

# Falun Gong: Who is trying to destabilize China?

by Jonathan Tennenbaum

Since the Chinese official banning of the “Falun Gong” cult in late July, China’s political scene has been dominated by the massive government campaign to root out the influence of the Falun Gong sect and a menacing “upsurge of feudal superstition” in the country. Chinese newspapers are daily filled with countless articles exposing and denouncing Falun Gong and its founder Li Hongzhi, against whom the government on July 30 issued an arrest warrant. Not only the large numbers of Falun Gong adherents, but above all the fact that the cult could never have grown so influential, without significant protection and support from within the Communist Party and government apparatus up to a high level, has made the Falun Gong affair potentially the most significant political development in China since the events of 1989.

It would be a grave mistake, however, to regard this as a purely “home-grown” crisis. The timing, circumstances, and key characteristics of the Falun Gong affair fit *perfectly* into the long-standing British strategy to destabilize China. Together with the Chinese Embassy bombing, the provocations of Taiwan’s Li Denghui and other events, it puts additional pressure on those in the leadership who are pursuing a moderate domestic and international policy course, which includes pursuing a positive relationship with President Clinton. Evidence points to a *deep and very high-level operation* linked, among other things, with the long-term effort by circles centered on Britain’s Prince Philip, to propagate “environmentalist” ideology into China—including Prince Philip’s personal emphasis on Buddhism and Daoism as key to organizing of anti-industrial “religious-environmentalist” movements in Asia. Implicated also are channels of influence radiating into China from the powerful Anglo-American mass-media and sports cartel, including especially the British intelligence-linked Hollinger Corporation and operations run out of Australia, as well as via Hong Kong and other present and former British Commonwealth areas.

The most significant factor operating here is not necessarily direct foreign control of Falun Gong (although this cannot be excluded), but rather the uniquely sophisticated British capabilities for *orchestrating* cultural warfare, which are based on thorough study of the historical and cultural vulnerabilities of populations and elites. This applies not only to

the Buddhist-Daoist problem per se, but also to the Chinese leadership’s apparent blindness to the susceptibilities within the party and leadership itself, connected with the influence of Bertrand Russell, Joseph Needham, and others, on leading intellectual strata in China during the early part of this century.

## Wild irrationalism

At first glance, Falun Gong is of the species of wildly irrational Buddhist-Daoist cults which have plagued East Asian societies down through the centuries, and which still flourish throughout the region today. Falun Gong advertises itself as a special, supernaturally powerful variety of *qi gong*, a traditional form of exercise which is widely practiced in China, especially among older people, and considered beneficial to the health. There are countless schools for *qi gong* all over China, and it is here, apparently, that the Falun Gong cult established a mass base.

Li Hongzhi, the founder and exclusive guru of Falun Gong, aspires to be the great transcendent unifier for the otherwise divergent, heteronomic mass of *qi gong* practices and cult beliefs. Li makes wild claims of supernatural powers, attracting people by the claim that the practice of Falun Gong can cure diseases and even make its practitioners invulnerable to disease and environmental pollution. Numerous believers have died after refusing normal medical treatment for their illnesses.

Beyond this, Falun Gong preaches that the planet Earth is about to explode very soon. Li Hongzhi violently denounces modern science and technology, which he claims are responsible for destroying the morality of society. The symbol of Falun Gong features in its middle a large swastika (a traditional Buddhist symbol) surrounded by yin-yang circles. Li Hongzhi cautions that it is not the same as Hitler’s swastika, because people with “special powers” can see that the Falun Gong swastika is rotating! In one direction it absorbs energy from the Universe, and in the other direction it emits energy. Li Hongzhi recommends, for example, that overseas Chinese should not intermarry, in order to maintain their “race character.”

Li Hongzhi’s writings are primitive charlatanry, appealing mainly to the most poorly educated strata in China, especially the older, unemployed, and underemployed, who (among other things) are worried about their health. While Li Hongzhi’s claim of 100 million followers in China appears wildly exaggerated, the official Chinese government press is itself emphasizing that the kind of *destabilizing potential* represented by Falun Gong poses a serious problem, which must be overcome by “popularization of science,” better education, and raising living standards. Quite interesting, in this context, is the unusually prominent role being given to famous Chinese scientists in the public debate over Falun Gong. Evidently, the intention is to go beyond a mere targeting of the cult, to launch an offensive campaign for science.

## Hollinger, Albright rush to defend Li Hongzhi

It was the Hollinger Corporation's London *Daily Telegraph* which first stood up to defend Li Hongzhi personally and condemn the Chinese government's banning of Falun Gong. In a July 27 article based on an interview with Li Hongzhi himself, the *Telegraph* praised Li and his "popular program of breathing exercises and mystic healing," going so far as to claim that Li's own healthy appearance is a "testament to Falun Gong." Among other things, Li Hongzhi, who has up to now insisted that his activities are strictly non-political, is quoted saying: "I don't know why the American government allows so many Chinese intelligence people in the States." Li then calls on Britain "to get involved to stop the Chinese government's brutal actions" against the sect, the which actions he likens to what was done during the Cultural Revolution.

The *Telegraph* article coheres with the reaction of a high-level British insider and China expert in a recent discussion with *EIR*. He condemned the government's action against Falun Gong, and, curiously, likened the situation with the Boxer Rebellion a century ago, "which the government, then, couldn't control." "I am also reminded of the Taiping Rebellion," he commented, "when 25 million people died. These are powerful memories, and history is one of the driving forces in China. We are seeing something that has more to do with the Chinese past than the present. The authorities could

provoke a rebellion by taking stupid action now."

Referring to the psychological impact of the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and the provocative statements of Taiwan's Li Denghui (see "Provocateurs Aim at Carving Up China," *EIR*, July 30, 1999), the British insider said, "Historically, whenever there has been a moment of nationalist-existentialist doubt in China, the country begins to fold internally. I think we are seeing the beginning of that *denouement* now . . . the beginning of an implosion."

## Will the United States fall into the trap?

Whether this wishful but cunning British thinking will come true, is another question; at the moment, the Chinese government appears to have the situation well under control. But in the meantime, U.S. Secretary of State "Mad Madeleine" Albright has already begun dragging the *United States* into the trap of defending Falun Gong. At the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meeting, which began on July 25, she reportedly complained to Chinese Foreign Minister Tang over the Chinese government's handling of the cult. A new, stupid U.S. "human rights" campaign on behalf of Li Hongzhi and his sect, combined with the circumstance that this dangerous charlatan has been living in the United States since 1996, would indeed provide an ideal opportunity to enflame Chinese anger against the United States and distract attention from the British hand in this affair.

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