

From the Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Bill Protests to China's Wuhan Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Outbreak: Implications of Two Crises for the Chinese Communist Party's Governance Model

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Abstract

At the time when Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill protest movement was entering the transition stage from 2019 to 2020, an earth-shattering event erupted in mainland China that was soon going to have a far-reaching impact not only on mainland China, but also on Hong Kong and the rest of the world: the outbreak of a novel coronavirus pneumonia at a macabre plague level in the city of Wuhan in China's Hubei province which rapidly turned into a global pandemic that infected over a billion and killed millions across the globe. This paper aims to investigate how the seven-decade iron-fist rule of the Chinese Communist Party has come under these two consecutive severe tests from 2019 to 2020 that have served to reveal the nature and global implications of the CCP's mode of governance in general and the current Xi Jinping administration in particular.

Keywords: Hong Kong, anti-extradition bill protests, national security law, China, Wuhan, novel coronavirus, pneumonia, pandemic, COVID-19, Chinese Communist Party (CCP), saturnic power, totalitarianism, Leninism, Fascism

1. Overture: The Twin Crises

Still fresh from the euphoria of the celebration of 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the 70-year iron-fist rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)¹ soon came under two consecutive severe tests from the later part of 2019 to 2020 – the escalation of the Hong Kong people's anti-extradition bill² turned pro-democracy protests that had already swelled from just over one million to nearly two million participants (i.e. about 30 per cent of Hong Kong's population) in the consecutive two weeks of June 2019, and Wuhan's novel coronavirus pneumonia – originally referred to as China's Wuhan nCoV pneumonia (novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)–infected pneumonia (NCIP)) or Wuhan pneumonia in short both inside and outside China (*Wuhan feiyan* / 武漢肺炎) and also in China itself before the term started soon to turn politically sensitive leading to the later official naming of the disease as “COVID-19” by the World Health Organisation – outbreak that soon spread to the whole of China and the world outside.³ The dictatorial rule of the Communist Party of China, under the disguise of co-ruling *de jure* with another eight minor legal parties as well as some other organizations including the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) – all controlled by and subservient to the CCP, making up the United Front (統一戰線 / 統戰) – in practice embraces a transborder ethnonationalist agenda for the preservation of CCP's *de facto* non-negotiable one-party rule.

This paper aims to investigate how the Hong Kong anti-extradition bill turbulence and China's Wuhan novel coronavirus (nCoV) pneumonia outbreak that has evolved into a world disaster reveal the nature and global implications of the Chinese Communist Party's mode of governance in general and the administration of CCP secretary-general and national chairman Xi Jinping (习近平) in particular.

2. Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill Protests

From 2019 to 2020, in the People's Republic of China under the autocratic rule of the Chinese Communist Party, there have been two incidents that sent tremors through the CCP's mode of governance since Deng Xiaoping (邓小平)'s *coup de grâce* demolishing the Maoist central-command autarchic collectivist economic structure and the 1989 Tiananmen student protest movement.

The first one was the anti-extradition bill⁴ protests and demonstrations (called *fansongzhong* / 反送中) in Chinese, i.e. "against extradition to China", which actually captures the essence of the protest movement more accurately) in Hong Kong that began in mid-2019⁵ and continued to rock Hong Kong until early 2020, unprecedented in CCP's China since the March to June student-led demonstrations in Tiananmen Square of Beijing in 1989 (which later spread to more than 100 cities in China, especially in Chengdu that saw the worst death and injury figures outside Beijing resulted from the June repression).⁶ The 1989 Tiananmen protest movement and the 2014 Hong Kong Occupy Campaign (a.k.a. Umbrella Movement) were both nationwide/city-wide movements that originated from student activism that were then transformed into a demand for liberalization and democratization from all sectors of society.

3. Change in 2019 Protest Format *vis-à-vis* the 2014 Occupy Campaign

However, different from these precursors, the anti-extradition bill protests soon turned into violence events, and although this has followed an inevitable trajectory of “官逼民反” [government (officials) driving the people to revolt]⁷, it would have inevitably left some stains and provided a long-awaited excuse for the CCP to override the Hong Kong Basic Law with the introduction of a draconian Hong Kong national security law (officially the “Law of the People’s Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”)⁸ in 2020. The introduction of this new national security law for Hong Kong essentially imposes similar manners of persecuting dissent and suppressing civil rights and political freedom on the mainland that have been going on for decades⁹ – in the name of the charges of “inciting subversion of state power” (*shandong dianfu guojia zhengquan zui* / 煽動顛覆國家政權罪; formerly known as *fangeming zui* / 反革命罪, i.e. the crime of “counterrevolution”) and “picking quarrels and provoking troubles” (*xunxin zishi zui* / 尋釁滋事罪) – upon Hong Kong which till now has enjoyed a respectable rule of law inherited from British colonial rule and has been resisting being assimilated by the rule-by-law totalitarian governance of the CCP dictatorship across the city’s northern border inside the “fatherland”.

4. Governmental Response to the Anti-Extradition Bill Protests

Just like what the world witnessed later in the 1989 Tiananmen student demonstrations, John Gretton, writing in the wake of the 1968 student protests that rocked France, comments that one of the major aspects of the student revolt that in particular distinguish it from the others is that

“its expression has nearly always been political [...] even where the first stirrings of revolt were concerned with purely university problems subsequent agitation has always had an overtly political character” (Gretton, 1969: 17), as he reminds us in his book *Students and workers: An analytical account of dissent in France May-June 1968* that student protests are nothing new or unexpected:

Student agitation is not a new phenomenon, and Latin-American governments have been toppled by it long before the French students posed a serious threat to the Gaullist regime. Even in Europe those countries whose twentieth century history has been turbulent have seen students take sides for or against political movements.

(*ibid.*: 16)

When the Hong Kong people are stubbornly resisting the encroachment of a totalitarian power in their struggle to safeguard freedom of thought and expression and their personal dignity as free human being,¹⁰ we are seeing the extent of incompetence and cowardice of the Hong Kong government, as an organization that could actually serve as a bridge between Hong Kong people and the central government in Beijing to protect Hong Kong people's democratic rights and interests, that is how willingly playing a role of complete subservience to the CCP central government power and betraying Hong Kong people's democratic demands.¹¹

We have also seen how the protest movement to protect Hong Kong people's democratic rights and interests under Hong Kong's autonomy against the CCP dictatorship's attempt to impose its model of governance that is characterized by trampling on the human rights of the mainland people – with its suppression of freedom of expression, muzzling the media, literary inquisition and extreme censorship¹² – upon

the Hong Kong people have been transformed under hopelessness and desperation, against a background of government's persistent stonewalling all the basic demands, from the peaceful demonstrations of the Occupy Movement in 2014 into a violent format led by *yung-mou* segment (勇武派), from peaceful demand into a "stir fry" (*lam chau* / 攪炒) approach of mutual destruction.

5. The Dilemma Protesters Were Facing in Confronting the Formidable State Machinery with Much Ampler Resources

With the escalation of street violence, the protesters' stance has increasingly come under attack from most who value stability and economic prosperity and who see the struggle for democracy and human rights just as unworthy abstract and pretentious, "Western" notions. Honestly, both sides are having their dilemmas. The broader protest movement could understand the damage violent tactics did to their cause but still stuck to the original resolution of "never give up, never break up with any faction" (不棄不離, 不割席) for fear that a split may weaken the bargaining power. And there was also at some point in time a belief that the violence has actually weakened Xi Jinping's hold on the politburo and may cause him to soften his hardline stance.

On the side of CCP regime, they should be able to see that the protestors' violence would eventually diminish the support the protest movement so far had been able to maintain from the majority of Hong Kong public and the liberal democratic West. Hence continuing police crackdown could be useful as it would cause more rage and more violence.¹³ It was a better option than giving in to the protestors' demand for free elections which could become a boost to the Mainland's own pro-democracy movement which had so far been successfully brutally suppressed. Also, allowing real free election of Hong Kong's Legislative

Council (LegCo) members and worse, the Chief Executive (CE), would enable the pro-democracy and human rights activists to dominate the Hong Kong government machinery which could influence, encourage and join hand with the Mainland's suppressed dissidents to threaten CCP's dictatorship. The once-softened Carrie Lam had evidently turned more hard-line after her visit to Beijing to talk to Xi Jinping. The central CCP government had obviously instructed her on a more hard-line approach. Seen in this light, the later introduction of the outrageous Hong Kong national security law that caused international uproar would represent the CCP regime's decision to force a PRC-isation of Hong Kong in order to ward off any potential Hongkongisation of the PRC.

6. The State's Upper Hand

In Xi Jinping's speech at the BRICs summit, he said "stop violence and chaos" (止暴制亂) Honestly, having managed to push rage and violence to an out-of-control level, the CCP regime was sensing that the protest moving could be losing moral support from the people, and hence it could be a ripe time for Beijing to act – thus reflecting a true following of Mao Zedong (毛澤東)'s "permanent revolution" theory: generating social chaos as a means to justify a strong State and authoritarian rule.

There is no way for optimism in negotiating with CCP on popular vote, true democratic elections with universal suffrage. Maintaining monopoly on power is always a paramount concern whether in formerly Russian (USSR) Soviet structure or for the CCP. It is in its nature; it is in its bones.

7. Violence Escalating

It is true that the Hong Kong protesters in 2019 had strayed far away from the nonviolent action approach of 2014's Umbrella Movement and that trend was worrying. During the siege of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, according to the police, protesters were storing ammunitions, including ingredients for making petrol bombs, on campus, and were throwing things from dorms down to streets. Again, the ultimate blame game is: who triggered the situation to deteriorate to such a mob-rule level (including increasing hatred and attack against innocent Mainlanders)? Are the Hong Kong government's and Beijing's stonewalling tactic on demand for genuine popular election of LegCo members and CE, and jailing leaders of the peaceful 2014 Umbrella Movement activists, thus leading to increasing violence, justifiable, ethical and blame-free as a government? The straying away from the principle of nonviolence plus mindless occupation of the airport (for which the protesters had apologized) could be seen as containing terrible mistakes committed by a leaderless movement lacking the organization and tactical skill of a formidable State machinery. The government's strategy of stonewalling all the demands apparently was effective in generating anger-led missteps in the protest movement – the increasing violence, airport debacle, etc. that might alienate more moderate supporters and create pretext for more drastic crackdown.

Like Robert Owen, the founder of British socialism said, as Marguerite Young informs us in her book on the New Harmony, the Utopian community Owen created in the 1820s: “Man interests himself little in forms of ideal government, being by nature not thoughtful – until he reaches a state of extreme desperation, cold and misery, with a package of dynamite in his hands. And then we see the insecurity of works of ages, the ghostly top blown off, the edifice dissolving.” (Young, 1945/1966: 127) Facing a government on strings of its

marionettists in Beijing that would not, and could not, give an inch, Hong Kong's new leaderless and "Be Water"-style¹⁴ protest movement was fated to go down the same way as Hans Koning described the Chicago of 1968:

The small shock troops in which SDS (very properly) wanted to organize its demonstrators to avoid mass beatings or mass arrests and to make political points never materialized. The men and women in the street did not want to be organized. They reacted to their impulses, their hopes and indignation, to the political circus at the convention, the aggression of the cops. And they did well, as infantry often does when its officers are not interfering.

(Koning, 1987: 138)

At one point the anti-extradition bill protests had indeed reached a dangerous situation, a critical point, very similar to the last stage of the 1989 Tiananmen protests. Opinion prevails, though not often voiced, among pro-democracy movement supporters then was to urge the young people to halt the protests when a certain point was reached,¹⁵ given the grim memory of the risk to the whole movement when a ruthless dictatorship was backed into a corner during the 1989 Tiananmen protests, also because further prolonging the protests would be falling further into the trap of the regime and turn public opinion against the pro-democracy movement and actually harm the ultimate goal of securing genuine universal suffrage and true free candidate choice for Hong Kong's Chief Executive election. While it is a democratic right for people to demonstrate peacefully, anyway, there was also fear that there would be agent provocateur from the regime used that as another opportunity to cause violence to create pretext for crackdown.

It was regrettable to see that the “*yung-mou*” actions were deviating from the nonviolent action principle, but from 2014 to 2019, the protesters’ demand had always been a most basic one: to be allowed to freely elect the leaders of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, without the authority-filtered list tantamount to “selection” instead of “election”. Is it really that difficult for the Hong Kong government and Beijing to agree to this small request?

While condemning the violence of the “*yung-mou*” faction of protesters for doing a disservice to the overall nonviolent pro-democracy movement,¹⁶ by draining away the support the wider movement needed and its moral high ground, critics should not lose sight of the real source of the violence, namely the Hong Kong government and its Beijing overlord that rejected the people’s demand for real democratic election of Hong Kong lawmakers and CE, the Hong Kong government that put all those leaders of the peaceful 2014 Umbrella Movement in jail, and thus cause the rage and violence among the protesters. People were correctly seeing the police as protecting other citizens from the violent protesters, but what they did not see or refused to see was that the police were being used by the authorities to fortify the unyielding, uncompromising position of an irresponsible government.¹⁷ The more the crackdown by the police, the higher the rage of the protestors, the more violent they would become, and that justified more crackdown by the police.¹⁸ And thus more violence. Such is the common strategy by authoritarian regimes to destroy pro-democracy movements by draining its support domestic and overseas through the violence generated. It was easy to say that the protesters should return to peaceful means, even when facing State violence. Resorting to violence themselves, even though could exert some pressure on the State, eventually was going to derail the protest movement itself. However, for those were facing personal risks and outrage in the streets facing police crackdown and

government's stonewalling,¹⁹ it would not be fair to simply doubt why this fact was not understood by them.

8. Who Held the Cards?

Sadly, all evidences since 2014 show that these were protests with no way out. The ultimate decision-makers are in Beijing, not Hong Kong. If Beijing insisted on not giving an inch (as has been the CCP's usual approach since 1989), there would be no way for the present setup of the Hong Kong government machinery to dare to disobey. The longer the protests went on, the more angry and feeling desperate the young people were, and the more violent they would become, and the more they would alienate many Hong Kong people in the streets, including those in the lower economic echelons who were already having too hard a life toiling daily to work to feed their families to care about political freedom and democratic ideals. That would create better and better excuse for government crackdown, whether it came, at that time as potentially a military mini-Tiananmen solution, or today, by way of "rule by law": the Beijing-imposed Hong Kong national security law.

9. The Blame Game and the State's Stonewalling Strategy

It is a blame game that everyone has to draw each person's own line. Either one blames the dictatorship that insists on denying the people political freedom and civil liberties and hence causes the riot, or one sides with the dictatorship. It is personal choice.

When it comes to dealing with student protesters' demand for genuine popular elections, unfortunately Beijing and its subservient HKSAR government are not willing to stick to the true meaning of the Sino-British agreement and Basic Law but instead repeatedly resorting

to the (re-)interpretation by CCP's rubber-stamp Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC)²⁰, like how Gretton comments on France's student protests of 1968 in his book *Students and workers: An analytical account of dissent in France May-June 1968*: "The students were thrown an Act of Parliament which, if it were loyally put into practice, would go a long way towards meeting their demands, but [...] the combination of conservation interests in the Government and the teaching profession and among parents of schoolchildren has had the effect of rendering it virtually null and void. Old habits, old methods look like creeping back under new names." And the continuing student agitation, says Gretton, "is to a large extent the result of this bad faith" for there are few fears as powerful "as the fear of losing one's status and authority." (Gretton, 1969: 277) "Everybody will look at what happened, and interpret it, according to his own lights. But those who are tempted to look at 1968 as Burke looked at 1789", thus warns Gretton with a comparison thrown back to Edmund Burke's defining tract of modern conservatism *Reflections on the revolution in France*, "would do well to ponder deeply before damning it in the same way." (*ibid.*: 278)

The strategy employed by the CCP and its docile Hong Kong SAR government is similar to that employed during the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. Do not respond to protesters' demands at all. Just drag. Wear them off. Waiting for the prolonged protest to cause inconvenience to civilian life and thus losing support from an expanding part of the populace. Rejecting meaningful dialogue at all and refusing to respond to demands will also cause protesters to become desperate and to resort to violence, thus creating an excuse for suppression by force. This is one of the major characteristics distinguishing a totalitarian state from a liberal democratic government. The most important thing is that the protesters must understand which type of regime they are facing. For example, France's response in recent years to the Yellow Vest

demonstrations and the Taiwan government's response to the Sunflower Movement back then were characterised by dialogues and compromises. This is the exact opposite of the CCP regime's and its subservient Hong Kong government's response to the Occupy/Umbrella Movement and anti-extradition bill demonstrations. The latter is an exemplar *par excellence* of how a ruthless autocratic regime drives an originally peaceful protest towards the path of violent conflict.

Just like in 1989 Beijing, time was on the side of the entrenched ruling class who could just keep on stonewalling protesters' demands and sit out the storm. The protests were going to fizzle out somehow, sometime. Society would get tired of it after it had dragged on for too long and caused more and more disruptions to daily life. Even the protesters would get tired. Same as in 1989 Beijing, there would be split within the protest movement – some might want to retreat and re-organize, while some would scoff at the idea of pulling back when demands had not been met and leaving their movement's leaders to alone face the wrath of the State, for even in the case of the relatively “leaderless”²¹ 2019 Hong Kong protests, still there were prominent supporters and mentors of the protest movement from all walks of life, be they the Joshua Wongs and Agnes Chows, or Benny Tais or Jimmy Lais or Denise Hos,²² who would have to face the State's subsequent persecution if just because the SAR government has to show its Beijing overlord that it is not weak, and that there are people to be dragged to court in chains to cow the rest of the restless society.

10. The World's Response to PRC's “Domestic” Repression

We have also seen the divergent responses of countries around the world to the CCP's suppression of democracy and freedom – due to their own respective domestic political considerations (as the proverb goes,

“Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones”), the profits brought by China’s trade and investment, consideration of the international *Realpolitik* in the midst of superpower rivalry reflecting in hedging, balancing or bandwagoning behaviour – not only developing countries, but even large Western liberal democracies that consider themselves the proud guardians of the universal value of the North Atlantic liberal democratic traditions are with no exception caught in this contradiction, just as in those days when they were dealing with the nascent ascendance of the Nazis’ Third Reich. Unfortunately, history has repeatedly been telling us that the rise and continued strengthening of a dictatorship-controlled country to a major economic, political and military power is a greatest global human tragedy of the immense proportion. Unfortunately as long as the totalitarian regime is still going from strength to strength, atrocities committed and human rights abuse will continue, and so will the international community’s silence and complicity.

11. Do Hong Kong People Really Demand “Independence”?

The question here is not Hong Kong’s independence – a misunderstanding that the CCP’s disinformation machinery²³ would want the whole world to believe.²⁴ That can be ruled out, even if for many that was their aspiration, for without political and military power for support, that remains a pipe dream.²⁵ The question here is the struggle not only of the Hong Kong people but people in the rest of China too for liberal democracy, universal suffrage, right to elect ruling party, rule of law, independent judiciary, the right to protest, to be free from CCP’s brutal infringement of human rights. That is the goal the Hong Kong people must go on fighting for, against repression by the CCP and its minions in Hong Kong. It is the Hong Kong people’s basic

human rights that the CCP and its subservient Hong Kong SAR government refuse to honour. It is to this end that the protests, in whichever form, must go on.

Since 2014 the protests are about universal suffrage and genuine election of the Chief Executive, the failure of which has led to 2019's anti-extradition bill protests whose violent nature has reflected the level of frustration in facing a ruthless central regime and a SAR government that has no gut to fight for the people's democratic rights and hence failed the people on every account. The failure of the Occupy/Umbrella Movement has led to the youths' disillusionment that in turn given birth to the more radical independence movement which is never in the mainstream because most people are matured enough to understand its being just a pipe dream. But this has been used by the CCP as a pretext to crush the democracy movement. That is why the pro-democracy protest must go on, but not those by the more radical independence movement that can derail the former. The whole pro-democracy movement needs better planning and organization, cast in a global context.

12. Youthful Disillusionment with a Regime of Absolute Power

The 2019 Hong Kong uprising has indeed deeply shaken the psyche of its Beijing overlord who has been long used to the submissiveness or even nationalistic self-diversion of the cowed Mainland citizens by the macabre example their ruthless State shows them of those who refused the toe the line, like those opposing the European monarchs during the age of Romanticism, as historian J.L. Talmon wrote:

The whole period of 1815-48 was an age of plot, conspiracy, riot and revolt on the one hand, and repression, censorship and police rule on

the other, varying in degree from country to country. What was to the regime in power legitimacy and law, was to the opposition coercion and arbitrary oppression. What the opposition regarded as their sacred rights, appeared to the ruling classes as the threat of mob violence and barbarous anarchy.

(Talmon, 1967: 32)

Déjà vu, Hong Kong, 2014, 2019. Similarly, a people who just wish to assert their rights to freely elect their own government. A people in a special corner of PRC who is fighting a battle which fellow citizens on the vast Mainland are too cowed by fear to fight. These brave, conscientious young people should be thanked by their Mainland counterparts for helping to voice what the latter dare not voice, fight what the latter dare not fight.

As prominent essayist and cultural critic Lung Ying-tai (龍應台), whose poignant writings are among those that had made an indelible contribution to the democratization of Taiwan, says, “The desire for fairness and justice, the pursuit of a reasonable system, and the demand for people’s participation in politics are universal. On the territory of the People’s Republic of China of more than nine million square kilometers, only the Hong Kong people have come forward. Today, Hong Kong people have torn their throats and shouted, and many people are shouting with the determination to sacrifice themselves. You can say that they are shouting out for the vast population of the PRC who are unable to speak out. Looking at it from another angle, the mainlanders absolutely can say softly to the Hong Kong people today: ‘Thank you, please take care. May the green hills be always there.’”²⁶

But ironically, these young people of Hong Kong are facing a tirade of curses and condemnation over the cyberspace from the young in the Mainland. And Hong Kong and other young students tending the

Lennon Walls in overseas university campuses are virulently, even physically, attacked by Mainland PRC students on those campuses. What has happened to the young of the PRC?

13. The Anguish in Hong Kong: The Coming Destruction

And in Hong Kong of 2019, just like Hans Koning ruminates over the Chicago protesters of 1968: “Liberal students *do* become radicals when ... etc., not because they’re hit over the head [a notion Chomsky told Koning he objected to] but because they find that when the chips are down, our rights remain rights only as long as we have the prudence not to test them (Mark Twain). And those kids in Chicago, that generation, assuredly did know what they were doing. What they were doing was the culmination of a decade of thought.” (Koning, 1987: 138) Almost half a decade of desperation down the line from 2014, those Hong Kong kids of 2019 did know exactly what they were doing, callous their actions might sometimes seem, for they were just deciding to waive the prudence of 2014 to further test their rights, a dignified Hong Konger’s rights, a prudence where elsewhere in China most citizens are still too scared to wave, too scared of the prospect of disappearing into the Chinese gulag under the pocket charges of “inciting subversion of state power” and “picking quarrels and provoking troubles”, shackles finally imposed on Hong Kong through Beijing’s introducing the new “Hong Kong national security law” by mid-2020, gleefully welcomed and employed by a SAR government and its leadership that had not hesitated in using it to disqualify “unpatriotic” legislators who had been elected by the people²⁷, before proceeded to use it to launch larger and larger waves of arrest of pro-democracy activists and politicians.

Such intensified creeping authoritarianism has meant one thing: Hong Kong citizens will no longer be so different from those in other

cities in the vast Mainland in terms of matters of legality.²⁸ As the Mainland citizens have long been used to, laws and the constitution “no longer meant what they said, for they had to be reinterpreted” in the light of the Party’s will – or in George Victor’s study of the psychohistory of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler’s, which means that even “with the directives they received, no judge, prosecutor, lawyer, or police official could be sure what a law meant in general or how it should be applied in a specific case, unless advised by the Chancellery.” The uncertainty over the laws and the constitution which can be subjected to reinterpretation further “weakened prevailing moral and ethical rules as well as legal ones”, says Victor. “Right and wrong were less clear than before. Nazi law professors noted that Nazi justice made it harder – in fact, impossible – for people to know whether their acts were illegal or what the consequences might be. One found the uncertainty desirable as it increased the pressure on people to conform!” (Victor, 1998: 117) The same adjustment to new legal reality should be pervading Hong Kong after the introduction of the new national security law for the territory, after seeing how a “lenient” judge in a trial of anti-extradition bill protesters could be condemned by Mainland State media and local pro-Beijing forces and even replaced, and how Jimmy Lai was repeatedly denied bail, thus making him newly one of the prisoners of conscience oldest in age in the vast land under the boot of the CCP, and abhorrently brought to court in metal chains,²⁹ in the twilight of this former British crown colony that was once upon a time rightly proud of its independent judiciary and incorruptible police force.³⁰ The adjustment to this new reality is much more dreadful than the creeping authoritarianism the Hong Kongers have been feeling over the decades since the Handover, much more than seeing the blatant “interpretations” of the Basic Law (Hong Kong’s mini-Constitution) by the powers that be in Beijing, much more than seeing the extraterritorial crime committed by the Mainland

CCP regime in the kidnapping of dissident Hong Kong booksellers and publishers (Yeoh, 2016a: 41-48)³¹ which marks the retrogression of the regime from what some termed “degenerative totalitarianism”³² to a form of quasi-Fascist racketeer governance³³ – like Victor’s observation of how Hitler’s “new system usually protected Nazis who committed acts for which the rest of the nation was punished”, in cases where the Storm Troopers committed what for others would be punishable crimes including homicide, and in the atrocities of *Kristallnacht* (Victor, 1998: 117-118) – and much much more than what is felt on the Mainland where people have learnt through decades what they are expected to do and not to.

As expected, in the recent months came large-scale crackdown on pro-democracy activism, following the advent of the new “Hong Kong national security law”. Jimmy Lai and his son have also been arrested under the new law.³⁴ Many pan-democrats were arrested under different charges, some out on bail. Dissident university academics were fired, including Benny Tai.³⁵ Apparently the whole purpose of the new law is to crack down on pro-democracy activism, instil fear and White Terror among dissidents. It is a standard Chinese Communist Party policy approach, now newly applied to Hong Kong. It was a positive development that the United State has continued to provide strong support for Hong Kong’s persecuted dissidents, as she has always done for the Mainland’s, and sanctioned the chief executive Carrie Lam and the other officials for the imposition of the new law and widespread crackdown on pro-democracy activism in Hong Kong, to a certain extent hitting them where it hurts, and the United Kingdom has taken positive actions too to provide exit route for the Hongkongers who just suddenly found themselves under the boot, but of course on the ground that will not sway the CCP even a bit.

14. The State's *Saturnic Power* and the Closing of the Chinese Mind

“There is reason to fear that, like Saturn, the Revolution may devour each of its children in turn.” Thus said Pierre Vergniaud, the leading spokesman for the moderate Girondins in Paris of 1793 (cited in Bullock, 1993: 493). He and other Girondins were guillotined later that year after being attacked by the more radical Jacobins. Vergniaud’s warning, which was reflected in the most well-known of Francisco Goya’s “Black Paintings” over two decades later, *Saturno devorando a su hijo* that depicts Saturn devouring his own child, need not only mean physical annihilation, but also assault on mental capability, on free thought, resulting in the obliteration of reason itself – as Goya depicted in his powerful aquatint *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (*The sleep of reason produces monsters*), just a few years after Vergniaud raised the above alarm.

One of the most important strategic instrument for infiltration overseas is the international network of Confucius Institutes (Yeoh, 2017: 934-959)³⁶, which constitute a direct arm of CCP’s propaganda department to condition a whole younger generation of other countries covertly and subliminally to be in tune to support CCP’s policy, including both domestic and foreign policies, and most importantly its dissent-intolerant governance model.³⁷ Meanwhile, shutting out information from outside³⁸ except being filtered through State mouthpieces, banning of all outside channels from *Google* to *Wikipedia*, from *Facebook*³⁹ to *Youtube* to *Twitter*, and replacing them with regime-approved own “equivalents” in the form of the strictly censored *Baidu* (百度), *Weibo* (微博), *WeChat/Weixin* (微信), etc., strict censorship of news permitting only “positive” domestic news to get published, and prohibition of investigative journalism⁴⁰ and persecution and jailing of non-official citizen-reporters (i.e. those acting independent from official

media and media cowed by the regime) and camera-witnesses have created an Orwellian world of “Ignorance is Strength” tacit State-promoted political environment.⁴¹ The power of the strict State control of information flow is not restricted to be over the young in the Mainland, but also reaching all generations vulnerable to such State manipulation. Beyond this “closing of the Chinese mind” in the Mainland, this power is having an outreach far into foreign lands through the United Front work’s successful controlling or influencing directly or indirectly almost all Chinese-language media overseas⁴² and propaganda via yearly billions of short messages and video clips on the social media (a tactic that is in line with the ancient Chinese proverb “three guys a tiger make”⁴³) including those by the CCP government-backed Internet warriors often referred to as the “50-cent gang” (*wumao* / 五毛),⁴⁴ as well as CCP-State-owned international propaganda arm like CGTN (China Global Television Network),⁴⁵ exploiting the liberal democracies’ practice of free mass and social media to tell the world Xi Jinping’s “China story” well (while blocking access to these same media within the borders of PRC), brainwashing audiences and readers all over the world on a daily basis inside and outside Chinatowns. It was reported that most of these online actions of the totalitarian CCP State rely on “spam accounts” to spread false news and conduct public opinion manipulations, and since most of these messages are in Chinese, it can be inferred that their target groups are people in Hong Kong or ethnic Chinese overseas communities. A report released by Harvard University in 2017 pointed out that the Chinese government fabricated 488 million fake online comments a year.⁴⁶

This represents a State power that goes far beyond, and in a far longer-term process, than what Joseph Nye called “soft power” (Nye, 1990, 2004, 2008) and what Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig called “sharp power” (Walker and Ludwig, 2017). It represents more of

a slow poisoning of the young mind though a *saturnic power*, and of minds of older generations too, but more importantly a whole generation of young Chinese minds – a terrifying mental corruption of a whole generation that is going to grow up to be the next generation of political leaders in Mainland China and overseas, like that having been done to the hardened, murderous child warriors in today’s terrorist battlefields and civil war zones. As Erich Fromm says of the CCP dictatorship’s counterparts in recent history:

Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism have in common that they offered the atomized individual a new refuge and security. These systems are the culmination of alienation. The individual is made to feel powerless and insignificant, but taught to project all his human powers into the figure of the leader, the state, the “fatherland,” to whom he has to submit and whom he has to worship. He escapes from freedom into a new idolatry. All the achievements of individuality and reason, from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century are sacrificed on the altars of the new idols. The new systems were built on the most flagrant lies, both with regard to their programs and to their leaders. In their program they claimed to fulfill some sort of Socialism, when what they were doing was the negation of everything that was meant by the word in the socialist tradition. The figures of their leaders only emphasize the great deception.

(Fromm, 1955: 208)

As has been with Hitler’s *Nationalsozialismus* (National Socialism / Nazism), Fromm’s critique serves as much to explain CCP’s “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” as a blatant lie, a contrived premise, together with the new Xi-brand of nationalist slogan “the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” employed to entrench the Party on

the altar of power to fulfil its cosmic destiny to lead the Chinese nation, which only the Party is almost divine-ordained to lead to its glorious destiny, as described vividly by Friedrich Hayek in his influential exposition of liberalism, *The road to serfdom* (1944):

The most effective way of making everybody serve the single system of ends towards which the social plan is directed is to make everybody believe in those ends. To make a totalitarian system function efficiently it is not enough that everybody should be forced to work for the same ends. It is essential that the people should come to regard them as their own ends. Although the beliefs must be chosen for the people and imposed upon them, they must become their beliefs, a generally accepted creed which makes the individuals as far as possible act spontaneously in the way the planner wants. If the feeling of oppression in totalitarian countries is in general much less acute than most people in liberal countries imagine, this is because the totalitarian governments succeed to a high degree in making people think as they want them to [which ...] is, of course, brought about by the various forms of propaganda.

(Hayek, 1944/1986: 114)

The CCP regime's continued relentless assault on political dissent and its absolute resolve to maintain its power monopoly at all cost – and steadfast refusal to let one fifth of humanity in this East Asian land mass resume their course of democratisation started by Sun Yat-sen (孫中山 / 孫逸仙 / 孫文) and others in the 1911 revolution that overthrew the 5000-year long imperial monarchical order but that was interrupted by the Japanese military invasion and the Communist Party's conquest of Mainland China – could only be postponing the inevitable and in fact accentuating the existing social contradictions, for both the speed and

volatility brought about by the country's breakneck economic transformation under increasing morphogenesis are making whatever State-sanctioned system with the bottom line of one-party rule short-lived in viability when all State-guided *modi vivendi* as such could be at best *pro tem* (Yeoh, 2011: 465-474)⁴⁷.

It is in this regard that transnational support, including also financial support and training for the pro-democracy activism is not only fully justified but highly important, despite all the effort of the dictatorship to resort to nationalism to discredit it.⁴⁸ One of the most outstanding episodes that attracted condemnation from both the government and pro-CCP nationalists was the case of demonstrating with the United States of America flag in Hong Kong of 2019 that had looked ridiculous and highly provocative to Mainland nationalists but the protestors are actually pressing the U.S. Congress to pass the proposed Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 (HKHRDA) that would serve to provide concrete support for their struggle. The related bill initially introduced in 2014 – following that year's Umbrella Movement and democracy protests in Hong Kong, which was followed by the CCP regime's outrageous cross-country kidnapping of Hong Kong booksellers about a year later – will establish punitive measures against government officials in Hong Kong or China who are responsible for suppressing civil rights in Hong Kong, and will help to put pressure on the Hong Kong government and the CCP regime to let Hong Kong remain sufficiently autonomous from China to justify different treatment of Hong Kong under U.S. law. Joshua Wong and Alex Chow's opinion piece in *The New York Times* was also having this Act in mind. With heavy link (family, financial) of China's high and mighty to U.S., this Act might have some impact, as it allows freezing of their U.S.-based assets and denial of entry into U.S. However, it could be a double-edge sword too. While the Act might cause some inconvenience to the present

Hong Kong administration and China, the real impact should be rather limited, not enough to cause Beijing to soften its stance. On the contrary, it might further fan blind nationalism in the mainland, playing right into the hand of the CCP dictatorship.

15. What's in a Flag: Ideals or Atrocities?

The flag “is the embodiment, not of sentiment, but of history”, said Woodrow Wilson, in a 1915 address.⁴⁹ Like the U.S. flag incident in the Hong Kong protests, similarly when some protesters were holding high the flag of the United Kingdom and trampling on CCP's regime's national five-star red flag they were merely contrasting the political freedom-denying, dissent-crushing, repressive totalitarian rule of the CCP with a dictatorship-manipulated “justice” system which they saw as blatantly creeping into the life of Hong Kong people⁵⁰ who valued so much freedom of expression and right for political dissent, to their former colonial British government whose human-rights-respecting liberal democratic government system with judicial independence which they aspired.⁵¹ Free thought and free speech and related political freedom and civil liberties are international ideals, sans borders, and the struggle against political persecution of dissent and human rights infringement is also transborder, and it has to be recognised as such, despite the efforts of autocratic, repressive regimes to discredit this international link by resorting to exclusionist ethnonationalism.

In his introduction to the edited volume *Students in revolt*, Seymour Martin Lipset (1969/1970: xxix) says that more than any other groups, “intellectuals tend to have an international reference group” and are clearly more likely to be cosmopolitans, referring to Robert K. Merton's distinction between “cosmopolitans”, who are oriented to outside groups for standards of comparison, and “locals”, who are concerned with the

evaluations of the community within which one resides, in his landmark publication in sociology *Social theory and social structure* (Merton, 1949/1968: 441-475). As cosmopolitans, these intellectuals and academics will thus have awareness of the shortcomings of their nation in comparison with the standards of the leading countries, which “heightens their desire to foster change within their own society and increase their resentment against local or foreign groups that inhibit modernization” and their support for radical political movement, and within this setting, students often turn into rebellious “apprentice intellectuals” under stimulation from their professors (Lipset, 1969/1970: xxix). These students, together with other groups, often turn to confrontation politics in the form of activist demonstrations due to the lack of legitimate channels of communication to authority, being ignored by the adult power structure (Lipset, 1969/1970: xxx). This is amply evident in both the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations and the 2019 Hong Kong protests, following closely the tradition in earlier times of China when students who were then crucial to the Imperial Court’s effort at modernisation were at the same time spreading republican and radical ideas throughout the society, helping to overthrow the Ch’ing Dynasty in 1911, and “were thereafter one of the elements continually pushing China towards modernization and radical ideologies.” (*ibid.*: xv)

16. The Chinese Overseas: The Exploitation of Transborder Co-ethnic Ethnonationalism

What is CCP regime and Hong Kong government’s response to the peaceful Occupy campaign demonstrations in 2014? The government refused to give an inch and violently suppressed it. The Occupy Nine were all sent to prison, including associate professor Benny Tai, the initiator of the Occupy campaign, who later after ending his prison term

was fired by the University of Hong Kong in 2020.⁵² The government insisted on not responding to the people's demands for genuine universal suffrage elections and would not give an inch. The peaceful way of appeal had failed altogether. The leaders who advocated peaceful demonstrations were all imprisoned. The 2019 demonstrations turned to violence. Whose fault is this? People not only in China, but also among the ethnic Chinese overseas community, who firmly support the CCP's dictatorship have their own conscience to question, as we have also seen that a large majority among members of the ethnic Chinese overseas communities, whether they be the leaders of the chambers of commerce or common people in the streets, have made the almost one-sidedly choice to support a dictatorship that despises free thought and brutally suppresses free speech.⁵³ It is also a choice made to willingly, slavishly destroy one's own conscience for the sake of enjoying the halo of a perceived glorious, strong ancestral homeland eulogized by the CCP dictatorship's official media and its fans, and subject oneself to the emotional extortion by an officially exploited never-ending "hundred-year national humiliation" rhetoric – which should help us to recall the national feeling of humiliation and the economic hardship following Germany's defeat in the First World War that served to lead to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* / National Socialist German Workers' Party) and resurrection of national pride under Hitler's Third Reich – thus either turning a blind eye to the cruel suppression of dissent by the ruthless regime, or faithfully dancing to the tune of the official media's theories of foreign "black hand" and "China exceptionalism".

We have even witnessed violent attacks under the banner of nationalism by China students studying overseas,⁵⁴ in academic institutions of free and democratic countries, upon the overseas student movements' events supporting Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill

protests and condemning the CCP dictatorship's eroding Hong Kong's civil rights and political freedom⁵⁵ – reminiscent of those bygone days when German nationalists, who were supporting the Nazi's resurrecting German glory, attacked the Jewish scapegoats and the supporters of the socialist movement and the ideal of liberal democracy. These harrowing episodes dreadfully inform us how a ruthless, autocratic regime can resort to exploiting ethnonationalism to maintain its political power monopoly.

"[...] how did intelligent, well-intentioned, educated, principled people [...] become so caught up in the [Nazi] movement, so captivated by Hitler's magnetism that they could accept everything – the secret police, the concentration camps, the nonsensical rhetoric of Aryan heroism and anti-Semitism [...]" So asked historian Eugene Davidson (cited in Victor, 1998: 5). The same question can be put to a broad population of admiring intellectuals, including academics, and many in all walks of life, both in PRC and outside, and in the case of the latter including the predominant portion of the overseas Chinese communities, as regards the CCP dictatorship's repression of dissent, the fate of the Chinese dissidents who are harassed, imprisoned, tortured, put under round-the-clock thuggish surveillance, or simply to "*be disappeared*" (*bei-shizong* / 被失踪), and millions more who are constantly put under such threat for any potential transgression as could be perceived by the CCP State as disobedient or recalcitrant, PRC citizens abroad including students whose families back home are under such threat for any potential "misbehaviour" of the children including even posting of messages critical of CCP on overseas social media.

Admittedly it is a personal choice whether while fighting for civil liberties and political freedom in, say, a country where one resides, one wants to apply a different standard whenever similar issues that emerge now happen to relate to the Chinese, to China, just because that ethnic

pride now seems to be paramount in the case of one being an ethnic Chinese overseas, or simply just as a manifestation of “China exceptionalism” subscribed to by even many of the world’s top thinkers, or due to historically based long-running hatred for “Western” imperialism compromising one’s moral compass causing an inclination to always see culpability of brutal dictatorships in developing countries as never to be in the regimes themselves but to be traced back, and only to be traced back, to the former colonial powers. Thus the double standard.

At the same time, this also leads to the cultivation of a mindset susceptible to the CCP regime’s propaganda strategy of deliberately confounding protest movement, though sometimes chaotic, against a dictatorship’s persecution of dissent, muzzling of freedom of expression, suppression of political freedom and civil liberties (as in Hong Kong) with civil disobedience-turned-riots that happen in a liberal democracy with free press, freedom of expression, opposition parties, civil society watchdogs and an independent judiciary (as in the U.S.), in order to counterattack the liberal democracies’ condemnation of its human rights abuses with a “not holier than thou” argument.

Talking about double standard ... When members of an ethnic Chinese overseas community fights against a repressive regime in the country they reside they do not say that it is that country’s internal affair and therefore the outside world should not intervene. When their co-fighters are arrested, they do not say that these people are agents of some foreign power trying to destabilize the country through the Opposition. Why do many of them need to adopt a double standard whenever matters are related to China? Simply being blinded by a misplaced ethnic pride?

Contrary to the CCP State propaganda highly influential among the blindly nationalistic young Chinese citizens as well as a great many among various generations of ethnic Chinese overseas, condemning

“Communist Party of China” dictatorship’s trampling on human rights, suppression of political freedom and civil liberties, and muzzling free speech, free thought and free press is not equivalent to or identical with attacking China or the Chinese people.⁵⁶ “Communist Party of China” is not equivalent or identical with China or the Chinese people.⁵⁷ A ruling political party is not equivalent to or identical with the country or the country’s citizens. Criticizing a political party’s rule is not equivalent to or identical with criticizing the country or the country’s citizens.⁵⁸ By the same token, to love China is not equivalent to having to love the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship. To love Chinese Communist Party dictatorship is not equivalent to loving China.

Most Han Chinese today, unfortunately, so confused within a mental state of what William Callahan (2010) termed “pessoptimism” effectively exploited by CCP propaganda employing China’s turbulent history, could no longer differentiate between China and the unelected dictatorship of the CCP, and could not understand that to bring down a ruthless dictatorship is actually to save a country’s people.

When contending that only patriots should be eligible to run the Hong Kong government, the Beijing regime and CCP apologists are also purposefully conflating patriotism – loyalty to China – and loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party. On one side are people who blindly support an autocratic Party-State that tramples on human rights and civil liberties, muzzles freedom of expression, denies citizens’ freedom of political choice, and persecutes political dissidents. On the other are those who risk their personal freedom and comfort and even their lives struggling to bring about a human rights-respecting governance system for China that honours citizens’ rights to political freedom and civil liberties – a resumption of the ideals of the 1911 revolution and Sun Yat-sen’s original call for “rights of the people” (民權) in his “Three Principles of the People” (三民主義) political philosophy that were

interrupted by the Japanese military invasion and the Communist Party's conquest of Mainland China. Honestly, who are the real patriots?

Many people long conditioned by totalitarian brainwashing would of course argue otherwise. Only a simple logical response is needed here. Let the majority of the Chinese people, one person, one vote, without the threat of White Terror from those in power, without the threat of jailing with conviction of "inciting subversion of state power" or "picking quarrels and provoking troubles", vote to decide whether the Communist Party of China should forever rule as a dictatorship or, instead, the people should have the basic right to freely choose the ruling party. This is not what the currently ruling unelected Communist Party government should just have the final say, nor should the so-called Little Pinks (*xiaofenhong* / 小粉紅)⁵⁹ among the China citizens or ethnic Chinese overseas. Are the Communist Party dictatorship and the Little Pinks regarding the vast China citizens as people who are unable to vote to determine their own future? Where is the human dignity of China's 1.4 billion people? Is it true that China's 1.4 billion citizens are really people without the ability to think independently, who forever need a Big Brother to think on their behalf? Is the brainwashing education of the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship really so successful over all these decades?

An example that can be used to gauge this is the case of Taiwan. The fact is that Taiwan is the first human-rights respecting liberal democracy in thousands of years of Chinese history, a recognized best-case democratisation model by world standard. But a great many China citizens, especially those in the younger generation, have been so conditioned by decades of "patriotic" education to ignore the fact of China remaining under the rule of a repressive dictatorship and instead to focus on Taiwan being just a renegade province to reunited with the mainland by force if necessary, while a great many among the overseas

Chinese have chosen to laud and support the repressive totalitarian regime of the Chinese Communist Party instead, and want Taiwan to be absorbed by this dictatorship in the name of the national glory of their “motherland” or ancestral homeland. However, probably there is always more to that than meet the eyes.

Of course, it is always difficult to gauge the level of success of such brainwashing over a whole generation. But there could be a lot of revelation if we are looking at the penchant for everything “Western” throughout China’s society from leaders to cadres to youths, from luxury items, mobile phones to education, despite all those nationalistic, Party-loyal rhetoric that the people let the Party hear what it loves to hear. Like George Orwell said in “Defense of Comrade Zilliacus” in 1948, two years before his passing:

Surely, if one is going to write about foreign policy at all, there is one question that should be answered plainly. It is: “If you had to choose between Russia and America, which would you choose?” ... in spite of all the fashionable chatter of the moment, everyone knows in his heart that we should choose America.⁶⁰

17. From Brainwashing to the Abuse of Racism Charges

In the present era after the fall of the Communist Party dictatorship in Russia and its Soviet Union captive nations⁶¹ and satellite states in Eastern Europe and Mongolia, all in 1990, where Mainland China (the “People’s Republic”) is the only giant landmass now still languishing under a Communist Party dictatorship, Orwell’s words could be ringing true, by all intents, in the hearts of all those nationalistic rhetoric-spewing so-called Little Pinks and old rouges domestic or in the diaspora.

In May 2020 after U.S. president Donald Trump told *CBS News* reporter Weijia Jiang “Maybe that's a question you should ask China” in response to the latter’s asking him why he was “making it global competition if everyday Americans still losing their lives and still seeing more cases”,⁶² Jiang hinted on Twitter that Trump was being racist. The accusation of racism here is indeed rather tricky. It actually implies that either Trump has conflated Jiang’s ethnicity, nationality and direction of loyalty, or Jiang has conflated her own ethnicity and the country of China that Trump mentioned, or both. When Trump said that if she were to ask China she would get a very unusual answer, he meant PRC’s unbelievably low rate of death from the novel coronavirus epidemic. It may or may not be incidental that the question has come from a China-born ethnic Chinese CBS reporter but the reporter’s insinuating later that Trump is being racist in saying that to her, though reflecting her honest mindset, could be misleading. “Racism” has been misused so much during this time of global pandemic to threaten people who dare to point out that the outbreak had indeed started in Wuhan,⁶³ China, whether or not the virus itself has originated anywhere including outer space, and it is the CCP regime’s penchant for secrecy and suppression of dissent that had helped to contribute to the global disaster.⁶⁴ Those who dare to insist on this fact are branded “racist” towards ethnic Chinese everywhere. There are prominent ethnic Chinese politicians and scientists making statements about the pandemic “has nothing to do with Wuhan” and coming forward to denounce people who “blacken China’s good name”. If ethnic Chinese overseas could not resist their “nationalistic” urge to support the ruthless and brazen dictatorship that is ruling China now, they really should not blame people everywhere suspecting that they are but PRC’s international fifth column.

Criticizing a China that is under the boot of the CCP's dictatorship is equivalent to racially discriminating against the Chinese? To call the world-ravaging CoV pneumonia that had spread globally from China's Wuhan outbreak "China virus" is a racial discrimination against the Chinese people?⁶⁵ Does that mean that the Chinese overseas (migrants and descendants) who are already citizens of countries other than China still consider themselves people of China? (Note the ambiguity of the English term "Chinese", referring to either people with China citizenship or people of Chinese ethnicity including non-China-citizens, which tends to compound the problem.)⁶⁶ Then how do the ethnic Chinese overseas communities protest about why others always regard them as the overseas fifth column of PRC? It is a simple fact that CCP is strategically conflating its dictatorship with "Chinese", criticism against CCP with anti-Chinese racism. The question is: how do the ethnic Chinese overseas think about that? Where do most of them actually stand?

The ethnic Chinese overseas communities should reflect: as a member of the great ethnic Chinese nation, if that is how they feel, they can feel extremely honoured. However, is the present iron-fist dictatorship in China that has oppressed the Chinese people for over 70 years – the brazen trampling of civil rights, the wanton arrest, torture and incarceration, sometimes to death, of dissidents in order to consolidate the permanent rule of the one-party dictatorship, the continued deception of the world, the relentless suppression of the civil rights and pro-democracy movements, let us not mention the bloody purges, the manmade famine that killed tens of millions of people, and the 1989 massacre of thousands of civilians during the Mao and Deng eras – the Communist Party dictatorship that does whatever it wants while suppressing any voices of dissent, really should be rightfully considered by them to be the honour to the Chinese nation, or rather an ignominy?

For the ethnic Chinese overseas communities, a real long-term threat from the CCP regime that is hardly recognised is that overseas ethnic Chinese's Great Han Sinism⁶⁷, accentuated for political use by the CCP regime's United Front infiltration and control of ethnic Chinese overseas communities, is pushing these ethnic Chinese overseas communities into an abyss of more and more being perceived as CCP's regime's "fifth column" repelled by other local communities. With more and more cases of ethnic Chinese overseas arrested for involving themselves in espionage (including technology theft) for PRC or acting as PRC's foreign agents of influence,⁶⁸ it is really difficult to blame other people for misperceiving ethnic Chinese overseas in general as the totalitarian PRC's "fifth column".

These ethnic Chinese overseas still feeling "patriotic" to the totalitarian PRC,⁶⁹ happily playing willing victims to the CCP dictatorship's ethnonationalistic emotional extortion, are tarnishing the reputation of ethnic Chinese overseas and arousing local resentment and suspicion towards them (thus the perennial label, "PRC's fifth column"). Their pride of having a glorious "strong China" backing them up is a dangerous misperception, as throughout the history of PRC since 1949, the CCP government has only had the record of using the ethnic Chinese overseas as its United Front tool and has never had the record of sending military aid to rescue the latter when anti-ethnic Chinese sentiments flared up into mob violence (unlike U.S.'s or France's oftentimes military evacuation operation for endangered American and French people in other lands). Never. Not in the case of Indonesia of 1965. Not in the case of Khmer Rouge's Kampuchea. Not anywhere. "Politics in command" (政治掛帥) bilateral relations has always been the CCP regime's strategic dictum. Ethnic Chinese overseas are just to be used for this political prerogative and can be swiftly discarded if doing otherwise could jeopardise this prime directive.

In this regard, it is important to draw attention to the fact that the Chinese Communist Party regime, through its United Front work propaganda department, the widely dubbed “fifty-cent” army (五毛) and the “voluntary fifty-cent” netizens (自乾五)⁷⁰, has been highly successful in influencing and brainwashing generations of ethnic Chinese overseas through media stake control as well as hundreds of millions of “patriotic” online video clips and social media short messages every year that purposefully obscure the distinction between nation and ruling party. Most importantly, it has acquired almost all overseas Chinese media outlets around Chinatowns.⁷¹ The purpose is to inculcate in Chinese minds the concept of upholding CCP’s one-party dictatorship governance model, and to make sure that a whole next generation of overseas Chinese thus brainwashed will grow up and when participating in local politics will lean towards, support, justify and favouring CCP’s one-party dictatorship model, or even guide local politics in the direction of authoritarianism and suppression of dissent, in order to cultivate more long-term allies for the CCP dictatorship.⁷² In an era when more and more Southeast Asian nations in China’s neighbourhood are retreating from democracy and returning to authoritarianism, against the Fukuyaman optimism earlier in the 1990s, the role of the PRC as a global supporter, ally and mentor for all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and the regular exercising of its vetoing power in the United Nations against world condemnation of such regimes’ excesses and atrocities, decades-long and going strong, is coming into the world political limelight again. The implication of a whole new generation of ethnic Chinese overseas actively participating in politics throughout the world from Jenni Chen-Ye (陳燕妮) of Finland to Gladys Liu Sim-ngor (廖嬋娥) of Australia at a time of totalitarian PRC’s alarmingly rising global political influence is

attracting political analysts' attention too⁷³ – the grim prospect of a whole young generation growing up to be community leaders sympathetic to the dissent-suppressing governance model of the PRC.

18. SARS Redux: CCP's Governance Model and Strengthening World Clout and How Wuhan's nCoV Outbreak Turned into a Global Massacre

Hardly a year since the first anti-extradition bill protest unfolded in Hong Kong in the form of a sit-in at the government headquarters on 15th March 2019 that set off the chain of protest actions that rocked Hong Kong over the rest of the year, another event have been moving apace frenetically that carries all the hallmarks of the CCP regime's governance model of covering up, persecution of whistle-blowers and unofficial citizen-reporters,⁷⁴ tight filtering of information, all-out effort to influence world bodies especially the World Health Organisation, and economic coercion against any country that dare to make remarks or take actions that the CCP regime perceives to be "unfriendly".⁷⁵ Unprecedented over the past century, the world is again in the grip of a horrifically deadly pandemic that by the end of 2020 has massacred almost two million people worldwide and damaged the health of the other over a hundred million people. It destroys lives; it destroys families. It destroys social fabric; it destroys values. But its deep impacts are not only medical and social, but also economic and political. From the first Wuhan outbreak at the turn of the year to today's macabre global menace, it has indeed been pointing to coming long years of living dangerously.

Adding to the blame game for the violence in Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill turbulence, the clumsiness of the world's large liberal democratic powers in dealing with the novel coronavirus (nCoV)

pneumonia from China that is fast-spreading throughout the globe has reflected how the CCP's export of the horrific new pneumonia, even if inadvertent and whether or not it has actually stemmed from a laboratory leak, has shaken the foundation of the ideal of liberal democracy.⁷⁶ But have the world's liberal democracies actually failed in their dealing with this novel coronavirus pneumonia exported from China in comparison with the CCP regime's?⁷⁷ And in the case of Hong Kong, has the turning to violence on the part of some factions of the Hong Kong protesters somehow justified the CCP dictatorship and the Hong Kong SAR government's position of not yielding to the protest movements' core demand for real popular elections with universal suffrage from 2014 through 2019?

It has become quite politically incorrect to hypothesize that China's Wuhan nCoV outbreak was a result of biological weapon experiment – e.g., as claimed by exiled Chinese ophthalmologist and virologist Yan Limeng (閔麗夢)⁷⁸ whose mother as a result was allegedly arrested by the CCP regime in China, but since biological weapon experiment is being conducted by all major powers, it also cannot be totally counted out. The question is proof. Even without this hypothesis, just say the Wuhan Institute of Virology was conducting legitimate scientific, medical experiment on viruses and bats, a virus leak (whether the viruses have been recombined or not) still represents a very high possibility.⁷⁹ Without more concrete proof from Yan, a more believable possibility is rather that this novel coronavirus has been accidentally leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology's laboratories⁸⁰ (which is actually conducting legitimate coronavirus experiments with strong ties to laboratories of the U.S., France and Canada) rather than as a result of malicious releasing of virus for some sort of biochemical warfare, but of course, substantial evidence is needed to prove this argument too.⁸¹ However, these are legitimate suspicions given CCP regime's penchant

for secrecy and cover-ups⁸² and its disallowing foreign experts to visit Wuhan for over a long year during which all evidences would have dissipated into thin air.⁸³ The wider scientific and medical world should not simply accuse this dissident virologist just as a lying conspiracy theorist, or just offhand dismiss the possibility of a lab leak as a conspiracy theory.⁸⁴ That would be academic dishonesty and close-mindedness. But of course until free press and free academic inquiry become possible in China (a post-CCP China), the truth will never be revealed whether regarding real cause of this macabre pandemic or the real death toll from the disease in China, especially in Wuhan,⁸⁵ or the real death toll of the 1989 Beijing massacre, or the real number of inmates in Xinjiang's "vocational training" brainwashing internment camps.

This novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan has not occurred out of nothing, unpredicted. There had been warnings all along, about how this totalitarian regime which is worsening in its domestic political repression is going to make the next severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) inevitable. Over a decade before the current macabre Wuhan nCoV pneumonia outbreak that ended up to be a still-ongoing massacre of the global population, Karl Taro Greenfeld gave the world this grim warning at the closing of his investigative report *China syndrome: The true story of the 21st century's first great epidemic* on the outbreak of SARS:

In fact, humanity had been lucky [...] Had it broken out before the twentieth century, it would certainly have been a dreadful epidemic, with a 5 to 10 percent mortality rate, causing millions of deaths. Even today, had it been as infectious as influenza, it would have killed millions [...] And [University of Hong Kong's virologist 管軾] Guan Yi was proving that it was still out there and mutating, its genetic

tumblers clicking away until it might settle on a more deadly combination.

(Greenfeld, 2006: 402)

However, ultimately, humanity would not be so lucky the next time a similar virus strikes again, if the PRC's totalitarian ruling model goes on unchanged or getting even more repressive, *China syndrome's* warning continues:

But if we had been lucky, been given, in effect, a warning by the genomic tapestry we had gashed upon, had we taken heed? [...] There were teams in Beijing, Washington, and Taiwan working on vaccines for SARS. There were Guan Yi and Malik Peiris and their cohorts in Hong Kong keeping vigilant. But what had really changed in China? The government still expected the local public health agencies to pay their own way. When that TV producer was infected by reemergent SARS and treated at Number Eight Hospital, rather than encourage the media to cover the outbreak, the government had arrested the first reporters to write about the new case [...] Any biases in the system that prevented accurate reporting of the initial outbreak remained. There had been no attempt to encourage more openness. One now encountered government officials who believed that the real lesson of SARS was to engage in more effective cover-ups. Even more troubling, Dr. Jiang Yanyong, the whistle-blower who had exposed the Chinese government cover-up, had since been put under house arrest for writing a letter to party leadership criticizing the government's labeling of the student protest at Tiananmen Square as "counterrevolutionary." The takeaway: deny everything.

(*ibid.*: 402-403)

As Greenfeld quotes political commentator Baopu Liu: “While the Chinese leadership is serious about fighting SARS, its No. 1 priority remains the stability of the regime.” Alas, the world has never learnt, and it is now paying the price with millions of deaths and economic ruin.⁸⁶ But allowing the CCP dictatorship to continue to strengthening its human rights abuses, persecution of dissidents, tight surveillance of citizens, enforcing amnesia and brainwashing a whole generation after the Beijing massacre of 1989,⁸⁷ is to encourage this rare remaining huge totalitarian state to continue its regime power stability priority over all else, that directly leads to this SARS redux – with a much wider scale – that has massacre millions across the globe. The outside world, the liberal democratic world has decided to continue sacrificing value and principle for corporate gains, for the lucrative China market, and investment opportunities, and many universities and academics in the liberal democratic world do that too for the sake of attractive project grants and visiting academic opportunities, and even the World Health Organization leadership (whose present Director-General was elected into office in 2017, becoming the first WHO director-general who is not a medical doctor, with the support of the PRC and a bloc of other Asian and African countries among whom PRC was influential, defeating his rival, a the British medical doctor candidate with distinguished career in the international civil service) has succumbed to the PRC’s clout and influence to play to the tune of the CCP regime in ignoring Taiwan’s message of warning inquiry,⁸⁸ in condemning with the PRC those countries that blocked tourists from China when the disease had started to turn into a “pandemic” – a warning term continuously shunned by the WHO leadership⁸⁹ that is blindly accepting words from a regime well-known for cover-ups and persecution of whistle-blowers and citizen-reporters. Such continuing appeasement from the liberal democratic world has unfailingly further encouraged the CCP regime’s arrogance

and belligerence,⁹⁰ and its penchant for using its huge market power – a new twist to the “human sea” stratagem of the Maoist era, non-military this time but in the form of irresistible purchasing power of a fifth of humanity with a booming economy – to punish any nation that dare to point to the PRC as the source of the macabre SARS redux. While this pandemic is murdering the global population and wreaking havoc in other countries’ economies, this brazen regime is advancing an agenda to take advantage of the deteriorating situation to act like saviour to the world through propaganda domestic and abroad and with its mask and vaccine diplomacy,⁹¹ while on the other hand pursuing even more draconian suppression of dissenting voices in the country,⁹² brutally clamping down on the Hong Kong people’s democratic aspiration through the slavishly subservient HKSAR government leadership,⁹³ threatening Taiwan with unprecedented number of military fly-by sorties, and sabre-rattling in the South China Sea.⁹⁴ In short, as adept as ever, this Leninist regime is quick on taking advantage of the world chaos caused by a virus it exported to flex its muscles in South China Sea, in Hong Kong, across the Taiwan Strait, and to further advance its influence in the Third World.⁹⁵ These tactics of the dictatorship need to be stopped, all for the sake of humanity’s next generation.⁹⁶

19. The Ultimate Purpose of Draconian Lockdown

When one talks about PRC’s “anti-Covid-19 success”, one has to be alert of a deeper implication for PRC – do the draconic measures actually strengthened the iron-fist rule of the CCP and emboldened it to even raise its level of oppression in the coming years – and here is more than meeting the eyes.

As at that time of the SARS outbreak, in State’s response to Wuhan’s nCoV outbreak we saw victims’ families being harassed and

lawyers intimidated for trying to sue the Wuhan local government for criminal negligence and official cover-up.⁹⁷ What we saw was a repeat of State's response in those cases of the melamine-contaminated Sanlu (三鹿) milk powder scandal and Wenchuan (汶川) earthquake's "tofu-dreg schoolhouses" (豆腐渣校舍) scandal when victims' family members were harassed and arrested and lawyers intimidated, and which later led to the CCP regime's large-scale arrest of lawyers and rights activists during the summer of 2015 in the infamy of the 709 Crackdown (中國 709 維權律師大抓捕事件).⁹⁸

If one looks at the two very similarly phrased "add oil" slogans, *Xianggang Jiayou* (Hiong Kong Kayau / 香港加油) and *Wuhan Jiayou* (武漢加油), both of 2019-2020, one will notice that the former was condemned by the CCP regime, the other promoted. The State's response to the first is truly ironic as it seems that any phrase that encourages Hong Kong whether that be "Hong Kong add oil" or "glory to Hong Kong" are perceived by the State as against the Centre, which is tantamount to admitting that the Centre is against the Hong Kong, against the people of Hong Kong, admitting the Centre's oppression of Hong Kong. On the other hand, "Wuhan add oil" may on the surface be just an exaltation for Wuhan to overcome the disease, but in effect it is also a distraction to divert attention from the central State's incompetence in handling the epidemic and the inhuman lockdown it imposed on the Wuhan people to correct its initial error and to salvage its reputation – alas, definitely worth salvaging is a reputation of brutal efficiency that is of ultimate importance for the CCP dictatorship – its "performance-based legitimacy", an image that it will go to any inhuman extreme to uphold, partly as a direct legacy of Mao's dictum "correction necessitates overkill" (矯枉必須過正, 不過正不能矯枉)⁹⁹. A too drastic quarantine by lumping people, healthy and potentially infected, forcibly together, just for the sake of protecting people "outside" and

even more importantly averting a potential bigger disaster that could destabilize the regime, is not only inept and incompetent (just like the implementation of the unnecessarily coercive, disastrous one-child policy that even involved extreme measures like forced abortion and sterilization) but also infringing human rights and counterproductive because it is subjecting people to cross-infection “inside” by force.

One of the most important purposes of the CCP regime’s extreme mode of locking down city is to block information.¹⁰⁰ The CCP regime-controlled data for the country have always been unreliable.¹⁰¹ Later with the virus danger receding, when Xi Jinping is rushing to resume functioning of the economy, Chinese data might be even less reliable than before. The world can only hope that the concealment will not be too much this time. Over the many months since the nCoV pneumonia from the Wuhan outbreak started to spread, the world has been made truly miserable by the typical Leninist governance model of the Chinese Communist Party.¹⁰² How many families were destroyed with member dead, and how many kith and kin were separated from each other forever by the great threshold. It is really beyond shame and sanity for the CCP dictatorship to brag, whether through open propaganda or insinuation, that this PRC-originated global pandemic has indeed proven that its enforced one-party absolute dominance dictatorship governance model is better than a liberal democratic system – is the CCP really worthy of being so proud of beating the human-rights-respecting liberal democratic nations by exporting this disease? Regardless of how much the CCP regime has attempted pointing the proto-origin of the 2019 Wuhan, China, novel coronavirus pneumonia to the United States, Italy, Spain, India, Norway, Australia or even the outer space,¹⁰³ no matter how much medical equipment and vaccine, how many masks and doctors are sent by this self-perceived, self-transformed “saviour” to the outside world, the truth cannot be concealed or obfuscated: the dictatorship’s trampling

of human rights, persecution of dissent and lying and concealing data and information¹⁰⁴ as it has always done point to it being the ultimate culprit of this global tragedy.¹⁰⁵ A respectable government or at least one with an ounce of decency left should have done what a conscientious former host at China Central Television (CCTV), Aqiu/Qiu Menghuang (阿丘 / 邱孟煌), advised, “Can we put on a face mask, just speak with a gentle tone and apologise, without arrogance, bow to the world, and say: we are sorry, we have caused you trouble.”¹⁰⁶ (“我们可不可以说话语调稍温和并带些歉意，不怂也不豪横地把口罩戴起来，向世界鞠个躬，说声：对不起，给你们添乱了。” Of course, his comment immediately attracted frenzied savage attack from PRC’s nationalistic netizens.) The world can choose to forgive the CCP (although it has not apologized so far), the world can kiss the CCP’s national five-star red flag like the President of Serbia mawkishly did¹⁰⁷ ... When human rights advocates like Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波) died from “late-diagnosed disease” contracted in CCP’s prison – one of the numerous dissidents “*be died from illness*” (*bei-bingsi* / 被病死) during incarceration – the world can closed its eyes and ignore the injustice that is occurring. But when millions of Liu Xiaobos around the world have tragically died from a disease that spread through the world due to factors intricately linked to the dissent-trampling neurosis of an ultimately self-serving totalitarian regime of the CCP, how long will the world continue to turn a blind eye to the macabre impacts of the Party’s sugar-coated ruthlessly enforced autocratic governance model?¹⁰⁸

20. The Misperception of Liberal Democracies’ “Failure” in Response to the Pandemic

It took many months after almost 4000 dead, according to official figures (the real figure should be many times higher given the CCP

regime's traditional approach of suppressing information) for the critical period of Wuhan's and Hubei's nCoV pneumonia situation¹⁰⁹ to be overcome. With millions of travellers from Wuhan still flying out even at the peak of the epidemic¹¹⁰ bringing the disease to many main tourist destinations¹¹¹ and then with newly infected travellers flying from one country to another, the Italian and Spanish outbreaks, later followed by the United States's, the United Kingdom's and rest of Europe's had occurred many months later than Wuhan's and the rest of PRC's, and hence were passing through critical periods much later than China's. Given a different cultural system that values individual freedom, a different demographic composition of aging societies, different degrees of pathophysiological vulnerability to flu and pneumonia between climatic regions and ethnic groups,¹¹² aversion to restricting individual rights and respect for dissent and opposition, press freedom and impossibility for information suppression, a high infection rate and high death toll are not surprising. Whether the death tolls are really so much higher than PRC's is difficult to judge,¹¹³ given the lack of free press and political opposition and civil societal pressure groups in this vast land under the boot of the CCP that always has a penchant for secrecy and cover-ups for the purpose of maintaining "stability" that it deems critical to maintain its autocratic rule.¹¹⁴ With the advent of advanced vaccines made possible by stringent scientific research with data transparency and watchdog monitoring, herd immunity will be reachable soon without the need for that kind of draconian inhuman lockdown practice of the CCP, which anyway is not possible to implement in human-rights-respecting liberal democracies.

Seen from the right perspective, contrary to what CCP's propaganda machinery wants the world to believe,¹¹⁵ the liberal democracies are not doing any worse than the totalitarian PRC.¹¹⁶ And these are countries with free press and free flow of information, unlike CCP-ruled PRC

where the real number of confirmed cases could more believably to be in the range to be the official number, as usual, read with a multiple of a dozen to twoscore. One major reason why CCP found it necessary to go for such drastic inhuman lockdown, besides being out of panic and because it is the usual “efficient” way the Party-State deals with issues like the inhuman implementation of the great unnecessary blunder of one-child policy, is to stifle the flow of information, so that data can be manipulated. That is also the reason why China has rejected for so long WHO’s and the West’s offer of sending scientists and experts to Wuhan and Hubei.¹¹⁷ There is much to hide.¹¹⁸ A CCP-style lockdown is important for this control of information flow.¹¹⁹ Eventually the CCP regime would have to agree to let foreign experts visit Wuhan and we should be expecting it to do so, say about a year from the date of outbreak, for such visit will help the regime to clear its culpability as one year is a long while. Much changes, upgrading and improvement would have happened to a market or a research facility or a laboratory in a year. Any meaningful evidence could be expected to have been easily annihilated in a long year if a regime wishes to do so.¹²⁰ As for people who could provide evidence from experience, they can be silenced, “disappeared”, held incommunicado in the usual way. As the late theatre critic Brooks Atkinson once said, “Drop the last year into the silent limbo of the past. Let it go, for it was imperfect, and thank God that it can go.” By the time foreign experts from the WHO are allowed to visit Wuhan, all meaningful evidence from a year ago would have disappeared into the “silent limbo of the past”, and the visit will have served the real purpose the regime wants. Everything will look as perfect as the regime wants, and a gullible world will be told that there is no way that the source of culpability for the pandemic could lie in such a perfect system, and it will just end up to be another case of a totalitarian power taking a world body for a ride.¹²¹

21. Cross-Strait Contrast: Liberal Democratic Taiwan's Excellence despite Being Ostracised by WHO

Just across a narrow Taiwan Strait from PRC, Taiwan's miraculous performance in this current wave of epidemic proves that the free and democratic Taiwan model represents the real future of the Chinese nation.¹²² As a scholar teaching applied geopolitics at Columbia University comments, "You're not China's neighbor without learning some things along the way, and the SARS experience nearly twenty years ago helped gird Taiwan for pandemics and the general China skepticism."¹²³ At that dangerous moment when this pandemic (which finally, after repeated delays, declared to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)¹²⁴ on 30th January 2020 by a WHO which had seemed so willing to trust information from a totalitarian source that cannot be trusted, playing itself into the hand of a power with well-recorded penchant for cover-ups to serve the ultimate aim of protecting the reputation of the regime at all costs) was spreading fast across the world and taking heavier and heavier toll on human lives, across the Strait from the source of the pandemic, the vibrant liberal democracy of Taiwan, shunned and ostracized by WHO,¹²⁵ was donating 10 million face masks – 7 million to Europe, 2 million to the U.S. and 1 million to a number of small countries that still recognize the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan diplomatically. Taiwan, the second largest face-mask-producing country in the world, was producing 13 million face masks daily, and was also donating 100 thousand face masks to the U.S. weekly. While the vibrant liberal democracy of Taiwan, with full respect for the people's freedom of expression, political freedom and civil liberties, deserves the world's support for her positive actions from being the earliest whistle-blower, sadly ignored by a WHO willing to put itself under the sway of a totalitarian regime, to her credentials

accumulated through her performance domestically and in helping the world in response to a pandemic that the WHO has to be held responsible for ignoring her earliest whistle-blowing enquiry, how has the world responded to her minimal request for participating in WHO meetings on the pandemic besides with *Realpolitik* concerns? Heeding the PRC's hysterical objection, the world has turned its back on the best-case human-rights-respecting liberal democracy of East Asia, and preferred to continue to ostracise this economic advanced industrialized nation that has every right to be respected and recognized as an independent nation like the other Northeast Asian nations who were formerly land-based colonies or tribute territories of the imperial Chinese dynasties, with right for self-determination. Taiwan is not asking for a formal membership of WHO but just for a restoration of her observer status at meetings stripped off by WHO under pressure from PRC¹²⁶ as punishment for voting in Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨 / 民進黨) as president and rejecting pro-Beijing Kuomintang (KMT, 中國國民黨)'s presidential candidate. Taiwan's star-performer credential as a liberal democracy that has excellently beaten the threat of the 2019 nCoV pneumonia pandemic (a.k.a. COVID-19) spread from China's Wuhan has strongly buttressed her international image and support.¹²⁷ The United States of America, as the largest funder of WHO (PRC's yearly funding is minuscule compared to the U.S.'s), is effective in cutting of its funding, as can be seen in WHO's almost immediate softening of its pro-Beijing stance (e.g. pressing Beijing again to allow WHO expert team to enter China to study the nCoV's origin – Beijing of course rejected that request again at that time)¹²⁸ and anti-Taiwan image (calling Taiwan directly to discuss over phone for an hour almost immediately after Trump's funding cut).

22. The Myth of Democracies-bashing Justifying PRC's Authoritarian Model

It is indeed interesting to observe how the novel coronavirus pneumonia's spread from the initial outbreak in Wuhan, China, has served to devastate the societies of the liberal democracies that value so much individual liberties. While mobility control can be justified to protect lives, the sudden kiss of macabre misfortune by a virus spread from thousands of miles away in the CCP dictatorship-controlled country that is placing everybody under house arrest in living hell, or snatching away one's innocent life like that of the "murdered-by-illness-contracted-in-prison" Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, is really driving people crazy. "Those who would give up Essential Liberty to purchase Temporary Safety deserve neither Liberty nor Safety," said Benjamin Franklin. Those democracies that has a tradition less subscribed to such dictum, and more rule-abiding, e.g. Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Germany and Austria, or even Australia and New Zealand and the Nordic democracies, have fared much better or even performing excellently in combatting this new PRC "China syndrome" (to allude to the apt title of Greenfeld's book on SARS), this SARS redux (to refer to his prediction two decades ago), especially those which are small island states, e.g. Singapore, Taiwan, New Zealand, or on a larger scale, Australia, where border control represents a smaller headache than others. South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Singapore are important success cases,¹²⁹ even though there are glitches here and there through various waves of the pandemic, to showcase against this SARS redux, especially that they are multiparty liberal democracies that share a Sinitic/Confucian cultural tradition with the Communist Party one-party-ruled PRC and Vietnam (though Singapore's democratic credential is often tainted by neo-authoritarianism, it still has a multiparty parliamentary structure and there has been a certain degree of liberalization in the

post-Lee Kuan Yew era (後李光耀時代), and is therefore much more encouraging in terms of democratisation than, e.g., the Vladimir Putin administration's Russian Federation). Taiwan and South Korea are still doing excellent; Singapore's spike in number of confirmed cases lately are mainly concentrated in several foreign workers quarters, while local cases are still very low in number, and Japan has experienced ups and downs, but still looks excellent compared to the large democracies on both sides of the Atlantic, where self-isolating is felt like real torture, and a shame as Italian opera tenor Andrea Bocelli has correctly and honestly, though not at the right time during this mass life-threatening healthcare crisis, described.¹³⁰ This disease's global spreading out from PRC's Wuhan outbreak has indeed shaken the core values of Western liberal democracies.¹³¹ With this virus spread, looks accidental but closely linked to CCP dictatorship's way of rule, Xi Jinping has indeed outdone Mao by winning an ideological war for CCP dictatorship's governance model. By exporting, though by most evidences appearing inadvertent, this Wuhan nCoV pneumonia, the CCP dictatorship is severely shaking the very foundation of individual freedom that is the cornerstone of North Atlantic multi-party liberal democracy, as a professor of politics at the University of Sydney and Forschungs professor at the WZB (Berlin) dismally says that this crisis could be making democracies their own worst enemies: "The upshot would be that Chinese-style ways of wielding power would tighten their grip on large parts of the world. A new despotism skilled at the arts of spreading voluntary servitude, what Chinese intellectuals like to call 'good governance' (*liángǎo de zhìlǐ*) [良好的治理], would triumphantly become a formative feature of our planet's pestilent future. Despotism would then be the future of democracy."¹³² Fortunately not excellent but still good news is that the overall situation in Europe is getting better, with Italy, Spain (worst cases) seemingly having past the peak and

France is getting better too. They are trying to return to a semblance of normal life now, especially that now with effective vaccines appearing to lead to herd immunity, though after large number of people were already dead. However, whether China's numbers of confirmed cases and deaths are really that much lower is questionable as the CCP regime's official figures are completely untrustworthy this time, as before.¹³³ In Asia, Israel, Taiwan, South Korea and New Zealand are among the liberal democracies that performed excellently against this nCoV pneumonia onslaught from China's Wuhan. These are important examples at a time when PRC's propaganda is trying to promote CCP's totalitarian governance model and the unqualified "success" of the coercive Wuhan-type lockdown.

In fact, judging which country's pandemic situation to be more severe should be more correctly based on the number of people killed. That is because many countries with low diagnosis rate due to the lack of tests. Of course, if the number of deaths is subject to tight State control and possible concealment which could not be challenged by the civil society watchdogs in a country where information is strictly controlled by a totalitarian dictatorship, there is no way to judge.

It is undeniable that this time the nCoV pneumonia that spread from Wuhan, China, throughout the world has turned out to be an earth-shattering assault on the value foundation of the world's major multi-party liberal democracies.¹³⁴ The liberal democracies' steadfast insistence on respecting the human rights of individuals has rendered them vulnerable in their attempt to parry the blow.¹³⁵ However, this particular plague represents a rare incidence once in a century, and its spread has also been closely linked to the long-running oppressive governance model of the CCP dictatorship, hence it cannot be seen as normality. Also, not all liberal democratic countries have shown such vulnerability in responding to this assault. Taiwan, Germany, South

Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, and Scandinavian European countries have all responded well.¹³⁶

The CCP dictatorship is now trying to turn the global disaster it generated through information-suppressing, whistle-blower harassing and free-speech-muzzling into a soft power advantage first with a mask diplomacy¹³⁷ and later with a vaccine diplomacy to promote its repressive authoritarian political governance model to the developing countries. It will be a long-term global disaster if the world's liberal democracies just sit by and let this largest dictatorship on this planet twist the narrative and dominate public discourse. While it is not easy to deny the initial spread of this disease from Wuhan through the millions of travellers who left Wuhan just before the lockdown, the CCP regime is all out to rewrite the narrative by confound the world by emphasizing on the virus's original source in nature to divert attention from its handling of the Wuhan outbreak,¹³⁸ to lead world opinion on a detour.¹³⁹

It may not be easy to understand why the crux of the matter could be so obscure to many. The problem is not whether the proto-origin of the virus is in China or the United States or Italy or outer space.¹⁴⁰ The problem is that the first large-scale outbreak occurred in Wuhan. The CCP regime has followed its consistent ways to conceal information¹⁴¹ and persecute whistle-blowers¹⁴² and mislead, influence and manipulate the leadership of the World Health Organization, actions that directly led to other nations' failure to defend against the epidemic in time, causing millions of tragic deaths and families permanently scarred by losing their loved ones. At the very date of December 31st, 2019, Taiwan alerted the WHO about the possible emergence of a new SARS in Wuhan (note the fact SARS can be transmitted from person to person) in an email of query,¹⁴³ and the WHO thanks Taiwan, saying that WHO experts would investigate.¹⁴⁴

At that time, Taiwan immediately checked the tourists flying in from the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province. As a document from the Five Eyes intelligence agencies obtained by an Australia daily put it chronologically, while officials in Taiwan had raised concerns as early as 31st December, and experts in Hong Kong alarmed by 4th January, PRC authorities denied the risk of human-human transmission until January 20 although evidence of that had reportedly emerged from early December, while beginning to censor news of the virus from 31st December, deleting terms including “SARS variation”, “Wuhan Seafood market” and “Wuhan Unknown Pneumonia” from search engines.¹⁴⁵ During this whole episode, as the dossier accused, the WHO had collaborated and continued to declare to the world that there was no evidence that the virus could spread from person to person. When some countries (including the United States) also began to consider partial closures to restrict the entry of Chinese tourists, China angrily scolded these countries for being unfriendly. The WHO also endorsed the CCP regime’s stance and strongly opposed countries considering partial closures keeping Chinese tourists out. Who was actively influencing WHO?¹⁴⁶ The said Five Eyes dossier also highlights how the PRC imposed travel bans on its own people but told other countries restrictions on movement were not necessary. As a result, millions of people were still leaving Wuhan after the outbreak and before the PRC government locked down the city on 23rd January 2020, while throughout February “Beijing presses the US, Italy, India, Australia, Southeast Asian neighbours and others not to protect themselves via travel restrictions, even as the PRC imposes severe restrictions at home.”¹⁴⁷

When the Wuhan epidemic situation had reached a stage where covering up was no longer feasible, the CCP regime simply sealed Wuhan with the most cruel one-size-fits-all method. In the months that

followed, the WHO, the United States and others had asked China to allow them to send in experts to investigate the situation in Wuhan, Hubei, but the CCP rejected them one by one.¹⁴⁸ The CCP government also blocked, harassed and arrested citizen journalists entering Wuhan to report and send out “unofficial” photographs and videos. Was the CCP’s absolute city-lockdown really aiming to just block the mobility of people or more importantly to block information and data flow?

Even allowing for imperfection and abuses in all systems, with watchdogs and structural checks and balances, scientists in the liberal democratic nations can be counted on to abide by professionalism in conducting research, and Italian or American scientists when discovering that the virus might have existed a year before in their country they would be able to publish their findings freely without threat from the State – unlike in the PRC, including highly respected top medical experts, who as people in the system has to always think about whether the heavy punitive hand of the CCP would come down to them, before publishing any findings that would negate or contradict the official Party line.¹⁴⁹ However, whenever the CCP regime catches such “evidence” that it considers to be useful to shift culpability, it will go for a publicity extravaganza, for obfuscation and befuddlement.

Said to be based on its own non-stigmatization guidelines introduced in 2015, WHO abandoned the term “Wuhan pneumonia” that was already in use at that time and spent many days to create a weird acronym “COVID-19”, saying that it was short for “coronavirus disease 2019”. If so, that would be a rather new practice for an epidemic that would have otherwise been named after the initial explosive outbreak, be that “Wuhan” or “China”.¹⁵⁰ The 1918 flu epidemic caused by H1N1 influenza virus is commonly known as the Spanish flu. The name “Spanish flu” came from the early affliction and large mortalities in Spain where it allegedly killed 8 million in May 1918. The Allies of

World War I came to call it the Spanish flu, primarily because the epidemic received greater press attention after it moved from France to Spain. The Japanese encephalitis (JE) refers to the infection of the brain caused by the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) that appears to have originated from its ancestral virus in the mid-1950s in the Indonesia-Malaysia region and evolved there into five different genotypes and spread across Asia. German measles (rubella) refers to infection caused by the rubella virus. It occurs worldwide. And then there is the Nipah virus. And there is the psychological condition known as the Stockholm syndrome. Nobody has ever had qualms about the eponymy with these past plagues and current epidemics, and these names have not caused any bad influence on tourism or other adverse effects for these regions. Diseases have a source history; geographic eponymy has a scientific advantage, and has commonly been practised in medical terminology, with diseases and medical entities being named after the place where a condition was first discovered or a disease was first detected. As Juliet wonders, in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*¹⁵¹, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet." Whether it be a beautiful thing like a rose or an evil thing like a disease, why is that unprecedented up-in-arms over a name? WHO's 2015 guidelines "for the Naming of New Human Infectious Diseases" had already been criticized as overly "politically correct" when it was introduced that "will certainly lead to boring names and a lot of confusion," as an expert on emerging infectious diseases predicted, as another virologist warned: "You should not take political correctness so far that in the end no one is able to distinguish these diseases". While as a scientist at WHO admitted that the new rules would make for more difficult names, it could also become harder for distinguishing diseases, in which geographic eponyms can be useful and well justified, which can provide useful historical epidemiological insights into the

geographical, environmental and demographic distribution and determinants of a disease, as well as the natural hosts and sources of infection. “For instance, under the new rules, Marburg disease (named after a city in Germany) might have been called filovirus-associated haemorrhagic fever 1, while Ebola (named after a river) might have been filovirus-associated haemorrhagic fever 2.” As the said virologist questioned: “Would it have been better if we had named [MERS, which was associated with the Middle East] novel betacoronavirus clade C, type 1?”¹⁵²

The new qualm about geographic eponymy aside, the CCP also wants the world to believe that its one-party totalitarian system is better than a multi-party liberal democracy, but that is not just wishful thinking. Even the true number of nCoV confirmed cases and deaths in China will eventually be like how many people died of starvation during the Great Leap Forward (大躍進), how many people were persecuted to death during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (無產階級文化大革命), and how many people were killed in the June Fourth massacre. As long as the CCP's one-party dictatorship remains, it will eventually become an unsolved case.

However, liberal democracies will survive. The respect for human rights and personal liberties will survive, and in fact will be strengthened after this crisis, having learnt much from the painful lessons, from errors made. The chaos currently seen in the United States and parts of Western Europe should be attributed to the failure of the executive leadership, not the structural weakness of the system of liberal democracies. The values of respecting individual human rights and freedom (famously reflected in Patrick Henry's 1775 declaration “Give me liberty, or give me death!” or Andrea Bocelli's recent untimely, controversial but misinterpreted remarks¹⁵³) developed over the millennia have prevented many of these liberal democracies from

locking down cities with strong means like the authoritarian CCP regime does. This is something that many people in China and many ethnic Chinese overseas cannot understand, because China has been under the autocratic rule of the emperors for thousands of years, and it has never been able to develop a system that respects individual freedom and human rights and freedom of speech as found in North Atlantic nations. It is a millennia-long dynastic governance system that the CCP has inherited and further strengthened well over its seven-decade rule, since its successful conquest of the whole mainland China in 1949, during which it has long been suffocating free thought, free speech, political freedom and civil liberties, and now through exporting the SAR-Cov-2, it is only suffocating human lungs, but is also killing the long-valued liberal democratic system of the free world by mental asphyxiation.¹⁵⁴ We are now forced to allow governments to acquire a lot of extra powers,¹⁵⁵ while turning innocent people into “criminals”. No matter deliberately or inadvertently,¹⁵⁶ by exporting this 2019 Wuhan’s nCoV pneumonia throughout the globe, the CCP dictatorship has managed to severely disrupt and compromise the normal functioning and even basic principles of liberal democracies worldwide.¹⁵⁷ During this whole episode of global disaster, we do not hear a single word of regret, not to say apology, to the world from the CCP regime,¹⁵⁸ a dictatorship that holds as its top prerogative its continued stranglehold to maintain absolute power and stifle dissent including international criticism – even starting a trade war to punish through economic coercion Australia’s asking for an independent international investigation into the pandemic’s origin,¹⁵⁹ plus arresting Australian reporters in its customary exercise of hostage diplomacy¹⁶⁰ with trumped-up charges long practised to perfection by a regime devoid of any moral decency on persecuted dissidents from Mainland civil rights activists to Hong Kong dissident publishers and booksellers,¹⁶¹ from critics of the CCP regime to the top

leadership's potential challengers – even at the expense of the welfare of China's own citizens who can only voice disagreement to government policy at their own personal peril?

23. CCP Dictatorship's Governance Model as Fascist and Totalitarian, and Hong Kong's Tragedy from Creeping Authoritarianism to Outright Repression

The two crises of 2019-2020 – the Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill protests and China's Wuhan novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak that turned into a murderous global pandemic – and the CCP regime's responses to them, respectively in the form a ruthless repression through a new “national security law” for Hong Kong¹⁶² and taking advantage of the very pandemic it originated to advance its agenda in the disputed waters of the South China Sea, across the volatile Taiwan Strait, and reinforce its politico-economic influence across the world,¹⁶³ ultimately give rise to the critical question of what really constitute the CCP dictatorship's real threat to the world: military hegemony or ideological penetration?

The concept of “totalitarianism” first took shape in the late 1930s “in the writings of those who had begun to question both the socialist credentials of the Stalinist regime and the Marxist interpretation of fascism as the final stage of capitalist decay”, as historian Christopher Lasch lays out in his book on the interrelations of contemporary politics and culture, *The minimal self*; instead, George Orwell, Arthur Koestler and the other former Marxists “had come to see Stalinism as a new form of domination: neither a return to an older type of autocracy nor the perverted socialism described by Trotsky as bureaucratic collectivism but a system of total control that sought to regulate not only the individual's public life but his inner life as well, thereby abolishing the

very distinction between the public and private realms and between society and the state.” (Lasch, 1984: 105) As regards Hitler’s Nazi regime in Germany, Lasch notes that it “could not be understood, as Orwell himself characterized it as late as 1939, during his brief flirtation with Trotskyism, as a further “development of capitalism” or even as a revival of old-fashioned autocracy.” (*ibid.*) The reason that these modern dictatorships – these regimes of totalitarianism which despite their use of terror to maintain their power actually enjoy a good deal of popular support – are so terrifying, as Lasch quotes Orwell, “is that they are something entirely unprecedented.” (*ibid.*)

The totalitarianism of today’s CCP regime is indeed unprecedented. The way it combines the siren call of Mammon with ruthless domestic repression as well as extraterritorial thuggery is unprecedented. The way it drags a million minority people against their will into concentration camps euphemistically called vocational training camps for brainwashing is unprecedented since the closing of Nazi’s last death camps. The way it is now moving forward to become the world first perfect digital totalitarian state with that unrivalled level of surveillance and the so-called “social credit system” is definitely unprecedented (Yeoh, 2018: 691-709)¹⁶⁴.

However, as Richard H. Mitchell argues in his book *Thought control in prewar Japan*, comparison of institutions set in different cultures is a risky exercise if each example occurs in a very different social and political atmosphere, and notes that while the prewar Japanese government effectively suppressed freedom of speech and thought, there is disagreement among scholars “over a political label: Was it a brand of “totalitarianism,” a special kind of “fascism,” or was it neither?” (Mitchell, 1976: 188) Noting that modern totalitarian states are characterised by having a single mass party with a maximum leader, employing terror tactics on a wide scale and aiming at totally reshaping

society, which represents a mold into which, the ideas and actions of Japan's major interwar leaders do not fit, Mitchell does acknowledge the argument of Maruyama Masao (丸山眞男), a leading proponent of the concept of a fascism peculiar to Japan, that "while fascism did not come from below, as in Italy and Germany, it was imposed from above" in the case of prewar Japan. The ruling elite of Japan then, as Mitchell cites Maruyama, being alarmed by the revolutionary situation at that time, gradually created a "totalitarian system ... within the framework of the State structure determined by the Meiji constitution". What Maruyama sees in prewar Japan's "totalitarianism", or "fascism imposed from above", while differing a great deal from those in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany as well as Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao's China, does resembles very much post-June Fourth Massacre China, though for Richard Mitchell, he would prefer to describe it as "highly authoritarian" that he sees more as a reassertion of authoritarian tendencies with corollary restraint on the exercise of liberalism and individual freedom brought about partly by the onset of total war (*ibid.*: 189). Mitchell is of course right in pointing out the fact that thought control in interwar Japan differed so much from that practiced by the Nazis, Leninist to Stalinist Soviet Union and Maoist China in the former's absence of mass application of terror, gulags and forced labour, executions, deportation to remote or frontier areas, or category of "nonpersons" that could be put to death (*ibid.*: 190-191). On the other hand, while such atrocities are not practiced in that Maoist scale today in the PRC, mass application of terror is still practice widely in the PRC, updated with most modern information technology and surveillance devices,¹⁶⁵ with arbitrary arrest and jailing of pro-democracy activists and other political dissidents under dubious charges like "inciting subversion of state power", "picking quarrels and provoking troubles", or even "soliciting prostitutes" (a frequently used smear tactic in which government critics

derisively refer to its victims as *bei-piaoji* / 被嫖妓 – “be prostitute-solicited”) or “bribery”, threatening exiled dissidents’ family members in the country; in place of Maoist forced labour (*laogai* / 勞改) “re-education camps” there are now million-inmate concentration camps in Xinjiang interning the Uyghurs with alleged forced labour practices (whitewashed as centres for vocational training and for anti-terrorism purposes) where inmates are allegedly subjected to intensive processes of thought reform, i.e. brainwashing,¹⁶⁶ that same Mao-era programme that “got its emotional scope and power through a combination of coercion with evangelistic exhortation aimed at the victim” (*ibid.*: 190)

24. PRC’s Persecuted Minorities

Regarding Xinjiang, according to a Washington-based Uyghur rights group, hundreds of Uyghur reporters, students and intellectuals were forcibly brought into government-run detention camps, subjected to heavy brainwashing and facing punishment for insubordination and even death from health problem deteriorated by the camps’ repressive environment, for at one stage according to a report having risen to 386 people missing, including 101 students and 285 scholars, artists and reporters.¹⁶⁷ Such outrageous CCP regime’s Xinjiang policy is fast approaching 1930-40s’ classic Fascism.

State statistics at least admitted the number of camp inmates (though of course not defined it so) to be 1.3 million (somewhat higher than the 1 million estimated by UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination and researcher Adrian Zenz).

The sad thing is that, except for some Western liberal democracies and some powerless societal human rights bodies, no countries are really protesting the CCP regime’s genocide, cultural or otherwise, of the Uyghurs,¹⁶⁸ not even the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

member countries.¹⁶⁹ Apparently the CCP regime's sharp power is working very well. Pakistan has later led 55 countries to voice against 39 countries' condemnation of China's suppression of human rights in Hong Kong, and Cuba has led 45 countries to voice against the 39 countries' condemnation of China's suppression of human rights in Xinjiang.¹⁷⁰

Similarly, no meaningful protest was raised against China at the time of Uyghur folk singer and composer Abdurehim Heyt's reported death under torture in a Xinjiang concentration camp in February 2019 and, if he did survive, at his disappearance again in October. Not much world attention was paid to the death of renowned Uyghur Writer Nurmuhhammad Tohti in 2019 who was reportedly denied medical treatment in a Xinjiang concentration camp.¹⁷¹ And these are high-profile cases; how about the plight of the rest of million who were brutally dragged by the CCP regime into these camps "for vocational training"?

Uyghur rights will continue to be a hopeless cause under the present dictatorship just as under the imperial Ch'ing Dynasty's rule. Uyghur rights, as well as those of the Tibetans and Mongols in Inner Mongolia, will only possibly be respected and free from cultural genocide when democratisation becomes possible in China as a whole. That will be a long-term struggle, given the present economic and political strength of the CCP dictatorship. Meanwhile, the totalitarian rogue regime remains defiant while the world in craving China's market and investment continues to turn a blind eye to such injustice and atrocities within the PRC.

While the brutal suppression of Falungong represents the Party-State's assault on a quasi-Buddhist modern cult emerged in the spiritual vacuum left by the Maoist destruction of traditional Chinese moral universe, which later grew so big that it started to pose a threat to CCP's

ideological and political monopoly, PRC's controversial nationalities policy concerns mainly Uyghurs, Tibetans and Mongols which are China's national minorities ethnolinguistically distinct from the Han Chinese but regional majorities (before the massive influx of Han Chinese into their regions), with hundreds to thousands to years of history, now under threat from the cultural assimilation policy of the CCP-ruled Han Chinese central State. The central State's suppression of their ethnic aspiration for self-determination and autonomy has always been ruthless and brutal, and the oppression is getting worse under the present leadership of Xi Jinping.

What most Han Chinese including those in the ethnic Chinese overseas communities fail to understand is that China's ethnic minorities' struggle for their rights is tied to the whole country's struggle for democratisation, for federalization will come hand-in-hand with democratisation, whether it be the struggle in Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, or Hong Kong or the rest of China, and as China's population constitutes one fifth of humanity, democratisation of China, which is now under the boot of Party-State regime that is supporting authoritarian regimes across the globe, is of absolute importance not only to the political health of its regional neighbours but also beyond.

25. China's Totalitarianism from Mao to Xi

Regarding the "Chinese Communist program for reforming the thinking of hostile intellectuals [...] to indoctrinate so thoroughly as to effect a radical transformation of beliefs", Richard Mitchell refers to Robert Lifton's writings (1956, 1961) about such Chinese Communist brainwashing as comprising the two basic elements of confession and re-education aiming at "social control and individual change" since according to Mao, the old society was corrupt, and "the people must be

saved by expelling dangerous ideology and instilling one supporting the state” (Mitchell, 1976: 190). The unrivalled Maoist brutality and savagery might have now belonged to a bygone era, but such Leninist totalitarian brainwashing persists in today PRC albeit in an updated format, more subtle in some way, with the aid of modern information technology, including erecting impenetrable “Great Firewall of China” (防火長城, referring to combination of legislative actions and technologies in PRC to block access to selected foreign websites, information sources and Internet tools, such as *Wikipedia*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Google*, *Dropbox*, *Slack*, *Whatsapp*, etc.) in cyberspace, thus banning almost all foreign information and news site and social media and Internet search engines and replacing them with local versions which are under tight surveillance and censorship such as *Baidu*, *Weibo* and *Wechat/Weixin*,¹⁷² enforced memory wipe and public amnesia of past events unfavourable to the CCP regime, in particular the 1989 Beijing-Tiananmen demonstrations and massacre – “there are only 364 days every year year in China; a day has been forgotten”, as Taiwan president Tsai Ing-wen well says¹⁷³ – and ruthless persecution of whistle-blowers and citizen-reporters as well as civil rights lawyers. All these measures has in effect led to and the closing of the Chinese mind, with citizens allowed to see only what the authorities want them to see, in an environment of perfected art of information control, with all factors deemed inconvenient to CCP’s one-party rule obliterated.¹⁷⁴ Take the example of the *Youtube* clip of that young woman from China studying in the U.S. who cruised around an American city liberally videoing the haunting scenes of a cityscape devastated by pandemic deaths, of ambulances darting on city roads with sirens blasting, patriotically reflecting loud that back home across the ocean how great her fatherland is (“祖国好强大啊!”).¹⁷⁵ How ironic, not for the fact that her fatherland’s autocratic ruling regime’s repressive governance is

ultimately culpable for spreading this disease to the world, not for the fact that access to *Youtube* is banned in her fatherland, but for that fact that she was driving around taking video as she wished to freely in a city of a liberal democratic country without fearing being persecuted by the State and putting the video on *Youtube* for the world to see, while in her fatherland – her *Patria*, to use a Fascist term – citizen-reporters like Chen Qiushi (陳秋實), like Zhang Zhan (張展), like Li Zehua (李澤華), like Fang Bin (方斌),¹⁷⁶ who sneaked into Wuhan to witness, photograph, video and sent their report out of the city to a people who were fed up with the State's censorship of news¹⁷⁷ and fabricating fake casualty figures, were hunted down like criminals, “disappeared”, tortured or eventually imprisoned under the charge of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” (尋衅滋事). Truly, how great her *Patria* is! Or take the example of that China professor returning to his fatherland from a visiting stint in Western academia, who laughed uncontrollably while giving a speech at the shocking death toll in Western liberal democratic countries from the nCoV pneumonia pandemic in comparison with “just 4000 deaths”, citing his great *Patria*'s official figures, which according to him, given China's huge population, meant no death at all.¹⁷⁸ Truly, by this professor's reasoning, PRC had won again: a great time for celebration. Such outlook, such mindset, from students to professors, reflects the terrifying *saturnic power* of a totalitarian ruling regime, the low poisoning of the mind, which is gradually, but effectively, after subjecting a whole generation to relentless, brutal brainwashing, enforced amnesia and stringent censorship, is leading down the road of the tragic closing of the Chinese mind.

With an over-confident dictatorship riding a wave of economic successes, kept being fed a feeling of invincibility by others, many of the practices and policies of the Maoist era have been revived by Xi Jinping who has openly expressed his deep admiration of Mao. Ruthless hard-

line coercive policies towards the frontier regions of Tibet and Xinjiang are some of those revived. Self-criticism by detainees is another, though now on primetime *CCTV*, an advance from Mao's on-stage public confession. The Stalinist-Maoist practice of detaining and medically "treating" dissidents in psychiatric hospitals has also be revived occasionally (defining dissent as sign of insanity). The Shanghai girl Dong Yaoqiong (董瑤琼) who splashed paint on Xi's portrait, while criticizing on streamed live video the CCP dictatorship and the brainwashing process (*naokong* / 腦控) the CCP imposed on the Chinese people, has been repeatedly sent into psychiatric hospital. But hers just represents a higher-profile case among many such "*be insaned*" (*bei-jingshenbing* / 被精神病) victims, including veteran-turned-rights-activist Zhu Yongjian (朱永健) who had been sent six times into psychiatric hospital. Their social media, e.g. *Weibo*, accounts have all been shut down too.¹⁷⁹

Despite the smokescreen of rhetoric, basically what we are witnessing in the PRC is the resiliency of what Hsu Szu-chien (徐斯儉) called "degenerative totalitarian polity" (*t'ui-hua chi-ch'üan cheng-t'i* / 退化極權政體) since mid-1990s which while having lost the original totalitarian regime's ideology, power of political mobilisation and monopoly over the economy, still not only continues with but tenaciously maintains the absolute monopoly of the "Party" over political power and State machinery and control over media of propaganda and social organisations (Hsu, 2003: 168). The major characteristic of such a degenerative totalitarian regime is, according to Hsu, just like many authoritarian and post-totalitarian regimes, by sourcing its legitimacy from economic development, and with the unchallengeable national power inherited from its totalitarian past is now playing the role of a developmental State to drive economic development, while at the same time continuing to prohibit political

pluralism, freedom of political association and the existence of independent mass media. Moreover, a degenerative totalitarian regime does not need to worry about justification for long-term survival that used to plague authoritarian regimes from the perspective of the ultimate value legitimacy, for not only that the degenerative totalitarian regime has inherited totalitarianism's self-justification of political monopoly, it is also carrying forward and strengthening the reign of terror and State machinery of repression that it inherited from its totalitarian past (*ibid.*: 168-169). Such an ingenious combination of the capability for national development and that for repression has served to continue a mode of governance which is justifying repression (in the name of *weiwen* (維穩), i.e. "maintaining stability") with economic development, observes Hsu, as long as the benefits of development surpass the costs of repression, as development (which has replaced ideology and social reconstruction in its totalitarian past) is now main aim of this degenerative totalitarian regime as the key to the paramount *raison d'être* of maintaining the status quo of monopolistic political governance. Unlike under an authoritarian government, even limited pluralism and self-organisation of societal interests to any meaningful extent are absolutely prohibited lest they jeopardise this degenerative totalitarian regime's absolute monopoly of all political power (*ibid.*: 169).

Interestingly in the unique case of today's China, the late Carl Joachim Friedrich and late Zbigniew Kazimierz Brzezinski's all six features of totalitarian states (Friedrich and Brzezinski, 1956) seem still have not lost their applicability. The new "(market) socialism with Chinese characteristics" has replaced the old straitjacket Maoism as the *all-encompassing ideology*. There is still only *a single party*, the CCP, legally allowed, unchallenged, to rule the country though it is no longer led by one man with a cult of personality (like Mao, or the consecutive

Kims in North Korea) but by a collective leadership in the CCP central politburo. There is still a *monopoly of communications* by extreme censorship and swift punishment of occasionally wayward editors and reporters, and *monopoly of weapons* ensuring swift State violence against any resistance threatening CCP's rule including military action against ethnoregional insubordination towards Beijing's internal colonization. While the discredited central-command economic system has been thrown into the ash heap of history as in all other parts of the formerly Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist (Communist) world except North Korea and replaced with the free market, a CCP-tightly-controlled *economy* is still imperative as high economic growth has manifested itself to be the top priority in legitimizing the Party's continued monopoly of political power together with outward projection of economic might taking precedence over local priorities (e.g., workers' welfare, social equality) because of the rising nationalistic support for CCP that international clout can generate. Finally, *organised terror* remains an effective tool to subdue the country's citizens, though as William Dobson notes in *The dictator's learning curve* (2012/2013), instead of mass killings and swift executions, the Party today prefers legal conviction and incarceration through the application of blanket laws like "subversion of state power" and "picking quarrels and provoking troubles" (a nebulously defined "pocket crime" charge into which "anything can be stuffed"¹⁸⁰), house arrests, extralegal beatings and other forms of harassment or more subtle forms of control and intimidation like threats to family members, loss of jobs and internal exile to remote areas, which as a whole form what can be described as the government's "holistic censorship regime"¹⁸¹:

The authorities' legal tools are surveillance, arrest and imprisonment. But often the "legal" apparatus is deployed as a form of intimidation

rather than law enforcement. This is because indiscretions against the ruling ideology are offenses against the CCP, not the civil authorities; civil law applies only imperfectly. So offenses against the “feelings of the Chinese people” are met with house arrest, incognito detention, assault by unidentified authorities and physical intimidation.¹⁸²

The “midnight knock on the door” during Soviet time that cowed the population throughout the Communist world, while still occurs occasionally like the case of the disappearance of the Causeway Bay Five, in these days could usually come in broad daylight in the new PRC with official legal summons backed up by blanket public offense charges in the realms of “subversion of state power”, “sedition”, “picking quarrels and provoking troubles”, “disturbing social peace” and an official kangaroo court.

It is such totalitarian nature of the CCP regime’s governance model that combines with PRC’s post-June Fourth State corporatism, or referred to by some observers as “Leninist corporatism” (see, e.g., Hutton, 2006: 8, 98, 144-148) that actually provides a closer resemblance to Francisco Franco’s *Nuevo Estado* (“New State”), and the “harmonious society” vision declared since the Hu-Wen (胡溫) administration does recall Franco’s vision of social cohesion and harmonious relationship between employers and workers via corporatism that would promote a close collaboration between them under the direction of the State and his corporatist policies to regulate the economy by controlling the conditions of work, wages, prices, production and exchange. This Franquist *Nuevo Estado* parallel may explain why the present authoritarian capitalist model of Chinese development does smell Fascist (Yeoh, 2017: 902-913)¹⁸³, especially that it does share the core characteristics of “classic Fascism” (as in Benito Mussolini’s Italy and Adolf Hitler’s Germany) as defined by the

late Bertram Myron Gross, American social scientist and Professor of Political Science at Hunter College of the City University of New York, in his provocative book *Friendly fascism: The new face of power in America* (1980): (1) “a tight Government-Big Business oligarchy with charismatic dictator or figurehead, and expansionist, scapegoating, and nationalistic ideologies”; (2) “liquidation or minimalisation of multiparty conflict and open subversion, with little use of democratic machinery and human rights”; (3) “negative sanctions through ruthless, widespread, and high-cost terror; direct action against selected scapegoats”; (4) “ceaseless propaganda, backed up by spies and informers, to consolidate elite support and mobilize masses”; (5) “widespread benefits through more jobs, stabilized prices, domestic spoils, foreign booty, and upward mobility for the most faithful”. (Gross, 1980: 170)

Today's PRC is no longer a Communist country but just ruled by a dictatorship still calling itself a Communist Party. But it still retains its former Leninist structure of governance. Corporatist maybe, but no longer Marxist. It wanted to be a free market economy but too scared to let go of State control lest that would jeopardize CCP's power. While turning to embrace capitalism, CCP is always wary about any potential challenges to its absolute power, whether from the physio-religious Falungong or too-successful huge business conglomerates – witness the recent action taken against Jack Ma and his Alibaba and Ant Group. Well reflected here is the unchecked power of a ruthless unelected ruling party. CCP has long ditched Marxism to embrace a rugged form of capitalism. It has to keep hoisting the Marxist flag because otherwise there will be no ground for it to claim continued political monopoly. Its Marxist-Leninist-Maoist past however still leaves it a strong structural legacy to influence the country's present policy orientation.

If we could see the present CCP's brutal authoritarian capitalist regime as the real modern manifestation of historian Karl Wittfogel's

“oriental despotism”¹⁸⁴, despite all its modern trappings, the contemporary CCP’s bureaucratic-mercantilist totalitarian regime is merely the latest imperial dynasty to rule China with the same brutal technique as practiced by the former emperors through the Middle Kingdom’s millennia of despotic rule. (Yeoh, 2016b: 584-589)¹⁸⁵

26. Saturnic Power: China Model’s Creeping Authoritarian Pull Is a Slow Poisoning of the Body Politic

In today’s China clearly we see a regime that maintains its political power monopoly through Orwellian surveillance of its citizens, through punishment with police power – and that of the State Security police (*guobao* / 國保) – backed by laws enacted to crush dissent. Recalling graffiti the writer Hans Koning noted on a Paris wall in May 1968: “Our modernization is only a modernization of the police” (Koning, 1987: 137), 1968’s Chicago “police riot” (as later described by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, noting the indiscriminate police violence against protesters, reporters, photographers and even bystanders) was sadly to be witnessed again in Hong Kong of 2019, though we can more accurately argue that both the police in the frontline and the increasingly enraged protesters were being victims of an incompetent Hong Kong State machinery and its overlord in Beijing whose experience in relying on police in enforcing its stability-above-all-else laws has been unrivalled.¹⁸⁶

The government’s response is the key. In 2014, the Occupy Campaign (Umbrella Movement) was a peaceful demonstration, just like Malaysia’s Bersih clean elections movement.¹⁸⁷ The demands are also similar, asking for one-person-one-vote voting in clean election, free from the authorities’ manipulation or candidate filtering for political inclination.¹⁸⁸ The result? The ruling regime refused to give an inch and,

instead, arrested all those who advocated peaceful demonstrations,¹⁸⁹ including the Occupy Nine with the campaign's initiator Benny Tai, who were then given jail terms. The government is like a steel wall. It turns a deaf ear to the demands of the people and arrests all those who advocate peaceful protests. As a result, by 2019 the demonstrations had turned to violence. As President John F. Kennedy once said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." (Kennedy, 1962) The government has driven civil society into revolt (官逼民反), and who should be held accountable?

The Hong Kong "uprising" (there should be no qualm in calling it so) reflects a conscientious society – the part of society that still cares about human dignity that comes from rights and liberty, the freedom to choose their government and in a process that is free from the political micro-meddling of a dictatorship, apart from economic and material comfort – deep in desperation due to the SAR government's steadfast stonewalling their demands voiced through 2014's peaceful Occupy Movement (a.k.a. Umbrella Movement), a SAR government that instead opted to persecute and jail activists involved in the movement. If the SAR government could claim that its hands were tied by Beijing who would not allowed it to give an inch, the conscientious society of Hong Kong also has a right to rebel – after all, how do such a semi-autonomous regional government who acted so slavishly subservient to a dictatorial central government has the skin to claim any legitimacy? When it had so callously given away its opportunity to listen to the people's demand for rights and dignity given by its semi-autonomy promised at the Handover, it has no right to chide the citizens for protesting, even resorting to riotous behaviour out of desperation. It has no right to condemn the protesters of getting support, including financial and training, from pro-democracy sympathisers abroad, when they could not get support from their own SAR government. It just seems like

déjà vu recalling how Hans Koning has described the 1968 Chicago street troubles:

The Chicago fighting was random, the Movement on the defensive. Many of them were kids, and I am not using the word in a patronizing way. They were very brave. By Tuesday night they had earned the sympathy first of the sidewalk, then of much of the convention. That was their Night of the Barricades, as the tenth of May had been in Paris.

(*ibid.*: 137-138)

Yes, kids they were, in Hong Kong of 2014 and 2019, as in Beijing of 1989. But unlike 1989's Tiananmen protesters (peaceful as those of 2014's Hong Kong), the these Hong Kong "kids" of 2019 were not receiving the same level of sympathy from many of their fellow citizens and the ethnic Chinese overseas communities, thanks to the success of CCP regime's United Front co-optation backed by economic enticements beefed up by ethnonationalistic brainwashing. Here we see a power exerted by a totalitarian regime, degenerative in its totalitarianism might be, which is not just "soft" or "sharp", but toxic – global projection of a *saturnic power* effecting a creeping, slow mental poisoning. "Indeed, unless we choose [...] the means to producing a race of free individuals," says Aldous Leonard Huxley in his 1946 foreword to *Brave new world* (1932), "we have only two alternatives to choose from: either a number of national, militarized totalitarianisms [...] or else one supranational totalitarianism, called into existence by the social chaos [...] and developing, under the need for efficiency and stability, into the welfare-tyranny of Utopia" – as Miranda exclaimed in William Shakespeare's *The tempest*, "O brave new world, / That has such people in't!"¹⁹⁰ It is an individual choice; it has to be. "You pays your money

and you takes your choice”, shrugs Huxley, metaphorically (Huxley, 1946/1970: xv). From ethnic Chinese overseas to foreign admirers of a glistering economic success perceived as attributed to the one-party rule of the CCP regime, from businesspeople fascinated with lucrative investment contracts to academics drooling over research grants and visiting fellowship opportunities, the world is happily savouring the toxicity of the *saturnic power* of a brazen regime that maintains its political power monopoly through domestic repression and external propaganda, a regime that has no moral bottom line, and joyously sailing the Huxleyan *soma* bliss towards an eternity of *soma* coma, as Lenina Crowne sings: “Hug me till you drug me, honey; / Kiss me till I’m in a coma; / Hug me, honey, snuggly bunny; / Love’s as good as *soma*.” (Huxley, 1932/1970: 136)

27. Entr’acte: When *Nineteen Eighty-four* Meets *Brave New World*

“And, like the baseless fabric of this vision, / The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, / The solemn temples [...] We are such stuff / As dreams are made on”¹⁹¹, says Prospero in William Shakespeare’s *The tempest*, the play from which Huxley’s *Brave new world* derived its title. Commenting on the latter, Margaret Atwood (2007) says:

He might well have added: “and nightmares”.

Margaret Atwood, in her 2007 review of *Brave new world* on the book’s 75th anniversary, wonders “Which template would win” between George Orwell’s “horrific vision of a brutal, mind-controlling totalitarian state – a book that gave us Big Brother and thoughtcrime and newspeak and the memory hole and the torture palace called the Ministry of Love and the discouraging spectacle of a boot grinding into

the human face forever” and Aldous Huxley’s softer form of totalitarianism over a “society of vapid consumers, idle pleasure-seekers, inner-space trippers and programmed conformists”, and asks: “Would it be possible for both of these futures – the hard and the soft – to exist at the same time, in the same place? And what would that be like?” Nevertheless, the bargain is that while Huxley’s totalitarianism feels “softer”, ironically it is, as Keith Phipps observes in his review of the 2020 television drama adaption of the book, “more insidious, and more seductive. It takes the form of pleasure and safety and a willingness to abdicate responsibility and individuality to maintain the status quo, no matter who gets reduced to a figure in an equation in the process.”

In 1985, Anthony Burgess’s critique of George Orwell’s 1984, Burgess summarizes Orwell’s dreadful premonition of mankind’s future in these words: “Orwell seemed to believe that the real world, as opposed to that of his feverish and genuinely diseased imagination, was moving in the direction of bigger and worse cacotopias. States would grow greater and more powerful. Equipped with the most devilish technology of oppression, they would more and more reduce the individual to a gibbering humanoid. The future presented an unequal contest between man and the State, and man’s defeat would be humiliating and total.” (Burgess, 1978/1980: 60) What makes this cacotopia even more chilling is that “people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think” made available to them to cultivate “a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumble puppy” (Postman, 1985/2005) – in the Arcadia of one-Party state, indulging in the self-gratifying, click-maximizing *douyin/TikTokian* pleasure – where *Tik Tok / douyin* (抖音), in place of intellectual detailed analysis, supplies in abundance broken, byte-size irrelevant and mostly unfounded “info” – and the unending self-

exhibitionist and voyeuristic reality shows, titillating the senses, redefining free speech as apolitical celebrity-focussed gossiping and senseless gibberish. As Huxley remarked in *Brave new world revisited* (1959), his own “second opinion” on his earlier dystopian masterpiece *Brave new world* (1932), Postman notes, “the civil libertarians and rationalists, who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny, “failed to take into account man’s almost infinite appetite for distractions.”” Comparing the two greatest dystopian treatises of the Twentieth Century, Postman gives us this haunting encapsulation: “In 1984, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In Brave New World, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we fear will ruin us. Huxley feared that our desire will ruin us.” In other words, a willingness to capitulate to the ultimate totalitarian state the humans have ever witnesses through a combination of dreadful punishment for not conforming and enticement with material pleasure implanting into individual consciousness through dominating propaganda by official mouthpieces and private media cowed under Party-State pressure.

28. “Nomenklatura Conspiracy” and the Great Totalitarian Deception

As Raymond Sleeper pointed out in 1987 referring to the Soviet Union and the “nomenklatura conspiracy”, we can discern the same deception being employed today by the CCP regime to maximise the maintenance of this capture-bonding, a continuation of the use of Marxist-Leninist concepts developed in Soviet/Maoist times that represented subversions of well-accepted Western liberal democratic ideas, mainly through the use of double-meaning language that serves to justify CCP’s authoritarianism, e.g., admitting that human rights, freedom and democracy are universal values but giving them a different meaning in

the “unique” Chinese context – in short, so and so and so “with Chinese characteristics”, inevitably because of “different national contexts” (*guoqing butong* / 國情不同). Sleeper referred to then head of the U.S. negotiating team in Geneva on nuclear weapons Ambassador Max Kampelman’s 4th January 1985, address to the Standing Committee on Law and National Security of the American Bar Association where he made a significant point on the USSR leaders’ facility in using language differently:

They have the ability to use language [...] in a way which is designed to confuse people like ourselves and undermine our will. This they do professionally and effectively. They take a noble word like *democracy* and adopt it as their own – as you know, they frequently call their systems ‘people’s democracies.’ This is a total corruption of the term [...] The Communists are able to use these differences [in meaning of words] to promote their own appeal, which [...] is essentially a humanitarian appeal [...] in their propaganda they identify themselves and ally themselves with efforts to achieve humanitarian goals such as ‘freedom’ or ‘justice.’

(Quoted in Sleeper, 1987: 203)

In other words, the “different use” of words Kampelman referred to is basically “an instrument of subversion, of disinformation – an instrument of deception” (*ibid.*).

Such instrument of deception is of course not the monopoly of the world’s one-party totalitarian regimes, old and new. Similar tactics are not uncommon in countries experiencing a creeping authoritarianism. “The most effective way of making people accept the validity of the values they are to serve is to persuade them that they are really the same as those which they, or at least the best among them, have always held,

but which were not properly understood or recognised before,” said Hayek, and just as what transpired in the history of Christianisation of the pagan world of the Roman empire, “The people are made to transfer their allegiance from the old gods to the new under the pretence that the new gods really are what their sound instinct had always told them but what before they had only dimly seen. And the most efficient technique to this end is to use the old words but change their meaning. Few traits of totalitarian regimes are at the same time so confusing to the superficial observer and yet so characteristic of the whole intellectual climate as the complete perversion of language, the change of meaning of the words by which the ideals of the new regimes are expressed.” (Hayek, 1944/1986: 117) The word “liberty” was picked out by Hayek as the worst sufferer in this perversion of language, but “freedom or liberty are by no means the only words whose meaning has been changed into their opposites to make them serve as instruments of totalitarian propaganda”, also not spared the fate are terms like justice and law, right and equality – a list that could be extended to embrace almost all moral and political terms in general use – which causes confusion by purpose, a confusion that “becomes worse because this change of meaning of the words describing political ideals is not a single event but a continuous process, a technique employed consciously or unconsciously to direct the people.” (*ibid.*: 118) After the fall of the Communist Party totalitarian regimes in USSR and across Eastern Europe in 1989/1990, the almost only Leninist totalitarian regime left – the CCP dictatorship in the PRC – has fully inherited the Soviet mantle, and with the PRC’s unstoppable ascendance to be the engine of economic growth and main source of lucrative business contracts for the rest of the world, and with no lack of top global intellectuals, not to say just people in the streets – from inside the PRC to the sidewalks of Chinatowns and beyond, fully willing to be co-opted by the totalitarian

regime in its glistering new coat, the extension of CCP's *saturnic power* continues to be greatly fuelled by such perversion of language.

The use of such “different meaning” tactic (i.e. the use of concepts that are in fact subversions of well-accepted Western liberal ideas born out of hundreds of years of struggle of civil society against autocratic monarchy, of the Painean revolutions French and American, and based on fundamental ideas first developed during the Renaissance) in Marxist totalitarian states or post-Marxist authoritarian states today as “active measures”, i.e. acts of “disinformation” and “deception” intentionally rooted in double-meaning language or “doublespeak” – closely related to George Orwell's concept of “doublethink” in his dystopian novel *Nineteen eighty-four*, one of his twin central conceptual inventions (with “Newspeak”) in the book – has its roots at the time when Lenin was planning to overthrow the Tsarist government at the turn of last century, as Professor Raymond Sleeper plainly lays out:

When Lenin began to organize his revolutionary conspiracy, he found that the main ideas of communism were already or could be expressed in terms of Western ideas so cleverly that the average citizen of the West [as well as that of the Russian empire, later USSR] would not see the trick – the inherent deception of communist ideas. To the contrary, the average citizen understood *genuine democracy* and *economic freedom* to mean what they had always meant, the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to travel, the right to work where he pleased – in short, freedom.

(Sleeper, 1987: 191)

Maintaining its Marxist-Maoist tradition, today's CCP is redefining concepts like democracy and human rights under the warped framework of “(market) socialism with Chinese characteristics”. In this process it is

following this early Leninist subversion of Western liberal ideas in the wide use of double-meaning concepts – one meaning being the accepted Western liberal concept (the “universal values” which today’s CCP is paying lip service to) and “the other meaning being the opposite or subverted meaning that was the true Marxist-Leninist meaning [which] also served the very useful purpose of not immediately alarming the established government, which Lenin had to deceive, confuse, and destroy in order to capture political power in Russia” (*ibid.*). No longer talking much about Communism, Marxism or even Maoism, the CCP regime of the “People’s” Republic of China has remained the faithful follower of this power of double meaning – redefining these terms like “human rights”, “democracy”, “freedom” in its own way, justifying such deception by referring to “China’s different context, different condition” (*guoqing butong*).¹⁹²

In this atmosphere criticisms against the Party or mode of government in this one-party state are considered subversive. The critic can be charged with “incitement to subvert state power” which can lead to more than 10 years’ jail or life imprisonment, as authoritarian patriotism asks for unquestioning loyalty and absolute allegiance to the government’s cause and therefore is intolerant towards dissent and any challenge against the Party’s monopoly over public discourse.¹⁹³

29. The Sleep of Conscience: Intellectual Escapism

In another of his most well-known works, *The fear of freedom*, Erich Fromm says that

The feature common to all authoritarian thinking is the conviction that life is determined by forces outside man’s own self, his interest, his wishes. The only possible happiness lies in the submission to these

forces ... The courage of the authoritarian character is essentially a courage to suffer what fate or its personal representative or “leader” may have destined him for. To suffer without complaining is his highest virtue – not the courage of trying to end suffering or at least to diminish it. Not to change fate, but to submit to it, is the heroism of the authoritarian character.

(Fromm, 1942/1991: 147-148)

It is not difficult for the persisting oppression of a totalitarian regime to breed such an authoritarian character, the capitulation in despair in witnessing constantly what dire fate has been and would go on befalling upon those who dare to defy authority, those who voice dissent. It is easier for such an authoritarian character to prevail of comfort of life is the reward for conforming and capitulation. It is a manifestation akin to Stockholm syndrome, it is a dissolution of one’s individual self into the safety of namelessness of a crowd for attention evading, a retreat into self-deception and illusion for survival, into by purpose blinding oneself as not to see the evil deed committed daily by the State in the name of the national good, into a world of nationalistic fervour where collective memory of the Party’s atrocities, crimes against humanity, has been wiped clean by the State. To live, you have to just spell evil backward, as often it is said. But such self-deception is basically a neurosis, as John Sanford says in his psycho-religious study of evil, *Evil: The shadow side of reality*: “We can say that intrinsic evil is a force of destructiveness that destroys wholeness [...] We can say that something that is dissociated is relatively evil because its evil varies with its state of dissociation [...] as the dissociation in Jekyll’s personality increased Hyde became increasingly pure evil.” (Sanford, 1982/1984: 145-146) As hideous as Hyde’s deeds were, Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson wrote in his 1886 haunting novella, *The strange case*

of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: “Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde; but the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience. It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired ...” (Stevenson, 1886/1999: 46) For Dr Henry Jekyll, it was just that “his conscience slumbered”, wrote Stevenson. What transpired was the sleep of conscience among the world’s multitude in that proclamation of “Peace for our time, peace with honour” of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain after that shameful, self-deluding Munich Agreement in the autumn of 1938 (Rothschild, 1988: ix), which the world were to unfortunately witness in the 1930s to 40s, and we are unfortunately witnessing again today; going together was also the sleep of reason – *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (*The sleep of reason produces monsters*) aquatint that Francisco Goya created between 1797 and 1799, in which the dreamer was surrounded by dark creatures of the night, two decades before he painted the most well-known among his “Black Paintings”, *Saturno devorando a su hijo* which depicts a Saturn that is devouring his own child (one of the fourteen “Black Paintings” created between 1819 and 1823 on the walls of the painter’s house) that came vividly alive in that dark night of State terror of 3rd-4th June 1989 Beijing (Yeoh, 2019b: 816). “‘Imagination deserted by reason begets impossible monsters,’ [Goya] had explained [...] Was it a premonition of what was to come? Were the Victorians and their American contemporaries doomed to sleep the sleep of reason and beget impossible monsters?” Asked historian Derek Jarrett in his book *The sleep of reason* (Jarrett, 1988: 1). He was talking about 1936. It is the same question we should be asking today too. This is about complacency in face of rising “high-tech totalitarianism” (Teng, 2019) backed by string economic performance and spiralling global economic clout and market power of the PRC.

“Life is but an empty dream,” Jarrett quotes Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “For the soul is dead that slumbers. And things are not what they seem.” “The sleep of the soul, the sleep that was death to all true wisdom, was the same as the sleep of reason,” remarked Jarrett, noting Goya’s “insistence on the need for imagination to be united with reason.” (Jarrett, 1988: 2) The slumber of conscience; the sleep of reason, the sleep of the soul. In his 1983 thesis, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, Benedict Anderson defined a nation as a community socially constructed and ultimately *imagined* by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group and “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible [...] for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (Anderson, 1983/1991: 6-7). The sovereignty of a nation-state is imagined, according to Anderson, because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm, giving rise to the national dreams of freedom whose gage and emblem were the sovereign state.¹⁹⁴ With such an imagined community being kidnapped by a totalitarian State, there would come the dissociation of this ultimate imagination and reason and conscience, leading down the road to the destruction not only of the dignity and fabric of this community but also the world around within its reach. Such is the terror of the totalitarian regime’s *saturnic power*. As Arthur Koestler graphically warns, cited by Robert Rothschild in his aptly titled book *Peace for our time*: “To give in to the temptations of the sirens is in the nature of man; but to be driven by despair to sleep with a crocodile is the privilege of our epoch.” (Rothschild, 1988: 46) This is a warning as relevant both for today’s mesmerised citizens in

happy servitude under a totalitarian regime as well as for a global community who is bound to be driven by post-pandemic economic despair to continue flirting with a crocodile whose projecting glittering authoritarian governance continues to shatter the influence of liberal democratic values.

30. The Great Deception and “Rule by Law” Leading to Ethnic Neurosis and National Psychosis

The destructiveness on personality impacted by having to live a lie day to day, for personal survival and comfort having to blind oneself to the State's atrocities towards people around oneself, the need to help oneself find excuses without scientific analysis and by ignoring all evidence to the contrary – tapping into State propaganda for inspirations – to justify one's condoning such State atrocities whether in terms of the large population of the country, the need for repression to keep territories from breaking away, that there is always imperialist enemies at the gate to destroy the great fatherland – this is not only Hayek's “road to serfdom” but succumbing to the State's *saturnic power* of a slow mental conditioning that is leading to mass neurosis, as captivated by Winston Smith's haunting, sudden personal realisation towards the end of George Orwell's *Nineteen eight-four*: “He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.” (Orwell, 1949/1984: 256) Forty years in the making, Big Brother's final triumph is for Winston Smith both a liberation and an inevitability, for the alternative was simply too unthinkable, as of that

case of the young Nazi aviator who was “totally identified, on a conscious level, with Hitler, the Hitler Youth Movement, and the goals of the Third Reich”, who came into Jungian analysis in Berlin, as given us by John Sanford in his book *Evil: The shadow side of reality*: “Shocked by his dreams [that contradicted his beliefs on a conscious level], the young aviator decided to investigate matters for himself and went to visit a concentration camp. What he saw here opened his eyes and appalled him [...] He then committed suicide; the revelation of good and evil was too much for him.” (Sanford, 1982/1984: 11)

*The result of this deception
Is very strange to tell,
For when I fool
The people I fool
I fool myself as well*

– says M.R. Haight in the book *A study of self-deception* that explains: “we can lie to people about themselves with perfect success if they are at all suggestible. But to do so we may need to look sincere in the teeth of such overwhelming evidence that other people think we are lying to ourselves. Typically however when we lie in this way it is also *about* ourselves, I think (as Sartre says); but not in bad faith, simply as means to an end.” (Haight, 1980: 110) Notoriously, though, as the above rhyme goes, “I do not fool myself, I change myself (if the trick works). And if this is what I hoped would happen, it may have been my lie’s main aim: for if I can change myself, I shall not need to fool other people for long. The change has worked when I no longer feel any fear; and there need be no paradoxical stage between that and my first state, one in which I fool *myself*.” (*ibid.*)

Explaining the psychological concepts of the “True Self” versus the “False Self”, psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, who saw a very important function of the “False Self” as “to hide the True Self, which it does by compliance with environmental demands”, says that in “the extreme examples of False Self development, the True Self is so well hidden that spontaneity is not a feature” while compliance “is then the main feature, with imitation as a speciality” (Winnicott, 1960/1965: 146-147)¹⁹⁵:

In this way it is possible to trace the point of origin of the False Self, which can now be seen to be a defence, a defence against that which is unthinkable, the exploitation of the True Self, which would result in its annihilation.

(Winnicott, 1960/1965: 147)

Winnicott's precursor Erich Fromm in his book *The fear of freedom* distinguishes between the “original self” and the inauthentic “pseudo self” that represents a way to escape the loneliness of freedom: “Although one looks at repression mostly from the standpoint of the operation of the repressed forces in neurotic behaviour, dreams, and so on, it seems important to stress the fact that every repression eliminates parts of one's real self and enforces the substitution of a pseudo feeling for the one which has been repressed [...] The loss of the [original] self and its substitution by a pseudo self leave the individual in an intense state of insecurity. He is obsessed by doubt since, being essentially a reflex of other people's expectation of him, he has in a measure lost his identity. In order to overcome the panic resulting from such loss of identity, he is compelled to conform, to seek his identity by continuous approval and recognition by others [...] Thus, he is ready to submit to new authorities which offer him security and relief from doubt [and in

the case of Nazi Germany] for the nucleus – the lower middle class – of the Nazi movement, the authoritarian mechanism was most characteristic.” (Fromm, 1942/1991: 174, 177-178) And yet in this Faustian bargain struck with the totalitarian regime, the individual whether like it or not, “pays for the new security by giving up the integrity of his self” while the factual dichotomy between him and these authorities does “thwart and cripple his life even though consciously he may submit voluntarily”, and it is in this manner, according to Fromm, that the “function of authoritarian ideology and practice can be compared to the function of neurotic symptoms.” (*ibid.*: 205)

Even for fighters against evil, Friedrich Nietzsche has warned against the corrupting influence on the psyche by the dark force, by the totalitarian order, of awakening the ever-existing dark side of personality, the Jungian shadow archetype – “that part of the personality which has been repressed for the sake of the ego ideal” (Whitmont, 1978: 160)¹⁹⁶ – in his 1886 *Jenseits von Gut und Böse (Beyond good and evil)*: “He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you.” (Nietzsche, 1886/1990: 102, §146) For those who opt for self-deception, shutting out knowledge of injustices and States’ suppression of free thought and murderous persecution of dissent in exchange for a safe and comfortable life for oneself, gazing long into the abyss that one needs to live with, makes terms with, will eventually change oneself in the self-deception as Haight says – a willing process of hypocrisy no doubt, but a chilling road to mass communal neurosis under the *saturnic power* of the totalitarian Party-State. According to the ego psychology neo-Freudians developed in the wake of Freudian psychology, if a person is “unable to come to terms with his or her limitations as a person and ultimately with mortality [...] neurosis would result” due to maladaptiveness of illusions, and to avoid that, writes

professor of psychology Shelley Taylor in her book on self-deception and mental health, *Positive illusions*, need to be maintained are “benign fictions about one’s self, the world, and the future” in an active process that requires “commitments of cognitive and emotional resources so that reality can be continually kept at bay” (Taylor, 1989: 122-123) While denial “may give the appearance of being a successful psychological shelter from reality,” says Taylor, in masking anxiety without making it go away, repression, on the other hand, “inhibits the full experience of emotional responses by pushing contradictory impulses into the unconscious.” (*ibid.*: 125)

In adjusting one’s behaviour to correspond to the expectation of society – and demands of a totalitarian State in our present context – one must often repress internal impulses that conflict with these standards – or suppress conscience-driven personal dissent against State atrocities – and thus essentially “repression eliminates the discrepancy between what one should feel and what one actually feels.” (*ibid.*: 126) Unlike either denial or repression that alters reality, self-deception comes in the form of illusions that “simply interpret it in the best possible light” by enabling people to “impose their own interpretations on events and to give themselves the benefit of the doubt, framing events” in ways that distort statistical reality, and as Taylor quotes psychologist Daniel Weinberger, to allow people to “hold beliefs that are more positive than reality can sustain” (*ibid.*: 126-127) Closely linked to this self-deception by way of positive illusions is the cognitive control of negative information (*ibid.*: 144-149) through selective attention, i.e. “selectively attending to positive information and selectively ignoring negative information”, and what Taylor calls “benign forgetting” to the extent that one even “forgets that one has forgotten” – a memory trick called “doublethink” in George Orwell’s *Nineteen eighty-four*. These mental processes have today definitely been made easier by a totalitarian State

that has enforced decades of collective amnesia upon the country's younger generation through strict censorship of "negative" information in publications and mass media and persecution of those who voice their memories of the Party's atrocities against citizens, of the night-long massacre of unarmed students and other civilians,¹⁹⁷ and by erecting a Great Firewall in cyberspace to totally block access to information from sources abroad, may those be *Google* or *Wikipedia*, *Facebook* or *Youtube*. The collective memory wipe has been so successful as to enable a "cognitive drift" in favour of the regime – and even more interesting is "the fact that many people accomplished this reversal of their previous opinions by maintaining that they had held the revised opinion all along" – constructing of memories to support the view that they have always felt the same way in a phenomenon of hindsight bias that some psychologists call the knew-it-all-along effect (Taylor, 1989: 150-151), as vividly portrayed in the title of Baruch Fischhoff and Ruth Beyth's 1975 paper, "I knew it would happen". Talking about this tendency of "creeping determinism", Fischhoff and Beyth believe that rather than reflecting some "wisdom of hindsight", the judges of events seem to reflect what might be called a "knew it all" attitude (Fischhoff and Beyth, 1975: 2).

Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance [...] And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures [...] Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire

throws on the opposite wall of the cave? [...] And of the objects which are being carried in the manner they would only see the shadows? [...] To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

(Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, §514-515;
Jowett translation, 1941/1966: 253-254)

In Plato's Socratic dialogue of the "Allegory of the cave" in his *Republic*, a group of people were chained in a cave from childhood and all that constitute their world, their reality, are the shadows on the cave wall in front of them and the sounds coming from the back outside the mouth of the cave. The impacts of symbolisms of this powerful allegory that have transcended ages have been far and wide, and in today's world facing the threat of a newly empowered totalitarian regime whose confident ruthless outreach of tentacles is going from strength to strength, it is harrowing to see how Plato's allegory from more than two thousand years ago is sounding more true for those millions of citizens at home and in diaspora, especially the younger generation, and myriads of otherwise respectable scholars who have continued to fall under the spell of this glistening high-tech totalitarian Utopia and swoon daily over a shadow reality like that suffered by those prisoners in "Plato's cave". What if a prisoner did by accident have a glimpse of the real world outside the cave? This is what Socrates told Glaucon over two millennia ago:

... when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows [...] And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the

objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, – will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him? [...] And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him? [...] Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

(Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, §515-517;
Jowett translation, 1941/1966: 254-257)

Such was the unenviable fate of the prisoners too long encased in the shadow world of “Plato’s cave”. Such will be the macabre prospects of the millions, especially the young, too long imprisoned behind the totalitarian regime’s Great Firewall for the “closing of the Chinese mind”, and therein lies the urgency of mass liberation, the liberation of minds, like the liberation of eyes of the prisoners of “Plato’s cave”, before it is too late, before another whole generation is intellectually destroyed like in what the Party had done in its past atrocities. The prospects might be grim, for the information filter has been drastic, the educational and media brainwashing has been relentless, the memory wipe for past Party atrocities has been thorough, the Party-State’s confounding nationalistic flame-stoking has been all the rage, and not boding well is the evidence reflected in the public’s apathy or even antipathy towards the harassed, persecuted, “disappeared”, jailed, died-in-jail pro-democracy dissidents and human rights advocates, towards the image of jailed Liu Xiaobo’s emasculated body and his sealed fate of

destruction in the hands of a shameless Party-State felt so threatened by the reform suggested in *Charter 08*, and how the Lennon-Wall pro-democracy Hong Kong students on campuses from U.S. to Australia had been harassed and physically attacked by China students whose future to live as dignified humans freed from the shackles of a totalitarian State was ironically being championed by the former from that little corner of the PRC which was the only region of China where dissent could still be voiced, at least up to the point when that outrageous new Hong Kong national security law was slammed on the Hongkongers to choke out their voices.¹⁹⁸

31. The Closing of the Chinese Mind

“Freedom of the mind requires not only, or not even especially, the absence of legal constraints but the presence of alternative thoughts. The most successful tyranny is not the one that uses force to assure uniformity but the one that removes the awareness of other possibilities, that makes it seem inconceivable that other ways are viable, that removes the sense that there is an outside.” So says Allan Bloom in his 1987 book *The closing of the American mind* (see page 249). Bloom’s grave warning for America in the 1980s regarding the state of liberal education has acquired a renewed pertinence today with regards China under the CCP dictatorship that with unparalleled arrogance derived from economic success and global-reaching market power has heralded a new era of what can be termed, paraphrasing Bloom, “the closing of the Chinese mind” with its often uncanny extent of censorship over publications, mass media, and cyberspace with the Great Firewall that has blocked out almost all information sources overseas from *Google* search to *Wikipedia*, and social media from *Facebook* to *Youtube*, from *Instagram* to *WhatsApp*, and replaced them with homemade versions –

Baidu, *Weibo*, *WeChat/Weixin*, etc. – that are under strict State surveillance and censorship. Strict censorship has also been applied to schools and universities¹⁹⁹ where in recent years under the Xi Jinping administration there were even seven dangerous Western notions warned of in a confidential internal document known as “Document No. 9” first published in July 2012:²⁰⁰ (1) (Western) constitutionalism/constitutional democracy (with the independence of the judiciary), (2) universal values (of freedom, democracy and human rights), (3) civil society (and civil rights), (4) (pro-market) economic neo-liberalism, (5) independent mass media (“Western news values”, i.e. press freedom), (6) historical nihilism (i.e. criticisms of CCP’s past mistakes),²⁰¹ and (7) questioning the “Reform and Open” policy (with its connection to the “power elite bourgeois class”). The first six notions²⁰² that were inveighed against in Document No. 9 are those that the Party saw as ideas then circulating in China that represented a direct challenge to its rule, as “Document Number 9 warned that ‘failure in the ideological sphere can result in major disorder’ and called on leaders at all levels to face the threat posed by Western political ideas”, reflecting the worries conveyed in a unpublished speech of Xi Jinping in December 2012 that “wavering ‘ideals and convictions’ of the Soviet Communist leaders” had led to the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and in a four-part video on the decline and fall of the Soviet Union disseminated in 2013 that “elaborated on Xi’s theme of the danger of following a Soviet path”²⁰³. Coverage of these dangerous “Western” values, principles or ideas in classrooms is strictly forbidden. They were also banned from the official media. As Bush (2016) correctly observes, the “irony of Document Number 9 was that at least some of these ‘threatening’ ideas were entrenched realities in the Hong Kong SAR”. The danger of these “seven no-talks” (*qi bujiang* / 七不講) lies in:²⁰⁴

- The core objective of promoting “universal values” is to get rid of the leadership position of the Chinese Communist Party.
- The suggestion of “civil society” is to establish new political forces outside the CCP’s grassroots organisations.
- The idea of “neo-liberalism” is to oppose the State’s macro-economic adjustment and control policy.
- To promote “Western news values” is to oppose party mouthpieces on which the CCP has always been insisting, to get free from the Party’s leadership of the mass media, and to practice “*glasnost*” that the Soviet Union followed during the *perestroika* period, in order to cause disorder to the Party and society through disconcerting public opinion.
- “Historical nihilism” aims to highlight the historical problems under the Party’s leadership in order to negate facts that have already been widely accepted by the people, and to derogate drastically and attack Mao Zedong and Mao thought, in order to totally negate the historical function of the CCP during Mao’s time, with the eventual purpose of weakening or even overthrowing the legitimacy of the Party’s leadership.
- Various views that aim to distort the “Reform and Open” policy point to the emergence of a “power elite bourgeois class” and State capitalism, and consider China’s reform as not thorough while economic reform can only be perfect through political reform.

In addition, there was another 16-item “Suggestions” internal document that was issued on 4th May 2013²⁰⁵ which probably contained the earlier form and source of the “seven no-talks” of Document No. 9, which clearly reveals the urgency of the need for tightening of thought control by including new topics that were previously not considered off-limits.

It is indeed baffling that university ranking exercises can again and again give so many universities in China which are all under draconian proscription of free academic enquiry and freedom of expression such high rankings. That probably says so much of the value of such exercises. Such high rankings are particularly dubious especially considering the environment of social and behavioural sciences as well as humanities because it is difficult to think that CCP regime's extreme suppression of free academic enquiry and muzzling of freedom of expression should be thus ignored by these ranking exercises, for universities are not just high-level vocational schools to meet employers' labour market demands. Universities are much much more than that. Even for disciplines of physical sciences, the way the rankings go could be dubious too in view, for example, of the recent drastic control by the CCP regime of what academics can or cannot publish on the novel coronavirus pneumonia and the sacking or persecution of academics who do not toe the party line.

In the last days of the Trump administration, U.S. axed five cultural interaction programmes which on the China side are plainly State orchestrated and strictly controlled. China can argue, in fact they just did, that other countries from the West are also promoting such propaganda to enhance influence and image. But the problem is that China is promoting the superiority of its one-party, non-electoral, dissent-suppressing, dissident-jailing governance model whose effects we have seen so clearly in regimes it tutored – from Southeast Asia to Latin America to Africa. Whereas in Western democracies local opposition parties and pressure groups are legally protected and allowed to speak out against government propaganda and project different, non-State viewpoints out to the world, all such groups are ruthlessly suppressed in China and so all cultural interaction programmes came out

from China are State-orchestrated and strictly State-controlled even though they may be advertised as from civil society (and ironically the term “civil society” has actually been among the nine topics banned by the Xi regime, not allowed to be mentioned or discussed in classrooms and lecture halls).

As Allan Bloom says in *The closing of the American mind*, “It is not feelings or commitments that will render a man free, but thoughts, reasoned thoughts. Feelings are largely formed and informed by convention. Real differences come from difference in thought and fundamental principle.” (Bloom, 1987/1988: 249) If, as Bloom laments, there is much in democracy that “conduces to the assault on awareness of difference”, CCP’s totalitarianism, by its nature, for its own survival which is the ultimate aim of all its policies however altruistically for-the-people its proclamations may sound, always carries the natural imperative to stem out awareness of different opinions which are potentially destabilizing for its political power monopoly.

“... one can try to re-create the world, to build up in its stead another world in which its most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others that are in conformity with one’s own wishes”, says Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and its discontents*, “But whoever, in desperate defiance, sets out upon this path to happiness will as a rule attain nothing. Reality is too strong for him. He becomes a madman, who for the most part finds no one to help him in carrying through his delusion. It is asserted, however, that each one of us behaves in some one respect like a paranoic, corrects some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him by the construction of a wish and introduces this delusion into reality. A special importance attaches to the case in which this attempt to procure a certainty of happiness and a protection against suffering through a delusional remoulding of reality is made by a considerable number of people in common.” (Freud, 1930/1961: 30)

Freud had in mind religion (whose “technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner – which presupposes an intimidation of the intelligence”) to class among the mass-delusions of this kind, adding that no one, “needless to say, who shares a delusion ever recognizes it as such”, thus paying a price of being fixed forcibly “in a state of psychical infantilism” and being drawn “into a mass-delusion” (*ibid.*: 30-31, 34) in order to conform and to comply for personal survival. In this manner, modern totalitarian regime’s *saturnic power* does share Freud’s view of traditional religion in probably “sparing many people an individual neurosis” but instead replacing it with a mass communal neurosis.

32. Rule *by* Law(lessness) and the Nazi Parallel in the Death of Liu Xiaobo

Noting Hitler’s hostility to the idea of law and due process, and his scorn for lawyers, Alan Bullock (1993: 461) draws our attention to the fact that the “Führer-state consisted of two different types of authority in parallel: the traditional state bureaucracy, and an alternative executive, extra-constitutional and extra-legal, to the second of which in the event of conflict between the two Hitler almost invariably gave precedence.” Such was a framework that can also help to explain the often contradictory nature of the CCP regime that keeps arguing that PRC is where rule of law prevails and yet the politically motivated arbitrary arrests and convictions are the rule rather than exceptions and where lawyers who defend dissidents are so frequently being stripped of their licences and even arrested and tortured (Xi Jinping administration’s “709” mass arrest of civil rights lawyers still stands to remind the civil society of how ruthless the CCP dictatorship could be). As Bullock recalls, such a structure was first diagnosed in Ernst Fränkel’s book

The dual state written in exile in 1941 wherein Fränkel described the Führer-state as “a fusion between the ‘normative state’ with its established norms and rules, and the ‘prerogative state’, which expressed Hitler’s claim to an overriding authority for which he was responsible only to history.” (Bullock, 1993: 461) In today’s PRC, we see similarly such overriding authority claimed by CCP as an embodiment of an almost divine, messianic Marxist-Leninist mission to fulfil its destiny to reclaim China’s lost glory. Same pretension, same arrogance.

After Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波) was sentenced to 11 years’ imprisonment on the charge of subversion for his role in co-authoring and distributing the 2008’s call for democratic freedoms in China, *Charter 08*, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, his wife Liu Xia (劉霞) has since been kept under house arrest although she has not been charged with any crime. This lawless confinement appeared to be taking a toll as Liu Xia was admitted in 2014 to a Beijing hospital, apparently suffering from a heart ailment and depression.²⁰⁶ As though putting pressure on Liu Xiaobo through persecuting his wife was not enough, the CCP regime also brought fraud charges against Liu Xia’s brother, Liu Hui (劉暉), who also was given an 11-year prison sentence. Still fearing for her brother’s safety back in China, Liu Xia, who arrived in Berlin on 10th July 2018 having finally been released from her own four-and-a-half-year house arrest, was conspicuously absent from the memorial service in Berlin on 13th July, on the first anniversary of Liu Xiaobo’s death.²⁰⁷

Not only that what the Communist Party dictatorship is doing has rendered the PRC a close parallel to classic Fascism, a close comparison has repeatedly been drawn, much to the chagrin of the CCP, between the death of Liu Xiaobo and the death of Carl von Ossietzky (who like Liu, also a committed pacifist) whom Adolf Hitler threw into a Nazi concentration camp and died in 1938. They are the only two Nobel

Peace Prize laureates who were awarded the prize while being imprisoned and who then died in custody. Liu was granted medical parole on 26th June 2017, apparently to spare the authorities the bad publicity of having him die in jail, and sent into closely guarded hospitalisation only seventeen days before his death. Carl von Ossietzky was sent in May 1936 to a hospital under Gestapo surveillance and died on 4th May 1938 in hospital, while still in police custody, from tuberculosis as well as illness resulted from of the abuse he suffered in concentration camp. While it is a fact that the blood-soaked history of CCP's rule parallels that of Nazis, the bone-chilling parallel between the fate of Liu Xiaobo and that of Carl von Ossietzky is simply no less uncannily heartrending.

The parallel between the fate of Carl von Ossietzky, who was jailed and died in Adolf Hitler's 1930s Nazi Germany, and Liu Xiaobo, who was jailed and died in 21st-Century China under Communist Party dictatorship, can be seen in many aspects:²⁰⁸

- ◆ Carl von Ossietzky was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1935 while in Nazi concentration camp; Liu Xiaobo was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 while in Chinese prison.
- ◆ In terms of the authorities' response to the Nobel Peace Prize award:
 1. Hitler would not allow a member of Carl von Ossietzky's family to collect the award on his behalf; the Chinese Communist Party government would not let Liu Xiaobo's wife Liu Xia go to collect the award on his behalf and instead placed her under permanent house arrest.
 2. Mention of Carl von Ossietzky's 1935 Nobel Peace Prize was banned in Nazi Germany; mention of Liu Xiaobo's 2010 Nobel Peace Prize (like the 1989 June Fourth massacre during the subsequent persecution of dissidents following which Liu Xiaobo

was also jailed in his first out of four prison terms till his death) is banned in China.

3. The Nazi government protested Carl von Ossietzky's award and issued a government decree that forbade German citizens from accepting future Nobel Prizes; the Chinese government protested Liu's award (but it celebrated when State writer Mo Yan (莫言)²⁰⁹ was awarded Nobel Literature Prize two years later).
 4. The Nazi government also responded to Carl von Ossietzky's Nobel award by setting up its own "German National Arts and Science Prize"; also as a response to Liu Xiaobo's Nobel award, a "Confucius Peace Prize" was launched in China.
- ◆ In terms of circumstances of death, Carl von Ossietzky died in hospital on 4th May 1938 while still in police custody; Liu Xiaobo was granted medical parole only in the terminal stage of his illness and sent into closely guarded hospitalisation, only seventeen days before his death on 13th July 2017.

33. Toxicity of *Saturnic Power's* Slowing Poisoning of Minds

The chilling examples of how the PRC now continues to treat its dissidents and political prisoners are not lost either on the PRC's exiled dissidents overseas or its new subjects in Hong Kong since 1997: for the latter the unending stream of tragedies from Cao Shunli (曹順利 , lawyer and human rights activist; victim of "death from pneumonia" while in five-month police custody for illegal assembly and *xunxin zishi* / "picking quarrels and provoking trouble") to Peng Ming (彭明 , democracy activist; victim of "death from sudden illness" while in jail), from Li Wangyang (李旺陽 , suspected to have died from the common tactic in which government critics refer to its victims as *bei-zisha* / 被自殺 – "be suicided") to Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波 , who died from a "late-

diagnosed” disease contracted while in jail), and a future grim prospect that they never had to consider when they were under British rule had been made more real when China again breached the “One Country, Two Systems” agreement to snatch Lee Bo (李波) from Hong Kong soil, and when China could even with the complicity of a client government in Bangkok snatch Gui Minhai (桂民海) from the streets of Pattaya. Such complicity brings to light an intricate nexus between domestic governance and foreign (politico-economic-military) policy, an impressive combination of *Innenpolitik* and *Außenpolitik*, with the latter inclusive of PRC’s so-called “soft power”, or in most cases more appropriately described by the new term “sharp power” introduced in a November 2017 *Foreign Affairs* article by Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig of the Washington, DC-based National Endowment for Democracy, in creating more “friendly” or client states who would support or even collaborate (though CCP’s extraterritorial actions) with the PRC in the latter’s suppression of domestic dissent and buying off critics in the foreign academia.

However, the toxicity of the CCP regime’s influence outreach went far beyond “soft”, “smart” and “sharp”, for it is an influence far beyond the pull of lucrative business contracts and diplomatic ties and political bandwagoning, for it is an influence across time that is corrupting a whole generation of younger people growing up, not only the nationalism-conditioned youths in the PRC, but also those huge multitude getting into age of maturity, moving into political and economic management positions across the free world outside the PRC, and also across that huge spectrum of ethnic Chinese overseas communities whose influential Chinese-language media has almost all been brought into control by the PRC propaganda department, the United Front – a slow poisoning of minds, most scarily the young minds, into accepting the CCP totalitarian regime’s dissent-persecuting mode of

governance as necessary, as superior, to be emulated. The long-term toxicity of this power has made it far beyond “soft”, “smart” or “sharp”, but *saturnic*.

34. CCP's “Third Reich” in the Context of Xi Jinping's “Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation”

E.R. Huber, a leading constitutional lawyer, wrote in 1939 in his authoritative *Verfassungsrecht* (“Constitutional Law”): “All public authority both in the State and in the Movement [i.e. the National Socialist (“Nazi”) Movement] stems from that of the Führer. The correct term for political authority in the People's Reich is therefore not ‘the authority of the State’ but ‘the authority of the Führer’. This is so because political authority is wielded not by an impersonal entity, the State, but by the Führer as executor of the united will of the people.” (Cited in Bullock, 1993: 461) Substituting today's Chinese Communist Party for the Führer, a close parallel in structure is apparent in CCP's “People's Republic”, or the CCP's version of the “People's Reich” to bring the analogy even closer as the now no-term-limit *zhuxi* (主席, chairman) of the PRC, CCP general secretary Xi Jinping's “Chinese people's Great National Rejuvenation” slogan is smacking of symbolizing the rise of an East Asian “Third Reich” after the glorious empires of the Han Chinese Han-T'ang dynasties and the Manchu aristocrats-ruled Ch'ing (Qing) dynasty in Chinese history that have long become the favourite subjects of State- and crowd-pleasing motion pictures and television series in the PRC. China's imperial history in actuality contradicts a myth that has been perpetrated not only by the CCP's propaganda machine but also by a great many foreign academics and politicians that colonialism had been exclusively Western and China has never been a colonial power. The past imperial conquest of today's

vast frontier regions of the country (especially Xinjiang), historical reverse colonialism (Inner Mongolia, and the northeast provinces that were formerly Manchuria), recent invasion (Tibet), and the former tributary vassal states network (Korea, Vietnam, etc.) all tell an opposite story, unless by colonialism we just mean the maritime version but not land-based conquests. Let us not forget that besides ruthless and gruesome suppression of dissent, the glorious “Prosperous Era of K’ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch’ien-lung” (康雍乾盛世) was also a period of empire consolidation with military campaigns, like those of the earlier empire builders whom Mao Zedong compared himself to and aspired to surpass in his own coming imperial exploits, bordering on the genocidal. For instance, to exert full and formal control over Ch’ing empire’s “new dominions” (*Xinjiang* / 新疆), it took Emperor Ch’ien-lung a brutal campaign of ethnic genocide to deliberately exterminate the Dzungars and it has been estimated that close to a million people, about 80 per cent of the Dzungar population, were slaughtered or died from diseases in that military campaign from the year 1755 to 1757, a gruesome episode historically known as the “Dzungar genocide” (準噶爾滅族).

CCP apologists have always been quick to point to war atrocities committed by Japan, or atrocities committed towards colonial subjects during the era of Western colonization,²¹⁰ thus using the “not holier-than-thou” argument to discredit today’s Western liberal democracies’ criticisms against the CCP regime’s persecution of dissent and trampling on human rights, while arguing that the treatment of dissidents is China’s internal affairs and that “China never intervenes in other countries’ domestic affairs in the name of human rights” – that is in fact honest, given that “those who live in glass houses should not throw stones”, as the proverb goes. However, while Western liberal democracies have been making positive efforts not only just to apologise for past colonialist atrocities and make amends in supporting economic

progress, equality and human rights of domestic minorities and democratisation of former colonies, we have never seen the CCP regime doing so even regarding its atrocities towards its own citizens and its past massacres in various forms during its seven-decade rule.

35. The Myth of “China Exceptionalism”

These two crises of 2019-2020 that this paper has so far explored has also served to debunk the myth of “China exceptionalism” (“中國與眾不同” 論), as well as that natural extension of “China exceptionalism” – that this populous country can afford to exclude foreign influences, e.g. by banning citizen's use of foreign information sources on the Internet and web tools, e.g. *Wikipedia*, *Facebook*, *Google*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, *WhatsApp*, by blocking citizens' access to outside ideas with the Great Firewall, by arresting those who circumvent the Great Firewall, and by becoming self-contained with own tools like *Baidu*, *Weibo*, *Wechat/Weixin* that are strictly controlled and censored by the CCP State, leading to the virtual closing of the Chinese mind.

For all intents and purposes, “China exceptionalism” is a very dangerous, misleading, obfuscating argument not supported by empirical evidence both historical and contemporary. However, this warped argument, strongly promoted by CCP mouthpieces like *People's Daily*, *Global Times*, *CCTV*, *CGTN* and eloquent apologists like Professor Zhang Weiwei (張維維) and Eric Li (李世默), has become overwhelmingly influential not only among ethnic Chinese overseas communities who care more about the halo of a Strong China image and less about the political freedom and civil liberties of the common citizens of China or the plight of thousands of prisoners of conscience in China's jails and the million in concentration camps. It is sometimes difficult to understand how, not only people in the streets, but even top

intellectuals and thinkers, will so often easily subscribe to simplistic, reductionist, groundless assumptions, and even develop a hostage mentality, except for the reason that lies in the great admiration for China's present economic achievement and the placing of perennial blame on past Western colonialism for any wrongs that they find today in the former victims of Western colonialism and exploitation. "China exceptionalism", which ideologically has Leninist roots since the time of Mao and Stalin, while empirically baseless and morally questionable and sharing a common ideological DNA with eugenics, racism and classic Fascism, is also influential among highly regarded non-Chinese academics and top thinkers like Martin Jacques ("Now let me shock you: the Chinese state enjoys greater legitimacy than any Western state. How come? In China's case the source of the state's legitimacy lies entirely outside the history or experience of Western societies.") or Kisore Mahbubani ("Communist rule is good for China"; "The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) should instead be called the Chinese Civilization Party"; "Be careful what you wish for ... if China had democracy today, it would generate a stronger Chinese nationalism"; "The CCP has contained a nationalist and assertive China").²¹¹ Such "China exceptionalism" arguments, however, tend to ignore that the many populous countries in the well-functioning liberal democratic world, and the performance of not only Taiwan but also that of many Eastern European countries – and some ex-USSR states especially the Baltic states – are evidence proving the fallacy of considering the CCP's one-party autocratic rule as being the only plausible governance system for China as a populous country, as a Chinese nation, or as a post-command transition economy.

Many in the ethnic Chinese overseas communities who are so proud of themselves due to China's economic achievements under the CCP's rule is trying every day with every means to prove the superiority of the

CCP's one-party dictatorship model, and to discredit and hold in contempt the multi-party liberal democratic political system wherein a ruling party is constantly held accountable for its decisions and actions by effective opposition parties' and private civil rights groups' checks and balances. Is it that these admirers of the CCP's totalitarian model are really hoping that the CCP could successfully promote its one-party dictatorship model that tramples on human rights to the world to replace the multi-party liberal democratic system? Do they really hope that their next generation will live under a one-party dictatorship? Or do they really hope that with re-migration their next generation would live in countries that destroys free speech, suppresses free thinking, and would face arbitrary arrests and persecution by the ruling party because of dissent in these countries that emulate and practice CCP's one-party dictatorship governance model to various extents? While praising every day the superiority of the CCP's one-party dictatorship model, thus gaining a glorious sense of ethnonationalism, and engaging themselves in daily Western liberal democracies-bashing, these people should also think about the impact of their action on the future of their next generation, and whether this is being fair to the latter.

36. The Myth of Performance-based Legitimacy

The economic success of China under the CCP rule after the 1989 massacre has become a very powerful factor in convincing many around the world of the superiority of CCP's one-party coercive authoritarian governance model, the justification of the 1989 massacre ("killing 2 hundred thousand to ensure 2 decades of stability for China" attributed to Deng Xiaoping), the argument of "China exceptionalism" that China is different from others in the world that multiparty democracy would be wrong for China. These have really served to convince not

only the majority of ethnic Chinese overseas but also many prominent non-Chinese academics like those just mentioned above. China's providing academic visit opportunities and research grant money to academics outside are important tools too in buying the latter's sympathy towards the CCP dictatorship. China money buying over directly or indirectly almost all Chinese-language media outlets around the world is also extremely effective in this. In this way, the CCP dictatorship has been highly successful in maintaining its political power monopoly through this myth of economic performance-based legitimacy.

The "performance-based legitimacy" argument is not new, and cannot be used to justify totalitarianism and political repression and persecution of free speech, free press and political dissidence. Even Hitler and his Nazi movement had come to power through huge popular support in democratic elections and ruled with stellar economic performance. In the 19th August 1934 plebiscite over 38,000,000 Germans (just a fraction under 90 per cent of those voting) gave Hitler their approval, and only 4,250,000 voted against him, with 870,000 spoilt ballot papers. (Badsey, 1991: 42)

"Certainly, the Nazis never won an outright majority in an election before 1934, but in later plebiscites and elections they always secured at least 90 percent of the vote", observes historian Stephen Badsey, "Hitler was enormously popular in Germany until at least the middle of the Second World War, and to the very end German opposition to his rule was minimal." (*ibid.*: 42) And behind that support was what in that bygone era qualified as an economic miracle brought about by the Nazis – a German model, to put in similar terms as today's so-called "China model" complete with grandiose buildings and infrastructural projects like bridges and high-speed rails that may not make economic sense or sometimes not even any other senses, glorious technological feat like the China craft that went to the dark side of the moon:

This popularity was largely due to Germany getting what it wanted and needed most, an end to the unemployment and poverty of the Weimar years. Hitler liked grandiose displays, impressive engineering, and complex technology virtually for their own sake. He had the good luck that his personal tastes, even his dreams, contained the cure for Germany's economic ills. He was also still enough of a radical to give the new generation of unorthodox economists a chance. Restrictions on foreign imports and a massive increase in public spending, based on Nazi notions of German cultural supremacy, created jobs by the million. By 1936 unemployment had dropped to nothing and there was even a labor shortage, while the standard of living had risen dramatically. Many of the new posts were in government, to run the Nazi bureaucracy. Other jobs came from the construction of the *Autobahn* or highways, and from public building programs, a favorite of Hitler the draftsman. A particular Nazi project was the small, cheap motor car affordable by everyone, the 'people's car' or *Volkswagen*.

(*ibid.*: 43-44)

As political satirist and journalist Patrick Jake O'Rourke once said: "Commies love concrete" (O'Rourke, 2012: 71), grandiose architectural feats are always the beloved hallmarks of empire-builders whether Roman or Communist, be they Western autocrats or Oriental despots, ancient or modern. All that glitters is not gold. Among the so-called infrastructure miracles – roads, bridges, high-speed rail, fantastic design of hotels and other buildings – some do have practical use, while others are for pointless vaunts (a most recent example being the world's first theatre with moving, spinning audience seats, an unnecessarily glamorous tech that turned out to be a death trap)²¹². These are never

projects other affluent countries cannot do, but just a matter of whether they are practical, cost-effective and the right things to spend money and resources on. But one thing is for sure: no other countries can compete with the PRC's unbelievable zeal in propagandising such achievements to promote national feel-good factor to strengthen the image of the ruling CCP regime, including circulating myriad of video clips promoting such "amazing" feats all over social media targeting a large captive audience, the zealous fans among the overseas Chinese, and beyond, who often misconstrue vanity as self-worth, and showmanship as glory.

There are still a great many poor regions in China, including many poor counties located in mountainous areas. The country's mega-cities can be as rich as those in Europe and the North America, while the villages could be as poor as those in economically backward countries²¹³, and the country's interpersonal and inter-regional income disparities are acute and widening, with the degree of income and wealth inequality now exceeding most European countries' and at around the U.S.'s level, and with 70 percent of wealth now concentrating in the hands of the rich within the top 10 per cent of society, according to renowned French economist Thomas Piketty.²¹⁴ Moreover, there is also increasingly acute problem of urban poverty. In an article published on 28th May 2018,²¹⁵ Xiang Songzhen (向松祚), council member and deputy director of the International Monetary Research Institute of the Renmin University of China and an advisory board member of the independent think tank Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum (OMFIF), warned China's academic, political, and media circles not to keep speculating China would challenge the United States, how the renminbi would challenge the dollar's hegemony, and how China is set to replace the United States as the world's leader, how the United States has declined, how the 21st century is China's century, and how

China is standing high now at the centre of the world stage. The fact is, Xiang pointed out, China still lags far behind the United States in many aspects, especially that many of China major livelihood issues have reached the brink of danger. He urged those who are indulging in such wishful thinking to just leave the few megacities of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou and take a look at the vast countryside, or leave the centre of Beijing and take a look outside the Sixth Ring, and see how those migrant workers are working ten hours a day, six days a week, and to take a look at those children who are unable to go to school, to witness the extent of poverty of many rural families, and to look closely at China's education and medical conditions. China's fundamental problem is not even Sino-U.S. relations. The country's fundamental goal is not to challenge and to replace the United States as leader of the world, but is to make sure that more than one billion Chinese could have access to education, to medical care and to aged care.

Xiang's warning resonates with the comments made by Liu Yadong (劉亞東), editor-in-chief of the *Keji Ribao* (科技日報, *Science and Technology Daily*), which comes under the supervision of China's Ministry of Science and Technology, at a science and technology seminar in Beijing a month later. "The large gap in science and technology between China and developed countries in the West, including the U.S., should be common knowledge, and not a problem." Liu said, "But it became problematic when the people who hype [China's achievements] ... fooled the leadership, the public and even themselves."²¹⁶

Against this background, other than taking great pride in vain, grandiose deeds to strengthen personal and the Party's political grip on the nation, how does one explain why the regime's leadership under CCP secretary-general and national chairman Xi Jinping has been throwing the nation's precious reserves to scatter around in what lately

in the form of Xi's signature Belt and Road project, building infrastructure projects around the world that are more often than not embroiled in local corruption and turning out to be white elephants? If this is a country with opposition parties and civil society watchdogs, it would be impossible for a ruling party and its leaders to do so as they please. In fact, the welfare of the people in rural areas and overcoming urban poverty should be the most important instead.

The priority of Xi's leadership is to strengthen the support of domestic nationalists with the CCP's global image. This is somewhat different from the Jiang Zemin (江澤民) and Hu-Wen (胡錦濤 - 溫家寶) periods. In order to consolidate its permanent one-party governance, the CCP is advocating the brilliant glory of achievements in material image (also in line with its Marxist-Leninist foundation of historical materialism), thus contributing to today's dog-eat-dog social value in this populous nation where ultra-left Maoism, with its "Cultural Revolution", has destroyed the morality of a whole generation. Since Deng Xiaoping's economic reform began in 1979, the CCP's Marxist-Leninist foundation has evolved into continuing Leninist governance while denigrating Marxism (Chen Yun (陳雲) had opposed it, Bo Xilai (薄熙來) had tried the opposite in Chongqing with his *Chongqing model* (重慶模式), but they have all failed in their partial efforts against the change), and after the June Fourth massacre in 1989 this was transformed into a mode of governance moving from Leninism, inclining towards Stalinism. During the Hu-Wen period, there was a slight backtracking, but after the Xi Jinping faction defeated the Bo Xilai faction and came to power, the Maoist mode of governance was restored, forming a new Leninist-Maoist model, and this has inherited Mao's extreme politics-in-command (政治掛帥) stratagem, while the Marxist economic foundation and ideology were further brushed aside.

37. Economic Miracle *Due to or Despite* Totalitarianism?

The so-called economic miracle has always been considered attributable to the stability brought about by the one-party rule of the Communist Party dictatorship, and also confirming the rightfulness of the bloody suppression of the 1989 Beijing Tiananmen student movement and demonstrations, and the efficiency of the subsequent authoritarian stability maintenance policy has been widely taken for granted not only among the ethnic Chinese overseas communities, but also around academic circles in the world. But is that really true? Contrary to what those who are bent on heaping servile flattery upon the CCP regime would prefer to believe, there are many factors contributing to China's economic miracle today, including Deng's *coup de grâce* to remove the Maoist ban of private enterprises, the traditional Chinese merchant culture (sometimes dubbed money-chasing instinct), and most importantly too, PRC's low-human-rights advantage (with no real labour unions or societal pressure groups permitted, thus facilitating the working of a neo-Franquist corporatist production structure). Regarding IT advancement, the "smart city" technology's testing ground of Xinjiang has little to no limits placed on it, giving companies like Huawei free rein to develop extremely invasive surveillance technology with no repercussions, resulting in China's IT companies having comparative advantages over European or American competitor companies who have to operate and test their technology in heavily constrained environments with vigilant governments and privacy watchdogs. As German analyst Adrian Zenz highlights, "companies like Huawei are able to develop such systems in regions like Xinjiang in tandem with the security services, and therefore with very few privacy restrictions", enabling them to gain "a problematic advantage over comparable Western companies".²¹⁷

In actuality, the economic success of the PRC should be attributed to the effort of the Chinese citizens after the dismantling of the Maoist drab collective structure, to the Chinese business acumen and traditional resilience for economic survival that has long been distinctive among the global Chinese diaspora. Hence China-watchers should be aware of over-adulation for the socialist-to-capitalist turncoat CCP regime as the architect of success. For many it is a personal choice, a personal political stance though, to insist on attributing China's economic success all to the CCP dictatorship and hence justifying its brutality but it is definitely way wrong to let the CCP dictatorship brazenly take major credit for China's present economic success over and above the Chinese people's entrepreneurial spirit (like that of the ethnic Chinese overseas). On the other hand, the traditional survival tactic of the overseas Chinese business community of attaching itself to any power-that-be for economic protection and opportunism giving rise to the notorious phenomenon of crony capitalism, to the extent of oblivion of labour exploitation and government corruption and repression of the local populace (Chua, 2003/2004: 147-158), which could be attributed to the harsh host country environment, lack of land ownership and discrimination against latecomer immigrant communities, is equally evident in the PRC where political repression has created a similar environment of collusion-or-else scenario.

Also, history has shown us that most young South Koreans and Taiwanese took that risk to fight against brutal one-party / military dictatorship in the 1980s (with between one to two thousand protesters killed in Gwangju (光州) alone in a pro-democracy uprising there that involved close to a quarter of a million people)²¹⁸ even though both South Korea and Taiwan (the former under the dictatorships from Park Chung-hee (朴正熙) to Chun Doo-hwan (全斗煥) and the

latter under the Kuomintang's martial law *de facto* dictatorship²¹⁹) had achieved economic miracle and became two of the four East Asian Tigers (亞洲四小龍). The situation in Hong Kong of 2019 indeed reminds us very much of the 1980 uprising by Gwangju's Chonnam (全南) National University students that ended in a massacre by government troops of at least more than 600 but possibly up to 1000-2000 Chonnam University students and other civilians, before it took another seven years with U.S. pressure for South Korea to turn from a repressive dictatorship into a human rights-respecting liberal democracy. In the 1987 student demonstrations a student activist leader was hit on head by a tear gas canister and died. That triggered further huge demonstration that became the catalyst that helped lead to South Korea's definitive final democratisation. That Yonsei (延世) University student Lee Han-yeol (李韓烈)'s July 1987 funeral participated by more than one and a half million people became one of the most important days in South Korea's modern history as it turned into a catalyst to bring down a dictatorship. While the situation in Hong Kong of 2019 – the struggle, deaths, and anguish – bears much similarity to that period of South Korean history, the comparison cannot be stretched too far between the sovereign country of South Korea, or Taiwan, and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the PRC's jurisdiction since 1997. The Chun Doo-hwan administration of the Republic of Korea (like the Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) administration of Taiwan, Republic of China) was under U.S. and Western pressure to democratise especially when situations in the streets were turning ugly. With China's present strength, the CCP regime and the Xi administration definitely need not have similar concerns regarding any external pressure for domestic political reform.

For China's citizens, it is of course a personal choice (who have personal peril to consider if a dissident course is chosen) whether to dissent or to conform. It is also a personal choice for many CCP apologists among ethnic Chinese overseas to support the argument that all Chinese should happily accept the CCP dictatorship's brutal crushing of political dissent just because China's economy is going well and China is growing stronger in its global clout and as a result they, the ethnic Chinese overseas, are perceiving themselves as a people prouder and safer. But are they sure that their perceived greater pride and safety are not simply a misconceived illusion fed by the CCP's United Front propaganda? It was said that sometimes one has got to go through hell to get to heaven.²²⁰ Ironically, for the many among the ethnic Chinese overseas who are misguided to bathe in the glory of a misconceived notion of a CCP heaven, that illusory heaven could eventually turn out to be just a transfer station on the road to hell, albeit probably paved with good intentions.

38. Perpetual Nightmare of Bureaucratic Totalitarianism and the Stockholm Syndrome

There is an interesting description of the Tiananmen Square, the centre of the 1989 demonstrations and the ultimate target of the brutal crackdown after the massacres elsewhere in Beijing of valiant citizens who went to the streets to block the advancing tanks and armoured vehicles of the so-called "People's Liberation" Army (PLA), in *Chinese whispers* (2013) by Ben Chu, the economics editor of *The Independent*:

To stand at the north end of Tiananmen Square in Beijing is to straddle the historical fault line that separates two Chinas. To the north is the opulent and vermilion-walled Forbidden City, the

enormous palace complex constructed by the Ming emperors in the fifteenth century. To the south lies the almost equally vast concrete expanse of Tiananmen Square, one of the largest public spaces in the world, commissioned by Mao Zedong. The architecture comes from two profoundly different eras, one imperial, the other Communist, and yet the sensation for the individual as he gazes north, and then south, is rather similar. The scale of both the square and the palace is intimidating. Both, in their own ways, project a cold and ruthless power. Both plant a feeling of insignificance into the soul of the individual. On this spot the Wittfogel proposition, that Chinese political history is one long and seamless story of autocracy, feels plausible.

(Chu, 2013: 82-83)

Chu is referring to the historian Karl Wittfogel who identified a connection between ancient “hydraulic empires” and modern China’s (and Russia’s) bureaucratic totalitarianism, and saw Mao’s CCP, despite all its modern trappings, as merely the latest imperial dynasty to rule China through the same technique he termed “oriental despotism”²²¹ as practiced by the former emperors. Chu notes that Wittfogel, himself a refugee from Nazi Germany, was following a long dismal tradition which can be traced back to the Enlightenment political philosopher Montesquieu and the Victorians and had hence projected a perpetual nightmare (Chu, 2013: 231).

And today still the portrait of Mao Zedong – the “Great Helmsman” of CCP that during its rule for almost a century directly caused the death of at least 40 million people through man-made starvation, through political purges, through persecution of dissent, thus claiming the largest number of victims among 20th-Century totalitarian regimes, as compared to Hitler’s 11 million, and Stalin’s 6 to 9 million – hung high

on the Tiananmen Gate. During the height of the Tiananmen protests, on May 23, 1989, three young protesters posted banners on the wall of the Tiananmen gate's passway, with one of them read, “五千年专制到此可以告一段落!” [time to end the five thousand years of autocracy!] and shortly after, threw eggs filled with pigment onto Mao's portrait. These brave souls were speaking the minds not only of their own but those of the great majority of China's citizens from students to workers to triad mobs, and of the ethnic Chinese overseas too, at that time, which was evidenced by outpouring of support for the protests and outrage at the subsequent June Fourth massacre, reflecting a human dignity that sadly we no longer see today. To protect the protest movement from the mortal danger of being branded as anti-CCP, the other protesters caught the three, made them apologise at a press conference, and handed them to the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau. That cautious action looked wise at that moment, but alas, facing a ruthless totalitarian regime, it did not succeed in protecting the thousands of protester, as well the brave Beijing residents who tried to protect the students, from their dire fate came the night of 3rd-4th June.

The fact is that so many Germans decades ago also so heartily supported the Nazis and Third Reich of Adolf Hitler – a ruthless but “feel-good dictator” who, while being dangerous to challenge, did restore to them the feeling of self-importance and bring back not only lost glory and national pride but also long-awaited economic improvement and security²²², and instill a higher feeling of external efficacy, like what Italians said about the effect of Benito Mussolini's Fascist reign on improving Italian trains' punctuality or what Mussolini did convince many of them about: “Mussolini may have done many brutal and tyrannical things; he may have destroyed human freedom in Italy; he may have murdered and tortured citizens whose only crime was to oppose Mussolini; but ‘one had to admit’ one thing about the

Dictator: he 'made the trains run on time.'"²²³

And like Beijing of 2008, Berlin hosted the 1936 Summer Olympics (*Olympische Sommerspiele 1936*). Outdoing the Los Angeles Olympics of 1932, a new 100,000-seat track and field stadium and six gymnasiums plus other smaller arenas were built for the Berlin Games which also became the first Olympics ever to be televised, with radio broadcasts reaching 41 countries. A grand world event that, unfortunately, like the 2008 Beijing Olympics as against the whimsical hope of many over-idealistic China-watchers, failed to usher in a new era of democratic reform in the host country (which South Korea did at the time leading to the Seoul Olympics of 1988) but instead served as a tool used by the host regime to consolidate its repressive rule, to exploit nationalistic fervour, to raise its undeserved world stature and to further its totalitarian grip over the country. History tends to repeat, and it does repeat.

Apologists for the CCP dictatorship usually go along lines like progress is paramount, and whether a governance model is democratic or authoritarian is irrelevant. Suppression of dissent is justified in the name of progress; just too bad. This position is not difficult to understand. It refers to performance-based legitimacy – the end justifies the means. But isn't Western colonialism and imperialism as bad? They ask. Democracy is a joke. They say. Hasn't China supported Hong Kong's economy? Cinderella treatment, many comment. Why aren't Hongkies happy? They scratch their heads. Human rights are a Western ruse employed to intervene. They scoff. If not for CCP's repressive rule, there will be chaos. Should we support prospects of chaos? They ask.

It is true that a great many in electoral democracies continue to vote for increasingly repressive regimes (though not as brutal as the CCP) based on similar fear for possible chaos. A manifestation of Stockholm syndrome?

39. Total Surveillance under Totalism: The Making of a Perfect Police State

Of course it could be argued that the conglomerates, the IT tech giants, like Huawei, SenseTime, Megvii and Alibaba (Yeoh, 2018: 692-703) as well as others that entered the sanction list of U.S.'s Trump administration, have no choice but to obey the Party-State's demand for collusion in political repression and citizen surveillance, from the smart cities in the ultra-modern first-world China to the million-inmate "re-education" concentration camps in Xinjiang – an enforced relationship between business and State more recently spelt out in a new regulation stipulating businesses' unquestioned obedience to State's demand for collusion²²⁴, as it has been said "live is evil spelt backward". However, such rationalization does not absolve businesses of the sins of partaking in political repression whether in IT-tracking and surveillance of dissidents from the eastern provinces to the frontier regions of Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia, and stemming buds of potential activities against the totalitarian State or in building and maintaining the Great Internet Firewall or diligently deleting messages critical of CCP in cyberspace and shutting down offending accounts from *Weibo* to *Weixin/Wechat* and tracing their IP addresses for State persecution, or in using forced labour in Xinjiang factories or cotton fields.

U.S. and India's banning of China apps,²²⁵ including U.S.'s initiating action to propose banning *WeChat* etc., represents an important move, though many in U.S. oppose such actions including Fareed Zakaria, citing importance of free flow of information. What they seem to ignore is the heavy censorship the CCP regime imposes on such home-grown media outlets and instruments, thus restricting their function, whether overtly or covertly, to being the CCP regime's propaganda tools; and how Chinese citizens' access to outside media or

Internet apps like *Google, Facebook, Wikipedia, Instagram*, etc. are outlawed by the CCP regime.²²⁶

Honestly can one really trust Huawei to dominate the 5G technology,²²⁷ especially after the CCP regime introduced the National Intelligence Law in 2017 obligating all private companies to provide all information they have collected to the government and obey and carry out whatever tasks the government asks them to do in the name of patriotism (that would of course be for surveillance on dissidents and espionage). In return, the new law says that the government is obligated to protect these companies. China companies like Huawei are promoting 5G as part of their smart & safe city project. Somehow one should feel scary if this technology is in the hands of the CCP regime (which in its Leninist corporatist governance structure effectively controls these companies, despite the latter's declaring otherwise to the outside world).²²⁸ One tracked and arrested with the use of 5G technology could be a criminal (as a popular China 5G promotional video shows), but in the case of China the person could also just be a political dissident.

China had planned to implement such surveillance nationwide beginning 2020, after experimenting in several pilot cities as well as Xinjiang over a few years. The surveillance system will include surveillance cameras,²²⁹ hi-tech spectacles worn by security officers, as well as detailed Internet surveillance. China's citizens would be classified into four categories, A, B, C and D, based on personal and behavioural information collected. Class A people could get fast track to loan, credit, children's education. Class D people would be blocked from even buying train or plane tickets. Even spouse of girl/boyfriend criticizing the CCP on the web could land a person in class D. It is not sure yet how far the government could carry out this "social credit" plan,²³⁰ but the prospect is truly scary. Alibaba and its Ant Group affiliate are prominent players in this plan in constructing a governance

model the world has never witnessed before that some refer to as “digital Leninism” (Funabashi, 2018) or the world’s first “digital dictatorship”²³¹, and besides Alibaba, and just like Alibaba willingly or forced, tech companies like Huawei, Hikvision and Megvii are all involved in this grand Orwellian-Huxleyan surveillance project, within which this “social credit” plan is a main component, unseen before in human history (Yeoh, 2018: 691-709)²³².

40. State-Industry Collusion in Repression

In his seven-year study of the Krupp family business empire, published in the book *The arms of Krupp: 1587-1968*, William Manchester noted that in the post-Nazi era, “virtually all Germans and a majority abroad believe that German industrialists had no choice, that the Nazis forced them to use slaves of all ages and sexes, that the industrialists themselves would have been exterminated had they behaved otherwise.” “This is untrue”, says Manchester, as the “forgotten mountains of Nuremberg documents [...] reveal that the Reich’s manufacturers not only had a choice; most of them took advantage of it” (Manchester, 1968/1970: 3-4). Even if these Chinese corporate giants were initially unwilling to, or just apathetic towards, collusion in State repression, there is no evidence that if given a choice these conglomerates would have actively resisted the pull of nationalistic “stability” rhetoric and lucrative government contracts. This is what Peter Hayes observes in his study of IG Farben, the largest corporation in Nazi Germany. As Hayes shows in his book *Industry and ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi era*, although the most infamous aspects of Nazi policy including the exploitation of slave and conscript labour, and the persecution and eventual massacre of the Jews, actually occurred despite IG Farben’s advocacy of alternative courses of action, IG Farben did grow rich under

the Nazi regime and was directly involved in some of its greatest crimes against humanity. As Hayes observes:

Thus, after 1933 as well as before, Nazi economic doctrine served as both a blueprint and a billboard, a blend of half-revealed ideological goals and political blandishments. By presupposing conquest, the führer knew that he presupposed the combined best efforts of the Reich's deeply divided social and economic classes. Therefore, while propaganda, *Gleichschaltung*, terror, and Hitler's charisma kept the populace in line and the Nazi movement together, the regime also contrived to spread employment and nearly restore the living standards of most citizens to pre-Depression levels. After a slow start in 1933, Germany accomplished within the next three years the most rapid and sustained economic recovery in the industrialized world.

(Hayes, 1987: 74)

Giving due consideration to inter-era standards, similar world visions, similar propaganda, similar State-promoted nationalistic fervour and similar economic miracles cut across the Nazi movement and the CCP dictatorship's "socialism with Chinese characteristics", and across the Third Reich's rise like the phoenix from the ashes and the continued rise of CCP's PRC now newly embroidered with Xi Jinping's "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation".

As regards what the people have been bargaining for, Hayes tell us:

As compensation for forgone monetary gains and lost political freedom, workers, peasants, and the long discontented lower middle classes got a reborn sense of national might, large doses of official flattery, and assorted and relatively inexpensive social innovations designed to betoken the establishment of a classless society.

The Third Reich enticed businessmen, on the whole, with less praise and more wealth than any other social group, but deceived them similarly nonetheless.

(*ibid.*)

A Faustian bargain, now and then.

In his 1997 book *The power of identity*, Manuel Castells looks at the link between the power of the State and the pervasiveness of new information technologies in a section titled “The state, violence, and surveillance: from Big Brother to Little Sisters” (pp. 299-303) in “Chapter 5: A powerless state?”, and the question of how the State could be “powerless when mastering a formidable technological capacity, and controlling an unprecedented stock of information” as claimed by various researchers. While admitting that “powerful information technologies might indeed be put to the service of surveillance, control, and repression by state apparatuses (police, tax collection, censorship, suppression of political dissidence, and the like)”, Castells positively remarks that so might they be used for citizens to enhance their control over the state – in the same way China’s dissident artist Ai Weiwei (艾未未) once remarked, “The Internet is the best gift to China – this kind of technology will end this kind of dictatorship”, before IT has actually turned into an ugliest tool in the hands of the CCP State²³³ – and also that new technologies may enable citizens to video-record events²³⁴ and thus provide visual evidence of abuses (as in the cases of citizen camera-witnessing which has been evidenced in recording possible police brutalities in the Hong Kong protests²³⁵ and Mainland China’s much persecuted citizen-reporters). And so Castells declares with emphasis:

Rather than an oppressive “Big Brother,” it is a myriad of well-wishing “little sisters,” relating to each one of us on a personal basis because they know who we are, who have invaded all realms of life.

(Castells, 1997: 301)

But as Castells emphasises too, he is talking about a liberal, capitalist state when he empirically dismisses the Big Brother imagery, while admitting that “indeed, George Orwell could well have been right, *vis-à-vis* the object of his prophecy, Stalinism, not the liberal, capitalist state, if political history and technology had followed a different trajectory in the past half-century, something that was certainly within the realm of possibility.” (*ibid.*: 299) However, what has apparently been missed from Castells’s analysis are the cases of several East Asian states, in particular the case of China, for the book’s focus is on capitalist liberal democracies. Unlike the American, West European and other “Western” capitalist liberal democracies, and unlike the East European countries and Mongolia that had overthrown the Communist Party dictatorship at the first instance when made possible by Mikhail Gorbachev’s new politics and embraced whole-heartedly liberal democracy and market capitalism, as well as most former constituent republics of the now defunct Soviet Union which did the same once they wrested independence from the former USSR (including even the Russian Federation that had backpedalled so much in its democratic reform into a Putin-centred autocracy but where hope for moving back on the path of democratic reform can hardly be said to have been extinguished as it still retains its parliamentary electoral democracy structure installed at the fall of the Communist Party dictatorship in 1990), the so-called “People’s Republic” of China remains the odd man out untouched by the Fukuyaman “end of history” *fin de siècle*

revolution, after violently suppressed the 1989 popular protests with a massacre that claimed thousands or tens of thousands of innocent lives.

But as an almost lone survivor out of an earlier whole pack of Leninist totalitarian regimes, the CCP regime has its anxiety, and hence it became more and more ruthless in guarding against “colour revolutions” penetrating from outside and a Gorbachev rising from inside. Like Nobel Literature Prize laureate Elias Canetti says in the epilogue in *Crowds and power*, “Whether there is any way of dealing with the survivor, who has grown to such monstrous stature, is the most important question today [...] Today the survivor is himself afraid. He has always been afraid, but with his vast new potentialities his fear has grown too, until it is almost unendurable” (Canetti, 1960/1984: 469), fear of being dethroned from absolute power like in the former USSR and its East European satellite states, or even like in Mongolia, in its institutional conflict with the dissident movement supported by foreign forces in the shifting strategic actions and change mechanisms between State domination and NVA (nonviolent action) assertion (Yeoh, 2012: 425-461)²³⁶. In this process, for this great survivor, as Canetti describes, his own “greatness and his invulnerability have become incompatible. He has over-reached himself. Rulers tremble today, not, as formerly, because they are rulers, but as the equals of everybody else. The ancient mainspring of power, the safe-guarding of the ruler at the cost of all other lives, has been broken.” Whether that mainspring be the divine right of the monarch or the messianic promise of the Marxist dogma (Russell, 1946/1961: 361)²³⁷, it is now broken, and while power “is greater than it has ever been, [it has become] also more precarious.” And hence, the “most unquestioned and therefore the most dangerous thing he does is to give commands” and the command, “even in the domesticated form found in any community, is no less than a suspended death sentence; and we know that strict and effective systems of

commands are in force everywhere” (Canetti, 1960/1984: 469) in this “spectacular vision of a happy hell” (Ryan, 1988/1990: 136)²³⁸.

If allowed to go down that road of unchecked power of repression and nationalistic, militaristic external sabre-rattling to maintain domestic support – for a regime that maintains its political power monopoly through maintaining mass hatred for historical nemeses – history has shown us the grim prospect for all, for whether or not this great survivor “is actually in danger from enemies [from without or within], he always feels himself menaced” and the “ultimate means of deliverance, which he never wholly renounces (though he may hesitate to use it), is the sudden command for mass death” (Canetti, 1960/1984: 469) – whether that be war across the Taiwan Strait or in the East and South China Seas or across the Himalayas or across the oceans against allies of its perceived enemies, whether by devious intermestic²³⁹ design or by way of a “Thucydides trap” (Allison, 2015, 2017). In what can be taken as a grim warning to a world that indulges itself in a *Danse Macabre* for lucrative gains to appease the burgeoning totalitarian behemoth, the almost sole great survivor from among its earlier *league of totalitarian gentlemen*, Canetti’s words sound truly harrowing: “The forest of his fears has grown so dense that he cannot breathe and he longs for it to be thinned. If he waits too long his vision becomes blurred and he may do something which will seriously weaken his position. The anxiety of command increases in him until it results in catastrophe. But before catastrophe overtakes *him* it will have engulfed innumerable others.” (Canetti, 1960/1984: 470)

41. Big Brother and Little Sisters: From Collusion to Self-censorship

I was not alone [...] There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear [...]

They whispered together, and then they all three laughed – such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand [...] but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood [...] They simply seemed to fade into the rays of the moonlight and pass out through the window, for I could see outside the dim, shadowy forms for a moment before they entirely faded away.

(Stoker, 1897/2000: 32-35)

In today's context, it is simply not applicable to the PRC when Castells talks about "statism disintegrated in contact with new information technologies, instead of being capable of mastering them [...] and new information technologies unleashed the power of networking and decentralization, actually undermining the centralizing logic of one-way instructions and vertical, bureaucratic surveillance" (Castells, 1997: 299-300). For the largest dictatorship on Earth today, the opposite is true. If liberal democratic capitalist societies today indeed, as Castells describes, "are not orderly prisons, but disorderly jungles" (*ibid.*: 300), the PRC society today represents an ominous dark forest, crisscross wired from every corner where predators are ready to pounce upon anyone stepping out of the State-designated path threatening to destabilise the political monopoly equilibrium of the CCP regime. In this self-designated "market socialism", the IT tech firms, the "little sisters" Castells refers to, like the Brides of Dracula in Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*, do not have a choice but, when called upon by the State, to support the latter's surveillance of citizens and persecution of dissidents – an obligation, unthinkable in liberal democracies, under the PRC's Leninist corporatist governance model that dictates the State-private sector

relationship, which in recent years formalised the ratification of the country's "National Intelligence Law" (2017) that codifies the obligation of PRC-based entities to assist in intelligence gathering: *"All organizations and citizens shall, in accordance with the law, support, cooperate with, and collaborate in national intelligence work, and guard the secrecy of national intelligence work they are aware of. The state will protect individuals and organizations that support, cooperate with, and collaborate in national intelligence work."*²⁴⁰

After all, whether within the PRC, in Hong Kong,²⁴¹ or extending market power overseas including Hollywood, private business interests are particularly vulnerable in resisting pecuniary enticement from a totalitarian power,²⁴² as Hayes observes in his study of IG Farben: "One common answer stresses tendencies inherent in the capitalist system, and it is partially correct. In a sense, Nazi economic policy rested on the recognition that so long as a state displays its determination but permits businessmen to make money, they will let themselves be manipulated as to how. The Nazis knew that commercial interests are not immutable objects, but definitions capable of restatement according to context." As Hitler once remarked, "Experts can always think differently than they did at first", Hayes notes that in order to induce them to do so, the Führer "monopolized the instruments of power in the state, subordinated the protections of law to the demands of ideology, built an arbitrary and confusing political edifice in which influence mattered far more than office, and extended his sway to most of Europe." (Hayes, 1987: 379-380) Having ascended the throne of the world's engine of growth, the PRC's sway is today reaching further across the globe, which would be much envied by Hitler if he is still living today, that is serving excellently in maintaining the totalitarian hold of the CCP dictatorship over its country without even having to start a hot war.

Take the example of the film industry. The controversy over the Disney film *Mulan* is just the latest among a whole long series of accusations against the Hollywood film industry's self-censorship and kowtowing to the CCP dictatorship for the sake of accessing China's market or due to China studios' investment in Hollywood films (though in the case of *Mulan* it was because of the disparaging comments on Hong Kong's pro-democracy anti-extradition bill protests from the lead actress, who is now an American citizen but originally from China, and more pertinently the end credits that thank Xinjiang's public security, the provincial arm of the CCP-State's version of the Nazi secret police *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo), at a time when the revelation of the territory's million-inmate concentration camps was reminiscent of Nazi's torture and death camps).

David Denby in his 2013 *The New Yorker* article "Hitler in Hollywood: Did the studios collaborate?" relates how Hollywood studios of the 1930s repeatedly cancelled "explicitly anti-Nazi films planned for production, and deleted from several other movies anything that could be construed as critical of the Nazis". Referring to two newly published books that year, *The collaboration: Hollywood's pact with Hitler* by Ben Urwand, a junior fellow of the Society of Fellows at Harvard, and *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933-1939* by Thomas Doherty, a professor of American studies at Brandeis, Denby points out that Doherty attributes the studios' craven behavior more to both greed and fear in studio practice and disagrees with Urwand's use of the word "collaboration". Urwand, on the other hand, in his book speaks of Hitler's victory "on the other side of the globe", meaning Hollywood, while claiming to see "the great mark that Hitler left on American culture" (Denby, 2013). An obvious reason for such self-censorship, "which both Doherty and Urwand give, is that the studios wanted to hold

on to the German market [...] No doubt the studio bosses accommodated the Nazis because they hoped for a more amenable regime in the future; they were businessmen, and acted as businessmen.” Besides the market, Denby also brings up the issue regarding the less known Production Code that the Hollywood studios imposed on themselves since the 1920s that contributed to pressure on the studios not to mention Nazism right up to the outbreak of war:

The pattern was clear: no matter how vicious Nazi conduct was, any representation of it could be deemed a violation of the code's demand that foreign countries be treated “fairly.” In practice, the more cruel and irrational the Nazis got, the safer they were from any Hollywood dramatization of their actions. [The then Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America censor-in-chief Joseph I.] Breen warned the studios of the danger to their German earnings, but his real intent was probably to remind the men running Hollywood that they should never feel safe.

(ibid.)

This Nazi-era parallel with the self-censorship trend of today's film studios, game producers and musical and entertainment companies and artistes around the world from the U.S. to Korea or even Taiwan to please the China market is all too obvious. Red Candle's recent pulling its *Devotion* game from Steam in all territories and CD Projekt's reversing the decision to release it on GOG.com²⁴³ represent not the first case of such self-censorship in recent years under PRC's market power pressure. That is the same pressure under which Hollywood and other film-makers have also usually chosen to self-censor. Like the infamous flag incident involving the South Korean girl group Twice's Taiwanese member Chou Tzu-yu (周子瑜) five years ago (Yeoh, 2016a: 53-60)²⁴⁴,

this kind of kowtowing to the market power of a totalitarian regime deserves indeed for induction into the entertainment industry's Hall of Shame. Such self-censorship shows clearly the full force of the global threat from PRC's market power today,²⁴⁵ and the *saturnic* effects of such global creeping authoritarian influence emanating from the PRC, like a devastating politico-cultural version of nCoV disease spread from a China outbreak, pressingly need to be stopped.²⁴⁶

42. Coda: Between Scylla and Charybdis

At the time when Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill protest movement was entering the transition stage from 2019 to 2020, an earth-shattering event erupted in Mainland China that was soon going to have a far-reaching impact not only on Mainland China itself, but also on Hong Kong and the rest of the world: the outbreak of a novel coronavirus pneumonia at a macabre plague level in the city of Wuhan in China's Hubei province. From that critical moment, we saw that after the horrific virus was exported from Wuhan, China, through millions of people who continued to travel abroad, an unprecedented massacre by disease unfolded throughout the globe.

We have also seen how this massacre has evolved into a killing battlefield where the world's superpowers wrestled. Just like the 1989 Beijing massacre, but only that the scope of this time's killings derived from the totalitarian governance of the Chinese Communist Party has expanded to the whole world. Just like the death of Liu Xiaobo who "contracted and being late diagnosed" of a disease while in jail, but only this time it is the death of Liu Xiaobo multiplied by two million and increasing. The connection between the large-scale violent clashes between the Hong Kong people and the government police suppression forces triggered by the anti-extradition bill protests and the global mass

killing by the nCoV pneumonia spreading from China's Wuhan across the world has been rarely mentioned; however, the two are actually inextricably linked to the CCP's totalitarian rule, a connection that has been explored in this paper.

“We are such stuff / As dreams are made on”, says Prospero in William Shakespeare's *The tempest*. For the central CCP State, Hong Kong does not represent a people with honour and dignity whose demand for self-determination deserves consideration. It never did. It was, is and will always be a piece of soulless rock as money is made on. After introducing by force the “Hong Kong national security law” followed by the unprecedented sacking of pro-democracy university academic, large-scale arrest of pan-democrats and dissident activists, and police raiding the dissident *Apple Daily* office, the U.S. slapped sanction on Hong Kong and China officials involved in the implementation of the repression and demanded that within 45 days goods exported from Hong Kong to the U.S. had to be henceforth re-labelled as “Made in China”, and no longer “Made in Hong Kong”, since the repression under the new draconian law had practically killed Hong Kong's freedom and autonomy that had so far distinguished it from the CCP-dictatorship-ruled PRC and hence justified a different preferential tariff-treatment for the city's exports. As a response, the Hong Kong SAR government is objecting vehemently to having to re-label its exports “Made in China”. Strangely, when it comes to political control, the CCP regime would say that Hong Kong is China's and hence nobody outside in the world can interfere in the way the PRC government wants to rule Hong Kong – in whichever format including suppressing dissent, arresting dissidents, firing academics, and muzzling free press – but when it comes to business and money matters and exports, the CCP regime and Hong Kong SAR government are practically saying that China is China, Hong Kong is Hong Kong – they are different, and the world must not treat

Hong Kong as part of China. How ironic ... During the weeks of political repression under the new “Hong Kong national security law” and mass arrests and the raid on media office, the CCP regime’s and Hong Kong SAR government’s official line has always been “Hong Kong *is* China’s, *is* a part of China, *belongs* to China” and the outside world has no right to intervene in China’s internal affairs or to condemn whatever that happens there, but when it comes to business, money and exports, the CCP regime and Hong Kong SAR government are complaining and protesting that henceforth Hong Kong’s exports to the U.S. would have to be labelled “Made in China”. And Hong Kong officials even more incredibly condemned the “Made in Hong Kong” to “Made in China” re-labelling as a barbarous American action of “describing what is white as black” (指白為黑).²⁴⁷ No, they say. These exports are “Made in Hong Kong”, not “Made in China”. So, money-wise, Hong Kong is Hong Kong, China is China. But when it comes to political repression, they say: Hong Kong is China’s, is a part of China, belongs to China.

As the government responses to Hong Kong’s anti-extradition protests, and previously the Occupy Campaign, show, it is still a long harsh winter for China’s pro-democracy movement, not only for its domestic and exiled political dissidents but also for its foreign supporters and contributors working in various ways in its advocacy. When the heavy hand of the State descends, when a subservient SAR government happily and enthusiastically flexes its muscle newly empowered by a national security law, dissident voices are crushed and conscientious people are silenced in the territory²⁴⁸ and become what Margaret Atwood called “the people who were not in the papers” (except when they are arrested and brought to court in chains) but people who still “lived in the blank white spaces at the edges of print [...] in the gaps between the stories.” (Atwood, 1985/1987: 66-67) Nevertheless, the desire for freedom and democracy and the struggle against totalitarian

oppression of political freedom and civil liberties will not be extinguished, just like in the Mainland over the past seven decades, like the garden of the Commander's wife as Atwood describes in her feminist dystopian masterpiece *The handmaid's tale*: "There is something subversive about this garden [...] a sense of buried things bursting upwards, wordlessly, into the light, as if to point, to say: Whatever is silenced will clamour to be heard, though silently." (*ibid.*: 161)

"Give China time. It will change," many would say, and it is "in the greater global interest to allow the ruling party in China to evolve and let China focus on its economic growth", as Kishore Mahbubani has advised us.²⁴⁹ Such are the popular echoes of the CCP regime's own narrative. While such caution that is anchored mainly on safety and stability is well-intentioned, it nevertheless also smacks of a hostage mentality, reflecting the helplessness of a world held hostage by an unstoppable rising power that thrives on domestic repression and is increasingly projecting its seemingly chillingly efficient autocratic governance model across the globe. But does anyone care for the aspirations for freedom and democracy of the Chinese citizens whose toppling of imperial despotism in 1911 was unfortunately disrupted by a foreign invasion, a civil war and the subsequent Communist Party conquest that installed a new autocratic dynasty that is even more chillingly efficient and thorough in dissent repression than any of the past imperial dynasties and that has since lasted over seven decades? Already seventy years of repressive rule. How many generations? Yes, leadership has been evolving, as Mahbubani has advised us to wait out patiently, from Mao to Xi. But after Mao, in which direction is the CCP leadership evolving? The Hu-Wen and Jiang administrations have indisputably paled in comparison with Xi's degree of domestic repression. How many more generations? How many more Wei

Jingshengs, Li Wangyangs, Liu Xiaobos, Nurmuhhammad Tohtis, Lei Yangs, Tenzing Delegs, Abdurehim Heyits, Peng Mings, Ilham Tohtis, Gao Zhishengs, Hadas, Yang Tianshuis, and thousands and thousands more need to face torture, to rot or die in jail for criticizing the ruling party or for just suggesting replacing the one-party dictatorship with a human-rights-respecting liberal democratic system? How many more need to go into Xinjiang's now already million-strong concentration camps for brainwashing?

To the people who are willing to accept CCP's promised offer of economic prosperity and physical wellbeing at a price of complete conformity, accepting happily State-enforced mass amnesia on past tragedies and avoiding questioning the State's wrongdoings, while just indulging oneself in trivial consumerism and mundane money-making and avoiding serious discourse with potential political risks, this Huxleyan glimpse of a future is CCP's promised Utopia. To those who are unwilling, continue your course of action at your own peril. It is a personal choice like that between Mo Yan and Liu Xiaobo, between PRC's myriad of conforming professors and Ilham Tohti, and between Hong Kong's conventional "apolitical" money-chasing tycoons and Jimmy Lai who has opted for not a life of conformist opulence a Hong Kong tycoon is expected to choose but has instead put his personal wealth and comfort at expected great risk to stand with Hong Kong's young and the rest of the conscientious majority to tell the CCP regime that enough is enough and that we shall no longer be cowed,²⁵⁰ knowing perfectly the full horror they would be facing when a ruthless totalitarian regime finally responds also with "enough and enough" and unleashes its scorching wrath upon the people. Political stances are personal choices. Mo Yan chose to conform and survive. Liu Xiaobo chose to defy and die. One may say that Mo Yan's is a more normal choice, or to take a cue from one of Richard Dawkins's catchy book titles (Dawkins,

1976), a natural response to the dictates of our selfish gene. It is a personal existential choice to make and each has one's own line to draw in the sand.

"The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity", so lamented William Butler Yeats in his poem *The second coming*, written in 1919 just at the close of the First World War. Lamentable for us today too, the mood prevails with the continued rise of the totalitarian behemoth of PRC and the increasing feebleness of a free world in disarray, a situation that lately seems to have worsened with the continued carnage brought to the liberal democratic Europe and America by the novel coronavirus pneumonia pandemic and a PRC, wherefrom the plague had spread across the globe from the initial Wuhan outbreak, is unmistakably rebounding after having contained the deadly epidemic with draconian measures that the free world can hardly imagine to take.

Odysseus had Circe's warning. On the one hand he would encounter the monster Scylla, the beast with six heads and six gaping mouths, each mouth set thick and close with triple rows of teeth. On the other, he would pass the whirlpool Charybdis, who three times each day sucked the waters down and spewed them up again. Charybdis seethed like a cauldron on a fire, and the spray she flung rained down on every side. When she gulped the salty sea the whole interior of her vortex was revealed, and the dark sands at the bottom came into view. Odysseus made his choice. He steered near to Scylla, and when the six-headed monster snatched the six best men from the deck of his ship he counted himself fortunate to have escaped with the rest past terrible Charybdis.

(Raymo, 1985/1988: 109)

Like Odysseus in the Homeric epic, the free world is facing a choice, a tough one, sailing between Scylla and Charybdis,²⁵¹ either carrying on appeasing the totalitarian regime for the sake of lucrative business contracts and investments and trade while having not only the civil liberties and political freedom of one fifth of humanity continue to be snatched away but also long-term global liberal democratic values sacrificed at the altar of the regime's *saturnic power*, or facing up to the creeping evil at the price of savouring the dark sands of an economic abyss in the aftermath of the devastating pandemic from the PRC.

A spectre is haunting the liberal democratic world: the spectre of a rising PRC. The rise of China is not a disaster for the world – the rise of any nation *per se* to prosperity should never be considered a disaster. But the rise of a PRC still under the boot of a strengthening CCP dictatorship is not merely a disaster to the liberal democratic world, but a calamity. And the struggle against the global *saturnic power* of this totalitarian regime that still has a fifth of humanity directly under its boot is in the main an ideational battle, like that between rationalist humanism and religious obscurantism from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, and that between liberal democratic values and Nazism/Fascism and Soviet totalitarianism from the Second World War to the disintegration of the “prison of nations” Soviet Union and the fall of Communist Party dictatorships from Eastern Europe to Mongolia.

It is time for the world's liberal democracies to make a clear choice – whether to accept a post-pandemic world even more dependent on trade, investment and technological, especially IT, relations with a PRC that continues to be ruled by a one-party dictatorship – a dictatorship that has taken advantage of the pandemic crisis caused by its very brutal dissent-crushing governance model in handling the original Wuhan outbreak to further its regional and global influence,²⁵² to continue strengthening its extra-territorial surveillance of dissidents and control of

global discourse through inducing foreign self-censorship with its immense consumer market power, and to strengthen its repressive, dissent-intolerant governance model that has become even more and more attractive to friendly nations with increasing authoritarian tendencies, thus further challenging the global appeal of liberal democratic values. Otherwise, would countries in the liberal democratic world pluck up the courage to stand up to protect the very foundation of the liberal democratic values even at the cost of sacrificing a certain percentage of their respective GDPs?²⁵³ Unfortunately, while it is easy to say that sometimes it might be worth it to stand up for a principle, even if that action comes with a cost, reality is often more cruel than that, and like Odysseus sailing between Scylla and Charybdis, neither of the choices is enviable, and in most of such situations what is available will just be nothing better than a Hobson's choice. "I had no choice," as Mo Yan once put it bluntly, in response to critics who said he had toed the State line too closely, "A lot of people are now saying about me, 'Mo Yan is a state writer.' It's true, insofar as [...] I get a salary from the Ministry of Culture, and get my social and health insurance from them too. That's the reality in China. Overseas, people all have their own insurance, but without a position, I can't afford to get sick in China."²⁵⁴ Economic cost could be a life-and-death matter for an individual, and the sad reality is that when that fact affects votes in an electoral liberal democracy, to what extent one can expect a democratically elected ruling party to hold dear to a value, a principle, before it finally cracks under the pressure of economic coercion from the PRC, the present global trade and investment juggernaut?

Notes

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article, *The Chinese Economy*, 2018), “Environmental policy in Malaysia with reference to Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy” (book chapter, Wenzao University Press, 2018), “マレーシア——親中心理を支える構造” [Malaysia: the fundamental structure of pro-China sentiment]” (book chapter, University of Tokyo Press, 2018), “Malaysia-Taiwan relations and Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy” (journal article, *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, 2018). <Website: <http://emileyeo5.wix.com/emileyeoh> / Email: yeohkk@um.edu.my, emileyeo@gmail.com>

1. Or officially the “Communist Party of China” (CPC, 中國共產黨). A note on notes: in the rest of the notes, besides for indicating the English title of a book, journal or media, and a website address (between opposite chevrons), italicization is also applied to the English translation placed before and separated with a virgule from a Chinese-language article title between inverted commas.
2. *A million people marching in anti-extradition bill protest, Hong Kong launches biggest challenge to Beijing's governance* / “称百万人反送中游行 香港对北京管治发起最大挑战”, *Oriental Daily News* (ODN, 東方日報) (Malaysia), 10th June 2019 <<https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/international/2019/06/10/293701>>; *1.03 million Hong Kong people took to the streets and roared. Why is China's “rule of law” unpopular?* / “103 万港人上街怒吼 中共法治为何不得人心?”, 看中國 (*Vision Times*), 10th June 2019 <<https://www.secrechina.com/news/gb/2019/06/10/896457.html>>; “As many as two million protesters hit Hong Kong streets”, Bloomberg, 16th June 2019 (updated 17th June 2019) <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-06-16/protests-swell-as-hong-kong-rejects-leader-s-compromise>>.
3. “Wuhan pneumonia: what we know about the new virus and how you can stop yourself getting sick”, *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 9th January 2020 (updated 22 January 2020) <<https://www.scmp.com>.





com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3045310/china-pneumonia-what-we-know-about-new-virus-and>; “Wuhan pneumonia: First suspected case reported in Singapore”, *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 4th January 2020 <<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/wuhan-pneumonia-first-suspect-case-identified-here>>. After WHO’s official naming of the Wuhan pneumonia as “COVID-19”, probably triggered by disgust at political manipulation, a joke began to circulate in cyberspace that “COVID-19” actually stands for “China Output Virus In Dec - 2019”. That reminds us of Ai Weiwei’s calling this novel coronavirus PRC’s most resounding “Made in China” brand that is spreading across the globe due to the repressive CCP regime’s penchant for cover-up (*Ai Weiwei: The novel coronavirus is the most resounding brand in “Made in China”* / “艾未未: 新型冠状病毒是「中國製造」裏最響亮的牌子”, *BBC News* 中文, 13th February 2020 <<https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/chinese-news-51485043>>; «Wuhan pneumonia» Ai Weiwei criticizes the WHO for committing huge blunder, thus tantamount to helping China to conceal information of the epidemic / “武漢肺炎: 艾未未批評世衛犯大錯 變相助中國隱瞞疫情”, *Youtube* (posted by *BBC News* 中文), 5th February 2020 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4ulxPYRRjo>>).

4. Referring to the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019 (2019 年逃犯及刑事事宜相互法律協助法例 (修訂) 條例草案). The protest against the bill has been referred to as the anti-extradition bill or anti-ELAB (i.e. Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill) movement. It is called *fansongzhong* (反送中) in Chinese, i.e. “against extradition to China”, which actually captures the essence of the protest movement more accurately.
5. «Hong Kong People’s Anti-extradition Bill Protest» *Civil servants are no longer silent, taking to the streets on Friday to walk with the people* / “【香港人反送中】公務員不再沉默 週五上街與民同行”, *ODN*, 29th July 2019 <<https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/international/2019/07/>>

- 29/300172>; «Anti-extradition Bill Protest» Hong Kong Government's information directors jointly signed an open letter "To be neutral and silent is tantamount to be an accomplice to a villain in its evil deeds" / “【反送中】港府新闻主任联署公开信 “中立沉默等于为虎作伥””, *Nanyang Siang Pau / Nanyang Business Daily* (NYSP, 南洋商報) (Malaysia) 29th July 2019 <<http://www.enanyang.my/news/20190729/>【反送中】港府新闻主任联署公开信 - 中立沉默等 />.
6. "Tiananmen Square protest death toll 'was 10,000'", *BBC News*, 23rd December 2017 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-42465516>>.
 7. The Chinese proverbial phrase “官逼民反” originated from the late Ch'ing (Qing, 清) Dynasty's social critique novel 《官場現形記》 serialized in 1903-1905.
 8. *Hong Kong version of the National Security Law – one can be imprisoned for life on 4 types of charges* / “港版国安法 4类罪可囚终身”, *China Press* (CP, 中國報) (Malaysia), 1st July 2020 <<https://www.chinapress.com.my/20200701/港版国安法-4类罪可囚终身/>>.
 9. “Hong Kong: Oppose China-sponsored national security law; respect the right to dissent”, *Suara Rakyat Malaysia* (SUARAM) – Working for Human Rights, 28th May 2020 <<https://www.suaram.net/repressivelaw/media/>>; 20 *Malaysia, Hong Kong and Taiwan student movement organizations jointly sign to condemn the Hong Kong version of the National Security Law* / “港版国安法 20 马港台学运组织联署 谴责港版国安法”, *CP*, 29th May 2020 <<https://www.chinapress.com.my/20200529/港版国安法-20马港台学运组织联署-谴责港版国安法/>>.
 10. *Hong Kong legal profession opposes extradition amendment, 3000 people march in black* / “港法律界反对引渡修例 三千人士黑衣游行”, *看中國* (*Vision Times*), 7th June 2019 <<https://www.secrechina.com/news/gb/2019/06/07/896073.html>>; *Airport rally by aviation industry in Hong Kong, publicizing the demonstrations' demands to international*

- passengers* / “港航空界机场集会向国际旅客宣导示威诉求”, *Sin Chew Daily* / *Sin Chew Jit Poh* (SCJP, 星洲日報) (Malaysia), 26th July 2019 <https://www.sinchew.com.my/content/content_2090393.html>.
11. “Hong Kong doesn’t have a pro-China ‘silent majority’: Voters overwhelmingly chose pro-democracy candidates in local elections, putting an end to the notion that a large chunk of the population was against months of protests.” *The Atlantic*, 25th November 2019 <<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/11/hong-kong-election-silent-majority/602551/>>.
12. *China reportedly strictly prohibits 65 types of contents of publications* / “传华严禁 65 项出版内容”, *ODN*, 16th July 2019 <<https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/international/2019/07/16/298449>>.
13. *Dissatisfied with the Chief Executive’s making the police grinded between Government and people, Police Sergeant says Carrie Lam’s handling methods are crazy* / “不满特首令警队成磨心 警官：林郑处理手法疯狂”, *Kwong Wah Yit Poh* / *Kwong Wah Daily* (KWYP, 光華日報) (Malaysia), 15th June 2019 <<http://www.kwongwah.com.my/20190615/> 不满特首令警队成磨心 – 警官：林郑处理手法疯狂 />.
14. *Anti-extradition bill protest launches social movement 2.0 mode – “Be water” demonstrations gather and disperse quickly* / “反送中开启社运 2.0 模式 • Be water 示威聚散迅速”, *SCJP*, 3rd July 2019 <https://www.sinchew.com.my/content/content_2077352.html>.
15. «*Hong Kong People’s Anti-extradition Bill Protest*» *American scholar urges for quitting while one is ahead as “the West will not come to your rescue”* / “【香港人反送中】美學者籲見好就收 「西方不會來救」”, *ODN*, 29th July 2019 <<https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/international/2019/07/29/300167>>.
16. *As anti-extradition bill protest radicalises, scholar calls for quitting while one is ahead and preparing for negotiation* / “反送中抗爭激進化 學者籲見好就收、準備談判”, *United Daily News* (UDN, 聯合報) (Taiwan),

27th July 2019 <<https://udn.com/news/story/120538/3955034>>.

17. *Men in white stormed into the Yuen Long station platform to chase and beat people; the police were criticized for mysterious disappearance* / “白衣人冲进元朗站台追打 • 警察神隐遭批评”, *SCJP*, 22nd July 2019 <https://www.sinchew.com.my/content/content_2088156.html>; *The Yuen Long attack lasted an hour without seeing any police officers appearing* / “元朗襲擊歷經一小時 未見任何警員”, *ODN*, 22nd July 2019 <<https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/international/2019/07/22/299224>>.
18. *«Anti-extradition Bill Protest» 6,000 mothers rallying in Hong Kong, “Our children are not thugs”* / “【反送中】港6千妈妈集会 “孩子们不是暴徒””, *NYSP*, 15th June 2019 <<http://www.enanyang.my/news/20190615/>【反送中】港6千妈妈集会 -br- 孩子们不是暴徒 />.
19. *Third young man in Hong Kong fell from a building due to “anti-extradition bill protest”* / “港第三名青年 因“反送中”坠楼”, *CP*, 30th June 2019 <<http://www.chinapress.com.my/20190630/>港第三名青年 - 因反送中坠楼 />; *«Anti-extradition Bill Protest» 15-year-old girl in Hong Kong became a naked floating corpse; her selfie video before she died revealed, “What did I do wrong?”* / “ 反送中  港15岁少女成全裸浮尸 生前自拍曝光 “我做错什么?””, *CP*, 15th October 2019 <<https://www.chinapress.com.my/20191015/> 反送中  港15岁少女成全裸浮尸 - 生前自拍曝光 />.
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 在中華人民共和國九百多萬平方公里的領土上，卻只有香港人站了出來。
 今天香港人扯破了喉嚨吶喊，很多人是抱著犧牲的決心在吶喊的。你可以說，他們在替那廣大的、無法出聲的人，吶喊出來。換一個角度看，大陸人完全可以對今天的香港人輕聲說一句：「謝謝你，請保重，願青山常在」……
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







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









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在地球上其他地方，每一分鐘就有 60 秒過去。
可是在中國，每一年卻只有 364 個日子，有一天被遺忘掉了。
過去在台灣，我們也曾經有許多日子，不能出現在日曆上面，但我們一個一個把它們找回來了。因為我們不必再隱匿歷史，所以我們可以共同思索未來。
希望這世界上每一個角落、每一片土地，都不要再有消失的日子。也祝福香港。
自由的台灣撐香港的自由
<<https://www.facebook.com/tsaiingwen/>>.
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«Global Pandemic» *Beijing Girl in New York exposes the current miserable situation in New York / “全球大流行 在纽约的北京妞 曝纽约现今惨况”, CP, 4th April 2020* <<https://www.chinapress.com.my/>>

- 20200404/ 全球大流行 在纽约的北京妞 - 曝纽约现今惨况 />.
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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYo_dz2njKM&feature=youtu.be>.
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indiscriminate use of violence / “净选盟及大马人民之声：谴责香港警察滥用暴力”，ODN, 14th June 2019 <<https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/nation/2019/06/14/294265>>; “BERSIH 2.0 and SUARAM: Condemnation of Police Brutality in Hong Kong and Call for Withdrawal of Extradition Bill – 净选盟及大马人民之声：谴责香港警察暴力及呼吁收回引渡犯罪嫌疑人法案”，Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) – Working for Human Rights, 14th June 2019 <<https://www.suaram.net/2019/06/14/bersih-2-0-and-suaram-condemnation-of-police-brutality-in-hong-kong-and-call-for-withdrawal-of-extradition-bill>> 净选盟及大马人民之 />.

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191. In modern English: “And just as this was all an illusion, so lofty towers, gorgeous palaces, solemn temples [...] We are made of the same stuff as dreams” (Durband, 1985: 153).
192. *The Wuhan pneumonia has become a turning point in China's defeat of the United States? Having successfully joined the United Nations Human Rights Council ... From WHO to human rights, China is embarking on a big picture of seizing power* / “武漢肺炎成了中國擊敗美國的轉捩點？成功加入聯合國人權理事會... 從世衛到人權，中國正在佈一場奪權

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193. Henry Steele Commager (1966). *Freedom and order: A Commentary on the American political scene*. New York: George Braziller, p. 117. (Cited in Westheimer, 2006.)
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 195. See also Davis and Wallbridge (1981/1983: 61-64).
 196. Cited in Sanford (1982/1984: 49).
 197. *June Fourth 31 years • Tsai Ing-wen: In China one day is forgotten every year* / “六四 31 年 • 蔡英文: 在中国每一年有一天被遺忘”, *SCJP*, 4th June 2020 <https://www.sinchew.com.my/content/content_2283396.html>.
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 200. First published in July 2012, 《關於當前意識形態領域情況的通報》 (Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere” is

a confidential internal document widely circulated in 2013 within the CCP but not available to the public. In July 2013 this secret document was allegedly leaked to an overseas Chinese news site by 71-year-old dissident journalist Gao Yu (高瑜), who was in turn sentenced to a seven-year imprisonment for “leaking state secrets”.

201. “網上廣泛流傳的中共「七不講」文件，要求高校教師不能講普世價值、新聞自由、公民社會、公民權利、黨的歷史錯誤、權貴資產階級和司法獨立。” (see *Xi Jinping's “New Deal”: After “7 Can't-Says” there are also the “16 Items”* / “習近平新政：七不講後又有十六條”，BBC 中文，28th May 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/05/130528_china_thought_control_youth.shtml?print=1>).
202. Highlighted in Bush (2016), Chapter 5, “Debating Universal Suffrage Before Occupy: Round 1”.
203. See Bush (2016), Chapter 5.
204. *Xi Jinping's “New Deal”: After “7 Can't-Says” there are also the “16 Items”* / “習近平新政：七不講後又有十六條”，BBC 中文，28th May 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/05/130528_china_thought_control_youth.shtml?print=1> (宣揚“普世價值”的核心目的是排除黨的領導；“公民社會”主張是要在基層黨組織外建立新的政治勢力；“新自由主義”理念反對國家進行宏觀調控；提倡“西方新聞觀念”，是反對黨一貫堅持的“喉舌論”，要擺脫黨對媒體領導，搞蘇聯當年改革時推行的“公開化”，用搞亂輿論來搞亂黨、搞亂社會；“歷史虛無主義”的要害是針對黨領導下的歷史問題，否認人們已普遍接受的事實，極力貶損和攻擊毛澤東及毛澤東思想，全盤否定毛澤東時期中國共產黨的歷史作用，目的是削弱甚至推翻黨的領導的合法性；歪曲改革開放的種種說法則認為，改革中出現了官僚資產階級、國家資本主義，認為中國改革不徹底，只有進行政治改革才能完善經濟改革等等。)
205. *Regarding some suggestions on the political work to strengthen and improve the thought of younger lecturers in higher education institutions /*

- 《關於加強和改進高校青年教師思想政治工作的若干意見》（簡稱「意見」）。(See Xi Jinping's "New Deal": After "7 Can't-Says" there are also the "16 Items" / "習近平新政：七不講後又有十六條", *BBC 中文*, 28th May 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/05/130528_china_thought_control_youth.shtml?print=1>.)
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207. "Berlin church holds memorial service for Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo", *Deutsche Welle (DW)*, 13th July 2018 <<https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-church-holds-memorial-service-for-chinese-dissident-liu-xiaobo/a-44670529>>.
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- jacques-fools-the-world.html*>; Kishore Mahbubani, "Communist Rule Is Good for China", *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol. 22, Issue 2, March 2005, pages 37-40 <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1540-5842.2005.00746.x>>; "Do not wish for the collapse of the Chinese Communist Party: Kishore Mahbubani", *The Citizen*, 9th April 2015 <<https://citizen.hkspublications.org/2015/04/09/do-not-wish-for-the-collapse-of-chinese-communist-party-kishore-mahbubani/>>.
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234. *Denise Ho Wan-see, Hong Kong mothers, Taiwan girl Carey Chang Pei-hsin: In the huge uprising, everyone can find a point of force* / “何韻詩、香港母親、台灣女孩張珮歆：在龐大起義裡，每個人都能找到施力點” (by 佳琦), *女人迷 (Womany)*, 13th June 2019 <<https://womany.net/read/article/19615>>.
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236. “§3. Domination and assertion: Interpreting Chinese sociopolitical movements” and “§4. Strategic action and change mechanisms” in Yeoh (2012).
237. Here referring to the similarities Bertrand Russell drew between Judeo-Christian eschatology and Marxist socialism: Dialectical Materialism/ Yahweh, Marx/the Messiah, Proletariat/the Elect, Communist Party/ Church, the Communist Revolution/the Second Coming, Punishment of the Capitalists/Hell, and the Communist Commonwealth/the Millennium—a messianic legacy that the present post-Maoist CCP has retained in a modernized and improvised format: Mao remains on the messianic pantheon; a rejuvenated, increasingly catch-all and technocratic Communist Party continues to be the umbrella Church to all societal groups religious or otherwise; and a CCP-ruled, stability-above-all-else, high-growth economic and military leviathan constitutes the centre of the imminent *Pax Sinica*.
238. Or at the least to the ever-unrepentant devil’s advocate, though by “a spectacular vision of a happy hell” Alan Ryan was actually referring to Bertrand Russell’s debt to Aldous Huxley’s *Brave new world* whose ideas Russell thought as having been stolen from him.
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Commentary

