

Communist March in Brooklyn Sets Off Alarm Bells

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Chinese Communist Party flag displayed at the Beijing Exhibition Center on Oct 10, 2017. (Wang Zhao/AFP via Getty Images)

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3/18/2024 Updated: 3/18/2024

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News Analysis

On Feb. 25, hundreds of marchers carrying red flags with scythes and hammers appeared in Brooklyn, New York, shouting slogans for a communist revolution, which attracted a lot of attention. The public

appearance of communist organizations and communist marches in the United States may come as a surprise to many people, especially the Chinese, but the United States is, in fact, one of the countries that the international communist movement pays the most attention to. So, what kind of organization is the Revolutionary Communists of America? What is the history of this party? What is its relationship to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? How much political influence can they exert in the United States in the future?

Development of Communism in Europe and US

Guo Jun, president of the Hong Kong edition of The Epoch Times, said on the “Pinnacle View” TV program that this group of American communists proposed a new party name, adding the word “revolutionary” before “Communists,” which suggests that it may be more dangerous than the traditional American Communist Party.

“This group of so-called communists, about 100 people, held meetings and marches in Brooklyn, New York, shouting the slogan that the communist revolution is the only way out. In addition to this group of people, they held concurrent meetings in several other cities. Information from their websites showed that there were about 1,000 to 2,000 people in total, and they proposed to form a new communist party called the Revolutionary Communist Party,” she said.

According to Ms. Guo, the addition of the word “revolutionary” is presumably intended to distinguish it from the former Communist Party. “The former American Communist Party was headquartered in Manhattan, and its goal was to participate in elections and eventually win seats in Congress, which was a legitimate struggle. In fact, the history of the American Communist Party is very long. It is very likely that the newly formed Revolutionary Communist Party will be different from its predecessors in that the so-called revolution means violent revolution, armed struggle, bloodshed, and the red coloring of its flag, and so it may be more dangerous than the traditional Communist Party of the United States,” Ms. Guo cautioned.

She also recounted the history of the communist movement and its divergence in different countries and at different stages.

“According to Marx’s idea, which is traditional communism, communists should first gain power in one or more developed countries in Europe, and then spread to other countries in other regions through enhanced productivity. Therefore, the first to enter socialism should be the most developed capitalist societies, naturally France, Germany, Britain, Italy, etc. In Marx’s time, the United States was still relatively backward, so it was not in his scope of consideration, and of course, Russia was even more out of the scope of consideration, because Russia was even more backward. It is also because Russia was backward that when Lenin seized power by force in the October Revolution and established a socialist state with violence and bloodshed, it was actually very controversial among European Marxists. Because Russia was not developed capitalism at all, but Lenin succeeded, so Lenin’s approach was singled out as Leninism. China’s situation was even worse. Mao Zedong seized power not by relying on workers but on backward peasants, and he also invented the guerrilla warfare tactic of surrounding cities from the countryside, which is essentially terrorism. However, he was successful in his endeavors, so he was labeled as Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism to represent his way of actions.”

Ms. Guo discussed the divergence in the development of communism and the different communist models in European countries and the United States.

“In those developed capitalist countries in Europe, socialist movements characterized by the model of moderate transformation emerged, the most famous of which was the Fabian Society in Britain,” she said. “This movement was popular in Europe, but the political parties representing it were not called communist but socialist, and in Britain, they were called the Labor Party. The CCP collectively calls these movements revisionism and denies that they are authentic Marxism.”

Ms. Guo continued to say that the situation was different in the United States, where certain socialist policies were introduced in the 1930s.

After Roosevelt came to power in 1932 in the midst of the Great Depression, he reformed the primitive capitalist system in the United States, such as welfare reform, social insurance, trade union rights, and so on. However, on the whole, Americans were not very accepting

of egalitarianism and socialism, which was an unfavorable factor for the revolution-minded Communist Party, she said.

“But as we have seen in the last decade or so, more and more young Americans believe in communism, but once this group of people enters society, most of them will change their minds. In fact, in the 1960s and 1970s, there were many young people who believed in communism, and they even had revolutionary bases in the United States. They even made bombs and robbed bank delivery vans, but these people later changed their views,” Ms. Guo continued. “I think that the group of Americans who propose the establishment of a revolutionary communist party this time are mostly young Caucasians. I think they are likely to be more violent and more in line with the agenda of the CCP, which makes them even more dangerous.”

Shi Shan, an expert on China issues and senior editor at The Epoch Times, said on “Pinnacle View” that the U.S. government must be on guard because the Communist Party is an armed rebel organization.

“One very important point is that the American Communist Party used to be under the direct leadership of the Communist International or the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In particular, it received a lot of money every year, and it practiced Marxism-Leninism. Lenin’s most important theory is the seizure of power by armed force, that is, armed rebellion. If there is an armed rebellion in any country, I think the government of that country will be very, very nervous. But in any case, the communist movement and the American Communist Party are still far from those in Europe. For example, I remember that in France, Italy, and even Spain, many of these organizations, which are directly called the Communist Party, used to be the second largest party, and they had a lot of seats in parliament. Some parties, like the Labor Party in Britain, had Marxism at their core, just that it took the form of the Fabian Society movement. In contrast, the Communist Party of the United States had basically no electoral success at all,” he said.

Independent TV producer Li Jun discussed the history of communism in the United States from another perspective on “Pinnacle View.”

The earliest precursor to American Communism, the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), was founded in 1887 and was not yet called the Communist Party. By 1919, various factions gave rise to the Communist

Party and the Communist Labor Party of the United States, which merged into the United Communist Party of America under Soviet directives. In 1921, some American Communists formed the Workers Party of the United States, which aligned itself with Communist ideology. The two parties eventually merged again around 1929, by which time the American Communist Party was essentially stabilized, Mr. Li said.

The 1930s marked the zenith of the Communist Party in America, bolstered during the Great Depression as disappointment with capitalism led to a surge in membership, peaking at 100,000. However, the Cold War era saw a decline, with membership dwindling to 5,000-10,000. Reports indicated that many members were actually FBI agents who closely monitored their activities, so the Communist Party of the United States slowly turned into a clandestine, underground party.

“But after the 1950s and 1960s, there were changes again, and many organizations didn’t necessarily appear in the name of the Communist Party, but they spread communist ideas in many areas, and they did cultural infiltration and subversion of the United States,” Mr. Li continued. “In 2016, there was a documentary called ‘Agenda: Grinding America Down,’ which talked about this infiltration process, and it said that the American Communist Party wanted to subvert the United States step by step through cultural infiltration, and they had set up many subversion targets. It is said that there are 45 specific goals, including support for homosexuality, support for environmentalism, support for women’s rights, equality for minorities, elimination of the right to pray in schools, and so on. They have set a series of goals to gradually transform the United States into what they want. The producer of the documentary said that he was shocked to see that many of the goals set by the Communist Party have been realized in the United States.”

Lack of Reflection a Recipe for Disaster

Current affairs commentator Heng He stressed that the lack of reflection on communism has allowed the communist ideology to go rampant in the West.

“After the fall of the Soviet Union, the whole world did not reflect on communism, thinking that there would be no more communism. This lack of reflection has led to the unchecked development of the communist movement. As a matter of fact, many people who are not explicitly affiliated with a particular party are inclined to communist ideology, and they have promoted communist ideology and communist education wherever possible. Progressivism, for example, is one of them,” he said, adding that American universities are among the worst affected.

He further noted that the lack of reflection on communism has also led to a lack of understanding of the threat posed by the CCP.

“At present, only a small number of people in the elite have realized the danger of the CCP, but the vast majority of Americans still think that the relationship between the United States and communism is one of competition. This has led to the promotion of the communist movement, the promotion of their ideology, which is very difficult to stop because they are pervasive, ubiquitous, and they have a very sophisticated infiltration program,” Mr. Heng said.

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