

Protests and Propaganda

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Poised to gobble up Hong Kong whole, completing the process Britain began when it ceded the colony back to China in 1997, the government of China remains concerned about world opinion, for it engages in massive propaganda.

“When a projectile struck a Hong Kong woman in the eye this week as protesters clashed with the police, China responded quickly,” explains an article in the *New York Times*. “Its state television network reported that the woman had been injured not by one of the police’s bean bag rounds, but by a protester.”

But that’s not the only kind of propaganda. If you have spent any time on Instagram, for example, you have probably seen the

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posts of Chinese people decrying the scandal and shame of how Hong Kongers resist government efforts at hegemony.

There is a name for this latter form of propagandist, “the fifty cent party” because the



Communist Party is said to pay social media users for each pro-government post . . . though almost certainly not 50¢.*

The basic idea, according to General Secretary Xi Jinping, is to “to strengthen media coverage ... use innovative outreach methods ... tell a good Chinese story, and promote China’s views internationally.”

And managing its own population, as when, according to the *Times*, state media “posted what it said was a photo of the woman counting out cash on a Hong Kong sidewalk — insinuating, as Chinese reports have claimed before, that the protesters are merely paid provocateurs.”

These young street protestors are almost certainly not mercenaries, though they have sometimes faced what appear to be hired thugs.

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This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.