

H.E. The Rector of the University of Studies of Milano, Prof. Enrico Decleva,
The University of Studies of Milano,
Via Festa del Perdono, 7, 20122, Milan,
Italy.

4th September 2009

Copy to : Prof. Daniele Checchi, Headmaster, Political Sciences Faculty
The Political Sciences Faculty Council
Toni Brandi, president Laogai Research Foundation Italy

Your Excellency,

Subject : agreement of cooperation between the University of Studies of Milano
and the Beijing Daxue University

My name is Harry Wu, I am the Executive Director of the Laogai Research Foundation, USA. I have been advised by a group of your students about the agreement between your University and Beijing Daxue (Beida) University in the context of the "European University Centre for Cooperation and Research" project. I am, therefore, taking the liberty of writing to you with some respectful advise.

China is not a free country. Human rights are not respected and all forms of dissent, whether political or religious, are persecuted. In China there are tens of thousands of forced sterilizations and abortions and thousands of executions every year. Often the human organs of the executed prisoners are sold for profit. Dissidents are frequently interned in the Laogai. I have myself spent 19 years in the Laogai concentration camps for being labelled a catholic and being labelled "counter-revolutionary".

The Beida University, like all schools and universities in China, has an internal Communist Party Committee that handles all financial, political and human resources issues. Such a Committee represents the strongest unit in every educational Institution in the country. Nevertheless, Beida has been the cradle of the May 4th reformist student movement and of the spring 1989 protests. Regretfully, however, the Communist Party still maintains a strict control on all university activities.

You are no doubt aware of the "Charter 2008", asking for human rights, freedom and democracy, that was signed by thousands of students and intellectuals and that provoked the herassment and arrests of many signatories.

In January of this year the Beida University acted in opposition to the Charter and distributed a notice requiring students *“to firmly resist and stay away from these actions, to maintain a clear state of mind, to not blindly conform and follow the actions of the crowd, and to not distribute harmful information through various news media or other communication channels.”* . Similarly, on April 30th, close to the "youth day" anniversary (May 4th) the cellphones of the 32,630 students of the university, buzzed with a text message from the university administration warning all students to *“pay attention to your speech and behaviour”* on Youth Day (4th May) because of a *“particularly complex”* situation.

Lately, **Prof Sun Dongdong**, head of the university's forensics department, told China Newsweek magazine that he thinks at least 99% of China's petitioners are mentally ill, even if the vast majority of them do not show symptoms. He also expressed support for the forced hospitalizations of mentally ill petitioners. Infact, it is common in China to forcefully intern dissidents in psychiatric hospitals. Notwithstanding the repression within the university, several students and professors signed "Charter 2008" and there have been cases like Prof. He Weifang who, because of his opinions, has been transferred to a faraway university in Xinjiang - Shihezi University - and Prof. Wan Yaoqui who resigned from the Communist Party. More recently (July 2009) Professor **Xu Zhiyong**, a PhD graduate of Peking University Law School, who founded the human rights organization "Open Constitution Initiative", has been arrested. The "crimes" committed by the members of the "Open Constitution Initiative" were to be critical of China's repression in Tibet and of legally assisting the families of children intoxicated by tainted and infected milk.

The control and interference by the Communist Party upon all chinese educational institutions is, in itself, in total contradiction to the universal and fundamental principles of independence, freedom of thought and respect for human rights that should reign in all universities.

You will no doubt receive pressures from many groups concerned primarily with their own gain instead of being concerned with the appropriate education of your students and genuine respect for human rights.

Allow me, therefore, to suggest to you that you request the insertion of a clause, within the cooperation agreement, ensuring respect for human rights and freedom of expression for all students at Beida University and for all students of Milano University participating to the project.

It is only by reminding the chinese educational authorities and the government of the supreme importance of freedom of thought and human rights that the west can help China to improve itself in the path towards freedom and democracy.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Wu
Executive Director
Laogai Research Foundation

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