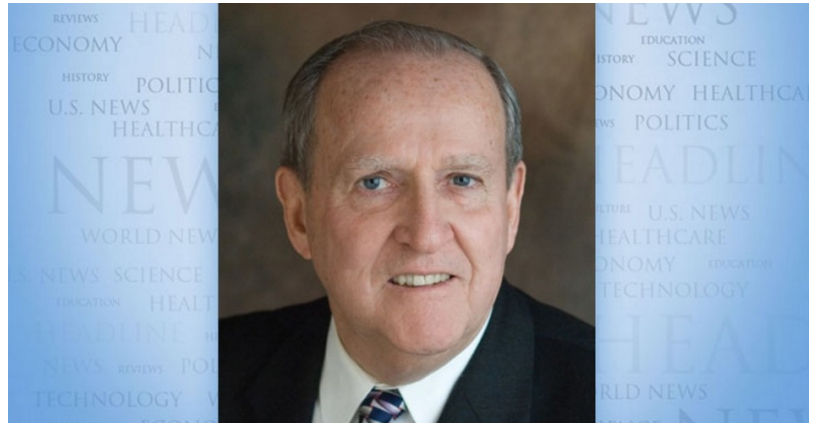




Written by [John F. McManus](#) on October 19, 2018

## China's Catholics Betrayed by Vatican

Communism has maintained its blood-drenched control of the Chinese mainland since 1949. In that year, the Nationalist Chinese government led by the anti-communist and valiant Chiang Kai-shek conceded military defeat and led two million followers (mostly military personnel) to the island of Taiwan (formerly Formosa). Over subsequent years, the 14,000-square-mile island (approximately half the size of South Carolina) has seen its population grow to 23 million and its freedom-based governmental system earn a hard-won place among the world's prosperous enclaves.



Still, the very existence of any remaining opponents of communist rule living on an island that Chinese leaders continue to insist is part of China itself has seriously irked Communist China's rulers. Threats and intimidation aimed at Taiwan have increased in recent years.

According to the authoritative 1997 *Black Book on Communism*, the followers of Mao Zedong sealed their 1949 victory with a mass murder rampage that claimed the lives of 65 million Chinese. The *Guinness Books of Records* lists the Chinese Communist government as history's greatest mass-murdering regime. Today, indiscriminate killing, incarceration, suppression of freedom, and universal fear of government mark communist rule over Mainland China's billion-plus people.

Traces of religious freedom in Mainland China have continued to exist despite the police state tactics of the government. The Catholic Church, for instance, has functioned even after many of its leaders and lay adherents have been forced out of the country, jailed, or even executed. Communist leaders have long considered Catholicism's attachment to the Vatican a threat it wants to terminate. Over the years, the communist leaders have ordered church officials to break with Rome. Many did exactly that and were welcomed by the government into what became known as China's "Patriotic Church." Those staying faithful to the Papacy formed what has been deemed the "Underground Catholic Church." At the Vatican, a succession of Popes pronounced excommunication for the sizable number of Catholic clergymen who were willing to break from Rome. But more than 30 bishops and a large number of priests in the Underground Church continued conducting services and ministering to the people even while government authorities have stepped up their drive to control them and force them into the Patriotic Church.

On September 22 in a remarkably uncharacteristic betrayal, the Vatican signed an agreement with China's leaders granting the communist government a decisive role in the appointment of bishops for China's 12 million Catholics. As part of the new arrangement, bishops in the Patriotic Church, previously excommunicated by the Vatican, have been forgiven by Pope Francis. Leaders of this government-sanctioned branch of Catholicism announced their willingness "to walk a path suited to a socialist society under the leadership of the Chinese Communist party."

Cardinal Joseph Zen, the aged Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, has spent a lifetime resisting China's



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communist rulers. On a visit to Rome in January 2018, he told Pope Francis face-to-face that any looming Vatican plan to legitimize China's Patriotic Church would be "an incredible betrayal and a complete surrender." But the deal with the communist government has now been made. Cardinal Zen strongly suggests that the second highest church official, Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin who had a hand in creating the new arrangement, should resign. But everyone having any awareness of the new requirements placed on China's Catholic clergy knows that the church's secretary of state could not have acceded to the demands of China's communist government without approval from Pope Francis.

The new arrangement agreed to by the Vatican means that all Catholic clergymen in China must be approved by communist officials and cooperating Catholic bishops. Along with the Patriotic Church's clergy, the Underground Church's bishops and priests will now tacitly or openly accept abortion, contraception, easy divorce and more — all of which has been forbidden by the church since Jesus Christ founded it in the first century.

There are many who have been led to believe China has changed, that more modern, more reasonable, more acceptable leaders have replaced the mass murderers who previously led China. This thinking holds that all should work with and maintain cordial relations with China's leaders, all of whom are committed communists and enemies of traditional Catholic teaching and practice. Pope Francis has swallowed this dangerously flawed new way of assessing Communist China and its leaders. Catholic people throughout the world have a duty to protest this monstrous betrayal.

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#).*



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