

Unlocking the CCP's Black Box of Propaganda

Oct. 21, 2020 | By Song Shan (Minghui.org)

At the Lushan Conference in 1959, Mao Zedong made the following remark, “Suppose we do 10 things and 9 of them are bad. If people know about the 9 bad things, we are doomed.” As a result, China's state-owned and state-controlled media censored “bad” news and only reported “good” news glorying the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Over 40 years have passed, and the CCP is still censoring information and spreading disinformation to “maintain stability.” Its cover-up of the coronavirus outbreak is the latest example of its propaganda machine at work. As of mid-October, over 40 million people in nearly 200 countries have been infected and more than 1.1 million have died of the coronavirus.

As always, the CCP did not learn any lessons from the resulting worldwide loss of trust in the Chinese government, and instead continued its campaign of

censorship and disinformation. Especially inside China, the CCP blocked information such as the United States' immigration policy barring CCP members from being granted entry or visa approval. There is hardly any discussion about the policy on WeChat, a multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app with over 1 billion monthly active users. This is because people know that once they dare to challenge the censorship, their accounts could be voided, which means that they could no longer make electronic payments, make phone calls, or even take public transportation by showing their health ratings on the app.

Numerous polices have recently been issued by various Chinese government agencies to regulate social media posting. For example, directives include no discussing the CCP's policy, no discussing orders from the central government, no visiting "counter-revolutionary" websites, and no casually accepting interviews from news media, especially overseas media.

How dark is the CCP's black box of propaganda? An examination of several examples provides a glimpse into this propaganda machine.

Mandatory App to Study Xi's Thoughts

While restricting discussions on social media such as WeChat, the CCP forcefully pushes out tools that directly narrate its brand of communist ideology. Xuexi Qiangguo, a Chinese app developed by Alibaba, is a required app, to learn the thoughts of Xi Jinping. Government officials, employees of state-owned enterprises, and public school teachers are required to download this software and study it daily. People who do not earn enough study points every day face punishment or threats of being laid off.

Netizens have often referred to this app as a “wall in a wall.” In China, there is already a “Great Firewall” in place that essentially serves as a virtual Berlin Wall to separate China from the West. This new requirement, like a wall within a wall, makes the fact-deficient internet space in China further crammed with CCP doctrines – forcing the propaganda, or brainwashing, on Chinese citizens.

The situation is similar to that of Nazi Germany. “Once they succeeded in ending democracy and turning Germany into a one-party dictatorship, the

Nazis orchestrated a massive propaganda campaign to win the loyalty and cooperation of Germans. The Nazi Propaganda Ministry, directed by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, took control of all forms of communication in Germany: newspapers, magazines, books, public meetings, and rallies, art, music, movies, and radio,” explained an article in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Viewpoints in any way threatening to Nazi beliefs or to the regime were censored or eliminated from all media.”

The Darkness of the Propaganda Black Box

As mentioned above, once Mao energized the state apparatus to dictate public opinion, even senior officials within the CCP were not spared. Peng Dehuai, China’s Defense Minister (1954-1959) and one of the most accomplished generals, was brought down for speaking out about the truth of the Great Leap Forward that resulted in millions of deaths; Liu Shaoqi, Mao’s successor and the second highest leader, also met the same fate for confronting Mao.

Besides top officials and intellectuals who were silenced by the CCP, a large number of ordinary

citizens also became its victims in countless disasters caused by the regime.

In August 1975, the Banqiao Dam in Zhumadian, Henan Province collapsed along with 61 other dams, causing a death toll of up to 240,000. The CCP blocked the news and did not partially reveal it until 1989. Since the major cause of the massive collapse was poor construction quality due to the Great Leap Forward, U.S.-based Discovery Channel designated the 75.8 disaster (a reference to August 1975) as the most severe of all man-made disasters, placing it ahead of even the Chernobyl disaster.

However, very few Chinese people know about the 75.8 disaster due to the CCP's information censorship. “The 75.8 disaster? Few people of the younger generation know about it,” said a local police officer in Henan Province.

Loss of life in man-made calamities is brutal; covering it up and blocking information is even more hideous.

One of the most glorious stories about the CCP Army in Chinese textbooks is the liberation of

Changchun City in Jilin Province in 1948 without killing anyone or firing a shot. The reality, however, was that the CCP surrounded the city for over 4 months. By prohibiting civilians from going out for food, 150,000 to 200,000 people died of starvation.

When Taiwanese writer Long Yingtai visited Changchun a few years ago and asked about the 1948 incident, many young people had never heard about it. Zhang Zhenglong, a military writer, also visited the elderly in the region asking for details. “I know all about this—everything you asked about, but I cannot speak a word of it,” one old man replied.

“Looking at the man, my feeling was like, I spent so much effort looking for the black box from a crashed plane—I found it, but I cannot unlock it,” Zhang recalled. In the end, he finished his book and published it, only to have it banned by the CCP with finding himself detained.

Even the Great Chinese Famine, with a death toll of 45 million, is treated by the CCP as taboo in literature and scholarly studies. Back then, top officials in the Ministry of Food had collected

statistics about how many died in the calamity, but then-premier Zhou Enlai issued orders to destroy all related documents.

Modern Day Lies

One may question the need to focus on history. While many things occurred decades ago and China is different now, the reality is that the same propaganda machine that produced those lies is still running today, producing more pro-CCP narratives day after day, around the globe.

On September 23, 2020, China Central Television, the CCP's mouthpiece, posted news on Facebook with a video claiming that Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist at WHO, announced that China's coronavirus vaccine was effective. Third-party reports verified that Swaminathan had not made those remarks and the CCTV had used edited video in reporting. Nonetheless, the CCTV kept the video posted and the false news was also propagated through other CCP news networks such as CGTN.

Even military actions are fabricated by the CCP. On September 19, the Chinese military released videos

of a simulation of China's bombers targeting U.S. Air Force installations on Guam. The footage was found to have been taken and edited from three Hollywood films, including Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen, The Rock, and The Hurt Locker. Similarly, pictures published by the CCP media on military exercises near Taiwan were identified to be archive photos of Taiwan's National Defense Ministry.

All of these fabrications aim to mislead people both inside China and around the world. And sometimes there seems to be no limit. During the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, although 9-year-old Lin Miaoke was shown on stage singing, the voice was found to have come from 7-year-old Yang Peiyi who was singing backstage. "It is an order from the Chinese Politburo [to so so]," clarified Music Director Chen Qigang on this issue.

The CCP news media also openly create lies. On February 18, 2019, the English edition of People's Daily published an article titled "We Need to Learn to Listen to China." The article praised China's Belt and Road Initiative and claimed to be written by Jenny Shipley, former Prime Minister of New

Zealand. Two days later, the author of the article was quietly changed to “a reporter for People’s Daily” on its website.

Among all the lies, one of the most devastating is the staged Self-Immolation Incident on Tiananmen Square of January 23, 2001, created to defame Falun Gong, a meditation system based on the principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance. The Chinese regime has conducted a brutal persecution of the practice since July 1999. In order to instigate hatred of nearly 100 million innocent Chinese citizens who practice Falun Gong, the CCP rebroadcast footage of the incident over and over again, and repeated it in textbooks, literature, and all forms of propaganda.

The United Nations, Reporters without Borders, Amnesty International, The Washington Post, and other news media have all identified loopholes in the CCP's narrative surrounding this incident. False Fire, a documentary that analyzed the CCTV video footage, received an honorary award in 2003 at the 51st Columbus International Film Festival.

Sanctions Against the CCP

World opinion of the CCP has changed significantly over the past few months. Especially as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the international community has become clear as to how the regime has misled the Chinese people—and the world—with its cover-up and disinformation.

The city of Flushing in New York is densely populated with Chinese. When events are held there that expose the CCP's human rights violations of Falun Gong practitioners or of Uyghurs, the Chinese Consulate always mobilized or paid people to harass participants.

As the U.S. government announced that it plans to cancel the pro-CCP Confucius Institutes, and classified People's Daily and other news media as foreign agents, and placed sanctions against top CCP officials for their crimes against Uyghurs and Hong Kong residents, such pawns from the Chinese Consulate are hardly seen anymore.

On October 2, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) further updated its Policy Manual to deny visas or permanent residence applications to

members of the communist party and other totalitarian parties.

Dongxiang, a magazine based in Hong Kong, found in 2012 that 90% of the CCP's Central Committee members already had their relatives immigrating overseas. The new measures from the USCIS and implementation of the Global Magnitsky Act would help unlock the CCP's black box of propaganda, bring it to the light, and lead us to a new chapter in history.

<http://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2020/10/21/187911.html>