

The Writing on the Wall: National and Global Implications of the Ruling Chinese Communist Party's Domestic and Foreign Policies

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Abstract

The December 2015 crackdown on labour activists was the culmination of a year of the Chinese Communist Party regime's war on China's civil society kicked off with the arrests of the "Feminist Five" in March, followed by the infamous crackdown on civil rights lawyers that began on 5th July and lasted till August. At around the same time, from mid-October to end of December 2015, five owners and staff members of Hong Kong's Mighty Current publishing company and Causeway Bay bookshop which respectively publishes and sells politically dissident books banned by China disappeared under mysterious circumstances (including one while vacationing in Pattaya, Thailand, and another while inspecting warehouse in Hong Kong) and reemerged in mainland China under the custody of the Chinese authorities. While these volatile incidents were unfolding domestically, the year also witnessed the continued rise of China's economic might in the global system. With specific focus on the latest events unfolding from year 2015 to the

present, this paper attempts to interpret such developments especially in terms of government policies with respect to the State's relations with the civil society since the leadership transition from Hu-Wen to Xi-Li administration, the implications of the global reach of China's economic might and soft power in this regard, as well as the current nature of the governing regime of the Chinese Communist Party.

Keywords: *China, Chinese Communist Party, State, civil society, dissent, dissidents, weiquan, rights-defence lawyers, labour activism, liberal democracy, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, Fascism*

JEL classification: *D73, D74, F52, H12*

1. Introduction

Recent years have witnessed several momentous developments in the political economy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) both on the domestic front and in her foreign relations. The miraculous economic performance of the country in the past over three decades has truly transfixed the world, and has resulted in the astonishing projection of her financial strength around the world through her foreign direct investments (FDIs) especially in Africa, her "soft power" offensive including through the establishment of the Confucius Institutes across the world, and her recently pushed initiative for the setting up of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that started operation on 25th December 2015 with a capital of US\$100 billion and the "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR, 一帶一路) proposal that saw continued progress with the creation of the State-owned Silk Road Fund on 29th December 2014 for which the Chinese government has pledged US\$40 billion. Concomitantly, China's increasing military and foreign policy

assertiveness in the East and South China Seas has brought her into different degrees of conflict and confrontation with her perennial nemesis Japan and her smaller Southeast Asian neighbours and their powerful Western ally, the United States of America (US).

Deriving correct interpretation of such fast-paced developments and changes has preoccupied much of the circles of China-watchers these days, with political scientists, economists, sociologists and international relations experts focusing their respective attentions on either the domestic transformation occurring within the PRC or on her foreign relations. This paper attempts to interpret such developments especially in terms of government policies with respect to the State's relations with the civil society since the leadership transition from Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao 胡錦濤 – 溫家寶 to Xi Jinping-Li Keqiang 習近平 – 李克強 administration, and in addition, the implications of the global reach of China's economic might and soft power in this regard. While having specific focus on the latest events unfolding from year 2015 to the present, the paper also delves into the history of imperial China in deriving its interpretation of the current nature of the governing regime of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)¹.

2. Return to the Iron Fist

In what looks like a retrogression from the trend that William Dobson observed in his book *The dictator's learning curve: Inside the global battle for democracy* (2012), there is a general trend since 2014 “that authoritarian regimes were beginning to abandon the quasi-democratic camouflage that allowed them to survive and prosper in the post-Cold War world”², according to Freedom House's report *Freedom in the World 2015 – Discarding democracy: Return to the iron fist*. As discussed from Section 2 to Section 7 of this special issue's introductory

article, “Political Governance and Strategic Relations:: Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus and China’s Rise in the Global System”, the CCP regime led by Xi Jinping, who has projected an image of himself as an admirer of Mao Zedong 毛澤東 despite what Mao did to his father Xi Zhongxun 習仲勳 during the Cultural Revolution, has resorted to campaigns against dissidents reminiscent of the Mao era, including televised confessions, as the latest ones by the abducted publishers and book distributors Gui Minhai 桂民海, Lui Por 呂波, Cheung Chi-ping 張志平 and Lam Wing-kei 林榮基 (owners and staff of Hong Kong 香港’s Mighty Current publishing company (巨流出版社) and Causeway Bay Books (銅鑼灣書店) owned by Mighty Current since 2014) somberly or tearfully admitting to smuggling illicit dissident books into China (and in the case of Gui Minhai also to a hit-and-run case a decade ago), and Swedish activist Peter Dahlin who was arrested in January 2016 for his activities in China with his human rights group, the Chinese Urgent Action Working Group (CUAWG), offering training and support to Chinese human rights lawyers who were trying to provide justice to the country’s disenfranchised and downtrodden. Peter Dahlin was paraded on China state television confessing that “I violated Chinese law through my activities here [...] I have caused harm to the Chinese government. I have hurt the feelings of the Chinese people. I apologise sincerely for this and I am very sorry that this has happened.”³ Several other “suspects” have also been made to confess their crimes on television recently, including Beijing rights-defence lawyer Zhang Kai 張凱 who admitted on TV his crimes of “violating state law, disrupting social order, harming national security” (違反了國家法律, 擾亂了社會秩序, 危害了國家安全).⁴

Besides, the CCP regime is “also resorting to criminal and administrative detention to restrict activists instead of softer tactics like house arrest or informal interrogations”, and according to *FIW 2015*, has

“made use of one of the Cold War’s most chilling instruments, the placement of dissidents in psychiatric hospitals”. This infamous and inhuman Soviet instrument of repression has also made a comeback in today’s Russia.⁵ The appearance of Gui Minhai, Peter Dahlin, Gao Yu 高瑜 and various others in the spate of televised self-incriminations since President Xi Jinping took power three years ago seems to represent an adaptation of the kind of forced public confessions by “enemies of the state” in the Mao era – especially during the tumultuous period of Cultural Revolution – to new technology that now makes it possible for everybody to see these on prime-time television, as New York University’s Professor Jerome Cohen, a foremost scholar on China’s legal system, observes. Recalling that Xi Jinping’s father Xi Zhongxun, Mao’s close comrade during the Chinese Soviet period, Long March and the Civil War era, who was publicly abused and humiliated during the Cultural Revolution, in fact advocated in 1983 the enactment of a law that would guarantee everyone in China the right to express differing opinion, Professor Cohen told CNN, “I hope Xi follows his father’s advice rather than continuing along this path. But I don’t have my hopes too high.”⁶

3. PRC the Racketeer State

Analysing historical European experience, the late Professor Charles Tilly in his 1985 paper “War making and state making as organized crime” postulates that “a portrait of war makers and state makers as coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs bears a far greater resemblance to the facts than do its chief alternatives: the idea of a social contract, the idea of an open market in which operators of armies and states offer services to willing consumers, the idea of a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government.” (p. 169) While

Tilly warns of the “faulty implicit comparisons between today’s Third World and yesterday’s Europe”, one can nevertheless argue that a Third World country like China which is not post-colonial has like the European countries her military development and apparatus for protection developed from within rather than inherited from any colonial masters.

According to Tilly, a “racketeer” government exists if we

[...] consider the definition of a racketeer as someone who creates a threat and then charges for its reduction. Governments’ provision of protection, by this standard, often qualifies as racketeering. To the extent that the threats against which a given government protects its citizens are imaginary or are consequences of its own activities, the government has organized a protection racket. Since governments themselves commonly simulate, stimulate, or even fabricate threats of external war and since the repressive and extractive activities of governments often constitute the largest current threats to the livelihoods of their own citizens, many governments operate in essentially the same ways as racketeers.

(Tilly, 1985: 171)

This is the governance model of a ruling political party whose paramount concern being its own perpetual unchallenged rule that is resorting to all means, both State-dictated legal measures (anti-subversion laws, sedition acts, internal security acts, social harmony laws, anti-terrorism laws, anti-secession laws etc. which are further twisted in practice to serve the purpose of muzzling free speech and harassing or jailing dissidents) and extrajudicial actions (using agents or unidentified thugs to harass, beat up and kidnap, or even attempt to murder, dissident writers, editors, publishers, book distributors,

journalists and civil rights lawyers) as well as a combination of both, to provide its criminal action with a legal topping, or in official parlance, to “preserve social harmony” of its “glorious era of peace and prosperity” (*taiping shengshi* 太平盛世) against the threat of “a small group of people” (*yi xiaozui ren* 一小叢人) who are accused of being in complicity with foreign enemies to try to discredit the government and to disrupt social harmony or to split the nation.

3.1. A CCP-defined Social Contract

The CCP government-defined threats to the country and people, internal and external, are in fact well identified, whether they be non-governmental civil-societal groups like the New Citizens’ Movement (*Zhongguo Xin Gongmin Yundong* 中國新公民運動), or worker’s groups independent of the nationalised All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU, 中華全國總工會), or outspoken academics or activists engaged in ethnic minority rights advocacy, civil rights lawyers who take up cases which the government wish the society to ignore, or any individual writers, artists and grassroots activists who become too vocal in criticising CCP government’s policies, not to mention those more outright democracy activists who directly challenge CCP’s self-declared moral right to deny Chinese citizens free political choice through multi-party elections. Continuous crackdowns, like Mao’s campaign against the “five black types” (*hei wu lei* 黑五類, i.e. landlords, wealthy peasants, anti-revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists) during the Cultural Revolution, have to be conducted to protect the Chinese nation from such threats, and in this process, the Party asks for the unquestioning loyalty and support from the Chinese people – not as a choice, but as an obligation, a CCP-defined social contract.

Like the great emperors in China’s past, whether they be Ch’in Shih-Huangti 秦始皇帝 (Qin Shihuangdi, the “First Emperor of Ch’in”

whom Chairman Mao idolised, whose dynasty name “Ch’in” gave rise to “China”, the name by which the country has since been known to the West, and whose self-invented title *huangti* (“emperor”) would continue to be borne by Chinese rulers for the following two millennia), Han Wudi 漢武帝 (Han Wudi, whose dynasty name “Han 漢” became the major autoglossonym⁷ of China’s dominant ethnic group that constitutes 92 per cent of the country’s population today), T’ang T’ai-tsung 唐太宗 (Tang Taizong), Sung Tai-tsu 宋太祖 (Song Taizu) or Genghis Khan⁸ (Yüan Tai-tsu 元太祖, Yuan Taizu) whom Mao Zedong evoked in his celebrated poem *Snow* (沁園春·雪), or the Ch’ing 清 (Qing) Dynasty emperors K’ang-hsi 康熙 (Kangxi), Yung-cheng 雍正 (Yongzheng) and Ch’ien-lung 乾隆 (Qianlong) in famed writer Eryue He 二月河’s novel trilogy and the phenomenal television series adapted therefrom, or First Emperor of Ch’in again in celebrity director Zhang Yimou 張藝謀’s national-glory-through-unity-is-all-that-counts epic film *Hero* (*Yingxiong* 英雄), today’s CCP demands to be considered a modern sage-king, a truly benevolent dictator who has brought renewed glory and prosperity, unity and stability to the long-suffering Chinese nation, and a harbinger of future hope of China, and it asks, as a moral right, that all dissenters and nonconformists, domestic and overseas, to be silenced and to let it do its good work.

3.2. State Racketeerism with Fascist Moral Rectitude

The CCP regime, in other words, embodies the late Professor Charles Tilly’s concept of a racketeer government, par excellence, yet with a professed pretension of moral rectitude absent in private racketeer syndicates. One could say that the term could be applied to any other authoritarian regimes – in Russia, in Thailand, in Zimbabwe, etc. – but these regimes lack, and are conscious of lacking, a moral legitimacy in maintaining and prolonging authoritarian rule. Hence these authoritarian

regimes have to manoeuvre within a constitutionally promised multiparty liberal democratic system which exists at least in writing in a general format, as generally described in William Dobson's *The dictator's learning curve: Inside the global battle for democracy* (2012). While Dobson includes China too, the Leninist backbone of this "degenerative totalitarian" regime (see Hsu, 2003) run by arguably the most successful triad in Chinese history nevertheless provides it with a Fascist moral rectitude for its authoritarian rule and hence there needs not be a pretension of free political choice or a multiparty electoral system wherein to manoeuvre. In this ultimate realm of State racketeering, anyone who complains about the price of protection (denial of civil liberties and political freedom) has to be a "subversive" (bending on subverting State power) who are often accused of committing another crime (as in the high-profile case of Gao Yu) – leaking State secrets by connecting with foreign human rights organisations or journalists, much akin to the ultimate sacrilege of breaking the code of *omertà* in the world of the most well-known private protection racket, *La Cosa Nostra* – the Sicilian Mafia.

Such fear bordering on outright political and ideological xenophobia towards presumed "collusion with outside forces" which has become part of the common charges against journalists and academics whom the Party-State is coming after was even loudly expressed against the country's highly respected and influential government think tank, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the early period of the Xi Jinping administration's intense crackdown on liberal intellectuals and activists, and tightening of its grip on the media, amidst his high-profile sweeping anti-corruption and ideological campaigns targeting the civil service and state-owned enterprises, when a senior party discipline inspector accused CASS of being "infiltrated by foreign forces" and "conducting illegal collusion during [politically] sensitive times".

During a session on Xi Jinping's thoughts on party discipline at CASS in June 2014, Zhang Yingwei 張英偉 who headed a group sent to CASS by the Communist Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) said the academy had "ideological problems" including "illegal collusion" between CASS experts and foreign interests at sensitive times, allowing undue foreign influence in sensitive issues, using the Internet to promote theories that played into the hands of foreign powers and using academic research as a guise for other purposes.⁹ This represented the same rationale behind the action taken against the supposedly politically harmless "Feminist Five", the most sustained crackdown on the NGOs and civil rights lawyers witnessed in two decades and the arrest of Peter Dahlin, which notably set the stage for the Xi Jinping administration to pass a controversial new law with a key element to cut foreign funding to Chinese NGOs and possibly stricter governing of foreign NGOs in the country on grounds of national security.¹⁰

To the extent that the threats – towards social harmony, towards national unity and towards PRC's sovereignty claim over almost all of East and South China Seas – that the Party-State implicitly or explicitly evokes to justify its repressive actions to "protect" its citizens are fabricated, exaggerated or entirely the consequences of its own activities in the sense that the "threats" are challenges against Party-defined "democratisation with one-party leadership under socialism with Chinese characteristics" – supposedly a new path of democratisation that China has created and ushered in in its role as a new-model democratising country (Zhou, 2013: 113-114) – the Party-State, in Charles Tilly's model, operates in essentially the same ways as a protection racket (Tilly, 1985: 171).

4. From “Degenerative Totalitarianism” to Fascist Nationalist Leninist State Corporatism

Representing an ideology, “Fascism” has always been a controversial term on whose exact nature historians, political scientists and scholars in other fields have long engaged in heated debate. George Orwell, in his *As I Please* column essay “What is Fascism?” for *Tribune* on March 24, 1944, a day when the Nazi’s SS were murdering 335 political prisoners in the Ardeatine Caves outside Rome, describes the word “Fascism” as “almost entirely meaningless”, and being used in conversation even more wildly than in print, for he had “heard it applied to farmers, shopkeepers, Social Credit, corporal punishment, fox-hunting, bull-fighting, the 1922 Committee, the 1941 Committee, Kipling, Gandhi, Chiang Kai-Shek, homosexuality, Priestley’s broadcasts, Youth Hostels, astrology, women, dogs and I do not know what else.”¹¹ Yet, he did admit that

[...] underneath all this mess there does lie a kind of buried meaning. To begin with, it is clear that there are very great differences, some of them easy to point out and not easy to explain away, between the régimes called Fascist and those called democratic [...] even the people who recklessly fling the word ‘Fascist’ in every direction attach at any rate an emotional significance to it. By ‘Fascism’ they mean, roughly speaking, something cruel, unscrupulous, arrogant, obscurantist, anti-liberal and anti-working-class. Except for the relatively small number of Fascist sympathizers, almost any English person would accept ‘bully’ as a synonym for ‘Fascist’.

That said, Orwell did recognise Fascism as “also a political and economic system” while lamenting that:

Why, then, cannot we have a clear and generally accepted definition of it? Alas! we shall not get one – not yet, anyway. [...] All one can do for the moment is to use the word with a certain amount of circumspection and not, as is usually done, degrade it to the level of a swearword.¹²

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) gave a more specific description for “classic Fascism” (as in Benito Mussolini’s Italy and Adolf Hitler’s Germany) as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 Characteristics of “Classic Fascism” (Gross, 1980)

Characteristics of “Classic Fascism”
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A tight Government-Big Business oligarchy with charismatic dictator or figurehead, and expansionist, scapegoating, and nationalistic ideologies. 2. Liquidation or minimalization 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. 6. Anxiety relief through participatory spectacles, mass action, and genuine bloodletting. 7. Internal viability based on sustained, frantic, and eventually self-destructive expansion.

Source: Gross (1980: 170).¹³

Nevertheless, the definitional conundrum remains. “For much of the U.S. left, fascism is little more than an epithet – simply another way to say ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ applied loosely to quite different social movements as well as to various aspects and elements of capitalist reaction”, says Don Hamerquist in “Fascism & anti-fascism” (2002), “But for those with more of a ‘theoretical bent’ fascism in essence is, and always has been, a ‘gorilla’ form of capitalism. That is, fascism is a system of capitalist rule that would be more reactionary, more repressive, more imperialist, and more racist and genocidal than current ‘normality’ of ruling class policy.”¹⁴ In opposition to that position, Hamerquist is of the opinion that Fascism “is not a paper tiger or a symbolic target but a real and immediate danger” whose nature, though, is not self-evident and thus requires clear explanation and the rejection of some conventional wisdom. “Fascism is not a danger because it is ruling class policy or is about to be adopted as policy. Not even because it could have major influences on this policy”, says Hamerquist with regard to the danger of today’s (neo-)fascism for the left, “The real danger presented by the emerging fascist movements and organizations is that they might gain a mass following among potentially insurgent workers and declassed strata through an historic default of the left. This default is more than a possibility, it is a probability, and if it happens it will cause massive damage to the potential for a liberatory anti-capitalist insurgency.”¹⁵

Without seeing Fascism too specifically from the perspective of the left, a workable definition of Fascism today, instead of simply using it as a label for some movement or governing model one considers “bad” or “very bad”, comes from Mathews N. Lyons. Lyons, an independent scholar who studies reactionary and supremacist movements, describes Fascism’s approach to politics as “both populist – in that it seeks to activate ‘the people’ as a whole against perceived oppressors or enemies

– and elitist – in that it treats the people’s will as embodied in a select group, or often one supreme leader, from whom authority proceeds downward.”¹⁶

Placed in the context of China’s ruling CCP, there is no lack of perceived enemies. There is always Japan, about whose war atrocities in World War II the CCP has never pulled back from reminding its compliant subjects (including the *fengqing* 愤青 – literally “angry youths” – who are never hesitant to take to the streets or resort to cyber bullying to defend national glory as far as their actions would not get them into trouble with their CCP overlords) while the CCP imposed a forced public amnesia over its own atrocities committed in its 1989 crackdown, and whose leaders’ expression of regret over war atrocities would never satisfy the demand for apologies the CCP has never forgotten to stoke up while the CCP itself has never apologised for all the atrocities it inflicted on China’s citizens during Mao’s years of horror and in the 1989 Beijing massacre and submitted them to the citizens’ judgment through the ballot box. There is America, who is meddlesome, imperialist, hegemonic and always bending on supporting the splittists working to break up the great Chinese nation. And there is any party who has the audacity to insist that Taiwan (ROC) is an independent, sovereign country, Chinese or non-Chinese, or to support the Tibetans’, Uyghurs’ or Hong Kong people’s struggle for freedom and autonomy, and thus “hurts the feelings of the Chinese people”. And among members of the ethnic minorities, anyone who expresses ingratitude towards the Han-dominated central State by demanding real autonomy, political and economic, beyond the ostensible representation of “chairmanship” of an ethnic “autonomous” region, and the exercise of the right of ethnic self-determination to resist internal colonialism and assimilation to the dominant Han 漢 Chinese culture and language, i.e. to resist to be just politically-correct “exotic” minorities¹⁷.

Lyons states further that Fascism “seeks to organise a cadre-led mass movement in a drive to seize state power [...] to forcibly subordinate all spheres of society to its ideological vision of organic community, usually through a totalitarian state [and both] as a movement and a regime [...] uses mass organizations as a system of integration and control, and uses organised violence to suppress opposition, although the scale of violence varies widely.”¹⁸ Though seems to have undergone tremendous transformation in image and essence since the Mao days, the Leninist nature of CCP’s governing model can never be doubted or ignored. As Lenin was sometimes said to have stood Marx on his head (in an analogy to Marx’s claim that he had stood Hegel on his head), Lenin’s main ideological contrast vis-à-vis Marx in the former’s support of the idea of a dictatorship (in contrast to Marx’s view of the state as a feature of class society to be used by a politically conscious working class to bring about the transfer of power from the bourgeoisie and then be abolished) has clearly remained the ideological mainstay from the Maoist era to the present post-economic reform era of the CCP:

Now we are repeating what was approved by the Central EC two years ago ... Namely, that the Soviet Socialist Democracy is in no way inconsistent with the rule and dictatorship of one person; that the will of a class is at best realised by a Dictator who sometimes will accomplish more by himself and is frequently more needed.

(Lenin’s “On Economic Reconstruction” speech on
31st March 1920, in *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works*,
Vol. 17, p. 89. First Russian Edition)¹⁹

Or dictatorship of a Party which would not in any way tolerate any real or potential challenge to its monopoly of political power through demand for multi-party competitive elections that it labels as a foreign

ploy to bring about a “colour revolution” or “peaceful evolution” to destabilise China, to “hurt the feelings of the Chinese people”.

While being hostile to Marxism, liberalism, and conservatism, yet borrowing concepts and practices from all three, Fascism, as Lyons points out further, “rejects the principles of class struggle and workers’ internationalism as threats to national or racial unity [...] rejects the liberal doctrines of individual autonomy and rights, political pluralism, and representative government [and] often romanticises the past as inspiration for national rebirth.”²⁰

5. Romanticising Dynastic Glory: Projecting *Taiping Shengshi* (Era of Peace and Prosperity) of a Continued CCP Future

On a recent evening at an arts center by the Thames, one young Chinese man stood up, glaring at the author [Ma Jian, the dissident novelist forced to leave China in 1987] on the podium. Eyes brimming with self-righteous earnestness, he said: “You can praise democracy as much as you like, but how can you ignore that China has lifted 300 million people out of poverty in the past 15 years? That is a major human-rights achievement. Russia and India have democracy, but look where they are,” he exclaimed, turning to the rest of the audience.

(Salil Tripathi, 2008b: 37)²¹

The “young Chinese man” referred to by London-based writer Salil Tripathi is today archetypical of a world-wide club of Sinophiliac cheerleaders – businesses, corporate leaders, diplomats, academics, overseas Chinese businessmen and community leaders. Just a proof of how money and/or nationalistic glory can buy loyalty, obedience, sycophancy, and indifference to or oblivion of the trampling on human rights, freedom and human dignity. As mentioned, a cultural element

cannot be ignored, neither can historical experience. To judge the average Chinese citizens' and overseas Chinese community leaders' attitude, outlook, worldview and behaviour from the point of view of the Western world with its deep-rooted Renaissance values and the French revolutionary ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* is futile. The cultural gap between these and the millennia-long dogmatic imperial-sanctioned Confucian worldview is wide.

5.1. The “Peace of Suppression”: An Existential Choice?

Chinese writer Mo Yan 莫言 (meaning “don’t speak”, nom de plume of Guan Moye 管謨業), also vice-chairman of the Communist Party-backed, State-run Chinese Writers’ Association, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature of 2012 was heavily criticised by many Chinese dissident writers and artists including, among others, Ma Jian 馬建, Yu Jie 余杰, Ai Weiwei 艾未未, Wen Yunchao 溫雲超, Mo Zhixu 莫之許 and Zhang Yihe 章詒和 for a complete lack of solidarity with and support for other Chinese writers and intellectuals who were punished or detained by the CCP regime for exercising their rights of free expression, and more specifically for being a member of a team of a hundred prominent writers in 2011 to hand-copy Mao Zedong’s influential “Yan’an Talks on Literature and Art” (毛澤東《在延安文藝座談會上的講話》) in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the speech Mao delivered on 28th May 1942 that forced writers to put their talent in the service of the Chinese Communist Party. This is a speech wherein Mao described the writer’s responsibility to place politics before art, how art should serve Communism – a speech that began decades of government control over Chinese writers and artists, a speech that served as the intellectual hand shackles on Chinese writers and artists throughout the Mao era, then again being held up for adulation by the CCP regime after the 1989 Beijing massacre, a speech with which

Mo Yan not only publicly agreed but has gone further to justify as a historical necessity that played a positive role in its time. This is not a surprise in view of Mo Yan's role as the vice-chairman of the CCP State-run Chinese Writers' Association, an instrument of thought control over China's writers, his defending State censorship on writings as something as necessary as airport security checks²², and his walking out of a literary symposium at the Frankfurt Book Fair of October 2009 along with Chinese officials to protest the presence of two dissident writers, Dai Qing 戴晴 and Bei Ling 貝嶺²³.

The dedicate position of the "State writer" Mo Yan has resulted in a series of embarrassing events three years earlier at the 2009 Frankfurt Book Fair, in addition to his infamous walkout, as *The New York Times's* correspondent Didi Kirsten Tatlow who covered the event relates²⁴:

After his opening speech at Frankfurt, Mr. Mo seemed to disappear. My notes record: "Things went downhill from there. Mo skipped his first public reading, where he had been due to inaugurate a new stage. I arrived five minutes early to find long faces at the stand of Horlemann Verlag, German publisher of 'Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out,'" Mr. Mo's new book.

"Fifteen minutes ago, according to a tight-lipped man with a company name tag on his lapel, someone rang to cancel. He didn't identify himself, but said he was with the Chinese delegation. No reason given. A slight? The man shrugged. His face said it all. Later, Mo would skip a major event at the Blue Sofa, hosted by German state television broadcaster ZDF," my notes continue.

According to literary agents and publishers, Mr. Mo was irritated by the endless political questions and, along with many delegation members, deliberately avoided events. Mr. Don't Speak became Mr. No Show.

Mo Yan's acquiescence on CCP's brutal suppression on dissent in fact led to a joke circulating after Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2012: "China has three Nobel Prize winners. The first can't get in [referring to dissident writer Gao Xingjian who took French citizenship, laureate of Nobel Prize in Literature, 2000], the second can't get out [referring to still-jailed dissident writer and democracy activist Liu Xiaobo, laureate of Nobel Peace Prize, 2010], and the third is 'Don't Speak'"²⁵

It is probably too easy for people not living under the boot of this ruthless authoritarian regime to heap harsh criticisms on those intellectuals who have chosen to censor themselves and work with their overlord, as Perry Link concludes his article "Does this writer deserve the Prize?" in *The New York Review of Books* (6th December 2012):

Chinese writers today, whether "inside the system" or not, all must choose how they will relate to their country's authoritarian government. This inevitably involves calculations, trade-offs, and the playing of cards in various ways. Liu Xiaobo's choices have been highly unusual. Mo Yan's responses are more "normal," closer to the center of a bell curve. It would be wrong for spectators like you and me, who enjoy the comfort of distance, to demand that Mo Yan risk all and be another Liu Xiaobo. But it would be even more wrong to mistake the clear difference between the two.

As Mo Yan himself put it bluntly, "A lot of people are now saying about me, 'Mo Yan is a state writer.' It's true, insofar as like the authors Yu Hua [余華] and Su Tong [蘇童], 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."²⁶ As Salman Rushdie, the thirteenth on *The Times's* 2008 list of the fifty greatest

British writers since 1945 and the literary world's most well-known fugitive from dogmatic terror, said in an interview by writer Salil Tripathi (2008a)²⁷, “Defending free speech in absolute terms may take us into a turbulent, hurtful arena. If we say nothing, we will have peace. But it is the peace of suppression, and that’s the choice we have to make.” It is also a choice of safety via ignorance and selective amnesia, as so many intellectuals in imperial China had long learned as a safe way to live and how the Sung dynasty poet Su Shih 蘇軾 (Su Shi, also Su Tung-p’o 蘇東坡, Su Dongpo) lamented in his poem *On the birth of a son* (洗兒):

人皆養子望聰明。我被聰明誤一生。惟願孩兒愚且魯，無災無難到公卿。

*Translation*²⁸:

Families when a child is born
 Hope it will turn out intelligent.
 I, through intelligence
 Having wrecked my whole life,
 Only hope that the baby will prove
 Ignorant and stupid.
 Then he'll be happy all his days
 And grow into a cabinet minister.

Some, like Mo Yan and myriad others, have chosen the peace of suppression. But as Lao Tzu 老子 (c. 571-471 BC) said, “民不畏死，奈何以死懼之？” [The people do not fear at all to die; / What’s gained therefore by threat’ning them with death?] (*Tao Te Ching* 《道德經》，Chapter 74), some rare breed like Liu Xiaobo 劉曉波 or Ilham Tohti and other dissidents past and present have made an unusual choice and opted

for personal turbulence in defending their rights and dignity as writers, academics, citizens and those of their fellow citizens.

However, in hand-copying Mao's "Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art", Mo Yan was just a new scholar following the line of venerated Chinese scholars over the dynasties flashing their loyalty for the infallible Son of Heaven while lamenting the poor masses' plight in the hands of the corrupt officials. Thus was drawn the line in the sand going beyond which to challenge the emperor's divine right to rule, his mandate from heaven, would be to bring doom on oneself. It is easy to attribute the scholars' "blind" loyalty towards the emperor to Confucian culture, but in practical terms, it all boils down to basic survival – a compromise in principle that they have to make while trying to work within the system to sort out problems and injustices faced by the masses. After all, what can a dead scholar or one who is rotting in jail do for the betterment of the world?

The CCP's argument – one which the cheerleaders are rallying around – is simple: it is demanding the people to abide by a basic compromise – a governing principle some call "market-Leninism", as described by Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn (1995), or capitalism with Chinese characteristics: what Bertolt Brecht described as "*Erst kommt das fressen und dann die moral*" [morality can only follow food] or Salil Tripathi summed up pithily, "rice bowl 1, free speech 0".²⁹

Culture-based arguments have their limitations, of course. While not denying the role that external factors (and American foreign policy post-World War II or during the Cold War) were playing in the democratisation of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, the fact that these three East Asian countries are able to sustain their human rights- and free speech-respecting vibrant, stable liberal multi-party democratic systems ever since despite their similarly imperial absolutist Confucian past, seems to be flying in the face of such cultural determinism. On the other

hand, the fact that another Asian giant, India, a multi-party liberal democracy, has also been able to lift nearly 100 million people out of absolute poverty since the country's own economic reforms began in 1991 – without having to curb civil liberties and political freedom or to suppress dissent – is also clearly flying in the face of the great Chinese compromise that CCP is trying to convince everyone as inevitable.³⁰

However, Mo Yan was not alone in this expression of sycophancy and servility at their best. With him hand-copying Mao's "Yan'an Talks" were a hundred of China's other prominent writers and artists, including well-known personalities like He Jingzhi 賀敬之, Wang Meng 王蒙, Eryue He and Jia Ping'ao 賈平凹.

5.2. Imperial Glory Redux: The Feel-Good Factor?

Eryue He (nom de plume of Ling Jiefang 凌解放) is best known for his biographical novels of three Ch'ing-Dynasty emperors – K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung – which have all been adapted into award-winning television series in China. Both the books and the television series had turned into quite a phenomenon in China and Overseas Chinese communities outside China and made Eryue He some sort of a celebrity writer. Like celebrated director Zhang Yimou's star-studded, national-unity-is-all-that-counts 2002 epic film *Yingxiong* (*Hero*), the success of Eryue He's "three emperors" series of books (1988-1996) and television series (1997-2002) adapted from them significantly reflects today's newly revived pride coming with rising economic and military strength which the CCP has effectively exploited to promote a new mix of patriotism-induced nationalism to mobilise loyal support for the Party-State.

The intelligentsia and masses have indeed responded well – witness the continuing great success of the sedulously crafted films and television series on China's past great emperors that coated brutality and

despotism with beautiful set, scenery and choreography, intoxicating audience with the prime sense of national greatness by pushing the judgment of social justice and the masses' freedom and dignity into negligible importance (Liu, 2009: 203-204), as a Sicilian proverb says, “*Cu è surdu, orbu e taci, campa cent'anni 'mpaci*” [he who is deaf, blind, and silent will live a hundred years in peace]. In this regard China's prisoner of conscience and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo in *Daguo chenlun* 大國沉淪 [great nation drowning] (2009) sees the present wave of rising nationalistic *daguo jueqi* 大國崛起 (the rise of a great nation) sentiments that the CCP is riding on as not simply a result of CCP's ideological indoctrination but rather rooted in the traditional Great Han-ism and the egocentrism of *t'ien-hsia* 天下 (“under the heaven”, *tianxia*) mentality (Liu, 2009: 201-202) which was related to the worldview of “普天之下，莫非王土，率土之濱，莫非王臣” (“all land under the heaven belongs to the Emperor and all people on the land extending to the coast are subjects of the Emperor”, from the classic *Tso Chuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Zhuan*) compiled c. 389 BC).

5.3. Political Culture in Transformation

One of the earliest definitions of political culture is: “the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values, which defines the situation in which political action takes place” – that given by Harvard professor Sidney Verba (1965: 513). It has been observed how Marxism was transformed when it came into contact with traditional Chinese political culture and turned into the dynastic, semi-Confucian political hybrid of Maoism and other brands in Confucian East Asia (e.g., Vietnam, but especially North Korea), or in the religious domain how Buddhism was transformed when it merged with traditional Taoist-Confucian tradition to give rise to Mahayana Buddhism in China or how it meshed with traditional Tibetan beliefs to give rise to Lamaism. Back

to political development, it has been observed how the transplanted liberal democracy brought in and imposed by the American victors on post-World War II Japan merged with the local Confucian-Shintoist tradition and worldview and the vestiges of the former feudal class system to give rise to the distinctive deferential political culture and reverence for authority which students of the East Asian developmental model note with theoretical enthusiasm in trying to explain the economic success of Japan and the four East Asian Tigers.

The CCP's success today in not only keeping its citizens cowed but actually in convincing most of its economically contented, patriotically fulfilled deferential subjects of their fortune to finally have an enlightened ruler (*mingjun* 明君) cannot be fully grasped without looking back into the long dynastic imperial history of China that shaped the deep-rooted political culture of the country, as we have seen earlier in the paper. After all, as Martin Jacques stressed, China is not a nation-state, but more than that, a civilisational state.³¹

5.4. Imperial Heritage

It is not too far off if we say that the PRC embodies the real essence of the traditional Chinese civilisational state. PRC is the real inheritor of the Chinese political tradition maintained through the millennia, whether in terms of the CCP State's interaction with its citizens, its dealings with the minority-inhabited frontier regions, or its foreign policy. The ROC on mainland is but an aberrational interlude whose original ideals had never been realised. China watchers in the West love to comment that despite admitting the horrors of the Cultural Revolution and the failure of Mao Zedong's radical collectivist economic policy, today's new leaders of the CCP would not discredit Mao because to do so would be shaking the foundation of the CCP's legitimacy. The implication is: what Mao represents is in all practicality dead. In reality, is this really so?

There is one most celebrated poem of Mao Zedong, *Snow* (沁園春•雪)³², in which Mao compared himself to the founding emperors of Ch'in (Qin), Han, T'ang (Tang) and Sung (Song) dynasties and Genghis Khan, the founder of the ancient Mongol empire that included Yüan-dynasty China. The poem was most often seen as an expression of Mao's self-aggrandisement:

北國風光，千里冰封，萬里雪飄。望長城內外，惟餘莽莽；大河上下，頓失滔滔。山舞銀蛇，原馳蠟象，欲與天公試比高。須晴日，看紅裝素裹，分外妖嬈。
江山如此多嬌，引無數英雄競折腰。惜秦皇漢武，略輸文采；唐宗宋祖，稍遜風騷。一代天驕，成吉思汗，只識彎弓射大雕。俱往矣，數風流人物，還看今朝。

*Translation*³³:

Look at the landscape of northern China:
The vast frozen land is covered with ice,
And the snow flits far-flung in the sky.
On both sides of the Great Wall,
The empty wilderness survives;
From upriver to downstream,
The roaring currents disappear.
The mountains dance like silver snakes,
The highlands slither like huge wax elephants,
As though they would like to compete with the heavenly God to see
who is higher.
When one glances at it on a fine day,
The land turns into a fair lady, who'd make-up with rouge, and
garmented in white –
That is extremely elegant and charming.

The territory is so gorgeous, and enchantment
 That had lured countless heroes to rush in, bend and bow.
 What a pity, the First Emperor of Ch'in and Emperor Wu of Han
 Were men lack of literary grace;
 Emperor T'ai-tsung of T'ang and Emperor T'ai-tsu of Sung
 Were short of spirit and strength.
 That proud son of Heaven,
 Genghis Khan,
 Knew only how to stretch the bow to shoot huge eagles.
 Alas, they are now gone as history:
 The real great hero,
 Is coming up now.

It is notable that all of these great emperors – First Emperor of the Ch'in Dynasty (秦始皇帝, ruling his unified China from 220 to 210 BC), Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (漢武帝, ruling China from 140 to 87 BC), Emperor T'ai-tsung of the T'ang Dynasty (唐太宗, ruling China from AD 626 to 649), Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Sung (Song) Dynasty (宋太祖, ruling China from AD 960 to 976) and Genghis Khan (founder of the Mongol Empire that included Yüan-dynasty (AD 1271–1368) China; posthumously declared the founder of the Yüan Dynasty as Emperor T'ai-tsu (元太祖)) – whom Mao compared himself to and aspired to surpass in achievement were empire builders and/or dynasty founders who no doubt contributed to how China looks today. Nevertheless, one should not ignore the fact that each of them was also murderer of hundreds of thousands of innocent people through military campaigns and conquests which often bordered on the genocidal, and in the case of Genghis Khan, a genocidal maniac whose trail of murder through Asia to Europe took at least forty million lives – a feat surpassed in the league of murderous dictators only by Mao himself and the CCP he led through

the disastrous Great Leap Forward (*dayuejin* 大躍進), the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*wuchanjieji wenhua dageming* 無產階級文化大革命) years of madness and various other murderous political campaigns for which the CCP till today has never apologised to the people or submitted to the judgement of the people through the ballot.

However, re-reading it from a broader perspective, this poem of Mao, definitely reflecting the outlook that CCP represents or rather what Mao would want it to represent, shows us a CCP that equates its era of governance to the greatest heights of the Chinese dynasties. After all, the era of a founding emperor (as referred mostly to in Mao's poem *Snow*) was usually the strongest part of a dynasty – Ch'in Shih-huangti, Han Kao-tsu 漢高祖 (Han Gaozu), T'ang T'ai-tsung (second emperor of the T'ang Dynasty but also the co-founder of the dynasty), Sung T'ai-tsu, Kublai Khan³⁴ (Yüan Shih-tsu 元世祖, Yuan Shizu), Ming T'ai-tsu 明太祖 (Ming Taizu) ... but sometimes the second or third emperor's reign too like those of Yung-cheng, K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung of the Ch'ing Dynasty – before the dynasty began to go into decline (although in the case of Han Wu-ti, he was the seventh and longest-reigning emperor of the Han dynasty).

5.5. A Global “Chinoiserie” Revival

Such image of grandeur is selling well too beyond China's borders further feeding the unending adulation of the universal Sinophiles, which Dirlik and Prazniak (2012) compare to the Western *Chinoiserie* during the 17th and 18th Centuries, and dampening any criticism of the CCP regime's brutal repression of dissent at home:

[...] criticism of the PRC seems perfunctory when compared to threats of embargoes and wars against comparable dictatorial regimes. Power relations, economic interests, and a long standing culturalist

fascination with China combine to set China apart from other such regimes. Indeed, there has been an ongoing celebration of the PRC's development under the leadership of the Communist Party that recalls memories of the *Chinoiserie* that took Europe by storm three centuries ago.

(Dirlik and Prazniak, 2012: 290)

Nevertheless, while these ages of national grandeur were eras when China reached its highest glory in the ancient world, they also represented ages of great political brutality as shown in the next two subsections below.

On the other hand, Mao had an anti-Confucian streak and he clearly preferred Legalism (*fajia* 法家) and this flavour is obvious in CCP's policies till now (e.g. the sometimes brutal implementation of one-child policy). Mao revered the First Emperor of the Ch'in Dynasty who reportedly burned Confucian canons and buried Confucian scholars alive.³⁵ This Maoist political-philosophical line has not changed in the CCP (e.g. Zhang Yimou's epic movie *Hero*, set during the reign of Ch'in Shih-Huangti) although that does not hinder today's CCP from exploiting Confucius' name where it find it useful, e.g., the Confucius Institutes, to project itself as a true guardian of Chinese traditions.

5.6. Repression during the Shengshi (Era of Prosperity): The Imperial Chinese Tradition of Literary Inquisition

The most important weapon in my arsenal is the dictionary. Let me choose the words ... by which you think and I will tell you what and how to think.

(Joseph Stalin (Иосиф Сталин), *Words*, n.p., n.d.,
quoted in Sleeper, 1987, p. 191)

K'ang-hsi's, Yung-cheng's and Ch'ien-lung's reigns did bring about long-term peace, stability and prosperity after years of war and chaos, but they were also eras of ruthless suppression of dissent. K'ang-hsi is considered one of China's greatest emperors who managed to bring all of Han China proper, Taiwan, the Manchuria region as well part of the Russian Far East also known as Outer Manchuria, both Inner and Outer Mongolia (today's Republic of Mongolia), and Tibet proper under Ch'ing Empire's control, and began the "Prosperous Era of K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung" (康乾盛世) or "Prosperous Era of K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung" (康雍乾盛世) or "High Ch'ing" (1683-1839), which outlived him. Yung-cheng's reign (1722 till his death in 1735), while much shorter than that of his father (K'ang-hsi, 1661 till his death in 1722) and of his son (Ch'ien-lung, 1735-1796 but retained ultimate power as emperor emeritus until his death in 1799), represented the continuation of the era of peace and prosperity (*taiping shengshi*) initiated by his father, further establishing Ch'ing-Dynasty China as the most powerful empire in Asia and extending the *Pax Sinica* began under his father's reign later known as the "Prosperous Era of K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung". Ch'ien-lung's reign saw the continuation of the era before decline set in towards the end of his rule.

Nevertheless, largely ignored by the masses who are mesmerised by the image of national glory promoted in today's commercialised popular culture is the ruthless and gruesome suppression of dissent during that era of *Pax Sinica* under the three Ch'ing emperors, not to mention the human miseries inflicted upon people in the frontier regions in Ch'ing China's military campaigns to expand and maintain its empire. Among China's dynastic rulers, the Ch'ing emperors are particularly notorious for their use of literary inquisitions (*wenziyu* 文字獄, or speech crime / *yi yan ruzui* 以言入罪 – referring to imperial Chinese courts' official persecution of intellectuals for their writings).

Literary persecution has been recorded since the Ch'in Dynasty over two thousand years ago, and has been practiced by almost all successive dynasties ruling China. While there are records of literary persecutions during the Ming Dynasty which were most severe at the beginning when Chu Yüan-chang 朱元璋 (Zhu Yuanzhang), i.e. Hongwu Emperor (洪武帝, temple name "Ming T'ai-tsu"), first founded the dynasty, literary inquisition was most severe during the Ch'ing dynasty which began with isolated cases during the reigns of the founding emperor Shun-chih 順治 (Shunzhi, actually the third emperor of the Ch'ing Dynasty but the first Ch'ing emperor to rule over China) and K'ang-hsi, and then evolved into a pattern, reaching its zenith during the reign of the last emperor (Ch'ien-lung) of the "Prosperous Era of K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung". An estimated 151,723 volumes of about 3,000 literary titles were destroyed by the inquisition during the Ch'ien-lung period, and censorship, deletion and modification were conducted upon many of those volumes that had been categorised into the *Ssu-k'u Ch'üan-shu* 四庫全書 (*Siku Quanshu*, the *Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature* officially commissioned by Ch'ien-lung Emperor). In these campaigns of literary inquisition, if the authority decided that any words or sentences were derogatory or cynical towards the ruling regime, a search for copies (sometimes thousands) of the offending work would be conducted to destroy them, and the author or artist could be executed by beheading or the even more gruesome *ling-ch'ih* 凌遲 (*lingchi*, or 殺千刀 / 千刀萬剮, the lingering death by slow slicing) – an extremely gruesome punishment of torture and execution practiced in imperial China from around AD900 until it was banned in 1905, in which the convict had portions of his/her body cut away piece by piece over an extended period of time as a process of execution. If the convict in a literary inquisition was already dead, his/her corpse would be dug out from the grave and mutilated as punishment.

The fate of these authors and their relatives who fell victim to literary inquisition “well illustrates the dangers of publishing in an empire where the ruler had almost unlimited power even over the world of knowledge, particularly when the ruler happened to be so insulated from the realities of life in his empire as Ch’ien-lung was”³⁶, as Professor R. Kent Guy comments in the section “The Growth of the Literary Inquisition (1776-1782)” in his 1987 work *The emperor’s four treasuries: Scholars and the State in the late Qianlong period*. The gruesome imperial Chinese practice of execution of relatives (抄家滅族) often extended wide – from First Emperor of Ch’in’s execution of three clans (夷三族), the punishment turned more and more cruel through the dynasties – to the execution of five, seven, nine (誅九族, i.e., in addition to oneself, all family members and relatives including also children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren), and in the case of the Ming-Dynasty Confucian scholar Fang Hsiao-ju 方孝孺, ten clans (including also his students), with the execution of 873 in total, plus the exile to remote frontiers (*fapei chongjun* 發配充軍) of over a thousand more distant relatives.

5.7. Era of Conquest and Genocide

Besides ruthless and gruesome suppression of dissent, this “Prosperous Era of K’ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch’ien-lung” 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”/Hsin-chiang 新疆 (*Xinjiang*), 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).

5.8. Distrust of Intellectuals

Ruler’s distrust of intellectuals is hence deep-rooted in Chinese history, and it was in fact well justified. While uprisings do not occur by themselves from the masses at the bottom, they could occur if intellectuals (literati) set their minds and commit themselves to organising them – in the modern era whether they be law graduates Lenin and Fidel Castro and his guerrilla comrades, medical doctors Che Guevara and Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (孫中山), or the philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán who led Peru’s *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path, *Partido Comunista del Perú*) guerillas until his capture in 1992 by the Peruvian government that sentenced him to life imprisonment. The brutality of Chairman Mao’s campaigns against intellectuals was often attributed to his cold reception by intellectuals frequenting the Peking University library while he was an assistant to the Peking University librarian Li Ta-chao 李大釗 (Li Dazhao, who co-founded the CCP with Ch’en Tu-hsiu 陳獨秀 (Chen Duxiu)) due to his rural Hunan origin, but the fact is that Mao was simply following what has traditionally been the practice by all great emperors of the Chinese dynasties in their literary inquisitions (*yi yan ruzui, wenziyu*) – the same fear and distrust of the intellectuals’ ability to foment and galvanise dissent right from the First Emperor of Ch’in Dynasty whom Mao revered most. This tradition has continued till today with the new leadership of the CCP.

Intellectuals may act to galvanise the masses who want change, define the goal clearly and provide necessary leadership for mobilisation and strategy (which according to the Albert Einstein Institution’s founder

Gene Sharp, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, multiple-time nominee for Nobel Peace Prize since 2009 and guru of non-violent action, consists of mainly four immediate tasks: strengthening determination, self-confidence, and resistance skills; strengthening the independent social groups and institutions; creating a powerful internal resistance force; developing a wise grand strategic plan and implementing it skillfully), but revolutionary movements are still movements of the masses whose initial “fire in the minds of men”, as James Hadley Billington, the Librarian of Congress Emeritus, once called³⁷, leads to the “revolutionary faith” of the intellectuals. This is the faith that Thomas Paine referred to in his 1776 call to revolution, *Common sense*: “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.” (Appendix to the Third Edition) Or more appropriately, as Samuel P. Huntington put it, the economically deprived masses (the poor peasants or the exploited workers) provide the “numbers”, the urban, educated intellectuals provide the “brains”, and the confluence of these two forces is that which makes revolutions.³⁸ Joseph Stalin understood that best when he said, “Ideas are more powerful than guns. We would not let our enemies have guns, why should we let them have ideas?”³⁹

5.9. Today's Racketeer State and Culture of Fear:

Making Relatives Pay

In September 2015, Burma arrested Bao Zhuoxuan 包卓軒, the son of human rights lawyer Wang Yu 王宇 and activist Bao Longjun 包龍軍 already being held incommunicado in China, and sent him back to China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, where he is then placed under house arrest.⁴⁰ As Bao Zhuoxuan's case shows, turning the screws on dissidents by persecuting their family members has become common practice by the CCP. Though no doubt much less cruel than the

punishment or even execution of a persecuted subject's extended family and entire clan in imperial China (抄家滅族, 株連九族 / 誅九族), this strategy of persecuting dissidents' families to exert pressure on the dissidents clearly marks CCP's PRC as the true heir of the millennia-long Chinese culture of imperial despotism.

For Anastasia Lin 林耶凡, a vocal supporter of China's human rights, the first sign of trouble came shortly after she won the Miss Canada crown in May 2015, when security agents began visiting her father, who still lives in China, and pressuring him to put pressure on his daughter, who has made clear she would use her crown to continue promoting her Chinese human rights advocacy, to be silent.⁴¹

Since the release of Uyghur rights advocate and democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer, who was arrested in 1999 and jailed since 2000, from a Chinese prison in March 2005 on medical grounds into the United States' custody in advance of a visit by the then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the region, her continued Uyghur rights advocacy has been met with an intense campaign on the part of the Chinese authorities to persecute her family members in China's Xinjiang Uyghur "Autonomous" Region. While Rebiya Kadeer's family has already been targeted by the Chinese government since she was detained in 1999, the harassment of her family members intensified after she was released on medical parole in March 2005 and left China for the United States, and a year later, her son, Ablikim Abdiriyim, was detained in June. On 27th November 2006, the day after Rebiya Kadeer was elected president of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), a court sentenced another two of her sons in China, Alim Abdiriyim and Kahar Abdiriyim, to fines amounting to millions of US dollars, and Alim Abdiriyim also to seven years' imprisonment on charges of tax evasion.⁴² In April 2007 Ablikim Abdiriyim was sentenced to nine years in prison for "instigating and engaging in secessionist activities", amidst his family's claim that he

was not given the right to legal representation of his choice and his “confession” was likely to have been made under torture. When his relatives visited him in prison on 13th December, he told them that he had been tortured and also had been held in solitary confinement since 3rd November after witnessing an incident on which the prison authorities wanted to keep quiet and after he refused to sign a document denying that he had witnessed the controversial incident in the prison.⁴³

Gao Yu, the well-known journalist accused of leaking state secrets, according to her lawyer Mo Shaoping 莫少平 who also represents Liu Xia 劉霞, initially maintained her innocence and only confessed on camera after officials threatened the safety of her son.⁴⁴

After Liu Xiaobo 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 has since been kept under house arrest although she has not been charged with any crime. This lawless confinement appears to be taking a toll as Liu Xia was admitted in 2014 to a Beijing hospital, apparently suffering from a heart ailment and depression.⁴⁵ 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.

Since 9th September 2010 after having served his jail term of four years and three months – ostensibly for the destruction of public property and traffic disruption, after his revelation of the brutal implementation of population control policy by the government of the prefecture-level city of Linyi 臨沂 in Shandong Province, involving women’s forced abortion and sterilisation – blind civil rights lawyer Chen Guangcheng 陳光誠 together with his family had been placed under tight round-the-clock house arrest and complete seclusion during

which *weiquan* 維權 (rights-defending) activists who were coming to visit him to render help were repeatedly beaten up by local thugs who were guarding his house. At least a hundred local thugs were paid to enforce a watertight round-the-clock surveillance of his residence – a structure that Chen himself in dry humour referred to as the “Chen Guangcheng Economic Zone”, though probably some local villagers were under duress and threat to themselves and their families to be paid to guard Chen. After publicizing an image recording he secretly made of his house arrest ordeal, Chen and his wife Yuan Weijing 袁偉靜 were cruelly beaten up by a mob who broke into their house on 18th February 2011, according to a letter sent out by Yuan. The terrorising and intimidation continued, she said, with their windows being sealed up with iron sheets on 3rd March, television antenna broken on 7th, and the intrusion of a large crowd of thugs who took away their computer and certain handwritten materials. According to another *weiquan* activist Liu Shasha 劉沙沙, Cheng Guangcheng’s 6-year-old daughter Chen Kesi 陳克斯 was denied her right to schooling because of her parents’ house arrest although she had reached the school age.⁴⁶

After Chen’s incredible escape from his Shandong confinement into the American embassy in Beijing with the help of Her Peirong 何培蓉 (“PearlHer”/Zhenzhu 珍珠), Guo Yushan 郭玉閃 and other *weiquan* activists and some of Chen’s fellow villagers and even allegedly some conscience-stricken guards enforcing his house arrest, in late April 2012, to get Chen to leave the American embassy, his wife was reportedly tied on a chair for two days and threatened to be beaten to death. Activists and friends who were trying to visit Chen at the Beijing hospital where Chen was after he left the American embassy were beaten up too. Well-known *weiquan* lawyer Jiang Tianyong 江天勇 was brutally beaten to deaf in his left ear by the *guobao* 國保 (national security officers). Others who came to the hospital to support Chen, such as artist Liu Yi 劉

毅 and *weiquan* activist Wang Lihong 王荔蕪, were also beaten up or detained. Back in Shandong Province, police beat up Chen's eldest brother Chen Guangfu 陳光福, reportedly chained his feet, slapped him, and struck him with a belt.⁴⁷ Police also beat Chen Guangfu's wife and also his son, Chen Kegui 陳克貴, who in self-defence caused minor injuries to the police officers. After Chen, his wife and two children were allowed to leave for the US on 19th May 2012 on "studies" ground, Chen Guangfu fled his family's captors in the tiny Dongshigu 東師古 village in Shandong and arrived in Beijing to seek help for his son. In November 2012, Chen Kegui was sentenced to over three years in prison.

Making relatives pay with the implicit threat of the worse has always been an effective tactic for the CCP regime to silence dissidents in exile as in the case of Chen Guangcheng, demoralise them and discourage other, potential, dissidents from following in their footsteps.⁴⁸

6. Mesmerised by the Dragon: The Chinese Road to Fascism

Money does buy loyalty and acquiescence. With a full treasury to dispense benefits and good feelings, the modern CCP State is adept in playing the role of a benevolent dictator. Helped by the proliferation of movies and TV series on imperial glory that mesmerise a contented people, the CCP State is resurrecting a proud image of a *taiping shengshi* (era of peace and prosperity) – a replication of the eras of T'ang T'ai-tung, K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung when China was a sort of international superpower too. But as we have seen, a hidden subtext is: these were also eras of brutal despotism. Prosperity and national glory under a brutal dictatorship: here lies the Faustian bargain. Economic success and increased military might overshadowing its Asian neighbours, especially its destined nemesis, Japan, in what can be called this century's turning

of the tables, have fed rising nationalism with a heavy dose of vainglory in the PRC. This explains why the present authoritarian capitalist model of Chinese development smells Fascist.

There is indeed a great similarity between the present CCP corporatist elite's political method and those used by the European Fascists over eighty years ago:

Imagine Italy 50 years after the fascist revolution. Mussolini would be dead and buried, the corporatist state would be largely intact, the party would be firmly in control, and Italy would be governed by professional politicians, part of a corrupt elite, rather than the true believers who had marched on Rome. It would no longer be a system based on charisma, but would instead rest almost entirely on political repression, the leaders would be businesslike and cynical, not idealistic, and they would constantly invoke formulaic appeals to the grandeur of the "great Italian people," "endlessly summoned to emulate the greatness of the ancestors."

Substitute in the "great Chinese people" and it all sounds familiar.

(Ledeen, 2008: 8)

Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, who gave the above analogy, provides further evidence – the PRC's enthusiasm today for, even compulsive embrace of, the glories of China's long history and passionate reassertion of the greatness of past dynasties (State-promoted and popularly received books like Er Yue He's dynastic novels, Zhang Yimou's grandeur epic movies, and other similar movies and TV series) as compared to similar invocation by Mussolini and Hitler of architecture and history to resurrect the feeling of ancient Roman glory and the Third Reich's supposedly mythical past (Ledeen, 2008: 9).

6.1. Nationalism the Quintessential and Ultimate Ideology

The power of nationalism today in the PRC is unmistakable as a political tool – the ultimate ideology after the demise of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinism and Maoism. Or rather after moving away from Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist-Maoism proper, nationalism – formerly a hidden underlying component – came out in full view in the open and became the major driving force in the ruling Party’s quest for political survival.

Indeed, according to Dirlik and Prazniak (2012), the real nature of the Chinese Communist Party-State and with it the so-called “China Model” of development can only be understood in terms of the central role played by nationalism right from the early revolutionary days:

The legacies of the revolution and Bolshevik structure of the Communist Party are no doubt important elements in structuring Chinese politics [...] Criticism that focuses on the legacies of revolution and socialism are misleading most egregiously in ignoring that it is nationalism, not socialism, that accounts for the behaviour of the regime. After all, the Chinese Revolution was a national revolution for autonomous development against “semi-colonialism”, with socialism as its vehicle. The vehicle gave the nationalism its particular flavour, but with the retreat from any operative vision of socialism, the latter seems more than ever merely a front for the national pursuit of wealth and power – under the leadership of the Communist Party.

(Dirlik and Prazniak, 2012: 291-293)

6.2. From Nationalism to Fascism, from Legalism to Fake Confucian Revival

And let us not forget, in the first half of the last century in Italy and Germany, it was fervent nationalism that eventually grew into Fascism.

Like Mussolini's transformation from a socialist firebrand into a fervent nationalist, the CCP State has also removed itself from its former socialist ideological base into embracing hard-core nationalism in rallying support for its monopoly of political power. We see the demand for undivided loyalty to the perpetually ruling CCP – an “advanced, selfless and united ruling group” (進步、無私與團結的執政集團), according to the teaching material “China Model National Conditions Teaching Manual” of the Moral and National Education (MNE, 德育及國民教育) school curriculum proposal which the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union has accused as being a brain-washing political action – which is presiding over, as noted earlier, a new “era of peace and prosperity” reminiscent of the great T'ang T'ai-tsung era or that of K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung (*K'ang-Ch'ien shengshi* 康乾盛世), and for the observance of CCP-instituted ideological uniformity and discipline.

Presuming that Mussolini had really made Italian trains run on time, moving far from the old days of austere Maoist autarchy to today's embracing in full fervour rugged capitalist efficiency, we see high-speed trains are running faster and faster too in today's PRC. There are a lot more similarities – talk of sacrifices for the Great Fatherland, and blind belief in legal coercion for social engineering reflecting the anti-Confucian Legalist (*fajia*) heritage of Mao who was himself a great admirer of the First Emperor of Ch'in who governed with Legalism and suppressed Confucianism along with all other non-Legalist philosophies in his time. In fact, new research and the latest experimentation with *dan-du er tai* 單獨二胎 which then led to the new two-child policy have shown how the unnecessarily coercive one-child policy has done more to wreck the Chinese society and cause untold miseries, while there has been no evidence of the so-dreaded population explosion in other countries like India which has allowed the fertility trend to take its

natural cause while interacting with modernisation and urbanisation. “As a symbol of the coercive state – an authoritarian government dictating the most intimate decisions a person can make – not much could surpass the People’s Republic of China’s one-child policy”, as a recent *Newsweek* report describes, “But for all the ostensible success of the policy – some demographers claim China’s population growth would have flattened out even without it – the draconian rule left emotional, social and economic scars the country and its citizens will be dealing with for years. Its consequences are felt throughout China, particularly in poorer rural areas, where its enforcement was often particularly brutal.”⁴⁹

While ditching the Maoist central-command economy and austere socialistic-communistic practices, the continuing ruling CCP with its leaders now in CEO-style suits and ties is still intrinsically a Maoist party which inherited the Maoist reverence for the Legalist tradition. Though against Mao’s anti-Confucian injunctions, the Party now goes with a fake revival of Confucianism which Yu Ying-shih 余英時, Emeritus Professor of East Asian Studies and History at Princeton University and the third recipient (2006) of the John W. Kluge Prize for lifetime achievement in the study of humanity, referring to the Confucius Institutes, calls an exploitation for commercial and political convenience in which what the CCP has been selectively promoting is the era-specific imperial dynasty-serving decadent feudalistic component of Confucianism that constituted the “Confucian shop” (*Kongjiadian* 孔家店) that the May Fourth Movement (1919) had aimed to destroy, while the Confucian insistence on the critique of political power and the contingent nature of political mandate, as well as the emphasis on the voice of the people in governance and the importance of public discourse and individual responsibility for social action have to be conveniently ignored or given a warped reinterpretation.⁵⁰ In fact, the

Party-State centre has made two most important basic policy parameters for local authorities concerning the management of Confucian revival, as a research found, namely, “replacing Confucianism by an ambiguous notion of ‘traditional Chinese culture’” and “co-opting preferred Confucian fragments into the official ideology”, and “does not approve inheriting Confucianism without deleting elements that are incompatible with its rule” (Pang, 2014: 636-637).

7. Negative Soft Power: How the Rise of China Today Is Affecting Civil Liberty and Political Freedom around the World

Voltaire once said: “The Holy Roman Empire was neither Holy nor Roman, nor an Empire.”⁵¹ By the same token, the “People’s Republic of China” has always been a travesty of language. Whatever the original idealism underlying the fight for the “people’s” brighter future that spurred the young Chinese Bolsheviks to launch a peasant revolution against the established order, or establishing order, in the early 1900s has already been corrupted by gaining absolute political power in 1949, by the brutal political campaigns through to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to preserve the absolute dominance of a small elite led by Chairman Mao, and by the sheer single-minded determination of the new brutally dissent-intolerant political elite of the “reformed” authoritarian capitalist mercantilist CCP in the new governance mode of a “degenerative totalitarianism” (Hsu, 2003)⁵² bending on perpetuating the absolute one-party dominance of its political-industrial-business complex. In this process, Sun Yat-sen’s original liberal democratic republican ideal of separation of five powers has long been betrayed. The only thing that remains is probably “China”. If we could see the present CCP’s brutal authoritarian capitalist regime as the real modern manifestation of historian Karl Wittfogel’s “oriental despotism”⁵³,

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.

The new twist is that today, through PRC's economic success, brutal suppression of dissent, and enforced amnesia upon its people, supported by the mesmerising eulogies of its cheerleaders across the globe and its "soft power" backed by huge lucrative market and financial strength, has presented the Asian giant as an irresistible model to the developing world. The writing is on the wall, and there seems little the beleaguered advocates of civil liberties, political freedom and social justice around the world could do about it except to rue so: A spectre is haunting the masses of the developing world. The spectre of the China model.

7.1. Cross-Border "Soft-Power" Silencing of Dissidents

On 26th November 2015, Anastasia Lin, the vocal supporter of China's human rights and the winner of the Miss Canada beauty contest we referred to earlier, was barred from boarding her flight from Hong Kong to China's island province of Hainan, the host of 2015's Miss World contest. Due to her human rights advocacy related to China, she being declared a "persona non grata" by the Chinese government can be expected, but it is the particular circumstance in this case which is intriguing. Miss Canada was barred from attending the Miss World contest in China because of her human rights advocacy and no protest was raised from the pageant organisers. "Miss World didn't even try to contact me," as Lin told the global digital business news publication *Quartz*, "These international organisers just give in to whatever China wants to do, so China continues to do it."⁵⁴ Any sane person would think that the Miss World pageant would have the self-respect to insist that China as the host nation admits every legitimate contestant, otherwise

the contest would naturally have to move to another venue. But we no longer live in a sane world where common logic still prevails. “We do not have any control over who is issued a visa. Although regrettable the event would still continue under these circumstances.” A pageant official in London reportedly so answered *The Washington Post*’s query, said the paper in an editorial on 7th November titled “Miss Kowtow 2015”.⁵⁵ Just another example of the kind of pathetic, pusillanimous response that has become increasingly common as China’s “soft power”, backed by lucrative market and investment opportunities it can provide in a world of economic despair, increases in leaps and bounds.

The CCP regime’s ability to stifle debate abroad is today as successful (including in the cash-trapped overseas academia where Confucius Institutes and joint programmes in China can come as much needed rescue) as its increasingly aggressive campaigns in locking up domestic dissidents and silencing critics at home. A blatant example of such extraterritorial attack on dissent is reflected in the exiled blind Chinese civil rights activist Chen Guangcheng’s accusation that he was being forced to leave New York University for “as early as last August and September, the Chinese Communists had already begun to apply great, unrelenting pressure on New York University, so much so that after we [i.e. Chen and his wife and son] had been in the United States just three to four months, NYU was already starting to discuss our departure with us.”⁵⁶ Despite N.Y.U.’s denial of the allegation and its law school’s claim that the fellowship as that given to Chen was always to be for one year, it is probably difficult not to link that turn of events to the then newly opened New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai), the first university jointly operated by China and the U.S., and part of a major initiative the NYU law school calls its Global Network University.⁵⁷

7.2. Exporting Repression of Dissent

Such cross-border “soft-power” silencing of dissidents backed by PRC’s present ability to offer lucrative opportunities through market, trade and investment (see Figure 4 and Figure 5 in this special issue’s introductory article “Political Governance and Strategic Relations:: Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus and China’s Rise in the Global System”) has reached worrying proportions. The exiled dissident Chinese cartoonist, Jiang Yefei 姜野飛, who fled to Thailand in 2008 after being imprisoned and tortured by the Chinese authorities for criticising their handling of the deadly 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, was arrested by police in Thailand for illegal immigration on 28th October 2015 and put on a plane chartered by the Chinese government back to China on 13th November, despite the fact that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had recognised his refugee status and Canada had offered to take both him and his family in. Besides Jiang Yefei, deported by the Thai government back to China together with him on the plane on 13th November were Dong Guangping 董廣平, a dissident and human rights activist who had refugee status, and Gui Minhai, the previously mentioned publisher of books critical of the Chinese government who was born in China but had acquired Swedish nationality and worked at a publishing house in Hong Kong.

The Thai government’s policy choice to please the Chinese government by helping the latter to export its domestic repression across its borders has been long recognised. In July 2015, Thailand deported nearly 100 members of Muslim Uyghur illegal migrants who were wanted by China back to the PRC, drawing condemnation from the United States and human rights groups and sparking protests in Turkey, home to a large Uyghur diaspora. The New York-based Human Rights Watch said the Uyghurs faced “grim” maltreatment back in China, and Sophie Richardson, China director for HRW stated that “Thailand should

make it clear it won't further violate international law by immediately announcing a moratorium on additional deportations of Turkic people to China."⁵⁸

Thailand is not the only member of ASEAN to do so, though, nor she is the first. In 2011, Malaysia detained 16 Uyghur illegal immigrants and deported 11 back to China, while the other five managed to register with the UN refugee agency UNHCR and were released into its custody. HRW said a Uyghur forcibly returned to China by Malaysia in 2011 was sentenced to six years in prison on charges of separatism, the same charge invoked to sentence the economist and ethnic Uyghur rights advocate Professor Ilham Tohti to life imprisonment in 2014. Then on 31st December 2012 Malaysia deported six more Uyghurs back to China. HRW said the men registered with UNHCR in Kuala Lumpur while in detention and were to have their claims reviewed when they were deported, and the UNHCR said in a statement that it had sought the men's release into its custody while their claims were being assessed and regretted that they were deported despite its intervention. HRW said the forced return of these Uyghurs to the PRC was a grave violation of international laws and Muslim minority Uyghurs repatriated to China from elsewhere in the past have expressed fear of torture, long jail terms or the death penalty.⁵⁹ Cambodia, another ASEAN member country, also forcibly deported back to China 20 Uyghur asylum-seekers, nineteen of whom had fled to Cambodia from Xinjiang in the wake of the July 2009 riots in the city of Urumqi, fearing persecution by the Chinese authorities. UNHCR was in the process of reviewing their applications for refugee status when Cambodia succumbed to pressure from the Chinese government to deport the 20 individuals, including two children. The Cambodian government's action to deport them back to China attracted international condemnation as fears mount that these individuals would suffer severe human rights violations upon their

return.⁶⁰ For a further elaboration of such phenomenon of China's domestic repression going global, see the earlier discussion in Section 6 of this special issue's introductory article, "Political Governance and Strategic Relations:: Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus and China's Rise in the Global System". On the claim of China's rising soft power projection abroad, see Section 7 of the introductory article, and the diagrammatic depiction of her global economic might in that article's Figure 4 and Figure 5.

8. Conclusion

From the first night of the Chinese New Year celebration on 8th February 2016 to the early morning of the 9th, Hong Kong's famed busy residential and commercial district of Mong Kok (旺角, the transliteration being from the older names 望角, 芒角) descended into chaos when city authorities' efforts to clamp down on street food vendors ended up with unprecedentedly violent clashes between the people and police in riot gear culminating in warning shots being fired by officers. The clashes, being dubbed the "Fishball Revolution" in an allusion to the "Umbrella Revolution" of 2014, resulted in 44 police injuries and 24 arrests.⁶¹

While even Hong Kong residents were shocked by the violent and bloodied nature of the street battle in a city where people pride themselves on a long history of peaceful protest including pro-democracy demonstrations like 2014's Occupy Central campaign a.k.a. Umbrella Movement where the only defense against police teargas and pepper spray was umbrellas, the unprecedented ferocity of the clashes can be portentous. As the global digital business news publication *Quartz* comments on the night of the clashes, "the scale and the ferociousness of the fighting [...] point to motivations that go far beyond

the plight of a few hawkers. Instead, the violence appears to be borne out of a deep-seated mistrust about the direction Hong Kong is headed, under the leadership of a government that too often looks like it listens to Beijing more than its own people.”⁶²

The last observation above is reflected in a researcher’s take, in ruminating on whether Hong Kong’s chief executive should “be a political leader, in its full sense, or just an administrator”, regarding Donald Tsang Yam-kuen 曾蔭權, Hong Kong’s second chief executive (2005-2012):

That Tsang saw his appointment as a job he would strive to get it done is widely seen as indicative of the mind-set of civil servants [...] His “boss-servant” mind-set has been manifested in his body language when he met with mainland Chinese officials and leaders in Beijing. Television news footage of him listening attentively and taking down notes carefully on what state leaders such as President Hu Jintao had to say has reinforced the public perception of him being a loyal servant. It is also open secret that he had addressed to the former Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office Director Liao Hui as “*laoban*”, or boss, when they met although they enjoyed a similar rank in the Chinese hierarchy.

(Yeung, 2013: 163-164)

The sad implication of this situation is that, sighs the observer,

The excessive show of humbleness of Tsang when dealing with Beijing officials has weakened his role and position as a champion of the interest of Hong Kong people when it comes to issues such as democratic development where the city and the central government do not see eye to eye.

(*ibid.*: 164)

Thus, behind the violent events in Mong Kok are desperation, frustration, disappointment and fear for a grim future, especially after the violent crackdown on Occupy Central movement of 2014, subsequent persecutions, increasing pressure on the media and latest outrageous episode of the disappeared Causeway Bay Five, for this once vibrant, free-wheeling city transferred since 1997 to be under the boot of a ruthless totalitarian regime which is at the moment showing no short-term prospect of giving way to a liberal democratic governance model.

8.1. Après Nous, le Déluge ...

And this is not just about Hong Kong. Like the title of the *Quartz* report, “Hong Kong’s ‘fishball revolution’ is about a lot more than just street food”, the violent and bloodied event in the first night of 2016’s Chinese New Year on the western part of Kowloon 九龍 Peninsula, like the increasingly volatile situation in Xinjiang and Tibet, reflects the inevitable responses of the people to the repressive policies of the increasingly Fascist racketeer central State in Beijing.

It would be unrealistic to think that none in the present CCP ruling echelon can foresee the dire consequences for future generations that would result from the continuation of the blatantly anachronistic Communist Party repression including that upon China’s vast restive frontier regions despite temporarily prolonging the CCP’s political power monopoly while bypassing all opportunities of liberalisation and democratisation, and national reconciliation related to the frontier ethnic regions, brought about by the never-came-before *Zeitgeist* of the e-generation. *Après nous, le déluge* ... nonetheless, seems to be the prevailing *modus operandi* of a too-deeply-entrenched ruling party at this moment.

8.2. Political Reform: Lack of Urgency?

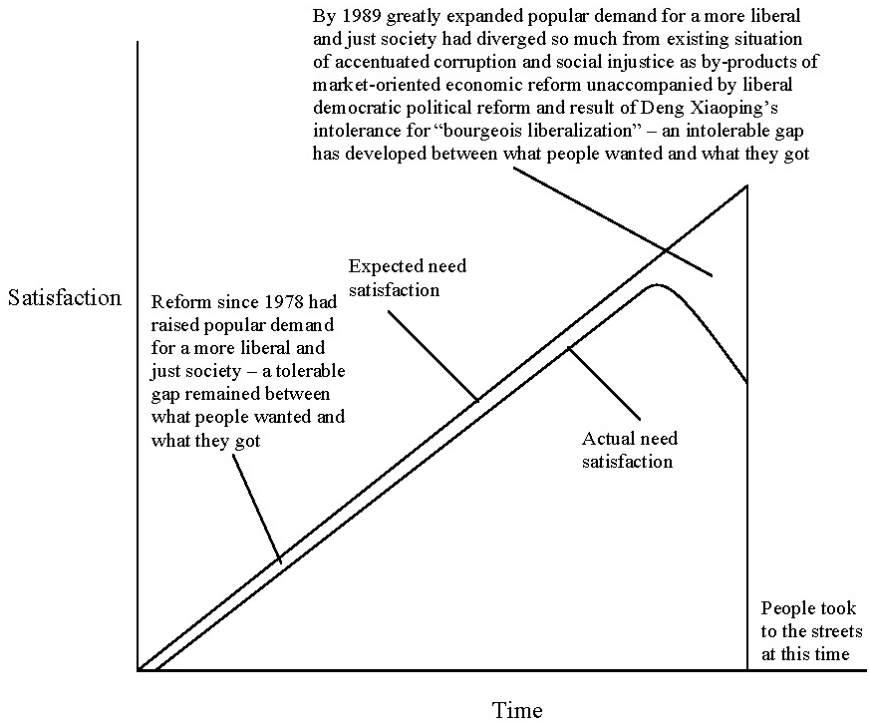
Some “nothing more to lose” uprisings are not guaranteed to happen even in times of general abject poverty, so one could surmise that they are even more remote in today’s PRC of modest prosperity. However, the trigger of revolution is not poverty per se, as the authority on political conflict and instability Professor Ted Robert Gurr in his 1970 book *Why men rebel* emphasises, but *relative* deprivation. Perception of unfairness and inequality in the distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits and a non-level playing ground is what really spurs the economic left-behinds, the dispossessed in the marketplace, those bypassed by economic growth to anger, bitterness and rebellious action. But these are, as the American historian of France and ideas Professor Clarence Crane Brinton notes in his 1938 work *The anatomy of revolution*, “not unprosperous people who feel restraint, cramp, [and] annoyance” at the existing governing regime and its cronies of patronage through government-business collusion (referred to as *guan-shang goujie* 官商勾結 in China) that are seen to be trampling on their right for a fair share of resources, opportunities and benefits from economic progress and wealth-generation. Revolutions “are born of hope” rather than misery, according to Brinton. As also observed by French political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville in *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (1856), while Louis XVI’s reign was the most prosperous period of the monarchy, it was this very prosperity that served to hasten the outbreak of the 1789 Revolution. That explains why the March-June 1989 student-led demonstrations on Tiananmen Square (天安門廣場) in Beijing, which gradually drew in participation of Chinese citizens from all walks of life and turned an initially small-scale anti-graft protest into a gargantuan movement for political freedom and civil liberties for which the Beijing residents were eventually willing to sacrifice their lives, had occurred at a time when economic life and even political

atmosphere in China were liberalising and improving under Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平 and Zhao Ziyang 趙紫陽's reform programmes, not when things were getting worse.

With expectations rising faster than actual improvement in life as economic growth takes hold, a previously mainly rural, pre-industrial or pre-reform moribund economy (traditional society beyond the far left side of the graph in Figure 1) going through reform, industrialisation and urbanisation (modernisation began, in the form of central-command to free-market economy, in the middle of graph) may eventually reach a stage when a variety of forces internal and external produce an economic downturn resulting suddenly in a big gap opening up between what people want to achieve and what they actually get in life – an unhinged “want: get ratio” that leads to a “revolution of rising frustrations” (Lerner, 1958, 1964: vii) as expectations outrace actual attainments like what happened in the Beijing of 1989 (see Figure 1). The sometimes seemingly baffling expression of insecurity on the part of the CCP in its oppressive actions in this era of relative prosperity is actually well justified.

Nevertheless, Harvard sociologist Theda Skocpol argues in her book *States and social revolutions* (1979) that revolutions can only occur beginning from the top with “state crisis” when governments are caught in situations they can no longer deal with; revolutions, in other words, do not just bubble up from the masses below. Lenin's success in taking over Russia was due to the virtual collapse of the Romanov dynasty after its defeat in the hand of the Germans in the First World War; Mao's success in taking over China was mainly attributed to the invading Japanese army wrecking Kuomintang 國民黨's ability to rule. Today's ruling CCP does not face such crisis at the moment.

Figure 1 China: Expanding Demand for Political Institutional Change, 1978-1989



Source: Based on Davies's J-Curve Theory of Revolution; see Vander Zanden (1988: 584), Figure 21.2 (adapted from Davies, 1962: 6, Figure 1).

8.3. *A Taste of Old Wine in a New Bottle*

The late Jeane J. Kirkpatrick in her *Commentary* magazine essay "Dictatorships and double standards" (November 1979) argues that authoritarian regimes are different from totalitarian regimes in that the former (e.g. formerly junta-ruled Argentina, Chile and Brazil) can

reform their politico-economic systems but the latter (the Communist-Party-ruled Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist/Maoist countries) cannot, and indeed later development had borne witness to her prediction:

[...] the history of this century provides no grounds for expecting that radical totalitarian regimes will transform themselves. At the moment there is a far greater likelihood of progressive liberalization and democratization in the governments of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile than in the government of Cuba; in Taiwan than in the People's Republic of China; in South Korea than in North Korea; in Zaire than in Angola; and so forth.⁶³

Admittedly, many might find distasteful this “Kirkpatrick Doctrine”, which advocated US support of anti-Communist governments including authoritarian dictatorships around the world during the Cold War based on Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's conviction that democracy could be restored easier to authoritarian states which were more amenable to gradual reform in a democratic direction than to totalitarian states. Nevertheless, her argument does seem to have been borne out by later events in the Soviet bloc with political system collapse in the Soviet Union, followed by disintegration, as the end result of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*, and the rest of Eastern Europe plus the USSR's Asian satellite state of Mongolia, now without USSR's military-security power of terror to back up their ruling Communist Party regimes and defunct central-command economies, which simply bolted from the old system formerly imposed on them by the Soviet Red Army.

However, events did not transpire that way in the case of the PRC. In China, the Party-regime succeeded in reforming itself, remaining entrenched in political control as a modernised totalitarian State, and as we have seen earlier, transitioning into a new form of Fascist corporatist

system. If we look at David Easton's application of the systems theory (see Section 2 and Figure 1 in this special issue's introductory article, "Political Governance and Strategic Relations:: Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus and China's Rise in the Global System"), different organs of the biopolitical system would seem to have metabolically undergone renewal while the top-level ruling class has been preserved (Easton, 1965). This is like the capitalist states reforming themselves into welfare states, introducing measures to protect workers' rights and the poor in the early part of the 20th century and thus preempting the Marxist prediction of a proletarian revolution. Different from the Eastern European case is also the local-born nature of the Chinese Communist movement – though representing in a way a strange hybrid ideologically foreign-inspired in its Marxist form, like the earlier Taiping Rebellion by the Christian millenarian movement of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan 洪秀全's *T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo* / Heavenly Kingdom of Peace (太平天國, *Taiping Tianguo*), described as a "strange upheaval" in Jonathan Spence's 1996 book *God's Chinese son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (see page xxiv of his "Foreword"), which itself was a modern manifestation of the oft-occurring peasant uprisings throughout China's long dynastic history.

On the other hand, the reason that the Party-State may no longer opt to rule by just brute force like old-style dictators but choose to use more subtle forms of coercion beneath a coat of democratic trappings, including grassroots elections, modern free market, politically censored but otherwise free access to the Internet and other social media and "evolving" rule of law, is simply that it has grown smarter with experience to realise that the old-style autocratic "thuggish repression" no longer works in this globalised Internet age, as William J. Dobson analyses in his book *The dictator's learning curve: Inside the global battle for democracy* (2012).

Having evolved with the times into a much more public relations-savvy technocratic clique, operating by consensus at high levels while enhancing economic efficiency at the lower tiers of government, the modern Party-State thus presents a uniform face of a government that delivers to the citizens and the world to dissuade attempts to challenge or destabilise its political monopoly which is today, of course, no longer purely a matter of politics and governance, as the Party-State has grown into a complex nexus of politico-pecuniary interests, a gargantuan structure of interfeeding power, favour and lucre with simply too much to lose. In other words, the once ideal-driven Chinese Communist Party is today

[...] no longer just a political but also an economic class which has a direct interest in the accumulation of capital. It has so far been more successful than its predecessors in the twentieth century in convincing the population that its interests are also the national interest, but how long it can do so is anybody's case. One of the particularities of the PRC is that the organizational apparatus that has enabled its development is equally efficient as an instrument of repression so long as it retains its coherence, which it has done successfully so far through the distribution of economic rewards and privileges throughout the organization. We should remember that the Communist Party and its auxiliary organizations make up around 20 per cent of the population.

(Dirlik and Prazniak, 2012: 297-298)

While kidnapping publishers and sellers of tabloid-style sensationalistic political books from Hong Kong to Mainland for interrogation seems remarkably civilised in comparison with the Islamic State's 7th January 2015 massacre of *Charlie Hebdo*'s editorial team for

publishing sacrilegious cartoons, the racketeer-State action of the CCP regime has so far seemed to be far more successful than ISIL/Daesh's terrorist tactics in instilling a sense of White Terror in the targeted society. Outside Hong Kong's dissident community, there has not been a society-wide broad-based response equivalent to the post-massacre "*Je suis Charlie*" campaign – it looks as if for most Hong Kong people, out of fear, indifference, resignation, or among supporters of Beijing, exultation, and overseas Chinese communities too, the feeling is "*Je ne suis pas Causeway Bay*" or "*Je ne suis pas Mighty Current*".

8.4. "*Cheerleader Syndrome*" and "*Mirror-image*" Self-deceit

Looking at the responses of international cheerleaders and China's younger generation, the tactic – backed by strong economic performance, improved living standards and mesmerising investment opportunities – has seemed to be very successful both domestically and beyond the country's borders.

No nation in history has ever done so much so fast. If the [...] leaders tell us that the control of information was necessary to get this job done, we can afford to take their word for it for the time being. We who know the power of free speech, and the necessity for it, may assume that if those leaders are sincere in their work of emancipating the [...] people they will swing around toward free speech – and we hope so soon.⁶⁴

One can be forgiven today for thinking that the two ellipses in the passage above both stand in place of the word "Chinese". But no, the passage above is from a 1943 *Life* editorial about the Soviet Union under Stalin – the two ellipses there stand for "Soviet" and "Russian" respectively in the original passage. *Life*'s optimistic opinion about the

Stalinist totalitarianism in 1943 unfortunately can today describe well the general view of CCP's worldwide cheerleaders about the PRC, who never hesitate to act as devoted, ardent apologists for PRC's human rights excesses, attempting to convince the world that anyhow the CCP leaders are gradually embracing the more "mature" concepts of the West (which admittedly the CCP leaders sometimes do pay lip service to as "universal values") and as this genuine invention by the CCP of a free-market "socialism with Chinese characteristics" gradually "matures", they will think more and more like the liberal democratic West – now a popularly accepted outlook Professor Raymond Sleeper called "the mirror-image syndrome" (Sleeper, 1987: 193). The end result of this adaptation process will not be a direct copy of the Western liberal model, but a Chinese improvement. For instance, Professor Xu Xianming 徐顯明, president of the China University of Political Science and Law (中國政法大學), posited in 2005 the *hexiequan* 和諧權 (i.e. "harmony rights", apparently in line with the official "construction of a harmonious society" policy of the CCP) which according to him is to "supersede the earlier three generations of human rights (i.e. rights of freedom, rights of survival and rights of development)".⁶⁵

On China's "democratic model", here goes a standard apologist's statement: "China's practice and theory have shown that 'democracy with one-party leadership under socialism with Chinese characteristics' has been explored and practiced for over 90 years since the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. The institution of the National People's Congress (人民代表大會制), the system of multi-party cooperation and political negotiation under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, 'democratic centralism' (*minzhu jizhong zhi* 民主集中制) and the Communist Party's work style of criticism and self-criticism together represent the role model of democracy under one-party leadership, which has transcended the scope of what liberal democracy could

explain [...] Liberal democracy is not universal; it is merely a special manifestation of Western civilization.” (Zhou, 2013: 113; my translation) By this reasoning, such “democratisation under one-party leadership” (*ibid.*: 138) should be the future system of democracy for the world to replace the Western liberal democracy which has proven not to be universally suitable and to have failed in the developing countries, and have even been questioned in the Western countries themselves, according to the apologist. After all, one can argue that if Marx could legitimately stand Hegel’s idealist dialectically dynamic model of nature and of history on its head and Lenin could do the same to orthodox Marxism with his more absolutist, doctrinaire perspective, his elevation of the role of violence as a revolutionary instrument and his belief in the absolute necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat, why can’t today’s “new CCP” do the same to these weary Western notions with its genuine invention of a perfect system of market-socialism and people-first (Hu Jintao’s “*yi min wei ben* 以民為本”) democracy with Chinese characteristics?

Such a “perfect” system, much superior to Western liberal democracy and which by Zhou’s criteria represents an unprecedented contribution to human civilization and a model of mankind’s political future, was succinctly and confidently described by Chen Xiqing 陳喜慶, deputy head of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (中共中央統戰部), at a press conference in which he unreservedly declared that China’s “multi-party” system was already perfect, hence there was no need to establish new political parties.⁶⁶ The CCP, according to Chen, has been absorbing the workers, peasants, soldiers as well as members of the intelligentsia as party members, while the eight existing “democratic parties” (*minzhu dangpai* 民主黨派) are focusing mainly on recruiting people from the middle and upper social strata, including those in the fields of

technology, culture and sports, as their party members. In China's so-called "multi-party cooperation" (*duodang hezuo* 多黨合作) system, these "democratic parties" are neither "non-ruling parties" (*zaiyedang* 在野黨) nor "opposition parties" (*fanduidang* 反對黨), but "participating parties" (*canzhengdang* 參政黨). Besides that, according to Chen, there are also "party-less" (*wu dangpai* 無黨派) people in the system, comprising those who are not members of the nine political parties.

8.4. The Road to Fascism Classic

Actually regardless of one's take on the apologist's statement, one has to admit that the road of democratisation may not be smooth for this Asian giant which had not seen a functioning liberal democratic era in her two thousand years of imperial and republican history (and in this context, today's best-case liberal democratic island state of Taiwan (ROC) is not a typical representation of China's destiny, but rather a unique aberration⁶⁷). Curiously date-exact, following Professor Zhou Tianyong from the Central Party School, China's authoritarian one-party political system will and should remain unchanged until at least 2037 (Zhou, Wang and Wang (eds), 2007: 2, 6, 45-46)⁶⁸. This is in line with what Deng Xiaoping stated in 1987, that direct general elections could only be held after half a century had passed in the 2000s, and at the moment the country had to make do with indirect elections above the county level and direct elections only at county and below county level, given the colossal population and inadequate level of cultural quality of the people (Hu, Hu, He and Guo, 2009: 19-20)⁶⁹. Even if the all-powerful authoritarian regime of China is willing to embark on a certain extent of democratisation at its own pace in a best-case scenario for the democracy advocates, as Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986) opine, while a transition from authoritarian rule could probably produce a democracy, it could also terminate with a liberalised

authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*) (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986: 9)⁷⁰. While shadows of the remnants of her ghostly past still linger to haunt the one-party State, there are already telling signs that the continuing transformation from a *dictadura* (dictatorship) into a *dictablanda* (and for the cautious optimist, possibly leading further to a highly restrictive *democradura* in the near future) is the most possible direction the CCP regime is heading to and indeed planning to head to, given the fact that the Western, “bourgeois liberal” multi-party competitive electoral democracy (*democracia*), together with its notion of separation of powers, has already been ruled out of the cards, or at least not until mid-2000s according to Deng Xiaoping.

Nevertheless, as this paper has argued, given the political realities that constitute the essence of today's CCP-ruled China, one can be forgiven for being overcome by some sentiment of angst and pessimism. Being obsessed with maintaining stability in order to perpetuate its grip on power, the CCP regime is today committing every conceivable violation of human rights – brutal suppression of free speech and political dissent with the harassment, physical abuse and torture, legal and extralegal detention, and tight surveillance and house arrest of civil rights campaigners, democracy activists, civil rights lawyers, civil society association leaders, and ethnic minority activists like Ilham Tohti who are simply voicing aspirations for regional autonomy and protection of ethnic rights. The case of Ilham Tohti's life sentence is a good example of how the CCP regime is justifying harsh prison sentences even against nonviolent Uyghur rights activists and related Internet users by invoking today's global War on Terrorism.⁷¹

As this paper and the earlier introductory article of this special issue have shown, if the intensification of repression in the past year in both the domestic and global contexts could be a sign of what is to come for

China under the continued uncompromising political monopoly of the increasingly authoritarian post-reform-era CCP, even a further liberalised authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*) seems to be precipitately fading from the horizon, but that may no longer be the heart of the matter, for heading out there into the uncharted waters, standing out ominously against the fading light of a liberal democratic future for China is the dark silhouette of a towering CCP navigating the country along a Chinese route to Fascism – not today’s varieties of neo-fascism in Europe and America, but full corporatist, classic Fascism of Benito Mussolini, *il Duce del Fascismo e Fondatore dell’Impero / della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, of Adolf Hitler, *der Führer und Reichskanzler des deutschen Volkes*, and (though inconclusively among scholars of Fascism)⁷² of Francisco Franco, *el Caudillo de la Última Cruzada y de la Hispanidad* – and worse, pulling the rest of the developing world, mesmerised by the “China model”, along a repressive, authoritarian capitalist path.

Notes

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the founder and editor of the institute's then top-tier Scopus-indexed triannual academic journal, the *International Journal of China Studies* (IJCS, Vol. 1, 2010 – Vol. 5, 2014), and is currently a member of the international editorial committee of several journals in Asia and Latin America. Among his latest publications in recent years are *From Handover to Occupy Campaign: Democracy, identity and the Umbrella Movement of Hong Kong* (edited focus issue, CCPS, 2016, forthcoming), *China amidst competing dynamics in the Asia-Pacific: National identity, economic integration and political governance* (edited special issue, CCPS, 2016, 633 pp. + xv), *Crossing the Chinese frontier: Nation, community, identity and mobility* (edited special issue, CCPS, 2015, 410 pp. + xv), *China – State, public policy and society* (guest edited special issue, *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies/CJAS*, 2014, 140 pp.), *June Fourth at 25: The quarter-century legacy of Tiananmen* (edited special issue, IJCS, 2014, 367 pp. + xv), *Taiwan: Democracy, cross-Strait relations and regional security* (edited focus issue, IJCS, 2014, 195 pp. + x), *China: Developmental model, State-civil societal interplay and foreign relations* (edited monograph, 745 pp. + xxi, ICS, 2013), “Political governance and strategic relations: Domestic-foreign policy nexus and China’s rise in the global system” (article, CCPS, 2016), “The writing on the wall: National and global implications of the ruling Chinese Communist Party’s domestic and foreign policies” (article, CCPS, 2016), “From Dungans to *xinyimin*: China, Chinese migration and the changing sociopolitical fabric of Central Asian republics” (article, CCPS, 2015), “Nationalism, historical consciousness and regional stability: Rising China as a regional power and its new assertiveness in the South China Sea” (book chapter, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), “中國 — 東南亞關係：中國能源安全政策的區域安全戰略分析” [China-ASEAN relations: analysis on regional security strategy of China’s energy security policy] (book chapter, Wu-Nan, 2014), “Literacy and education in contemporary China: Daunting challenges

amidst rapid economic development” (article, *CJAS*, 2014), “The long shadow of Tiananmen: Political economy of State-civil societal relations in the People’s Republic of China twenty-five years on” (article, *IJCS*, 2014), “Poverty reduction, welfare provision and social security challenges in China in the context of fiscal reform and the 12th Five-Year Plan” (book chapter, Routledge, 2014), “Taiwan and Mainland China: Impacts of economic progress and international environment on political trajectory in comparative perspective” (article, *IJCS*, 2013), and “Evolving agencies amid rapid social change: Political leadership and State-civil society relations in China” (book chapter, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). His latest research projects include the MOHE/UM High-Impact Research (HIR) Grant project “The China Model: Implications of the contemporary rise of China” (2013-2016) and Suntory Foundation/University of Tokyo international research grant project “Beyond ‘China threat theory’: Dialogue with China experts on the rise of China” (2014-2015, Malaysian component). <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).
2. Freedom House’s report *Freedom in the World 2015 – Discarding democracy: Return to the iron fist*, p. 5.
3. “Swedish activist Peter Dahlin paraded on China state TV for ‘scripted confession’” (by Tom Phillips), *The Guardian* (UK), 20th January 2016. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/20/swedish-activist-peter-dahlin-paraded-on-china-state-tv-for-scripted-confession>>
4. ODN, 3rd March 2016. (東方日報 /Oriental Daily News/ODN is a Malaysian daily in Chinese, with China news sources mainly from the Hong Kong and Taiwan media.)
5. Freedom House’s report *Freedom in the World 2015 – Discarding democracy: Return to the iron fist*, p. 5.
6. “Trial by media? Confessions go prime time in China” (by Steven Jiang),

CNN (Cable News Network), 26th January 2016. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/26/asia/china-television-confessions/index.html>>

7. People in southern China, especially among the speakers of either Cantonese/*Yue* 粵 or Hokkien/Fujianese/*Min* 閩 regionalects (whose combined population is larger than the number of speakers of either Polish or Ukrainian, the two East European/Slavonic languages with most numerous speakers except Russian, or the speakers of Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish combined) actually refer to themselves as *T'ang-jen* 唐人 (*Tangren*, in their respective varied local pronunciations) instead of *Han-jen* 漢人 (*Hanren*), as noted here by George Moseley (1966):

The contradistinction between Han Chinese and national minorities repeatedly made [...] suggests that the Han Chinese constitute a homogeneous, discreet community from whom the national minorities are readily distinguishable. In fact, however, the cultural gap between “Han Chinese” and “minority” is often no greater than that between Han Chinese of different regions. There is an almost continuous ethnocultural spectrum extending from the northern, wheat-eating, Mandarin-speaking Chinese at one end to, at the other, the dark-skinned K’awa in the south who are primitive food-gatherers and speakers of a language of the Mon-Khmer family. In between are the more than 100 million “Han” Chinese of south-coastal China who speak dialects other than Mandarin and who, in fact, sometimes refer to themselves as *T'ang-jen* (men of T’ang, after the T’ang dynasty, seventh to tenth centuries) rather than as *Han-jen* (after the Han dynasty, third century B.C. to third century A.D.) and the more than ten million persons of the “national minorities” in south China who have been to varying extents acculturated to Chinese ways – to the point, in some cases, that they had no awareness of being different, of being a “minority,” until they were informed of the fact by workers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences who came to their areas after 1949.

(Moseley, 1966: 8-9)

8. In Mongol “*Chinggis Khagan*” or “*Chinggis Khaan*” (Чингис хаан).
9. “Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is ‘infiltrated by foreign forces’: anti-graft official” (by Adrian Wan), *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 15th June 2014 <<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1533020/chinese-academy-social-sciences-infiltrated-foreign-forces-anti-graft>>. These warnings to CASS were posted in an article on the website of a research institute for modern Chinese history which Zhang Yingwei visited on 10th June 2014. The article was removed a few days later on 14th June after the news began circulating online.
10. “Trial by media? Confessions go prime time in China” (by Steven Jiang), *CNN (Cable News Network)*, 26th January 2016. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/26/asia/china-television-confessions/index.html>>
11. George Orwell (Eric Blair). What is Fascism? *Tribune* (democratic socialist fortnightly newspaper founded in 1937, published in London), 24th March 1944. <http://orwell.ru/library/articles/As_I_Please/english/efasc>
12. George Orwell (Eric Blair). What is Fascism? *Tribune*, 24th March 1944. <http://orwell.ru/library/articles/As_I_Please/english/efasc>
13. “Classic fascism versus ‘friendly’ fascism”, *Third World Traveler*. <http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Fascism/Classic_Friendly_Fascism.html>
14. Don Hamerquist (2002). Fascism & anti-fascism. In: Mark Salotte, J. Sakai and Don Hamerquist, *Confronting fascism: Discussion documents for a militant movement*. Montreal: Kersplebedeb Publishing. <<http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/books/fascism/fashantifash.php>>
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16. Matthew N. Lyons (undated). What is fascism? Some general ideological features. *Political Research Associates (PRA)*. <<http://www.publiceye.org/eyes/whatfasc.html>> (The article represents paragraphs adapted from Chip

Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, *Too close for comfort: Right wing populism, scapegoating, and fascist potentials in US politics*, South End Press, Boston, 1996.)

17. In the context of the political economy of ethnic relations, it should be noted that the dominant group may perceive a subordinate group as “exotic” rather than “real” (Hoetink, 1973: 177-91). An example of such an “exotic” minority in Malaysia, besides the Orang Asli (i.e. “aborigines”), is the small Gento Kristang community (autoglossonym, from Portuguese “*Gento Cristão*”) in the state of Melaka, descended from the 16th-Century Portuguese settlers and occupiers. Defined as “deviating in somatic and/or cultural respects, without being conceived subjectively as a menace to the existing social order” (Hoetink, 1967), “exotic” groups (or Cox (1948)’s socioracial “strangers”) are not perceived as “real”, because they are not subjectively comprised within the “societal image” of the dominant. Thus they do not attract the latter’s hostility, as do “real” subordinate groups viewed as a menace. The case of the Ainu (アイヌ) and the “burakumin” (部落民) in Japan and that of the Amerindian natives and Afro-Americans in the United States today are good examples of these two polar subordinate situations – the Ainu and Amerindians being in some way viewed as “exotic” vis-à-vis the other two “real” minorities; instead of bitterness and hostility, they are met with “a mild benevolence, a condescending philanthropy” on the part of the dominant society (Hoetink, 1973: 179). Such distinction between the two types of subordinate groups was vividly described by DeVos in his study of the “burakumin”: “The basic attitudes held [by the dominant Japanese society] toward the Ainu are not as pejorative as towards the outcastes [i.e. the “burakumin”] [...] the Ainu have been treated ambivalently very much as the American Indians have been, in contrast to the caste distinctions which underlie the treatment of American blacks.” (DeVos, 1972: 326) Paradoxically, China’s largest minority, the Zhuang (壮) in Guangxi Province, could actually be more

- “exotic” than “real”. Being the most assimilated of minorities, the Zhuang’s ethnic consciousness was virtually created by the Han-dominated central Communist Party-State in the early 1950s (see, for instance, Kaup, 2000). Similarly for many small ethnic minorities in adjacent Guizhou and Yunnan. The same cannot be said for the “real” ethnic minorities of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang and Tibetans in Tibet and Qinghai, many of whom are strongly resisting Han dominance, assimilation and internal colonialism.
18. Matthew N. Lyons (undated). What is fascism? Some general ideological features. *Political Research Associates (PRA)*. <<http://www.publiceye.org/eyes/whatfasc.html>> (The article represents paragraphs adapted from Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, *Too close for comfort: Right wing populism, scapegoating, and fascist potentials in US politics*, South End Press, Boston, 1996.)
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 20. Matthew N. Lyons (undated). What is fascism? Some general ideological features. *Political Research Associates (PRA)*. <<http://www.publiceye.org/eyes/whatfasc.html>> (The article represents paragraphs adapted from Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, *Too close for comfort: Right wing populism, scapegoating, and fascist potentials in US politics*, South End Press, Boston, 1996.)
 21. Salil Tripathi (2008). The conscience of a forgetful nation. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol. 171, No. 5, June 2008, pp. 37-40 (see p. 37).
 22. “Mo Yan: Censorship is good” (Books Blog by Alexander Nazaryan), *Daily News* (New York), 6th December 2012 <<http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/pageviews/mo-yan-censorship-good-blog-entry-1.1639562>>;

- “Nobel Prize winning author Mo Yan says censorship is necessary”, *The Telegraph* (UK), 7th December 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/9728801/Nobel-Prize-winning-author-Mo-Yan-says-censorship-is-necessary.html>>.
23. “The Writer, the State and the Nobel” (by Didi Kirsten Tatlow), *The New York Times*, 12th October 2012. <<http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/the-writer-the-state-and-the-nobel/>>
 24. “The Writer, the State and the Nobel” (by Didi Kirsten Tatlow), *The New York Times*, 12th October 2012. <<http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/the-writer-the-state-and-the-nobel/>>
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 27. Salil Tripathi (2008). To tell and listen: Salman Rushdie. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol. 171, No. 4, May 2008, pp. 24-27 (see p. 27).
 28. Translated by Arthur Waley (Source: *Poetry* (January 1918)). <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/3155>>
 29. Salil Tripathi (2008). The conscience of a forgetful nation. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol. 171, No. 5, June 2008, pp. 37-40 (see p. 39).
 30. Salil Tripathi (2008). The conscience of a forgetful nation. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol. 171, No. 5, June 2008, pp. 37-40 (see p. 37).
 31. Martin Jacques (2009). *When China rules the world: The rise of the Middle Kingdom and the end of the Western world*. London: Allen Lane. See also Martin Jacques, “Civilization state versus nation-state” (15/01/11 – *Süddeutsche Zeitung*), Martin Jacques – Official Site <<http://www.martinjacques.com/articles/civilization-state-versus-nation-state-2/>>.

32. Mao first composed the poem in 1936 but only published it when he went to Chungking 重慶 (Chongqing) in 1945 to hold peace talks with Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石. The poem became quite an instant sensation among Chinese intellectuals at that time.
33. This translation is a mix of Johnson K. Gao's and Zhao Hengyuan and Paul Woods's versions. Johnson K. Gao (Dallas, Texas, USA) translated the poem into English in 2008 <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3986613/The-English-translation-of-the-poem-the-Snow-by-Mao-Ze-dong#scribd>>. Gao had composed a song for this poem which was selected in a CD titled *For Love, for Snow and for Echo* <<http://cdbaby.com/cd/johnsongao2>>. An earlier translation was that by Zhao Hengyuan 趙恆元 and Paul Woods (1993): 《毛澤東詩詞 (漢英對照)》[the poetry of Mao Zedong (Chinese-English bilingual edition)], 天津人民出版社, Tianjin, pp. 66-69.
34. In Mongol “*Khubilai Khagan*” or “*Khubilai Khaan*” (Хубилай хаан).
35. The first Emperor of Ch'in (Qin) reportedly buried 500 to 1100 Confucian scholars alive, though scholars including Michel Nylan and Martin Kern doubted the fact or the extent and pointed to possible biased Han-dynasty scholars' exaggeration or fabrication.
36. R. Kent Guy (1987). *The emperor's four treasures: Scholars and the State in the late Qianlong period*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, page 176 (under the section “The growth of the Literary Inquisition (1776-1782)”. <https://books.google.com.my/books?id=bFA6a60_5LgC&pg=PA78&dq=The+Emperor%27s+Four+Treasures:+Scholars+and+the+State+in+the+Late+Ch%27ien-lung+Era.&hl=en#v=onepage&q=The%20Emperor's%20Four%20Treasures%3A%20Scholars%20and%20the%20State%20in%20the%20Late%20Ch'ien-lung%20Era.&f=false>
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40. *Ibid.*
41. “Miss Kowtow 2015” (editorial), *The Washington Post*, 7th November 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/miss-kowtow-2015/2015/11/07/ca15cc72-84a2-11e5-a7ca-6ab6ec20f839_story.html>
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43. *Ibid.*
44. “Trial by media? Confessions go prime time in China” (by Steven Jiang), *CNN (Cable News Network)*, 26th January 2016. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/26/asia/china-television-confessions/index.html>>
45. “China turns the screws on dissidents by persecuting their families” (editorial), *The Washington Post*, 26th February 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/china-turns-the-screws-on-dissidents-by-persecuting-their-families/2014/02/26/1aa191f8-9e68-11e3-a050-dc3322a94fa7_story.html>
46. *ODN*, 18th June 2011, 5th September 2011.
47. “Chen Guangcheng brother escapes to tell of beatings and reprisals” (by Tania Branigan), *The Guardian (UK)*, 24th May 2012. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/24/chen-guangcheng-brother-flees-captors>>

48. “China turns the screws on dissidents by persecuting their families” (editorial), *The Washington Post*, 26th February 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/china-turns-the-screws-on-dissidents-by-persecuting-their-families/2014/02/26/1aa191f8-9e68-11e3-a050-dc3322a94fa7_story.html>
49. “Even with one-child policy lifted, China becoming ‘world’s largest old-age home’” (by Bill Powell), *Newsweek* (US), 31st October 2015. <<http://www.newsweek.com/2015/11/13/its-one-child-policy-lifted-china-becoming-worlds-largest-old-age-home-389059.html>>
50. 「孔子學院及其影響 —— 專訪余英時」 [Confucius Institutes: a special interview of Yu Ying-shih], 《縱覽中國》 [China overview], 8th April 2012.
51. Voltaire, *Essay on the Customs* (1756).
52. 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, its 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* 维稳, 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 the 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).

53. Karl Wittfogel (1967). *Oriental despotism*. New Haven: Yale University Press (see Chu, 2013: 80).
54. "China barred a human rights activist from a global beauty contest – putting her squarely in the spotlight" (by Richard Macauley and Heather Timmons), *Quartz* (qz.com), 27 November 2015. <<http://qz.com/560703/china-barred-a-human-rights-activist-from-a-global-beauty-contest-putting-her-squarely-in-the-spotlight/>>
55. "Miss Kowtow 2015" (editorial), *The Washington Post*, 7th November 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/miss-kowtow-2015/2015/11/07/ca15cc72-84a2-11e5-a7ca-6ab6ec20f839_story.html>
56. Quoted in "N.Y.U., China, and Chen Guangcheng", Letter from China – Dispatches from Evan Osnos. *The New Yorker*, 17th June 2013.

57. *Ibid.*
58. “Thailand deports 100 Muslim Uighurs to China”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 9th July 2015 <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/thailand-deports-100-muslim-ughurs-to-china-1436451320>>; “Thailand says rejected China request to deport all Uighurs – decision draws criticism from the U.N. and sets off protests in Turkey”, *Borneo Post online*, 11th July 2015 <<http://www.theborneopost.com/2015/07/11/thailand-says-rejected-china-request-to-deport-all-ughurs/>>.
59. “Malaysia accused over deporting Uighur asylum seekers to China”, *The Guardian* (UK), 5th February 2013. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/05/malaysia-ughur-asylum-seekers-china>>
60. “China urged to release Uighur activist allegedly tortured in prison”, Amnesty International UK / Blogs, 21st December 2010. <<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/countdown-china/china-urged-release-ughur-activist-allegedly-tortured-prison>>
61. “‘Fishball revolution’: Hong Kong comes to terms with brutal New Year street battle” (by Finbarr Bermingham), *The Week* (UK), 11th February 2016 <<http://www.theweek.co.uk/69474/fishball-revolution-hong-kong-comes-to-terms-with-brutal-new-year-street-battle>>; “Bristling under Beijing: Hong Kong’s ‘fishball revolution’ is about a lot more than just street food” (by Richard Macauley and Heather Timmons), *Quartz*, 8th February 2016 <http://qz.com/612813/hong-kongs-fishball-revolution-is-about-a-lot-more-than-just-street-food>.
62. “Bristling under Beijing: Hong Kong’s ‘fishball revolution’ is about a lot more than just street food” (by Richard Macauley and Heather Timmons), *Quartz*, 8th February 2016 <http://qz.com/612813/hong-kongs-fishball-revolution-is-about-a-lot-more-than-just-street-food>.
63. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick (1979). Dictatorships & double standards. *Commentary*, 1st November 1979. <<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/dictatorships-double-standards/>>

64. Raymond S. Sleeper (ed.). *Mesmerized by the bear: The Soviet strategy of deception*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, p. 174 (in the chapter “Political pilgrims”, selected by David Martin, pp. 169-175, with most of the quotations reproduced from the collection put together by Paul Hollander in *Political pilgrims*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981 (hardcover) / New York: Harper and Row, 1983 (paperback)).
65. “以和諧精神超越傳統三代人權的對抗精神，將化育出新一代人權——和諧權。和諧權將成為和諧世界建設的基石和要素。” [Let the *hexie* spirit transcend the confrontational spirit of the three generations of conventional human rights, to cultivate and produce a new generation of human rights – the *hexie* rights (rights of harmony). *Hexie* rights will become the foundation stone and key element of the building of the *hexie shijie* (harmonious world).] (See “法學專家徐顯明提出第四代人權‘和諧權’”，中國新聞網／騰訊網，22nd November 2006 <<http://news.qq.com/a/20061122/002038.htm>>.)
66. ODN, 1st July 2011.
67. “The island of Taiwan only achieved a peaceful transition from martial law and dictatorship to democracy roughly two decades ago, with 1990 student protests known as the Wild Lily movement [that] took place just one year after the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations were violently crushed in China”, as *The Washington Post*’s China bureau chief Simon Denyer reminisced in a reportage on the recent Taiwanese general elections, “Twenty-five years later, as China moves in a more repressive direction, harassing and arresting not only dissidents, lawyers and journalists but also feminists and LGBT-rights activists, the island at its side is moving ever more confidently on the opposite path.” (“‘Progressive, tolerant and diverse’: How Taiwan is moving ever farther from China” (by Simon Denyer), *The Washington Post*, 19th January 2016 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/01/19/progressive-tolerant-and-diverse-how-taiwan-is-moving-ever-farther-from->

china/>) Indeed, through one-person-one-vote free and fair popular elections on 16th January 2016 Taiwan elected its first female president Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文, an LSE PhD, who is part-aboriginal, “the first woman to run an Asian country who is not the child of a political dynasty”). The fact that female candidates won 43 out of 113 seats in Taiwan’s parliament, and legislators from Taiwan’s Austronesian aboriginal inhabitants who make up just 1.5 per cent of the population took up 7 per cent of seats in the parliament (*ibid.*), further consolidated Taiwan’s unique position not only as the only vibrant, fiercely democratic, proudly progressive, tolerant and diverse Chinese-speaking polity, but also in sharp contrast to the increasingly autocratic and ruthless CCP autocracy in Mainland China (cf. Taiwan’s being progressive, tolerant and diverse, besides her vibrant liberal democracy, especially in view of the new president having publicly supported LGBT rights and endorsed same-sex marriage, a position she publicly expressed when the biggest gay pride parade in Asia was held in Taipei on 31st October 2015). (“As Taiwan celebrates gay pride, presidential hopeful Tsai Ing-wen comes out for marriage equality” (by Kenneth Tan), *Shanghaiist Daily*, 1st November 2015 <<http://shanghaiist.com/2015/11/01/tsai-ing-wen-gay-taiwan.php>>; “Taiwan crowds march in Asia’s biggest gay pride parade” (by Agence France-Presse), *Mail Online (Daily Mail, UK)*, 31st October 2015 <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3298008/Taiwan-crowds-march-Asias-biggest-gay-pride-parade.html>>)

68. See Bo (2009: 10-11).
69. Cited from 《鄧小平文選》第3卷 [selected works of Deng Xiaoping, volume 3], Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1993 年版, 第 220~221 頁。
70. Cited in Diamond (2002: 24).
71. Freedom House’s report *Freedom in the World 2015 – Discarding democracy: Return to the iron fist*, p. 4.

72. Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses (2001) argues that Francisco Paulino Hermenegildo Teódulo Franco Bahamonde “was not a fascist. There is an element of revolutionary politics in fascism, of wanting to provoke a dramatic change in society. That was not Franco’s intention: on the contrary, he wanted to preserve Spain from change ... the debate as to whether Franco was a fascist is in many ways irrelevant, since the denial of Franco’s fascism has often been an essential part of attempts to legitimise his actions. The fact remains that his brutality matched or even exceeded that of Mussolini.” (p. 87) Similarly Raymond Carr (1980) states that: “In spite of the Fascist trimmings of the early years – the goose-step and the Fascist salute – Francoism was not a totalitarian regime. It was a conservative, Catholic, authoritarian system, its original corporatist features modified over time. It came to have none of the characteristics of a totalitarian state: no single party parallel to the state administration; after the early years, no successful attempt at mass mobilization.” (p. 165) However, Paul Preston (1995) disagrees strongly with such an approach, saying that “in the last twenty years [since the 1970s], scholars have dwelt on the fact that Francoism was not Hitlerism ... resulting in an increasingly widespread consensus that Francoism was never really fascism ... Such an approach is understandable and unfortunate ... An eagerness to exonerate the Franco regime from the taint of fascism can go with a readiness to forget that, after coming to power through a civil war which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and forced hundreds of thousands more into exile, the dictatorship executed at least quarter of a million people, maintained concentration camps and labour battalions, and sent troops to fight for Hitler on the Russian front ... the confident exclusion ... of the Franco regime from a discussion of fascism could only be justified if fascism is taken to be synonymous with Nazism at its most extreme, complete with racialistic bestiality. Such a view, since it leads logically to the suggestion that Mussolini’s Italy was not really fascist, is so rigid as to

be useless.” (pp. 10-11) Going into details on characteristics of the *Caudillo*’s regime, Andrew Forrest (2000) similarly finds Francoism fascist: “The *teoria de caudillaje* was a defining contour of the Franco regime, and with it came a flourishing personality cult ... this bureaucratic state learned much from the economic policy of Fascist Italy. These lessons also included autarky, the Labour Charter establishing rights and duties of workers (1938), the ‘Battle for Wheat’ and the INI, a source of state investment for industry (1941). The Falangist Seccion Femenina ... ‘re-educated’ women in their traditional roles, analagous to the Nazi Kinder, Kirche, Kuche ... Franco regime banned not only divorce but, along with all Catholic countries, contraception. As in Mussolini’s Italy and the Third Reich, awards were given as incentive to produce large families ... Through the voluntary Youth Front founded in 1940 (Pelayos aged 7-10, Flechas 11-14, Cadetes 15-18) Falangists instilled political doctrine ... [and] occupied top positions in the Franco propaganda machine, press, radio, film, theatre, and ... orchestrated parades and rallies affirming mass support for the Caudillo with their fascist salute and conspicuous blue shirts.” (p. 116, p. 118) Some observers, though, have opted for a mid-way approach, calling the Franquist regime “semifascist”: “Falangists never played a major role in the new state. Most of the key leaders of the Falange did not survive the Civil War, and Franco moved quickly to subordinate the fascist party, merging it as well as more conservative and traditional political forces into the broader and vaguer National Movement under his direct control ... Thus, while there was a definite fascist element during the first decade of Franco’s rule, most analysts have concluded that early Francoism can more accurately be described as semifascist.” (Solsten and Meditz (eds), 1988) (The quoted passages in this note came from the compilation in “Was Franco a fascist?”, *International School History* <http://internationalschoolhistory.net/western_europe/spain/1945-53_was_franco_a_fascist.htm>.)

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