



China: A Sick Nation

The coronavirus epidemic in China, which has spread throughout Asia and reached Western Europe and the United States, reveals the criminal incompetence and duplicity of the Chinese Communist government. As of this writing, the government reports that some 77,000 people in China have been infected by the virus, but other estimates place the number much higher. More than 2,600 have died.

Yet the sickness of Communist China goes well beyond a physical epidemic. China is culturally sick because it is a one-party state run by a ruthless Communist Party. The *Mindszenty Report* has written extensively about the Chinese government's war on Christians and other travesties committed by the regime. *The regime's repression of Christians, Muslims and Buddhists has grown even worse over the last year.*

We hope readers will share this report with family members, especially young people, many of whom have fallen for the lure of socialism being promoted in America by leading politicians, educators and the media.

The Revolution Betrayed Once Again

The Chinese Communist Party is intent on cracking down on all religions—Christians, Muslims and Buddhists—by constructing a new religion around President Xi Jinping. Communist regimes inevitably deteriorate into cults of personality.

Communists come to power claiming to represent the downtrodden—workers and peasants—against the privileged capitalists and the ruling class. In the 20th century, millions of people have died at the hands of revolutionary monsters who attracted political support by calling for the liberation of people from their alleged oppressors—capitalists, foreign imperialists or dictators. These revolutionaries rallied the masses in the name of freedom, only to become far worse tyrants than those they replaced. Their revolutionary regimes became soaked in the blood of the very people they had called to freedom. In maintaining power, friends and foes of the revolution found themselves declared as enemies of the state,

targets of massive police apparatuses created by these revolutionary regimes.

Yet, even in the midst of starvation, gulags, mass arrests and Orwellian thought police, cults of personality are created around these revolutionary leaders. Young revolutionaries and supporters in other countries make these revolutionary tyrants into folk heroes. Think of the cults that gathered and still revolve around revolutionaries who are portrayed as men of the people and liberators of the oppressed, even though history has revealed the atrocities they committed and encouraged: Lenin, Stalin, Castro, Mao, Ho Chi Minh.

How can we explain the seeming paradox of the modern revolutionary mind that in an age of reason holds so strongly to an unfounded faith in the perfectibility of mankind? Their revolutionary faith is articulated with a façade of reason, science and the latest economic theory, even while they dismiss an abundance of historical and empirical evidence. This seeming paradox, however, is a direct result of the 18th-century Enlightenment, which imparted a belief that men were the masters of the universe and progress was inevitable through the advancement of scientific reason. Enlightenment thought fostered hubris in the modern mind. The belief in human progress to perfection proved to be a facile step for revolutionaries.

The 1789 Template

The modern concept of revolution emerged for the first time in the French Revolution of 1789. This revolution, unlike previous ones in early modern European history, called for the complete overthrow and destruction of the old order. All “old regime” institutions were razed. Revolutionaries led by the radical Jacobin Maximilien Robespierre proclaimed that Christianity was to be replaced by the Cult of Reason. They adopted a new calendar beginning with the Year One; they proclaimed that each week had ten days. The so-called Committee of Public Safety summarily tried and guillotined enemies of the revolution. The mob was fickle

and the revolution ate its own. The revolution descended into terror—Robespierre himself was guillotined in 1794—but the modern revolution had been born.

Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin were obsessed with the French Revolution and the later revolutionary Paris Commune of 1848. This obsession with revolution—the need to completely destroy all the remnants of the old regime and to create a new world unchained from the past—reveals more than just a romantic mentality, but also the inherent arrogance of the revolutionary mind. Both Marx and Lenin concluded that the nature of revolutions and the chaos created in the struggle for a new order necessitated dictatorship. For Marx, the solution lay in the dictatorship of the proletariat, a concept he did not fully explore. Lenin took the concept one step further to mean that one party—his Bolshevik party, the Communist Party—represented, indeed, embodied true revolutionary principles and class interests.

Contemporaries of both Marx and Lenin—revolutionaries themselves—warned that the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat when implemented would result in tyranny. Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, a contemporary of Marx, predicted that the dictatorship *of* the proletariat would become a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. Lenin's contemporary Rosa Luxemburg, a German revolutionary, openly attacked Lenin's concept of a centralized party as “imbued, not with a positive creative spirit, but with the sterile spirit of the night-watchman state.”

Under the new Bolshevik dictatorship in the Soviet Union, Lenin and Stalin were made into folk heroes—men of humble origin who became revolutionary heroes in the name of the people. The model has been followed time and again. In Eastern Europe, Tito in Yugoslavia and Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania were made into cult figures. This pattern recurred with Mao in China, Castro in Cuba, and Chavez in Venezuela. The cult of personality is essential to dictatorships. Thus Xi Jinping's cult of personality has emerged in China.

The Cult of Xi Jinping

Xi Jinping aims to build a cult of personality around himself, replicating the cult of Mao. Essential to the creation of this cult is to remove any rivals such as Christ, Allah, Buddha and even Confucius. In creating this new cult, Xi Jinping's government has intensified attacks on every religious group. Muslims have been subjected to unprecedented amounts of surveillance and control. Christian churches have been shut down or desecrated, and Buddhist monks have been forced to pledge allegiance to the state and wave the national flag. Grassroots organizations have come under attack.¹

Under the state Administration for Religious Affairs, established in 1951 following Mao's accession to power, five religious organizations are allowed to exist under government control. These state-sanctioned religions are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism. The state controls these groups' finances and publications. Ostensibly, Chinese citizens are “free” to practice their religion, as long as they are officially sanctioned by the government. In 2015, the Chinese Communist government announced that these religions were to undergo “sinicization” by fusing their religious thought, beliefs and practices with Chinese socialist thought. Under Xi Jinping this campaign has intensified.

Increasing Religious Persecution

In the western region of Xinjiang, the home of the majority of Muslim Uighurs, a draconian police state has been installed. At least a million Uighurs have been imprisoned in re-education centers. Gulags, in short. Especially targeted are Uighurs showing distinct markers of Islam like growing long beards or refusing to drink alcohol. Restaurants, food stalls and grocery stores that display symbols associated with Islam have been closed or attacked. In the northern city of Yinchuan, home to the largest concentration of Hui Muslims, the government has banned the call to prayer. The pretext is that the call to prayer creates noise pollution.

Buddhism and Taoism, with deeper roots in East Asia, have not been exempted either. In Tibet, government officials monitor the daily activities of Tibetan monasteries. Regulations limiting travel and communication have been imposed on Buddhists. The famous Shaolin Temple, an ancient Buddhist monastery, has been forced to fly the Chinese flag for the first time in its 1,500-year history to demonstrate its loyalty to the Chinese government. And the Falun Gong spiritual movement has been severely persecuted for decades.

Christians have not been spared in this campaign of repression. Catholic churches and priests have been especially targeted, even though in September 2018 the Vatican signed an agreement in which Pope Francis officially recognized seven Beijing-appointed bishops. These bishops had been initially excommunicated because they were not approved by Rome. Under this controversial secret agreement, Pope Francis ceded power to the Chinese Communist Party.

There are an estimated 9 million Catholics in China, 5.7 million of whom now worship in state-sponsored churches. Still, these concessions have not placated the Chinese government. Government authorities have launched campaigns against Protestantism as well. Of the 68 million Protestants in China, only 23 million worship in state-affiliated churches.

Important to note, *this campaign against Christians has intensified since the Vatican's agreement with the Xi Jinping regime*. In February the Chinese government instituted regulations imposing new controls over almost every aspect of religious life in the country.² These new regulations govern the organization, function, supervision and management of religious groups. They call for reports on the religious organizations' teachings and daily projects. They cover every religious group.

As one Chinese minister declared, "In practice, your religion no longer matters, if you are Buddhist, or Taoist, or Muslim or Christian: *the only religion allowed is faith in the Communist Party*" (CCP).³ The rules state that religious organizations must adhere to the leadership of the CCP and implement the values of socialism.

Article 17 of the new regulations is even more explicit, stating that "Religious organizations must spread the principles and policies of the CCP, as well as national laws, regulations, rules to religious personnel and religious citizens, educating religious personnel and religious citizens to support the leadership of the CCP, supporting the socialist system, adhering to and following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics."⁴ This mandate had already been imposed before the regulations were to take effect in February.

Banning Christmas, Bibles, Sunday School

In December the government ordered members of unofficial churches in five provinces in China not to hold public gatherings to celebrate Christmas! A pastor in Shandong, where previous celebrations had drawn thousands of worshippers, told his flock, "We can't do Christmas this year, we can't have any activities on Christmas."⁵ This is more than a story of the grinch who stole Christmas. This is hard-line Chinese Communist policy to ensure that Xi Jinping is worshipped and glorified.

These new policies amplify policies imposed two years ago to reinterpret Christianity to accord with secular Chinese communist ideology. The online sale of Christian Bibles has been banned. Given that the party controls printing presses, this means that Bibles are in effect banned in China. In the recent crackdown, the government is enforcing a law that children under the age of 18 cannot convert to Christianity. As a result, across China, Sunday school classes are being canceled. Priests and ministers have been ordered not to proselytize or try to convert any youth before they are 18 years old. Under attack as well are youth ministries and the teaching of church leaders how to minister to teens.⁶

Churches have been ordered in China's central province to take down the Ten Commandments. Churches were forced

to replace the Ten Commandments with quotes of President Xi Jinping. Biblical paintings and crosses were removed and replaced with portraits of the president. Need it be said that the Chinese Communist one-party dictatorship abhors the First Commandment about "false gods"? Moses warned his people about having false gods and worshipping a golden calf. Where is Pope Francis warning his followers about having false gods?

The oppression of Christians and other religions in China involves more than just new regulations. In addition to large-scale detention of Uighur Muslims for "re-education" in internment camps, it is estimated that more than a million Christians and Buddhists have been detained.⁷ The Chinese government aims to suppress any thought or practice contrary to Chinese Communist ideology. The target is a growing Protestant community of 68 million Protestants and 3.3 million underground Catholics. (Another 5.7 million Chinese belong to the state-sponsored Chinese Patriotic Association.)

The underground Catholics who have refused to join the state-sponsored Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association are no longer in communion with the papacy. This underground Catholic church, clergy and laity, remain loyal to the pope and the worldwide church, even while experiencing decades of persecution, imprisonment, torture and death. Yet they continue to resist the Vatican's accord with the Chinese regime that allows the government to appoint bishops.⁸

Catholic Resistance

Even as the war on Christians, including Roman Catholics, has intensified, the Vatican continues to celebrate its "Provincial Agreement" on the appointment of bishops signed in September 2018. In February Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with his counterpart in the Vatican, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, to celebrate their bilateral accord.⁹ (Theodore McCarrick, the former archbishop of Newark who helped lay the groundwork for the accord in the 1990s, is no longer a cardinal of the Catholic Church, no longer an archbishop, and no longer a cleric after credible allegations arose involving sex abuse of a minor.¹⁰)

What is especially shocking about this public celebration is that the full provisions of the accord have never been disclosed. Critics have called the accord a betrayal of millions of members of the underground Catholic Church in China, as well as devout Catholic members of the Vatican-recognized government-sanctioned church.

The former bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Joseph Zen, has been the most outspoken critic of the accord. In explaining Pope Francis's kowtowing to the Chinese government, Cardinal Zen believes Pope Francis is simply ignorant about

Chinese communism. “Francis may have natural sympathy for Communists because for him, they are the persecuted. He does not know them as the persecutors they became once in power.” Cardinal Zen sees the Vatican accords as selling out the faithful. “They [the Chinese government] want full surrender. And so now we are at the bottom. They finished the operation selling out the Church. With a totalitarian regime, there’s no possibility of any talk or bargaining. They want you on your knees.”¹¹ Truer words have never been spoken.

A January report by the bipartisan U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China revealed an overall deterioration of religious liberty and an intensified campaign by the Chinese Communist government to force all religions to conform to the party line. Specifically, the report concluded that persecution of Catholics has worsened since the 2018 accord.¹²

These are trying times for Roman Catholics and Protestants. In America, we are experiencing a sustained attack on Christianity. Our Chinese Christian brothers and sisters are experiencing much more brutal suppression by a communist regime. What can we do to help them?

We can ask our priests and ministers to speak from their pulpits about what is happening in China today. We can provide ammunition through the *Mindszenty Report* and other news articles about the travesties in China. We can purchase bulk orders of this Report and circulate other news articles to members of our congregations. We can warn our children and grandchildren about the false god of communism. And we should continue to pray and promise, “We will have no false gods before us.”

1 Alexandra Ma, “Jailing Muslims, Burning Bibles, and Forcing Monks to Wave the National Flag: How Xi Jinping is attacking religion in China,” *Business Insider*, August 3, 2019.

2 “China’s Draconian New Rules for Religious Groups Insist They ‘Spread Communist Party Principles,’” <https://barnabasfund.org/us/>

news/chinas-draconian-new-rules-for-religious-groups-insist-they-“spread-party-principles”.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Michael Foust, “China: Children Cannot Become Christians Until They Are 18,” *Christian Headlines*, September 3, 2019.

7 Martin M. Barillas, “Chinese Government Demands Christians Use Religion to ‘Spread Communist Party Principles,’” *LifeSite*, January 6, 2020.

8 Ibid.

9 “Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Met on Friday with Counterpart in the Vatican, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, to Celebrate Their Bilateral Accord on the Naming of Bishops,” *Breitbart*, February 2, 2020.

10 Kevin Jones, “Disgraced Ex-Cardinal ‘Mr. McCarrick’ Remains at Kansas Friary, One Year Later,” *Catholicnewsagency*, June 20, 2019; and “McCarrick: Architect of China-Vatican Accord,” <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/mccarrick-architect-of-china-vatican-accord>.

11 *Breitbart*, February 2, 2020, op. cit.

12 Ibid.

Attention St. Louis-area readers: Please join us for the second talk in the Cardinal Mindszenty Speaker Series at Saint Mary of Victories Church in downtown St. Louis, Missouri, on Sunday, March 15, on “**Missouri: The Show Me Life State.**” Pam Fichter and James Cole will address new developments in Missouri abortion law and national trends following the church’s regular monthly luncheon which starts at 12:15. The 1:00 talk is free, but RSVP for lunch (\$10 payable at the lunch) to 314-727-6279 or info@mindszenty.org.

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