

She wanted a family, a place to live, and a

job that could support both, but all three

seemingly vanished overnight. At the la-

bor camp, after a brutal beating, guards

handed her divorce papers produced by

her in-laws. They publicized it in front of

a crowd of hundreds to humiliate her,

then told her that they could "help her"

if she "cooperated" with them and quit

She refused to do either. After con-

tinued pressure and more arrests, Ms.

Feng's health deteriorated and the heart problems she said had disappeared after

practicing Falun Gong resurfaced. With

help from overseas adherents, Ms. Feng

escaped in 2008 to Thailand to reunite

with her husband, who had fled a year

earlier. Her plan was a secret, even to her parents, who only learned about it after

Until her escape, she said, she had

But the shadow of the persecution

persists. For the past 11 years, Ms. Feng

hasn't been able to see her eldest son,

now 23. Her second son, who was born

in the United States and is now 10, has

you are again in jail somewhere and

China practicing Falun Gong in 1999,

Xia Deyun, then an engineer for top

persecution had on families.

practicing Falun Gong.

she reached Thailand.

been "living in hell."

Falun Gong Practitioners Recount a Harrowing 24 Years of Withstanding **CCP Persecution**

By Eva Fu

In her 34 years, Doria Liu almost never saw her mother cry—not even when her mother recounted suffering harrowing torture at the hands of Chinese authorities in a bid to break her faith.

But during a video call on May 6, when Ms. Liu showed her mother a photo of her and her husband holding their 8-month-old son, the 68-year-old Meng Zhaohong began quietly wiping her eyes. The photo shows the couple beaming and wearing bright yellow outfits during a celebration of World Falun Dafa Day, the day marking the public introduction of their spiritual practice, Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong. From an ocean away in San Francisco,

Ms. Liu was at a loss for words. The two are close, especially after Ms. Liu lost her father at the age of 10, but they haven't seen each other since Ms. Liu escaped China eight years ago. In China, wearing the same bright yellow outfit, bearing the words "Falun Dafa is good" along with "truthfulness, compassion, tolerance"—the three core principles of the faith—could trigger an arrest.

Benign as they may be, those words are anathema to the Chinese communist regime, which for nearly a quarter of a century has waged a vicious war against the faith group.

Ms. Liu encouraged her mother, also a Falun Gong practitioner, to flee China: "When you have a chance, come at

"OK," responded her mother. It was late at night in the United States and the baby was fast asleep, so Ms. Meng hurried to end the call so as not to wake him.

Ms. Liu thought they would talk more the next day, but that never happened. Anxiety gripped her as her phone calls went unanswered for more than a month. She eventually learned that her mother had been arrested for talking to shoppers at a farmers' market about Falun Gong and the persecution.

During an interrogation, police A Feng Liping and her slapped Ms. Meng more than 20 times, son in Shenzhen, China, then tormented her in a dark under- in 2005. ground cell because the local prison refused to accept her, after a health screening revealed tuberculosis, high blood pressure, and other issues.

Ms. Liu counted that as the seventh time in 24 years that her mother had been arrested, merely for persisting in practicing her faith.

July 20th, 1999, was the day the Chinese regime launched its bloody eradication campaign on Falun Gong, a meditative practice embodying spiritual teachings along with slow-moving exercises. Before then, estimates put the number of adherents in the country at as many as 100 million. The ruling Communist Party had initially supported the practice, but eventually deemed its popularity intolerable, viewing it as a threat to the

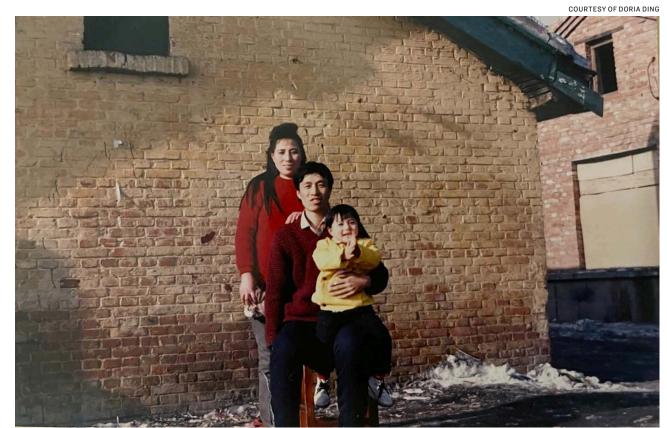
fighting for regime's control over society. For 24 years, tens of millions of adherthe rights ents have become targets of an all-enof everyone. compassing persecution by authorities Persecution who were given free rein, and encouraged, to inflict maximum pain—physiis never too cal, financial, and social.

Across the country, practitioners have suffered from arbitrary arrests, detention, surveillance, forced labor, violence, and even forced organ harvesting; nothing is off limits in the regime's bid to wipe the faith from existence.

As part of its campaign, the communist regime blanketed media, textbooks, and the internet with disinformation maligning the practice, to turn public opinion against Falun Gong adherents.

The morning the full-scale persecution began, Ms. Liu, who was 10 at the time, went to meditate with about a dozen people at a local Falun Gong exercise site, which was housed in a police bureau in northern China's Heilongjiang Province.

Hours later, when they turned on the television at home, they realized the beliefs they and tens of millions of others from Falun Gong practiembraced had become the subject of hate propaganda broadcast across the nation.



Meng Zhaohong with her family in Heilongjiang, China, in the early 1990s.



It's about

far away.

Doria Liu, Falun Dafa

practitioner

Falun Gong practitioners

during a re-enactment

of the Chinese Commu-

nist Party's practice of

forced organ harvesting

tioners, during a rally in

Taipei, Taiwan, on April

23, 2006.

'Living in Hell' The hostility was pervasive and instan-

Down along the southeastern Chinese coast, Feng Liping, a pharmacy owner in the industrial hub of Shenzhen, encountered dozens of police surrounding her and other practitioners and taking photos as they practiced the Falun Gong exercises in a park. Soon after, police cars began to hover around Ms. Feng's apartment building, and her pharmacy license was revoked.

That October, she traveled to Beijing to appeal to CCP leadership to end the per-call doesn't go through, I'd wonder if secution. She was arrested and placed in a detention center, where she was forced persecuted." to make thousands of plastic flowers every day and endure insults from guards Families Ripped Apart due to her faith. Ms. Feng miscarried her With an estimated 1 in 13 people in first child while in the facility.

Even after her release, surveillance it's hard to fathom the toll this sweeping and police harassment occurred daily. Four months after giving birth to a son in 2001, Ms. Feng fled her home after oil producer Shengli Oil Field in eastpolice threatened her with a two-year ern China, spoke of a sense of guilt prison sentence if she didn't sign doc- even today toward her son, who was uments to renounce her beliefs. But one month into high school when poauthorities tracked her down and, in lice put her in a labor camp and raided 2002, sentenced her to three years in their home. a labor camp.



never met him. Her parents were both sad and relieved to know she would no longer be in China with them. "Do you know that during all these years, I nearly cried my eves blind?" her mother told Ms. Feng when she called from Thailand. "Whenever my

The teenager was so distraught that

Ms. Feng never had high ambitions. he sank into depression and stopped at-

tending school for the entire year while Ms. Xia was behind bars. He spent most Doria Liu with her husband days in his room and avoided seeing anyone. Sometimes, he would vomit for no apparent reason, according to Ms. Xia, who fled to New York in 2021. Her son now lives in Canada

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The first time he saw her after she was freed from detention, he held her tight without saying a word.

In that embrace, it was as if he released many things that had been bottled up, Ms. Xia said.

A Dumpling Plate

In 1999, Ms. Liu was still in elementary school—too young to make sense of all that was going on.

"Everyone was practicing [Falun Gong], be it in the parks or at school, everything was fine. Why would they suddenly declare it not good?" she recalled thinking.

Winter in her hometown in Tahe, a county in the far north of China's northernmost province Heilongjiang, was numbingly cold. That winter, she and her grandparents made dumplings from scratch and took warm clothes to see her imprisoned mother, who, like Ms. Feng, was arrested for petitioning the Chinese leadership over Falun Gong. The police sneered at the food, and flatly refused to let them meet with Ms. Meng. Neither would they agree to take anything to her.

It took more than a decade for Ms. Liu's mother to reveal the dark details she had kept mostly to herself. Her mother, she would learn, was fed cold Chinese cabbage soup twice a day while locked in a cell with a broken window for two

Keeping Up the Fight

Ms. Liu lived in China under the cloud of persecution for 16 years. During that time, she and her mother were together for no more than five years in total. More than half of the time, Ms. Meng was in jail, and when she wasn't, she was often trying to dodge authorities' relentless

While detained, Ms. Meng had been

of her detained mother, Meng Zhaohong, on July

and son calling for release



13 people in China were practicing Falun Gong in 1999. force-fed concentrated saline water, had her clothes stripped off, and was beaten while being tied to a metal chair, during which her tormentor broke her ring finger. In 2012, after four years of torture in prison, Ms. Meng weighed just 77 pounds and couldn't get up from bed without support. Her friend jailed at the same facility didn't make it out. When Ms. Liu helped her mother

bathe, it pained her to see the wounds and scars that covered her body.

"I can't imagine how she survived," Ms. Liu said.

Recently, Ms. Liu hasn't been able to sleep before 3 a.m. A helpless feeling hits her as she still lives under the shadow of the ongoing persecution, no matter how far she is from China's shores. Just last week, on July 14, authorities arrested another Falun Gong adherent who helped find a lawyer for her detained mother. But Ms. Liu vows to do everything she

can from the United States to secure her mother's freedom and bring the abuses to an end. Meanwhile, she hopes her mother will

"hang in there." Her mother's tiny 5-foot-2 frame "has

withstood so much," she said. "Every day, I worry if I can speak to her again.

Ms. Liu continues to use her voice and her freedom in America to raise awareness of the evil in China. She says publicizing the abuses isn't just for her family or adherents of her

practitioners, but tomorrow, it could be

"It's about fighting for the rights of everyone," she said. "Persecution is never 15, 2023.

Xia Deyun takes part in a Falun Gong parade to commemorate the 24th anniversary of the persecution of the spiritual faith; today, the target is Falun Gong discipline in China, in New York's Chinatown on July

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ANALYSIS

China's Economy Is Facing Its Biggest Challenge in Decades

By Terri Wu

China's economy is facing its biggest challenge in decades, and authorities are running out of tools in their toolbox to address the issues, according to experts.

The country's latest macroeconomic data point to an economy on the verge

The June consumer price index was little changed year-over-year and down by 0.2 percent compared with May. The producer price index, which reflects wholesale costs, declined by 5.4 percent compared to June 2022, showing a bigger drop than May's 4.6 percent.

June's trade data continued to show a downward trend. The dollar value of China's exports decreased by more than 12 percent year-over-year, a bigger drop than May's 7.5 percent. Imports also declined by nearly 7 percent from June 2022, compared to 4.5 percent in May.

The troubles facing the world's second-largest economy are multifaceted, including heavy debts in the property sector and local governments, the weakening of return to investments, low household confidence, and geopolitical tensions with the United States and the European Union, according to Gary Jefferson, an economics professor at Brandeis University and a specialist in the Chinese economy.

It's the result of the regime's policies over the past 30 to 40 years, he said.

While many have pointed to the massive disruptions brought about by the pandemic and the regime's zero-COVID policies as the source of China's current woes, Mr. Jefferson believes that structural issues are likely to blame.

"As evidence of the systematic nature of the problem, it appears that the decline in economic confidence and social confidence are mutually reinforcing," Mr. Jefferson told The Epoch Times.

"The reluctance to partner and marry and have children likely results in part from and feeds into the economic downturn. Fewer families augur a decline in the demand for larger or upscaled housing units, further contributing to weakness in the property sector, leading to less demand for land leases and local government revenue."

China is grappling with a declining birth rate even as the regime dropped its one-child policy in 2016 and has allowed families to have up to three children in recent years. Many couples have refused to have more kids, citing the high costs.

'Deepest Difficulty' Since 1989

"The government is really in sort of the deepest difficulty it's been in, at least since June 4th, 1989," he added, referring to the Tiananmen Square massacre of Chinese students seeking democratic reforms and the resulting international isolation. After that, China's economic growth took three years to get back on steel bars on the con-

While a southern tour by then-Chinese communist leader Deng Xiaoping in 1992 helped reignite economic growth, China is now not in the same situation, having significantly developed since then, Mr. Jefferson points out.

With decades of savings by Chinese 🔻 families and enterprises and abundant investment opportunities, economic recovery isn't likely to readily happen, he said, adding that authorities are running out of options.

In response to the 2008 global financial crisis, Chinese authorities released an enormous stimulus package—4 trillion yuan (\$586 billion at the time)—that significantly increased government spending on infrastructure, and debt in the property sector and local government.

Today, the return on physical and human capital investment is low compared to 10 years ago, due to the enormous volume of infrastructure investment already undertaken, and the increase in higher education enrollment the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) initiated in 1999, Mr. Jefferson said. China's youth unemployment rate topped 20 percent in May and June, partly due to the oversupply of college graduates that has grown to 10 million, from 1 million two decades ago.

In his view, a stimulus would require enormous funding from the central and local governments, which would mean even more debt accumulation—



Everyone is dealing with much stress in life.

Mike, factory supervisor in China's Zhejiang Province

A worker prepares struction site of the Zhangjinggao Yangtze River Bridge on Mazhou Island in Jingjiang, Jiangsu Province, China, on July 14,

and that's very problematic. And when "It makes it very, very difficult for the people have more money, they may Party to be able to manage a recession choose to bank it or use it to pay off their or accept a recession," he added. debts. Therefore, getting more money into people's hands may not stimulate situation for the leadership." spending, he added.

The professor gave an analogy of a car 'I Don't See Hope Now' speeding along a hill and suddenly facing a cliff.

been a cliff maybe 50 or 100 feet away vate sector hubs. Mike used a pseudthat the car could land upon and then resume its journey," he said.

But in the current circumstances, "more than any other situation in the past 40 years, the distance to the other side of the cliff is substantially greater than that has been, making a safe landing more problematic."

A key distinction between China and Western economies, according to Mr. Jefferson, is that Western governments have procedural legitimacy from elections and legislative processes, but the performance.

"It's a rather difficult, embarrassing

Mike, 27, works at a polymer additives factory in a city in eastern China's Zhe-"Often when this happened, there's jiang Province, one of the country's prionym when speaking to The Epoch Times for fear of CCP reprisals.

> He graduated from college in 2017 with a major in urban underground space engineering. In July 2020, after his twoyear contract with a subway project in southern China's Hunan Province ended, he moved to his current city to work at a factory that had just opened. The factory specializes in higher quality products tailored to the overseas market. In May 2022, a big Western European

company didn't renew its annual order Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) legit- of 15,000 pounds of products due to the imacy depends entirely on its economic geopolitical tensions between China and Europe, he said. Since then, the



factory hasn't been able to secure any about 9,000 yuan a month, or \$1,260. His replacement orders to make up for the mortgage is 6,000 yuan, or two-thirds of shortfall. It has now stopped production his monthly income. After paying for all and is selling its inventories.

ways to adjust the product line to cater car. Even though his girlfriend, unlike to the domestic market, but "securing many Chinese women, doesn't require orders will be very difficult" because Mike to have a car and an apartment to demand is low.

According to him, a nearby auto parts factory has cut 3,000 workers or 30 percent of its workforce. In addition, he said their medical expenses when they get workers at that factory no longer have older. He wants a child but would rather overtime opportunities, a main source wait until he's financially able to provide for them to earn above the minimum the baby with a good life. As to having line to make ends meet.

thought his life was going somewhere. So without hesitation. he bought an apartment in the city in October 2020. However, the economy took a downturn and the three-year pandemic lockdowns exhausted many, he said.

"I don't see hope now," he told The Epoch Times. "Everyone is dealing with much stress in life."

As a factory supervisor, Mike makes sion," he added.

necessities, he can hardly save anything,

The business, he said, is looking for he said, and he still needs to save for a marry, he considers it "a man's obliga-Mike's small factory wasn't alone. tion" to achieve those before marriage. Mike's hope is to have some savings to take care of his parents, at least to cover

more than one child now that the one-When Mike first moved to Zhejiang, he child policy has ended, Mike said "no"

> "I wouldn't be able to afford that!" When asked about Chinese state media reports that the economy has been steadily recovering, he replied, "That's propaganda! It's exactly the opposite of how we feel among the people.'

"As far as my life goes, I'm in a reces-

 Shipping containers stack at Zhoushan port in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China, on Apr. 19, 2023.



difficulty it's

been in, at least

since 1989.

Gary Jefferson, economics professor, Brandeis University

A Chinese "one-child" policy billboard saying, "Have fewer children, have a better life" greets residents on the main street of Shuangwang, southern China's Guangxi region on May 25, 2007.



China's goal this year.

going up again."



Chen Yun, who sat alongside Deng Xiaoping as one of the most influential CCP leaders shepherding economic "opening up" policies in the 1980s, said that under the reforms, the private sector should operate like a "bird in a cage." The freedom of the market economy is restricted by the cage's dimensions embodied by central planning.

Courting the Private Sector Again

Recently, CCP leaders have been meeting with business leaders, especially high-tech companies, signaling an end

to the three-year clampdown on private

Antonio Graceffo, a China economic analyst and contributor to The Epoch Times, said there's long been a love-hate relationship between the CCP and the

"Obviously, being communists, they

have to hate the private sector. How-

ever, China wants economic growth,

and they realize the private sector is responsible for most of the economic

growth," he told The Epoch Times. "And

they're smart enough to realize that, so

they don't want to kill the goose that lays

The CCP has never grown out of its

"bird in a cage" thinking, according to

Mr. Jefferson, and that mentality persists

with current leader Xi Jinping.

industry.

private sector.

the golden eggs."

Mike says he doesn't trust those meetings for a slightly different reason. He said if the sessions were led by Mr. Xi, whom he called "the emperor," he might've had a little bit of hope.

If not, any decisions could be overridden by Mr. Xi at any time, and the system of China's society determines that politics come before the economy. To him, the CCP prioritizes government spending on maintaining stability or the ruling of the Party, and any stimulus will result in very little money in people's hands because the elites with connections at the top will be the main beneficiaries.

He said more people like him have started wondering about the structural nature of China's economic problems.

A year ago, he said, most people still blamed the United States for their economic problems and echoed CCP propaganda, such as "The American imperialists never abandon their wishes to see us die." But now more are complaining about the structural issues within Chinese society, such as the corruption of CCP officials.

Looking Ahead

The CCP has yet to roll out any largescale stimulus. It cut borrowing rates in June and recently extended property loan relief for developers to ensure the delivery of homes under construction. This week, the China Securities Regulatory Commission cut mutual fund management fees to boost investor participation.

Also, earlier this week, a Singapore hedge fund filed a petition in Hong Kong to force bankrupt developer Kaisa into liquidation. The petition was the first case based on unpaid mainland debt, signaling creditors' impatience and low confidence in the restructuring of China's property sector. Previously, such petitions only involved offshore debt.

In April, Evergrande, the world's most indebted property developer, reached a restructuring deal with major creditors, which includes allowing bondholders access to the company's offshore assets listed in Hong Kong.

On July 6, Chinese Premier Li Qiang vowed to introduce "targeted and coordinated policy measures" to address the current economic challenges.

The CCP will probably release a stimulus package to finish the unfinished construction projects, said Mr. Graceffo. However, that isn't going to really increase the demand, he added, saying that it will give employment only a temporary boost. Some of the salaries of those jobs may be spent on consumption, but apartment or office buildings will remain empty in the long run.

Mr. Jefferson said that as a developing country, China would need 3 or 4 percent inflation to accommodate structural economic changes that forge new sectors with rising prices as money flows out of weakening sectors.

"When you have across-the-board price stability, it's also evidence that you're not getting really these sectors that are driving new growth in the economy."

In Mr. Graceffo's view, China's economy will get worse in the near term. And in the long term, China may not see a growth rate above 5 percent again unless something unusual happens, he predicted. Five percent GDP growth is

"I don't see in the long term the growth



▲ Falun Gong practitioners take part in a parade in Flushing, New York, on April 18, 2021, to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the April 25th peaceful appeal of 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing.

ORGAN HARVESTING

'Absolutely Horrific': US Doctors' Group Comes Out Against CCP's Forced Organ Harvesting

By Danella Pérez Schmieloz & Eva Fu

A U.S. doctors' group is taking a stance on the Chinese regime's industrial-scale murder of prisoners of conscience for their organs, urging U.S. authorities and doctors to do what they can to stop enabling the abuse.

"Overwhelming evidence" indicates that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been incarcerating and committing forced organ harvesting on religious, ethnic, and other minorities in China, according to a statement released by the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons earlier this month.

The group also called upon the U.S. government and American physicians to stop training or educating medical professionals from China—or any other totalitarian regime—in skills that could be used to commit the abuse.

"We unequivocally condemn it. It's absolutely barbaric, inhumane, unethical. There's no way to justify this at all." Dr. Richard Amerling, former president and current board member of the AAPS. told The Epoch Times. "You cannot forcibly take someone's organs, that's the grossest violation of bodily autonomy that could exist."

"They essentially execute a living person by removing their heart, they're still technically alive, they're not brain dead. It is absolutely horrific."

In 2019, the China Tribunal, an independent expert panel, concluded that the Chinese regime has been committing forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience for years, and "on a substantial scale."

The tribunal also concluded that imprisoned adherents of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice systematically persecuted by the regime for over two Sept. 24, 2022. decades, are the principal source. Uy- ▼ ghurs and other persecuted minorities in northwest China are also at risk, along with Tibetans and House Christians, experts have said.

Allegations of the communist regime killing Falun Gong practitioners to sell their organs for transplant first emerged in 2006. Since then, numerous investigations have confirmed grisly details of this atrocity.

"It's tough to confront this evil," said Dr. Amerling. "I think people shy away from looking at things like this. And if you don't look at it, and you just put it buried under the sand, pretend that it doesn't exist, life's easier in many ways."

"But once you recognize that this is going on, it demands a response. This is



This is too barbaric. A civilized

country cannot allow this to go on without some sort of statement.

Dr. Richard Amerling, board member, Association of American Physicians and Surgeons

Falun Gong practitioners raise awareness about the persecution of their spiritual practice by the Chinese Communist Party in China, outside the U.N. building in New York, on allow this to go on without some sort of Organ harvesting is a lucrative business statement."

30 years, believes forced organ harvesting "needs to be condemned forcefully by the medical establishment in this

"It's absolutely gut-wrenching and victim's body. horrifying to think this is going on, that Experts have estimated that 60,000 to people abuse medical knowledge to perform such evil acts," he said.

Dr. Amerling believes medical societies have the duty to push back against such abuses by publicizing them and shunning Chinese personnel from U.S. medical educational circles.

"Why are we training these doctors? Why are we educating them? Why are manding position" through its control we allowing them to participate in American medicine in any way?" he said. "They should be blocked from any participation in the American medical system, period. They should not be be a national policy. But challenges trained in our hospitals, they should not be allowed to present papers at our conferences, they should not be allowed to publish articles in American bought their silence, according to journalism."

their entry to the United States "would ties over the past three decades, and send a message to the government, that experts believe that is only the tip of we're aware of what they're up to," he said.

One nonprofit transplantation organization is already doing that. The International Society for Heart and Lung gan harvesting in China. Transplantation, the world's largest organization dedicated to researchnon-consenting donors.

for the CCP. During a 2021 hearing be-Dr. Amerling, a nephrologist for over fore the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Geoffrey Nice, who chaired the China Tribunal, said the Chinese regime could obtain up to half a million dollars from each

100,000 transplants take place in China every year, far exceeding the regime's official figure of 10,000. Organs for those additional transplants are predominantly sourced from prisoners of conscience, they said.

Dr. Amerling further called upon the U.S. government to harness its "comof U.S. banks to help put an end to organ harvesting.

He believes that banning the U.S. training of Chinese physicians should remain, due to the CCP's influence over U.S. institutions through donations and grants that have effectively advocates. The Chinese regime has Penalizing these doctors and barring donated over \$3 billion to universithe iceberg.

> Recently, American lawmakers have ramped up efforts to counter forced or-

Last month, Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) introduced the Falun Gong Protection ing end-stage heart and lung disease, Act (H.R.4132). The bill aims to impose last year said it will no longer accept sanctions on individuals complicit with research papers "involving either or- forced organ harvesting in China and gans or tissue from human donors in bar them from entering the United the People's Republic of China" due to States. It would also make it a U.S. policy the body of evidence of the regime's sys- to avoid cooperation with communist tematic forced organ harvesting from China in the organ transplantation field and to coordinate efforts with allies and multilateral institutions to sanction the

Also in June, Texas signed into law a bipartisan bill that makes it illegal for health insurance providers to fund organ transplants using organs originating from China or any other country that's known to be involved in forced organ harvesting.

In March, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act to sanction anyone complicit in such practices. Dr. Amerling welcomed these legisla-

tive responses and hopes others can join his organization in making a position. "Words have an impact. We can't let the Chinese get a pass," he said.

CCP INFLUENCE

CCP Attempted to Interfere With Shen Yun Performance at US University, Emails Show

By Danella Pérez Schmieloz & Eva Fu

Chinese students attempted to have a Shen Yun performance canceled at a top Texas university in 2018 by sending requests to the university's president and the theater tickets office, according to emails recently provided to The **Epoch Times.**

Before Shen Yun's performance at Texas A&M University (TAMU), a Chinese student named Tian Su, sent an email to the then-university president Michael Young asking him to not let the performance take place.

In the email, Mr. Su attacked Shen Yun and Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline under heavy persecution in China, with language that echoed Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda, alleging that the performance would make the environment for Chinese students "not safe."

Mr. Su also sent an email to the theater's ticket office, asking them to revise the language describing Shen Yun's performance as "authentic Chinese culture" that cannot be seen in

TAMU is one of the world's top 100 universities in science and technology. Its engineering school ranks among the top ten in the United States.

Another student named Bizhu also asked the box office to "think twice" about hosting the event, claiming the show was linked to politics and might entail negative consequences for Chinese students in TAMU as it was organized by the Southern USA Falun Dafa Association, an organization run by practitioners of Falun Gong.

"Our diploma in TAMU might not be taken as legit when we go back to China because of this," the email stated. "It might hurt our reputation in China, and more practically, the validity of our degree."

A former engineering student at TAMU who took part in organizing the event recently provided the emails to The Epoch Times. He only gave his first name Jim for fear of reprisals. He has reported the incident to the FBI and provided the emails.

Such efforts at censorship are familiar to Shen Yun Performing Arts—a classical Chinese dance and music company—which has for years been targeted by an unrelenting campaign by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to interfere with its performances around

the globe. The company, founded in New York in 2006, has a mission to revive 5,000 years of traditional Chinese culture through the arts, according to its website. The company gives audiences a glimpse of "China before Communism," a divinely inspired civilization where ancient wisdom and spirituality thrived but were crushed when the communist party took over, its website states.

Shen Yun's performances include depictions of present-day China and the regime's over two-decade-long persecution of Falun Gong.

The practice, which involves medibased on three core principles: truth- Gong rally at City Hall in New York on May 11, 2016. fulness, compassion, and tolerance, 100 million. In 1999, the communist re- us how they will intervene." gime, fearing that the number of praccampaign to suppress the practice and

tured, and even killed for their organs. The CCP's propaganda campaign against the practice has expanded to dents and Scholars Associations, local the West, where it uses "malign and student groups with known links to inaccurate" labels in an attempt to demonize the practice "and incite unfounded fears that the group is dangerreport by the Falun Dafa Information

Connection With the Chinese Consulate

In a different screenshot of a group discussion on Chinese social media We-Chat on Jan. 30, 2018, a Chinese student said they have contacted the Consular the Chinese embassy regarding the universities, either deceived by Chi-



▲ The Academic Plaza at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas.

神韻晚會 2018

Shen Yun Performing Arts poster from the 2018 tour.



tative exercises and moral teachings 🔺 Levi Browde, executive director of the Falun Dafa Information Center, at a Falun

of the practice have been arbitrarily that they can "continue to express dis- Epoch Times. detained, subjected to forced labor, tor-satisfaction and protest" so long as it doesn't violate the local laws.

> CSSA is the acronym for Chinese Stu-Chinese consulates.

Supposedly created to help international students and promote cultural ous or violent," according to a recent exchange, CSSAs form part of Beijing's sprawling overseas influence operations run under the CCP's United Front Work Department.

> Levi Browde, executive director of Falun Dafa Information Center, said the incident at TAMU is part of a "broader dynamic" in the regime's efforts overseas to suppress criticism.

gained popularity in China during performance, and that the officials nese Communist Party propaganda sentially a threat of potential economic the 1990s, with estimates putting the will consult with the embassy's Office or under pressure from the Chinese boycott if the event in question is alnumber of adherents at 70 million to of Educational Affairs before "telling consulate, send collective emails to lowed to proceed," he said. university administrators lodging "Chairman Yuan of the CSSA has re-complaints where they claim to feel titioners posed a threat to its authori- ported to the school. Some of us have offended by an activity on campus that ficult middle position because if they tarian control, initiated a sweeping protested to the president's office. But promotes free speech or runs counter refuse requests or don't demonstrate the university hasn't made a positive to CCP propaganda, including ones their loyalty to the CCP on campus, its adherents. Since then, adherents reply so far," the student said, adding related to Falun Gong," he told The that can have short and long-term con-

These emails and following in-person complaints often use cookie-cutter defamatory and false labels from the **CCP about Falun Gong.**

Levi Browde, executive director, Falun Dafa Information Center,

The Falun Dafa Information Center passion connected to it." recently released the report "Surveillance, Slander, and Censorship," which Chinese Embassy for comment. "We have seen Chinese students and found that the Chinese regime exportsoil through defamatory textbooks, contributed to this report.

as well as by interfering with Falun Gong events, some of them involving the consulate-linked CSSAs.

According to Mr. Browde, since 2017, there have been at least nine documented incidents in New York, Chicago, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, and other states, where Chinese students and proxy associations at U.S. universities, "either deceived by Chinese Communist Party propaganda or under pressure from the Chinese consulate, send collective emails to university administrators lodging complaints where they claim to feel offended by an activity on campus that promotes free speech or runs counter to CCP propaganda, including ones related to Falun Gong."

"Clearly, this is another example,"

said Mr. Browde. "These emails and following in-person complaints often use cookie-cutter defamatory and false labels from the CCP about Falun Gong, like 'cult' or 'anti-government,'" he said, adding such behavior is "often a coordinated effort to silence speech," with input from the Chinese consulate.

"That connection can often be hard to nail down, but in this case, it's obvious that this was reported to the consulate and instructions awaited," he said, noting the WeChat message.

Mr. Browde was particularly struck by Bizhu's argument that Shen Yun performances could "delegitimize" the Chinese students' diplomas from TAMU and damage the university's

"This too is an argument to pressure the university that it could lose lucrative tuition from Chinese students, es-

"This is a perfect example of Chinese students and CSSAs being put in a difsequences for themselves and their family in China."

Despite the attempted interference with the show, Shen Yun successfully performed at the Rudder Auditorium in College Station, Texas on the evening of Feb. 13, 2018, to a sold-out auditorium.

Mr. Young, then president of TAMU attorney and emeritus professor—attended the performance.

When interviewed after the performance, he said: "I love the fact that it's capturing a broad range of Chinese history and Chinese culture, and it has an enormous amount of beauty and

The Epoch Times has contacted the

Assistance and Protection section of proxy associations in other American ed its suppression of religions to U.S. Sherry Dong, Li Chen, and Cathy He

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