



Chinese Activists Coming to America

A report back that includes meetings, what they saw, dialogues with U.S. activists, and finally, what we can learn from each other

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While millions of tourists, students and business people travel between China and the U.S. every year, grassroots activists from both countries rarely meet face-to-face for political dialogues.

With increased tension between U.S. and North Korea, China bashing, Trump's war rhetoric heard loud and clear across Asia, honest, in-depth and even controversial dialogues between Chinese and U.S. activists are increasingly necessary.

Lee Siu Hin, a long-time Chinese American activist, began organizing activist delegations to and from the U.S. and China. After the first successful and historical U.S. grassroots activists' delegation to China last July (see previous article), a small Chinese activist delegation visited the U.S. between November 8 and 18. They met with different activists from across the Southwest, attended a protest, volunteered in a soup kitchen, and slept at the activists' homes.

Chinese Are Coming !

This delegation represented today's broad-based Chinese left-wing and Maoist cyber activism.

Zhao Shan is a left-wing media activist from Shanghai, China, and a retired state enterprise worker who currently runs a website that sponsors regular social events for middle or older generation Chinese left-wing/Maoist communities. They hosted our last U.S. delegation meeting in Shanghai.

Li Yuqiao is a left-wing media activist from Beijing, China who is a new generation college-educated cyber activist who supports Chinese government policies and the Chinese Communist Party. He was the co-organizer for direct action against the World Bank's former chief Robert Zoellick at a press conference in Beijing in 2012. They hosted our last U.S. delegation meeting in Beijing.

Volunteer Work

Unlike a vacation, the 10-days Chinese activist delegation began by meeting with community activists at Boyle Height's LA Catholic Workers House. They're a progressive religious community who helps homeless people. We stayed at their community house, and went to their soup kitchen in skid row the next morning to help cook and serve food for the homeless people; it helps the delegation understand how U.S. community activists operate.



Activists' Meetings

The delegation met a wide-range of activists from across the country including Los Angeles Asian American labor organizers from SEIU, UTLA and Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-LA Chapter.

In Tucson, Arizona, delegates met activists including a Chinese foreign student at University of Arizona who currently studies environmental science, and volunteer for an immigrant activist group called, "No More Death." We had in-depth discussions about environmental issues and the differences between the Chinese and U.S. left.

US-Mexico Border Protests and Tech-Ins

One of the major goals of the delegation was to attend the School of Americas Watch (SOAW) Border Encuentro, a U.S.-Mexico border mobilization and protest. The event also included a conference with many immigration-related topics, such as DACA. In Tucson, between the meetings, we protested an immigrant court case at a rally at the Federal Court House and later in the afternoon we went to the Eloy Detention Center, an immigration detention facility, for a rally and an inspiring evening performance.

The next morning we went to Nogales, Arizona, a city that strides the U.S. and Mexico border. There we joined a bi-national activist's march to the border wall led by the Veterans for Peace. In the afternoon, we attended a conference at a hotel where there were many immigration-related workshops including mine, "How to achieve multi-ethnic organizing."

On the last day of the three-days encuentro at the U.S.-México border wall, there was a bi-national rally including music, Litany & Presentes and Puppetistas! We met some good activists from Mexico, and it was a very inspiring mobilization for the Chinese delegation to understand how U.S. activist peacefully protest.



Activist Groups

In Tucson, we stayed at Borderlinks, a famous immigrant rights organization building, that has an office in the front and a hostel in the back where we stayed.



Also in Tucson, we had a meeting with Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ), our organization's fiscal sponsor; they also support organizations such as Occupied Wall Street, U.S. Labor Against the War. We visited their large office space, a building that was a former bar-dance club with a large dance hall. Now remodeled, it has become activist's office and gathering space. We also had in-depth exchange between Chinese activists about U.S. activism.



Peace Activism

In Tucson, we were invited to attend a peace vigil at the gate of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, organized by a local group called The Nuclear Resister. It's the first-time that Chinese activists have stood side-by-side with U.S. peace activists to protest in front of a U.S. military base.



Town Hall Meetings

In Oakland, California, we stayed at one of my activist friend, Eugene Ruyle's house. He has a political education table at UC Berkeley every Wednesday at noon and he also run a weekly town hall meeting called "Sunday Morning at the Marxist Library" at the Communist Party-run Niebyl Proctor Marxist Library. He invited us to attend an evening section to discuss "China's historical view of the October Revolution." About twenty people participated; the participants from different left-wing backgrounds were interested in China's view on environmental, labor and One Belt One Road issues.



At the last day of our delegation, we went to UC Santa Cruz, to speak at a lunchtime town hall meeting organized by local activist Sarah Ringler titled, "Understand China, the 19th Party Congress, and the situation on the Korean Peninsula." Over fifty people, mostly students, attended. We had a very good discussion.

U.S. Maoist Organizations

In Berkeley, California, we visited the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP)-run Revolution Bookstore. Chinese Maoist activists had very interesting and long discussions with U.S. Maoists about China-US relations, Maoism and current Chinese socialism.

The delegation also met with another previously unknown U.S.-Maoist organization, Leading Light Communist Organization (LLCO).

It's a very interesting phenomenon because when we were in Los Angeles, many Latino activists told the Chinese delegation that there are several small pockets of youth-led people of color militant gun-carry Maoist groups across the inner city U.S.

Accomplishments, Thankfulness

We successfully organized an historical 10-day Chinese activists' visit and meeting with a wide-range of U.S. activists. We're grateful that U.S. activists have been very friendly and have offered us lots of help. They include Mullaney Hardesty from Phoenix, Arizona who offered to drive us, Lotus Fong, from San Francisco, California, who organized meetings for us, and Eugene Ruyle, Sarah Ringler and the LA Catholic Workers, who without their help, we wouldn't have been able to organize this delegation. It also showed the kind side of the U.S. activists and their solidarity with Chinese activists.

Misunderstanding, Lesson We'd Learned

While we had good dialogues, but we still have many sharp political, economical and ideological differences. Both sides have their own ignorance and prejudices. How to bridge the differences and overcome them is a critical issue.

Western world's left-wing ideology and core values are much different than many Chinese Maoist left-wing values, even completely in the opposite direction. In the U.S. it can be considered as far right, anti-labor, anti-environmental, neo-liberal and anti-fair trade economic policy.

This could be a good discussion for future delegations to discuss how to learn from each other and find common ground to work together.

Future Plans

We'll continue organizing future China delegations, and we're aiming to build a new China-U.S. bi-national activist network. Our next delegation will be from December 26, 2017 to Friday, January 5, 2018. It's called: China: Pearl River Delta Region - Shenzhen, Dongguan, Hong Kong Labor, Globalization, and Migrant Workers. We look forward to having you join us! For more information:

<http://www.ChinaDelegation.org>

Article Link:

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*** About Lee Siu Hin**

Lee was born in Hong Kong from five generations of Chinese migrants from Japan. Lee is a long-time international activist for over 40-years, national coordinator of National Immigrant Solidarity Network, Action LA Network, a coordinating committee member of UFPJ, and long-time reporter for Pacifica Radio KPFK-Los Angeles, reporting from former Yugoslavia, former Soviet Union, Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, and Mexico. Currently, he's traveling between China and the U.S. to organize bi-national activism work as well as medical solidarity projects.