
Interview: Martin Lee

U.K. surrendered to Beijing on Hong Kong

by Mary M. Burdman

Mr. Martin Lee, a member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, spoke with *EIR*'s Wiesbaden Bureau by telephone on Feb. 22, 1990.

On Feb. 15, Mr. Lee had issued a press release denouncing the British-Chinese deal over Hong Kong. In his release, Mr. Lee stated: "This morning, people in Hong Kong woke up to the shock of reading that Britain and China had reached a secret deal on their future. Not only did people in Hong Kong have absolutely no opportunity to participate in this decision about their future, but the British government has not even told them what the terms of the reported deal are. Instead, we hear about it from reports on speeches by mainland Chinese officials. . . .

"If the published reports are accurate, then what Britain has done is a shameful act of surrender. . . .

"The so-called concessions granted by China are nothing more than Chinese pledges to break the [1984] Joint Declaration in a less blatant manner than they have threatened to do. . . . Not until 2003—13 years from now—will half the [Hong Kong] legislature be democratically elected. . . .

"Could you imagine how the people of Czechoslovakia or even Lithuania would respond if their governments told them they could not elect so much as half their parliament until 13 years from now? . . .

"In essence, Britain has decided that it will allow China to make the critical decision regarding the structure of the pre-1997 Hong Kong government. One must ask if the British government has decided to hand over to China its responsibility under the Joint Declaration's Article 4 to administer Hong Kong until 30 June 1997. . . .

"For the people of Hong Kong, we cannot lose hope in the future. In the last year, we have forged a strong sense of Hong Kong identity. We are Chinese by race, our veins are filled with Chinese blood, and we love our nation. At the same time, we love freedom and we are committed to having democracy here.

"I call on Hong Kong people to unite and voice clearly

our demands for democracy. . . .

"The game is far from over. We must continue to fight for what we believe in, for one day we will win."

EIR: Here in Germany, we have seen a very similar response on the part of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher and her British government against the reunification of Germany, as we have seen in the sellout of Hong Kong. How do Hong Kong people respond to the unification of Germany?

Lee: We like what we have been reading about and watching on the television as to the whole political change of Europe, but the reunification of the two Germanys is not the sort of topic which has attracted much attention in Hong Kong.

Obviously, we would think that it is a good idea, and at the end of the day there will be a bigger Europe, and that will be a very powerful Europe. Maybe that is not something Mrs. Thatcher would like to see.

I don't think she has had enough time to reflect on it and see the full implications, and that is why she wants it to slow down. That would be a very powerful Germany, indeed.

Hong Kong certainly would like to see East Germany getting democracy and moving away from communism, because the Chinese people in Hong Kong are here because they or their parents have run away from the Chinese communist regime.

Their parents took them to Hong Kong, or gave birth to them here away from this regime. We are Chinese who love China as a country, but we do not espouse communism. . . .

EIR: Although most of the British press denounced the sellout of Hong Kong, some responses were very different, i.e. the *Sunday Telegraph* saying that Hong Kong's "chattering masses" should not have democracy. Then there are the views of those like Dr. David Owen of the Social Democratic Party, who talks of "commercial communism" and it being "homespun" in China. To me, this is imposing communism on China.

Lee: Of course. If you want to take the cowardly approach, you can always find a lot of excuses. I feel insulted when people seem to think that Chinese don't need human rights. "They don't deserve it, they don't want democracy." It is always foreigners who say this, you know.

I am sure that it has everything to do with the color of our skin. Can you imagine similar things being said about anybody who is white, no matter where, in this world? It is ridiculous in the extreme to say that because we are Chinese, China is to be treated differently, as these Americans are saying. It is absolutely sickening to me to hear things like that.

When you talk of human rights, the question is, am I a human being? I am Chinese, but am I human? If the answer is yes, then why do not I have the same human rights? Anybody who can argue with that, shows themselves up immediately.

EIR: It is our view that it was the courage of the people in Beijing and all of China, which sparked the revolutions in Eastern Europe later in the year. There would not have been a revolution in Eastern Europe without the Chinese revolution.

Lee: That is right. The trouble is, I suppose the people of Europe knew what was happening in China, but I doubt if the people in China know what is happening in Europe, because of the news blackout.

I know that in the big cities, particularly Beijing, they have been able to tune in to the Voice of America and the BBC, but other than that it is difficult to get any correct information about the rest of the world.

EIR: What is your view of the Bush administration policy, especially after he vetoed the visas for the Chinese students?

Lee: Bush explained to people on the television very clearly that he intended to do executively, what Congress wanted to do by legislation. Of course, that is not as safe as when the law is there, but I suppose once he has made the solemn promise, on television, I do not see as a President, he could change his mind.

I think these students are safe, from that point of view. I don't agree with his logical reasoning, but one can see some sense in what he said, should we antagonize China unnecessarily, when I can do it by executive act? Why should we do this by legislation China considers confrontationist?

I can understand that sort of argument, but of course you know what sort of man he is.

EIR: That is why we are doubtful. There is no need to propitiate China. You may have heard that Mr. Kissinger was forced to resign from the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, after there was an international scandal that he was using his influence to stop confrontation with Beijing.

There is every indication, however, that President Bush will go along with what Beijing dictates.

Lee: Same with the British. They have completely surrendered. I think that from now on, everything that happens in Hong Kong cannot happen without the blessing of Beijing. They have just completely given up their entitlement to run this place under the Joint Declaration, back to the Chinese already.

EIR: Do you think the British are now going to allow the Chinese to take measures to impose repression on Hong Kong?

Lee: I am sure they are not as good to us as before, when we had 1 million people in the streets—then, any government will listen to you. When people are frightened away, then we suffer.

When people are no longer backing us up like before then the British government will look over its shoulder. It would appease China whenever possible. I think this is the beginning, no doubt about it.

U.S. mobs threaten Panamanian civil war

The United States' occupation government in Panama is deploying fascist mobs similar to those unleashed by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, to intimidate its political opponents. On March 5, a violent mob threatened to kill Cecilio Simón, Dean of the School of Public Administration of the University of Panama, and took over his office.

Dean Simón is well known in Panama and abroad for his outspoken opposition to the Dec. 20 U.S. invasion, and to the drug-linked regime installed by the Bush administration in Panama.

On March 3, in a manner similar to the attacks ordered by Khomeini against the United States Embassy in Teheran, a mob attempted to break into the residence of Peru's ambassador to Panama to seize officials of the former government of Gen. Manuel Noriega as hostages. The former officials have been granted diplomatic asylum by the Peruvian government. The mob attacked the residence with rocks, sticks, and home-made bombs, causing a fire that almost destroyed the building. Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderón endorsed the mob's actions, and said that the government would not grant safe-conduct out of the country to the former officials.

A precedent for the attack had been set previously by U.S. forces, which, for several weeks following the invasion, surrounded the same residence with armored personnel carriers, and encouraged daily demonstrations by pro-government mobs. As was done against the Papal Nuncio during the time General Noriega was granted sanctuary by the Pope's envoy, the American forces bombarded the Peruvians with loud Satanic rock music. In recent weeks, the mobs have also staged physical attacks against political prisoners of the occupation regime, including against former legislator Rigoberto Paredes.

Panama has not yet begun to rebuild from the mass destruction brought about by the invasion; more than one-third of the workforce is unemployed, and there is danger of mass hunger and epidemics. By inciting mob hysteria under these conditions, the U.S. occupation government is creating a situation that could lead to a civil war similar to that in El Salvador.

In fact, just as in El Salvador, death squads have appeared. A few days after an American soldier was killed on March 2 by the bombing of a night club, supposedly by a previously unknown "December 20 Commando Unit," the bodies of five Panamanians were found, shot through the head, their hands tied behind their backs.