

January 1, 1955

**Despatch No. 358 from American Embassy Taipei to
the Department of State, 'Expulsion of Lei Chen
from the Kuomintang'**

Citation:

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Summary:

The despatch outlines the expulsion of Lei Chen from the Kuomintang (KMT) following his publication of a critical letter in the "Free China" magazine that challenged party-led indoctrination and education policies. This letter criticized excessive political education in schools and the role of the Youth Corps, leading to his expulsion by direct order from Chiang Kai-shek. The event underscores tensions between party control and emerging liberal dissent within Taiwan's political environment. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH
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FROM : AMEMBASSY, TAIPEI 358
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. DESP. NO. Action Assigned to [Signature]
REF : EMBDES 353, January 17, 1955; EMBDES 356, January 18, 1955
DATE: January 19, 1955
JAN 21 1955

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| 71 For Dept. Use Only | ACTION REC. 112.1 | DEPT. IN F O | OC/R-2 OLI-6 P.1 SY-2 LES-4-2 CIA-7 ARMY-4 NAVY-3 AIR-3 USIA-201 CA |
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SUBJECT: Expulsion of LEI Chen from the Kuomintang
REVIEWED BY [Signature] DATE 4/18/82

RDS [] or XDS [] EXT. DATE []
REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING []
DECLASSIFIED [] RELEASABLE []
RELEASE DENIED []

1/ A memorandum, "Lei Chen's Expulsion from the Kuomintang", is transmitted as Enclosure No. 1.

The memorandum was prepared by a well-informed Chinese with extensive acquaintanceships in the Kuomintang, Chinese press circles and the Chinese Government. On the basis of conversations with various sources, including LEI Chen, he has set forth the circumstances leading to Lei's being expelled from the Kuomintang. The circumstances, as described in the memorandum, correspond closely with those mentioned by other reliable informants to Second Secretary Richard T. EWING and the RO -- and reported to the Department in the above-cited despatches.

2/ As a supplement to the memorandum there are transmitted herewith a translation of the offending letter, published in the December 16 issue of Free China (which precipitated Lei's
3/ expulsion from the Kuomintang), and a translation of a letter presenting the Kuomintang viewpoint, carried in the January 16 issue of Free China.

For the Ambassador:

Robert W. Rinder
Robert W. Rinder
First Secretary of Embassy

Copy pouched to Hong Kong

Enclosures *HT*

1. Memorandum dated January 18, 1955
2. Translation of letter dated December 16, 1964
3. Translation of letter dated January 16, 1955

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The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

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Memorandum
January 18, 1955

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LEI CHEN'S EXPULSION FROM THE KUOMINTANG

In the December 16, 1954 issue of the Free China, there was a letter to the editor urging the Government not to impose too much political indoctrination upon already-overburdened high school students.

The letter declared that, as far as the curriculum is concerned, the situation is not so bad because the present curriculum is not really heavy as it used to be, say, ten years ago. But what is bad, the letter complained, is that the students are forced to spend so many extra hours on such entirely unrelated political subjects as the Three Peoples' Principles, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Teachings, President Chiang's Speeches, and many other indoctrination pamphlets issued by the China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps. On top of that, examinations on these subjects are held from time to time in order to determine the student's political proficiency.

The letter accused the Youth National Salvation Corps of diverting too much of the students' time to extracurricular activities such as, to mention a few, team conferences, group discussions, cadre conferences, patriotism lectures, group singing, parades, fund-raising, troop-cheering and so forth. On the Kuomintang's 60th anniversary, high school students were even required to go out in the countryside and preach KMT doctrine.

The letter asked: "Since all public schools are supported by taxpayers of all faiths and beliefs, why is the Kuomintang alone given the privilege to publicize its doctrine? And why not the Young China Party and the Democratic Socialist Party?"

It may be mentioned that the letter was written by one of the editorial writers of the Free China as a way to express the magazine's "editorial" sentiment because openly to write an editorial criticizing the ruling Kuomintang in this outspoken manner would be sure to invite retaliation. The writer is himself a high school teacher.

Notwithstanding this precaution, Free China got into trouble. This is what happened to the magazine.

On December 28, 1954, the KMT Central Headquarters held its regular propaganda conference with President CHIANG in the chair. When all routine reports and discussions were over and when the

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President was about to leave, MAO Hsi-sheng, a standing member of the Central Committee, suddenly stood up and said: "Recently there have been people opposing the study of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Teachings and The President's Speeches."

The President raised his eyebrows, "Who?"

WU Nan-ju, Director of the Government Information Bureau, answered: "Free China magazine."

The President asked: "It is run by HU Shih, isn't it?"

Wu replied: "Not exactly. Hu runs it only in name. LEI Chen is back of it."

The President's face hardened: "Ah, Lei Chen, that rascal! I have been told that he is working for the Office of the American Military Attache. Is he a party member?"

Upon being given the affirmative answer, the President narrowed his eyes: "Expel him right away."

Thus ended Lei's long (some 30 years) KMT membership.

After that, the KMT Central Headquarters immediately withdrew its NT\$1,500-per-month postage allowance to Free China. It is expected that the Executive Yuan will follow the lead and stop the monthly subsidy of some NT\$2,000.

But this is not yet the end.

It was learned that on the occasion of the Judicial Day on January 11, 1955 Vice-President CH'EN Ch'eng pointedly asked President WANG Ch'ung-hui of the Judicial Yuan if there was any law that might be invoked to discipline unruly and undesirable liberals.

Apparently Dr. Wang did not quite get the Vice-President's idea. So the latter repeated, but Wang gave no direct reply. Later, in an anniversary speech before ranking judicial officials, Ch'en charged that self-styled Chinese liberals have made false statements against the Government under the protective shield of democracy and freedom, and demanded their elimination through due legal processes.

Afterwards, chatting with some legislators and members of the Control Yuan, Ch'en was reported to have said: "Lei Chen is not a Communist, but he has learned to make use of Communist techniques in attacking the Government."

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It appears that trouble awaits Lai and Free China.

It is said that there has been formed in KMT Central Headquarters an information screening committee, comprising representatives from the Fourth Section (propaganda), the Sixth Section (political matters), the General Political Department, the Provincial Peace Preservation Headquarters and the Government Information Bureau to study ways and means to improve propaganda work.

No further action is expected from the Government against Lai for the simple reason that the suspension or complete shutdown of a magazine which has attained some international renown may do damage to the Government's prestige as a democracy. There are, however, indications that pressure may be brought to bear upon the "internationally obscure" independent Tzu Li Wan Pao, which is well known for its criticisms of the Government, in order to warn other independent magazines and newspapers which are not so easy to handle.

As a matter of fact, the Government always has the means to force a magazine or paper to act within bounds without ordering its outright closure. For instance, the Government may withdraw its financial support; it may instruct government offices not to subscribe to an undesirable magazine or paper; it may substantially cut down its paper rations; it may order the Post Office not to deliver it; it may "ex-communicate" its publisher and leading officers from all social and public functions. In short, the Government has many methods at its disposal to control an undesirable publication.

So far the Government has not been ready to go all-out against Free China.

However, unless its publisher and editorial writers show discretion in order to "steer clear of the head wind" (避风头), they will not get away with impunity.

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Translated from the FREE CHINA magazine, Taipei, December 16, 1954

Something should be done to relieve present educational crisis

Letter to the Editor:

Since the last summer vacation, the Provincial Department of Education has time and again issued orders to the various schools that curriculums for students be made less troublesome. As the ratio of the number of graduates of elementary, middle and high schools to that of students actually admitted by examination into a school or college of a higher level is very small, there has generally been a keen competition among those who take an entrance examination. It would become more difficult for any graduate to pass an entrance examination if the curriculum were further lightened.

As a matter of fact, the present class-work for middle school students is not too heavy. The textbooks they now have are not as hard as those which we were required to study in the middle schools and the class hours now are even less than those maintained in the old days. As far as the class-work is concerned, the burden of the students nowadays cannot be said too heavy. Their present burden is not caused by the regular class-work but because of the subjects which they are required to study outside their class hours, such as the Three People's Principles, Teachings of the National Founder, President CHIANG's Lectures, the various booklets issued by the Youth Corps, etc., etc. Examinations on these subjects are given regularly by the educational authorities, by the schools concerned, and also by the Youth Corps. Each student has to devote a great portion of his valuable time to these "political subjects" and leave regular study aside.

In addition, these students are required to engage themselves in rather too much other activities outside their school work which have taken too much of their time and energy and increased their burden, particularly since the establishment of the Youth Corps. Besides being required to participate in all the regular activities outside their class-work in the school, these students have to hold one meeting after another, study political subjects, practice singing; sometimes they have to maintain order of a mass meeting at the Armed Force Stadium, sometimes they have to hold patriotic rallies in the City Hall, sometimes they have to conduct fund raising campaigns, sometimes they have to go to comfort the troops, while other times they have to hold parades in the streets. Not only have these activities not been reduced under the orders of the educational authorities, but, to our surprise, these students were

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recently required to participate in the publicity work in celebration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Kuomintang, to study the special bulletin issued by the Central Kuomintang Headquarters setting forth the history of the party for the past sixty years, and also to write articles on the subject of "What do I know of the Kuomintang", etc. What have these students to do with the Kuomintang? Were these orders issued by the Department of Education or by the Youth Corps? If the Kuomintang should be permitted to require the students to conduct propaganda work, would the Democratic Socialist and Young China Parties be permitted to follow suit? Aren't we now carrying out a constitutional administration? Isn't our government ruled by democracy and freedom? We should have an all-round free education but not a party dominated education.

We would like to point out clearly that all the public provincial schools are operated with funds given by tax-payers who have every right to demand that their children be given regular education but not "Kuomintangized" education. The educational authorities and the Youth Corps must not introduce party education under any pretext. Being a democratic country, we must not try to fool others, as well as ourselves.

Mr. Editor, our complaint is not a bit exaggerated and those who now suffer are not limited to the children of ours alone. We are quite worried for the future of our children due to the increased activities outside their regular school work. It is sincerely hoped that this letter may be published in your magazine so that this unfortunate situation may be brought to the attention of our educational authorities.

(signed by)

YU Yen-jen
HUANG Sung-feng
KUANG Ch'ang-pai

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The Free China Magazine, Taipei
January 13, 1955

REGARDING THE SO-CALLED "EDUCATIONAL CRISIS"

Letter to the Editor:

There appeared in the December 16, 1954 issue of your magazine a letter to the editor with regard to the "educational crisis". Upon close examination of the contents of the letter, I discover that the three writers of the letter really intended to chide the Kuomintang. If the three gentlemen wished to do so, they might as well do it without involving us young people. I feel that the Kuomintang should answer the challenge, but the Kuomintang has not done so. Maybe this is because of its magnanimity. Although I am merely a student, yet I beg to use a little of your space to voice our reaction.

(1) In their letter, the three gentlemen pointed out that owing to keen competition in entrance examinations the curriculum has been made rather heavy. However, this heavy curriculum does not come from difficult textbooks, nor from too many class hours, but from the "many extracurricular subjects which the students are required to study such as the Three People's Principles, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Teachings, President Chiang's Speeches, and other indoctrination pamphlets issued by the Youth National Salvation Corps." What is more unfortunate is that "examinations on these subjects are given regularly by the educational authorities, by the schools concerned, and also by the Youth Corps" and that "Each student has to devote a great portion of his valuable time to these 'political subjects' and leave his regular study aside." The three gentlemen compared these subjects to "political lessons" (a term often used by the Communists), and regarded them as quite unnecessary.

(2) In their letter, the three gentlemen also pointed out that there are too many extracurricular activities for the students, "using up their time and energy and increasing their burdens". These extracurricular activities have become even more serious since the establishment of the China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps. They also charged that these activities have become multiplied and more varied. They mentioned a few: team meetings, group discussions, cadre conferences, lectures on patriotism, group singing, youth parties, troop-cheering, parades, etc. The three gentlemen were rather displeased because these activities are contrary to "the measures prescribed by the Department of Education for reduction of extracurricular activities".

(3) The most important point in their letter is the participation of students in the celebration of the Kuomintang's 60th

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anniversary. They expressed great displeasure at the educational authorities who asked students to go out to the countryside to do publicity work, to study the articles contained in the KMT anniversary bulletin of the KMT Central Headquarters, and to write essays on 'My Understanding of the Kuomintang'. They wished to know "what to do if the Young China Party and the Democratic Socialist Party also ask students to perform publicity work for them". We are enforcing "constitutional government" and clamoring for "democracy and freedom", but we are not trying to institute party-dominated education. Therefore, they reasoned implicitly that we are following the steps of the Communists.

Here is their final conclusion:

"Neither the educational authorities nor the Youth National Salvation Corps should use education as a pretext to bring about "Kuomintang-dominated education", because "living in a democratic country we must not try to deceive others, or fool ourselves." As a result, "they cannot but ask the educational authorities to take special note of this horrible trend and do something to ward off this educational crisis".

As regards their high-sounding opinion, I wish, as a reader, to say that the three writers of the letter are dangerously naive and completely ignorant of China's modern historical development and her present position. I could find no better expressions to describe their line of reasoning than naivety and ignorance.

In the first place, they know that we are enforcing constitutional government and publicizing democracy and freedom, but they forget that Article 1 of the Chinese Constitution says: "The Republic of China, founded on the basis of the San Min Chu I, shall be a democratic republic of the people to be governed by the people and for the people." In order to promote better understanding of our founding spirit and national policy, the school authorities have introduced the course on the San Min Chu I. I am of the opinion that any Chinese who wishes to foster constitutional government would agree to the arrangement. I cannot see why the three gentlemen differ in opinion.

In the second place, our founding father, Dr. Sun Yat-sen labored through insurmountable difficulties to establish this Republic. His great personality and inspiring deeds are recognized by all. I am sure that the three gentlemen would also agree. Just like the Americans who are required to study the thoughts and ideals of Washington, we Chinese should acquire a thorough understanding of the thoughts and ideals of our founding father. Is it not right that the school authorities assist the students in their study of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's teachings? I cannot see why the three gentlemen differ in opinion.

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In the third place, our incumbent President is popularly elected through due constitutional processes. It is he who leads us in this bitter struggle against Communism. What is wrong with asking the students to read his speeches?

In the fourth place, anyone knows that the Chinese Republic is founded by the Chinese Kuomintang. Without the Kuomintang, the Manchu Government would not be overthrown, and Japan would not be defeated. Without the Kuomintang, there would be no struggle against Communism. Without the Kuomintang, pardon me for my rudeness, the three gentlemen may not live so peacefully under the present circumstances and may not be able to write such a magnificent letter. I regret to say that their ignorance of Chinese history of the past sixty years is incredible. It is indeed a pity that they showed such lack of understanding of the development of party government by comparing the Kuomintang with the Young China Party and the Democratic Socialist Party. Is not the 60-year history of the Kuomintang worthy of our study and understanding? As a matter of fact, its policy concerns everyone of us, and it is the ruling party.

In the fifth place, party organization has long withdrawn from schools. The Government even instructed that youngsters not of age cannot take part in party activities. I wish to draw the attention of the three gentlemen to the fact that the instruction came from the KMT-led Government. What is their basis to say that the Kuomintang is trying to dominate education? It is ridiculous to claim that the study of the Three People's Principles, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Teachings and the President's Speeches by the students is tantamount to "Kuomintangizing" education.

In the sixth place, the purpose of the China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps is to band the young people of China together and regular their daily life. It is a simple fact that the Corps has done a lot to promote better morale among the troops and cultivate industrious spirit among the students during the recent years. Can the three gentlemen suggest a better arrangement than the Youth National Salvation Corps to provide proper guidance to the students and foster their patriotism? How much do they know about the differences between the Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps and the Communist New Democratic Youth Corps? How could they make a comparison if they did not know much?

In the seventh place, young people's ardor should be properly channeled and their life wisely regulated. It is funny that the three gentlemen even regarded group singing, youth parties, troop-cheering, fund-raising and parades as unnecessary. When the entire nation is being enveloped in a tense wartime atmosphere, how could we expect the youngsters to bury their heads in books? Are group activities not necessary? Fund-raising and troop-cheering are the most important undertakings today. Youth party is the best way to

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stir up the youngsters' fighting spirit. Are such activities not
necessar? The three gentlemen have not recognized the trend of
the times. They criticized the activities of the Youth National
Salvation Corps on the basis of their old-fashioned thoughts.

I am still a high school student and may have offended the
three gentlemen with my words, but I hope they will listen to
my advice.

Sincerely yours,
(signed) CHANG Hu-yu

RLow.

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