Huanan Teachers College (華南師範學院) in Guangzhou. At those schools, the children of high-ranking cadres constituted the leadership of the Red Guards and the Red Guard movement there was more aggressive. For example, in early 1967, when a schoolmate asked Liu Tingting (劉亭亭), one of the leaders of Red Guards at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University and the daughter of Liu Shaoqi who had just been purged in public, if she truly had beaten three people to death in the summer of 1966 as rumored, she said: "It was glorious to beat people to death at that time. So I exaggerated and said that I had beaten three people to death."

Related in interviews were some cases in which children of teachers

joined other students in attacking their own parents. On August 25, 1966, at the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, when many Red Guards were beating Jiang Peiliang (the party secretary of the school), his son, a seventh grader of this school, hit his father with a club. After Jiang was beaten to death, his son became mentally ill. According to an interviewee who saw him in 1994, he had still not recovered his sanity and could not function as a normal person.

### *Teacher Reaction to the Violent Persecution*

When interviewing teachers, I asked what their reaction was to the beatings at that time. In fact, all of them silently endured the brutality and cruelty. Guo Shengming (郭聖銘), a history professor at Huadong Teachers University, said that when he was dragged away from his home and paraded on campus with a high hat and without shoes, he thought all those actions nonsensical and tried not to take them seriously. His Taoist philosophy helped him to bear all insults. Guo was not the only teacher who, in order to protect himself psychologically, deceived himself into believing that the violence was just an absurd farce.

Gong Haoran (龔浩然), a teacher of Guangzhou Twenty-fifth Middle School, said that he had learned some martial arts before the Cultural Revolution and knew how to protect his body from harm as best possible. When students beat him, he squatted and held his head with two hands, adjusting his breath in the way of martial arts. Fortunately, he was not hurt very seriously. A physics professor at the Beijing Architecture Material Institute, Sun Jusheng (孫菊生), was locked up at his home and beaten by Red Guards from Beijing Eighth Girls Middle School and Beijing Thirty-first Middle School for several days. He said he learned to keep his body as still as possible while being beaten in order to reduce pain and damage.

Han Jia'ao, vice-principal of the Middle School attached to Qinghua University, was wounded and could not get treatment from a hospital. He treated himself with "Yunnan white medicine" (雲南白藥), a traditional herbal remedy for traumatic ailments. Pervious to this, he did not drink, but the herbal medicine needed to be taken with liquor so he started drinking regularly from the summer of 1966, first for the wounds and later simply out of habit. He is a drinker to this day.

No one took action to protest the brutality or criticize the violence in public. This was not because the teachers were all cowards but because such protest was impossible. There were three obvious reasons: (1) the police had received an order<sup>36</sup> to ignore the student violence; none would help those who were mistreated; (2) the violent students were members of the "Red Guard" organization which was supported by the authorities, while the teachers were isolated individuals; and (3) any personal resistance could bring serious revenge and cause more deaths. For example, in Beijing, on August 25 a man named Li Wenbo (李文波) allegedly took a kitchen knife and attacked a Red Guard from the Beijing Fifteenth Girls Middle School when he and his wife were locked up and beaten at their home. Li Wenbo was killed by the Red Guards immediately. The head of the Beijing Fifteenth Girls Middle School named Liang Guangqi who had been jailed in the school for a week was beaten to death on the night of that day after Li Wenbo's death. Beginning the next day, August 26, the number of people who were beaten to death per day in Beijing jumped from a two-digit to a three-digit number. Faced with unprecedented humiliation and violence, the teachers had no choice but to endure and find psychological refuge in self-deceit.

Nor was hiding or escape possible. Without resident registration (or *hukou* 戶口) a person could not stay anywhere, and the omnipresent Red Guards could not be avoided. One teacher interviewee explained that the thought of secretly leaving Beijing or the country came to his mind, but he realized that such a plan was too difficult and dangerous to execute very quickly. Sun Jusheng, a physics professor mentioned above, was beaten by Red Guards from middle schools near his home, when his sister Sun Qikun (孫啓坤) came to say good-bye. She was escaping from the Beijing Steel College where her husband was a professor and where he had been beaten. She was caught but refused to tell these Red Guards where her husband was hiding. She was beaten to death on August 27, 1966. The only teacher in Beijing who succeeded in leaving for Hong Kong was Ma Sicong (馬思聰), a professor of the Central Music College (中央音樂學院). Having been

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<sup>36</sup>Wang, *Wenhua dageming yanjiu ziliao* 1:91.

beaten and insulted, he secretly left Beijing in November of 1966. After he left, people who were thought to be close to him were interrogated and persecuted.

In one case, a locked cage had been built so that teachers could not escape. Zhang Baolin (張保林), a geography teacher of the Middle School attached to Qinghua University, saw many of her colleagues badly beaten. In fear, she knelt on the floor at her home and asked her son to beat her in order to practice how to endure pain. She felt she could not bear torture without rehearsal.

Teachers were divided into four categories by the "working groups" in June, as mentioned above, and to a certain extent retained their political status after the "working groups" departed. The declared policy (政策) of the Cultural Revolution, which emphasized "distinguishing" (區別) those who "had committed serious errors" (犯了嚴重錯誤) from the "enemies,"<sup>37</sup> efficiently prevented teachers from protesting the violence. After Bian Zhongyun was beaten to death, one teacher wrote an anonymous letter in disguised handwriting expressing her condolences to Bian's husband. The remaining teachers kept silent.

Some of those teachers, who were not considered to "have problems," "struggled" against other teachers along with students. The fact that such teachers incited students to beat other teachers out for the sake of personal revenge emerged during the interviews.

### **Simultaneous Persecution Against Classmates**

From late July to early August, a couplet spread quickly in the schools in Beijing and then across the entire country. Pasted up by the Red Guards everywhere, the couplet read "the son of the heroic father is a warrior; the son of the reactionary father is a rotten egg" (老子英雄兒好漢，老子反動兒混蛋). In the context of the Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1966, this couplet meant that students whose fathers were "revolutionary cadres"

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<sup>37</sup>See note 21 above.

carried his corpse out of the jail.

## **Explaining the Violence Against Teachers**

### *Mao Zedong's Leadership and Encouragement*

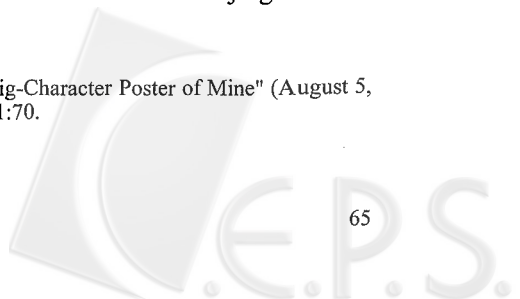
From the very beginning Mao determined that the educational system and educators should be the target of the Cultural Revolution. On May 7, 1966, in a letter to Lin Biao (林彪), who was designated as Mao's successor three months later, Mao said: "The capitalist intellectuals will not be allowed to rule our schools any longer." The major part of this letter was quoted in the editorial of the *People's Daily*, August 1, 1966. On May 16, 1966, Mao issued a "Circular" (五一六通知) in the name of the CCP Central Committee, which was circulated only among high-ranking (county level and above) party cadres in May of 1966 and was published in the *People's Daily* on May 17, 1967. In the "Circular," Mao wrote: "Completely denounce the capitalist representatives in the academic, educational, journalist, artist, and publication circles. Take the power of leadership back from these cultural realms." Several high-ranking cadres then went to Beijing University and organized seven people there to write a "big-character poster" to attack the authorities of this university. Mao ordered the Central People's Radio to broadcast the content of this poster to the entire country on June 1, 1966 and later called it "the first Marxist-Leninist big-character poster."<sup>38</sup> With the publication of this poster, all schools ceased their regular curriculum and students immediately launched a wave of verbal attacks on school authorities and teachers.

In July of 1966, Mao ordered the withdrawal of the "working groups" from schools and criticized them for making the Cultural Revolution movement "cold and clean"<sup>39</sup> (冷冷清清), even though the violence had taken place during the period when the "working groups" controlled the schools. Mao also claimed that the violent attacks that occurred at Beijing Univer-

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<sup>38</sup> Mao Zedong, "Bombing the Headquarters—A Big-Character Poster of Mine" (August 5, 1966), in Wang, *Wenhua dageming yanjiu ziliao* 1:70.

<sup>39</sup> Gao and Yan, *Wenhua dageming shinian shi*, 31.



sity on June 18, 1966 were a "revolutionary action,"<sup>40</sup> which the "working group" opposed.

On July 28, 1966, a formal notice regarding the withdrawal of the "working groups" was issued. On the same day, Jiang Qing (江青), Mao's wife, related Mao's comments on violence to the student representatives of the middle schools of Haidian District at a rally: "When good men beat bad men, the bad men get what they deserve. When bad men beat good men, it is an honor for the good men. When good people beat good people, it is just a misunderstanding which could not be cleared up without a fight."<sup>41</sup>

On August 1, 1966, Mao wrote a letter to support a student group named the "Red Guards" at the Middle School attached to Qinghua University and a student group named "Red Flag Fighting Group" at the Middle School attached to Beijing University, giving them his "enthusiastic support."<sup>42</sup> In this letter, Mao also mentioned the name of Peng Xiaomeng, the head of the "Red Flag Fighting Group." Peng had publicly beaten Zhang Chengxian (張承先), the head of the "working group" at Beijing University, in front of Mao's wife and more than ten thousand people at Beijing University on July 26, 1966. As mentioned above, the students of the Middle School attached to Beijing University incited violent attacks in their school earlier than did other schools in Beijing.

On August 5, 1966, the CCP Central Committee voided the statement of June 20, 1966 approved by Liu Shaoqi, which had said that the "working group" at Beijing University was right to stop the violence on campus.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, the statement of August 5, 1966 supported violence against teachers.<sup>44</sup> On the same day, Bian Zhongyun, the vice-principal of the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, became the first person beaten to death by the students.

<sup>40</sup>Jin, *Wenhua geming shigao*, 177.

<sup>41</sup>Jiang Qing's speech was printed in *Wuchan jieji wenhua dageming cankao ziliao* ((Reference materials for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution), comp. Beijing College of Chemical Technology and Beijing Economics College, vol. 2 (Beijing: 1966), 7-28.

<sup>42</sup>Wang, *Wenhua dageming yanjiu ziliao* 1:62.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*



On August 18, 1966, after Red Guards in Beijing beat some people to death, Mao met in Tiananmen Square with a million Red Guards who came to Beijing (having been provided with free train tickets) to celebrate the Cultural Revolution. Song Binbin, a Red Guard of the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, put a Red Guard armband on Mao Zedong's sleeve. Their photograph was published, thus symbolizing Mao's support of the Red Guards. On learning her name ("Binbin" means "refined and courteous"), Mao said: "*Yao wu ma!*" (要武嘛 Be violent!). Then Song published an article relating the story of how, after meeting Mao, the girl changed her name to Yaowu.<sup>45</sup>

Actually, Bian Zhongyun's death was reported immediately to high-level authorities,<sup>46</sup> and the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau reported the number of deaths in an "internal report" every day, but Mao never specifically criticized the violence that was spreading rampantly and instead he openly expressed his "enthusiastic support" for the Red Guards. Mao's wife Jiang Qing even called the Red Guard students "little suns" (小太陽). In Beijing, the violence escalated rapidly in August and reached the peak in late August, between the first and second of Mao's meetings with millions of Red Guards in Tiananmen Square, August 18 and 31. No one who was close to Mao has provided any information about Mao's reaction to the huge number of deaths in August, but from the published instructions above we know the violence was the result of his leadership and encouragement.

In early August of 1966, Mao demoted Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平), while Lin Biao, the highest leader of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), had become second in power with a new title "Mao's closest comrade-in-arms." In addition, the college entrance examination system had already been abolished two months previously, in June of 1966. For the political goal that Mao Zedong claimed, namely taking back power from the "capitalists in the party" and having an educational revolution, there was no need to use violence to attack teachers—a powerless group—

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<sup>45</sup>*People's Daily*, August 20, 1966.

<sup>46</sup>One of the heads of the Red Guards of this school confirmed this at the interview with me on September 10, 1993.

in such unprecedented and brutal ways. Revolutionary ideals are insufficient to explain Mao's motivation for the persecution.

### *The Rise of the Red Guards*

As described above, Red Guard students were the ones who conducted attacks against teachers in the summer of 1966. The attacks were considered a part of the "revolutionary actions" of the Red Guard movement. Red Guard organizations played an important role in the violence. In most cases, beatings were a collective activity, conducted not by individual students but by a group of Red Guards. A group of Red Guards acted together, inciting each other and encouraging hostilities. Sometimes, a beating took place in front of hundreds of people. On such occasions, everyone just wanted to show his/her sympathy for brutality and cruelty against the "enemies." On the other hand, when a person was beaten to death, the group of beaters would not take responsibility as individuals and thus did not fear committing murder. For example, Bian Zhongyun, the first victim of the violence of 1966, died after being beaten by many students. During the several hours of torture, no one at this school of more than 1,600 students tried to dissuade the beaters from these inhuman actions. In the evening after the beating, at the student dining hall some talked loudly about how they forced her to eat dirt from the toilet or how they fetched hot water to scald her. There was no sense of guilt, but rather an excited, giddy atmosphere.

The Red Guards and similar student organizations appeared in middle schools after Mao ordered the Central People's Radio to broadcast the "big-character poster" from Beijing University on June 1, 1966. On June 2, 1966, the first poster made by Red Guards at the Middle School attached to Qinghua University was entitled "Pledge to fight to the death to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat! Pledge to fight to the death to defend Mao Zedong Thought!" It said further: "Whoever disobeys Mao Zedong Thought, no matter who he is, no matter how high his position is, no matter what banner he flaunts, will be smashed to pieces." This kind of exaggerated, violent tone, which was the typical style of public expression broadly employed during the Cultural Revolution, was developed to a great extent by the Red Guards.

On July 26, Peng Xiaomeng, the head of the "Red Flag Fighting Group" at the Middle School attached to Beijing University, beat Zhang Chengxian, the head of the "working group" at Beijing University on the rostrum during a rally. Afterwards, according to several interviewees, Peng's school became "a corporal punishment camp" (刑訊場), where they beat teachers, students from a "bad family background," and "ox-ghosts and snake-demons." Many were injured and two people who were residents around the school were beaten to death at the school. After Mao wrote a letter to support the Red Guards and Peng Xiaomeng on August 1, Red Guard organizations sprung up everywhere. At many schools, the rise of the Red Guard movement and the large-scale attacks against teachers began simultaneously. For instance, at the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, the Red Guard organization was established on July 31 and the vice-principal, Bian Zhongyun, was beaten to death on August 5. Following after Mao's eight meetings in Tiananmen Square with a total of ten million Red Guards from Beijing and other provinces, the wave of physical attacks against teachers expanded from Beijing to the entire country.

In Beijing, Red Guards built jails in some schools and established the Red Guard Police Corps (糾察隊). On August 25, 1966, the Dongcheng District Red Guard Police Corps beat forty-six teachers of the "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" at Beijing Twenty-sixth Middle School. Gao Wanchun (高萬春), the principal of this school, had his hands tied behind his back and was forced to kneel on sharp stones placed on the seat of a stool. Gao fell to the ground under the blows of clubs several times and was pulled up on the stool again and again. Gao was forced to hold the corpse of a man, a resident of the neighborhood, who had been beaten to death by the Red Guards. Gao committed suicide by jumping from the top level of the school's classroom building. The Xicheng District Red Guard Police Corps issued ten "general orders" (通令) which instructed their members on how to search the homes of "enemies" and ordered the banishment of certain categories of people from Beijing to the countryside. According to the *Beijing Daily*, December 20, 1980, the number of the people expelled in the summer of 1966 from Beijing was 85,000. (Those people were not able to return to their home until 1978.) These "general orders" were also posted

and distributed in other cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou and directed the Red Guards' violent actions there.

The Red Guards espoused an essentially destructive philosophy. At the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, in August 1966, the Red Guards destroyed books and paintings on campus. After the vice-principal, Bian Zhongyun, was beaten to death on campus, three seventh graders beat an eighteen-year-old waitress of a restaurant near the school to death in the chemistry laboratory, merely because she was rumored to be a "bad woman." These kinds of pointless yet destructive actions were romanticized as "revolutionary behavior" which no one dared to stop. Ironically, these actions, which consisted for the most part in destroying objects and in beating innocent people, were called "rebellious actions," but they were actually carried out with the support of the highest authorities.

Unprecedented emphasis on family background distinguished the Red Guards from the other youth organizations in China; this included even the Communist Youth League, which for years during the Cultural Revolution was replaced by the Red Guards. The Red Guards took family background as the first and almost sole condition for membership, and absolutely excluded students from certain kinds of families. At the Middle School attached to Qinghua University, some eighth graders from various family backgrounds formed a group named "Plum Blossom" (梅花) in order to participate in the activities of the Cultural Revolution. Red Guards from this school forced the group to disband because of their "unclear class alignment." As mentioned above, the couplet "the son of the heroic father is a warrior; the son of the reactionary father is a rotten egg" split students into three categories: "red," "black," and "gray," which formed three strata so distinct that students in different categories did not even talk to each other during the summer of 1966 and afterwards. The "rotten egg" students were humiliated and insulted by their classmates, while the Red Guards received huge privileges, which could include the opportunity to meet Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square and the power to kill their teachers, peers, and other people.

The name "Red Guards" indicates that they were the guards of Mao Zedong and would defend him. Setting aside the issue of whether Mao

were naturally the driving force of the Cultural Revolution, whereas students from "bad families"—such as "landlords," "rich peasants" (who had been labeled "enemies" and deprived of property in the early 1950s), "counterrevolutionaries," "bad elements," "rightists" (so labeled in 1957), and "capitalists"—were counted as "rotten eggs," an epithet for the target of the Cultural Revolution. Eventually, this couplet was the criterion for qualification for membership in the Red Guard organization. On the one hand, this couplet privileged the Red Guards. On the other hand, it victimized the students from "bad families," who then suffered violent persecution from their peers, as had their teachers.

In every school covered by this research, students from "bad families" were verbally insulted or physically attacked by their classmates. For example, on the morning of August 4, 1966, Red Guards from the fourth class of the seventh grade, the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, held a "struggle meeting" against their classmates. Among the forty-five students in the class, ten were Red Guards and sat on chairs, ten were from "bad families" and stood in front of the classroom, while the rest of the class sat on the floor during the "struggle meeting." A huge slogan "Down with the children of dogs," which was the term used to refer to those from "bad families," was pasted on the wall. A long rope went around the necks of the ten students who were "struggled against," tying them together. All of the accused were ordered to "confess" their "reactionary thoughts" and their parents' "crimes," then repeat "I am a child of a dog. I am a rotten egg. I deserve to die." Red Guards beat them with fists and poured ink on them. Similar "struggle meetings" took place in several classes at the school. The vice-principal, Bian Zhongyun, was also beaten that day and then beaten to death the following day.

At the Middle School attached to Beijing University, the birthplace of the couplet, a seventh grader named Wan Hong (萬紅), whose father was a "rightist," was "struggled against" in the classroom. She was forced to stand on a chair and then beaten with leather belts. During the "struggle meeting," a classmate pulled the chair away and she fell down to the cement floor. Zhu Tong (朱同), a twelfth grader and the son of a "rightist," was beaten badly. One night he had to crawl home because he was hurt so seriously he could not walk.

At the Middle School attached to Qinghua University, the birthplace of the Red Guards, a student named Guo Lanhui (郭蘭蕙), whose father was a "rightist" of 1957, could not bear the insults and thus committed suicide by drinking insecticide. She died at the age of nineteen. Yang Ailun (楊愛倫), an eighth grader from a "bad family," tried to commit suicide by throwing herself on the railway near the school. She was hurt badly by a moving train but did not die.

At Beijing First Middle School, there was not only an "ox-ghost and snake-demon team" for teachers, but also a "team of the children of dogs," which was comprised of about two hundred students from families with "problems." They were separated from other students and were forced to "work for self-reform" (or *laogai* 勞改). One evening a tenth grader was beaten at a "struggle meeting." When the meeting finished, several Red Guards put a cat in the pants of this student. The cat scratched and bit him, and the student cried miserably all night. Many students heard his cries, but none spoke up for him.

On August 25, 1966, Cao Binhai (曹濱海), a twelfth grader of the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, fought with the Red Guards, who were also his classmates, as they were searching his home. Cao picked up a kitchen knife and hurt one of his classmates. As a result, Cao's mother, Fan Ximan, was beaten to death that day. Cao became insane and never recovered.

At Beijing Thirteenth Middle School, Wu Supeng (武素鵬), a student from a "bad family," was taken to the "Red Terror Interrogation Room" established by the Red Guards and locked in school. One day during the interrogation Wu disagreed with the Red Guards; Wu was put into a gunny-sack. Several Red Guards tied the sack and beat him to death.

At Beijing Sixth Middle School, a twelfth grader named Wang Guanghua from a "small capitalist" family left Beijing to engage in "revolutionary networking" without permission from the Red Guards of his school. When he came back to Beijing on September 27, 1966, he was immediately kidnapped and taken to the former music classroom which had been remodeled into a jail since mid-August. There he was beaten by more than ten Red Guards. He died the next day in the jail at the age of nineteen. Several teachers who had been imprisoned there for a month

needed to be defended at that time, true is that the Red Guards indeed instigated the first waves of massive "Mao worship" during the Cultural Revolution. From the pictures and documentary films published by the authorities in 1966—the "reported side" of the Cultural Revolution, one can see that the Red Guards started a set of new rites: wearing a Mao badge on the chest, carrying Mao's little red book at all times, waving the little red book during parades and rallies, singing the song of Mao's quotations, dancing in honor of Mao, hanging Mao's portrait and quotations everywhere, starting all speeches with Mao's quotations and ending by shouting "May Chairman Mao live for ten thousand years, ten million years" in as loud a voice as possible.

As a youth organization, the Red Guards had three main characteristics: taking an innate condition (family background) as the criterion for membership, leader worship, and collective violence. The former two features provided support for the latter.

### *Personal Factors*

To explain the brutality and cruelty the students directed against the teachers, personal factors should also be considered. In fact, there was not any official order calling on students to beat their teachers; some students started or invented the methods of torture by themselves. According to interviewees, in many schools there were a certain number of students who were very active in all violent actions and seemed to enjoy the violence, regardless of whom they were beating. The beatings were often life-threatening, but those doing the beating did not care. They took advantage of the opportunity that the Red Guard movement brought to attack those who were helpless and incapable of resisting.

In some cases, personal resentment was a crucial factor. For example, at Beijing Sixth Middle School, when vice-principal Shan Chengzuo (單承佐) was denounced as a "member of a black gang," one student beat him fiercely and told him: "Do you remember how you disciplined me? It is your turn for punishment now." Qiu Qingyu, the principal of Beijing Jixianghutong Elementary School, was beaten to death by a student who had graduated but returned to the school to get revenge.

From the attached list of the schools covered by this research, one can



find that the middle school students beat many more teachers to death than college and elementary school students. In the summer of 1966, middle school students were from fourteen to nineteen years old. They had received more than seven years of education—higher than the average level of education in China. Therefore, "ignorance" or "innocence" cannot be used as excuses for the cruelty. Nonetheless, the degree of the violent persecution that students implemented may be related to their ages to a certain extent.

### **The Consequence and Effect of the First Wave of Attacks Against Teachers**

As mentioned above, the massive violent persecution began in schools and proliferated throughout society as a whole. When the violent attacks reached many high-ranking party cadres who were beyond the five circles (i.e., the academic, educational, journalist, artist, and publication circles) that the party's "Circular" of May 16, 1966 advocated attacking, some middle school Red Guards in Beijing started opposing the new groups of college students who were attacking the Red Guards' high-ranking cadre parents. In this case, the "Central Cultural Revolution Group" changed their attitude toward the Red Guards in middle schools from that of unconditional support to supporting their opponents, who were the college student groups attacking the "capitalist-roaders with powerful positions in the party" (黨內走資本主義道路的當權派) in all ministries of the central government and the provinces. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were among those attacked.

When their parents were denounced by the new student organizations, the Red Guards fell victim to the movement that they had started. However, the decline of the original Red Guards did not mean the end of the philosophy of violent attacks. On the contrary, the massive violent persecution that the Red Guards promoted in the so-called "Red August" (紅八月) period of 1966 continued in the following years. In late 1966 and 1967, students in the mass organizations that had dominant status during that period physically attacked the "capitalist-roaders with powerful posi-

tions in the party." For example, students beat Peng Dehuai (彭德懷), the former defense minister, at the "struggle meeting" in Beijing in July of 1967. Two of Peng's ribs were broken during the beating.<sup>47</sup>

When the new student organizations concentrated on "seizing power" (奪權) and directed their efforts against the high-ranking cadres in 1967, the persecution of teachers was comparatively, though temporarily, reduced. During the "Cleansing of the Class Ranks" (清理階級隊伍) movement which started in 1968, however, the teachers became the main target again. Many teachers were detained on campus for months or years and some of them were beaten by students again. The prolonged physical and mental torture resulted in many suicides.

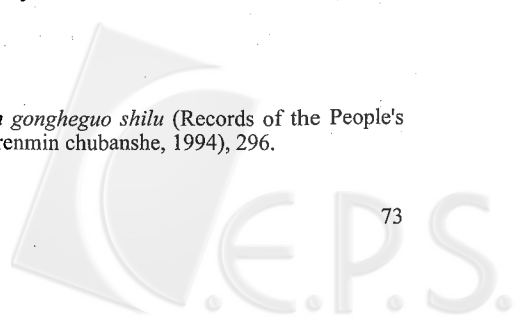
On June 18, 1968, at Beijing University, about two hundred teachers and cadres, who had been imprisoned on campus for months, were beaten and tortured in very brutal ways during a school-wide action. This date was chosen to celebrate the violent event that had occurred two years previous, on June 18 of 1966, mentioned twice above. In the attack of June 18, 1968, more educators were beaten more viciously than in the attack of June 18, 1966. From 1966 to 1968, it was in part this increasing violent persecution that fueled enthusiasm for the Cultural Revolution.

I am not able to calculate how many educators died from the persecutions during the first three years of the Cultural Revolution. Anecdotal evidence does, however, give us a glimpse into the extent of the violent persecution. For instance, according to one interviewee, at the First Gate of Building No. 9 (a dormitory for average teachers and staff) of Beijing Agricultural University, where a total of only eleven families lived, five people committed suicide between 1966 and 1968.

Violent student attacks against teachers were an important part of the Cultural Revolution but have been largely ignored in official accounts and contemporary scholarship. This paper can only attempt to retrieve one corner of the violent persecution during the Cultural Revolution and to provoke further research into this tragedy.

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<sup>47</sup>Chen Donglin and Du Pu, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo shilu* (Records of the People's Republic of China), vol. 3 (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1994), 296.



**Appendix 1**

**List of Schools Included in Survey**

(Educators were beaten to death at the schools marked with a "\*\*").

**Beijing (北京市): 46**

Beijing University  
Beijing Agricultural University  
Beijing Architecture Material Institute  
Beijing Steel College  
Beijing Teachers College  
Central Music College  
Central Art College  
Qinghua University  
Beijing First Middle School  
Beijing Second Middle School  
Beijing Fourth Middle School  
Beijing Fifth Middle School  
Beijing Sixth Middle School\*  
Beijing Eighth Middle School\*  
Beijing Thirteenth Middle School\*  
Beijing Fifteenth Middle School  
Beijing Twenty-fifth Middle School\*  
Beijing Twenty-sixth Middle School  
Beijing Forty-seventh Middle School  
Beijing Fifty-second Middle School\*  
Beijing 101st Middle School\*  
Beijing First Girls Middle School  
Beijing Second Girls Middle School  
Beijing Third Girls Middle School\*  
Beijing Fifth Girls Middle School  
Beijing Eighth Girls Middle School  
Beijing Tenth Girls Middle School\*  
Beijing Fifteenth Girls Middle School\*  
Middle School attached to Beijing Mineral Industry Institute  
Middle School attached to Beijing University  
Middle School attached to Chinese People's University\*  
Middle School attached to Qinghua University  
Middle School attached to Beijing Foreign Languages College\*  
Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University\*  
Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University\*  
Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers College\*



Beijing Baizhifang Middle School\*  
Beijing Jingshan School\*  
Beijing Lishihutong Elementary School  
Beijing Jixianghutong Elementary School\*  
Beijing Kuanjie Elementary School\*  
Beijing Shijiahutong Elementary School  
Beijing Haidian District Laohudong Elementary School  
Beijing Yuquan Elementary School  
Beijing Zhongguo-Guba Friendship Elementary School  
Beijing Zhongshan Gongyuan Kindergarten

**Fujian Province (福建省): 2**

Xiamen Fourth Middle School  
Xiamen Eighth Middle School\*

**Guangdong Province (廣東省): 8**

Guangdong Taishan First School  
Guangzhou Seventh Middle School  
Guangzhou Sixteenth Middle School  
Guangzhou Seventeenth Middle School\*  
Guangzhou Twenty-fifth Middle School  
Guangzhou Fifty-seventh Middle School  
Guangzhou Sixty-second Middle School  
Guangzhou Railway Middle School

**Jiangsu Province (江蘇省): 11**

Changzhou Twenty-sixth Middle School  
Elementary School attached to Nanjing Forestry College  
Nanjing Sanpailiu Elementary School  
Nanjing Nanchanglu Elementary School  
Middle School attached to Nanjing Teachers College  
Nanjing Second Middle School\*  
Nanjing Foreign Languages School  
Wuxi City Houbao Elementary School  
Yizheng City Experimental Elementary School  
Yancheng County Central Elementary School  
Yangzhou City Wantou Commune Elementary School

**Jiangxi Province (江西省): 4**

*March/April 2001*

Nanchang Eighth Middle School  
Lushan First Elementary School  
Nanchang City Yangzi Elementary School  
Leping County Dasishang Elementary School

**Shaanxi Province (陕西省): 2**

Second Middle School attached to Shaanxi Teachers University  
Xi'an Thirty-seventh Middle School\*

**Shanghai (上海市): 12**

Huadong Teachers University  
Shanghai Fuxing Middle School  
Shanghai Datong Middle School  
Shanghai Middle School  
Shanghai Qiyi Middle School  
Shanghai Nanyang Mofan Middle School  
Shanghai Tongji Middle School\*  
Shanghai Third Girls Middle School  
Middle School attached to Huadong Teachers University  
Shanghai Foreign Languages School  
Shanghai Xincheng Middle School  
Shanghai Nanhui County Huinan Town Elementary School

**Shanxi Province (山西省): 1**

Quwo County Chengguan Elementary School

**Sichuan Province (四川省): 3**

Hongya County Middle School  
Luzhou Third Middle School  
Middle School attached to Xinan Teachers College

**Tianjin (天津市): 5**

Tianjin Beijiao District Nanchang Middle School  
Tianjin 105th Middle School  
Hongqiao District Jinzhongqiao Elementary School  
Hexi District Xinanliu Central Elementary School  
Nanshi Elementary School



**Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (新疆維吾爾自治區): 1**

Ku'erle City Second Middle School

**Zhejiang Province (浙江省): 1**

Hangzhou First Middle School

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**Appendix 2**

**Victims Mentioned in This Article Who Were Beaten to Death by the Red Guards**

**Bian Zhongyun** (卞仲耘), female, 50, vice-principal of the Girls Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, died on August 5, 1966.

**Chen Baokun** (陳葆昆), male, art teacher of Beijing 101st Middle School, died on August 17, 1966.

**Chen Yanrong** (陳彥榮), male, worker, resident at Beijing Haidian District, Lan-qiyang 109. He was killed by the Red Guards of the Middle School attached to Beijing University on August 27, 1966. An old lady was killed with him, but I could not find her name.

**Chen Yuanzhi** (陳沅芷), female, 42, Chinese teacher of Beijing Twenty-fifth Middle School, died on September 8, 1966.

A custodian of Beijing Twenty-fifth Middle School, whose name is unknown, was beaten to death in the summer of 1966.

**Fan Ximan** (樊希曼), female, mother of Cao Binhai, a student of the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, died on August 25, 1966.

**Guo Wenyu** (郭文玉), female, principal of Beijing Kuanjie Elementary School, died on August 27, 1966.

**He Hancheng** (何漢成), male, resident around Beijing Sixth Middle School, was beaten to death in the school jail in the summer of 1966.

**Hua Jin** (華錦), female, head of Beijing Eighth Middle School, died on August 22, 1966.

**Huang Zubin** (黃祖彬), male, physics teacher of Xiamen Eighth Middle School, Fujian province. He was beaten to death in August of 1966.

**Jiang Peiliang** (姜培良), male, secretary of the party branch at the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, died on August 25, 1966.

**Jin Zhengyu** (靳正宇), male, Chinese language and literature teacher of the Second Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers University, died on August 25, 1966.

**Li Jinpo** (李錦坡), male, custodian of Beijing Jingshan School, died in August 1966.

**Li Wenbo** (李文波), male, 54, resident at 121 Guangjumenei (廣渠門內) Street, Chongwen (崇文) District, Beijing, died on August 25, 1966.

**Liang Guangqi** (梁光琪), female, 54, head of Beijing Fifteenth Girls Middle School, died on August 25, 1966.

**Lin Xiuquan** (林修權), male, teacher of Shanghai Tongji Middle School, was beaten to death on campus in the summer of 1966.

**Lu Zhenxian** (呂貞先), dean of Beijing Kuanjie Elementary School, died on August 27, 1966.

**Meng Zhaojiang** (孟昭江), male, Guo Wenyu's husband, died on August 27, 1966.

**Pang Chengfeng** (龐乘風), male, a staff member of Guangzhou Seventeenth Middle School, Guangdong province. Pang was beaten to death in September of 1966.

**Qiu Qingyu** (邱慶玉), female, principal of Beijing Jixianghutong Elementary School, died on October 1, 1966.

**Sha Ping** (沙坪), female, principal of Beijing Third Girls Middle School, died on August 22, 1966.

**Sun Di** (孫迪), male, 36, teacher of Beijing Tenth Girls Middle School, was beaten to death on campus in the summer of 1966.

**Sun Qikun** (孫啓坤), female, retired accountant. Her husband was a professor at the Beijing Steel College. She was beaten to death on August 27, 1966.

**Wang Bogong** (王伯恭), male, retired teacher of Chinese, was beaten to death at a "struggle meeting" in the summer of 1966.

**Wang Guanghua** (王光華), male, student of twelfth grade of Beijing Sixth Middle School. He was beaten to death on September 28, 1966, in the jail that the Red Guards established on their campus.

**Wang Leng** (王冷), female, Chinese teacher of Xi'an (西安) Thirty-seventh Middle



School, was beaten to death at a "struggle meeting" in the summer of 1966.

**Wu Supeng** (武素鵬), male, student of Beijing Thirteenth Middle School, was beaten to death in his school in August of 1966.

**Xu Peitian** (徐霽田), male, custodian of Beijing Sixth Middle School. Xu was beaten to death on October 3, 1966.

**Yang Jun** (楊俊), male, teacher of the Middle School attached to Chinese People's University, was beaten to death in August 1966.

**Yu Ruifen** (喻瑞芬), female, biology teacher of the Middle School attached to Beijing Teachers College. She was beaten to death in August of 1966 on campus. Her family has left Beijing and I have been unable to determine the exact date of her death.

**Zhang Bingjie** (張冰潔), female, head of Beijing Baizhifang Middle School, died in the summer of 1966.

**Zhang Furen** (張輔仁), male, Chinese teacher of the Middle School attached to Beijing Foreign Languages College, died on August 19, 1966.

**Zhang Fuzhen** (張福臻), male, administrative staff of the Middle School attached to Beijing Foreign Languages College, died on August 19, 1966.

**Zheng Zhaonan** (鄭兆南), female, 36, Chinese teacher of Beijing Fifty-second Middle School, died on September 8, 1966.

**Zhu Qingyi** (朱慶頤), male, history teacher of Nanjing Second Middle School, Jiangsu province. He was beaten to death in August of 1966.