

A Chinese state media article has defined the pro-democracy movement as a cult and criticized liberal intellectuals, insistent lawyers, and democracy activists, calling them heretics. The article sparked public outcry. Many believe the characteristics of a cult as explained in the article best describe the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

On June 11, the online version of CCP mouthpiece Qiushi Magazine, qstheory.cn, published a commentary entitled, "Why The Pro-Democracy Movement Is A Kind Of Cult." The spread of this article online has led to much condemnation.

The author accused liberal intellectuals as being defensive of their cult. It further claimed that pro-democracy organizations are actually the "hidden cult," the "democracy cult," or the "U.S. interests cult" – which safeguards the interests of the United States.

Wang Tiancheng, former Peking University law lecturer: "How is the pro-democracy movement pursuing US interests? Are there any examples? Many pro-democracy activists were forced to exile to the U.S. but not to safeguard the interests of the U.S. People know many student leaders and activists were forced to leave China because the CCP was trying to catch them. We are seeking freedom and democracy for China. We do not serve the U.S. government. We do not receive money from them either. We are self-reliant."

The author of the article equated liberal intellectuals, lawyers, and pro-democracy activists to cultish terrorists. They were collectively referred to as anti-China political forces causing chaos. The article accuses the U.S. of backing the cult, terrorist groups, activist organizations and the separatist forces. Critics argue that the article intends to confuse the concept of "anti-China" with "anti-communist." It attacks people who dare say no to the CCP regime using Cultural Revolution-style political labels.

It even directs national sentiment to go against the United States. The purpose is to cover up the CCP's ruling crisis caused by the loss of popular support.

Wang Tiancheng: "We are a patriotic democratic movement. We are anti-communism, not anti-China. This distinction must be made. Opposing the CCP and opposing China are different matters. It is an act of patriotism to oppose the CCP. The CCP ruined China."

Zhang Jian, China's social issues researcher: "I think it includes all overseas organizations that dare say no to the CCP regime, religious groups such as Falun Gong, minority ethnic groups, and overseas Chinese Democratic Party organizations. It basically says those who oppose the CCP are anti-China forces. It confuses people endlessly about the concepts of China and the CCP, which are fundamentally different."

The article also claimed that what liberal intellectuals pursue is not freedom, democracy or universal values. Rather, according to the article, they are in pursuit of the core values introduced by the U.S. such as "everyone for himself" "devil take the hindmost," and "selfish power to promote social progress." However, critics argue that the "selfish theory" is precisely the values and ideals the CCP has consistently upheld.

Wang Tiancheng: "The 'everyone for himself' and 'devil take the hindmost,' is in fact the CCP creed. The greedy, corrupt CCP has ignored the long-term interests of the country, refusing to accept the civilized world's rules. It is well known how corrupt the CCP high officials are and how wealthy their families are. They have never done anything an ordinary government should have done in pursuit of public interest."

Zhang Jian: "In the United States, human rights are above all else. The American Constitution clearly defines the God-given human rights and freedom of speech. This article subverts true American values. It discredits Americans, the Chinese in America, and all those who pursue democracy and freedom. It addresses those who pursue democracy and freedom as cult members, while the CCP is the biggest cult in the world."