

# The British role in creating Maoism

by Michael Billington

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, China became the training center for many of the emerging terrorist operations under British sponsorship across the globe. In that light, it is important to note that the British played a crucial role in the creation and nurture of the Communist Party of China, and what became known as Maoism, as one of the myriad parts of the “balance of power” structures created during the Versailles Treaty process following World War I. The British, at that historical turning point, were particularly concerned that Dr. Sun Yat-sen, China’s foremost republican leader, might succeed in his ambition to modernize and unite China through his unique combination of the Confucian moral tradition, the Christian humanist tradition from the Renaissance, and the American System of Political Economy. Such a policy would have put China on a course to becoming a major power in the world, which would have severely disturbed London’s preferred “balance.” In practice, this “balance of power” kept the British in control, not by means of a superior culture, but by destroying any emerging power, while draining resources from subjugated colonies or semi-colonies.

Sun Yat-sen’s program for China envisioned the development of all of Asia in collaboration with republican forces in Europe and the United States. This was considered to be the greatest conceivable danger to the continued world domination of British financial power. As was the usual British policy, while taking certain direct measures against Sun’s organization, they also set in motion the creation of a radical counter-revolutionary force against Sun’s Nationalist Party, to prevent the emergence of a strong republican China.

The result was Maoism, which, like the British-trained jacobins who created the Terror during the French Revolution, functioned over the next half-century to turn China back to a primitivist hell, culminating in the nightmare of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution. It was during the peak of that nightmare that the British deployed the leaders of nascent terrorist movements from around the world to China for training.

The British East India Company, which increasingly controlled China over the nineteenth century following the 1842 Opium War, actually began the process which led to Maoism in 1877, when they sent a young radical Chinese opium addict, Yen Fu, to England for training. Yen Fu’s job was to translate the most important works of British empiricism, such as those of Herbert Spencer and Adam Smith, both to

inundate the young intelligentsia of China with hedonistic, irrationalist dogma, and to give the Chinese the false impression that this British, Aristotelian philosophy was one and the same as “western thought,” and in particular, that this actually anti-scientific ideology had been the basis of the development of modern science and industrial economies.

Although Sun Yat-sen, perhaps more than any other twentieth-century world leader, understood the evil of the British Empire and of British empiricist ideology, the majority of the young Chinese intellectuals in the early decades of the twentieth century were deeply influenced by British radical liberalism. However, when the Versailles Treaty confirmed Sun Yat-sen’s most dire warnings about the British intentions to preserve and extend colonial power in China, the Chinese exploded in rage. A student revolt, similar to the Beijing Spring of 1989 that ended in the June 4 massacre at Tiananmen Square, spread from Beijing University throughout China. This uprising, launched on May 4, 1919, and the political movements of the following few years, are known to history as the May 4th Movement. The potential that this movement would lead to a republican nationalist upsurge in support of Dr. Sun and his ideas was considered a serious threat to the British-led colonial powers.

## Russell and Dewey in China

To meet this “threat” required, primarily, cultural warfare. To this end, Britain deployed into China the most evil figure of the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell. He was joined by the founder of the American school of Pragmatism, John Dewey, whose life’s work was the destruction of Classical education. Dewey doubled as a journalist and promoter of the policies of the Anglo-American banking houses running the rape of China—in particular, his friends at the House of Morgan.

Russell and Dewey, in China during the crucial 1919-21 period, together led the effort to turn the May 4th Movement away from the republican principles of Dr. Sun. The writings of both had already been translated and widely circulated in China during the 1910s. From their classes in Beijing and Shanghai, emerged the core leadership of a communist movement.

Sun Yat-sen had drawn on the best of the humanist traditions in both Chinese Confucian culture and western Christian culture, while rejecting the opposing oligarchical traditions of western Aristotelianism and its Chinese equivalent, Legalism and Taoism. Russell and Dewey did exactly the opposite. Confucianism and Christianity were blamed for backwardness in China, while Russell and Dewey insisted that any progress would depend upon the adoption of the libertarian, free-trade dogma of the British radical philosophers, and the return to the “pragmatic” form of government of the Legalists and the “anti-authoritarian” mysticism of Taoism.

Russell was sponsored on his trip by the Anti-Religion

Society, arriving immediately following a tour of Russia. While formally critical of some aspects of the Bolshevik leadership in Russia, he praised their organization and their purpose, while introducing Marxist and Leninist ideas to China through his classes. He argued that although Bolshevism could not prevail in western Europe, it could be usefully applied in China at its current stage of development. (Mao's later disagreement with Russell was limited to which *tactics* were best suited for the implementation of communism in China.)

Russell espoused the racist, colonialist notion of the "noble savage"—that the backward natives of colonial nations are actually far better off in their backwardness, without being subjected to the evils of scientific and technological development. British rule over these backward nations was considered an unwanted but necessary task—the "white man's burden."

Russell, like Mao after him, praised the Legalist Emperor Ch'in Shi-huang who had burned the Confucian Classics and buried the Confucian scholars alive. He despised the Confucian influence and its moral tradition, complaining that "the Chinese have not yet grasped that man's morals in the mass are the same everywhere: They do as much harm as they dare, and as much good as they must."

Russell proposed that "China needs a period of anarchy in order to work out her salvation."

## The Cultural Revolution

Russell's work reached its fulfillment in the Cultural Revolution, under Mao: the destruction of the family as demanded by Russell, with children coerced to condemn their parents for crimes such as the pursuit of Classical learning (either western or Chinese); the destruction of advanced learning, as the schools were shut down and students sent to the country to "learn from the peasantry," in keeping with Dewey's dictate to "learn by doing"; Malthusian policies of birth control, with the initiation of the policy of limiting the number of children permitted each family; millions of youth, worked up into a frenzy of "anti-authoritarian" rage, wandered through the country in mobs, destroying books and objects of art, and torturing or killing whomever they chose. Mao's cohorts even carried out an "Anti-Confucius Campaign" against intellectuals and the Classics, praising the tyrant Ch'in Shi-huang for burying the Confucian scholars alive. Said Mao: "Emperor Ch'in buried alive only 460 scholars; we have buried 46,000 scholars. But haven't we killed counter-revolutionary intellectuals?"

It was during this era that Pol Pot of the Khmer Rouge, Abimael Guzmán of the Shining Path, and dozens of other terrorists came to China for training, usually under the sponsorship of London. Simultaneously, the emerging "liberation theology" movement launched into an international campaign to glorify Maoism, describing the Cultural Revolution as a utopian heaven.

# RU/RCP: anatomy of a Maoist countergang

**Name of group:** Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), formerly Revolutionary Union (RU).

**Also known as:** Fight Back, Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, Revolutionary Communist Workers Brigade, Rich Off Our Backs, Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee, U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association, Revolution Books, China Books, Organizing Committee for a World Without Imperialism Contingent (WWIC), Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru, No Business As Usual.

**Headquarters:** 3449 North Sheffield, Chicago, Illinois. As of 1992, RCP had offices in 16 U.S. cities: Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco/Berkeley, Washington, Miami, Atlanta, Honolulu, Baltimore, Cambridge/Boston, Detroit, New York City, Cleveland, Portland, Oregon, Philadelphia, Houston, and Seattle.

**Date of founding:** Originally called Revolutionary Union, it was founded in 1969 as a Maoist splinter out of pro-terrorist RYM II faction of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

**Location of operations:** In addition to U.S. cities listed above, RCP is active in western Europe, particularly in France, Germany, and England. As a result of 1981 criminal indictments of RCP National Chairman Robert Avakian and other leaders, for their break-in to White House grounds during a Presidential ceremony in the Rose Garden, Avakian and others fled the U.S. and have been living in exile in Paris.

### Major terrorist actions:

August 1971: RU cell in Reading, Pennsylvania is running explosives to left- and right-wing terrorist groups, including the Weatherunderground, Puerto Rican terrorists, and Ku Klux Klan, throughout the United States and Canada. Explosives provided by Reading, Pa., RU leaders Bertram Jones, Thomas Kanger, and James Colbert, are used by KKK terrorist Charles Simms to blow up 14 schoolbuses in Pontiac, Michigan, to stop racial integration through busing.

1972: RU personnel are involved in the phony "Black September" Arab terrorist cell based in Montreal. Planned terrorist attacks against prominent American Jewish targets were foiled by diligent U.S. law enforcement. The cell's controllers include prominent Canadian China lobby figures James Endicott, Chester Ronning, and Paul Lin; and the phony "Black September" operation was authorized by National Security Adviser Henry A. Kissinger. One incident believed to be linked to RU-linked "Black September" cell is the summer 1973 shooting of Israeli Col. Josef Alan near Washington, D.C.