



Published by:

International Committee for Human Rights in Taiwan

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U.S.A. : P.O. Box 15182, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20825

International edition, January 1990

Published 6 times a year

ISSN number: 1027-3999

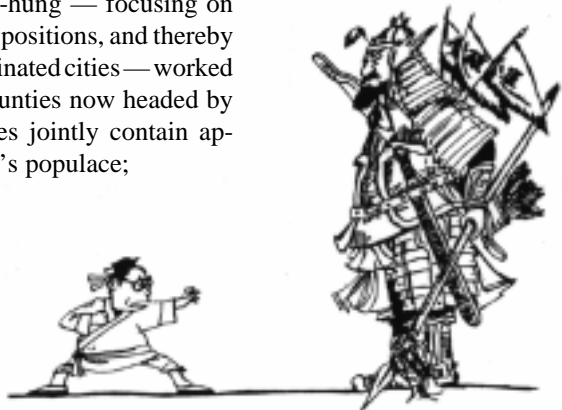
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December Election Victory for DPP

The 2 December 1989 elections in Taiwan were a major success for the opposition Democratic Progressive Party — in spite of large-scale vote-buying and tight control of radio and television by the ruling Kuomintang. The percentage of the popular vote going to the DPP went up from some 22% in the previous (1986) elections to over 30% in December 1989.

In the national-level Legislative Yuan, the DPP increased its representation from 11 seats to 21 seats, out of a total of 101 “supplementary seats.” In the contest for 21 local-level administrative seats (16 county magistrates and 5 mayor positions) DPP candidates won 6 out of 21 races. The most important victory was that of Dr. You Ching in Taipei County. The results are highly significant for the following reasons:

1. The “local strategy” approach devised by DPP Secretary-General Chang Chün-hung — focusing on races for local administrative positions, and thereby “surrounding” the KMT-dominated cities — worked to quite an extent: the six counties now headed by opposition county magistrates jointly contain approximately 50 % of Taiwan’s populace;
2. The fact that 20 of the 32 “New Nation Alliance” candidates won in their respective races means that the idea of Taiwan independence is gaining further hold among the people of Taiwan — in spite of at-



DPP David challenging KMT Goliath

tempts by the ruling Kuomintang, the military and the secret police to threaten and intimidate Alliance candidates, and scare the people away from the idea of independence. For further information on this aspect of the elections, see “Towards a New Nation” on. pp. 11.

3. The election results also show the dominant position of the DPP as major opposition party: only one candidate from other newly-formed opposition parties was elected, which means that Taiwan will have a two-party system for some time to come. There was however a strong showing by several independent candidates who are not formally affiliated with any party, but a number of whom — most notable newly-elected legislators Mrs. Chang Po-ya (former mayor of Chiayi) and Mr. Cheng Ting-nan (former Ilan County Magistrate) are closely allied with the DPP.

The opposition makes major gains

Below we present an overview of the most important victories posted by the democratic opposition in the races for county magistrates and city mayors. The mayor positions of the two most important cities (Taipei and Kaohsiung) are not elective, but appointed by the Kuomintang authorities:

In Taipei County, **Dr. You Ching**, the West German-trained lawyer won the DPP’s most significant victory against the KMT’s Li Hsi-kun, a National University Professor handpicked by President Lee Teng-hui. Dr. You thus won right in the President’s backyard. In Ilan County, young and charismatic Provincial-Assembly member **Yu Shi-kun** won in this Eastern seaboard county. In Changhua County, longtime human rights advocate **Mrs. Chou Ching-yü** — wife of former DPP-chairman Yao Chia-wen — won against major odds;

In Hsinchu County, National Assembly-member **Fan Chen-chung** won a narrow victory for the seat of Hsinchu County Magistrate. In Southern-most Pingtung County, DPP-Provincial Assembly member **Mr. Su Chen-chang**, a prominent opposition lawyer by profession, won by a wide margin. In Kaohsiung County, **Mrs. Yu Chen Yueh-ying**, a member of the Yu-family — which has dominated Kaohsiung County politics for the past three decades — retained her position as County Magistrate.

In the city of Chiayi, **Mrs. Chang Wen-ying** — a medical doctor — took over the position of mayor from her sister Chang Po-ya, who was elected to the Legislative Yuan. The Chang sisters are formally non-affiliated, but have in practice taken positions closely aligned with the DPP.

The most significant DPP loss in the races for County Magistrates and City Mayors was that of **Mrs. Hsü Jung-shu**, wife of DPP Secretary-general Chang Chün-hung, who lost the race for mayor of Taichung City. In Tainan County, **Mr. Lee Tsung-fan**, the DPP-candidate for the seat of County Magistrate, lost — amid fraud charges — by a slim margin of some 9,000 votes to his KMT-rival (see article on p. 8).

Legislative Yuan. In the Legislative Yuan, a number of the newly-elected representatives are members of the New Nation Alliance, these include: Dr. Hong Chi-chang, dentist Wei Yao-chien, lawyer Hsieh Ch'ang-t'ing, political scientist Dr. Lü Hsiu-yi, and Ms. Yeh Chu-lan, wife of the late *Freedom Era* editor and publisher Cheng Nan-jung.

Furthermore, two lawyers elected from Kaohsiung, Messrs. Chang Chun-hsiung and Li Ching-hsiung are members of the Alliance. Lawyer Chen Shui-pien, while not a member of the Alliance, is also an ardent advocate of independence. They can be expected to keep the issue of the future of Taiwan on the front-burner in the discussions in the Legislative Yuan.

Another vocal newcomer to the Legislative Yuan is Mr. Lin Cheng-chieh, a mainlander-member of the DPP who has a long record as an advocate for democratization in Taiwan. Mr. Lin was publisher of *Progress Magazine*, and until now served in the Taipei City Council.

Several DPP-members who were already in the Legislative Yuan were re-elected. Among them Mr. Hsü Kuo-tai (younger brother of imprisoned opposition leader Hsü Hsin-liang, see article on pp. 20), Mr. Yu Chen-hsien (a member of the Yu-clan in Kaohsiung County), and Mr. Chiu Lien-hui of Pingtung County, one of the elderly statesmen among the opposition. Also re-elected was Mr. Chu Kao-cheng, the “Rambo” of Taiwan politics. Because he generally acts like an unguided missile, the DPP did not nominate the erratic Mr. Chu, but he ran anyway and won — apparently because his wild antics have gained him a broad support in his home-county of Yunlin.



Dr. Hong Chi-chang

In the occupational groups, the opposition DPP also made a significant breakthrough: its candidate for a seat representing farmers, **Mr. Tai Cheng-yao**, won a seat in the Legislative Yuan. Mr. Tai is the first non-KMT legislator to be elected by the farmers in 40 years. He is a farmer from Kaohsiung County and is also a former political prisoner of the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident. Mr. Tai's candidacy was endorsed by the Farmers' Rights Association based in Yunlin, which organized the now well-known May 20 farmers' demonstration in 1988.

Of the 101 seats in the Legislative Yuan, 23 are reserved for representatives of functional constituencies, such as occupational groups (labor, farmers, educational personnel, etc.), and aborigines. Traditionally these seats, and the "Fukien" province seat, have been tightly controlled by the Kuomintang, but in the 1986 elections, the DPP managed for the first time to get someone elected as a representative from labor. In 1989, 18 out of the 23 seats went to the KMT, while the DPP won three seats and non-affiliated candidates two seats.

In the **Taipei City Council**, the DPP-membership went up from 11 to 14 seats (out of a total of 51 seats). Most prominent among the new members are Ms. Daisy Peng and Mr. Huang Chung-wen ("Daniel"). In the **Kaohsiung City Council**, the DPP representation doubled from 4 to 8 (out of 43 seats). The most well-known among them are Mr. Huang Chao-hsing, Mr. Chen Kuan-fu, and Ms. Lin Li-chen, wife of former "Kaohsiung Eight" defendant Lin Hung-hsüan.

In the **Taiwan Provincial Assembly**, the DPP increased its membership from 11 to 16 seats (out of a total of 77). The most important victory was won by **Ms. Chou Wei-ying**, wife of an imprisoned independence advocate, reverend Tsai Yu-ch'üan. Ms. Chou held the most talked-about campaign rally during the whole campaign: on 22 November 1989, Mr. Kuo Pei-hung, president of the US-chapter of the World Formosans for Independence (WUFI), appeared before some 6,000 supporters at Ms. Chou's rally in Chungho near Taipei, held a 45-minute speech, and disappeared again before some 3,000 (!) police and security agents could apprehend Mr. Kuo.

The interesting aspect of it was, that Mr. Kuo's appearance had been announced beforehand, and that the authorities had launched an island-wide manhunt for him, offering a NT\$ 2.2 mln. (approx. US\$ 85,000) reward to anyone providing information leading to Mr. Kuo's arrest. However, at the end of the appearance at the 22 November rally, the lights were turned off, and Mr. Kuo and some 1,500 supporters donned masks with the Chinese characters "blacklisted" on it, making it impossible for the police to find him. Two weeks later, Mr. Kuo reappeared again at gathering commemorating human rights day in Los Angeles.



"Blacklisted" independence supporters at rally in Chungho

Other important victories in the Provincial Assembly were won by Ms. Chang Wen-ying of Taichung City (a dentist, who in 1979 courageously assisted imprisoned opposition leader Shih Ming-teh), and Ms. Yu Ling-ya, daughter of Taichung County Magistrate Yu Chen Yueh-ying.

Were the elections fair ?

While the election procedures were relatively more open than before, a considerable amount of unfairness remains in the overall election process and the political structure. The most important ones are:

- * The Kuomintang's tight **control over the electronic media**, and particularly the three television stations; below, we present more on this aspect;
- * The large-scale **practice of vote-buying**, especially by extremely rich KMT-candidates, called "golden oxen." This practice is particularly widespread in the rural areas and among candidates in the occupational groups. Newspapers in

Taiwan even published lists of the “going rates” for vote buying. These varied — according to the importance of the race — from NT\$ 500 to NT\$ 3000 (approx. US\$ 20 to US\$ 115). According to the pro-government *China Times*, in the races for the occupational group seats, the price of one vote even went up to NT\$ 5000 (US\$ 190) in the industrial group and NT\$ 9000 (US\$ 350) in the business group.



**Anti vote-buying sticker of the
Clean Election Coalition**

- * the fact that the elections for the Legislative Yuan are only **for a limited number (101) of “supplementary seats”**. Even if the opposition won 100% of the vote, they would still be in a minority, because at the present time some 163 seats (approximately 60%) in the Legislative Yuan are occupied by old mainlanders, who were elected on mainland China in 1947. Also, 29 additional seats are not elective, but appointed by President Lee Teng-hui from among the Kuomintang-faithful in the Overseas Chinese community.

The Kuomintang also has a built-in advantages due to its tight control and its frequent use of legal measures and law enforcement institutions against the democratic opposition. A number of examples:

- * **Legal restrictions on the duration and scope of the campaign;** by limiting the period during which candidates can organize their own campaign rallies to one week, the authorities attempt to minimize the opposition’s exposure to the general public.

During the second week of the campaign period, only government-sponsored rallies are allowed in which the opposition’s speeches are sandwiched in between those of Kuomintang candidates, thus minimizing their effect.

- * **Freedom of speech was limited at best:** roving teams of secret police agents — composed of members of the feared Taiwan Garrison Command (Taiwan’s equivalent of Rumania’s “*Securitate*”), the Investigation Bureau and the National Police Administration — equipped with video camera’s, attended opposition gatherings to

“gather evidence”, in particular against candidates who had expressed themselves in favor of Taiwan independence. Thus only the most courageous dared to speak out;

- * **limitations on civil rights;** a number of prominent opposition figures cannot participate in elections because they have been deprived of their civil rights following earlier political trials and convictions. These include DPP-chairman Huang Hsin-chieh and secretary-general Chang Chün-hung, and editor/writer Huang Hua. This limits the possibility of the democratic opposition to field good candidates in all races.
- * The Central Election Commission, which administrates the elections, is **totally dominated by the ruling Kuomintang;** there are no DPP-members of the Commission;
- * One DPP-candidate, Mr. Weng Ming-chih, who was running for a seat in the Legislative Yuan for the offshore island of Kinmen, was not allowed to visit his home area to campaign until the second week. The authorities claimed this was due to “security reasons.” At that point it was not possible anymore to organize his own campaign rallies. Predictably, the Kuomintang candidate won with 97.2% !!

No equal access to radio and television

In spite of the fact that the Election and Recall Law stipulates that “political parties shall have equal access to the media”, the Kuomintang still maintains tight control of radio and television, and restricts the DPP’s attempts to use these media: in particular the three TV-stations give minimal coverage to the DPP and other opposition groups.

During the campaign, each TV news broadcast on the average spent some 3 minutes on the campaigning. Out of this, some 2 minutes and 45 second was about KMT candidates, mainly walking around, shaking hands, thus giving them name and face familiarity. The remaining 15 seconds consisted of some quick flashes of opposition candidates, but never letting the TV audience hear any of the candidates’ statements. The TV also never showed the large crowds (by most estimates varying from 10,000 to 35,000) attending the opposition rallies.

The TV-News also did not show any candidate discussing issues. A proposal by the DPP to have a televised debate was turned down by the stations, although progressive KMT-members also supported the idea.

The stations also outright refused to place political advertisements for DPP-candidates (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 41, pp. 21-22). Ownership of the three TV stations is as follows: China Television Company CTV, owned by the Kuomintang party itself; Taiwan Television Enterprise TTV, owned by the Taiwan Provincial Government; and China Television System CTS, owned by the military.

The opposition made several attempts to get around the government's news restrictions:

* Both in the Taipei suburb of Panchiao, as well as in the central Taiwan city of Taichung, the DPP set up a "Fourth TV Channel." On 30 November 1989, the DPP television stations broadcasted for about an hour, giving the news from the DPP-perspective. The program from the Panchiao station, dubbed the "Green Station", featured scenes from a campaign rally by DPP-candidate You Ching, and election reports read by a masked newscaster with a farmer's hat, the symbol of the native Taiwanese identity.

The KMT authorities reacted strongly, saying that the broadcasts were "illegal": Mr. Shaw Yu-ming, director-general of the Government Information Office (GIO) stated that "the unauthorized broadcasts will be dealt with according to the law" and said that GIO officials were already searching for the transmitters and would confiscate them. He added that according to the Broadcasting and Television Law any television installation must first be approved by the government. Ironically, Mr. Shaw's own GIO has repeatedly turned down opposition applications for radio and TV-licenses !!

* Another attempt to get around the KMT's control of television was made by *The Journalist*, a prominent weekly news magazine in Taipei. In mid-November, the magazine wanted to distribute a documentary videotape with an overview of Taiwan's political developments since the 1940's and interviews with a number of candidates from across the political spectrum, including some pro-independence candidates. The magazine had submitted the videotape to the GIO for review, but the GIO delayed release of the tape, saying that "certain inaccurate and illegal aspects of the film must be revised before it can be approved."

Protest against Fraud in Tainan

On election night, suspicion of ballots rigging by election officials resulted in a 30-hour protest in Hsinying City by supporters of Mr. Lee Tsung-fan, the DPP candidate for Tainan County magistrate. Incidents of election violence were also reported in the counties of Taoyuan, Nantou, and the cities of Hsinchu and Taichung on election night.

The protest in Tainan County was prompted by suspicions of election fraud. Firstly, the supporters of DPP candidate were angered by the slow pace of the opening of the ballot boxes. They suspected this was being done to enable to Kuomintang officials to stuff the boxes. Secondly, at 9 p.m. on election night, when the counting of ballots in several key districts was far from being completed, the KMT candidate for Tainan County Magistrate, Mr. Li Ya-chiao, declared himself the winner and his supporters set off firecrackers for a victory celebration. Supporters of Mr. Lee Tsung-fan, the DPP candidate, immediately became suspicious of ballot rigging in favor of the KMT candidate. Thirdly, supporters of DPP candidate were angered by reports that ballot boxes from eight villages were taken to the police station, where — they suspected — the contents of the boxes were tampered with.

On December 2, around 10:30 p.m., an estimated 3,000 of Mr. Lee Tsung-fan's supporters surrounded the county government building in Hsinying city, and demanded an explanation from the election officials. After the election officials failed to give a response, the angry protesters charged into the office building, destroying furniture, wrecking computer equipment and smashing windows. The protesters also detained two officials of the Tainan County Election Committee in a campaign truck, and tried to force them to nullify the election.

The number of demonstrators increased to an estimated 10,000 on Sunday, 3 December 1989, after DPP supporters from other parts of Taiwan arrived to join the protest. Mr. Huang Hsin-chieh, chairman of DPP also appeared before the protesters and appealed them to remain calm and avoid bloodshed. The authorities mobilized about 1,000 riot police backed by water cannons to disperse the crowd. Clashes broke out as the protesters resisted by throwing rocks. Demonstrators ended the 30-hour siege of the Tainan County Government building in Hsinying City in the morning of 4 December 1989, after Mr. Lee Tsung-fan filed a complaint accusing election officials of vote rigging.

On 5 December 1989, the officials of the Tainan Election Committee agreed to a recount of the ballots from the eight villages after a long negotiation with DPP officials. The recount was completed in the afternoon on 8 December 1989, but — according to election officials — confirmed the earlier results. Mr. Lee Tsung-fan said that he remained convinced that ballot-stuffing and tampering had taken place.

In the aftermath of the incident, the authorities on 18 December arrested Mr. Hsieh Chin-chuan, a DPP-candidate for the Legislative Yuan, for his role in organizing the protest against the suspected election fraud. At the time of going to press of this issue of *Taiwan Communiqué*, he was being held without bail.

In an interesting related development, the pro-government TTV television station dismissed Mr. Chang Hsao-tseng, the manager of the news department, suspended news anchorman Lee Sze-tuan, and transferred TV reporter Hu Chia-chun away from the news department, because on 4 December 1989 they had reported that election officials in Tainan had found errors in the ballot recount and that the Tainan elections had been nullified.

This report was presumably incorrect (and in any case “inconvenient” for the Kuomintang) and TTV had later issued bulletins correcting itself. The episode illustrates the tight control of the Kuomintang authorities over television.

Military Involvement in the Elections

A disconcerting development in the December elections was the involvement of the military in support of a number of hardline conservative candidates. The military’s involvement in elections began with the KMT primaries in August 1989, when it mobilized its “iron votes” from the villages of military personnel in different parts of Taiwan in support of its candidates.

In total, the military had 13 candidates from the north to the south of Taiwan running for seats in the Legislative Yuan. The *Independence Weekly Post* reported that the military was in control of some 1,150,000 votes, including the actively serving soldiers, police, and military intelligence.

The military even formed a Command Center and assigned high ranking generals to map strategy and tactics for each of the 13 election districts. Of the 13 candidates for Legislative Yuan supported by the military, 10 were elected, most of them second-generation mainlanders born in Taiwan.

Although there has been military support for particular candidates in previous elections, the scale of the military’s involvement in the December elections was unprecedented.

The reasons for the increased political activity of the military is the rapidly changing political climate in Taiwan. With their old, dependable supporters in the Legislative Yuan — elected on the mainland in 1947 — dying off at a rapid rate, the military apparently wants to bring a group of ideologically-conservative legislators into the Legislative Yuan in order to counter the increased influence of the DPP, and safeguard its defense budget.

The military also has a deep mistrust of the young KMT legislators, who are elected during supplementary elections, and who have become a dominating force in the Legislative Yuan, because they tend to be reform-minded.

The military's meddling in the elections even caused a major amount of infighting within the Kuomintang: National Taiwan University professor Ting Shou-chung had long been planning to run for the Legislative Yuan as a representative of Taipei North. However, he was not nominated by the Kuomintang, because military chief-of-staff Hau Pei-tsun (now defense minister) was reportedly against it. The military was apparently planning to run its own candidate, Mr. Chao Chen-peng.

Professor Ting decided to run anyway ... and was elected ! However, the episode had an unpleasant ending for Ting's father-in-law, Wen Ha-hsiung, who happened to be a high-level general in the armed services. In mid-November general Wen was removed from his position as commander-in-chief of the Combined Service Forces, according to press reports from Taiwan, "because he had failed to convince his son-in-law not to run."

Towards a New Nation

New Nation Alliance sparks debate

The December election campaign has again focused attention on the question of Taiwan's future. The renewed interest was sparked by the formation of the "**New Nation Alliance**" — 32 candidates of the democratic opposition of the DPP-party — who, in a joint election platform, called for "a new constitution, a new parliament, and a new nation." They emphasized that these goals will be achieved by peaceful means. Other main points in the platform included independent sovereignty, peaceful coexistence with China, and a return to the United Nations.

Stifling the discussion

The Alliance's step drew a sharp response from the ruling Kuomintang authorities: on 21 November, President Lee Teng-hui said that advocacy of Taiwan independence "will be punished." In the weeks preceding the elections, a variety of other Kuomintang officials — from the High Court prosecutor to the military chief-of-staff — sounded

harsh warnings against the increasing calls for independence. Judiciary officials in Taipei indicated that after election day, the 32 Alliance candidates would be prosecuted and go to jail.

During the election campaign, the Central Election Commission removed references to advocacy of independence from campaign material submitted by Alliance candidates for inclusion in the campaign bulletin, which is distributed by the CEC to all voters. When DPP lawyer Chen Shui-pien (a candidate for the Legislative Yuan, but not a member of the Alliance) placed a large ad in the *Independence Evening Post* of 28 November 1989, which read “Long Live Taiwan Independence”, the Taiwan High Court announced that it was considering to prosecute Chen on “sedition” charges.

Lin Yi-hsiung’s Basic Laws

The formation of the Alliance coincided with the return to Taiwan of Mr. Lin Yi-hsiung, a leading opposition member arrested and sentenced in connection with the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident. Mr. Lin’s mother and twin daughters were murdered on 28 February 1980, after Lin had mentioned to his visiting mother that he had been tortured by agents of the Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. The Taiwan authorities have still not solved the murder (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 38, pp. 9-11).

During the past five years, Mr. Lin has been studying abroad, first at Harvard University in the United States, then Cambridge University in England and currently at Tsukuba University in Japan.

The purpose of Mr. Lin’s visit was to make public the draft of a **Basic Laws for a new Republic of Taiwan**. The text of the draft was published in the *Independence Evening Post* on November 8, 1989. The Basic Laws has eight chapters: on citizenship, the territory, the parliament, the presidency, the administration, the judicial system, the regional system and other regulations.

Mr. Lin favors a cabinet system, with the president being elected by popular vote and a unicameral system for the parliament. The prime minister is nominated by the president and approved by the parliament. The national territory includes Taiwan and the surrounding islands. Any change of the national territory should be first approved by the parliament, then subject to the approval of the people in a national referendum.

Mr. Lin also pays strong emphasis on the protection of human rights, freedom and dignity in his basic law. In the first chapter on citizenship, Mr. Lin wrote, that respect

and the protection of human dignity are the obligation of all citizens and the government. Public officials under no circumstances should insult or mistreat any citizen. The authorities can not arbitrarily search the home of citizens, arrest, detain, interrogate citizens without following proper legal procedures.

According to press reports in Taiwan, prosecutors of the High Court were investigating whether they would file “sedition” charges against Lin for drafting the document, and against the *Independence Evening Post* for publishing the full text of the draft.

For an open discussion on Taiwan Independence

Editorial

The Kuomintang’s efforts to stifle an open discussion of the idea of Taiwan independence are regrettable, because it represents the most viable, just and sensible solution to the island’s main predicament: its international diplomatic isolation.

The Taipei authorities need to realize that it will only be possible for the international community to accept Taiwan as a full member if it is an entity in its own right, and not some pseudo-substitute for China. It is the Kuomintang itself which keeps the “two-China” idea alive with its “Republic of China” acting as a rival-regime of the PRC-government, thereby inviting Peking’s animosity and endangering the long-term survival of Taiwan as an independent entity.

Towards peaceful coexistence

The real reason that the Kuomintang considers advocacy of Taiwan independence “seditious” is that it undermines its outdated claim to be the government of all of China — the basis for its continuing hold on political power in Taiwan. In attempting to prevent opposition members and supporters from discussing their ideas, the authorities even used the old bogus argument from across the Taiwan Straits: “if Taiwan moves towards independence, the Communists will attack.”

While not discounting the mainland’s sensitivities on this issue, we do suggest that for the PRC it will be highly preferable to have a friendly Taiwan as its neighbour, as opposed to having a continuously hostile rival, “Republic of China”, which still considers itself the rightful ruler of all of China. In other words: peaceful coexistence is better than the hostile status quo.

It must also be remembered that Taiwan was never an integral part of China. Only during two short periods (1887-1895 and 1945-1949) was Taiwan considered a “province” of China — in very much the same way as the Netherlands were ruled by France during the Napoleonic times and by Hitler Germany during World War II. After 1945, the island and its people became pawns in the battle between the Communists and the Nationalists in their civil war on the mainland. Taiwan had no part in that war, but became a victim of it when the Nationalists lost, and moved to Taiwan.

Democratization essential

It will be difficult for the KMT to stem the rising democratic tide, particularly when the Taiwanese people see that around the world, from Eastern Europe to Southern Africa and Latin America, the people are expressing an insatiable thirst for more freedom. The political system in Taiwan, while less repressive than before the end of martial law in July 1987, is not free by far: the military still goes largely unchecked, and the secret police has wide leeway to go about its unsavory practices. The electronic media continue to be tightly controlled by the ruling Kuomintang. The Legislative Yuan still consists for some 60 percent of geriatric legislators elected on mainland China four decades ago.

During these 40 years, this system has deprived the Taiwanese people of a say in their political system and the future of the island. This undemocratic system persisted for so long because the Kuomintang authorities were able to hang on to power through tight control of the media and education system on the one hand, and outright repressive measures (martial law, secret police) on the other. While the situation has improved significantly since 1986, when — due to the pressure from an increasingly vocal and inventive democratic opposition movement — a gradual liberalization set in, the present situation is still far from democratic, as illustrated with the statistics on the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly.

The taboo needs to be broken

Thus, for Taiwan to move forward and freely decide on its future, the taboo on the topic of Taiwan independence needs to be broken. For an increasing number of Taiwanese people it is an idea whose time has come: particularly after “Tiananmen”, more and more people on the island are convinced that it is the only viable, just and fair solution to the Taiwan question. They feel it is time for the international community to support it.

The Kuomintang’s objections against the independence idea are self-serving: independence would mean fair and open elections for all seats in the legislature, and the

chance that the party might lose its dominant role on the political scene. The KMT has to realize that continuation of its anachronistic political system, and the resistance against Taiwan independence, will only perpetuate the island's political isolation.

The most viable solution

“Reunification” as proposed by both the Kuomintang and the PRC are anathema to the Taiwanese people: on the Kuomintang’s terms it must be discounted as an impossible pipe-dream: the mouse cannot dictate its terms to the elephant. On the PRC’s terms it is **utterly reprehensible**, certainly after the events of “Tienanmen” and the crackdown on the people of Tibet. It would subject 20 million people who have experienced economic freedom and a taste of political freedom to the whims and control of a repressive leadership in Peking. To the Taiwanese people it is thus neither rational, reasonable, nor desirable, and a totally unacceptable proposition.

Thus, the most viable solution is for the international community to urge the Kuomintang authorities to discard their pretense to be the government of all of China. They should speedily move towards a fully democratic political system on the island, in which the people can freely elect their own government, which can then be recognized as the legitimate government of Taiwan. Then the vision of Lin Yi-hsiung and the “New Nation Alliance” will come true, and the declaration of 6 November 1989 will be recognized as a milestone in Taiwan’s history.

Presidential “elections” coming up

National Assembly an antique relic

The dust of the December 1989 elections had not yet settled, or maneuvering began for the presidential elections, which are scheduled for March 1990. However, the “electorate” for the upcoming presidential elections is quite different: only some 780 persons are eligible to vote: the members of the National Assembly. As some 700 of these 780 happen to be old mainlanders (s)elected in mainland China in 1947 — or not even *elected*, but *appointed* by the Kuomintang to succeed deceased assembly-members — the result of this “election” would in general be quite predictable: the KMT’s candidate President Lee Teng-hui, who succeeded President Chiang Ching-kuo, after his death in January 1988.

The DPP consider the National Assembly an antique relic, and has pushed for **direct presidential elections by the people of the island**. The party is planning to nominate its own presidential and vice-presidential candidates in an island-wide primary to be held on 18 February 1990. While under the present system its candidates have no chance of being elected, the DPP's campaign will focus international attention on the ludicrousness of the Kuomintang's system of electing a president.

An old mainlanders' last revolt

However, the sailing will not be quite smooth for President Lee, as many of the old mainlander assembly-members are revolting because President Lee is gradually pushing them into retirement. It would be a long-overdue retirement, because most of them are in their eighties, but they cling to their positions because they claim to be the true representatives of China, and say that they cannot be replaced until China has been "recovered." They have the support of still powerful conservative elements in the Kuomintang, the military and secret police agencies.

Thus, many of the old mainlanders have threatened to vote against president Lee, a native Taiwanese, or come up with their own candidate, such as general Chiang Wei-kuo (Chiang Ching-kuo's younger brother) or even general Hau Pei-tsun, until recently military chief-of-staff, and appointed defense minister just before the elections.

To counter the old mainlanders, younger and more forward-looking Kuomintang-members led by newly-elected Legislative Yuan member Chao Shao-kang launched a campaign in support of president Lee. While there is no doubt that the KMT will nominate Lee and that the Assembly will "elect" him, the campaign by the old mainlanders may force Lee to offer the post of vice-President to a conservative old-timer, although public opinion polls in mid-December indicated the general populace favored either the populist native Taiwanese Lin Yang-kang, presently president of the Judicial Yuan, or James Soong, the present secretary-general of the KMT.

Prison Report

Huang Hua indicted for advocating independence

On 21 December 1989, Mr. Huang Hua (52), a prominent writer and editor, and an active member of the democratic opposition in Taiwan, was indicted on "sedition" charges for advocating Taiwan independence.

Mr. Huang, who has earlier been imprisoned for a total of some 21 years for his political ideas, has been the key figure in the “**New Nation Movement**”, an organization established in November 1988. The group has urged the Kuomintang authorities to move towards a new, democratic, and independent Taiwan, and advocates direct elections of the President by popular vote, instead of the present system whereby the President is elected by the National Assembly, which is dominated by old mainlanders.

The activities of the Movement culminated in the formation of the **New Nation Alliance**, a coalition of 32 DPP-candidates, who ran in the recently-held elections on a joint pro-independence platform. The Alliance posted a major victory when 20 out of the 32 candidates were elected.



Mr. Huang Hua

On 23 December 1989, Mr. Huang refused a subpoena from the High Court prosecutor to appear in court. Instead, he appeared on the front steps of the High Court building in Taipei, and protested his indictment by displaying a white banner with the Chinese characters “Long Live the Republic of Taiwan” on it. Mr. Huang departed after distributing a written statement.

In the statement, Mr. Huang pointed out that “People have the right to use peaceful means to request changes of national policy. All my life, I have made great effort to use peaceful means to build a Republic of Taiwan. I do not recognize the legitimacy of the KMT regime to rule Taiwan. Therefore, I refuse to accept any subpoena from the court.” Furthermore, he stated that “I will concentrate on the goal of nation building, and join the contest for the nomination for president as a DPP presidential candidate.”

Mr. Huang, born in 1937, has spent most of his adult years in jail for his beliefs, a total of 21 years and four months. In December 1963, he ran for a seat in the Keelung city council and declared his intention to form a “Freedom Party.” On the next day, he was arrested on charges of being “a hoodlum” and was shipped off to an offshore island for detention. He spent two and a half years in prison.

In August 1967, he was arrested again on “sedition” charges for his advocacy of new political parties and for distributing leaflets calling for an independent Taiwan. He was

sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment but was released in 1975 under an amnesty to commemorate the death of former president Chiang Kai-shek.

After his 1975 release from prison, he joined the editorial staff of the only existing opposition magazine at the time, the *Taiwan Political Review*. In his writings, he emphasized the need for political reform, a multi-party system, and an end to martial law. Soon he was arrested again on charges of sedition for spreading "rebellious thoughts." In July 1976, he went to prison again and was released in May 1987 after 11 years in prison. After his release, Mr. Huang worked briefly for the opposition DPP as the head of the department of organization. He was subsequently elected as the president of **Formosa Political Prisoners Association** in August 1988. In November/December 1988, he led a 40-day campaign all over Taiwan to focus public attention on the issue of Taiwan independence.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: when the "Kaohsiung Eight" trial took place in March 1980, the *Chicago Tribune* published an editorial under the heading "Taiwan's Comic Opera Trial", which read (in part) as follows:

"Taiwan's leaders seem determined to make themselves an international laughingstock by going ahead with a sedition trial against eight advocates of Taiwan independence. The charges read like a Gilbert and Sullivan plot to anyone not thoroughly steeped in the lost-cause mentality of the Kuomintang, ...

... the bizarre episode is all too obviously an attempt by a desperate and increasingly isolated leadership to avoid having to face the untenability of its position. Its position is untenable because the alleged seditionists in the military courtroom ... are right as a matter of diplomatic realism. Taiwan is an independent country, the Kuomintang's claims notwithstanding. The sooner that fact is declared to the world, the better Taiwan's chances to avoid being swallowed into the vast gray maw of the People's Republic of China.

... the trial is less amusing than mad. As a model of prosperity and economic egalitarianism, Taiwan is in a position to recover its lost support in a world that remains largely sympathetic to its unhappy political position. Instead it shows an ugly, and untypical, face of repression. By establishing a reputation for tyranny, and by clinging to a cause that is lost beyond retrieval, Taiwan's leaders may indeed cause the "two China's" to be united — united in the same way a cat is united with a mouse."

These words still ring very true at the present time: by arresting and sentencing Mr. Huang Hua and other advocates of Taiwan independence, the Kuomintang authorities are compounding their mistakes, and are making it more difficult to move towards a truly free and democratic political system on the island, and to extract Taiwan from its diplomatic isolation.

Overseas Taiwanese Leader Arrested

On 28 November 1989, the Kuomintang authorities in Taiwan arrested a prominent overseas Taiwanese leader, Mr. Leo Yih-sheh (“Columbus” Leo). Mr. Leo is a former president of the Taiwanese-Canadian Association of Toronto, a member of the Central Committee of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), and the General Director of the 1989 annual convention of the World Federation of Taiwanese Associations (WFTA), the main umbrella organization for Taiwanese living abroad.

According to reports from Taiwan, he was arrested — without a warrant — at around 8 p.m. — when he was on his way to an election rally of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party. At the scene of the arrest, he was pushed and punched into the police van. In the van, he was punched in the chest and kicked in the groin. He has now been charged with “illegal entry into Taiwan” under Article 6 of the National Security Law, although the police could not produce any evidence that he entered Taiwan illegally. The police has refused to release him on bail, and kept him detained at Shih-lin Detention Center. On 11 December 1989, he was indicted on charges of “violating the National Security Law.”



Mr. Leo Yih-sheh

Mr. Leo was in Taiwan to observe the election campaign. Although blacklisted by the Kuomintang authorities for his criticism of the lack of democracy and human rights on the island, he visited Taiwan during the past summer to organize the annual conference of the World Federation, the second time in its history that the conference was held in Taiwan. After the conference he was deported for “making anti-government remarks.”

Born in Pu-li in Central Taiwan, Mr. Leo (29) is now a Canadian citizen. He received his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of Waterloo (Ont.), and is working as a computer specialist with Ontario Hydro in Toronto. A summary trial was held in Taipei District Court on 23 December 1989, and on 30 December, Mr. Leo was sentenced to ten months imprisonment.

Hsü Hsin-liang sentenced after farcical trial

As we reported earlier (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 42, pp. 14 and 17-18), former Taoyuan County Magistrate Hsü Hsin-liang's (48) unconventional return to the island on 27 September 1989 (on a fishing boat, disguised as a fisherman), and his arrest on "sedition" charges were making major waves in Taiwan.

On 18 November 1989, the first session of his trial was held before the Taiwan High Court. Former U.S. Attorney-General Ramsey Clark, who attempted to journey to Taiwan to attend the trial, was prevented by the Kuomintang authorities from entering Taiwan. However, two other U.S. lawyers, Martin Garbus and Larry Shelling, did attend the trial.

A second session — lasting more than six hours — was held on 16 December 1989. The prosecutor attempted to show that Hsü had "attempted to overthrow the government" by helping to organize the "Kaohsiung Incident" of 10 December 1979, an absurd charge in view of the fact that Hsü had left for the United States two months before the 1979 event. The prosecutor based his "evidence" on the confessions of four other major opposition leaders who were arrested and tried after the incident, and subsequently sentenced to long prison terms.

However, Mr. Hsü pointed out that those confessions were extracted under extreme duress, and in some cases under torture. Two of the opposition leaders, DPP-chairman Huang Hsin-chieh and Secretary-General Chang Chün-hung, were present at the trial and offered to present testimony in the case, but the judge refused to hear them, saying that there was "already enough documented evidence" !!

On 23 December 1989, the High Court found Mr. Hsü "guilty" of sedition and illegal entry, and sentenced him to 10 years imprisonment. The sentence was reduced to six years and eight months as part of a presidential clemency.

In a reaction to the sentencing, 23 scholars strongly criticized the trial and sentencing of Mr. Hsü, calling the "evidence" totally unconvincing and the verdict extremely unfair. The scholars included National Taiwan University professor Chang Chun-tung and University of Pennsylvania professor Parris Chang, who were attending a National Development Seminar in Taipei.

In a joint statement, the scholars called the process against Mr. Hsü "worse than in military court under martial law." They said that the decision by the authorities to

sentence Mr. Hsü was “going against the world trend of democratization, when the waves of democracy are spreading around the world, and the Communist dictatorship of Rumania — following other Eastern bloc countries — is collapsing under the protests of the people.” The scholars urged the authorities to reconsider the case against Mr. Hsü.

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Freedom of the Press ?

Freedom Era stops publishing

One of the most prominent opposition publications in Taiwan has been forced to close down. In November 1989, Mr. Cheng Chao-chi, the editor-in-chief and publisher of **Freedom Era** announced that the magazine would stop publishing. Mr. Cheng cited financial problems, but clearly the continuing attempts by the authorities to harass the magazine were an important reason: the magazine’s title was suspended a record 37 times since the end of martial law — 15 times in 1989 alone.

The magazine had been in continuous operation since 1982, a record among Taiwanese opposition publications. During its existence, it was one of the most outspoken and hard-hitting critics of the ruling Kuomintang, the military, and secret police. It thus became a major target for the KMT’s censorship: until the end of martial law, some 95% of the magazine’s issues were banned or confiscated.

Freedom Era became well-known internationally in April 1989, when its editor and publisher, Mr. Cheng Nan-jung, died when he set himself on fire rather than be arrested by police who were storming his office to arrest him on “sedition” charges for publishing a draft-Constitution for a new, democratic, and independent Taiwan (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 40, pp. 1-9).

In the recently-held elections Mr. Cheng’s wife, Ms. Yeh Chu-lan, ran for a seat in the Legislative Yuan, and was elected with a strong majority. She has vowed to continue her husband’s struggle for a free and independent Taiwan.

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Notes

The Kaohsiung Incident commemorated

On Sunday, 10 December 1989, a crowd of over twenty thousand people attended a rally in Kaohsiung in commemoration of the “Kaohsiung Incident” of 10 December 1979. People assembled at the Kaohsiung stadium over an hour before the speeches were scheduled to begin. Many brought their children, too young to remember the Human Rights Day rally of 1979 which changed the course of Taiwan’s history. As usual with major opposition events in Taiwan, the government-controlled radio and television did not give any coverage to the commemoration.

At the end of the commemoration, at around 10:00 p.m., several opposition leaders walked along the route of the 1979 incident. DPP chairman Huang Hsin-chieh — a central figure in the 1979 event — urged the Kuomintang authorities to correct the wrongs perpetrated by the authorities in the wake of the incident.



Crowd at Kaohsiung Commemoration on 10 December 1989

The 1979 event was the first major human rights day celebration on the island, but it turned into a violent clash between demonstrators and police after police surrounded the crowd and began using teargas, and military police units dressed up as civilians incited violence (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 42, pp. 7-14). The incident was later used as an excuse by the authorities to arrest virtually all major opposition leaders.

At the present time, one person remains in jail in connection with the Incident: demonstration organizer Shih Ming-teh, who was originally sentenced to life imprisonment on “sedition” charges. The sentence was later reduced to 15 years imprisonment

Betting on the wrong horse: the KMT and Noriega

The U.S. military action against the drug-trafficking dictator Noriega has put the Kuomintang authorities in Taipei in a highly awkward position: in their eagerness to establish “diplomatic” relations with as many nations around the world as possible, the Taipei authorities went out of their way to cozy up to Noriega. They sent a heavyweight ambassador, former defense minister Soong Chang-chih, who — according to press reports in Taiwan — had “established an exceptionally good relationship with Noriega” !!

The new Panamanian government of Guillermo Endara is likely to distance itself from regimes which closely associated themselves with the repressive dictator. This may prove to be a headache for the Kuomintang, which already finds itself in an isolated international position.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *this situation highlights the shortsightedness of the Kuomintang’s policy of maintaining close ties with dictatorial regimes up and down Latin America. As we have argued before, the best way to get out of the diplomatic isolation is to move swiftly to a fully democratic political system, which can then be recognized by the international community as the sovereign and legitimate government of Taiwan in its own right. Continuation of the “Republic of China” myth will only increase the island’s isolation.*
