

Communism and Falun Gong: A Clash of Identities

by David Matas

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Why are an innocent harmless group of people, practitioners of the exercises Falun Gong, being killed in China for their organs? There is something basic to the identities of both the Chinese Communist Party and Falun Gong which has led to this tragedy. We are dealing here not just with ghoulis opportunity, but rather a clash of identities.

I do not mean to suggest that practitioners of Falun Gong are in any way responsible for their fate. Falun Gong practitioners, like all victims, are innocent.

One has to look to the perpetrators to explain the victimization. It is unreal and indeed unconscionable to blame the victims for their victimization. Why perpetrators choose one set of victims rather than another tells us more about the perpetrators than the victims.

Yet, in order to understand the victimization, we need to understand the vulnerabilities of the victims. The vulnerabilities of Falun Gong make them susceptible targets for the worst elements of Chinese Communist Party identity.

In what follows, I go through various aspects of Chinese Communist Party identity and indicate how they play into Falun Gong vulnerabilities. These aspects of Communist identity on which I focus are, in a nutshell, religious intolerance, control obsession, modernism, materialism, cruelty, secrecy, propaganda, insecurity, demand for loyalty, and instrumentalization.

1. Religious intolerance

One element of Communist Party culture is disrespect for religion. Communists are

atheists. But, more than that, they disdain the religious. They considered the religious to be fools. Karl Marx called religion the opiate of the masses.

Religion, according to Communist Party doctrine, is a drug administered by oppressors to make the oppressed forget the pain the oppressors are inflicting. Through religion, through a belief in happiness in the next life, the oppressed find solace from the misery in the present life.¹

Religion in an ideally functioning Communist society has no place. Communism is supposed to remove the economic oppression, the cause of the pain. So, there should be no need for an opiate to forget the pain. The existence of religion in a Communist society becomes an admission that Communism has failed.

An opiate does not come out of nowhere. It is sold by pushers for the purpose of addiction, an unending demand, and power over the users. That too is part of the Communist Party analysis of religion.

Part of Chinese Communist Party propaganda against Falun Gong is invective against their teacher Li Hongzhi. The Party refers to Li as a "cult leader", engaging in "deceitful tricks... to cause death". He is described as a person who seeks "to deify himself". According to the Party, he has engaged in "malicious fallacies". He "instigate(s) foreigners to cause trouble in China" (including presumably me).

Falun Gong practitioners understandably take offense at this sort of invective. But, in spite of the fact that it is directed at a particular person, it is not personal. It is rather everyday

¹ Austin Cline "Karl Marx on Religion" updated April 19, 2017

<https://www.thoughtco.com/karl-marx-on-religion-251019>

Communist Party propaganda against a wide variety of religions. This invective is typical of Communist Party views of spirituality generally.

Communism has no appreciation of spirituality and sees spirituality in purely material terms. In material terms, Communists can see spiritual leaders are respected, even venerated. Communists attribute this respect to bamboozlement. Not showing any appreciation of what generates the respect, Communists see the respect as some sort of fraud perpetrated by spiritual leaders on their followers.

2. Control obsession

A second element of Chinese Communist Party culture is an obsession with control. Any political party wants power. Indeed, it could hardly be called a political party if it did not.

However, Communist parties take the desire to control to another dimension. One can see this in the constitution of China.

The preamble refers to "the Chinese people of all nationalities led by the Communist Party of China with Chairman Mao Zedong as its leader" and "the Chinese people of all nationalities, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought" and "the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents". "Three represents" is the title of booklet that former Chinese Communist Party leaders and Chinese President Jiang Zemin wrote.

The preamble adds that "there has been formed under the leadership of the Communist Party of China a broad patriotic united front". The preamble adds that "The system of the

multi-party cooperation and political consultation led by the Communist Party of China ..."

So, in case you happen to be a forgetful reader, the constitution kindly repeats the notion of leadership of the Communist Party of China five times. It is impossible to miss the point.

Moreover, this leadership is not just advisory or setting a good example. Constitutionally, China is a dictatorship.

The constitutional preamble says "The people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, which is in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat, has been consolidated and developed." The constitution adds that "the Chinese people of all nationalities will continue to adhere to the people's democratic dictatorship".

Article 1 of the Constitution provides: "The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants." Article 3 of the constitution says "The State organs of the People's Republic of China apply the principle of democratic centralism."

So, again, in case a reader missed the point, the constitution asserts three times that China is a dictatorship, and rephrases it one more time to emphasize that the centre rules. Dictatorship is not just the whim of some wayward rulers. It is the legal system in China.

The Constitution of China also articulates many human rights values, including freedom of religion.² However, any legal document must be read as a whole. The guarantee of freedom of religion in the Constitution of China is explained and limited by the context in which it is found, a context in which the leading role through dictatorship of the Communist

² Article 36

Party is at its core.

The Communist perspective on human rights was summarized neatly by Yuri Andropov and Miklos Haraszti. Andropov was Leonid Brezhnev's successor as head of the USSR. He said both candidly and ominously:

"Any citizen of the Soviet Union whose interests coincide with the interests of society feels the entire scope of our democratic freedoms. It is another matter if those interests (of the citizen) ... do not coincide (with the interests of society)".³

The Hungarian writer, Miklos Haraszti put it this way:

"Within the Revolution, complete freedom; against the Revolution, none."⁴

The relationship between the Communist Party and the state is unlike anything we see in democratic countries. In democratic states, those in government rule. In China, it is the Party that rules. State functionaries are puppets. It is the Party which pulls the strings.

Up and down the government political and legal structure, for every state officer, there is a Party official. The state is a facade behind which the Party operates.

At the pinnacle, the two systems merge. The President of China is also the head of the Communist Party of China. Everywhere else the two systems separate, with a Party official instructing a state official. In China, the Communist Party is everywhere, behind closed doors, deciding what policies, decisions and laws will be and whether and how they will be enforced.

³ Izvestiya, June 10, 1975 at page 1, column 1.

⁴ "The Velvet Prison", page 120.

Because the Party controls the legal system, the laws are not enforced against the Party. The Party does not impose the laws on itself. Party policies and actions may violate the laws. But there is no one in the system to say that this is so.

The President of the Supreme People's Court, Xiao Yang, in 2007 said:

"The power of the courts to adjudicate independently doesn't mean at all independence from the Party. It is the opposite, the embodiment of a high degree of responsibility vis-à-vis Party undertakings."⁵

There is an absence of the rule of law in China. Or, to put it the way the Chinese Communists would put it, the rule of law in China means control by the Party.

This obsession with control has a direct impact on all religions. The Party has appointed Catholic bishops, the Panchen Lama, successor to the Dalai Lama and Muslim imams.

The Falun Gong, which is not hierarchical, which has no priests or bishops, which has no leadership, can not be usurped the way China has attempted to usurp Christianity or Islam or Buddhism. If the Government of China could have appointed a head to the Falun Gong movement, it would have done so and the Falun Gong would have survived in China, albeit in Chinese government controlled form. Because, given the nature of the Falun Gong, this form of imposition of control from above is impossible, the practitioners became vulnerable to persecution in a way that other faithful were not.

These two aspects of Communist identity, religious intolerance and a control obsession, have had in China under Xi Jinping an ironic convergence. Under Xi Jinping, religion has

⁵ "A correct concept of judicial authority is the proper meaning of rule of law," China Court Daily, February 21, 2008, <http://www.chinacourt.org/html/article/200710/18/270093.shtml> (accessed February 21, 2008).

become not just an institution for the Party to control but an instrument of Party control.

The Criminal Law of China prohibits the use of "superstitious sects or secret societies or weird religious organizations ... to undermine the implementation of the laws and administrative rules and regulations of the State"⁶. Superstitious sects or secret societies or weird religious organizations are not banned outright. Only those which "undermine the implementation of the laws and administrative rules and regulations of the State" are banned.

In China, the phrase "undermining the implementation of the laws and administrative rules and regulations of the State" is code for undermining Communist Party rule. So, "superstitious sects or secret societies or weird religious organization" which do nothing to undermine Communist Party rule are not banned.

The phrasing of the law suggests that sects which are not superstitious, societies which are not secret and religious organizations which are not weird are perfectly ok, even if they undermine the implementation of the laws and administrative rules and regulations of the State. Yet, practically, the law works in a circular fashion. Those sects, societies or religious organizations which undermine, in the view of the Party, Party rule, are by virtue of that perceived undermining, considered superstitious, secretive and weird.

Currently, the Party is embracing some elements of Buddhism as a technique of self legitimization. Party head and President Xi Jinping has said "If the people have faith, the nation has hope, and the country has strength." The Party has tolerated and even encouraged the growth of some elements of Buddhism.⁷

⁶ Article 300

⁷ Ian Johnson, "What a Buddhist Monk Taught Xi Jinping" March 24, 2017
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/24/opinion/sunday/chinas-communists-embrace-religi>

The Chinese Communist Party today does not hesitate to use religion as an opiate for the masses where the effect of the drug is to lull those taking it into acceptance of Party rule. The Party has learned a lesson from what they thought they saw capitalist oppressors doing, using religion as a technique for power.

3. Modernism

A third element of the Chinese Communist Party culture is an emphasis on modernism. The Chinese Communist Party sees itself as new, a break from the colonialism and feudalism of the past. Communism represents to the Party an overthrow of imperialist foreign rule and feudal overlords, as well as capitalism.

The Chinese Communist Party then has mixed in with the traditional Communist Party economic ideology a strong dose of nationalism. In the words of the Constitution, through the Chinese people, through the Communist Party, "have taken control of state power and become masters of the country".

One aspect of the focus on modernism is pride in technological advance. Part of that advance in which the Party takes pride is its abilities in transplant surgery.

Since the advent of the persecution campaign against Falun Gong, the Government of China has continuously incorporated organ transplantation into its Five-Year Plans for multiple ministries. In 2001, establishing organ transplantation regulations was listed as part of the

[on.html?mcubz=2](#)

Ian Johnson, "Is a Buddhist Group Changing China? Or Is China Changing It?" June 24, 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/24/world/asia/china-buddhism-fo-guang-shan.html>

Tenth Five-Year Plan for the Ministry of Health.⁸ In 2004, organ transplantation technology was added as a major research area and key technology in the Tenth Five-Year Plan for National Health, Science and Technology Development.⁹ In 2008, organ transplantation was included once again as a key project in the Eleventh Five-Year National Key Technology Research and Development Program.¹⁰ Since 2011, organ transplantation has been included again in the Twelfth Five-Year National Key Technology Research and Development Program and a number of other national special plans within that Twelfth Five-Year Plan.¹¹

Since 2000, China's national plans and programs and other national funds have incorporated a large number of projects related to organ transplantation, one of the

⁸ The notice on the Ministry of Health issued health Tenth Five-Year Plan, 110.com, The Ministry of Health, 2001-07-23,
http://www.110.com/fagui/law_148410.html
<https://archive.is/4v3uG>

⁹ The Tenth Five-Year Plan on Chinese Health Technology Development and 2010 Vision Plan, The National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China 2004-06-03
<http://www.nhfpc.gov.cn/zwgkzt/pzcggh/200804/20487.shtml>
<https://archive.is/Gj3uO>

¹⁰ Ministry of Health issued the National Key Technology Research and Development Program of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan to support four projects, Guidelines for application
<http://news.sciencenet.cn/htmlnews/2008228163031735202339.html>
<https://archive.is/SxgyM#selection-303.3-303.6> , 2008-02-28

¹¹ Meeting Minutes on the 12th Five-year Plan Strategy Study Workshop - National High-tech R&D Program of China (863 Program) on Stem Cells and Tissue Engineering
<http://www.gzbio.net/web/gsrc/info/201202168700.html>
<https://archive.is/buGh0>
 The project start meeting of 863 Program on the field of biology and modern medical was held in Beijing 2012-07-31
<http://www.cncbd.org.cn/News/Detail/3001> <https://archive.is/2GU4s>
<https://archive.is/npahC>

"comprehensive, leading future emerging industries" that is meant to drive China's future global development. The military, central and local governments have invested heavily in domestic medical institutions to carry out basic research and development in the organ transplant field and promote its industrialization.¹²

Communism is to China a foreign import. The ideological foundations of Communism were laid by the German Karl Marx and the Russians Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. In another irony of Communist rule in China, the Party, on the one hand, rails against foreign interference in China to justify its own rule and, on the other hand, imposes on China a foreign ideological construct.

Falun Gong, in contrast, is traditional, local, authentically Chinese. Although its advent is new, far newer than Communism, it is a blend of ancient Chinese spiritual and exercise traditions. The global TV network run, in the main, by Falun Gong practitioners is called NTD TV. NTD stands for New Tang Dynasty. The old Tang Dynasty ran from 618 to 907 A.D.

To the Chinese Communist Party, the Falun Gong are a regression, a leap backward, back to where China was before the Communist Party took over. For Falun Gong to prevail would mean a China that would continue as if the Chinese Communist Party never existed, aside from the scars the Party left behind.

4. Materialism

The flip side of the Communist Party scepticism of spirituality is its emphasis on materialism.

¹² David Matas, David Kilgour, Ethan Gutmann "The update to Bloody Harvest and The Slaughter" at www.endorganharvesting.org

The original Marxist analysis turned the Hegelian historical philosophical dialectic on its head, changing it into a materialistic dialectic.¹³

Communism originally incorporated socialism - from each according to his means, to each according to his needs. Socialist communism was a form of communitarianism.

Under Chinese president and Party secretary Deng Xiaoping, all that changed. Deng said "It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice."¹⁴ He meant that as a metaphor for the economic system. Stripping the message of the metaphor, what he was saying was that it does not matter whether the Chinese economy employs socialism or capitalism, as long as it produces wealth.

Deng also said "There are no fundamental contradictions between a socialist system and a market economy"¹⁵. That, of course, depends on your overall goal. If your overall goal is "to each according to his needs", then there is indeed a fundamental contradiction between a socialist system and a market economy. If your overall goal is national wealth, then the contradiction disappears.

Deng also said "Let some people get rich first".¹⁶ That is a pretty straightforward and explicit rejection of the socialist principle of income equality.

Deng's embrace of capitalism even spread to the military. In 1985, Deng issued a directive

¹³ David Matas, Chapter 3 "Communism as a root case of human rights violations" in *No More: The Battle against Human Rights Violations*, Dundurn 1994

¹⁴ Quoted in Hung Li *China's Political Situation and the Power Struggle in Peking* (1977), page 107

¹⁵ Interview, *Time*, 4 November 1985.

¹⁶ Quoted in *The Economist* (31 May 2001).

allowing the People's Liberation Army units to earn money to make up the shortfall in its declining budgets. China's military went from public financing to private enterprise. The military today is a conglomerate business. This business is not corruption, a deviation from state policy. It is state sanctioned, an approved means of raising money for military activities.

This shift in economic philosophy has impacted throughout China. Its impact on the health sector was particularly dramatic, since health professionals and institutions are not typically seen as primarily concerned with the making of money. The health system, even in many capitalist countries, is geared to equality of care of all who need it.

But in China, that came not to be the case. Money counts. The health system, like, the rest of China, became a wealth generating business. And the lead money maker was transplantation.

When China moved from a socialist to a market economy, the health system was a major part of the shift. From 1980, China began withdrawing government funds from the health sector, expecting the health system to make up the difference through charges to consumers of health services. Since 1980, government spending dropped from 36% of all health care expenditure to 17%, while patients' out of pocket spending rocketed up from 20% to 59%.¹⁷ A World Bank study reports that reductions in public health coverage were worsened by increases in costs by the private sector.¹⁸

According to cardiovascular doctor Hu Weimin, the state funding for the hospital where he works is not enough to even cover staff salaries for one month. He stated: "Under the

¹⁷ "The high price of illness in China", Louisa Lim, BBC News, Beijing, 2006/03/02

¹⁸ "Public Health in China: Organization, Financing and Delivery of Services". July 27, 2005, Jeffrey P. Kaplan

current system, hospitals have to chase profit to survive." Human Rights in China reports: "Rural hospitals [have had] to invent ways to make money to generate sufficient revenue".¹⁹ The sale of organs became for hospitals a source of funding, a way to keep their doors open, and a means by which other health services could be provided to the community.

Many of the transplant centres and general hospitals in China are military institutions, financed by organ transplant recipients. Military hospitals operate independently from the Ministry of Health. The funds they earn from organ transplants do more than pay the costs of these facilities. The money is used to finance the overall military budget.

There is, for instance, the Organ Transplant Center of the Armed Police General Hospital in Beijing. This hospital boldly stated:

"Our Organ Transplant Center is our main department for making money. Its gross income in 2003 was 16,070,000 yuan. From January to June of 2004 income was 13,570,000 yuan. This year (2004) there is a chance to break through 30,000,000 yuan." ²⁰.

For a money obsessed health system, sourcing organs from Falun Gong practitioners became an inexhaustible source of funds. They were defenceless and unorganized. They were held in arbitrary detention in the hundreds of thousands. They were depersonalized through vilification. They refused to identify themselves to the authorities when arrested to protect their families, neighbours, friends and employers back home, making them easy

¹⁹ "Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights in the People's Republic of China", April 14, 2005, paragraph 69, page 24.

²⁰ <http://www.309yizhi.com/webapp/center/intro.jsp> . This page was available in early July, 2006 and has been removed afterwards. The archived page is at <http://archive.edoors.com/render.php?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.309yizhi.com%2Fwebapp%2Fcenter%2Fintro.jsp&x=0&y=0> .

prey. And their organs were healthy because of their exercises. The military, including the military hospitals, had easy access to the prison population. The Falun Gong became an extremely vulnerable population.

5. Cruelty

The Chinese Communist Party has had a long, cruel history. The mass killings of innocents did not begin with Falun Gong. Before that there was Mao's mass starvation, the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Square massacre. The Party is steeped in blood.

Mao's famine of 1959 to 1961 was based on the Communist policy of industrialization and the decision to create an agricultural product surplus to feed industrial workers. Farmers had to produce more than they consumed in order to create this surplus. Communist Party propaganda called the effort the "Great Leap Forward".

The farm economy was at that time a subsistence economy. It was not producing a surplus in the amounts that Communist policy dictated were needed. So, food was forcibly extracted from farmers to create an artificial surplus, even though it meant starving subsistence farmers to death. The number of famine victims has been estimated to be between 20 and 43 million.²¹

Yang Jisheng wrote in 2008:

"In Xinyang, people starved at the doors of the grain warehouses. As they died, they shouted, 'Communist Party, Chairman Mao, save us'. If the granaries of Henan and Hebei had been opened, no one need have died. As people were dying in large numbers around them, officials did not think to save them. Their only concern was

²¹ Peng Xizhe, "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces," *Population and Development Review* 13, no. 4 (1987), 639 - 70.

how to fulfil the delivery of grain."²²

The Cultural Revolution of 1966 to 1971 also involved mass killings, of five types:

- 1) victims were humiliated and then killed by mobs or forced to commit suicide on public places;
- 2) unarmed civilians were killed by armed forces;
- 3) local security officers, militias and mobs ran pogroms against those seen as class enemies;
- 4) suspects of alleged conspiracies were tortured to death during investigations;
- 5) captives from factional armed conflicts were summarily executed.²³

In their biography of Mao Zedong, Jung Chang and Jon Halliday wrote about the Cultural Revolution:

"at least 3 million people died violent deaths and post-Mao leaders acknowledged that 100 million people, one-ninth of the entire population, suffered in one way or another."²⁴

More recently was the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989. The Chinese military shot without warning randomly at a gathered crowd of more than a million people who had occupied the Square.²⁵ The crowd were demonstrating for democracy. The soldiers fired at

²² "A hunger for the truth: A new book, banned on the mainland, is becoming the definitive account of the Great Famine.", chinaelections.org, 7 July 2008 Archived 10 February 2012 at the Wayback Machine.

²³ Jeffrey Hays "Cultural Revolution: death toll, fighting and mass killing from Cultural revolution", 2013
<http://factsaddetails.com/china/cat2/sub6/item1813.html>

²⁴ *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Cape, 2005.

²⁵ Ma Jian, "Tiananmen Square 25 years on: 'Every person in the crowd was a victim of the massacre'" The Guardian, 1 June 2014

those running away. Among those killed were medical personnel attempting to help the injured. The estimated deaths range to more than 2,000²⁶.

Killing innocents for their organs is cruel, but no more cruel than starving farmers to death, or humiliating, torturing and then killing arbitrarily defined class enemies or massacring students protesting for democracy. Cruelty desensitizes the perpetrators. Cruelty has become easy for the Communist Party because they are so used to it.

6. Secrecy

Like many other facets of government, the Chinese Communist Party takes secrecy to a whole other dimension. The Government of China is one of the most secretive governments in the world. Timothy Gelatt writes:

"a 'presumption of secrecy' might be said to pervade the PRC's approach to the flow of information."²⁷

The Communists have a paranoiac dread of enemies who, they fear, want to obtain information which they can use to sabotage Communist Party rule. Chinese laws have changed from time to time to allow, at least it would seem, more openness. Yet, the

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/01/tiananmen-square-25-years-every-person-victim-massacre>

²⁶ Seth Faison, "The Persistent Mystery: How Many Died in 1989?" New York Times, June 4, 1999

<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/04/world/the-persistent-mystery-how-many-died-in-1989.html?mcubz=2>

²⁷ Timothy A. Gelatt "The New Chinese State Secrets Law", Cornell International Law Journal, Volume 22, Issue 2 Summer 1989 Article 4, <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cilj>

culture of secrecy is so deeply rooted in the Chinese Communist Party consciousness that it would be virtually impossible to dislodge it.

This fixation on secrecy is evident in the organ transplant file. For instance, the Ministry of Health of China at one point accepted that organs for transplants were coming almost entirely from prisoners. The Ministry claimed that these prisoners were criminals sentenced to death and not prisoners of conscience. How many people in China were sentenced to death? The Government of China would not say, claiming that the information was a state secret.

To take another example, for *Bloody Harvest*, David Kilgour and I were able to garner useful information about transplant volumes from the China Liver Transplant Registry in Hong Kong. After our work was published, the China Liver Transplant Registry shut down public access to statistical aggregate data on its site. Access is available only to those who have a Registry issued login name and password.

At The Transplantation Congress in Vancouver in August 2010, Haibo Wang, who was then assistant director of the China Liver Transplant Registry, presented at the same session I did. I asked him why public access to the data on the Registry website was shut down and if it could be restored. His answer was that public access was shut down because people were, so he said, 'misinterpreting' the data. If anyone was now to get access, the Registry had to know first the purpose for which the data was being used and some confidence that the data would not be, in his view, 'misinterpreted'.

The Chinese health system runs four transplant registries, one each for liver, kidney, heart and lung. The other three are located in mainland China - kidney and heart in Beijing and lung in Wuxi. The data on the other three sites is also accessible only to those who have registry issued login names and passwords.

What we see in the organ transplant file is not initial secrecy and evolving openness, but rather the reverse. Data, like the Hong Kong Liver Transplant Registry aggregate figures, which were once available cease to be available. There is not just secrecy; there is cover-up.

There has been a progressive dismantling of Chinese website information which gives an insight into transplant practices. One example is website information about short waiting times for transplants, information to which we referred in our reports. Short waiting times means that sources are being killed for their organs.

The China International Transplantation Assistant Centre website said, "It may take only one week to find out the suitable (kidney) donor, the maximum time being one month..." . It went further, "If something wrong with the donor's organ happens, the patient will have the option to be offered another organ donor and have the operation again in one week." The site of the Oriental Organ Transplant Centre in early April, 2006, claimed that "the average waiting time (for a suitable liver) is 2 weeks." The website of the Changzheng Hospital in Shanghai said: "...the average waiting time for a liver supply is one week among all the patients".

If you go to those sites now, those statements are not to be found. You can see them on the website www.organharvestinvestigation.net , because we have archived them, but not on the websites from which they originally came.

This has been a consistent pattern. With regularity, when researchers cite an official Chinese source, the source disappears.

Falun Gong practitioners are as open as the Communist Party is secretive. As I mentioned,

one of their basic principles is truthfulness. Falun Gong practitioners take that principle seriously, to the point where diligent practitioners have more or less no secrets either about themselves or about others.

Unlike many human rights victims, those who get out of detention and out of China are willing to undergo the retraumatization involved in retelling their stories to provide evidence about what happened to them in China. They become an invaluable source of information about what is happening in China. This frankness inflames the Party even further against them.

The Constitution of China itself refers to truthfulness. It states

"The victory in China's New-Democratic Revolution and the successes in its socialist cause have been achieved by the Chinese people of all nationalities, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, by upholding truth, correcting errors and surmounting numerous difficulties and hardships."

The constitutional values of upholding truth and correcting errors, like freedom of religion, have to be understood contextually, where dictatorship of the Communist Party is eminent. To paraphrase Miklos Haraszti: in support of the Party, complete truthfulness; against the Party, none.

7. Propaganda

The Chinese Communist Party may be secretive, but it is far from silent. It considers propaganda essential. The Chinese Government calls propaganda the life blood of the Party.²⁸

²⁸ Professor Anne-Marie Brady, statement to a hearing of the U.S. - China Economic and

Chinese Communist Party propaganda involves both publication and censorship. Propaganda is divided between the internal and external. External propaganda is further broken down between Chinese and non-Chinese target audiences. Because the large number of foreign visitors to China, those responsible for internal propaganda are expected to keep in mind that the propaganda may well have a foreign audience.

The Chinese language propaganda is more aggressive than the foreign language propaganda. Foreign language propaganda defends against criticism. Chinese language propaganda aims to promote endorsement of Party goals.

Other than Falun Gong media - the Epoch Times, NTD TV, and Sound of Hope Radio, Chinese language media outside of China is almost entirely Communist Party propaganda. The Party offers to Chinese language media abroad free content, an offer that the media can not afford to reject.

Propaganda is not limited to standard media outlets - radio, TV and newspaper. It includes the internet, including social media, Overseas Chinese CCTV 4, cultural activities, support for the teaching of Chinese language internationally by, amongst others, Confucius Institutes, and organized activities such as conferences and cultural tours.

For social media, the Party has hired internet commentators to post to social media accounts. The number of commentators is estimated at 250,000 to 300,000. Data analysis of social media activity and leaked government emails shows that the Party generates about

448 million posts every year in this way.²⁹

The Party propagandizes heavily against Falun Gong. The propaganda against Falun Gong bears little resemblance to the features of Falun Gong which led to its repression. The propaganda is rather straightforward demonization of the most extreme sort. The Party accuses Falun Gong of every crime imaginable - vampirism, cannibalism, including eating their own children, forced prostitution, induced suicide and so on. Everything is encapsulated under the rubric "evil cult".

The link between dehumanization and brutality is a common place of persecution. Persecution almost always begins with words.

The incitement to hatred against the Falun Gong, like all incitement to bigotry, has an impact. The place with the most ferocious impact is China, where the propaganda is uncontradicted. But the incitement has an effect everywhere.

Even in democratic states, people may know enough not to swallow Chinese propaganda whole. But there is often a tendency to think that where there is smoke, there is fire. Within China, jailers and hospitals know that they can kill Falun Gong for their organs with impunity, precisely because the Party propaganda is so venomous about them.

The Falun Gong community is ill placed to counter the avalanche of organized, structured, systematic Chinese Communist Party propaganda against them. Falun Gong media outlets are run by volunteers. Its practitioners are mostly not human rights professionals, researchers or writers. The unorganized Falun Gong phenomenon is at an overwhelming

²⁹ Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument" April 9, 2017

disadvantage in the face of the Chinese Communist Party propaganda behemoth.

8. Insecurity

China has had a long history of religious based mass movements which went from popularity to protest, from protest to resistance, from resistance to revolt and from revolt to rebellion. The Chinese Communist Party is very much aware of this history and saw in the Falun Gong the threat of its re-enactment.

A partial list of these Chinese rebellions sparked by religious mass movements is:

- Yellow Scarves - a Taoist led movement in Shandong province which led to a rebellion in 184 AD. The rebellion took thirty years to suppress. The name came from the scarves the Taoists wore.
- Five Pecks of Rice - a parallel Taoist religious movement in the Sichuan area of China, also Taoist, also rebellious, for thirty years.
- Red Turban - a protest of the White Lotus movement, a hybrid of Buddhism and Manichaeism. The protest led to a rebellion from 1351 to 1368
- White Lotus - a tax protest of the White Lotus movement. The protest led to a rebellion from 1796 to 1804
- Taipan Heavenly Kingdom - a protest movement with a variant of Christian beliefs. The protests led to a rebellion from 1851-1864.
- Du Wenxiu - a Muslim protest movement in western China. The protests led to a rebellion from 1856 to 1872.
- Dungan - an overlapping Muslim protest movement in nearby areas of China. The protests led to revolts first from 1862 to 1877 and second from 1895 to 1896.
- The Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists or Boxers - combined Taoism and Buddhism with martial arts. They attacked and killed foreign Christian missionaries and Chinese Christians in the Boxer rebellion of 1899-1901.

The Chinese Communist Party had seen the Communist world collapse around them, driven out by popular movements in one country after another. This was a history with which they too were very much aware when a Falun Gong crowd gathered in large numbers in Beijing.

The Party, in April 1999, published an article in the magazine Science and Technology for Youth, which defamed the practice of Falun Gong. A large number of Falun Gong adherents demonstrated against the contents of the piece outside the Tianjin editor's office. Arrests and police beatings resulted.

To petition the Government Petition Office in Beijing about these arrests, on April 25th, 1999, 10,000 to 15,000 Falun Gong practitioners gathered from dawn until late at night outside the Communist Party headquarters at Zhongnanhai next to Beijing's Forbidden City. The gathering was silent, without posters.

This was the largest gathering of protesters in Beijing since the Tiananmen square massacre. The Party had no advance warning of this gathering and was startled.

The same day President and Party Secretary Jiang Zemin sent a letter to the standing members of the Political Bureau of Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party about this gathering in which he wrote:

"Without being noticed by humans or ghosts, more than 10,000 people gathered around the gate of the centre of the Party and State Power Centre, for a whole day However, our relevant departments had found nothing at all beforehand, even though from the Internet one can quickly find the local contacts of the Falun Gong organization This incident has been one that has the most participants among many other events since the 89's incident. I have repeatedly stressed the need to prevent the small from becoming large, and report all major events to us. Since

1992, Falun Gong became involved in the activities of a considerable number of social groups of party members and cadres, intellectuals, servicemen, workers and peasants, yet it has not aroused our vigilance. I am deeply ashamed."

What Jiang Zemin referred to as "the 89's incident" is a Chinese Communist Party euphemism for the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Falun Gong is distinct from previous religious movements which led to rebellions because first of all the Falun Gong are not organized. Second, they are non violent.

Paranoia trumps reality. One can argue that Jiang Zemin knew better. But one explanation of events is that he did not.

There is substantial evidence that security elements within the Party knew about the April 25th event before it occurred and, indeed, helped prompt them. There was a debate within the Party before the April 25th event about what, if anything, to do about the Falun Gong phenomenon. The April 25th event was, for elements of the Party, a demonstration by some to convince other to come on board against Falun Gong.

The April 25th event may have been staged for Jiang Zemin rather than staged by him. One possible explanation for April 25th is that elements within the Party wanted to bring Jiang Zemin on board and they needed the event of April 25th to do so. Jiang may have given a go ahead to the April 25th staging to see if those opportuning him to go after Falun Gong could produce a big enough event to be both convincing to him of the threat of Falun Gong and useable for him to convince others of the threat.

Falun Gong had no spokesperson or leadership to explain Falun Gong to the Communist Party. The very disorganization of Falun Gong meant that it was hard to dispel the paranoiac myths the Chinese Communist Party constructed against the movement.

The Party does not have insecurity or paranoia as official doctrines. In fact, it is quite the reverse. Current President and Party Secretary Xi Jinping has called on the Party to be "confident in our chosen path, confident in our political system, confident in our guiding theories and confident in our culture." He refers to China as a sleeping lion. Former US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said that Xi "sees a strong Party as essential to stability".³⁰

Calls for confidence and claims of strength are the flip side of insecurity. If the Communists see a strong Party as essential to stability, the reason is that they fear instability.

Falun Gong looks to the Party to be the very instability they fear. Its lack of connection to the Party, its large numbers and its ability to mobilize has looked to at least some in the Party to be a threat.

9. Demand for loyalty

When David Kilgour and I released our report and began speaking publicly about it, the Government of China responded with a wide variety of implausible objections. They claimed our quotes from official sources were misquotes. Yet, the sources we quoted remained posted on official websites even after the Chinese Government claimed they were misquotes.

They disagreed with various statements they quoted us as saying. Yet, their quotes of us

³⁰ Evan Osnos "Born Red: How Xi Jinping, an unremarkable provincial administrator, became China's most authoritarian leader since Mao" The New Yorker, April 6, 2015 <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/04/06/born-red?>

with which they disagreed were things we never said. We could word search our work and could see that what they put in quotation marks as our words were not our words at all.

They claimed our work was based on rumours. Yet, David Kilgour and I are both lawyers and studiously avoided reference to any hearsay, any rumours.

They accused us of being manipulated by Falun Gong. Yet, neither of us are Falun Gong practitioners. Moreover, though the Party may not have appreciated that Falun Gong is a set of exercises, we surely did. The very notion of being manipulated by a set of exercises is linguistic nonsense.

Strangest of all, they called us anti-China. Yet, if we were truly anti-China, the murder in China by some Chinese of other Chinese would be a matter of indifference to us. Neither of us have any personal connection to China. The fact that we have put so much time and effort into combating human rights violations in China would seem to show all on its own that a charge of being anti-China has no basis.

The claim of misquotes, the misattributions, the claim of rumours, the charge of manipulation by Falun Gong were wrong. Yet, they would have been plausible answers to our work, if they had been correct.

The charge of being anti-China was a puzzler. It was hard to see at first how that even amounted to a criticism of our work.

The reason the Party saw it is a criticism is that the Chinese Communist Party sees itself as China. To the Party, being anti-Communist means being anti-China. Because our work reflected badly on the Party, to the Party it meant that our work reflected badly on China.

This identification of the Party with China is so deeply ingrained within Party culture that the Party can not bring itself to make a distinction between the two. To Chinese Communists, the Party means China and China means the Party.

One can see this melding in the emphasis on Party loyalty. The Party told Chinese public sector managers in education and media in January 2017 to adhere to new rules of Party loyalty to keep their jobs. A Party statement that month said "Judicial and law enforcement professionals ... stay absolutely loyal to the Party". The document said that there would be training courses and strict supervision to guarantee Party loyalty.³¹

This melding of the Party and China does not exist within the Falun Gong community. Chinese Falun Gong see the Party as one entity and China as another. Their loyalty is to their beliefs, not to the Party rule over China.

10. Instrumentalization

All this presents a pretty bleak picture of the Chinese Communist Party. Yet, the Party is not a monolith. Within it there are substantial debates.

Since the Party is not democratically elected, who governs in China is determined by power struggles within the Party. These power struggles focus on a number of surrogate issues, including democracy, human rights and Falun Gong.

High level officials almost immediately prior to the Party decision to repress Falun Gong were on record as saying that Falun Gong was a healthful practice. A China Sports

³¹ Today, "China says police and judges need absolute loyalty to party" January 19, 2017, <http://m.todayonline.com/world/china-says-police-and-judges-need-absolute-loyalty-party>

Commission official in a report published in February 1999 publicly praised Falun Gong, saying:

"Falun Gong and other types of qi gong can save each person 1,000 yuan in annual medical fees. If 100 million people are practising it, that's 100 billion yuan saved per year in medical fees."

He added, referring to an internal memo:

"Premier Zhu Rongji is very happy about that. The country could use the money right now."

The report states that the director of the sports commission, Wu Shaozu, is an ardent supporter of the qi gong masters.³²

After the repression of Falun Gong had been imposed, there was also internally an attempt to lift it. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, at a closed Communist Party meeting in Zhongnanhai on March 14, 2012 was reported to have addressed organ harvesting with these remarks:

"Without anaesthetic, the live harvesting of human organs and selling them for money is this something that a human could do? Things like this have happened for many years. We are about to retire, but it is still not resolved. Now that the Wang Lijun incident is known by the entire world, use this to punish Bo Xilai. Resolving the Falun Gong issue should be a natural choice."

The Party announced the next day that Bo lost his position as Communist Party General Secretary of Chongqing.³³

What happens in China behind closed doors at Communist Party meetings is, by its very

³² Bay Fang, "An Opiate of the Masses? Millions of Chinese embrace a mystical exercise movement" US News and World Report, February 15, 1999

³³ Cheng Jing "Wen Jiabao Pushes for Redressing Falun Gong, Source Says" Epoch Times April 9, 2012.

nature, not a matter of verifiable public record. What could be seen though by anyone at this time was the lifting of censorship on the killing of Falun Gong for their organs. In late March 2012, search results about organ transplants on the officially sanctioned Chinese search engine Baidu showed information about the work David Kilgour and I did, *Bloody Harvest* and the involvement of the assistant to Bo Xilai, Wang Lijun, in organ harvesting.

When two successive Premiers, Zhu Rongji and Wen Jiabao, come out in favour of Falun Gong, one opposed to imposing the repression and the other in favour of lifting it, there is more going on than just a desire to protect the innocent. The Premier of China is at the pinnacle of the State/Party structure, just a step below the President. As one can see by the remarks that Premier Wen directed to Bo Xilai, the Falun Gong issue played into jockeying for power within the Party.

The decision to repress Falun Gong led to a parallel power structure within the Party, the 610 office. June 10, 1999 was the date of the Party decision to repress Falun Gong and to set up an office for that purpose. The 610 is not one office, but rather a network of offices throughout the country. Every police station, every government enterprise and bureaucracy has its own 610 component. It is a vast parallel Party structure spread throughout China.

Party and State head Jiang Zemin had actively promoted the repression of Falun Gong. The 610 bureaucracy within the Party was a parallel power structure for Jiang Zemin and his acolytes. For the Jiang Zemin faction of the Party, the repression of Falun Gong was an instrumentalization, a way of spreading their tentacles of control throughout the Party.

No one in China becomes President of China and Secretary General of the Communist Party without a strong sense of strategy. Did Jiang Zemin turn against Falun Gong, in part, because it helped him politically extend control of his faction throughout the Party/State? Even if he believed everything he wrote about Falun Gong, the fact that it helped him

politically within the Party was surely not to him a matter of indifference.

Conclusion

On the one hand, we have a governing political party which is intolerant of spiritual beliefs, obsessed with control, sees itself as modern, emphasizes materialism, has a history of gross cruelty, is secretive and propagandistic, is insecure to the point of paranoia, demands loyalty and does not hesitate to use innocents as pawns in internal power struggles. On the other hand, we have a movement which is unorganized, large, pervasive, spiritual, truthful, based on tradition, seen to be capable of mass mobilization, and not Communist in its beliefs or loyalties. The combination became a disaster for China.

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David Matas is an international human rights lawyer based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.