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People hold a banner in support of the millions of Chinese people who have quit the Chinese Communist Party and its affiliated organizations, in New York on May 16, 2019.



'QUIT THE CCP'

GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT
GAINS NEW TRACTION

See Page 2



Falun Gong practitioners hold a banner in support of the 330 million Chinese who have withdrawn from the Chinese Communist Party during a parade in Washington on July 18, 2019.

CHINESE REGIME

Movement to Reject CCP Gains New Traction Amid Toughening US Stance

EVA FU

NEW YORK—Tucked away in a typical brick building, a small office marked only with a cobalt blue banner and a small yellow sign on the exterior, has been unusually busy.

About a month or two ago, a flood of requests started pouring in to the nonprofit Global Tuidang Center, a volunteer-run organization headquartered in Flushing, a neighborhood in the borough of Queens, New York, which coordinates efforts for Chinese who wish to renounce their ties with the ruling regime in China. The center has more than 100 branches globally.

"Doesn't matter if it's day or night, people have kept coming for the certificates," Yi Rong, the center's director, said in a recent interview.

Literally meaning "Quitting the Party," Tuidang is a grassroots movement that has steadily gained appeal among the global overseas Chinese community since 2004, fueled by the publication of the Chinese-language Epoch Times' editorial series, "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party."

In recent months, as the United States hardened its China policy—due to disputes over Beijing's handling of the pandemic, human rights abuses, and trade practices—the movement has picked up steam.

If China's affluent must choose between the free world and the authoritarian Chinese regime, 'the choice would be obvious.'

Wang Han, graduate student

Chinese citizens wait to submit their visa applications at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, in this file photo.

From July to September, the number of people who renounced their ties with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its affiliate organizations was over 4 million. Since 2004, a total of more than 365 million have done so, according to the Tuidang Center's records.

China currently has more than 91.9 million active Party members, but that number does not include the Young Pioneers—an organization for which membership is compulsory for virtually all primary school students—and the Youth League, an organization for middle and high school students.

From mainland China, requests have notably shot up compared to past years. Many have inquired about obtaining digital certificates, which the organization began offering in August after an influx of requests, said Tom Tang, a volunteer at the New York center.

What prompted these Chinese citizens' decisions varies. Some fear that their Party membership may pose a potential hurdle on their path to immigration, as U.S. laws prohibit members of communist parties from obtaining an immigrant visa. The Tuidang Center's certificates are recognized by U.S. immigration officers, Yi said.

Yi recalled one person who recently flew from mainland China to New York specifically for the certificate.

"I just want to pick up the certificate before getting back [to China]," Yi recalled him saying.

The recent uptick has corresponded with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issuing an alert reiterating its policy of barring Communist Party members.

Several days after the alert, on Oct. 9, a woman surnamed Xie visited the Tuidang Center requesting a certificate for her husband, who is currently awaiting an immigration visa interview at the U.S. consulate in Guangdong Province in China's southeast.

Her husband had worked in a state-run firm in China. Like his coworkers, he joined the CCP for the career benefits, she told The Epoch Times. Concerned about the growing U.S.-China rift, her daughter, a U.S. citizen, had suggested he make a formal Party withdrawal.

For others, the gesture is a symbolic stance to distance themselves from the regime's wrongdoings.

Wang Han, a graduate student in data analytics at the University of Southern California, wrote a statement in May to withdraw from the Young Pioneers, the Chinese communist organization for primary school students, which he had joined as a child.

Wang, originally from Hangzhou city, has read about China's contemporary history and found that the "Party doctrine could not explain away" its attempted whitewashing of wrongdoing.

While he "never had a favorable impression of the CCP," the massive Hong Kong protests last year and the regime's outbreak response were the final straw, he said. When he came across Chinese commentators sharing their views about the Tuidang movement on YouTube, he decided that it was "time to draw the line," the 23-year-old said in a phone interview.

Among his circle of Chinese friends in school, many hold negative views of the regime—though few want to risk the repercussions of sharing their thoughts openly, he said. A good majority, himself included, don't want to go back to their home country.

If China's affluent must choose between the free world and the authoritarian Chinese regime, "the choice would be obvious," he said.

Yang Li, a San Francisco volunteer who helps man the Tuidang hotline, pays close attention to the emotion in the callers' voices, such as anger or confusion. Those in the latter

category often come with specific questions about the Party that could stretch the conversation to over 40 minutes, she said.

High officials have called too: In late May, as Beijing's rubber-stamp legislature convened its annual plenary sessions, a delegate called and asked to withdraw from the Party, saying that he has "seen enough of the regime's evil deeds." Choking back tears, he shared about the time he led a team of medics to assist Wuhan during the COVID-19 outbreak's early stages, and the deaths he saw there. He said he met with whistleblower doctor Li Wenliang there, who was punished for sharing the news about the virus. Li told Yang he "regretted being a Party member."

Some high-profile officials have recently withdrawn publicly from the CCP, including Li Chuanliang, a former deputy mayor of Jixi city in northeastern Heilongjiang Province who recently defected to the United States.

One person from Guangdong called in October with a list of 53 people who wanted to quit the CCP's affiliate organizations. About one or two months ago, another from Zhejiang Province supplied names of over 30 acquaintances who wished to quit.

She said she was compelled to tell them about the Tuidang movement upon reading a booklet about the regime's persecution of the spiritual group Falun Gong.

The hotline has also recently seen a spike in spam calls from paid Chinese trolls, known as the 50-cent army. These calls often contain a lot of background noise, and the callers hurl insults nonstop, Yang said. "They keep dialing to keep the phone lines busy, so that those who really want to register Party withdrawals can't reach us."

One time, a Chinese police officer phoned in and threatened to track Yang down and arrest her. "I'm in the United States. How would you arrest me?" Yang responded. The officer quickly stopped talking.

Yang, who has had many similar encounters throughout her years of manning the hotline, blamed such attitudes on the CCP's ideological brainwashing. When another officer from Dongguan city, Guangdong, gave similar threats, she replied by refuting CCP talking points one by one. The officer became quiet and said he would "think it over carefully." A little while later, he called back. "I know what to do now," he told Yang.

ORGAN HARVESTING

Working From Within: How Lawyers in China and Canada Collaborated to Uncover CCP's Organ Harvesting Atrocities

JUSTINA WHEALE

Allies in free countries can be a powerful force to help unshackle those suffering under brutal regimes, said renowned Canadian human rights lawyer David Matas, as he outlined how he and others worked with a Chinese lawyer to expose some of the Chinese regime's most horrific crimes.

A Winnipeg-based international human rights lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Matas spoke at a virtual panel exploring the modern context of Gandhi and human rights, marking the 150th birthday anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on Oct. 4.

"We do not have to be inside a repressive country to resist the repression of that country," Matas told the panel.

"Non-violent resistance has to shift from inside to outside. Commanding attention, spreading awareness, appealing to global opinion, bringing a mass movement into being cannot be done from within the country of repression. ... The Gandhis of today inside the country of repression, even just by demonstrating how little can be done from inside, can spur action from outside."

In 2006, Matas was pursuing an independent investigation into disturbing claims of the forced organ harvesting of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience in China.

Working in concert with David Kilgour, former cabinet minister and Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, the pair hit a roadblock: they wanted to go to China to do the work but needed an invitation from a representative within China to proceed. Chinese officials had already made it clear they only wanted to deny the evidence of organ transplant abuse in China, so Matas and Kilgour needed to find another way.

The person who eventually responded to their call, at great personal risk, was Gao Zhisheng, a renowned lawyer often referred to as the "Conscience of China" and who Matas likened to China's modern-day Gandhi.

Gao, a self-taught human rights lawyer, was known for representing Chinese citizens who experienced persecution, including practitioners of the spiritual group Falun Gong. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had launched a brutal persecution campaign against the peaceful spiritual discipline in 1999, in efforts to "eradicate" Falun Gong, as former CCP leader Jiang Zemin feared the increasingly popular practice was overshadowing his legacy. The CCP's own data indicated there were more Falun Gong practitioners in China than Party members.

"The fact that Falun Gong were peaceful, unorganized, and apolitical did not stop Party power-climbers who were looking for an easy target," Matas told the panel.

Practitioners were swept up in the large-scale persecution campaign; those who refused to give up their beliefs were imprisoned and tortured in labor camps across China. A few years later, rumors began to emerge that organs of these prisoners of conscience were being harvested without their consent to feed lucrative organ trade, while their bodies were cremated to hide the evidence.

Starting in late 2004, Gao repeatedly sent letters to senior CCP officials, demanding changes to the suppression of Falun Gong adherents and other oppressed groups. The CCP responded with escalating harassment and threats against him.

By the time Gao invited Ma-



Gao Zhisheng at his office in Beijing on Nov. 2, 2005.

tas and Kilgour to investigate in 2006, the CCP had revoked his license to practice law, put him and his family under police surveillance, arbitrarily arrested him and his office staff, and were suspected of attempted assassination after a military vehicle tried to run Gao down in the street.

Yet in his reply to Matas, Gao assured him that the risks of inviting the Canadians to investigate the forced organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners were far outweighed by the ever-present danger of living under "an evil dictatorship system."

"The source of danger lies in this evil inhuman system, not what we choose to do," he said in a letter.

Matas-Kilgour Report: 'Bloody Harvest'

What Matas and Kilgour eventually found in their investigation, detailed in their 2006 report "Bloody Harvest," was evidence of state-sponsored illicit organ harvesting. Falun Gong prisoners of conscience were being used as a living organ bank to supply China's lucrative organ transplant trade, they concluded.

Among the evidence considered for the report were phone calls made to Chinese transplant doctors, in which the doctors admitted to harvesting organs from Falun Gong practitioners.

Kilgour and Matas were later joined by investigative journalist Ethan Gutmann in writing an update to "Bloody Harvest." Released in June 2016, the report concludes that the number of transplants done in China far exceeds the official numbers and that the main source for the organs is the killing of innocents, primarily Falun Gong practitioners.

An independent London tribunal further confirmed last year, after a year-long investigation, that prisoners of conscience have been—and continue to be—killed in China for their organs "on a significant scale."

Gao's Courage

Gao's courage and willingness to work with Matas was instrumental in uncovering this atrocity, and shows how powerful these types of collaborations from inside and outside a repressed country can be, Matas said.

"Gao Zhisheng did not prompt me to begin my work on the Falun Gong file, since I began the report before I knew of him, but he surely encouraged me to continue and persevere," he said.

"If he was prepared to risk so much for so long, I, from the safety of Winnipeg, should do what I could."

Gao's courage came at a price, however. After his invitation to Matas, he was repeatedly kidnapped by police, severely tor-

mented, and imprisoned several times. His wife and children were threatened by authorities, and in 2009 they fled China for the United States in a daring escape.

Gao was released from a three-year prison sentence in China in 2014, but was rearrested in August 2017 and his whereabouts remain unknown.

Gao displayed exceptional heroism and put himself at great risk to help others, said Matas, but noted that there are countless other ways to help support victims of persecution in China like Falun Gong adherents, without danger. His speech to the panel included 18 recommendations for measures that could be taken in the fields of medicine, law, business, and research that would have a profound effect toward stopping the persecution and illegal organ harvesting.

For example, Matas said Canada should require provinces to report all cases of transplant tourism and re-enact an existing bill that would make complicity in transplant abuse abroad an extraterritorial offense, while imposing an immigration ban on those complicit in organ transplant abuse.

He said Canada should also apply Magnitsky sanctions to Chinese officials directly involved in the persecution of Falun Gong—a request made to the Liberal government by the Falun Dafa Association of Canada in 2018.



David Matas, a Canadian international human rights lawyer and co-author of "Bloody Harvest: Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China."



MARK RALSTON/AP/GETTY IMAGES

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MARK ZOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

A Popular 'Boycott China' Campaign Emerges From a Conflict Zone in India

VENUS UPADHAYAYA

Ladakh, India—Since India and China's war-like buildup on the disputed border in Ladakh, an innovator and education reformist has been reminding people in a series of popular videos to deal with China through their wallets rather than bullets.

Sonom Wangchuk, an engineer who holds a special voice in contemporary India's social innovation landscape, has been communicating from his base at the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives (HIAL) in Phyang Valley in Ladakh through a series of videos since May, when the Chinese incursions into Indian territory started.

The videos are a part of a campaign called "I Live Simply," which aims to change human behavior to address the climate emergency and encompasses Sonam's boycott of made-in-China. The Epoch Times visited Sonam at HIAL to talk about his boycott campaign and his approach to finding solutions to Chinese manipulation of the global market by inspiring people to "live simply."

"Each individual in the world has amazing power. One power is that they can choose their own leaders, which is an unprecedented power we have acquired through our democracy," Sonam said, while seated in an open terrace facing a panoramic view of mountains and a desert that HIAL is afforesting.

"But the other, that is even more than making a Donald Trump or Barack Obama, we shape the world that we see. So if we learn to live in ways that do not support exploitation of the environment, or exploitation of nations, politically, by strengthening a regime that is producing all this, we need to have the right values," he said.

Sonom said "wallet power" isn't about "high philosophy" but signifies the individual power that has the means to "not encourage" regimes such as the Chinese Communist Party.

"It's not just me and the toothbrush or the pair of shoes that I buy, but what it does, if it fuels a monster that is, you know, causing so much disharmony and pain around, then I have the power to not patronize that. That's where I say wallet power," he said.

His campaign struck a chord with people globally during the pandemic, and it picked

Sonom Wangchuk at the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives in Phyang valley in Ladakh, India, on Oct. 16, 2020.



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up more support inside India after a bloody conflict between India and China on June 15 at Galwan, over 120 miles from where he lives.

"It was partly influenced by what was happening right next door—bullying and aggression and so on, after Tibet, [it's] Ladakh, [and] that irritates, irks Ladakh," Sonam said about his campaign.

When The Epoch Times visited him at HIAL on Oct. 16, there was heavy traffic of Indian army vehicles on the national highway leading to the Institute, and the tensions between the two nations still continue despite a series of high-level diplomatic and military talks, while the anti-China sentiment within India is high.

'Pathetic Double Standards'

Sonom said material consumption can never be the source of contentment; he wishes people were brought up to understand that.

"The whole thing is about going too materialistic. Life spins around material exchange and material production and material consumption. Perhaps our education should have been our upbringing, our cultural evolution should have been more balanced to see that, beyond a point,

material isn't the source of contentment," he said.

"I am totally not with no material, not enough material, comfort—nobody will be happy with a hungry stomach," he said, adding that a balance has to be struck, and also that more satisfaction can be achieved by sharing with others rather than by consuming alone.

Sonom said he's not just irked by what China is doing on the Indian border but also by what China is doing to its own people. At some point, the world and its leaders have to take responsibility for enabling China to do that, he said.

"And the people around the world were gullible, who are flowing in this river of desires to get their cheap products without caring what that does tomorrow or day after," he said, adding that it's not just ordinary people, but also leaders of various nations who are keen for economic deals with China.

"They would not overlook these things when it's like, Kuwait with Saddam attacking. But they would overlook when China is doing that to Tibet, or Xinjiang, or so on," Sonam said. "And they would overlook that China doesn't even let its own people have access to information."

observers speculate that since it's very rare for officials to miss key meetings, they may have been dismissed from their positions.

Past Achievements?

The bulletin said the Party fought "three major battles" during the past five years. The concept was first introduced by Xi in October 2017, with the goals of preventing major financial risks, alleviating poverty, and reducing pollution.

But in recent years, high-risk ventures such as the peer-to-peer lending (P2P) industry, have boomed and collapsed, while the country's largest real estate developers have accumulated massive debt. In September, state-run media

reported that 76 of the biggest real estate developers would have to repay 2.5 trillion yuan (about \$373.6 billion) over the next 12 months, including 177 billion yuan (about \$2.64 billion) in interest.

Meanwhile, the CCP didn't lay out concrete plans to reduce carbon emissions. The bulletin noted that the country hopes to develop more green technology and that "carbon emissions will decrease after it reaches a peak" sometime in the next 15 years.

Challenges

The bulletin also admitted that China currently lacked "key technologies and innovation capabilities"; that agricultural productivity needed to be im-

proved; that the "international environment" was becoming tougher; and that the economic disparity between urban and rural remained stark.

To combat these challenges, the Party emphasized the need to become technologically "self-reliant" and expand domestic demand—by updating factories to have the capability to produce high-end goods.

Deputy minister of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council Chiu Chui-cheng said during a daily press conference in Taipei on Oct. 29 that this reflected the Chinese regime's desire to overcome U.S. export restrictions due to increasing trade tensions. It also showed that "China's unemployment rate is serious and the society has unstable factors," he said.

He said it will be difficult for Beijing to increase consumption due to the unemployment rate and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ambitions

In the bulletin, Beijing also said it would continue to develop its Belt and Road Initiative, a foreign policy project to invest in infrastructure projects around the world and build political influence. The initiative has been criticized by U.S. officials and experts for placing developing countries under massive debt.

"[China] will actively participate in the reform of the global economic governance system," the bulletin said.

The CCP also said advancing military technology would be as important as economic development. It planned to invest more in developing weapons and intelligence.

"We must speed up the modernization of national defense and military troops," the bulletin stated.

There were no details about the Vision 2035 plan, but China affairs commentators previously analyzed that it indicated Xi's intention to head the Party at least until the year 2035.

We need to understand who was created for whom and that the market was created for facilitating human life. Nowadays 'you may find human life shaped to suit the market—that was never the idea,' Wangchuk said.

The service that plants and animals provide you is never costed," he said when asked what he means by harmony in today's world.

He said that we first destroy our environment and exploit its resources and then try to find industrial solutions for what we've destroyed.

"And we can't see that we are cutting the same branch where we are sitting," he said.

"Nowadays, they're talking about CO2 parts per million going so high that we have to sequester it, and then send it deep into the earth to store it. Well, what are your coal mines? They are exactly that," he said.

"On one hand, you're plundering that and bringing it out and releasing what algae stored or other numerous plants stored, again, releasing it to create the same atmosphere that we had 3 billion years ago, which is why life was not possible."

Sonom said both discussions—one about sequestering carbon and sending it deep down into the earth and the other about mining coal to fire power plants—are happening at the same time.

"We are not so stupid that we kill all these engines that do exactly what you thought was a bright idea or innovation. And then we live without their service, where the air is unbreathable," he said, adding that we talk about the human mortality rate due to coronavirus, but we forget about the rate at which other forms of life are disappearing from the earth.

CCP Fueling a Consumeristic Mindset

"The Chinese Communist Party and its strength is because of the consumeristic mindset of the rest of the world.

Their strength has come from the world that wants cheap things to fulfill their desires, and so on," he said.

"And that has been happening ever since we started living beyond our means—you know, we need one pair of shoes, and we have 10 or 14—that kind of lifestyle. That is where we went wrong in just overdoing, over-consuming, and thinking that is an index of success."

He said we need to understand who was created for whom and that the market was created for facilitating human life.

Nowadays "you may find human life shaped to suit the market—that was never the idea," he said.

"Because of this mindset and approach, we have become consumption monsters that want more and more and more of everything. And that more and more is limited by your means, your income. And China filled that gap by producing cheap to give more and more of consumables to the people, and in the process, it did whatever to its people, to its natural resources, to its forests, nobody cared as long as they kept getting their own cheap goods."



Sonom Wangchuk at the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives in Phyang valley in Ladakh, India, on Oct. 16, 2020.

CHINESE REGIME

Beijing Lays Out Ambitions, Admits to Economic Challenges During Key Plenary Meeting

NICOLE HAO

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) issued a 7,000-plus-word bulletin upon the conclusion of its most important political meeting of the year, in which it emphasized leader Xi Jinping's "core" role and hinted at the enormity of China's economic woes.

Known as the fifth plenary session, top Party officials convened to map out the country's economic development, drafting a five-year plan and a new 15-year plan called Vision 2035.

The bulletin issued on Oct. 29 stated that Xi was "the core of the Party" and "takes the helm," while noting the eco-

The CCP also said advancing military technology would be as important as economic development. It planned to invest more in developing weapons and intelligence.

nomics challenges ahead.

"We will surely be able to overcome the various difficulties and obstacles that appear on the road ahead, and we will surely be able to push forward into a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics," the bulletin states.

China experts say that this is the Party admitting to the bad shape of the country's economy.

The bulletin also revealed that 198 members and 166 alternate members of the CCP's elite Central Committee participated in the meeting—meaning four members and two alternate members failed to show up. While Beijing didn't offer an explanation for their absence, some



Chinese soldiers line-up after a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of China's entry into the Korean War in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China on October 23, 2020.



Paramilitary police officers patrol in front of China's central bank in Beijing, in this file photo.

OPINION

China's Digital Currency Poses Security Risks the West Can't Ignore

FAN YU

The regime in Beijing recently completed digital yuan testing in a seemingly innocuous manner. In the southern city of Shenzhen, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) distributed 10 million digital yuan to 50,000 residents in the form of virtual "red envelopes," a whimsical reference to gifts of money received on the Lunar New Year. While the "Digital Currency Electronic Payment," or DCEP, is China's version of central bank-issued digital currency, it's anything but whimsical.

In a traditional electronic payments system, transactions can only occur between two bank accounts, or two accounts on a payment platform that are linked to bank accounts. With DCEP, transactions occur between two DCEP wallets, and neither wallet needs to be linked to a bank or a payments company.

The DCEP appears to serve two main purposes: one is to increase the yuan's international reach and become a leading global currency, potentially replacing the dollar, while the other is to allow Beijing to mine financial data from people who transact with the currency.

China's central bank issued digital currency is an audacious form of data harvesting. Each cup of coffee or bank transaction is logged without permission and can be leveraged by the CCP.

A customer (C) scans a QR payment code to pay at a restaurant in Beijing on Oct. 28, 2020.

Regarding the first goal, China's efforts to expand global yuan adoption have been unsuccessful. As of September, the yuan's share as an international payment currency sits below 2 percent, according to SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) data. That figure has barely budged from a year earlier, signaling that the yuan's international "market share" has stalled.

A new-fangled technology underpinning the yuan currency is unlikely to increase its popularity. Countries didn't use the yuan not because it was technically inferior to any other currency in circulation; they prefer to transact in currencies that are liquid, freely convertible, and backed by a stable economy. Whatever deficiencies yuan had, the DCEP doesn't change them.

What about digital convenience? A common misconception is that DCEP is a cryptocurrency, but it's centralized and doesn't run on blockchain. It bears little resemblance to popular cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. It's a digital form of payment. But the world already has digital payment platforms such as PayPal and Venmo. There are already highly sophisticated yuan-denominated mobile payment solutions out there, such as Alipay and WeChat.

From the end user's perspective, there doesn't seem to be an advantage in using DCEP, which brings to mind a central question—what problem is the DCEP trying to solve?

The DCEP turns out to be an answer to a question that nobody asked, at least nobody outside of Zhongnanhai.

One quickly comes to the conclusion that the problem was a lack of control. Legacy payment solutions—paper or digital—don't give the CCP the level of control and data it desires. The M0 money supply, which represents the amount of physical cash in circulation, can't be traced and is the candidate to be replaced by DCEP. Even Alipay and WeChat—which can be traced by Beijing—are first and foremost controlled by business enterprises, not the CCP.

China's supposed goals of internationalization of the yuan and digital convenience appear to be red herrings. Or at best, they are secondary. Control of data—at first among Chinese consumers, then international consumers—seems to be the primary objective.

The DCEP could "create unprecedented opportunities for surveillance," according to a recent study published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)'s International Cyber Policy Center.

The ASPI report acknowledges

that China's DCEP is no lock to become a mainstream global payments platform. But Western governments can't afford to simply ignore the threat.

"The initial impact of a successful DC/EP project will be primarily domestic, but little thought has been given to the longer term and global implications," the report states. "DC/EP could be exported overseas via the digital wallets of Chinese tourists, students, and businesspeople. Over time, it is not far-fetched to speculate that the Chinese party-state will incentivize or even mandate that foreigners also use DC/EP for certain categories of cross-border RMB transactions as a condition of accessing the Chinese marketplace."

This should give Western leaders pause. Think about the current hand-wringing over Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei across the Western Hemisphere. The Huawei debate is largely driven by security risks—that Huawei would grant the CCP troves of foreign data.

In fact, Huawei announced in a recent WeChat post that the new Huawei Mate 40 is the first smartphone that enables a hardware wallet for China's DCEP.

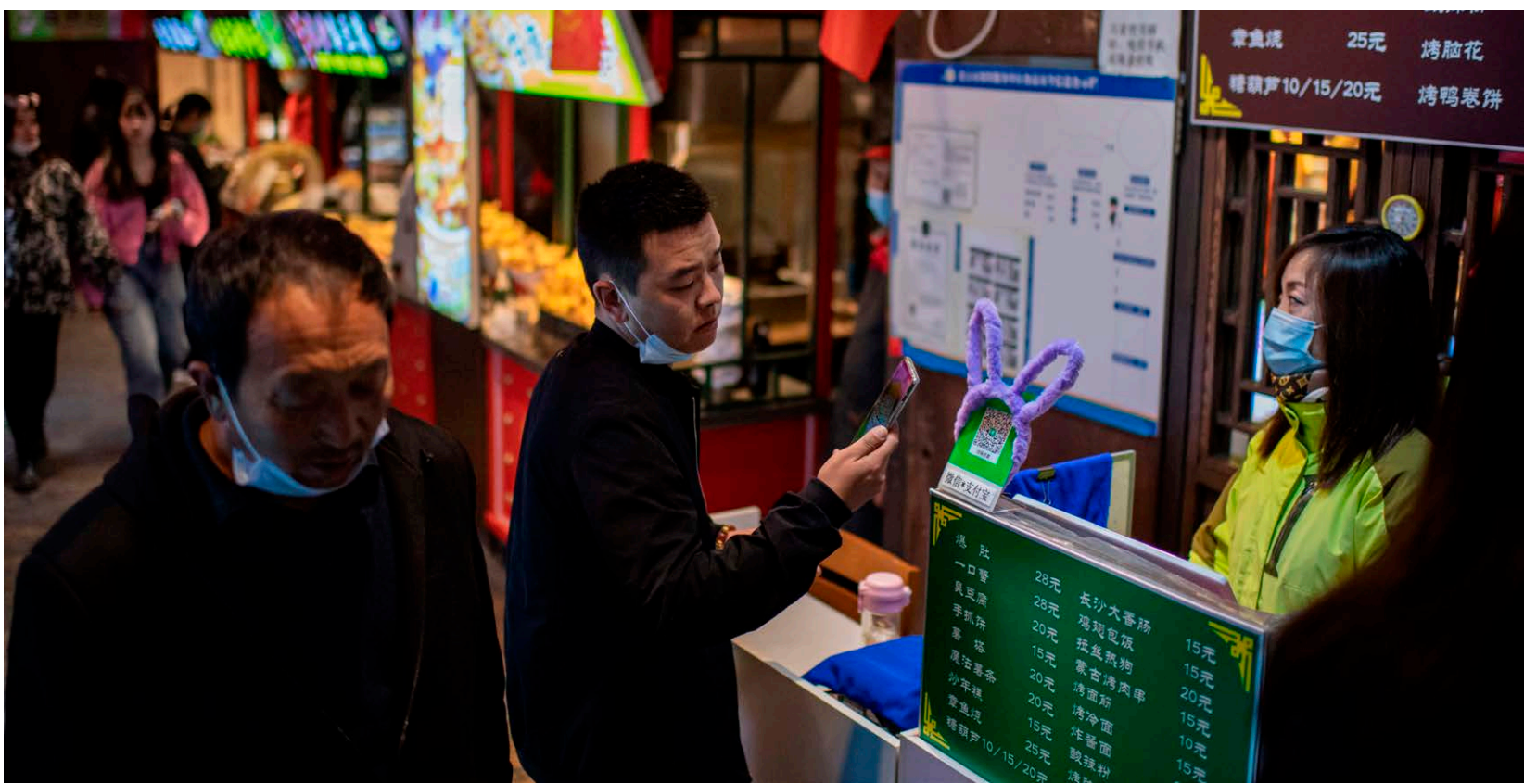
So China's DCEP is an audacious form of data harvesting. Each cup of coffee, bank transaction, or peer-to-peer payment is logged without permission and can be leveraged by the CCP. And from China's perspective, that's a feature, not a bug. "A successful DC/EP could greatly expand the party-state's ability to monitor and shape economic behavior well beyond the borders of the People's Republic of China," the ASPI report concludes.

Western central banks must wake up to the security and data risks of China's new central bank digital currency. A global currency and payments solution, once widely adopted, will be difficult to roll back.

It's a Pandora's box that international central banks can't unwittingly open.

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Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



NICOLAS ASFOUR/AFIP VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHINESE INFILTRATION

Canada 'Severely Penetrated' by Beijing's Influence Operations, Says China Expert

JUSTINA WHEALE & JAN JEKIELEK

There are several alarming examples of Beijing's interference in Canada that show how deeply the Chinese Communist Party's operations have penetrated the country, says China expert Charles Burton.

From the escalating harassment of Chinese human rights defenders in Canada, to the federal government's delays in banning Huawei from Canada's 5G networks, to the arbitrary imprisonment of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in China, to recent threats by the Chinese Ambassador against Canadians in Hong Kong, Beijing's influence is sweeping and pervasive, Burton says.

"Canada has so far proven to be one of the countries that China is able to achieve the most in terms of influence operations, and preventing Canada from opposing Chinese international activities incompatible with the international rules-based order and trade and diplomacy," he said on The Epoch Times American Thought Leaders program on Oct. 25.

Burton, a senior fellow at Canada's Macdonald-Laurier Institute, pointed to the recent case of Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu, who threatened Canada not to grant asylum to Hong Kong residents fleeing the city due to the national security law imposed by Beijing, saying it would amount to "interference in China's domestic affairs."

"That, in itself, is an indication of how severely penetrated Canada is, because we allow the Chinese regime to engage in thuggery and threatening behaviours such as we would not tolerate from any other country," Burton said.

According to a report published last year by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, the Canadian parliamentary watchdog that oversees national security, Beijing maintains "significant and sustained foreign interference activities" in Canada.

This includes targeting the Chinese diaspora, seeking to corrupt political processes, manipulate Canadian media, and influence discourse on Canadian campuses in its favour.

As Canadians become increasingly wary of the CCP amid the pandemic—recent polls have found Canadian views of the CCP have plummeted since the outbreak began and the majority do not support expanding trade ties with China—Burton says much of Beijing's interference in Canada stems from ties with business and political elites that forge channels of influence behind the scenes.

"You do have major Canadian firms who have extensive, lucrative relationships with Chinese communist business networks, who also have considerable influence at the most senior levels of government," he said.

"And their line is that the most important thing in the Canada-China relationship is the promotion of Canadian prosperity, through trade and investment... everything else in terms



A man with a large Chinese flag blocks a Tibetan protester during the visit of then-Chinese leader Hu Jintao to Ottawa on June 24, 2010.

of China's international behaviour or domestic human rights abuse should be subordinated to the larger goal."

Academic Censorship Raises Alarm Bells

Burton warns that Beijing's influence at academic institutions around the world also poses a serious threat to democracies, pointing to the recent case of a New Zealand professor being censored by her own university after publishing a report on the Chinese regime's influence operations in New Zealand.

Professor Anne-Marie Brady, a leading authority on Chinese communist influence, was put under investigation by the University of Canterbury after publishing research into how China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) exploited civilian channels for military purposes in New Zealand. The circumstances are suspicious, as Brady has been a target of the Chinese Communist Party for years, and her report cites evidence of PLA influence on academic research in New Zealand institutions.

"She's shown that there are scholars at Canterbury and other New Zealand universities who seem to have an awful lot of connection to defence-related institutions in China," Burton said.

Her research also claimed that a number of universities in New Zealand have links to Chinese telecom giant Huawei, and that some academics have participated in Beijing's well-financed recruitment program, the Thousand Talents Plan, which has come under close U.S. scrutiny over possible threats to national security.

A review of Brady's report was or-

dered by university Vice Chancellor Cheryl de la Rey, after Brady presented the paper to New Zealand's Parliament in the summer. According to local media reports, de la Rey said the paper has "manifest errors of fact and misleading inferences."

"The investigation of Brady is being done by an 'internal secret council' at the university without 'the guarantees of due process of law,'" says Burton, and if they rule against her, she could lose her university platform, ending much of her research work.

Burton recently spearheaded a letter, signed by over 250 China experts and academics worldwide, supporting the quality of Brady's work. He also helped set up a crowdfunding platform to raise the estimated NZD\$20,000 to pay for her legal fees.

Burton says that although there is no "smoking gun" tying the CCP directly to the case, the regime's well-documented pattern of interference at academic institutions globally through Confucius Institutes and Chinese Student Associations, as well as evidence that they have harassed Brady directly—she's had her home broken into and the brakes of her car were tampered with—makes the case highly suspicious.

"Professor Brady is a major cause of concern to the Chinese regime because of how well she has highlighted the concerns that governments should have about creeping Chinese influence into policy making circles, and into influential corporate elements in all of our societies," Burton said.

"So it seems reasonable to assume that the Chinese diplomatic officials in New Zealand would be quite happy to see Professor Brady ceasing to function as a scholar in this area."

New Zealand's geopolitical "strategic potential" also makes it an especially attractive target for the Chinese regime in their influence operations, he says, which may also explain ongoing efforts to silence Brady.

"If China was able to gain, tip over, the balance of influence and become the dominant influence in New Zealand over, say, the United States and the western democracies, China could then use it for military and strategic purposes," he said.

The outcome of Brady's case could have widespread consequences for academic freedom in Canada and elsewhere, warns Burton.

"This is a very serious situation and one which all of us who are engaged in political science research on China are watching very carefully for fear that if this succeeds in silencing Professor Brady and preventing her from

continuing her research, that comparable actions may be taken against professors and scholars in other countries doing the same thing."

In May, a coalition of human rights groups including Amnesty International Canada, released a report on how Chinese authorities have exerted influence in Canada in order to censor China-related human rights work, titled "Harassment & Intimidation of Individuals in Canada Working on China-Related Human Rights Concerns."

The report noted an increasing trend of interference, harassment, and intimidation on Canadian university campuses, with a "noticeable mobilization" of Chinese international students.

This could take the form of pro-Beijing protests or counter-protests believed to be organized by Chinese officials or consulates, and other means of harassment and intimidation against activists carried out by groups of "provocateurs" believed to be Chinese international students organized or incentivized by Chinese officials or pro-Beijing front groups.

Alternative Markets

Burton believes Canada should be "looking at alternative markets and alternative ways to guarantee our security, because China is just not a reliable and good partner to be engaging with, both in terms of morality and in terms of just the trust basis."

This includes the question of whether to allow Huawei to participate in the country's 5G networks—something Ottawa has yet to make a decision on.

"I mean, dealing with Huawei, aside from the fact that it can be used for espionage, do we really want to deal with the company that's been complicit in putting in telecommunications installations that have led to the surveillance and persecution of important minority groups in China, right now in particular the Uighurs, but really everybody in China who's been subject to this kind of repression?"

He said different countries' responses to China seem to vary, but it could prove useful to discover why "Canada has proven to be such fertile soil for Chinese regime penetration."

"As a researcher, I'd like to look into that a bit more and see if we can get to the bottom of it and find that perhaps there's some policymakers who would be reluctant to continue collaborating with the Chinese regime, if their activities became more generally known."

"As I said, sunshine is the best disinfectant."



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