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Circle Pines, MN
A.P. World History, 10th grade

Lesson Title:

To what extent do modern extremist groups follow the policies of Mao Zedong?

Key Concept in A. P. World History:

6.2 –Peoples and states around the world challenged the existing political and social order in varying ways, leading to unprecedented worldwide conflicts.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to...

Utilize the historical thinking skills of AP World History to analyze an important primary source text, On Guerrilla Warfare, by Mao Zedong.

Research a modern day extremist group utilizing a database curated by a non-partisan, non-governmental organization.

Compare today's extremist groups to the guerrilla warfare of Mao Zedong's 1930s China.

Anticipatory Set:

Show this two minute video clip from History Illustrated that highlights the definition of guerrilla warfare.

<https://bit.ly/2GhIG2s>

Lead a brief brainstorming session with students asking them to list times and places in which such tactics have been used. Then, discuss which have been considered acceptable or not, and how point of view informs that decision.

Lesson Body:

Completed as homework, the following is required reading for the lesson:

Mao Zedong –On Guerrilla Warfare. Students should read chapter 1 (pages 41-50) and complete the accompanying Document Analysis sheet.

On Guerrilla Warfare:

<https://bit.ly/1I35CM0>

Analysis Sheet:

<https://bit.ly/2jY3eEx>

This analysis sheet has been created particularly for an AP World history class. It enforces the primary source document analysis skills of historical context, intended audience, purpose, and point of view.

Lesson:

Students should individually read the brief article, “The Islamic State’s Strategy was Years in the Making” by Elliot Ackerman, published in the New Republic on August 8, 2014.

<https://bit.ly/2rJWJJP>

Point out to students that Mao wrote On Guerrilla Warfare during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

There, he laid out his three phase model for insurgency:

Phase 1-Earn the population’s support by distributing propaganda and attacking the organs of government.

Phase 2-Escalate attacks against the government’s military forces and vital institutions

Phase 3-Conventional warfare and fighting in order to seize cities, overthrow the government, and assume control over the country.

Students will now be directed to the following website from the Counter Extremism Project (CEP), a nonprofit, nonpartisan NGO that combats extremist groups:

<https://bit.ly/2IKM7nU>

This page contains a list of 31 extremist groups as identified by the CEP. These groups represent a cross section of geographic areas, from Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa; to right wing nationalist groups in Europe, and even the KKK in the United States. A teacher could pre-select a handful of groups upon which to focus, or students could be given the opportunity to select any of the 31 groups. This choice can be tailored to meet the needs of individual students and teachers.

Students will research their chosen extremist group with the goal of creating a briefing page for the U.S. government. Distribute the following briefing paper template for student preparation:

<https://bit.ly/2sckbiu>

Conclusion:

Students will present their briefing papers to the class. This could be held in either a cabinet meeting or a town hall meeting format in order to create a feeling of professionalism for the presentations. Also, after each presentation, the class could be asked to vote on what they feel is the proper course of action with this particular extremist group.

Assessment:

Students could be asked to connect their extremist group to Mao’s three phases of guerilla warfare. Their writing could address the following question: “To what extent is ____ group similar or different from the guerrilla phases outlined by Mao Zedong?” Such a question reinforces the AP historical thinking skill of comparison.

Additionally, teachers could distribute a chart prior to the presentations in which all extremist groups are compared to Mao. Students could then choose the one most closely associated with his policies and write a comparison paper.

Modifications:

This lesson can be completed without the reading of the primary source, On Guerrilla Warfare. While recommended for AP World History students, it might be too dense and/or time consuming in a regular World History classroom.

Additionally, for the sake of time and/or student ability, teachers may choose to omit the verbal presentation portion of the briefing paper assignment.

Extensions:

Subscribe to the CEP Youtube channel in order to remain informed on global extremist activities.

Read more chapters of Mao's On Guerrilla Warfare. Chapter 3 focuses on guerrilla warfare in other times and places, including the Napoleonic Wars, the Russian Civil War, and Ethiopia. This would be particularly relevant in an A.P. World History class.

Sources:

Mary Habeck, Senior Fellow, FPRI Program on National Security FPRI's 2018 Military History Institute March 25, 2018

<https://bit.ly/2GjVVzQ>

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On Guerrilla Warfare by Mao Zedong:

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