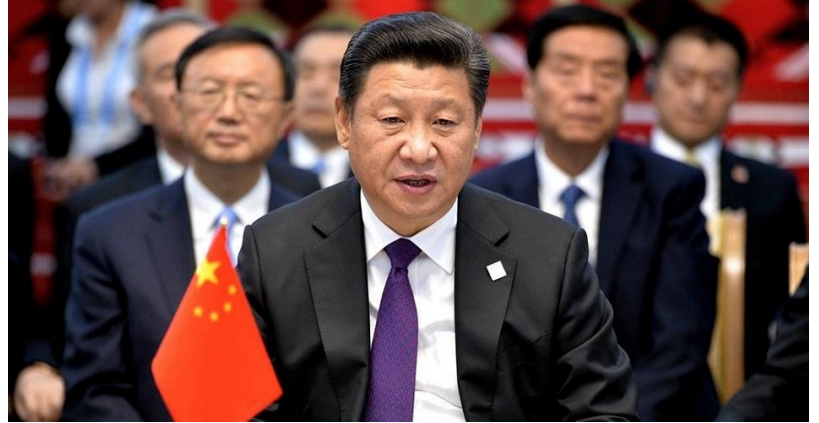




Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 24, 2019

China Orders People of Faith to Rewrite Religious Texts to Conform to Party Line

Wang Yang, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, reportedly told a group of 16 different religious representatives called on to attend a meeting of the conference last month that they must interpret their religious views in their texts to meet the instructions of Communist Party Chairman Xi Jinping and fulfill "the requirements of the era." Wang is also a member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China, an indication of how much importance the party placed in this conference.



This directive brings to mind the words of Karl Marx, the "godfather" of all communists:

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

Ever since Karl Marx wrote those words in his introduction to *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* in 1844, his philosophical successors, including Lenin, have waged war on religion in general, and on Christianity in particular. Vladimir Lenin, speaking of religion in *Novaya Zhizn* in 1905, wrote in part, "Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man."

Mao Zedong, who ruled as the Chairman of the Communist Party of China from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976 and was responsible for the killing of an estimated 30 to 70 million victims through starvation, persecution, prison labor, and mass executions, once said that religion was as bad as Nazism and had to be eradicated.

Persecution and suppression of religion are continuing under the current communist regime in China headed by Xi Jinping, who assumed power in 2012. Articles in *The New American* since then (e.g., "[China's Churches Face Renewed Government Persecution](#)," "[Communist Chinese Regime Steps up War on Churches](#)," and "[Chinese Persecution of Christians on the Rise During Holidays](#)") have documented the Chinese communist government's war on Christians.

In today's world of social media and Internet news, when it has become very difficult to cover up openly violent persecution, the communists in China have turned to more subtle forms of oppressing religion than rounding up believers and shooting them. They use more indirect methods such as attempting to gain control over the editing, printing, and distribution of Bibles and by demanding that they have the right to appoint church leaders, such as the bishops who pastor Chinese Catholics.

American Military News reported on December 23 that the religious officials hand selected to attend the November conference chaired by Wang Yang reportedly agreed with instructions handed down by the Chinese ruling Communist Party and agreed to undertake an effort to review and amend or re-



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translate their various religious texts — including the Bible.

The religious leaders reportedly said their efforts would help prevent “extreme thoughts” and “heretical ideas” from undermining China.

Britain’s *Daily Mail* noted in a report back on November 27, the day after the conference ended, that

China is set to censor all translated versions of classic religious books to make sure that their messages reflect the principles of Socialism.

The new editions must not contain any content that go against the beliefs of the Communist Party, according to the country’s top officials on religious matters.

Paragraphs deemed wrong by the censors will be amended or re-translated, the officials have said.

We are reminded of the work assigned to Winston Smith, the protagonist in George Orwell’s *1984*, whose job at the Ministry of Truth consisted of taking documents published in the past that contradicted the Party’s current positions and rewriting them so that they agreed with current published documents. Smith would then drop the old versions into a “memory hole,” which destroyed all evidence that the documents had been altered.

Whether some sort of “Ministry of Truth” exists in today’s communist China we do not know, but the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference’s decision to revise the Bible and other religious texts to conform to the Communist Party’s propaganda certainly accomplishes the same goal as the fictional version described by Orwell.

Photo: kremlin.ru

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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