Shi Huang di and the Qin Dynasty

Directions: Read each document and answer the question(s) that follow. Then consider which enduring issues are present in the document, select your top two choices, and write them in the chart below. When selecting you enduring issues, choose from the following list:

**Conflict - Desire for Power - Inequality - Need for and Impact of Innovation**  
**Impact of Interconnectedness - Impact of Ideas and Beliefs - Environmental Impact**  
**Scarcity - Population Growth**

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After reading all five documents and completing the above chart, select the ONE enduring issue that you believe is best expressed in the document set on Shi Huang di and give evidence from three different documents to support your choice.

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Document #1: Great Wall of China

Context: Though the beginning of the Great Wall of China can be traced to the third century B.C.E., many of the fortifications included in the wall date from hundreds of years earlier, when China was divided into a number of individual kingdoms during the so-called Warring States Period. Around 220 B.C., Qin Shi Huangdi, the first emperor of a unified China, ordered that earlier fortifications between states be removed and a number of existing walls along the northern border be joined into a single system that would extend for more than 10,000 li (a li is about one-third of a mile) and protect China against attacks from the north. When Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi ordered construction of the Great Wall around 221 B.C., the labor force that built the wall was made up largely of soldiers and convicts. It is said that as many as 400,000 people died during the wall's construction; many of these workers were buried within the wall itself. Construction continued up to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), when the Great Wall became the world's largest military structure. Today, the Great Wall is generally recognized as one of the most impressive architectural feats in history.

1. Why did Shi Huangdi have existing walls joined into one single wall?

2. What happened to many of the laborers that built the Great Wall of China?
1. What ended in 221 BCE?

2. Why did this end in 221 BCE?
Documents #3: Standardization of Chinese Culture

Image 1: Unification of currency. Bronze banliang coin. China, Qin dynasty, Third century BCE. The Chinese inscription on this coin reads banliang, with ban to the right of the hole and liang to the left. Banliang means "half-ounce" — the weight of the coin.


Image 2: Unification of weights and measurements. Officials throughout China would have used this same weight to measure goods.

Source: Courtesy National Palace Museum/Taipei City, Taiwan. http://www.c3teachers.org/inquiries/china/

Image 3: Vehicles of the same track. The Qin dynasty expanded the number of roads in the empire and standardized how the roads were built.

1. List 4 things that Shi Huang di standardized in China?

2. How did the building of canals benefit the Chinese people?
Legalism was a school of Chinese philosophy that grew popular during the turbulent Warring States era (475–221 BCE) through the influence of the philosophers Shang Yang, Li Si, and Han Feizi. Legalism influenced the government of the Qin Dynasty (221–207 BCE). The Legalists believed that human beings are inherently selfish and short-sighted. Thus there can be no social harmony by choice. Instead, social harmony is achieved, through strict laws, a strong central control and absolute obedience to authority. The Legalists advocated for a government that handed out strict punishments and rewards for specific behaviors. They stressed the direction of all human activity toward the goal of increasing the power of the ruler and the state.

Adapted from: http://www.britannica.com/topic/Legalism

1. What did legalist philosophers think about human beings?

2. As a Legalist, what did Shi Huang di believe was necessary to achieve social harmony?

3. What did legalists think was the goal of all human activity?
Document #5: Book Burning and Executing Scholars

"I humbly propose that all historical records but those of Qin be burned. If anyone who is not a court scholar dares to keep the ancient songs, historical records or writings of the hundred schools, these should be confiscated and burned by the provincial governor and army commander. Those who in conversation dare to quote the old songs and records should be publicly executed [Chinese tradition claims that 460 rebellious Confucian scholars were buried alive in a common grave and many others were stoned to death]; those who use old precedents to oppose the new order should have their families wiped out; and officers who know of such cases but fail to report them should be punished in the same way."

1. Which historical records were burned?

2. What was done to Confucian scholars (and their families) who challenged the "new order" (Shi Huang di and the Qin dynasty)?