

CHINA: Xi Jinping to teachers: Nourish the faith in the Chinese Communist Party

– In his “important speech”, the president asked educators to instill patriotism in young people and reject “misconceptions and ideologies”. Since 2012, a struggle against the spread of “Western values” and the ban on religious education for young people is underway in schools and universities.

AsiaNews (21.03.2019) – “Nourishing” faith in the Chinese Communist Party and rejecting “misconceptions and ideologies”: this is the program that Chinese president Xi Jinping proposed to a group of teachers gathered yesterday in the capital for a seminar on “ideological theory” and politics “.

According to Xinhua, Xi gave an “important speech”. In it, the party leader, who is also general secretary and head of the military commission, said that starting with toddlers China must “nurture generation after generation [of young people] who support Chinese Communist Party rule and China’s socialist system”.

“Most importantly,” he added “we must emphasise [taking the correct stance] on politics such that people who have faith [in the party] can preach what they believe in.”

He also asked all educators to instill patriotism in young people and reject “misconceptions and ideologies”.

Since Xi took power in 2012, the Party has launched [a battle against the spread of “Western values”](#) in schools and

universities, banning books that promote “Western ideas” such as democracy and the rule of law.

At the same time, those who spread “religious” ideas among students are prosecuted. In the name of “patriotism” students are required to reject religions, especially those that come “from the West”, that is Christianity, making students swear to fight them.

The new regulations on religious activities prohibit young people under 18 from going to church or receiving a religious education.

Uyghur Muslims in “de-radicalisation camps” in China: Business first for Saudi Arabia...

– Willy Fautré, Director of Human Rights Without Frontiers

– HRWF (23.02.2019) – Saudi Arabia and China have just signed commercial agreements for \$ 28 billion (See the article of The New York Times on 20 February: <https://nyti.ms/2BLEqsG>). Annoyed by human rights criticisms and anti-corruption investigations in North America and the EU, Saudi Arabia is suddenly increasing and accelerating his business relations with China.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia is the leading member of the troika of three countries at the UN, with Hungary and Kenya, which will write the report on the Universal Periodic Review of China’s

human rights record, whose final act will be in a few days...

One of the priority human rights issues which will be scrutinized by NGOs will be the situation of one million Muslims of all ages belonging to the Uyghur ethnicity. Perceiving them as a threat to national security, Beijing has deprived them of their freedom and put them in camps to allegedly “de-radicalize” them. Saudi Arabia’s crown prince has already taken sides with China’s President Xi Jinping on this problem, omitting to say that his country is highly responsible for the “radicalization” of Muslims in the world.

Time for Muslim majority countries to unite their diplomatic and other efforts for the release of all the Uyghur Muslims in China.

Al Jazeera: Saudi crown prince defends China’s right to fight ‘terrorism’ – 23.02 (<https://bit.ly/2E4fJbo>)

“Activists say MBS’ support for China’s ‘anti-terrorism’ measures is tacit approval of crackdown on Uighur Muslims.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) has supported China’s right to undertake “anti-terrorism” and “de-extremism” measures, according to Chinese state media, in remarks activists lambasted as a defence of Beijing’s crackdown on its Uighur Muslim minority.

Prince Mohammed made the comments to Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday during a visit to Beijing, the last leg of an Asian tour that included Pakistan and India, according to state-run news outlets.

In his talks with Xi, MBS hailed relations with China as trouble free, the official Xinhua news agency reported, while Xi urged joint efforts to counter extremism and terror.

Xi told the crown prince the two countries must strengthen international cooperation on de-radicalisation to “prevent the

infiltration and spread of extremist thinking”, according to Xinhua

Saudi Arabia respected and supported China’s right to protect its own security and take counter-terror and de-radicalisation steps, the crown prince told Xi, according to the same report, and was willing to increase cooperation.

“China has the right to take anti-terrorism and de-extremism measures to safeguard national security,” MBS told Xi, according to the state-owned CCTV.

“Saudi Arabia respects and supports it and is willing to strengthen cooperation with China,” he added.

‘Disgusting’

Riyadh has remained silent over China’s treatment of Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in the far-western region of Xinjiang. That’s despite the ruling Al Saud family’s image of itself as the defender of Muslims across the world and protector of Islam’s two holiest shrines.

Up to one million Uighurs and other minorities are being held in internment camps in Xinjiang as part of a draconian anti-terror and anti-separatist campaign, according to estimates cited by a UN panel.

Activists slammed MBS’ stand, with Miqdaad Versi, spokesperson for Britain’s Muslim Council, calling the remarks “disgusting” and a defence of “the use of concentration camps against Uighur Muslims”.

The World Uyghur Congress, a Germany-based advocacy group, said MBS’s failure to raise the issue of the Uighur detentions amounted to tacit support for “China’s gross rights violations”.

The Saudi crown prince’s visit came five months after the crown prince came under intense pressure in the US and

elsewhere following the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. In the US Congress, criticism has also been building for months over the kingdom's handling of the war in Yemen, where it is accused of causing widespread casualties and suffering among civilians.

China has refrained from faulting Saudi Arabia over issues such as the war or killing of the journalist, in keeping with its long-held tradition of non-interference in other countries' affairs.

The hush-hush approach reflects how China and Saudi Arabia have grown close over the past decade based on complementary economic interests, said Michael Clarke of Australian National University's National Security College.

"Basically, in the Saudi case there seem to be very clear incentives for it to not rock the boat in service of the Uighur issue," Clarke told The Associated Press news agency.

During MBS' visit to China, Riyadh's national oil giant Saudi Aramco said it had signed an agreement to form a Saudi-Chinese joint venture, worth more than \$10bn, to develop a refining and petrochemical complex in northeastern Liaoning province.

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority also announced the signing of 35 non-binding memorandums of understanding, worth \$28bn, including deals related to energy, mining, transportation and e-commerce.

China is Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner.

See as well

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/saudi-crown-prince-defends-chinas-203233929.html>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2019-02-22/saudi-agrees-10-billion-china-refinery-deal-as-crown-prince-visits>

Exclusive video smuggled out of China: <https://bit.ly/2Tt43W0> – Uyghur children indoctrinated in camps

With one million minority Uyghur Muslims detained for re-education, what becomes of their children? They are locked in “schools” of Han Chinese propaganda

– By Chang Xin –

Bitter Winter (26.01.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2Tt43W0>– The children of the detained Uyghur parents are kept in so-called *Loving Heart* kindergartens and schools in Xinjiang. They undergo full-time supervision and receive their education in Chinese only. Usually, the iron gates of these *Loving Heart* facilities are firmly locked. The walls are surrounded by barbed wire, and access is strictly controlled. There is little chance for these children to go outside. The children only get to see their parents once a month during a monthly video call. According to a teacher of one kindergarten, the children always cry after talking with their parents on video.

“Loving Heart” is a euphemistic name given by the Chinese authorities to conceal the nature of the facilities for outsiders. Such names are common in Xinjiang.

As more than one million Uyghurs are locked up in Xinjiang’s

“transformation through education camps,” more and more children are losing parental care. There is even a special name for families with both mother and father in custody: “double-detained families.”

Previously, *Bitter Winter* reported about a shelter house located in the new town area of Qapqal county, in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture. A “shelter house” is another euphemistic name given by Chinese authorities to facilities housing and indoctrinating children whose parents have been arrested.

This shelter house began operations in August 2018. Unlike ordinary schools, when entering this facility, visitors must register their ID information in a special security room, and personal belongings must pass through a security check.

Heavily-guarded lookout posts, barbed wire on the walls, densely placed surveillance cameras, helmets, and other riot control gear in the first room inside the dormitory building—these seem to tell people that this is not an ordinary school. A map of China is hung in the dorm, and the walls are covered with propaganda slogans, such as “I’m Chinese; I love my country” and “Always follow the Party.” Such displays seem familiar. They are reminiscent of the installations inside transformation through education camps.

The government even allocates a military instructor to provide military training to these young children.

Although there is a full range of facilities in the shelter house, this does not seem to make up for the children’s pain of losing their parents.

According to a teacher at the “shelter house,” as soon as evening comes, the children cry about wanting to go home to see their mom and dad. This is quite a headache for these teachers, who have been forcibly deployed by the government.

A teacher said, "Many teachers have been exhausted. There is no solution. Regardless of whether you are a Han Chinese or an Uyghur, as long as you say something wrong, you will be sent to 'study' for an indefinite period of time, leaving your home unattended, and your child sent to this shelter house for education. The policy for this year is to maintain stability instead of working."

Emotional distress is not an isolated phenomenon. A teacher who previously worked at a "welfare home" (which is similar in nature to a shelter house) in Bole city told *Bitter Winter* that more than 200 Uyghur children who are housed at that facility had very unstable moods. Some of them even tried to ingest laundry detergent or swallow fish bones to harm themselves. And some asked, "Is this [welfare home] a jail?"

A prison officer in Xinjiang said, "When dealing with the education of the children of ethnic minorities, the government has organized a rigid and isolated education for them. With public security police officers as their teachers, the young Uyghurs are forced to study a uniform Chinese curriculum arranged by the government – they must speak Chinese, eat pork, wear Han clothes, and live according to the Han people's habits and tradition. They are restricted to this environment, with no chance to contact the outside world. Indoctrinated with such a heavy-handed and mandatory education, these children of ethnic minorities become unconsciously obedient to the Chinese Communist Party government."

In 2017, similar *Loving Heart* schools and transformation through education camps have appeared in large numbers in Xinjiang. According to sources, in Lop county alone, 11 *Loving Heart* nurseries (for children aged 1 to 3 years) and nine kindergartens (3 to 6 years) have been built. Seven *Loving Heart* full-time nursery classes have been set up in junior and senior middle schools. Among them, Xinhua Kindergarten's *Loving Heart Full-Time Nursery Class* teaches 150 toddlers aged 1 to 3 years old. *Yudu Loving Heart*

Kindergarten teaches over 500 children aged 3 to 6 years old. Lop County No. 3 Elementary School teaches more than 900 children (aged 7 to 16) of “double-detained families.” In Lop county alone, as many as 2,000 children are being held in custody.

As the interview was nearing the end, numerous Uyghur children were being sent to the shelter house in Qapqal county. Among them, the oldest is 17 or 18 years old, and the youngest is only three years old. While waiting to register, the children looked into the distance with complex expressions on their faces. Perhaps this is the last free time they will have before being placed in state indoctrination.

Reported by Chang Xin

The strange shyness of the EU towards China

– by Marco Respinti –

A seminar of scholars and politicians in the European Parliament loses an excellent opportunity to put respect for human rights at the top of priorities –

Bitter Winter (02.02.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2DPRZs0>– In the second half of May, the member states of the European Union (EU) will hold elections to renew the European Parliament (EP), and it is logical that, one after the other, hot topics are surfacing. One of these is undoubtedly the relations that the EU has, and above all will have, with the other giants of the international political scene: for example, China.

Especially in a historical moment in which the Asian colossus is overtly expanding its power and its grip through the Belt and Road Initiative in spite of the fact that, although it has been the protagonist of the dizzying and proverbial economic growth, it is now lagging behind in the midst of the recent slowdown in its manufacturing output, the decline of the renminbi (Chinese yuan) compared to the US dollar, and the clash on tariffs with the United States of America (the effects of which are also felt in the EU).

Therefore, it makes a lot of sense to have a seminar like the one organized by the German representatives to the EP, Jo Leinen, a Social Democrat, and Reinhard Butiköfer, of the Greens, respectively, president and vice president of the Delegation of the EP for relations with the People's Republic of China, entitled *Political values in Europe-China relations*. It took place in the Altiero Spinelli building of the EP in Brussels on January 30, and featured Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova from the Latvian Institute of International Affairs in Riga; Alice Ekman from the Institut français des relations internationales in Paris; Mikko Huotari from the Mercator Institute for China Studies in Berlin, Germany; Tamsas Matura, from the Corvinus University in Budapest, Hungary; Miguel Otero Iglesias, from the Elcano Royal Institute in Madrid, Spain; and Tim Nicholas Rühlig, from the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm.

Human rights not at the top of the agenda

That said, at the cost of appearing naïve, even very much naïve, one would expect that talks about political and commercial relations among countries cannot disregard the respect for human rights and the fundamental liberties of the person. If it makes sense that two despotic countries find it easy to understand each other politically and economically, it also makes sense to expect that a democratic state demands from its probable or possible political and economic partner to respect at least the standards of democracy that it

personally observes. How can one think that a democratic country can deal at political and economic level with another if the latter arbitrarily imprisons, tortures, abuses and even kills its citizens? You do not need to be morally superior to understand that trading with a country where human dignity is trampled daily is not good for affairs; even cynics get it. In fact, everyone understands how economically risky, not to say detrimental, it is to maintain commercial exchanges – where all is based on trust, compliance with agreements, respect for rules and transparency – with a treacherous and double partner, used to acting outside the law, to lie and to subjugate rather than to benefit its citizens.

Why then (and here is all my intentional naïveté announced above), when it comes to relations between the democratic states of Europe and a totalitarian country like China, are human rights not at the top of the agenda? The seminar of January 30th in Brussels, for example, didn't put them on top of the list.

Raise the stakes

Well, a few words were said, some facts were mentioned, but with the handbrake pulled, stealthily. As if the scholars who intervened knew, consciously or subconsciously, not to push things beyond a certain limit. One could say that this is the way scholars operate since they express themselves differently from activists. True, but only partially. Yes, scholars do their job in a different manner from that of the activists, and rightly so; on the other hand, even scholars are able, if they want to, to put things clearly. Of course, differently from activists, but certainly not in a less straightforward way.

After all, in the Brussels seminar, Mikka Huotari explicitly said that several things happening in China are incompatible with the standards that the EU countries are accustomed to. Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova has specified that Latvians

have little sympathy for the model of government that dominates China as well as for the flippant approach that Beijing adopts towards international law. Tamas Matura reported that, if Hungary looks favorably on China, it is not so for the Czech Republic and Poland, whose societies are amply impatient towards the "Beijing model", adding that, in these assessments, it is always necessary to carefully distinguish the attitudes of the governments from the orientations of the citizens. Alice Ekman has opportunely noted that, when dealing with China, one cannot take anything for granted so that each time it's necessary to make sense of the words defining their meaning. Rights, law, government, and freedom do not have the same meaning in China as in Europe.

But then, if the scholars who spoke at the seminar feel some uneasiness, and somehow reveal it, why can't we completely turn priorities upside down (I am still intentionally naïve) and make way for respect of human rights and fundamental liberties of a person a binding paradigm of any other yet legitimate political and economic question? Why, in short, can't we start from those tenets, explicitly saying that as long as China does not change its attitude on human rights and fundamental liberties, there can be no partnership?

Now (and here my naïveté ends), in the globalized world, it is not possible to retreat in some splendid isolation. It is evident that, like it or not, the rest of the world has to come to terms with the Chinese economic power. But it is equally valid that the stakes can be raised, that the chip of respect for human rights can be put on the table. And it is not true that if one did it, China would leave the table: in order to trade, there must always be at least two.

Two kickers

Certain self-censorships are thus inexplicable. To scholars, who do not act in politics, it wouldn't cost much to speak openly. At the price of seeming idealists, they can afford it

because they hold no political office, and if they speak frankly, they may even benefit from it.

For politicians, however, the price may be higher. They have an ideological agenda to follow and have no intention of affording themselves certain liberties. This is a mischievous statement of mine, but the conclusion of the Brussels seminar on Wednesday has helped to nurture it.

Some thirty minutes prior to the conclusion of the seminar, once the speakers had all given their presentations, Mr. Butiköfer, who acted as the coordinator of the table, opened the Q&A session. He collected all the interventions from the public and then gave back the floor to the speakers. Out of the many questions, two touched the hidden heart of the problem. The first (the first ever) was Ryan Barry's of the Uyghur Congress in Munich, Germany: he asked if the news of the million (at least) Uyghurs that the CCP unlawfully detains for religious and ethnic reasons in the Xinjiang's "transformation through education" camps have had an echo in the European countries reviewed by the speakers. Another question was posed by a Chinese lady who asked if the politicians realized that any consideration on China couldn't ignore the fact that China professes a Communist ideology and practices a Communist ideocracy, which aims at total domination and degradation of people. At this point, two kickers followed.

The first was Mr. Butiköfer's management of the Q&A: he summarized all the audience's questions, inviting the speakers to choose their favorite to answer but omitting the two mentioned above, Uyghurs and Communism. Then, he gave the floor to the speakers in reverse order compared to their first run of interventions; they chose to answer everything but the two above mentioned questions, perhaps because the moderator omitted them. Thus, at time expired, with an attendant who signaled to Mr. Butiköfer that it was time to leave the room to a subsequent event, Mikka Huotari took the floor again. And

here is the second kicker: he meritoriously recovered the unanswered question on Uyghurs. But at that point, there was no more time, and the question remained suspended in the void (the one on Communism never reappeared on the horizon).

CHINA: All religions are persecuted in China: the case of Catholics (By B. Cervellera)



Brussels (AsiaNews) – *“All religions in China are persecuted”*: This is the conclusion of Austrian Member of Parliament, Dr. Josef Weidenholzer, at a conference held yesterday afternoon at the European Parliament in Brussels on the theme “Religious Freedom in China”. The meeting organised by representatives of the People’s Party and the socialists, had several guest speakers who offered their witness to a packed hall. After a brief introduction by parliamentarians Bas Belder (Dutch) and Christian Dan Preda (Romanian), the following spoke: Bob Fu, founder and director of China Aid; Kuzzat Altay, Uighur exile in the United States; Marco Respinti, director of Bitter Winter; Willy Fautré, director of Human Rights without Frontiers; Fr. Bernardo Cervellera, editor of AsiaNews. From the audience emerged testimonies of Tibetan Buddhists, Taoists, sects, branded by the regime as “evil cults”. Below we publish the intervention of the editor of AsiaNews.

AsiaNews (24.01.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2G70S0j>– In a meeting on religious freedom in China in the Brussels office of the European Parliament, the testimonies of Protestant Christians, Uighurs, Catholics. The voices of Tibetan Buddhists, Taoists and sects. The intervention offered by the editor of AsiaNews.

On January 14, AsiaNews published [a “Christmas diary” written by a Chinese priest](#), Fr. Stanislaus, who recounts the difficulties experienced by Chinese Catholics in a province of the Northeast. For “security” reasons Christmas Masses must be controlled by the police; young people under the age of 18 cannot take part; the New Year banners of good wishes, which the Chinese hang on their doorstep and with which Christians wish peace and blessings from God, cannot be sold.

On the same day, the foreign ministry spokesperson, Ms. Hua [Chunying], said: “You do not understand China. Do not you know how many Buddhist and Taoist temples and Christian churches in China operate legally? According to the law, Chinese citizens enjoy full religious freedom! We have taken preventive measures against terrorists and extremists, to

allow so many ordinary people to fully enjoy normal religious freedom! ”

Perhaps in China all young Catholics under 18 are considered “terrorists”, forbidding them to attend Christmas Mass, Sunday Mass, and catechesis. To allow them to “fully enjoy religious freedom”, in primary and secondary schools of various provinces of China (Anhui, Henan, Inner Mongolia), representatives of the Ministry of Education have forbidden pupils and students to celebrate Christmas (and the Lunar New Year), to exchange gifts or to participate in religious ceremonies; in several provinces (Hebei, Shaanxi, Yunnan) [Christmas celebrations and decorations were forbidden in the cities](#), seen as “[an attack on Chinese culture](#)”, a submission to Western “spiritual pollution”.

Apart from the historical error of considering Christianity as a “religion of the West” (given that Jesus was born in Asia and that Christianity arrived in China in the 7th century from Iraq), it is clear that the Chinese Communist Party is conducting a veritable “religious war” on Christianity and Catholics, all in the name of “security” and “nationalist patriotism”.

In the name of security

In the name of security, religious activities are divided into “normal” and “illegal”, although there are no differences in rite or execution between the two. What makes a religious activity “normal” is its submission to the control of political authorities: bishops, priests, places of worship registered with the Ministry of Religious Affairs; registered publications; registered pastoral plans; registered times; registered participants. Added to this are the ubiquitous cameras in the parish offices; the permits to ask to meet Chinese or foreign Catholic personnel; the continued presence of the police around or inside the places of worship.

“Illegal” religious activities are those carried out with personnel or in places that are not under control. The Catholics who carry out these activities, defined as “criminals”, claim their freedom as guaranteed by the Chinese constitution, but risk arrests, fines, expropriation of buildings, or their destruction.

In 1994, the UN envoy for religious freedom, Abdelfattah Amor, asked China to eliminate this difference between “normal” and “illegal” activities, but this request went unheard.

It should be noted that this division – inserted by the government – creates the so-called official Church (of “normal” activities) and the underground (or unofficial) Church.

The instrument of this division is the Patriotic Association, guarantor of “normality”, whose statutes violate the integrity of the Catholic faith because it wants to build a Church “independent” from the universal Church and the Holy See. Official Church members agree to register as the “lesser evil”; those of the underground Church categorically refuse to register. But both communities suffer violations of religious freedom and risk elimination: the former from a suffocating control; the latter from arrests, disappearances, killings, destruction.

The situation has become even more radical with the launch of the [New Regulations on Religious Activities on February 1, 2018](#).

Under the new regulations the official communities must submit to the control of the dimensions, colors and position of crosses; the height and position of statues; texts posted online, with a ban on the live streaming of all ceremonies. The underground communities do not even have the right to exist.

Activities carried out in unregistered places and with

unregistered personnel are subject to heavy fines: between 100 and 300 thousand yuan for “unauthorized” activities (Article 64).

In addition to incurring fines, sites that host “illegal” activities will be closed down, seized and subject to forfeiture in state assets. For several months police and representatives of the Religious Affairs Bureau have been systematically meeting bishops, priests and lay faithful of the underground communities for “a cup of tea” and “to advise” them to register in the official communities.]

This explains the various “forced vacations” of [Wenzhou bishop Peter Shao Zhumin](#), or [the indoctrination classes](#) of priests in Hebei, Henan, Inner Mongolia, ...

Underground bishops and priests are “advised” to register in the official communities, taking them to “forced vacations” or to “indoctrination classes”.

It is our duty to at least name the victims of this persecution: Msgr. James Su Zhimin, underground bishop of Baoding (Hebei), who has been missing in police custody since 1997; Fr. Liu Honggeng of Baoding, missing since 2015; [Fr. Wei Heping \(also known as Yu Heping\), who died in 2015 in mysterious and suspicious circumstances.](#)

There are also victims in the official Church: [Msgr. Thaddeus Ma Daqin](#), bishop of Shanghai, since 2012 in isolation and under house arrest for having dared to leave the Patriotic Association; [Fr. Liu Jiangdong, of Zhengzhou](#) (Henan), expelled from his parish in October 2018 and forbidden to live as a priest, for having dared to organize meetings with young people even under the age of 18.

For all of this, since February 2018 many communities have been forcibly closed, [convents](#) and places of worship destroyed with bulldozers, [including some shrines](#) in Shanxi and Guizhou. It is estimated that in 2018 at least 30 Catholic churches

have been closed and destroyed.

But there are also churches (official) that are destroyed in the name of urban expansion – as in [Qianwang and Liangwang \(Shandong\)](#) – and whose land is seized for building development without any compensation.

In the name of nationalist patriotism

Another method of submission and elimination of Catholics is nationalist patriotism, or [“sinicization”](#). According to the dictates of Xi Jinping, the Church must not only assimilate Chinese culture, and express its creed with Chinese categories, but must create theologies, history, works of art according to the dictates of Chinese culture. Again it falls to the Patriotic Association to verify this is being done.

But the race for inculturation has also become iconoclasm with the destruction of works of art from the past (“too Western”) and that of external and internal church decoration, [the demolition of crosses from bell towers, the destruction of domes and facades considered “not Chinese in style”](#). Patriotism obliges communities to hoist the Chinese flag on every religious building, to sing patriotic hymns before services, [to hang a portrait of Xi Jinping even on the altars.](#)

The provisional agreement between China and the Holy See, signed on September 22nd 2018, has not changed this situation. It is true that in some ways, the agreement is a conquest because for the first time in modern China history the Pope is recognized as head of the Catholic Church in China.

However, last December, Wang Zuoran, deputy chief of the United Front and former director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, once again stressed that the principles of independence and self-management will not be eliminated “at any time and under any circumstances”.

In words reportedly shared with one [of these] underground

bishop [s], the Pope is said to have referred that if the agreement was not signed, China threatened to illegally ordain 45 bishops “independent” from the Holy See, creating the basis for a real schism. The agreement was therefore blackmail.

In addition, immediately after the signing of the agreement, in many regions of China the United Front and the Patriotic Association held rallies for priests and bishops explaining to them that “despite the agreement”, they had to work for the implementation of an independent Church. The destruction of crosses, churches, indoctrination sessions, arrests continued just as before the agreement, if not worse.

Four conclusions

1. It is clear that the government and the Chinese Communist Party are engaged in a real religious war to oust the God of Christians and replace Him with the god-Xi Jinping, which implies a total submission to the Communist Party, a condition included in the New Regulations to nurture religion in China. In the name of the sinicization and subjugation religions are distorted until they become simple instruments of collateral support to the Party.
2. What happens to Catholics, also happens to civil society and the business world. In recent years, control of media, social networks, the population, NGOs has grown ... and even in the business world, submission to the Party is required, on fear of kidnappings, arrests and convictions.
3. China ploughs ahead undisturbed trampling on religious rights, civil society and commerce thanks to the indifference of the international community or the servility of many states which in view of possible, rapid economic gains with the Chinese market, turn a blind eye to these violations.
4. The international community and the Chinese government suffer from myopia: they do not realize that religions –

not only Catholicism and Protestantism – are spreading ever more rapidly just as esteem for Party politics is diminishing. The result is an erosion of Chinese society and a greater need for political and economic reforms. Ensuring religious freedom for Christian communities and other faiths could help China to achieve greater cohesion by saving it from chaos.

CHINA: Dozens of Bitter Winter reporters arrested

- Bitter Winter (27.12/2018)
- <https://bit.ly/2BI559d> – Accused of espionage and subversion, at least 45 contributors are in custody; the reporter who filmed a secret camp in Xinjiang “disappeared” after the arrest.

In August 2018, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities designated Bitter Winter a “foreign hostile website” for publishing secret documents and news reports about the CCP’s suppression of religious beliefs and Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.” The authorities have retaliated by launching repeated attempts to hack the website, and by targeting reporters and contributors.

Since August, at least 45 Bitter Winter contributors in mainland China have been arrested for filming incidents of, or gathering news about, the CCP’s persecution of religious freedom and violation of human rights. Reporters are usually detained and interrogated on the charge of “divulging state secrets” or “involvement in infiltration by foreign forces.” Some reporters have been sent to legal education centers” to undergo mandatory indoctrination, while others

have been tortured and abused.

The CCP has intensified its attacks on freedom of the press and those recording human rights violations in China. Reporters Without Borders, an international non-profit based in Paris, France, released a report in December, naming China as the country with the most imprisoned journalists. At least 60 professional and citizen journalists have been arbitrarily detained (strict control of information by Chinese authorities makes it difficult to document the case of every missing journalist, so the number may be higher).

This crackdown on reporters has hit Bitter Winter hard. In mid-October, two contributors were arrested in the southeastern coastal province of Fujian. They are still being detained. The authorities designated them as so-called “first-level persons” that undergo heightened scrutiny, with family visits prohibited. According to insiders, both contributors have been tortured by police.

Another contributor, from Xinjiang, conducted groundbreaking investigative reporting into transformation through education camps,” including their internal construction. That contributor was arrested at the end of September. To date, his whereabouts remain unknown.

Some contributors who have been released were able to report on their interrogations. According to one, he was told, “You’re in China, so you must abide by Chinese laws. If the state deems that you have violated the law, then you have violated the law. If the Party wants to mess with you, it would be like crushing an ant.” The reporter was further told, “Collecting these materials and reporting about these incidents is a subversion of state power; it is espionage.”

Another contributor remarked, “Covering the news is very dangerous, but we must let the world know the reality of the CCP’s persecution of religious beliefs and its abuses of human

rights. They should be condemned and stopped. I think that I will be able to persevere and continue to report.”

Reported by Lin Yijiang