
Interview: Gen. T'eng Chieh



How we can overthrow the mainland China dictatorship

This interview—Part II in a series—was conducted by C.M. Lao, publisher of the Chinese Flag Monthly, in Taipei, June 14, 1989. General T'eng is an elder statesman of the Kuomintang party in the Republic of China on Taiwan. He was a close adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, and is today Taiwan's leading military strategist.

Lao: The mainland Chinese today dare to show their anti-Communism in public, and it is remarkable that you explain this as a result of a loss of control by the Chinese Communists. But many people point out that Communist China has military forces of about 3 million men. Their leaders believe that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. For the future, can they use this military power to save their political power, or not?

General T'eng: Armed forces are the central strength to make a country survive and develop. Armed forces also support the existence of political power. But armed forces cannot develop a high level of efficiency if they betray the will of the people. When all the people wholeheartedly support the armed forces, then the armed forces can develop a very high level of efficiency. They can seize political power, and naturally they can protect political power. But when the political power is against the will of the people, and when the government and the people are in conflict, then the armed forces will no longer function as the guardians of those who hold political power, even though they have been used temporarily by the politicians. The essence of the armed forces is that they cannot betray the will of the people.

Now all the Chinese, inside and outside the mainland, are showing their anti-Communist attitude, including the members of the Communist Party and the diplomatic corps as well. The soldiers come from civilian life. Is there any reason that they will violate the will of the people by not fighting against the Communists? Therefore, we are definitely sure that within the Communist armed forces, in the hearts of the soldiers, there is also anti-Communist feeling. This judgment will not be wrong.

The army has been used for massacres at Tiananmen using machine guns and tanks, killing numerous peaceful

students and civilians who were merely fighting for freedom and democracy. That is the result, because the army was blindfolded in regard to the real facts, or fooled, or threatened. Maybe up to now the people they killed or are ordered to kill are still considered rebels. They still think that they have been doing a great job for the country, and they don't yet know that what they have done is actually to negate the will of the people, the revolution, and human nature. Without outside intervention, the army will remain blindfolded for some time to come. Not only those soldiers who received the orders to carry out the massacre at Tiananmen, but the whole army, will continue to be used by the Communist leaders.

I predict that from now on the Communist leaders will strengthen their control of the armed forces to the maximum, using every trick to keep the troops blindfolded, including brainwashing, bribery, demagoguery, strong surveillance, and mass manipulation, all applied non-stop to eliminate their enemies and to consolidate their hold over the army.

That is exactly like the early period when the Communists had occupied mainland China, and they used their army to eliminate their opponents. They will carry out a nationwide massacre to protect their political power. In 1949, the Chinese Communists occupied the mainland and the people were completely deluded by their propaganda campaigns and were like a herd of sheep. But the Communists still continued to use starvation, disease, struggle campaigns, "disappeared" persons, and "suicided" persons, in order to kill 80 million people without anyone's noticing it. They have maintained their political power for 40 years. Now the whole population is against them. If they want to keep their power intact, how many people will they have to kill? Judging from what they are doing now, they have combined the army and the secret police to eliminate all opposition leaders.

But today, everybody has already been shocked into awareness, many have broken free of food control, and many are able to travel and communicate more freely. The leaders of the democracy movement have successfully escaped from the deadly manhunt, and that is strong evidence to prove that the Communists no longer have a free hand to slaughter their people at will. The mainland Chinese have been living in a

very cruel system for a long period of time under the Communists. They have been trained as organizers, propaganda experts, and strategists by the Communists. Therefore they know how to practice anti-Communism, and they are fully able to take anti-Communist action. Because they have wide knowledge and capability in anti-Communism, they do not need our assistance for that. What they need, and what we can offer them as help, is financing, weapons, and all necessary high-technology equipment.

Obviously, the main target for the mainland Chinese is to split the Communist army and the secret police. They need to win over a large part of the army and the secret police to fight on their side. According to their needs, we should plan and organize systematically and well to help them. We should not impose leadership, but we can offer help. I deeply believe that the result of this assistance will be another successful revolution on the model of the Chinese Revolution of 1911.

Lao: With the food controls and the controls on transportation and communication no longer functioning, as you have pointed out, we can see that it is impossible for the Communists to revert to the practices of the Mao period. In addition, the will of the entire nation is against the Communists. The Communist army is looking more and more like the armies of the end of the Ching dynasty. [In the period before the fall of the Ching dynasty in 1911, the imperial armies became more and more factionalized and unreliable—ed.] There is no doubt that this is true.

But from the strategic point of view, some people here in Taiwan think that the student movement in mainland China went too far, causing the massacre and this tragic result. Some people in Taiwan think the student movement was wrong to raise the slogans of “Down with Deng Xiaoping” and “Down with Li Peng.” They say the students should have followed the example of Mussolini during his March on Rome, when his slogans were “Long live the King” and “Down with cabinet,” and that therefore the student slogans should have been: “Long live Deng Xiaoping” and “Down with Li Peng.” If they had done so, say some people in Taiwan, the result would have been different. I wonder what you think about this question.

General T’eng: The situation in mainland China today is different from the situation in Italy then. The King of Italy appointed a cabinet and gave them the responsibility of exercising power, while the King himself was not directly involved in governing the country. But after World War I, the cabinet in Italy was so weak that many foreign and domestic difficulties arose, giving the leftists the chance to play out their violence, occupying the factories, breaking down the social order, and evoking the rage of the citizens. Under these circumstances, Mussolini came forward and organized the war veterans to wipe out the violence of the leftists, restore the social order, attack the government for its weakness, support the king, and create a strong government. This policy

seemed to correspond completely to the hopes of a desperate nation, and so finally he achieved political power.

Today on the mainland, the political power of the Communists is actually completely in the hands of Deng Xiaoping, and he bears direct responsibility for all the existing problems. It is not wrong for the students to cry out “Down with Deng Xiaoping,” even though from the strategic point of view, the students did not raise this slogan. Deng Xiaoping had no sympathy with the students. The editorial of *Renmin Ribao* on April 26 had accused the students of being troublemakers, and this editorial was dictated directly by Deng Xiaoping. Before that editorial was published, the student movement was still quite limited. The slogans that they were using were very mild. They did not advocate the ouster of Deng Xiaoping.

As everybody should know, Italy in 1922 was a monarchy, and the king and the prime minister had clearly delineated responsibilities. “Down with the cabinet” did not mean “Down with the king.” Today on the mainland, the Communist Party is run through a dictatorial system, and this dictatorship is identical with the person of Deng Xiaoping. Li Peng is so loyal to the dictator Deng Xiaoping that he is like his shadow. So if the students had raised the slogan “Down with Li Peng” and “Long live Deng Xiaoping,” Deng would not have accepted it. Even if he had accepted it, and replaced Li Peng with a different prime minister, the result would have been the same. Deng still would have carried out the same policy and would not have let the student movement accomplish any of its goals.

Lao: According to what you say, the massacre of the students was unavoidable.

General T’eng: The student movement was searching for the future of the Chinese people. All the students were determined to do this, even if they had to sacrifice their lives. Whether the students would live or die depended exclusively on the decisions of Deng Xiaoping. Deng even would have had the power to turn away from the traditional failures of Communism. He could even have selected a peaceful solution to the problems of the mainland. That means that if he had accepted the students’ demands, made some democratic concessions to the people, and moved against corrupt bureaucrats, then Deng Xiaoping would still be the leader today. This would have been the best solution, but he did not do it.

Lao: According to your explanation, in the democracy movement in mainland China, the demands of the students were totally reasonable. The students were very courageous and they were ready to face any sacrifice. The tragic massacre took place completely because of Deng Xiaoping’s decisions. Why did Deng have to choose these stupid and cruel methods? You are of the same age as Deng Xiaoping. In your youth, you were a classmate of Liu Shiao-chi and Lin Piao.

During the peace talks [between the Kuomintang and the Communists in Chungking in 1942-43—ed.] you got to know Chou En-lai. Given your experience, can you tell us for what psychological reasons Deng Xiaoping, even knowing the massacre would ruin his reputation, did what he did? Is it because he is an old fool, or because he was blindfolded by certain people, causing him to make a blunder?

General T'eng: Yes, the success of the student movement calls our attention to three of its aspects: They were very well organized, they expanded their numbers very rapidly, and they fought for the right goals. It was not the students who made mistakes, but only Deng Xiaoping himself. Actually, I still had a little bit of hope for Deng Xiaoping. Among the leaders of the Communist Party, he was slightly more sensible in his actions. If he had followed his sensible tendency, he would have gradually turned onto the democratic road.

Some time ago, when I made the concluding remarks at a conference of the *Chinese Flag Monthly*, I gave a hint that Deng Xiaoping already had consolidated total power within the Communist Party. I had hoped that he could make up his mind to give up Communism, lead the whole nation to democracy of the Free World type, create a new chapter of human history, and guarantee the success of his own career. I had thought that he would choose this path, since this would have been the best way. But to my surprise, in the event, Deng did not do anything of the kind. From this point of view, it seems his political level and qualities are insufficient.

Deng does not understand what kind of policy is necessary to guide a country. The determining factor in a national policy must be the will of the people. Now, everybody is looking forward to democracy, freedom, and equality, and those are indeed the reasonable choices. In politics, we have to respect these choices and fulfill them. We absolutely cannot reject these choices, for otherwise we will not be successful.

Deng is the same age as I am. He should have seen everything clearly enough. But this time, what he did proved that he cannot see things clearly at all. That means that he does not understand enough about problems in the political sphere. The horrible decision he made has created an irreversible result. No matter how long the Communist regime may go on, Deng will definitely be convicted as a criminal by world history. He could have been immortal in world history, but now he has been transformed into a criminal. Either he is not very smart, or he is an old fool. The wrong decisions he made helped the student movement to accelerate its progress toward its goal.

Lao: I feel there is one more question we should pay attention to. Recently the newspapers have often quoted Yang Shang-kun, Li Peng, and other Communist leaders as saying that the Communist movement had lost 20 million people [fighting the Japanese and later the Kuomintang in the civil war—ed.] over several decades in the struggle for Commu-

nism, and that they would never allow the restoration of capitalism. On June 9, when Deng Xiaoping made a television speech, he also mentioned this. Can you tell us what they really think? People say this is feudalism, but to me it is like the attitude of a businessman or merchant. It seems that the merchant thinks that an item belongs to him because he paid good money to buy it, and he will not let anyone take it away for nothing. On the other hand, the Communist attitude is that the country belongs to them alone.

From the point of view of Chinese traditional culture, a nation belongs to all of its people. The citizens must be cherished even more than the emperor. A person who has great virtue or talent can rule the country, but none of those Communist leaders recognize this traditional philosophy. This is an extremely selfish and prejudiced attitude. A person with this prejudiced attitude will not have psychological equilibrium. The Communists always suspect that someone might seize their country. Therefore, to maintain their power, they will use totally insane methods.

If Deng Xiaoping had only made some small concessions to the democracy movement, he could have made everybody happy. Even if he had given no concessions, he could have simply let the student movement play out, and no one would have been able to undermine his power. Basically there was no need to carry out the massacre. He could have solved the problem easily. Why did he insist on carrying out the massacre? I think, besides what you said before about his political level not being good enough, that he is psychologically unbalanced. Because Deng was so obsessed with the fear that someone could oust him from power, even though there was no real danger that the students would seize power, that he fell prey to the delusion that he was in the midst of a life and death struggle, and he ordered the massacre.

General T'eng: The attitude of Deng Xiaoping's gang is like that of a banker: Ruling the country or losing power is for them like the banker when he is keeping or losing his own property. They don't respect the need of the country for economic development. Therefore, they won't permit the introduction of capitalism. But when we discuss this problem we have to understand the background of Deng Xiaoping's gang. Among the Communists who worked together with Mao Zedong, only a few were educated, such as Mao himself, Liu Shiao-chi, Chou En-lai, Lin Biao, and Deng Xiaoping. What did those people study? Mainly, they studied war, and they made some successful discoveries. Mao Zedong created a theory of people's war that went beyond that of Lenin. He used this theory to win the war against the Kuomintang, but the Communists don't really care about principles of any kind.

What is the strong point of capitalism? The Communists never tried to figure this out, but they concentrated only on the weak points of capitalism, and tried to attack these. What is the weak point of Communism? They never took the trouble to look into this, but they only used propaganda to play

up the strong points of Communism. Because of years of repetition of this propaganda, they themselves have come to believe it. So, they don't understand the strong points of their enemies. They only know the weak points of their enemies. They don't understand their own weak points, but only their own strong points. So that is the mentality of Mao Zedong, Chou En-lai, Liu Shiao-chi, Lin Piao, and Deng Xiaoping. From the very beginning, those leaders have considered capitalism as very backward, and Communism as totally superior.

If people judge the Communists from the point of view of tradition and of human nature, they will be absolutely wrong. The Communists violate tradition and human nature as a part of their method, and they call this their theory of warfare. With this theory of warfare, they have won almost every war they ever started.

Communism proved it cannot work, but they still think it is superior, because they cannot accept any aspect of capitalism. When they hear anything about capitalism, they feel fear, and they want to avoid it. Besides that, through their lifetime they have studied war, and they act like conquerors.

This kind of person is ignorant, and they are not humble enough to learn the truth. So when someone opposes them, they will behave exactly like a conqueror. Those leaders act like this, and they set the example for the lower-ranking officials. Who are the members of the Communist Party? Most likely they are illiterate farmers. According to sources, among government officials, including members of the National People's Congress and provincial governors, many are illiterate. This includes even Hu Yaobang, who had completed only an elementary school education. How can you expect a country led by such people to be any good? But such people have a special kind of talent, and that is a talent for torturing people physically and mentally.

Therefore, the Communists have problems not only with their principles and theories, but they also have personnel problems. Many people recognize that there are problems with Communist theory, but many pay no attention to the problems within the Communist Party. Only a few Communist leaders are educated, and they only know how to handle

wars, and how to torture people; they don't know how to develop the country and they are totally ignorant. So if you judge them by reasonable standards, you are completely wrong. The Communist method of waging war violates human nature and violates tradition. If you judge them according to the criteria of human nature and tradition, you are wrong again.

For example, before the massacre at Tiananmen, the hunger strikers never dreamed that the Communists would commit this terrible slaughter. By the end of May, the newspapers published stories saying the students were preparing gas masks, wet towels, etc. What they were preparing for was the likelihood that the troops would use tear gas to drive them out of Tiananmen Square. Normally, when governments disperse demonstrations, they tend to use tear gas or water cannons. But the Communists never use these kinds of traditional methods. They use machine gun fire and run over the demonstrators with tanks to carry out the slaughter. Is that not against tradition and against human nature? If people judge the Communists from the point of view of tradition and of human nature, they will be absolutely wrong. The Communists violate tradition and human nature as a part of their method, and they call this their theory of warfare. With this theory of warfare, we learn from past experience, they have won almost every war they ever started, and there is no place they cannot conquer.

During 40 years, the Communist regime has killed approximately 80 million people, according to my estimate. People say the Communists are very cruel, but from the Communists' own point of view, there is nothing cruel about this. If they can seize political power and keep it, everything that they do is right and reasonable. Besides, the Communists have a very special technique of killing people. It is difficult to get hard evidence of the type we got in the Tiananmen massacre. At the very beginning, the Communists admitted only that 300 people had been killed, and they said that the majority were soldiers. Later on, the spokesman told American journalists that not a single student had been killed.

They don't care if the whole world laughs at what they say and calls it a big lie. Some people say that there were 10,000 killed and about 30,000 injured. Actually, nobody knows the number of killed and wounded, because when the Communist troops killed people, the trucks came right behind to pick up the bodies and move them to a remote suburb for burial or cremation. How can you expect that an accurate total could be provided? Therefore, when Communists kill people, they use a sophisticated technique and they totally deny everything.

Can we consider such Communists as human beings? If a person has problems like this, how can that person react with normal human feelings? Therefore, they can do nothing else but seize power and try to keep power at all costs. In fact, they have no ideas about development and because of this they will never allow development to occur.