

China Already Owns the West

As has become abundantly clear to the American sport-watching public, political movements and causes are all the rage for the multi-millionaire entertainers who play games for a living.

From the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which is now so ubiquitous in sports as to not have a nominal leader, to Milwaukee Brewers' pitcher Brent Suter's movement to [#StrikeOutWaste](#), it has become hard to simply watch a sports game. Woe be it unto you should you bemoan this fact, especially as regards the BLM movement. Don't you care about human rights?

But the fact is that your concern for human rights is only allowed to shift in the preferred direction of the media and entertainment elites who create the content you consume.

Voice concern over western countries' treatment of people from African descent and you are on safe ground.

But voice concern over the Chinese government's treatment of pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong, or of the ethno-religious minority Uighur Muslims and you had better brace yourselves for consequences.

Around this time last year the [NBA was embroiled in controversy](#) when Houston Rockets General Manager Darryl Morey voiced support for pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong. Rockets owner [Tilman Fertitta later claimed](#) that Morey did not speak for the team, and that the Rockets "are NOT a political organization." This year, when the NBA allowed a set of approved social justice methods to appear on the back of players' jerseys, [eight members of the Rockets](#) sported messages including "Black Lives Matter" and "Justice Now."

This sort of hypocrisy stretches across the pond, as the

English Premier League is also engaged in this double standard regarding the acceptability of political messaging.

As [The New York Times reports](#), Arsenal midfielder Mesut Özil has been frozen out of the team, despite being far and away the [highest paid player](#) on the team. In December 2019 Özil made a very public denunciation of China's treatment of the Uighur Muslim minority in Xinjiang, as well as condemning the lack of response from the international community at large.

According to the *Times*, many people close to Özil warned him that making that [Twitter post](#) would bring negative consequences for his career. China is the Premier League's biggest foreign market and immediately scrubbed references to Özil from its state censored internet, while state TV ceased broadcasting Arsenal's matches. For his part, Özil also believes his tweet was what precipitated his fall from favor, though the *Times* article notes there may be other factors in play.

Regarding the plight of the Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking Muslims, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Randall Schriver [stated](#) in May 2019 that, "The (Chinese) Communist Party is using the security forces for mass imprisonment of Chinese Muslims in concentration camps."

The Department of Homeland Security has [prohibited importation of products manufactured in Xinjiang](#) based on reports of forced labor inflicted upon the Uighur population. Reports also reveal torture of detainees in these re-education camps, including [forced abortions and the forced sterilization](#) of Uighur women via drugs and injections. The Trump administration [pulled all U.S. funding](#) for the U.N. Population Fund over concerns that China was using money from the fund to carry out these forced abortions.

[Guidelines for the Xinjian region](#) now mandate children's

education by state-run schools, forbid parents from not following the Communist Party's family planning policies, and forbid the "naming of children to exaggerate religious fervor."

So while Özil's [friendship](#) with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan may be questionable, his opposition to China's treatment of the Uighurs (which a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators are working to [officially label a genocide](#)) should not be controversial.

But money always talks, and China has lots of it.

Arsenal's [response to Özil's tweet](#)?

"Regarding the comments made by Mesut Özil on social media, Arsenal must make a clear statement. The content published is Özil's personal opinion. As a football club, Arsenal has always adhered to the principle of not involving itself in politics."

Or at least it did, until defender Héctor Bellerín and other players across the Premier League announced their intent to [voice support for Black Lives Matter](#). The Black Lives Matter logo was added to [all Premier League shirts](#) when the season re-started after the COVID-19 imposed shutdown, and one such jersey from Arsenal forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has made its way into the Museum of London's collection.

Black Lives Matter is a safe slogan to wear because it addresses an alleged grievance against Western democracies, specifically America, where freedom of speech is valued and where there are no modern-day concentration camps. Criticism of actual genocide committed by a brutal regime in China apparently does not enter the minds of most of the woke athletes who fill our television screens so frequently.

This is because the overlords of Chinese sweatshop factories will happily make soccer and basketball jerseys that say

“Black Lives Matter” on the back, and American basketball teams and European soccer teams are quite happy to peddle these wares to consumers.

But jerseys with a slogan such as “Uighur Lives Matter” are unacceptable to the Chinese Communist Party, and therefore are unacceptable to the Western capitalists whose pockets are so generously lined by a murderous regime.

The hypocrisy is so present it practically casts a shadow.

—

Image Credit:

Wikimedia Commons-Ronnie Macdonald, CC BY 2.0