

Communism as articulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century was not instituted in any country until after the Russian Revolution in 1917 and subsequent civil war during which an estimated 8-10 million Russians perished.

A museum of totalitarianism recently opened in Lviv in western Ukraine, containing displays from both the Soviet and Nazi occupation periods of the city.

The horrors committed over twelve years in the nations lying between Berlin and Moscow are detailed by Yale historian Timothy Snyder in his seminal book *Bloodlands*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EykFRYWI9Q>

There were in all about 14 million victims, but at the war's end the region fell behind the Iron Curtain, leaving the history mostly unexplained for decades. The inhuman nature of Soviet communism has been discussed extensively during the 100th year since the 1917 Revolution (See, for example, pieces by Canadian writer Robert Fulford and John O'Sullivan). A monument to the victims of communism is soon to be built in Ottawa.

The governance model in Russia today, presuming it to be neither communism nor democracy, is beyond the scope of this talk. President Vladimir Putin in a 2016 speech was quoted as saying that he is and has always been fond of communist “ideas”, the independent news agency Interfax reported.

He later came under scrutiny from the Russian Communist Party for criticizing Vladimir Lenin, the inventor of totalitarianism, as being responsible for the initial collapse of the revolution and civil war. “You know that I, like millions of Soviet citizens, over 20

million, was a member of the Communist Party of the USSR and not only was I a member of the party but I worked for almost 20 years for an organization called the Committee for State Security,” Putin said, referring to the KGB. “I was not, as you know, a party member by necessity,” he said.

Most of us outside Russia today take anything Mr. Putin says with a large grain of Caspian salt.

China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam

By the mid-20th century, some thought communism would replace democracy and the rule of law as the dominant political ideology worldwide. Today, mercifully, probably only five authentically communist governments remain, co-existing with about 188 other nations-a majority with democratic governance of widely differing varieties.

The five are China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam

The focus here will be China.

Let me begin with a confession. As a student here in Paris in the late ‘60s, I was actually ...an admirer of Mao. I read his Little Red Book. He seemed kind in that famous photo, swimming in the Yangtze River. Most historians today, however, name him with Stalin and Hitler as the worst

mass murderers of the 20th century.

His biographers [Chang and Halliday](#) note that “over 70 million perished under Mao’s rule” in peacetime. Many governance problems in China today stem from the fusion of Mao’s totalitarianism and his successor Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms. “Crony capitalism”, violence and corruption are the system in China today.

Every 10 years or so since it seized power in 1949, the Party has launched some form of persecution on a minority in order to instill terror in the Chinese people generally.

Consider just four of the campaigns launched since 1950:

- ‘*The Great Leap Forward*’ where an estimated 40 million people starved to death,
- ‘*The Cultural Revolution*’ of 1966-76...saw perhaps another two million killed,
- *The Tiananmen Square Massacre* of 1989, where soldiers killed thousands who were seeking openness and democracy, and

- *The ongoing persecution of Tibetans, Uyghurs and Christians, and in 1999 the start of the ongoing inhuman crackdown against Falun Gong*

China is still the world's most populous country and now has the second largest economy and a third of the world's billionaires. Because of its huge population (about 1.388 billion), the GDP per capita last year was under (US)\$7,000, just 55% of the world's average, thus highlighting that it still has a long way to go improve living standards for all.

The recent 19th Party Congress indicated how far President/General Secretary of the Party/Chairman of the Central Military Commission Xi Jinping has taken China backwards in terms of political and economic liberalization. He has moved significantly from one-party government towards one-person rule.

Is it a return to an earlier emperor period? The new leadership comprises six men all over 60 years of age, which means Xi has avoided anointing a clear successor since none will be eligible for a two-term presidency from 2022 under current retirement rules. He might also break with convention to hold onto power beyond his second term.

Key decisions were made in advance as controls on civil society were tightened. While Xi urges a disciplinary state with enormous security, surveillance and punishment capabilities, and simultaneously represses market forces and social freedoms, he could discover that a concentration of power with no checks and balances will backfire.

Democracy pretended

Like North Korea and Russia, the party-state in China still pretends to be a democracy. Isaac Stone Fish, a senior fellow at the U.S. Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations, writes: "Beijing goes on insisting—despite its lack of free and fair elections, uncensored media, or an independent judiciary—that it's a democracy...But... lying to the people does not the sound foundation of good governance make. In the seven years I lived in China, no Chinese person who was not a Communist Party hack could tell me with a straight face they were living in a democracy."

Wei Jingsheng of the Wei Jingsheng Foundation and the Overseas Chinese Democracy Coalition comments from America on whether democracy exists within the Party itself: "The constitution of the Chinese Communist Party very clearly states: the whole country of China must obey the CCP leadership, the whole CCP must obey the central committee of the CCP...Some people said Deng Xiaoping created a democratic atmosphere within the CCP... (He) was retired at home (in 1989) when he called a few retired old men who were just as angry as he was, and thus they were able to remove the Secretary-General of the Communist Party as well as decide on using the people's army to kill the people. Is this "democracy within the Communist Party"?"

Nathan Vanderklippe of Canada's Globe and Mail notes that the Party's Xinhua News agency "ridicules western systems as 'doddering' and marked by 'endless political backbiting, bickering and policy reversals' that have 'retarded economic and social progress and ignored the interests of most citizens'...Party leaders in Beijing no doubt consider it in the Party's interest to develop what Francois Godement of the European Council on Foreign Relations foresees as 'digital authoritarianism... the notion that you can actually enforce among the population-and certainly among the cadres-conformity, because you know everything that they do, you know everything that they say. Marxism or Maoism with IT has never been tried before'."

The Canadian economics commentator Nick Rost van Tonningen, however, notes “ (Xi Jinping) presides over an economy whose glory days as ‘a dominant engine of global growth’ are over...its total debt-to-GDP ratio, at 250+% and rising, is in a class by itself and will almost inevitably lead to a financial crisis...The Shanghai-based Hurun Group has found in its surveys that half of all Chinese millionaires are planning, or considering, to move to another country, with the most popular destinations being the US, Canada, the UK and Australia.

This may over time prove the Achilles Heel of the new ‘forget political freedom, we will allow you to get rich under the leadership of the Communist Party’ policy strategy announced by President Xi at the recent National Party Congress; for what good is it to be rich if your wealth cannot buy what you want most, freedom from being hassled by Communist Party officials?”

“Great leap backward”

Jiayang Fan, staff writer at the New Yorker, concluded about the Party Congress: Refining his personal control rather than reforming a sclerotic system may seem expedient for Xi, and, in the short term, he may be able to accomplish his immediate goals faster. But setting the precedent of a modern-day emperor ensnares Chinese politics in a cycle of volatility and unsustainability that renders an entire nation vulnerable, once again, to the whimsy of an individual...Xi’s vision for China’s future, even though it is up to 2050, suggests a great leap backward, in which old lessons remain unlearned.

Canadian Clive Ansley, who practised law in Shanghai for 14 years until 2003, notes: China does not have a legal system in any meaningful sense. It is a completely bogus system, which was introduced in 1979 for reasons having little or nothing to do with any desire to implement Rule of Law... China is a brutal police state...There is a current saying amongst Chinese lawyers and judges who truly believe in the Rule of Law...: ‘Those who hear the case do not make the judgment; those who make the judgment have not heard the case’.... Nothing which has transpired in the ‘courtroom’ has any impact on the ‘judgment.

The Party operates outside and above the law as in the pre-1991 Soviet Union. In an article for Lawyers' Rights Watch, Ansley and Gail Davidson make numerous points, including these:

- China is violating its international human rights obligations.
- The courts and the judiciary are controlled by the Communist Party of China and are therefore not independent. President Xi has publicly declared that China will not accept 'Western style' judicial independence.

Human dignity

Wang Yu illustrates the off-camera face of the Xi regime. Ms. Wang after spending several years in prison has become a fearless champion of the abused. In 2013, she said, "Many people think: 'China is rich, developing quickly ...has tall buildings, wide highways, fancy cars'...They don't know that Chinese people are like animals that don't have any basic rights". Wang was arrested in 2015 and released the following year after being coerced to give a televised confession. Her human rights work is highlighted in the 2016 documentary *Hooligan Sparrow*. She was later awarded the 21st Ludovic Trarieux International Human Rights Prize and the American Bar Association's inaugural *International Human Rights Award*.

Gao Zhisheng, known by many as 'the conscience of China' and twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, was moved in 2014 from prison to house arrest, but could at the time barely walk or speak because of the torture he had undergone. In September 2015, in his first interview in five years, Gao told Associated Press that he was tortured with an electric baton to his face and spent three years in solitary confinement since 2010. "Every time we emerge from the prison alive, it is a defeat for our opponents."

Former European Parliament vice-president Edward McMillan-Scott compares Gao to Nelson Mandela. He adds about the UN's former torture rapporteur, Dr. Manfred Nowak: "(In 2006 Nowak) estimated that some two-thirds of the seven to eight million detained in China's re-education through labour system were practitioners of Falun Gong. Thousands of them perished from the illegal harvesting of their vital organs as part of the People's Liberation Army's lucrative organ transplant trade."

Gao says in his new book published outside China, [*Unwavering Convictions*](#) : "The number of people held in Chinese prisons has always been highly classified. My personal and conservative estimate is that the number cannot be less than 15 million. China has far more prisons than universities. (It was only after years of working as a lawyer that I found out that there are more than 5,000 detention centers used for holding those on remand...)"

Bloody Harvest

In 2006, the [*Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong in China*](#) (CIPFG) asked David Matas and me as volunteers to investigate persistent claims of organ pillaging/trafficking from Falun Gong practitioners. We released two reports and a book, [*Bloody Harvest*](#) , and have continued to investigate (Our revised report is accessible in 18 languages from www.david-kilgour.com).

We determined that for 41,500 transplants done in the years 2000-2005 in China, the sourcing beyond any reasonable doubt was Falun Gong prisoners of conscience.

Our main conclusion is that there “continues today to be large-scale organ seizures from unwilling Falun Gong practitioners (...) Their vital organs, including kidneys, livers, corneas and hearts, were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries”.

A Nobel Peace Prize nominee and co-founder of the [International Coalition to end Organ Pillaging in China](#), Ethan Gutmann’s 2014 book, [The Slaughter](#), places the persecution of the Falun Gong, Tibetan, Uyghur, and house Christian communities in context. He explains how he arrived at his “best estimate” that organs of 65,000 Falun Gong and “two to four thousand” Uyghurs, Tibetans and House Christians were “harvested” in the 2000- 2008 period.

Forced labour camps

David Matas and I visited about a dozen countries to interview Falun Gong practitioners who had managed to escape both the camps and the country. They told us of working in appalling conditions for up to sixteen hours daily in these camps with no pay and little food, crowded sleeping conditions and torture. Inmates make a range of export products as subcontractors to multinational companies, including Christmas decorations and McDonalds’ estaurants toys. This constitutes gross corporate irresponsibility and a violation of WTO rules; it calls for an effective response by all trading partners of China.

Response of transplant professionals

On October 10, after a screening of the Peabody award-winning film documentary [Human Harvest](#) in Harvard Square, I stressed some points made earlier by David Matas in Prague:

- In the days of the Soviet Union, mental health professionals globally faced the abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union and acted strongly against it, helping to have Soviet era practices changed. Today, transplant professionals globally face the abuse of transplant surgery in Communist China, but their response has been disappointing. (Only a few) have bothered to

take the trouble to read the research and realize that what is going on in China with transplantations is mass killing of innocents and coverup. They react accordingly, distancing themselves from the Chinese transplant profession and encouraging others to do likewise.

- Tragically, however, four organizations (The World Health Organization (WHO), the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS), The Transplantation Society (TTS) and the Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group (DICG)) have accepted Chinese party-state propaganda that our research demonstrating mass killings of innocents for transplantation is based on rumour (which it is not) and that it is unverifiable, although it is both verifiable and verified.

- The Chinese Communist Party has no credible factual answers to the work of independent researchers who have demonstrated the mass killings of innocents for transplantation. Indeed, given the massive scale of the transplantation business in China, it is impossible to deny this research in any credible manner. The Party publicizes and exaggerates the endorsements of those transplant professionals who have fallen for their propaganda. One can only hope that a willingness to confront the truth about China will prevail generally in the transplantation profession before many other innocents are killed for their organs.

Conclusion

James Mann, author of [China Fantasy](#) and former Beijing bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times: "...Democratic governments around the world need to collaborate more often in condemning Chinese repression — not just in private meetings but in public as well...Why should there be a one-way street in which Chinese leaders send their own children to America's best schools, while locking up lawyers at home? The Chinese regime is not going to open up because of our trade with it..."

Former Premier Wen Jiao-bao noted before leaving office, "Without the success of political

structural reform, it is impossible for us to fully institute economic structural reform. The gains we have made... may be lost...and such a historical tragedy as the Cultural Revolution may happen again.”

I wonder how many Chinese citizens are asking if Xi is seeking to return China to one of its emperor periods?

Governments, investors and business people should examine why they are supporting the violation of so many basic human rights in order to increase trade and investment with China. This has resulted mostly in national jobs being outsourced to China and continuous increases in bi-lateral trade and investment deficits. Are we so focused on access to inexpensive consumer goods and a potential large market that we ignore the human, social and natural environment costs paid by abused Chinese nationals to produce them?

Consumers in many countries create much of the wealth in China, while its state-owned enterprises and spies ignore intellectual property laws and copy everything from small appliances to civilian and military aircraft.

Chinese citizens seek safety and security, the rule of law, respect, education, good jobs, accountable governance and a good natural environment. The party state in Beijing should support these aspirations.

Thank you.

***The Platform of European Memory and Conscience International Conference
Collège des Bernardins and Fondation Napoleon, Paris
November 8-9, 2017
Hon. David Kilgour, J.D.***