

The memoirs of Zhao Ziyang: A book to change China

By OLIVER PERRET
Epoch Times Staff

HONG KONG—When a former Chinese communist premier advocates western democracy as the best form of governance, what does it take to get his memoirs published? Or even recorded, for that matter?

We met with Bao Pu, editor of the recent best-seller, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Zhao Ziyang*, to discuss the significance of the publication.

"It took two and a half years to [obtain] the material ... Every communication was not done in any electronic form; no phone calls, no email, and I had no direct contact with anyone who was directly involved with the material," Bao explained.

Bao Pu is the son of Zhao Ziyang's former policy secretary and the owner of a small publishing company in Hong Kong. Shortly after Zhao's death in 2005 he became aware of tape recordings that Zhao had secretly made while under house arrest. Feeling the importance of the memoirs and the need to make them public, Bao undertook the task of bringing them to print. Although the project ultimately succeeded, he felt the threat of persecution from Beijing throughout the process.

Hong Kong's proposed Basic Law Article 23, which the communist regime pushed for but failed to get passed in 2003, demonstrated this threat clearly, says Bao. "If Article 23 in Hong Kong had passed then I'd have to consider the possibility that after this book had been published that the publishing house would be persecuted, and I'd be persecuted in Hong Kong," he said.

Article 23 attempted to prohibit "any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government," along with outlawing certain forms of political organization. Such definitions are often given opaque and arbitrary interpretations in China.

Zhao's memoirs are an "essential read" for anyone involved or interested in China, says Bao. It sheds light on the process of how China shifted from a planned economy to a market economy. It also reveals that Zhao, rather than Deng Xiaoping, was the main instigator behind this transformation. During the 13th



SELLING OUT: People purchase copies of the Chinese edition of the memoirs of deposed leader Zhao Ziyang in Hong Kong. MIKE CLARKE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Communist Party Congress, Zhao had proposed a package of both political and economic reforms. He had proposed that China move from "ruled by men"—in other words, the Communist Party—to "rule of law." His proposal was rejected however, and to this day the Chinese regime continues to operate outside the law, according to observers.

"His political experience shows the world how the reformers tried to bring about political changes and failed. [The] market economic reform was in parallel to an attempt to do political reform. One succeeded, the other failed. The end of the debate reveals a system of authoritarian hypocrisy."

Near the end of the book Zhao suggests that, in his view, the best political system currently available in the world is western-style

democracy. He saw no future with China's current political system, as his experience showed him that economic progress cannot lead to political change in the communist regime.

"If a country wishes to modernize, not only should it implement a market economy, it must also adopt a parliamentary democracy as its political system. Otherwise, this nation will not be able to have a market economy that is healthy and modern, nor can it become a modern society with a rule of law. Instead it will run into the situations that have occurred in so many developing countries, including China: commercialization of power, rampant corruption, a society polarized between rich and poor," Zhao says.

The Chinese regime has not yet commented on the book's

publication, the first ever first-person account from within the Chinese leadership. Public response within China has been very positive, says Bao.

"I got a lot of request from mainland China for copies," says Bao. "A lot of them told me that they've downloaded it from the Web."

Bao expects that the book will have a lasting effect and help to cause changes within China, starting with the academic and intellectual community.

"The book serves as a restoration of history, once this version of history is in the public domain and receives a lot of attention, it'll be very difficult for future historians working on the official version of history to ignore this. From this point of view, it has an evolutionary impact for sure."

Inmates moved out of Chino prison after riots

By IVAN VELINOV
Epoch Times Staff

State prison authorities in California have finished moving out over 1,000 inmates from the California Institution for Men in Chino, after a racially motivated weekend riot destroyed their housing units.

Eleven inmates are still hospitalized, according to Terry Thornton, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and one inmate's critical condition was upgraded to serious.

In the weekend riot, 250 inmates were hurt, and the California prison was badly damaged and remained uninhabitable, after a racial riot among African-American and Latino prison gangs, according to a report.

Over the weekend one dormitory was destroyed by fire that broke out during the melee. Prisoners used pieces of metal from lockers, destroyed beds, and ripped off pipes to use as weapons. The reception center west was badly damaged by the riot and was rendered uninhabitable.

Prison authorities have not released new information on what started the riot, but prison authorities said that the fight started along ethnic lines. The Chino prison facility has also a record of other riots in the past, and several inspection reports since 2006 determined a record of poor maintenance,

overcrowding, and riots.

At the time of the riot, the Chino prison held almost 6,000 inmates, nearly twice its capacity.

Last week, a three-judge federal panel ordered the state of California to reduce population in its overcrowded prison system. The judges ruled that there is "overwhelming" evidence that overcrowding of the state prison network is the primary reason for the lack of appropriate medical and mental health care.

The judges ordered the state to reduce its prison population by over 40,000 prisoners within the next two to three years.

The ruling affects the California's 33 adult prisons, most of which now operate at double capacity with about 150,000 inmates, housed in facilities designed to hold about 80,000 people.

Chino and other California prisons are changing the historic practice of separating inmates by race, and according to a 2005 Court decision that found racial segregation to be illegal, now inmates from different races share cells. The weekend rioting took place in barracks that were fully integrated.

The California prison system canceled visiting hours over the weekend and is on lockdown indefinitely, according to a spokesperson. The inmates were either transferred or en route to one of four other correctional institutions within California.

Afghan vote: High noon for Karzai—and Obama

CONTINUED FROM P1

Karzai's main challenger, urbane former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, whose strength as a candidate has surprised Western diplomats, aims to win enough votes to force a run-off, while Taliban fighters, fiercer than at any time since they were driven from power eight years ago, want to cause enough bloodshed to prevent the election from taking place at all.

POLL PREDICTS SECOND ROUND
Western media sometimes describe Karzai as unpopular -- an easy assumption to make when you listen to Afghans complain about the rampant corruption, incompetence and nepotism in his government -- but although they often bemoan the parlous state of the country, polls clearly show most like their leader.

A U.S.-funded survey this week found two thirds of Afghans had a favorable opinion of him, with just 16 percent having an unfavorable view. But it also predicted Karzai would win a disappointing 45 percent of the vote and face a second round.

Despite the worsening war in the south and east, most of Afghanistan is at peace, its economy growing and its desperate poverty easing, if slowly for a country that has absorbed tens of billions of dollars in international aid.

A master coalition-builder, Karzai has won a formidable line-up of endorsements from regional bosses, many of whom may be expecting jobs in a future government to the alarm of Western diplomats keen to keep ex-guerrilla chiefs from carving up power.

But Abdullah, who emerged from a northern anti-Taliban alliance with roots in the ethnic-Tajik minority, has shown signs of winning support beyond that narrow base. The poll shows him easily placing second with 25 percent of votes.

If he forces a second round, Abdullah could unite the opposition to mount a stronger challenge, although his northern roots may still make it difficult for the former eye doctor to win enough southern support to become president.

TARGETING PURPLE FINGERS
Staging a poll would be hard enough without the Taliban's threats in a country where barely a third of the population can read and ballot boxes have to be hauled over mountains by donkeys.

Militants have broadcast threats by radio and spread leaflets, raising fears that voters' purple indelible ink-stained fingers -- once a jubilant sign -- could mark them for reprisals.

The United Nations said that threats and violence have already disrupted election preparations and sharply curtailed public campaigning in insurgent areas, and could prevent many Afghans from reaching the polls on election day.

Even if violence does not wreck the poll, it could make it more difficult to prevent fraud, and raise the odds of a run-off by suppressing turnout in southern areas that support Karzai.

The Obama administration's response to the worst violence of the eight-year-old war has been a forceful U.S. military escalation, aimed at tipping the balance.

About 30,000 additional U.S. troops have already arrived in Afghanistan this year, pushing the size of the Western force above 100,000 for the first time, including 62,000 Americans. More foreign troops have died in Afghanistan since March than in the entire period from 2001-2004.

Outside battle zones, ordinary Afghans seem to be enjoying the campaign season, which has seen their cities festooned with bright campaign posters and candidates pass out free meals.

GLOBAL Q & A

What is the best gift you have ever received?

Tickets to a concert, a car, children, love... What does a gift mean to you? These are some of the answers our respondents from Alkmaar to Burnaby gave when Epoch Times reporters asked locals across the globe, "What's the best gift you have ever received?"



Nassjo, Sweden
Lina Eriksson, 19, Camera Store Clerk

The best gift would be the AC/DC [concert] ticket I received when I graduated from high school.



Singapore
Lian Jin Hoe, 28, Commercial Real Estate Agent

The best gift I ever received is from God, that gave me the opportunity to lead a normal life. Everything else I would like to achieve with my own hands. Regarding a physical gift, I would say that it was from my girlfriend, an expensive watch that I never even think about. However, the best gifts usually can't be bought by money.



Wellington, New Zealand
Chris Simpson, 24, Video Store Clerk

My friend Katherine got me a little toy bear that looks like a rat. It was from a cafe. I keep it on my desk, and it just looks nice. I really love it. She gave it to me because we used to go to that cafe and play chess.



Hamburg, Germany
Dieter Schroder, 51, MBA

This is a good question, I think it was my university entrance diploma [laughs]. I like to work.



New York, USA
Grace Cabading, 32, Actuary

The plane ticket to New York given to me by my mother back in the Philippines and I've been here ever since.



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Eduardo Antonio Ramalho, 54, Engineer

It was a cellar of wine. I got it from my kids as a birthday gift. This was the first gift they gave me all together. I think that is why it was so special.



Bucharest, Romania
Mihaela Ghitescu, 33, Psychologist

The most wonderful gift I have ever received are my children that God gave me. I can't think of any material things, they are far less important.



Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada
Robert Thai with wife Donna

My granddaughter's greeting card. She is seven years old. Because we love her very much, so anything that she gives us we think is very wonderful.

Look for the Global Q&A column every week, when Epoch Times correspondents interview people around the world to learn about their lives and perspective on local and global realities. Next week's global question: "Does today's younger generation have it easier or harder than previous generations—in regards to life, work, schooling, and so on?"