

Red Genes or Red Memes

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- 1 Edward O. Wilson and Richard Dawkins have both made significant contributions to our understanding of cultural evolution by integrating it with genetic evolution. Their theories highlight how cultural elements, like genes, evolve and influence human behavior and societies.**

1.1 Edward O. Wilson's Contributions

Edward O. Wilson, often considered the father of sociobiology, extended the principles of evolutionary biology to explain social behaviors. In his book "Sociobiology: The New Synthesis" (Harvard University Press, 1975), Wilson argued that many social behaviors have a biological basis and are subject to evolutionary pressures. He suggested that human culture could be understood in terms of evolutionary processes, where behaviors that enhance survival and reproduction become prevalent.

Key Concepts: 1. **Gene-Culture Coevolution:** Wilson proposed that genes and culture coevolve, influencing each other over time. This means that cultural practices can affect genetic selection and vice versa. 2. **Biocultural Evolution:** He emphasized the interaction between biological and cultural evolution, suggesting that human evolution is driven by both genetic changes and cultural innovations. 3. **Eusociality:** Wilson's work on eusociality, particularly in insects like ants and bees, provided insights into the evolutionary basis of complex social behaviors. He extended these concepts to human societies, highlighting the role of cooperation and social structures in evolutionary success.

1.2 Richard Dawkins' Contributions

Richard Dawkins introduced the concept of memes in his book "The Selfish Gene" (Oxford University Press, 1976), offering a framework to understand cultural evolution parallel to genetic evolution. He defined memes as units

of cultural transmission or imitation, such as ideas, behaviors, or styles that propagate within a culture.

Key Concepts: 1. **Memes as Cultural Replicators:** Dawkins argued that memes, like genes, are replicators that undergo variation, mutation, and selection. Memes spread through imitation and can influence human behavior and societal development. 2. **Memetic Evolution:** He proposed that cultural evolution occurs through the replication and transmission of memes, which can evolve independently of genetic evolution. This process explains how cultural practices and ideas spread and persist across generations. 3. **Interaction with Genetic Evolution:** Dawkins acknowledged that memes and genes interact, with cultural practices influencing genetic fitness and vice versa. For example, cultural practices related to diet, medicine, and social organization can impact genetic selection pressures.

1.3 Integrating Cultural and Genetic Evolution

Wilson and Dawkins' theories collectively highlight the importance of both genetic and cultural factors in human evolution. They offer a comprehensive understanding of how behaviors, social structures, and cultural practices evolve and influence human societies.

Key Insights: 1. **Dual Inheritance Theory:** The integration of genetic and cultural evolution supports the dual inheritance theory, which posits that humans inherit two types of information: genetic and cultural. This dual inheritance shapes human behavior and societal development. 2. **Adaptive Significance:** Both genetic and cultural traits can have adaptive significance, enhancing the survival and reproductive success of individuals and groups. Cultural practices that improve cooperation, resource management, and social cohesion can be particularly advantageous. 3. **Dynamic Interaction:** The dynamic interaction between genetic and cultural evolution suggests that human societies are constantly evolving, with cultural innovations influencing genetic selection and vice versa.

The contributions of Edward O. Wilson and Richard Dawkins have significantly enriched our understanding of human evolution by incorporating the role of culture alongside genetics. Their theories highlight the complex interplay between genetic and cultural factors, providing a nuanced perspective on the evolutionary processes that shape human behavior and societies. This integrated approach offers valuable insights into the mechanisms of cultural transmission and the evolutionary basis of social structures, emphasizing the importance of both genes and memes in human evolution.

2 The French Revolution, the Paris Commune, and the Symbolism of the Red Color

2.1 The French Revolution

The French Revolution, which began in 1789, marked a significant shift in political, social, and cultural landscapes in France and beyond. One of the enduring symbols of this revolutionary period is the color red, which came to represent various ideals and movements within the broader revolutionary context.

- **Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**: The slogan of the French Revolution, "Liberté, égalité, fraternité" (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity), embodied the revolutionary goals of freedom from oppression, equal rights for all citizens, and unity among the people. The red flag, alongside the tricolor (blue, white, and red), became a powerful emblem of these ideals.

- **Red as a Symbol of Revolution**: During the French Revolution, red emerged as a symbol of the people's struggle and sacrifice. The red Phrygian cap, also known as the "liberty cap," became a widely recognized icon of liberty and resistance against tyranny.

2.2 The Paris Commune

The Paris Commune of 1871 was another significant moment in French revolutionary history, where the red color once again played a crucial symbolic role.

- **Background**: The Paris Commune was a radical socialist and revolutionary government that briefly ruled Paris from March 18 to May 28, 1871. It arose in the aftermath of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the collapse of the Second Empire.

- **Red Flag of the Commune**: The red flag, prominently used by the Communards, symbolized their commitment to socialist principles and the struggle against the existing political and social order. It represented solidarity with the working class and a rejection of the bourgeoisie and capitalist structures.

- **Legacy of the Red Flag**: The Paris Commune's use of the red flag solidified its association with socialism, communism, and workers' movements. It influenced subsequent revolutionary and labor movements worldwide, cementing the red flag as a universal symbol of proletarian struggle and leftist ideology.

2.3 The Red Color in Revolutionary Symbolism

The use of red in both the French Revolution and the Paris Commune has had a lasting impact on the symbolism of revolutionary and socialist movements:

- **Revolutionary Blood**: The color red is often associated with the blood of martyrs who died fighting for revolutionary causes. This symbolism highlights the sacrifices made in the pursuit of justice, equality, and freedom.

- **Communist and Socialist Movements**: Inspired by these historical events, various communist and socialist movements across the globe adopted

the red flag as a symbol of their cause. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Chinese Communist Revolution, and numerous other movements utilized red to signify their revolutionary fervor and solidarity with the working class.

Therefore, the red color has a profound and enduring significance in the context of revolutionary movements, particularly those that emerged from the French Revolution and the Paris Commune. It symbolizes the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, as well as the bloodshed and sacrifice inherent in the struggle for these ideals. The legacy of the red flag continues to inspire and unify movements for social justice and political change worldwide.

3 Red Genes and Totalitarianism in Mao and Xi

The concept of "red genes" in the context of Chinese political ideology refers to the enduring principles and legacy of the Communist Party, often symbolized by the revolutionary spirit and values instilled during the era of Mao Zedong. This notion emphasizes the continuity of these values across generations and their adaptation to current political strategies under Xi Jinping.

Mao Zedong's Era

Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China, established a totalitarian regime characterized by centralized control, suppression of dissent, and extensive use of propaganda. His leadership during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) aimed at reinforcing the communist ideology, which he referred to as "red genes." Mao's totalitarian approach was marked by:

1. **Centralized Power**: Mao consolidated power by eliminating rivals and establishing a personality cult. His image and ideology permeated every aspect of Chinese life.
2. **Cultural Revolution**: This movement sought to purge capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society, reinforcing communist principles through mass mobilization, public humiliation, and re-education.
3. **Propaganda and Ideology**: The use of media, education, and literature to propagate Maoist ideology was extensive. The "Little Red Book," a collection of Mao's sayings, became a symbol of this indoctrination.

Xi Jinping's Era

Xi Jinping has revived many of Mao's tactics, emphasizing the continuity of the Communist Party's values, which he frames as the "red gene." Xi's totalitarian tendencies are reflected in several key aspects:

1. **Political Control**: Xi has centralized power to an unprecedented degree since Mao, abolishing term limits and positioning himself as a core leader.
2. **Anti-Corruption Campaign**: Officially aimed at rooting out corruption, this campaign has also been a tool for eliminating political rivals and consolidating Xi's power. High-profile purges of officials often signal warnings to potential dissenters.
3. **Ideological Campaigns**: Xi has launched ideological campaigns to reinforce party loyalty, such as the promotion of "Xi Jinping Thought" on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, which has been enshrined in the constitution.
4. **Surveillance and Repression**: The use of advanced surveillance technology, internet censorship, and the repression

of ethnic minorities (e.g., Uyghurs in Xinjiang) underscore the regime's totalitarian nature. The "Great Firewall" and social credit system exemplify the extensive control over information and personal behavior.

Continuity and Adaptation

While the ideological core remains rooted in Maoist principles, Xi Jinping has adapted these to the modern context, leveraging technology and globalization. The narrative of "red genes" under Xi serves several purposes:

1. **Legitimization of Authority**: By emphasizing continuity with Mao, Xi positions himself as the rightful heir to the revolutionary legacy, thus legitimizing his authority.
2. **Nationalism**: The concept of "red genes" is tied to Chinese nationalism, portraying the Communist Party as the guardian of China's rise and its historical destiny.
3. **Social Cohesion**: Reinforcing these ideological roots helps maintain social cohesion and loyalty to the Party, particularly important as China faces economic challenges and international pressure.

Conclusion

The concept of "red genes" reflects a blend of historical continuity and modern adaptation within China's totalitarian framework. Under Mao, this was characterized by direct, often brutal, methods of control and indoctrination. Under Xi, while some methods have evolved with technology and globalization, the underlying principles of centralized control, suppression of dissent, and ideological indoctrination remain deeply rooted. This continuity underscores the enduring nature of totalitarianism in China, adapted to maintain the Communist Party's grip on power in the contemporary era.

4 Using "red memes" instead of "red genes" to describe the ideological legacy and principles of Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping is a more accurate and contemporary way to understand how these ideas are propagated and sustained in Chinese society. Here's a detailed explanation:

Red Memes vs. Red Genes

Memes: Cultural Transmission

1. **Definition of Memes**: A meme is an idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture. Richard Dawkins coined the term in his book "The Selfish Gene" to describe how cultural information spreads.
2. **Mechanisms of Spread**: Memes spread through imitation, communication, and social learning. They can be transmitted via writing, speech, rituals, symbols, and media.
3. **Relevance to Ideology**: Using "red memes" emphasizes the cultural and ideological transmission of Maoist principles and

values, which are perpetuated through education, propaganda, and social practices. It captures how these ideas are ingrained in society and continue to influence behavior and beliefs.

Genes: Biological Transmission

1. **Definition of Genes**: Genes are units of heredity that are passed from parents to offspring, determining biological traits.
2. **Limitations in Context**: Referring to "red genes" metaphorically implies a hereditary passing of ideology, which is less accurate in explaining the social and cultural mechanisms at play.

Application to Mao and Xi

Mao Zedong's Era

1. **Creation of Red Memes**: Mao established numerous symbols, slogans, and rituals to embed communist ideology into Chinese society. Examples include the "Little Red Book" and the Cultural Revolution's propaganda campaigns.
2. **Cultural Revolution**: The mass mobilization during the Cultural Revolution was an exercise in spreading and enforcing Maoist memes, aimed at eradicating old customs and ideologies in favor of communist values.

Xi Jinping's Era

1. **Revival and Adaptation**: Xi Jinping has revived many of Mao's ideas, adapting them to contemporary contexts. This includes promoting "Xi Jinping Thought" and reinforcing loyalty to the Communist Party.
2. **Propaganda and Education**: Xi uses modern technology and media to disseminate these red memes. This includes extensive use of state-controlled media, social media surveillance, and education reforms to instill party ideology from a young age.

The Role of Memes in Authoritarian Regimes

1. **Control and Stability**: Red memes help maintain social control and stability by creating a unified ideological front. They ensure that the population adheres to a set of beliefs that justify the party's rule.
2. **Suppression of Dissent**: These memes also play a role in suppressing dissent by framing alternative ideologies as threats to national unity and stability.

Conclusion

Using "red memes" instead of "red genes" is a more precise way to describe the propagation of Maoist and Xi's ideologies. It highlights the cultural and social mechanisms through which these ideas are spread and sustained, rather than implying a biological transmission. Understanding the spread of these memes helps explain the resilience of totalitarian and authoritarian structures in China, providing insight into how the Communist Party maintains its grip on power.

5 Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping use the concept of "red genes" to shape their political and social policies for several reasons, each deeply rooted in the history, ideology, and strategic objectives of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Here's an expanded explanation:

Ideological Continuity and Legitimacy

1. **Historical Continuity**: - **Mao's Legacy**: Mao Zedong is a foundational figure in the history of the People's Republic of China. His ideology and policies laid the groundwork for the CCP's governance. By invoking "red genes," Mao established a narrative of revolutionary legitimacy, framing the CCP as the rightful inheritor of the struggle for Chinese liberation and socialist transformation. - **Xi's Reinforcement**: Xi Jinping emphasizes "red genes" to assert the CCP's continuous and unbroken lineage from Mao's revolutionary ideals. This continuity reinforces the party's legitimacy and positions Xi as a guardian of Mao's legacy, thereby bolstering his own authority.

Social and Political Control

2. **Unified Ideological Front**: - **Control through Ideology**: By promoting the concept of "red genes," Mao and Xi foster a collective identity centered around communist values. This ideological unity helps maintain social stability and control, as it aligns the populace with the party's goals and diminishes dissent. - **Educational Campaigns**: The CCP has implemented extensive education campaigns to instill these values from a young age, ensuring that the concept of "red genes" permeates the social fabric.

3. **Suppressing Dissent**: - **Enemy of the State Narrative**: By framing alternative ideologies or criticisms as threats to the revolutionary legacy, Mao and Xi can justify the suppression of dissent. This creates a clear dichotomy between the loyal, ideologically pure citizens and the subversive elements that must be controlled or eradicated.

Mobilization and Nationalism

4. **Revolutionary Zeal and Mobilization**: - **Mao's Mass Campaigns**: Mao utilized the concept of "red genes" to mobilize the masses during the Cultural Revolution, emphasizing the need to purge society of capitalist and traditionalist elements. This mass mobilization was crucial for maintaining his control and enacting his radical policies. - **Xi's Modern Campaigns**: Xi uses similar rhetoric to mobilize nationalistic fervor and collective action, particularly in his anti-corruption campaigns and initiatives like the "Chinese Dream." This mobilization serves to reinforce his political agenda and consolidate power.

International and Domestic Perception

5. **Projection of Strength**: - **Internal Strength**: By constantly referencing "red genes," the CCP projects an image of ideological purity and strength. This is intended to reassure the Chinese populace of the party's sta-

bility and direction. - **External Messaging**: Internationally, this rhetoric positions China as a strong, unified nation with a distinct and proud revolutionary heritage. It sends a message that the CCP is resolute and unwavering in its ideological commitments.

Conclusion

The use of "red genes" by Mao and Xi is a strategic tool that serves multiple functions: it legitimizes their rule, maintains social control, mobilizes the masses, and projects strength both domestically and internationally. By continually invoking the revolutionary legacy and embedding it into the social and political fabric of China, the CCP ensures its dominance and perpetuates its ideological foundations. This approach has been crucial for the party's ability to navigate the complexities of governance and maintain its grip on power in the face of changing internal and external dynamics.

6 ### Analysis of Xi Jinping's Statement on "Red Gene"

Xi Jinping's statement about perpetuating the "red gene" to ensure the continuity of the "red state" across generations reflects a deep commitment to maintaining the ideological and political lineage of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The "red gene" is a metaphor representing the core values, traditions, and revolutionary spirit of the CCP, which Xi is determined to perpetuate.

Red Gene as Red Meme

When Xi Jinping refers to the "red gene," he is essentially invoking what Richard Dawkins would describe as a "meme." In Dawkins' seminal work, *The Selfish Gene*, memes are units of cultural transmission that propagate from one mind to another, much like genes transmit biological information. The "red gene" can thus be understood as a set of memes encompassing communist ideology, revolutionary history, and the CCP's political doctrines.

Transmission and Propagation

Xi's insistence on passing down the "red gene" indicates a desire to ensure the survival and dominance of these particular memes within Chinese society. This involves various methods of propagation:

1. **Education**: The CCP incorporates its revolutionary history and values into school curriculums to ensure that young generations internalize these ideas from an early age.
2. **Media and Propaganda**: State media continuously promote the party's achievements and historical narratives, reinforcing the "red gene" in the public consciousness.
3. **Cultural Practices**: The CCP encourages public commemorations, patriotic songs, and literature that reinforce its ideology and revolutionary spirit.

These practices ensure that the "red gene" remains ingrained in the collective consciousness of the Chinese population, thereby perpetuating the party's influence.

Ensuring Continuity

The phrase "ensuring that the red state has successors, passed down from generation to generation" highlights the importance of political continuity. This involves grooming future leaders loyal to the party's ideals and ensuring that the public remains aligned with the party's goals. It also implies strict control over ideological education and the suppression of dissenting views that might threaten the party's narrative.

Comparison with Dawkins' Meme Theory

1. **Survival of Memes:** - **Dawkins:** Memes survive based on their appeal and ability to replicate. - **Xi's Red Gene:** The "red gene" survives through deliberate state efforts, utilizing propaganda, education, and cultural reinforcement.

2. **Transmission Mechanisms:** - **Dawkins:** Memes spread through communication, imitation, and social interaction. - **Xi's Red Gene:** The "red gene" spreads through institutional mechanisms controlled by the CCP, including schools, media, and cultural policies.

3. **Mutation and Evolution:** - **Dawkins:** Memes can mutate and evolve over time as they adapt to different environments. - **Xi's Red Gene:** The CCP aims to maintain the purity of the "red gene" by controlling the narrative and preventing ideological mutations that could weaken the party's control.

Implications

The approach taken by Xi Jinping to perpetuate the "red gene" demonstrates an understanding of the power of cultural and ideological memes. By ensuring the dominance of these memes, the CCP seeks to maintain its legitimacy and control over Chinese society. However, this also raises questions about freedom of thought and the potential for ideological indoctrination.

Conclusion

Xi Jinping's emphasis on the "red gene" can be understood through the lens of Dawkins' meme theory. The CCP's efforts to propagate and maintain this meme highlight the importance of cultural transmission in sustaining political power. By controlling the narrative and ensuring the "red gene" is passed down through generations, the CCP aims to secure its continued dominance in China. This effort to maintain ideological purity and political control underscores the enduring power of memes in shaping societal values and structures.

7 Stalin did not explicitly use the term "red genes" in his rhetoric, but he certainly used the symbolism of the color red and the revolutionary heritage to consolidate his power and promote his regime. Here are some key points that illustrate how Stalin employed these elements:

Use of the Color Red 1. **Symbol of Revolution**: - The color red was deeply associated with the Bolshevik Revolution and the Communist movement. It symbolized the blood of the workers and martyrs who fought for the socialist cause. Stalin leveraged this powerful symbolism to evoke a sense of revolutionary fervor and legitimacy. 2. **Propaganda**: - Soviet propaganda under Stalin heavily featured the color red in posters, banners, and flags. The red flag, in particular, became a potent symbol of the USSR, representing the unity and strength of the Soviet people under communist ideology.

Revolutionary Heritage 1. **Legitimization of Rule**: - Stalin positioned himself as the rightful heir to Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution. He emphasized his role in the October Revolution and the Civil War, thereby claiming continuity with the revolutionary legacy. 2. **Cult of Personality**: - Stalin's cult of personality was built around his image as a staunch defender of the revolution. He was portrayed as a fatherly figure who embodied the revolutionary spirit, and his leadership was depicted as essential for the survival and success of the Soviet state.

Political Rhetoric 1. **Class Struggle**: - Stalin consistently invoked the rhetoric of class struggle and the fight against capitalist and reactionary forces. This narrative was used to justify purges, political repression, and the centralization of power, framing these actions as necessary to protect the revolution.

2. **Five-Year Plans and Industrialization**: - The rhetoric of building socialism was closely tied to the industrialization efforts and the Five-Year Plans. The success of these plans was portrayed as a triumph of socialist ideology and the revolutionary spirit, often highlighted with the color red in various propagandistic materials.

Conclusion While Stalin did not use the specific term "red genes," his use of red as a symbol and the revolutionary legacy played a crucial role in his political strategy. The color red and the ideals of the revolution were central to his propaganda, helping to legitimize his rule, foster a sense of unity and purpose, and justify his authoritarian measures. This approach created a powerful narrative that linked Stalin's regime to the foundational events and symbols of Soviet communism.

8 The color red indeed symbolizes revolutionary blood and is deeply intertwined with the imagery and rhetoric of various revolutionary movements, including those led by figures like Stalin, Mao, and Xi Jinping. This symbolism goes beyond mere color choice; it carries profound historical and ideological significance that has been leveraged for political purposes.

Revolutionary Symbolism

Stalin 1. **Historical Context**: - The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which led to the establishment of the Soviet Union, is often associated with the color red, symbolizing the blood shed by workers and soldiers in their fight for socialism. This association helped cement red as the color of the revolution and the working class. 2. **Propaganda**: - Stalin used red extensively in Soviet propaganda. Red banners, flags, and uniforms were ubiquitous, representing the continuity of revolutionary fervor and the strength of the proletariat. This was a visual reinforcement of the ideology of the Communist Party, aligning the present with the heroic past of the revolution.

Mao Zedong 1. **Cultural Revolution**: - During Mao's Cultural Revolution, the color red became even more pronounced as a symbol of loyalty to the Communist cause. Red Guards, named for their allegiance to Mao's vision, wore red armbands and carried the "Little Red Book," a collection of Mao's quotations. 2. **Political Rhetoric**: - Mao's speeches and writings frequently invoked the imagery of red, equating the revolutionary struggle with purity and sacrifice. The "Red Sun" metaphor often used in reference to Mao himself highlighted this symbolism.

Xi Jinping 1. **Red Gene Theory**: - Xi Jinping has emphasized the importance of inheriting the "red gene," referring to the revolutionary legacy of the Communist Party. This concept suggests that the ideological commitment to the Communist revolution is passed down through generations, much like genetic inheritance. 2. **National Rejuvenation**: - In his speeches, Xi often calls for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, framing this as a continuation of the revolutionary struggle. The use of red in national celebrations and party events underscores this ongoing connection to the revolutionary past.

Red as a Symbol of Revolutionary Blood The choice of red as a revolutionary symbol is not arbitrary; it reflects the bloodshed and sacrifices made during these political upheavals. It serves as a powerful reminder of the cost of revolution and a call to maintain the spirit and ideals for which the blood was shed. This symbolism is used to inspire, unite, and legitimize the current political regime by drawing a direct line to the revolutionary struggles of the past.

Conclusion The color red, symbolizing revolutionary blood, is a potent tool in political rhetoric and propaganda. It represents the sacrifices made for ideological causes and serves to link contemporary political movements to their revolutionary roots. Leaders like Stalin, Mao, and Xi have effectively used this symbolism to strengthen their regimes, evoke a sense of continuity, and mobilize their populations around a shared historical and ideological narrative. This use of red helps to sustain the authority of the ruling party by constantly reminding citizens of the revolutionary heritage and the need to preserve its legacy.

9 The Use of "Red" in Revolutionary China

In revolutionary China, the color red became deeply ingrained in the cultural and political fabric of the nation, symbolizing revolution, loyalty, and the ideological purity of the Communist Party. This pervasive use of red extended to various terms and concepts that emerged during different phases of China's revolutionary history, highlighting the symbolic power of the color in shaping political narratives and identities.

Historical Context

1. **Red Base Areas**: - During the Chinese Civil War, the term "Red Base Areas" referred to the territories controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). These areas were crucial for the CCP's strategy and survival, providing safe havens from which they could launch operations against the Nationalist forces. The color red signified the revolutionary spirit and ideological purity of these bases.

2. **Red Revolution**: - The Chinese revolution itself was often referred to as the "Red Revolution," emphasizing the radical transformation and the revolutionary bloodshed associated with it. This term reinforced the CCP's narrative of leading a heroic and just struggle against oppression and imperialism.

3. **Red Guards**: - During the Cultural Revolution, the "Red Guards" were militant youth groups mobilized by Mao Zedong to carry out the goals of the revolution. They wore red armbands and were seen as the vanguard of the ideological struggle, tasked with rooting out counter-revolutionary elements and upholding Maoist thought.

4. **Red Little Soldiers**: - "Red Little Soldiers" were children and young adolescents indoctrinated with Communist ideology and mobilized to support the Cultural Revolution. This term reflected the CCP's efforts to instill revolutionary values from a young age, ensuring the continuation of the revolutionary spirit across generations.

Mao and Xi's Invention of "Red Genes"

The concept of "red genes" is a modern ideological construct used by Xi Jinping and previously by Mao Zedong to emphasize the importance of maintaining the revolutionary legacy. The term implies that the revolutionary spirit and loyalty to the Communist Party are inheritable traits, passed down through generations like genetic material.

1. **Mao Zedong**: - Mao used the symbolism of red extensively to consolidate his power and promote his revolutionary ideals. Terms like "Red Guards" and "Red Little Soldiers" were central to his efforts to mobilize the masses and maintain control over the country during turbulent times.

2. **Xi Jinping**: - Xi has continued this tradition, often invoking the idea of "red genes" to underscore the importance of loyalty to the Communist Party and the revolutionary cause. This concept is used to legitimize the current regime by linking it to the heroic past of the Communist revolution and to ensure that the ideological purity of the Party is preserved.

Conclusion

The pervasive use of red in terms like "Red Base Areas," "Red Revolution," "Red Guards," and "Red Little Soldiers" reflects the deep-seated symbolic power of the color in China's revolutionary history. Mao and Xi's emphasis on "red genes" highlights the continued importance of revolutionary ideology in legitimizing the CCP's rule and ensuring ideological continuity. This extensive use of red imagery serves to reinforce the narrative of a heroic, ongoing struggle for the Communist cause, deeply embedding these concepts in the cultural and political consciousness of China.

10 The red color has been widely used by communist countries as a symbol of their ideology and political movement.

This use of red can be traced back to the early days of communism and socialism, where it became associated with the struggle for workers' rights, revolution, and the overthrow of capitalist systems. Here are some examples and reasons why red became a common symbol:

Historical Background and Symbolism

1. **The Paris Commune (1871)**: - The red flag was used as a symbol of the Paris Commune, one of the earliest instances of a socialist government. This event helped cement the association of red with revolutionary socialism and communism.

2. **Russian Revolution (1917)**: - The Bolshevik Revolution adopted the red flag as a symbol of the workers' movement and the fight against the ruling Tsarist regime. The color red symbolized the blood of the workers who had struggled and sacrificed in the fight for their rights.

3. **Communist International**: - The red flag became a universal symbol of communist movements around the world, often featuring prominently in the flags and symbols of communist parties and states.

Examples of Communist Countries Using Red

1. **Soviet Union**: - The flag of the Soviet Union was red with a gold hammer and sickle and a gold-bordered red star in the upper canton. This flag became one of the most recognizable symbols of communism globally.

2. **China:** - The flag of the People's Republic of China is red with five yellow stars in the top left corner. The red background symbolizes the communist revolution, and the stars represent the unity of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party.

3. **Vietnam:** - The flag of Vietnam is red with a large yellow star in the center. The red symbolizes the bloodshed during the fight for independence and revolution, while the yellow star represents the unity of the working class, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals, and the youth.

4. **Cuba:** - The flag of the Communist Party of Cuba is red, reflecting the same revolutionary spirit and communist ideology.

5. **North Korea:** - The flag of North Korea, although featuring a blue and white stripe, has a prominent red star that symbolizes communism and the revolutionary spirit of the country's founding principles.

Symbolism and Cultural Impact

- **Revolution and Struggle:** Red is often associated with the blood of martyrs and the struggle of the working class, which is central to communist ideology. - **Unity and Power:** The color red is also seen as a symbol of power and unity among the proletariat. - **Global Recognition:** The use of red in the flags and symbols of communist countries helped create a visual and ideological connection among various communist movements globally.

That is to say, the widespread use of red by communist countries is rooted in historical associations with revolution, the struggle of the working class, and the sacrifices made in the pursuit of a communist society. This consistent use of red has made it a powerful symbol of communist ideology and has played a significant role in the visual and cultural identity of communist states worldwide.

11 Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia used red symbolism extensively. The use of red in their flags, uniforms, and propaganda materials was consistent with the broader communist tradition, signifying revolution, the blood of martyrs, and the fight against oppression.

The Khmer Rouge and Red Symbolism

Flag of Democratic Kampuchea: - The flag of Democratic Kampuchea (the official name of Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979) was predominantly red, featuring a yellow outline of Angkor Wat. The red background symbolized the revolutionary struggle and the blood of those who fought for the country's liberation from colonial and imperialist influences.

Uniforms and Propaganda: - The Khmer Rouge military and officials often wore uniforms with red elements. Red scarves and armbands were com-

mon among Khmer Rouge soldiers and cadre, symbolizing their commitment to the communist cause. - Propaganda materials, including posters and banners, frequently used red to evoke revolutionary zeal and solidarity with other communist movements worldwide.

Pol Pot's Ideology and Red Symbolism

Pol Pot, the leader of the Khmer Rouge, adhered to a radical interpretation of communism, heavily influenced by Maoist principles. The use of red was a direct reflection of this ideological alignment, emphasizing radical transformation, the overthrow of the existing social order, and the establishment of a new, agrarian-based society.

****Comparison with Other Communist Regimes:**** - Like other communist leaders, Pol Pot utilized red as a unifying and mobilizing symbol. This was similar to the practices in the Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam, where red symbolized the bloodshed in the fight against oppression and the struggle for a communist future. - The emphasis on red also served to align the Khmer Rouge with the broader international communist movement, despite their extreme and unique interpretation of communist principles.

Historical Context

****Communist Symbolism:**** - Red has been a defining color for communist movements globally since the 19th century. It became a symbol of the working-class struggle, revolution, and the fight against capitalist exploitation. - The Paris Commune of 1871, one of the earliest socialist governments, used the red flag, which influenced subsequent socialist and communist movements, including the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution.

Conclusion

Pol Pot's use of red was consistent with the broader tradition of communist symbolism. It represented revolutionary fervor, the blood of martyrs, and the fight against imperialist forces. This use of color was part of a broader strategy to invoke a sense of unity, purpose, and ideological commitment among the Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian population during their brutal regime.

References - ****Khmer Rouge and Red Symbolism:**** [Wikipedia on Democratic Kampuchea Flag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Kampuchea) - ****Communist Symbolism:**** [Encyclopedia Britannica on the Red Flag](<https://www.britannica.com/topic/red-flag-communism>)

12 Indeed, communist countries have often used the metaphor of "red genes" to characterize their political regime as embodying revolutionary and ideological continuity. This concept aligns with the broader symbolic use of the color red in communist movements, which historically signifies revolution, the blood of martyrs, and the fight against oppression.

Invention of "Red Genes" in Communist Regimes

****Symbolism of Red in Communism:**** - The color red has been central to communist symbolism since the 19th century. It represents the blood shed by workers in the struggle against capitalist oppression and is a symbol of revolutionary zeal and the pursuit of equality and justice. - This symbolism was prominently adopted by the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, and other communist states, embedding the color red in flags, uniforms, and propaganda materials to evoke solidarity and revolutionary spirit.

****Red Genes as a Metaphor:**** - The term "red genes" is a metaphorical way to suggest that the revolutionary and ideological principles of communism are ingrained in the population, passed down through generations. - This metaphor implies that the revolutionary spirit and loyalty to the party are inherited and perpetuated, much like genetic traits.

****Xi Jinping's Emphasis on "Red Genes":**** - Xi Jinping's frequent references to "red genes" emphasize the importance of maintaining the ideological purity and revolutionary heritage of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). - His speeches often highlight the need to pass down these "red genes" to ensure the continuity of the CCP's rule and to reinforce the party's legitimacy and authority.

Historical Context and Usage

****The Soviet Union:**** - The Soviet Union extensively used red to symbolize the revolution and the communist state. Terms like "red army" and "red flag" were central to Soviet identity, emphasizing their revolutionary origins and commitment to communism. - The idea of revolutionary continuity was also significant in the Soviet Union, where successive generations were indoctrinated with communist ideology through education and propaganda.

****China and the Red Gene:**** - In China, the term "red gene" has been used to describe the ideological and revolutionary legacy of the CCP. It is a way to emphasize the party's historical legitimacy and its role in China's development. - Xi Jinping has focused on the concept of "red genes" to stress the importance of ideological education and the need for loyalty to the party across generations.

****Vietnam and Other Communist States:**** - Similar to China and the Soviet Union, Vietnam and other communist states have used red symbolism to signify

their revolutionary heritage and commitment to communist principles. - The propagation of revolutionary ideology through education and state-controlled media is common in these states, reinforcing the metaphorical "red genes."

Implications and Analysis

Political Continuity: - The concept of "red genes" serves to legitimize the current leadership by connecting it to the revolutionary past. It reinforces the idea that the current regime is the rightful heir to the revolutionary legacy. - This helps maintain political continuity and stability by fostering a sense of historical mission and ideological purity.

Ideological Indoctrination: - The emphasis on "red genes" underscores the importance of ideological indoctrination in maintaining the regime's control. It highlights the role of education, propaganda, and cultural practices in perpetuating the party's ideology. - This approach ensures that the revolutionary principles and loyalty to the party are deeply embedded in the population, reducing the likelihood of dissent.

In conclusion, the metaphor of "red genes" reflects the deep-seated use of red symbolism in communist regimes to signify revolutionary continuity and ideological purity. This concept is deeply embedded in the political and cultural practices of these regimes, ensuring the perpetuation of their ideology and maintaining their political legitimacy.

13 Red Genes as Red Memes: A Deeper Understanding

In analyzing the concept of "red genes" often referred to by leaders like Xi Jinping, it becomes evident that the term can be more accurately understood through the lens of meme theory, as proposed by Richard Dawkins. Instead of literal genetic transmission, the "red genes" represent a set of ideas, values, and ideological constructs that are culturally transmitted and perpetuated within a society. These are better understood as "red memes."

Understanding Memes

Meme Theory: - **Definition:** A meme is an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture. Memes act as units for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices, which can be transmitted through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena. - **Mechanism:** Similar to genes, memes replicate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures, thereby influencing their success and proliferation within a culture.

Cultural Transmission: - **Propagation:** Memes propagate through imitation and social learning, often utilizing media, education, and social institutions to reinforce and spread their influence. - **Persistence:** Successful memes are those that effectively resonate with or benefit the host population, ensuring their continuation and dominance in the cultural landscape.

Red Genes as Memes in Communist Regimes

Metaphorical Red Genes: - **Xi Jinping's Usage:** When Xi Jinping

talks about "red genes," he refers to the enduring ideological elements of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) – its revolutionary heritage, values, and principles. These elements are not biologically inherited but culturally and ideologically transmitted. - **Red Memes**: These "red genes" are essentially memes that encapsulate the communist ideology, revolutionary spirit, and political doctrines of the CCP, ensuring their replication and survival across generations.

Methods of Transmission: - **Education**: Incorporating communist ideology into school curriculums ensures that young generations are indoctrinated with the party's values from an early age. - **Media and Propaganda**: State-controlled media perpetuate the party's narratives, reinforcing the revolutionary history and achievements of the CCP. - **Cultural Practices**: Public commemorations, patriotic songs, and literature serve as vehicles for transmitting these memes, embedding them in the collective consciousness of the population.

Ensuring Continuity: - **Grooming Leaders**: Future leaders are groomed to uphold and propagate these red memes, ensuring ideological continuity. - **Suppressing Dissent**: The state actively suppresses alternative ideologies to maintain the purity and dominance of the red memes.

Comparison with Meme Theory

Survival and Replication: - **Memes and Genes**: Just as genes compete for survival, memes compete within the cultural space. Memes that resonate with the population or are actively promoted by powerful institutions have higher chances of survival. - **State Control**: In the context of communist regimes, the state plays a significant role in promoting and ensuring the survival of specific memes, like the "red genes," through education, media control, and cultural reinforcement.

Adaptation and Evolution: - **Memetic Evolution**: While memes can evolve and adapt over time, the CCP's approach to the "red gene" involves maintaining ideological purity, limiting mutation and adaptation to ensure the consistent transmission of core values. - **Selective Reinforcement**: The CCP selectively reinforces memes that align with its goals, ensuring that these memes remain dominant and unchallenged.

Implications and Analysis

Cultural and Ideological Indoctrination: - The emphasis on "red genes" underscores the importance of ideological indoctrination in maintaining political control. The deliberate and systematic propagation of these memes ensures the perpetuation of the party's ideology. - By embedding these memes deeply in the cultural fabric, the CCP secures its legitimacy and authority, reducing the likelihood of ideological challenges.

Historical Continuity: - The use of "red genes" highlights a historical continuity in the use of ideology to maintain control. This approach is not unique to China but can be observed in other communist regimes where the propagation of revolutionary memes is crucial for maintaining political stability.

Understanding Through Meme Theory: - **Dawkins' Perspective**: From Dawkins' perspective, the "red genes" can be seen as powerful memes that have successfully replicated and evolved to maintain the dominance of the

CCP's ideology. - **Cultural Impact**: The impact of these memes is profound, shaping not only political structures but also social behaviors, cultural practices, and collective identity.

In conclusion, the concept of "red genes" in communist rhetoric is best understood as a set of powerful memes that are deliberately propagated to ensure the ideological and political continuity of the regime. This understanding, grounded in meme theory, provides valuable insights into the mechanisms of cultural transmission and the role of ideology in maintaining political power.

14 Mao Zedong's phrase “yòu hóng yòu zhuān” translates to "both red and expert" in English. This concept was pivotal in Maoist ideology, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, reflecting Mao's vision for the ideal socialist citizen and cadre.

Meaning and Context

1. **"Red"**: - **Political Loyalty**: The term "red" symbolizes unwavering commitment to communist ideology and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It denotes a deep alignment with the revolutionary goals and socialist values espoused by Mao and the CCP. - **Ideological Purity**: Being "red" implies a strong sense of ideological purity, adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles, and an active participation in the socialist cause.

2. **"Expert"**: - **Technical Proficiency**: The term "expert" represents technical skill, professional competence, and specialized knowledge. In Mao's vision, it was essential for individuals not only to be politically reliable but also to be proficient in their respective fields to contribute effectively to socialist construction. - **Balance**: The ideal was to balance political commitment with technical expertise, ensuring that the workforce was not only loyal but also capable and efficient.

Historical Context

- **Cultural Revolution**: During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Mao emphasized the importance of "red" over "expert." This period saw widespread persecution of intellectuals and professionals who were seen as insufficiently "red," leading to a significant disruption in education and professional sectors. The slogan "red and expert" was used to encourage the alignment of technical skills with political loyalty, but often, ideological purity was prioritized over expertise. - **Educational and Professional Policy**: The phrase influenced policies in education and employment, where the selection and promotion of individuals were based on their political credentials as much as their professional qualifications. This led to a culture where political indoctrination was a significant component of educational curricula and professional training.

Implementation and Consequences

- **Revolutionary Committees**: The establishment of revolutionary committees in workplaces and educational institutions was aimed at ensuring that political ideology permeated all aspects of life. These committees were responsible for maintaining the "red and expert" balance by overseeing both political and professional aspects of the institution. - **Long-term Impact**: The emphasis on being "red and expert" had lasting effects on China's development. While it aimed to integrate political ideology with technical expertise, the Cultural Revolution's prioritization of political loyalty over expertise led to setbacks in scientific, educational, and technological advancements.

Modern Perspective

Today, the phrase "red and expert" serves as a historical reminder of the efforts to merge political ideology with professional competence during Mao's era. It underscores the complexities and challenges of integrating ideological commitment with practical skills in the context of state governance and development.

15 The concepts of "red genes" and "red memes" as symbols of political despotic power and the mechanisms for establishing state control over the economy and society in China can be traced back through various dynasties. From the Qin Dynasty to Xi Jinping's contemporary regime, these symbols have represented efforts to eliminate property rights, undermine the rule of law, and strengthen despotic and totalitarian rule. Here is a detailed examination of how this theme has manifested across different Chinese dynasties:

Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) - **Centralization of Power**: The Qin Dynasty, under Qin Shi Huang, was the first to unify China, implementing a centralized bureaucratic system. This centralization eliminated the feudal system, consolidating power directly under the emperor. - **Legalism**: The state adopted Legalism, emphasizing strict laws and harsh punishments. This ideology helped the Qin eliminate property rights and enforce state control over all aspects of life, suppressing any form of dissent.

Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) - **Continued Centralization**: Although the Han Dynasty incorporated Confucian principles, it retained the

centralized bureaucratic structure established by the Qin. The emperor held absolute power, with a strong central government controlling land and resources. - **Imperial Confucianism:** While Confucianism provided a moral framework, it also reinforced the hierarchical structure, ensuring loyalty to the emperor and limiting individual property rights.

Tang Dynasty (618–907) - **Economic and Cultural Flourishing:** The Tang Dynasty saw significant development, yet the state maintained tight control over the economy, including monopolies on salt and iron production. - **Centralized Bureaucracy:** The Tang expanded the examination system, ensuring that officials were loyal to the central authority, thereby reinforcing state control over local governance.

Song Dynasty (960–1279) - **Economic Innovations:** The Song Dynasty introduced paper money and advanced trade, but the state regulated these innovations, maintaining control over economic activities. - **Civil Service Exam:** The merit-based civil service system further centralized power, ensuring that government officials were aligned with the state's interests.

Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) - **Mongol Rule:** The Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty continued the centralization of power, imposing strict controls over the Chinese populace and economy. - **Economic Policies:** The Yuan maintained state monopolies over key resources, such as salt and iron, ensuring that economic power remained under state control.

Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) - **Autocratic Rule:** The Ming Dynasty reinforced centralization, with the emperors exercising absolute control. Economic activities were heavily regulated by the state. - **Isolationism:** Policies like the maritime ban restricted trade, further consolidating state control over the economy and preventing the rise of independent commercial power.

Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) - **Expansion and Control:** The Qing Dynasty expanded China's territory and continued to exercise strict control over the economy and society. Trade was regulated through systems like the Canton System. - **Bureaucratic Control:** The Qing maintained a centralized bureaucracy, ensuring that all significant economic and social decisions were made by the state.

Mao Zedong Era (1949–1976) - **Communist Revolution:** Mao's establishment of the People's Republic of China marked the height of state control. Campaigns like the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution aimed to eliminate private property and enforce communist ideology. - **Propaganda and Indoctrination:** The term "red genes" originated in this era, symbolizing loyalty to the Communist Party. The state used propaganda to indoctrinate the populace with communist values.

Deng Xiaoping and Beyond (1978–2012) - **Economic Reforms:** While Deng Xiaoping introduced market reforms, the state retained significant control over the economy. The concept of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" ensured that the Communist Party maintained its grip on power. - **Ideological Control:** Despite economic liberalization, the CCP continued to control ideological discourse, preventing any challenge to its authority.

Xi Jinping Era (2012–Present) - **Reassertion of Control:** Xi Jin-

ping has reasserted centralized control, emphasizing the importance of the "red gene" to ensure the continuity of CCP ideology. - ****Intensified Propaganda:**** Under Xi, propaganda efforts have intensified to promote the CCP's historical narrative and ideological purity. The state uses education, media, and cultural initiatives to reinforce loyalty to the party.

Conclusion From the Qin Dynasty to Xi Jinping's modern China, the concepts of "red genes" and "red memes" symbolize a continuous thread of centralized, despotic control. This historical pattern shows how China's rulers have used ideology and state power to maintain authority over the economy and society, ensuring the perpetuation of their rule across millennia. These themes have consistently involved the elimination of property rights and the suppression of the rule of law to strengthen despotic and totalitarian rule.