

# Agitation and science

## Maoist Information Web Site

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In response to the media spectacle of events in Tibet and protests around the Olympics, articles have appeared suggesting that China treats its internal nationalities better than the West treats its own internal nationalities and people in countries it has attacked and occupied; other articles point out that the West opposes or fails to support many non-Tibetan independence and separatist movements. These articles criticize Western hypocrisy. The articles raise the question: How could communists do better in their agitation in the First World? The Chinese government claiming to be Marxist is actually revisionist, and China is not a socialist country.

Basically, the answer is that they cannot do better, and it is because the West is comprised of imperialist countries whose populations are mostly exploiters, not proletarians. Exploiters can be pitted against each other or calmed by articles about hypocrisy. Exploiters cannot be united behind some anti-revisionist communist banner.

MIWS will use Floyd Rudmin's article "The Hypocrisy and Danger of Anti-China Demonstrations" as an example.<sup>(1)</sup> The article says that the West commits worst crimes against humanity, says that China treats minorities better than "most Western nations," points out that separatism is not unique to China, and tells people attacking China over Tibet to restrain themselves and prioritize other things. The article and the Web sites on which it appears do not claim to be communist, and MIWS does not know Rudmin to be a communist, but the article works. The article appears on Web sites that also contain pro-Dalai Lama material; this represents the kind of change that is possible in public opinion in the First World.

Rudmin's article works, but it would not work as well in a Maoist publication. First of all, the article, to justify the current Chinese government's maintaining "social order," implies that socialism in China was disorder and contributed to the killing of millions of people, and there are various ideological problems that would make the article unsuitable. But in addition, if an article like this can work outside a Maoist context, then there is no need for a watered-down version of a similar article to be in a "Maoist" newspaper; in fact, it would be counterproductive. First World exploiters are

not going to be persuaded by a Maoist argument. The "Maoist" banner should be reserved for ideas that do not and cannot appear elsewhere. If there is nothing unique about "Maoist" agitation, then it does not need to be called Maoist. This is also a matter of not watering down Maoism.

The wrong way to approach Rudmin's article would be to go sentence by sentence and check it for ideological and factual problems. It obviously is not Maoist, and presenting the article's errors to the public, as if liberal democracy, with its supposed values of truth and reason, in the First World were not mostly a myth and a majority of First Worlders cared about the truth, would be delusional. First Worlders do not care about, or have an interest in, answering historical and theoretical questions enough to make intellectual and social progress. First Worlders are already anti-communist, and that is not going to change until their situation becomes dire; public opinion change must take place with this constraint.

Most public opinion struggles in the First World cannot be openly led by communists. The class basis for such leadership is not there, and contradictions in the First World are intra-bourgeois. Instead, communists can carry out agitation anonymously, infiltrating the bourgeoisie's discourse without trying to turn the bourgeoisie into communists. In some cases, "agitation" is not really an appropriate description of public opinion struggle. It would be better if First Worlders were not politicized about international issues, and so articles that tell people to shut up about Tibet have a role. It is not that scientific communists necessarily want First Worlders to do something about Tibet specifically or are trying to get First Worlders to become anti-imperialist activists in all public opinion struggles.

Anti-China chauvinism in the First World is connected to a general militarist climate that also affects countries other than China. In this context, China's internal situation is irrelevant. Anti-China chauvinism must be opposed for the sake of opposing militarism. Chinese revisionism must be dealt with in Maoist publications and in party-building, but there is not some proletarian movement in the First World waiting to be unleashed by discussing the revisionism of the Chinese government with a popular public opinion campaign against Chinese revisionism, and Westerners without espionage resources are in no position to be purporting to support particular proletarian forces in China in Tibet struggles.

It should be remembered that fake Maoists are putting on an act of opposing both U.S. imperialism and the Iranian government, while disseminating anti-united-front

ideas in the international communist movement (while supporting strategic and tactical so-called creativity and domestic and international maneuvering), and contributing to a reactionary trend in public opinion. Some of these fake Maoists now claim, using chauvinist reasoning and non-reasoning (not Maoist analysis and criteria and thorough consideration of their own countries' international economic position), that China is imperialist. While China and Iran are being treated in different ways by imperialists, and Iran is in a more precarious situation, some acceptance of, or passivity toward, what these fake Maoists have done involves a careless mixing of agitation and party-building. People combining agitation with communist-ideology-building in the First World are less able to discern when others do so in a way that supports imperialism, and blurring party-building with agitation holds back scientific advancement. It is increasingly clear that incorrect orientations on agitation, party-building, and science, are partly responsible for the current problems of the international so-called communist movement.

Without a grasp of the need for the division strategy in the First World (not uniting First Worlders under the leadership of the proletariat), one may carry out public opinion campaigns as if the proletariat were unevenly distributed in the world, the principal contradiction weren't between imperialism and the oppressed nations, and oppressed nations weren't in the crosshairs of imperialism. Strategy reflects theory and analysis, and wrong strategy with a tenuous connection to correct theory can lead to worse strategy and even counterrevolution. One can start with a correct view of class structure, but adopt a strategy that does not correspond to that view and end up supporting imperialism.

Articles about the reaction over Tibet are a reminder of why MIWS does not have a Web page for agitation, beside its news page, which is more instructive than agitational. Most agitation is best done outside of a Maoist Web site. Rudmin's article and articles criticizing the Tibet reaction from various other angles are not Maoist, but one can imagine that some were written or published by Maoists anonymously or people influenced by Maoists. If they were not, then Maoists may be able to prioritize other work, because others are already doing public-opinion-related activity that is helpful to the oppressed.

In the past, Maoist newspapers have been used for agitation. A newspaper can be a way of communicating analysis of events and developments to others in a party or movement. A communist newspaper can also be a place for needed agitational

material difficult to disseminate by other means. However, one practice is for agitation to be overly connected to the communist party and to party-building. The underlying line is that agitation is a path to theory or party membership, despite the First World's having an exploiter majority. If such a line were articulated and its scope and implementation were carefully circumscribed, MIWS would object to it less, particularly for outside of the Internet, where a party may be able to carry out the line with success. What is more concerning is when agitation is blurred with theory, and not just theory, but even the production of theory. The production of theory should be separate from agitation (except, obviously, where agitational practice is related to theory and agitation is intended to answer a theoretical question about agitation).

Under the Maoist banner, First World Maoists should first and foremost be promoting science. Other struggles can be carried out in other contexts. First World Maoism is not watery unity, which is a result of relating agitation to Maoism in an incorrect way, or prioritizing an organizational or leadership struggle in the majority-exploiter First World. One could argue that people get to science through agitation, but without clear examples of science, "Maoism" becomes watered down. There are indications of people's confusing agitation with Maoism as a whole, leading to the emergence of non-scientific people claiming to uphold contemporary Maoist positions. Blurring scientific struggle, and science production, with public-opinion-creation, has the potential to exacerbate the problem and is a particularly troubling instance of failing to separate public-opinion-creation from party-building.

In regard to whether there is any relationship between agitation and party-building in the First World other than a party's being needed to do agitation, again class structure has to be kept in mind. In limited contexts, a party may be able to take people from the pre-communist phase to the pre-scientific communist phase and then to the scientific communist phase by starting with agitation, but it is doubtful that people in the First World can go from agitation to scientific communism, much less stay there, without a long period of learning. The notion that one can become scientific-communist after only reading agitational articles and one organization's ideological and theoretical pronouncements is mistaken. Without a revolutionary situation and class structure, becoming scientific-communist in the First World is a lengthy process.

In conclusion, effective public-opinion-creation is not always going to be connected to building a party or building for a party. The Tibet spectacle serves to illustrate how creating public opinion may be accomplished within the dynamics of the

bourgeoisie's own ideas and demands. Most people in the First World are imperialist exploiters, and this has a profound influence on the success of chosen strategies and tactics, including those of public-opinion-creation. In the First World, work publicized under the Maoist banner is mostly meant to promote science or its advancement.

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## Notes

1. Floyd Rudmin, "The Hypocrisy and Danger of Anti-China Demonstrations," Global Research Web site, 2008 April 18, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=RUD20080418&articleId=8731>