Document C: Newspaper Article:

The following newspaper article was written in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976 CE), a time of very severe government censorship. People who criticized the government were often punished by the state. The article’s author analyzes Confucian criticism of Qin and the fall of the empire.

On the question of the causes of the downfall of the Qin dynasty, the first fallacy fabricated by the reactionary Confucian scholars was the “theory that the Legalist line destroyed Qin.” . . . Actually the opposite was true. Originally, Qin was a small feudal state in the western part of China. Until the early years of the Warring States period, it was still rather backward, and was looked upon by the various eastern states as a “barbarian” country. Later, Qin . . . implemented the Legalist line and, as a consequence, rapidly became strong and prosperous. Qin Shi Huang was an outstanding statesman of the Legalist school. Within a short period of time he unified the six states and established the first centralized feudal state. . . . However, Qin Shi Huang had one great flaw: he did not strike at the opposition hard enough, or suppress them thoroughly. After the establishment of the Qin dynasty, he forcibly moved 120,000 influential and wealthy families from all parts of the country to Xiangyang, thus forcing them to move far away from their old homes . . . But the Qin government did not adopt effective measures for exercising dictatorship over these reactionary slave owners.

Source: T’an Hsiao-Wen, “A Refutation of Some Confucian Fallacies Concerning the Causes of the Downfall of the Ch’in Dyansty,” Kuang-ming jih-pao (Enlightenment Daily), September 1, 1974, Peking.

Comprehension and Analysis Questions:

1. When was this document written? What was going on in China at the time it was written?
2. How might this have influenced what Hsiao-Wen wrote about the fall of the Qin Dynasty?
3. Why do you think the author of the article wrote that Confucian scholars had fabricated a fallacy?