

**The Chinese Catholic
Church in Conflict:
1949-2001**

**Beatrice K. F. Leung
and
William T. Liu**

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Cover photo: Catholic church in Guiyang, built in 1876

About the Authors

Beatrice K.F. Leung, Ph.D. Is a member of the Sisters of Precious Blood. Dr. Leung has written extensively on the Sino-Vatican Relations and religious policy in China. She is Professor in the Department of International Affairs, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, Kaoshiung, Taiwan.

William T.Liu, Ph.D. Taught at the University of Notre Dame. He later taught at the University of Illinois where he also headed the national Asian American Mental Health Research Center. He was a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health; the University of California, San Diego; Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, and Hong Kong Lingnan University. Before his retirement, he was Visiting Senior Fellow at the East Asian Institute of the National University of Singapore.

Foreword

Let me begin with two anecdotes. I recently visited a well-known Church in Beijing, situated a little off the city's main shopping street, where the 6.30 a.m. Mass was being celebrated. Arriving a few minutes late, I slipped into the back row. After a while, I realized that the person to the left of me was not moving in harmony with the rest of the congregation. Stealing a sideways glance I realized that I had placed myself next to the Public Security official. No harm done. He appeared to be fast asleep. However, when the Mass reached the 'Greeting' moment, the official jumped up and seized me most warmly by the hand as if to welcome me to his Church. This experience, strange though it was, was a good deal more satisfactory than what had transpired a week before in the city of Hangzhou. There, I was assured by the otherwise immensely kind hotel staff, no Church had ever been heard of.

In fact, Hangzhou has had a Christian community since the Tang Dynasty (618-905 AD) when traders in the city included Christians, Muslims, and Jews.¹ In the early 14th Century the Franciscans established a mission there, which too, eventually disappeared²

Then, in 1582 Father Ruggieri was allowed to leave the enclave of Macao to visit the city of Zhaoqing, in Guangdong Province. This journey was at the invitation of a Mandarin who 'burned with desire' to acquire a beautiful chiming watch, recently brought to China by Father Matteo Ricci precisely for the purpose of entrapping the interest of Chinese officials with western science and craftsmanship. Three years later Ruggieri was invited to Hangzhou, the fabled capital of the Southern Song dynasty, where he arrived in January 1586. In Hangzhou, Ruggieri was

welcomed by the father of a former Governor of Zhaoqing, who not only allowed him to live in his house, but was himself received into the Church.³ This was the beginning a long Jesuit mission in Hangzhou. In 1658, Fr. Martin Martini was sent to the city. While in China Martini compiled his *Atlas of Description China*, published by Blaeu, this work was so remarkable that to this day much of its information is still of academic value and the book itself remains an object of great bibliographical interest and beauty. In Hangzhou, however, Martini began the renovation of the Church building, a task eventually completed by a successor in a proper 'Roman' architectural style. Close to the West Lake, the favorite landscape of Chairman Mao and of millions of others (including myself), this Church was generally recognized to be the most beautiful Church in China.⁴ In the ensuing centuries the Church and its community suffered many traumas and physical disasters, but the building itself was fully restored as recently as 1990, and returned to the faithful for worship.

I tell these stories, not as travelers tales, but because they encapsulate so much of the strange, contradictory, tragic, and historical amnesic, yet endlessly inspiring history of the Catholic Church in China. This is a story of the world's oldest polity and civilization in conflict with the world's most venerable and enduring religious institution. The great contribution of this new book is that, between them, in so many different ways, William Liu and Beatrice Leung illuminate this complex, and for the outsider, largely incomprehensible picture.

In the early part of the book the authors describe the arrival of the Catholic and other Christian missions from the 16th Century onwards. Of particular note are the details of the Churches' contribution to health, welfare, and education. Before 1949, for example, between them the Churches supported 16 universities (13 Protestant and 3 Catholic),

5,000 schools and similar, 216 hospitals, and 781 clinics. The Catholic education effort, while relatively small at the higher level, was notable for its focus on women's education (quite revolutionary) and education in the poor and remoter parts of China. This geographical pattern of activity is still reflected in the presence of the underground Church.

After 1949 the Chinese Communist Party launched a vigorous campaign, first against all foreign elements in the Church, and then against its relationship with Rome. At this time it appears that the basic belief was that complete eradication of religious belief and practice was possible. The comparisons with Soviet Russia are interesting. In Russia, the Party had to deal with a huge traditional body of believers, which it attacked and controlled by organizational means, but in fact had only a limited impact on.⁵ This became apparent in the anti-Nazi war when religion flowered and inspired people in desperate straits. In China, the Party started with many advantages. The Church was clearly associated with foreigners and Communist ideals of control were supported by a Confucian culture of dependence and submissiveness and by an Imperial tradition of suppressing foreign religions that went back to Yung Cheng's reign in the early 18th Century. To this Mao added a new level of 'thought reform', used, and developed against dissidents of all kind, including those within the Party.

In the mid 1950s there began a series of severe anti-Catholic campaigns that produced such extraordinary figures as Bishop Kung of Suzhou and later Shanghai, and Dominic Tang, Bishop of Guangzhou.⁶ These and many others, known and unknown, form one of the most remarkable groups in Christian history, surviving imprisonment and 'thought reform' for decades.⁷

In the era of Deng Xiaoping, from time to time some rays of hope have penetrated this sad history. The authors

throw light on two most important aspects of this period. First, they show just how indistinct is the division between the Patriotic and the ‘underground’ Church. In many cases the status of Bishops is unclear and the Patriotic Church includes many priests and Bishops who are *in pectore* loyal to Rome. The second point, however, is disturbing and surprising. Using many remarkable documents, they show how the Vatican has consistently failed to support the underground Church, in the hope of unification and recognition through diplomacy with Beijing. To date, the gains from this seem to have been slight, if any. The authors argue that in this jurisdictional dispute Beijing’s approach is entirely based on concern relating to Taiwan. I do not quite believe this myself, although the Taiwan dimension is always present in any foreign policy issue for China.

In general the 1990s have been a troublesome decade. Far from rising economic prosperity being linked to a genuine growth of civil society and human rights, the attacks on the religion were, in fact, set off by a letter written by Chen Yun, China’s most famous economic planner. The Chinese were clearly very concerned with East European parallels, but the evidence shows that this anxiety, while understandable given the history of the Polish Pope, was quite misplaced.

Resolving the issues between the Vatican and Beijing is likely to be a long and difficult affair. On both sides, the legal and bureaucratic complications are considerable. The authors have considerable discussion of some of the legal dimensions, but the bureaucratic issues are equally great. On the Chinese side, religious affairs directly involve at least four important organizations: The Party (especially the Politburo Standing Committee); the Religious Affairs Bureau; The United Front Work Department and the National Minorities Bureau. On the Vatican side, there is Propaganda Fide and the Secretary of State’s officials. What

relations are within the Chinese side we cannot know, but theory suggests disagreements. Within the Vatican, the two departments are, according to credible reports, constantly at war. Bringing all these parties to an agreed solution is therefore obviously not going to be easy.

Nonetheless, when we look at the changes that have occurred over the past fifty years in China, there is I think scope for optimism. As prosperity rises and old ideologies seem ever more inadequate, the challenge of materialism will grow. Although here again, the issues for the Church are not new. When Matteo Ricci challenged the beliefs of a 16th Century Mandarin the Mandarin replied as follows:

As for my part, all my glory and happiness consists in this same Girdle and Habit of a Mandarin, all the rest is nothing but fables and words which the wind blows away; meer stories of things invisible or rather never to be seen. That which is visible, is to command others; Gold and Silver, Wives and Concubines, and multitudes of servants of both sexes, these are visible; Noble Houses, great Wealth, Banquets, Divertissements, these are to be seen...⁸

This rampant materialism of Ming China has obvious contemporary echoes. And from contemporary problems spring uncomfortable social consequences: facts of which the Party is only too well aware. But many Chinese grow uncomfortable in this new world, and as knowledge becomes ever more accessible and personal experience deepens, the flowering of religious experience and the growing autonomy of religious institutions will gradually become unstoppable.

Christopher Howe
The University of London

Preface

The world is full of ironies. We shall explain this remark further in subsequent chapters. Our own irony is that we started to plan the book with the intention of giving multitudes of unorganized and original materials about the Catholic Church in China a systematic narration with a theoretical framework. After having searched for such a framework, we decided to use Philip Selznik's well-known phrase on the Soviet society, namely, "the organizational weapon" to describe the way the Communist Party dealt with religion in China. In the process of building our argument based on the control apparatus of the state and party on religion, we later found out that the unilateral control of religion by the state and the Party was merely the method in the process of resolving the religious problem in the context of religious freedom proclaimed by an atheistic socialist regime. This process was marked largely by continuous episodes of conflict and accommodation that resulted in what seemed to be one faith, two churches, or one Catholic faith with both the official national church severed from the Holy See and the underground Church unwilling to be subservient to the Party/state in spite of vowed patriotism by its members. We therefore appropriately gave the title "The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict, from 1949 to 2001" as the major focus of the book.

We found that even after the collapse of the Communism in Europe and Russia and three generations of Communist leadership later, the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party continue to use state organizational weapons to control religion, although new methods (including websites, regulations and laws) and tactics are used in place of the old, repressive instruments. These new tactics inadvertently changed the way religion

cope with polity, as polity later had to deal with a changing environment of religious organizations that continued to link in substantial ways with the Church outside China from which an indigenous Catholicism emerged and expanded that had never before been experienced in China.

The irony came when we first thought, from initial examination of these original source materials, that weapons of repression and control of religion had practically driven Catholicism out of the land, but the facts show that there had been a revival of the Church and that enemies of opposing organizations of the Church and the state found room for cooperation, with the state seemingly having won the battle of control. The facts also show that the Church has triumphed in the war in the long run. The Chinese Catholic Church has, from all indications, gained both strength and support from the Holy See and a membership of the indigenous population never before achieved by a century or more of missionaries before the socialist regime. There had been more churches built, seminaries and convents erected, and religious professionals sent abroad for additional training. There has been an organization of indigenous bishops for the first time in the history of the Chinese Church.

To begin with, a litany of ironies was that the government's fear of foreign intervention of religious institutions had its historical precedent in China's recent past; in particular in the Taiping Rebellion in late Qing Dynasty, when a Christian leader began a revolution against the monarchy. The Party leaders' fear of the political impact of foreign religions was the driving force towards the establishment of the Three-Self Movement. The goals of Three-Self Movement meant self-financing, self-propagation of faith and self-governance. After the Deng era, the government had encouraged church groups to solicit foreign donations to build seminaries and churches inasmuch as to

invite foreign lecturers to teach short-term courses in state supported seminaries. The irony was demonstrated by the fear of foreign influence on one hand, and the desire of foreign resources to assist the Catholic Church on the other. The conflicting policies somehow resulted in the exercise of a religious policy of the Party/State that mystified some scholars studying the religious policies of China.

The major concern of the underground Catholic Church was not so much to oppose the state control of religious activities as it was the unwillingness to negate Papal ecclesiastic authority and the Church's right to propagate the faith. There were, over the years, donations from foreign sources to the official Catholic Church in China, but cash donation to a government-controlled-church was compensated by the opportunity to maintain the integrity of church teachings and the cooperation between the underground and the official church. The complex process of political, historical, economic, and international human rights pressures on religious freedom had led to a series of ironic decisions in the post-reform era of the Party's policy on religion.

We also found that the Party had entrapped itself in the web of ironies of the need for the state and constitutional guarantees for religious freedom on the one hand and the intense fear of the expansion of the strength of religious power to counter the Party's atheistic belief on the other.

But the chain of ironies does not stop here. When the former strong man of the Party Deng Xiao-ping proclaimed that "it did not matter whether it is black or white cat, as long as it catches mouse, it is a good cat," China had since freed itself from the iron chains of economic restrictions of central planning imposed by Marx-Lenin-Mao ideology. But the white cat is never the black cat, and will never be. China, being a socialist country, is no longer a country of socialism.

“Socialism with Chinese characteristics” is merely a lexical dialectic lacking in precise meaning. Similarly, religious freedom under the watchful eyes of Party control defies all the principles of “freedom of religion.” Again the linguistic shades of meaning of “freedom” have been employed for the convenience of state control as well as giving security personnel the right to decide not only what freedom refers to, and freedom from what? The lack of a mutually acceptable definition of religion by the Party/state and religious leaders further confused the issue.

We were able to document the fact that the rebirth and increased growth of the Catholic Church in China can be explained by the continuous interacting processes between the Church and the Party in defining the legitimacy of religious authority in light of the orthodox Party leadership and the monopoly of state authority.

Contrary to the assertion made by some scholars that the underground Church presents an obstacle to the development of a civil society in China, we submit that the underground church in fact has been an important player in shaping the way the Party deals with religion, thus making it possible for the official church to be more autonomous in crucial areas of church administration. Without the persistent loyalty of the underground church to the ecclesiastic authority in Rome, Party religious cadres and leaders of the official church would have lost the essence of Church teachings in favor of the revolutionary version of patriotism and nationalism. Not only it would not create room for the development of a civil society, it would have rendered religion a meaningless institution. The less than fifty years old “official Catholic Church” could not be able to articulate a new theology, an established faith, and a set of doctrines. In the same vein, without these watchful eyes of those ordained by the Pontiff prior to the revolution, the “patriotic official church” could not train future generations of clergy

and religious personnel. The official church would have been another state fabricated front organization of the state control bureaucracy. Leaders of the Party knew this well; they had no choice but to support a church that had to recognize the authority in Rome. Members of both the underground church and the official church, through their cooperation, however tangent and not without reservation, had educated and trained a large number of next generation religious leaders in China. Archbishop Jin of Shanghai, a staunch supporter of the official church, put it nicely when he said to German theologians that the Chinese church is a local church in the same way as the Irish church, the Italian church and the Mexican church are all local churches. It is the sum total of all local churches that constitute the Church Universal.

In the course of writing this book, we wish to acknowledge the Hong Kong Archdiocese for having collected and commented on some of the original source materials of public and private correspondence between underground church leaders on the mainland and church leaders outside China.

We are grateful to Leo F. Goodstadt at Trinity College, University of Dublin, who gave detailed suggestions, and to Stephen Warner of the University of Illinois, and Joseph Tamney of Ball State University, for their suggestions. Quite independently, they viewed the element of conflict as a driving force toward the revival of the Church, a theme we also embraced.

We are also grateful to the late Father Lazlo Ladany, S. J., for his publications on China and the Chinese Church, which we used freely throughout the volume. Ledney's contribution to the Church in China should be long remembered. China researchers benefited from his *China News Analysis* for decades. Without his journal on China, we could not do what we did in this volume.

The authors wish to thank Father Roman Malet, SVD, for allowing us to use the *Monumento Serica* materials located in the House of the Society for Divine Word at St. Augustine near Bonn in Germany. His hospitality and numerous conversations on the Chinese church during our visit there are deeply appreciated. German and other European missionaries of the Society of Divine Word (SVD) established *Monumento Serica* at the Beijing Catholic Fu Jen University (defunct after the 1949 revolution). It is a rich collection of books and journals of missionary work in several languages that cover a wide spectrum of disciplines of history, sociology, economics, anthropology, arts and classics as well as bibliographic research on the Chinese society. Many of these books and journals were published in Chinese by some of the most authoritative scholars before the Revolution. After missionaries were driven out of China in the early years of the regime under socialism, the collection first went to Japan and was later transferred to the University of California at Los Angeles. The institute later built its own facilities to permanently house these books, documents and periodicals.

We wish to thank the congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood of Hong Kong, an indigenous Chinese congregation for their support and encouragement of Beatrice Leung as a career researcher on the Chinese church.

We also wish to thank the University of Notre Dame for having provided an excellent academic and research environment for William Liu to begin his research career on religion during nearly two decades of his tenure at Notre Dame. We wish to thank Barbara Valdez for her careful editing of the manuscript fit for publication and in such a short time to meet the deadline. We also thank Mark Plew and Faith Brigham of the Anthropology Department of Boise State University in Boise, Idaho, for their kind assistance in matters of printing.

Last but not least, we are most grateful to Professor Christopher Howe of the University of London for the introduction. Professor Howe, an eminent scholar on economies of both China and Japan, has had the first-hand observation of the China church while serving Her Majesty's government as an advisor to Hong Kong's University Grants Committee for many years. His introduction to our book is deeply appreciated.

Beatrice K.F. Leung
William T. Liu

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Chapter One

Organizational Weapons and Control of Religion

Philip Selznick in his classic study of the Bolsheviks' organizational weaponry argued that the Bolsheviks' skill in making the full use of the potential of organizations, as well as its capacity to mobilize divergent elements enabled the Party to seize totalitarian political power.⁹ Selznick believed that political and organizational dimensions reinforce each other, and the latent structure of communist politics was not reviewed until the system was seen in action. Hence the study of Bolshevik institutional capacities through organizational behavior was vital in its institutional assessment.¹⁰ In short, the Party had skillfully employed organizations as weapons to control all aspects of its citizenry. Selznick defined an organizational weapon as follows:

We shall speak of organizations and organizational practices as weapons when they are used by a power seeking elite in a manner unrestrained by the constitutional order of the arena within which the context takes place. In this usage, 'weapon' is not meant to denote any political tool, but one torn from its normal context and unacceptable to the community as a legitimate mode of action. Thus the partisan practices used in an election campaign – insofar as they adhere to the written and unwritten rules of the contest – are not weapons in this sense.¹¹

For Selznick, there were two dimensions to his investigations in understanding the Communist Party as a combat party. First was the study of organizational

weapons/manipulation aimed at searching for a “latent structure,” in contrast to the manifest or official proclaimed functions of the organization. By this he meant an emergent pattern of adherence and control, of self-perpetuating, interlocking commitments of the Bolshevik Party.¹² The second was the study of the distinctive competence of the Bolshevik Party in turning members of voluntary associations into disciplined and deployable political agents. Thus Selznick believed that the study of the combat party, the vanguard mass, and their interactions in the context of organizational weapons constituted a major approach assessing Communism and the Communist Party.¹³

Organization weapons in the Bolshevik Party included tactics and strategies of total control over individual Party members, preserving the managerial leadership, manipulating the press as collective organizer, adopting conspiratorial activities, and becoming organs of infiltration.¹⁴ For the vanguard mass, when the Bolshevik strategy aims to annihilate the enemy, the strategic emphasis is on changing the nature, structure, and functions of the organization being manipulated.¹⁵

Weapons, tactics, and strategies including assassination and defamation are used in gaining access to target groups and institutions, neutralizing the opposite force, legitimizing the communist influence, and mobilizing target groups for the interests of the Bolsheviks.¹⁶ Selznick skillfully showed familiar tactics such as the *united front*, defensive strategies as well as penetration into, and manipulation of, institutional targets in micro-details to give an overall display of organizational weapons of the Bolshevik Party.¹⁷

Selznick provided the first comprehensive study of the organizational strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik Party. In the Movement of Communist International context he

drew heavily from case studies and documents on Communist Parties in the United States, Europe, and Latin America to discuss the development of Communist International and the use of the model of organizational weaponry. Apart from the Communist Party in the Philippines, Selznick's study omitted Communist Parties in Asia, most conspicuously the Chinese Communist Party.

However, there is no shortage of published studies on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) by other scholars. Franz Schurmann was one of the first Sinologists who studied ideology and Party control of civil organizations. His work was akin to that of Selznick's model on "organizational weapon," comparing Mao Zedong's manipulations of organizations to achieve a political agenda to that of the Bolshevik model.¹⁸

Selznick and Schurmann had independently studied communist parties operating in two different countries. Though of the same origin, these two communist parties were at different stages of development and had different organizational apparatus to assure the party supremacy. Through analyzing documents and interviewing former Communist Party members, Selznick revealed that before the Bolshevik Party was the ruling party, it had very actively manipulated institutional targets for its enhancement.¹⁹

On the other hand, Schurmann dealt with the CCP when it became the ruling party after defeating the Kuomintang Party of Chiang Kai-shek (KMT). The CCP sought to extend its rule in every aspect of Chinese life. This transformation was difficult because Chinese society had long been imbued with Confucianism. When discussing Mao's art of state management under the theme of transformation, Schurmann argued that organizational weapons were employed to deal with social groups, though

Mao called it “the Theory of Contradictions” which deviated in many ways from the Soviet experience.²⁰

Schurmann argued that Mao paid more attention to individual people’s thinking and belief system than did Lenin and Stalin. Mao introduced “thought reform” to force conformity with CCP ideology.²¹ In so doing Mao believed that Communism was not only embedded in organizations but among individuals in China.²²

Communist Party Organizational Control in China

In adapting the Bolshevik tradition in both nation building and in annihilating opposition, Mao’s tactic was to change circumstances in the political context. For example, Mao’s Great Leap Forward was not like that of Stalin in collectivizing agriculture and establishing urban communes, and he did not believe that the Stalin model could work in China. Similarly, the Cultural Revolution was a prime example of how Mao used mass campaigns to advance his personal political objectives. The “Religious Freedom Policy,” which had never been practiced in Soviet Union, was employed by the CCP to serve the purpose of controlling institutional religion in China.

The characteristic feature of Chinese society was the traditional value of Confucianism that had molded a docile and submissive political culture, which in turn provided an environment particularly suitable for applying the strategy of control through Party/state bureaucracies in the new regime.²³ In particular, Mao went a step further by creating small primary groups among the masses as tools to change minds, employing an innovative instrument of “self-criticism” with techniques of group dynamics that had proven to be enormously effective and often quoted in the West as “brain-wash.”²⁴

In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping's economic reform was aimed at modernizing China by making it "rich and powerful" (*fuqiang*). This was defined as "socialism with Chinese characteristics," through the combination of a market economy and centralized control of regional planned development. This new economic strategy had a far greater impact on Chinese politics, culture, and society than had the preceding program during the Mao era.

Forces released by economic reforms have weakened the CCP's political and organizational control and altered the Party-State and society relations in many ways. Numerous social organizations began to emerge due to the relatively free political environment compared with the Mao years. Economic reforms also brought greater individual freedom.²⁵ In 1989, the Civil Administration Bureau registered 16,000 plus so-called government sponsored non-governmental organizations at the national level, which was about 16 times more than were allowed during the Cultural Revolution and more than 200,000 provincial and municipal level non-governmental organizations or 33 times more than during the Cultural Revolution.²⁶ Two important weapons of the CCP of the Deng Era in dealing with social organizations were repression of non-compliant organizations on the one hand and incorporation of CCP members into organizations that were "non-governmental" to insure that the Party always had the grip on all civil organizations.²⁷

Although economic reform had resulted in greater freedom for the individual in China, there was no softening with respect to civil organizations.²⁸ This was particularly evident after the Tiananmen Square Incident in June 1989 when the Party mobilized all state control apparatus to monitor non-governmental organizations, on the pretext of conducting a streamlining exercise.²⁹ Thus the new Bureau for the Management of Non-Governmental organizations was created. In October 1989, the State Council issued its

new “Regulations Concerning the Registration of Social Organizations,” which gave the government greater control over the activities of private organizations by requiring them to register with the state in order to operate legally. After reviewing all civil organizations, the government decided to deregister a sizable number of previously registered organizations. As a result, 400 civil organizations on the national level and 20,000 on the provincial and municipal levels were banned.³⁰

A number of Western scholars argue that contemporary Chinese society is characterized by corporatism in which the Party/State control social institutions by incorporating the two, i.e., for the government to establish civil and voluntary organizations as non-government institutions.³¹ But scholars at the Chinese Academy of Science avoided the discussion on civil society and state/party relations in the context of corporatism. Instead, they examined data from social surveys and argued that some authority had slipped into the hands of private individuals as a result of their newly acquired social and economic power unleashed by economic reforms.³² All these discussions indicated that the organizational manipulation of the Mao era had lost its efficacy after 1980. Nonetheless, there had been no evidence that the CCP was willing to give up its control of all social institutions.

On the other hand, the banning of Falun Gong widely publicized in the closing years of the 1990s reflected that the CCP was allergic to any religion-like collective action from the masses, who believed that they were immune to the CCP’s control in the era of reform. When the existing control apparatus was unable to curb the spreading of Falun Gong, a semi-*qi gong* and breathing exercise group that bore the characteristics of a religious cult, high technological devices such as the government website on Fulun Gong, combined with traditional police actions, were deployed to suppress

overt dissident activities of the loosely organized exercise group in different localities linked only by internet communications.³³

Various studies have been conducted on the decline of the Party's authority as well as changing functions of Chinese social organizations, such as the Workers' Union and women's organizations, both of which had been used as organizational weapons of the CCP since the pre-1949 era.³⁴ In the wake of an unsuccessful attempt to deploy some organizations to deal with new problems, the CCP switched from less efficient bureaucratic organizations to announce policies, regulations and laws as means of control. For example, the Party's continuous reinterpretations of "religious freedom policy" and issuing of state decrees (Document 144 and 145) without legislative process have been used from time to time as ways to exercise control of religious organizations when the political situation called for such actions.³⁵

Throughout this volume it is the authors' intention to demonstrate how organizations were created and subsequently changed by the Party/state in dealing with various religious bodies, particularly with the Chinese Catholic Church.

Control of Religion After the Reform

The relationship between the Communist Party and Christianity is fundamentally one of conflict between beliefs in theism and atheism. European Communist states and the Soviet Union were formerly Christian countries. The rise of red flags in the eastern block under Soviet rule invariably led to a clash over the fundamental moral authority in a society over time, for religious values were deeply embedded within a cultural tradition that could not be replaced by a foreign

ideology.³⁶ Believing in a faith and acceptance of an ideology was also the source of conflict between the hierarchical authority of an institutional religion and the equally rigid hierarchical authority of the Communist Party.³⁷

In addition to political and ideological differences, China's Church-State dispute had been complicated by cultural factors.³⁸ The clash of authority stems from communist organizational behavior of the state and the Party on one hand and the traditional concept mandate of heaven, a personal deity as in the case of religious faith that competed for allegiance of the people. During the dynastic period, the Emperor had absolute authority because it was believed that the Emperor had the heavenly mandate, and the imperial court authority was thus absolute. When ecclesiastic authority and political authority were separated, the legitimacy of human rule came under constant scrutiny in China. In the Soviet Union and former Soviet Eastern Europe, however, exercise of control and suppression by the Party/state did not weaken the authority of the Church; it merely shaped the way people compartmentalize their obedience.³⁹ As soon as communist parties disappeared, religion revitalized itself.

During the reform era, there was a revival of interest in religion and an increase in the number of churchgoers, just as there had been in post-communist Russia. During the immediate days after the collapse of communism in Europe, China's political leaders had anxiously monitored the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and its impact on the role of Catholics in the post Soviet Polish society and in Russia, on the influence of the Orthodox Church. After the June 4th student demonstration at the Tiananmen Square and subsequent massacre, Chen Yun, second man to Deng Xiaoping in 1990, advised Jiang Zemin to be firmer in dealing with possible upsurges of religious forces in China.⁴⁰

Fragmented documents were found on the encounters between the Party hierarchy and organized religions and, in particular, the Catholic Church. The few published works on Christianity give a contradictory picture of how religion had flourished in Deng-Jiang's reform era, strong party-state control notwithstanding.⁴¹ No document to our knowledge addressed the problem from the viewpoint of organizational strategies. Analysis of such strategies during the post-reform period seems warranted.

We focused our analysis on the Catholic religion in China because the Roman church, like the communist party, is a highly structured organization with clearly delineated hierarchy and doctrines; its ecclesiastic authority of the Pontiff and the Roman Curia provide guidance and institutional control of religious matters of local churches all over the world. The commonality is the monolithic authority that prevailed both in the communist Party and the Catholic Church respectively. The commonalities and fundamental differences in the nature of authorities provided an excellent opportunity for a study of organizational structure and functions. The struggle for control, however, was not as simple as it appeared to be. First, the Church merely claims legitimate authority over religious worship and faith. It is essentially apolitical. The communist party, on the other hand, claims absolute power that controls every aspect of an individual's life--attitudes, values, and institutional norms that are essentially political-driven. Furthermore, given the history of colonialism and early missionaries' dependence upon protection from their governments after the signing of unequal treaties with China, the struggle for control went beyond the question of power being legitimate for the new regime; it was a matter of national identity and national sovereignty in the context of the history of a defeated people. Christianity, as a foreign religion and the Catholic Church, with its ecclesiastic authority in Rome, presented an opportunity for the Party to force upon Chinese faithful an