

Hate Speech and Fear Mongering Has No Place in the Public Domain.

RE: <https://youtu.be/10-L4aES4TAp>

The below comments address the You Tube video referenced just above.

In 1999 or thereabout, the Chinese Communist Party (Party) created a set of lies and fabrications about Falun Gong in order to justify, legitimize and mobilize a violent suppression campaign (a *douzheng* in Party parlance) against the spiritual group. Depicting Falun Gong as they are inaccurately depicted in China to effectuate the eradication of the group is no different than treating as accurate Nazi depictions of members of another faith-based community, that is Judaism, depictions also manufactured to turn the German people against the Jews in order to annihilate them in Auschwitz and other concentration camps.

This video operates in a historical vacuum.

First, the Party routinely targets specific groups as collective enemies of the Party and of all Chinese Society.¹ Indeed, the Party has a decades-long history of launching such campaigns against particular groups, followed by their systematic suppression and ostracism from society as well as subjection to various acts of Party-sponsored violence without due process of law.²

Second, the process is always the same; and generally characterized by the following progression:

(i) The decision to target any specific group as an enemy is always made by the Party.³ This practice extends from early suppression campaigns such as the Anti-Rightist campaign in 1957, which targeted at least 550,000 “rightists,” through the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, the crackdown on “Spiritual Pollution” in the 1980s, the Tiananmen Square crackdown of 1989, and the targeting of Falun Gong and other religious groups from the 1990s through today, in addition to other examples.⁴

¹ The use of *douzheng* in this context of identifying collective enemies is crucial to the political ideology and praxis of the Chinese Communist Party. In the Party’s official ideology, enemies of the people, or of the Party that claims to represent the people, are considered the appropriate targets for the violent aggression denoted by the term *douzheng*. This was especially apparent during the Cultural Revolution period but was also central to previous and subsequent official ideology. *See, e.g.,* Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication*, 48 (University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

² *See, e.g.,* Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China*, (W.W. Norton & Company, 1995) (“Campaigns, or *yundong*, were concentrated attacks on specific issues through the mass mobilization of the populace”). *See also* Michael Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics: A History*, (Duke University Press, 2005) (Describing the violent campaigns of the Communist Party against those it deemed enemies).

³ With specific reference to Falun Gong, *see, e.g.* Ronald C. Keith and Zhiqiu Lin, “The ‘Falun Gong Problem’: Politics and the Struggle for the Rule of Law in China,” 175 *China Quarterly* 623, 642 (2003) (“The CCP response to the ‘FLG problem’ points to the dangers of a resuscitated state instrumentalism in the ever deepening context of China’s social and economic transition ... the Party is using law for the political purpose of leading a moral charge against heresy”); with reference to the more general practice of Party decisions to target such enemies *see also, e.g.* Flora Sapio, *Sovereign Power and the Law in China*, (Brill, 2010) (Describing how the Party leadership frequently decides to place certain targeted groups or actors in a “zone of exception” as enemies without normal due process rights or other forms of legal protection).

⁴ *See, e.g.,* 2001 speech by Politburo security head Luo Gan, as quoted and described in *The Tiananmen Papers*, *supra* note 4 at xix, (“[O]ur struggle with enemy forces has entered a new era this year. Foreign enemy forces have stepped up strategies to Westernize us, to split us. At home, our struggle [*douzheng*] with the

(ii) Following such a decision, the group to be targeted is identified in official Party media and by Party affiliates with carefully crafted rhetorical language, branding the target as an enemy of both the Party and the “People,” and as opposed to Party ideology as well as to social welfare in general.⁵

(iii) The initiation of the crackdown is signaled and implemented through society via the use of escalating hostile language by the Party,⁶ with the term “*douzheng*” being perhaps the most important such signal.⁷

(iv) Flagship media in China, such as the People’s Daily newspaper and the China Central Television (“CCTV”) evening news broadcast, and Party ideology journals, continually spread the word to ensure that the designated group is broadly known to be a Party enemy.⁸

(v) Special and general security forces are mobilized to identify, round up, arbitrarily detain, and physically and mentally abuse individual members of the “group.” The ideal aim is to force so-called “enemies” to renounce their group identity and beliefs and “join forces” with the Party to attack other members of the targeted group, using the same methods.⁹

(vi) This final step is what is referred to as “*zhuanhua*” or “forced conversion” (literally to ideologically “transform”). Individuals refusing to be converted are subjected to ever increasing violence.¹⁰

elements who stubbornly uphold bourgeois liberalization rises and falls.’ ... [In his speech, Luo Gan] cited eight adverse trends as distinct yet linked elements of this complex struggle: the plot to incite efforts to reverse the verdict on June Fourth; the activities of Falun Gong...”).

⁵ See, e.g., “Consolidating and Expanding Results of the Struggle to Expose and Criticize ‘Falun Gong,’” Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China in New York, October 20th, 2003, available at: <http://www.nyconsulate.prchina.org/chn/xw/t29883.htm> (Calling for “strengthening and improving ideological political work” to “obtain complete victory in this struggle [with Falun Gong].”).

⁶ See, e.g., Juha Vuori, *Critical Security and Chinese Politics: The Anti-Falungong Campaign*, 64 (Routledge, 2014) (“words in China are not only political objects, but loyalty tests in a system defined by inter-factional struggle.”); on the broader issue of the performative, instrumental character of political terms used by the Party, see generally Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics*, (Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992).

⁷ See, e.g., Perry Link, *An Anatomy of Chinese: Rhythm, Metaphor, Politics*, 312 (Harvard University Press, 2013) (“The word *douzheng* originally means struggle ... [but] the intensity and variety of the cruelty involved went well beyond ordinary ‘struggle.’ It included ransacking homes, burning books, public humiliation, beatings, torture, eye-gouging, killings, demands that families pay for the bullets that killed their loved ones [etc.]”); Lu, *supra* note 1.

⁸ See, e.g., *id.*

⁹ See, e.g. Liu Yong, “The Situation and Countermeasures Fighting against ‘Fa Lun Gong’ [Tong ‘Falun Gong’ *Douzheng de Xingshi ji Duice*], 14 Journal of Shandong Public Security College [*Shandong Gong’an Zhanke Xuexiao Xuebao*] 3, (2002). (“At present the anti-‘Falun Gong’ struggle [*douzheng*] faces grave difficulty, which is apparent in the obvious increase of organized activities, and that meetings and link-ups have continued despite repeated prohibition ... the difficulties of transforming [*zhuanhua*] ‘Falun Gong’ elements and other aspects must be countered with targeted countermeasures... we must establish a special organization and special troops to intensify the struggle [*douzheng*] against ‘Falun Gong.’”).

¹⁰ See, e.g. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2008 Annual Report (“The term “transformation through reeducation” (*jiaoyu zhuanhua*) describes a process of ideological re-programming whereby practitioners are subjected to various methods of physical and psychological coercion until they recant their belief in Falun Gong.”).

In short, this video summarily repeats as if accurate a propaganda campaign manufactured by the Party in China to violently suppress and eliminate the religion of Falun Gong and its believers. By characterizing the playbook used by the Party to violently suppress religious believers in the mainland as accurate is misleading, inappropriate, and disheartening. It should be taken down.

This video divorces the practice of Falun Gong from the practices of Taoism, Buddhism and other Related Religious Traditions.

The video inaccurately demonizes a spiritual practice that has much in common with spiritual beliefs and practices of Tibetan Buddhists and the Taoists. Indeed, nothing about its teachings or practices suggests that it is somehow different in kind—or somehow more “controversial” or “political”—than widespread religions such as Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Tibetan Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism, etc.

Like other Eastern (and many Western) religions, the teachings of Falun Gong, which are largely set forth in *Zhuan Falun*, the Falun Gong “bible,” includes, among other things, discussions about the divine creator and its highest manifestation, Truthfulness-Compassion-Tolerance (Zhen-Shan-Ren); ultimate concerns or ideas related to fundamental questions about life, death and other imponderable matters; metaphysical beliefs that address the reality which transcends the physical world; a moral/ethical system that prescribes norms of conduct; and a comprehensive set of beliefs (religious beliefs are not confined to a single question); a founder; important writings; gathering places designated for religious study; designated times for prayer, special diet; and the propagation of the religion. See *Zhuan Falun* (generally), available at <https://en.falundafa.org/falun-dafa-books.html>.

These and other teachings can generally be traced directly to the Buddhist and Daoist traditions of which it is a part. Its belief in reincarnation, for example, has been a feature of various branches of Buddhism throughout its 2,500 years, and was also endorsed in the teachings of many other Indian- derived religions, various Middle Eastern, African, and Native American spiritual traditions, and even by influential Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras. Falun Gong adherents, like others who believe in a generally Buddhist cosmology, associate the process of reincarnation with the concept of “karma,” or the accumulated effect of good and bad deeds performed in one life impacting one’s subsequent incarnations. To demonize teachings of karma and reincarnation would require the demonization of the majority of the traditional majority beliefs of much of East, South, and Southeast Asia, together comprising about a third of the total world population. As in other mainstream religions, believers in Falun Gong accept that suffering might have deeper fundamental causes while still being called upon to be compassionate towards those afflicted. Unlike the false characterizations set forth in the video, Falun Gong scripture calls on adherents to be sympathetic and compassionate towards all persons. Indeed, the beliefs and practices cited in the video are unconventional only when divorced from the cultural contexts and religious traditions from which they arose. For instance, the belief in the existence of supernatural powers of one sort or another feature prominently in the Buddhist and Daoist spiritual traditions. As Richard Madsen notes, while some of Falun Gong’s discussion about supernatural abilities may seem incredible to those unfamiliar with Asiatic religions—these claims are “in continuity with a wide spectrum of Chinese religious practices.”¹¹

¹¹ Richard Madsen, “Understanding Falun Gong,” *Current History* 99, 245 (Sep 1, 2000).

In short, this video not only ignores the operation of violent suppression campaigns in China which is no different than denying the fact of the Holocaust. It additionally ignores the actual tenets and practices of the religion, especially by divorcing it from its cultural context and the religious traditions related to it. As a form of fear-mongering hate speech that is misleading if not out-and-out dangerous. It has no place in the public domain.

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HUMAN RIGHTS LAW FOUNDATION
/s/ Dr. Terri E. Marsh