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Elections don't bring full democracy

Although the elections which were held in Taiwan on 21 December 1991 were the first elections for (almost) all seats in the National Assembly, they still didn't bring full democracy to the island.

The elections were marked by large-scale vote buying by Kuomintang candidates, while gerrymandering of election districts and control of television gave the ruling KMT an unfair advantage over the democratic opposition of the DPP. It was not a "level playing field" by far.

Nor did the election turn into a referendum on the "reunification" versus "independence" issue, as was expected earlier. The Kuomintang played down reunification and its anachronistic claim of sovereignty over China, and instead focused on "stability and the status quo", while playing on the Taiwanese fears of a military attack by Peking by saturating the news media with ranting against Taiwan independence.



**President Lee Teng-hui: "Why are all those candidates throwing away their NT-dollar bills ?
Is Taiwan independent already ?"**

The unfairness of election process means that the Kuomintang still has some way to go before the political system in Taiwan can be considered democratic. In the meantime the DPP will have to work harder to overcome its handicaps, it has to spread its grass-root network, gain fair access to television, and present itself as a viable alternative to the Kuomintang.

With regard to the *independence* issue, it is essential that the people of Taiwan have an open discussion in a fully free political atmosphere before a vote can be considered truly representative of their opinions. This was not the case in the present elections.

On the following pages we first give an overview of the results of the elections in terms of facts and figures. We then present details of the unfairness in the election process, in particular the vote-buying, gerrymandering, and control of television. This is followed by an assessment of the elections by Dr. James D. Seymour. We conclude with an analysis of the weaknesses and tactical errors by the DPP, and how the major issue in the campaign — Taiwan Independence — did play a role.

Results: Facts and Figures

An overview of the results is given in the following table. :

	KMT	DPP	Small parties	TOTAL
Number of VOTES (mln)	6.053	2.036	0.416	8.505
% of vote:	71.2%	23.9%	4.9%	100.0%
Number of SEATS				
Elected: 179	41	5	225	
Allocated:				
“Non-regional”	60	20	0	80
“Overseas reps”	15	5	0	20
Total 1991 elections	254	66	5	325
% of seats:	78.2%	20.3%	1.5%	100.0%

<i>Remaining from 1986</i>	64	9	5	78
OVERALL TOTAL	318	75	10	403
% of seats:	78.9%	18.6%	2.5%	100.0%

The fact that the Kuomintang now has 78.9 percent of the seats in the Assembly means that it has a sufficient majority to amend the Constitution without the risk of blocking by the DPP: revisions of the Constitution require approval by at least 75 percent of the members of the Assembly.

In the upcoming Constitutional revision process, the Kuomintang is likely to follow the “minimalist” approach, and only aim for a few minor amendments that give it a reformist appearance while maintaining the essence of their system and apparatus in place. In the section titled “*Assembly in Transition*” we give an overview of what can be expected in the upcoming National Assembly session, which is scheduled to start on 20 March 1992.

The results of the election also show that there is virtually no room for smaller third parties: The “Chinese Social Democratic Party” — a splinter-group which split off from the DPP in 1990 — received only 2.2 percent of the vote but no seats at all.

The recently-established National Nonpartisan Alliance (NNA) received 2.3 percent and won three seats, while some 13 other minor parties and non-affiliated candidates won a total of 3.2 percent of the vote but no seats at all.

Rules of the game still unfair

While these elections were more open than previous elections in Taiwan’s history, they were still far from democratic. The Kuomintang authorities were able to portray themselves in a positive light by allowing the opposition some room for maneuver, but at the same time — under the surface — they employed a number of techniques which left the DPP boxed in a corner.

An overview of the major elements of unfairness:

1. **Vote Buying:** press accounts from Taiwan show that there was widespread votebuying: the influential *Independence Evening Post* reported that 95% of the KMT candidates were engaged in votebuying. Even the pro-Kuomintang *China Post* reported that “*Election decadence hits new heights*” (17 December), and “*Bribery allegations reported everywhere*” (20 December). Professor Parris Chang, a prominent Taiwanese-American scholar who headed a delegation of American scholars to observe the elections, stated after the elections: “if no vote buying had taken place, the KMT would only have received some 55% of the votes, while the DPP would have gotten nearly 45%.”

Vote buying was reportedly most rampant in the South and in the rural areas. In the beginning of the campaign the “going rate” for a vote was NT\$200 (US\$ 8), but as the campaign heated up the prices rose to NT\$500 (US\$ 20), while in some hotly contested areas, such as Taoyuan and Changhwa, they soared to NT\$ 1000 (US\$ 40). Other inducements included gifts and banquets: three days before the elections, a Kuomintang candidate in the third district of Taipei threw a banquet of 360 tables (some 4000 people) for key constituents.

Each Kuomintang candidate reportedly spent at least NT\$ 15 million (US\$ 600,000) on the elections, while in key districts the “required amount” was a multiple of that. Altogether, the Kuomintang’s candidates are reported to have spent some NT\$ 5 billion (US\$ 200 million) in the campaign. The practice of vote buying was exacerbated even further by the Kuomintang practice of nominating rich local businessmen as candidates, who are referred to as “golden oxen” by the people of the island.

A very special way of vote buying occurred a few days before the elections, when on 16 December 1991 officials of Premier Hau Pei-tsun’s Executive Yuan announced that civil servants, public school teachers and military service personnel would receive a 8-10 percent salary increase during the coming year. A similar tactic was used by the Kuomintang in 1989, when civil servants received a 13 percent raise just before the December 1989 elections.

2. **Gerrymandering:** in mid-1991 the authorities pushed through a revision of the Election and Recall Law, which involved a far-reaching splitting up of election districts, and by cleverly choosing district boundaries so as to split up DPP strongholds (“*gerrymandering*”) forced the opposition to spread its resources

so thin that in most districts they were no match for the KMT with its control of the administrative machinery and its abundant resources (mainly drawn from tax funds).

In fact, the splitting up of the election districts is in clear violation of Taiwan's own Constitution: Article 26 of the Constitution states that the elections districts should coincide with the county boundaries. However, the Kuomintang majority in the Legislative Yuan simply steamrolled the DPP's objections.

"If no vote buying had taken place, the KMT would only have received some 55% of the votes, while the DPP would have gotten nearly 45%."

Professor Parris Chang

- 3. The Lin-li system of allocating votes to KMT candidates:** A "Lin" is a block of about a dozen families and a "Li" is a block of approximately 100 families. The chiefs of "Lin-li" are local officials who are generally KMT-members. This system of control through local block and ward heads is also widespread in Communist countries such as the PRC.

It is used as follows: the *Lin-li* officials are given sums of money by KMT candidates to buy votes in their *lin* and *li*. These officials work in a low-key fashion, and it is thus difficult to detect. They visit families at home, and also promise other inducements if the *Lin* or *Li* votes in favor of the KMT. Also, by "allocating" certain blocks to the various KMT candidates they can spread the votes very evenly and thus gain a much higher number of seats than would normally be possible.

Opposition legislators Chen Shui-pian and Hsieh Ch'ang T'ing have said they will propose a bill to abrogate the system.

- 4. Few outside observers allowed.** The Kuomintang authorities allowed very few outside observers into Taiwan to observe the elections: only two delegations of American scholars were allowed into the island. Others who applied for visa during this period, such as the editors of *Taiwan Communiqué* and the director of the Washington DC-based **Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA)** were refused entry — without any explanation.

Other aspects of unfairness are highlighted in the following article by James D. Seymour. Dr. Seymour is Senior Research Scholar at Columbia University in New York. He was part of a US delegation which spent a week in Taiwan observing the elections.

No “level playing field”

by James D. Seymour

For decades the Taiwanese people have been struggling to achieve democracy. Finally on December 21, they were allowed for the first time to elect a full National Assembly — a body which has as its sole responsibilities to elect the President and to amend the Constitution. The normal legislative powers lie with another body, the Legislative Yuan.

If past elections in Taiwan were highly unfair, this time they were only slightly better:

The election system. *Taiwan’s election laws favor incumbents in many ways. The campaigns are very short, lasting only ten days (reduced from the earlier 15 days by a KMT-introduced amendment of the Election and Recall Law in July 1991 — Ed). Thus it is difficult for the voters to learn about non-incumbent candidates, not to mention the issues of the election. Furthermore, the government decides what questions are legitimate issues for the campaign. Discussion of some matters was not permitted, and such campaign planks were blanked-out on candidates’ officials platforms. Such was the case with Taiwan independence, which nonetheless turned out to be a main issue in this campaign.*

The districts are multi-seat, with voters having only one vote, making it possible for the best-organized party to help candidates who need just a few more ballots to get them past the election threshold. Votes can be shifted, even at the last minute. This largely explains why a party with 71 percent of the votes can win 78 percent of the seats.

The districts this time were much smaller than has been the case in previous elections, and there were charges of gerrymandering. At any rate, it appears that the system of small districts made it possible for the Kuomintang to tap into the support of local factions. Another layer of complexity has to do with the special constituencies: there are special provisions for the election of women

and ethnic minorities, which opens the way for manipulation by the rich, well-organized KMT.

Controlled media. During the 1980s, Taiwan's print media liberalized. Although most of it is KMT-dominated, there are independent political magazines and newspapers. Radio is still largely KMT-dominated, although a few stations are relatively independent.

The big problem is with television. All three systems are controlled by the ruling party. This year, in a major departure from past practice, the DPP was allowed a total of 94 minutes of TV time over 10 days of campaigning. Although the rules supposedly limited the KMT to 215 minutes, they only applied to "party propaganda," and not to dissemination of government propaganda. Thus, at least until the final days of the campaign (when the government claimed to be cutting back), the screen was almost saturated with pro-government "shorts" (**tuán p'ien**). These ranted against Taiwan independence, and in favor of "stability," the KMT's two main campaign issues.

"If past elections in Taiwan were highly unfair, this time they were only slightly better."

Dr. James D. Seymour

Television journalism was also highly distorted. For example, although almost all of the vote buying was done by KMT candidates (the DPP lacking the funds to compete on this ground), a rare case of DPP vote-buying was given great play in the TV evening news.

A similar situation prevailed regarding the placement of campaign posters: there were strict limits on the DPP, but pro-government posters could be seen everywhere. This typifies the overall situation: whereas the DPP can only campaign during the limited election period, there is pro-KMT propaganda all year around.

Many citizens excluded from politics. In the past, many of the opposition's most prominent spokesmen have been kept out of the political process by virtue of imprisonment or exclusion from the country. At the time of the election there were only a handful political prisoners (most notably Huang Hua, serving a ten-year sentence), but other convicted dissidents were out on bail and awaiting almost certain imprisonment. Many overseas Taiwanese are denied to reenter

the country. Four overseas leaders who managed to enter the country were imprisoned, while two others were deported.

All students are also forbidden to participate in the political campaigns. This has a disproportionate impact on the DPP, which has wide support on college campuses and which suffers from a shortage of campaign workers and poll watchers. Interestingly, in a straw-poll, which was held just before the elections at National Taiwan University, the DPP received 50 percent of the vote, while the Kuomintang ended up with only 20 percent.

Interference by the military. In the past, the army blatantly interfered in elections. This time, the military kept a much lower profile (strongman premier Hau Pei-ts'un was little in evidence until election night, when he made a triumphant televised appearance at the headquarters of the Central Election Commission).

Still, the military is said to control a million voters. These include not only active duty soldiers, but also families, reservists, and veterans. The military has its own slate of candidates, and their constituency (especially their captive audience of troops) is heavily propagandized to support them. If votes are needed in a particular district, soldiers are sent home to vote. People may be instructed to wait at home in the morning to wait for word on which candidate can best benefit from their vote. Thus, in a close race, KMT candidates have an excellent chance of defeating DPP candidates. In the event 99 of the 107 military-backed candidates won. Presumably votes which were not needed to ensure victory for these people were allocated to other KMT candidates.

All in all, the Kuomintang's "victory" is thus due much more to its cunning manipulation of the existing system and to its monopoly of the electronic media, than the result of a fair and open competition with the democratic opposition. It was in no way a "level playing field."

DPP: weaknesses and tactical errors

While all factors mentioned above already worked to the disadvantage of the DPP, this was compounded by a number of weaknesses and tactical errors on the part of the DPP itself. A brief survey:

1. **Factional infighting.** Prior to the elections, members of two of the factions within the DPP — the **Formosa** group and the **New Movement** group —

openly competed with each other for the right to be nominated as DPP candidates in the various districts. This was of course played up by the KMT-controlled media, and gave the voters a negative perception of the DPP. In the future, the nomination process thus needs to be better coordinated.

As the nomination process was not well-organized, in many districts the DPP had too many candidates (each representing a different faction), thus spreading the vote too thin. Indeed, some 12 DPP candidates lost by only a small margin because votes went to another DPP candidate in the same district. The party could thus have ended up with at least 78 instead of 66 elected seats.

On the positive side it needs to be mentioned that most candidates associated with DPP-legislators Hsieh Ch'ang-t'ing and Chen Shui-bian were elected. These two men have built up a good name as serious, hard-working legislators, which is now paying off in the election results. Also, three former leaders of the student movement at National Taiwan University were elected. They are Messrs. Liu Yi-teh, Li Wen-chung, and Lai Chin-lin. They played a key role in organizing the student protests against the Kuomintang's interference in student organizations in the mid-1980s, and are likely to come to the forefront in the upcoming National Assembly debates.

2. **Leading figures in safe “Non-regional” seats.** Another tactical error of the DPP was that leading figures such as former Chairman Huang Hsin-chieh and Secretary General Chang Chün-hung positioned themselves in the safe “non-regional seats”, and left the campaigning for the regular seats to younger, less well-known candidates, who had less name-recognition with the general public.

The “non-regional” seats are 80 seats, formally “representing China”, which are allocated to the parties in Taiwan on the basis of the share of the vote in the elections — with a minimum threshold of 5 percent, thus excluding the minor parties. In the December 1991 elections the DPP obtained 20 of these seats, and five out of twenty seats reserved for “overseas representatives.”

3. **Weak DPP organization at the grass-root level** while the Kuomintang has a long-established, tightly-organized, and well-greased network. The DPP's disadvantaged position was aggravated by a new rule stating that university students were prohibited from participating in the campaigning. Because of the KMT's control of the media, the DPP has traditionally been very dependent on holding outdoor rallies, and has relied heavily on students as campaign workers.

4. **The DPP leadership underestimated the Kuomintang** and its determination to win these elections, and did very little in the period March through July 1991, when the Kuomintang was changing the rules of the **Election and Recall Law** to its own advantage. They also hardly responded in the period October through November 1991, when the authorities lashed out at the DPP for adopting the “Independent Taiwan” platform. Leading DPP-figures such as Huang Hsin-chieh and Hsu Hsin-liang did not work hard enough to counter the slander-barrage of the Kuomintang and its controlled press.

The Independence Factor

The election also did not turn into a referendum on the “reunification” versus “independence” issue, as was expected earlier. The Kuomintang played down reunification and its anachronistic claims of sovereignty over China, and focused on “*stability and the status quo*” instead, while playing on the Taiwanese fears of a military attack by Peking by saturating the news media with ranting against Taiwan independence.

The pro-independence forces were bolstered to some extent by the appearance of three prominent overseas Taiwanese leaders at rallies in Taipei and Kaohsiung: on 10 December 1991, Mrs. (Jacinta) **Ho Kang-mei**, WUFI chairperson for Europe, and Mrs. (Vicky) **Lo Ching-fen**, former publisher of the California-based *Taiwan Tribune*, appeared in Taipei, while the chairman of WUFI’s Latin American chapter, Mr. **Chou Shu-yeh**, emerged at a large rally in Kaohsiung.

However, the independence organization’s president, Dr. (George) **Chang Tsang-hung**, was arrested upon his arrival at Taoyuan International Airport (see *Prison Report*, p. 18), and was thus prevented from participating in the campaign for the opposition.

The Kuomintang-controlled Central Election Commission also attempted to suppress the pro-independence sentiments by deleting the text of the formal platform chosen by many of the DPP-candidates (“*the establishment of an independent and sovereign Republic of Taiwan to be decided in a plebiscite*”) from the official election announcement, which was distributed to each household a few days before voting. The leaflet, containing information about the candidates, such as educational background, party affiliation and their political platform, thus had blank space where there should have been information for the voters.

Ironically, the Taipei authorities even deleted the word “Taiwan” from phrases such as “a new Taiwan nation”, or “a new Taiwan Constitution” in the text of the platform of the opposition candidates !

Six DPP county magistrates, who officially also headed the local county elections commissions, expressed objection to the censorship by the CEC and issued a joint statement that they would print the full text of a candidate’s platform so that the voters could make their decision. When the Central Election Commission deleted the text anyway, the six resigned as chair of the local election commissions.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *the election results can by no means be interpreted as a democratic vote for unification, because the authorities never allowed an open discussion on the “Taiwan independence” issue, and portrayed independence in an extremely negative light. If a similar “vote” had been held in the Baltic states in 1985 or 1986, then certainly the results would have been twisted, and — under Russian influence — would have been in favor of retaining “unity” with the USSR, and not for independence.*

It is essential that the people of Taiwan have an open discussion in a fully free political atmosphere before a vote can be considered truly representative of their opinions. This was not the case in the present elections.

Both internal-Taiwan and international developments point clearly in the direction of independence and not towards unification with China. In spite of KMT protestations, the Taiwanese people have a different culture and language from the people in China, the economy is ten times as developed, while the people in Taiwan have at least had a taste of democracy: they will not give up their identity and newfound freedoms in order to chase outdated reunification dreams that would only too quickly turn into nightmares.

The best way forward would be for the Taipei government to formally renounce its claim to sovereignty over China, and emphasize its separate entity as a sovereign, independent nation-state. A course should be charted out towards membership of international organizations, such as GATT and the UN, diplomatic relations with other nations as “Taiwan” (and not as “Republic of China”), and of course (undoubtedly lengthy) negotiations with China, leading to mutual recognition.

Assembly in Transition

The “Eternal Congress” retires

In mid-December 1991, some 565 old members of the three legislative bodies in Taipei, the National Assembly (469 old-timers), the Legislative Yuan (81 seniors), and the Control Yuan (15 retirees) submitted their application for retirement. With them, all elderly mainlander members, who had been elected on the mainland in 1946-47, disappeared from the political scene. They had remained in office since 1947 without running for election, giving rise to the name “*Eternal Congress*.”

They didn't leave empty-handed: each received a pension amount of NT\$ 5.6 mln (US\$ 225,000), while a special arrangement with the banks in Taipei gave them a highly favorable interest rate if they would put this amount in the bank: 18 percent.

Thus ended the legislative reign of one of the longest-lasting groups of parliamentarians in recent history. Some 3,000 had originally been elected as representatives from China's far-flung provinces during the turbulent period right after World War II. In 1949, after the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's troops on the mainland, some 2600 of them came with the generalissimo to Taiwan, where they clung to their old dream of “recovery of the mainland.” They maintained their positions until now, but eventually had to go when the Taiwanese people started to demand a more democratic political system.

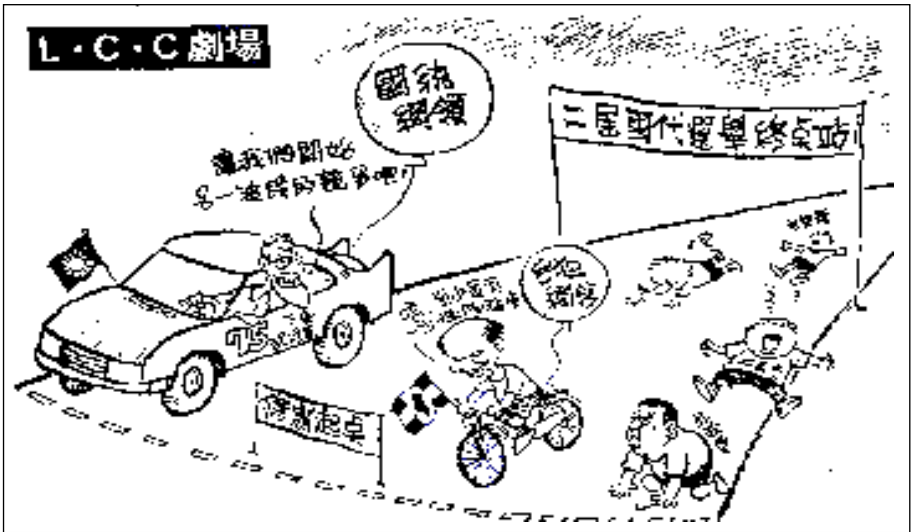
What will the new Assembly do ?

The only official task of the new Assembly will be to revise the Constitution. It is the second phase of a two-stage approach decided by the Kuomintang in the beginning of 1991 (see “*Amending the Constitution: two stages or one ?*” in **Taiwan Communiqué** no. 49, pp. 6-7). The first phase took place at a meeting of the National Assembly in April 1991 (see **Taiwan Communiqué** no. 50, pp. 2-12).

What can be expected in the coming period ? The US-based publication *Newsweek* summarized it perhaps most aptly in the title of an article, analyzing the election results: “*A mandate to do nothing*” (*Newsweek*, 13 January 1992).

The Kuomintang is indeed likely to follow the “minimalist” approach, and only aim for a few minor amendments that give a reformist appearance, such as election of

the President "by delegation", which means that the National Assembly will continue to serve as electoral college for the election of the President. If true direct elections were held, a future strong and charismatic DPP candidate might win over the KMT's nominee. Other reformist moves by the KMT are likely to be the election of the Provincial Governor and the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung, which have until now been appointed positions.



President Lee Teng-hui to DPP-chairman Hsu Hsin-liang: "Let's have another race !!!"

The DPP takes the position that the Constitution is outdated, since it was drafted on the mainland in 1946, and is based on the archaic claim of the Kuomintang authorities to sovereignty over all of China. The DPP has pushed for the adoption of a new Constitution, based on the present reality that Taiwan is a de facto independent nation. The DPP argues that continuing to claim that Taiwan is part of China will only isolate Taiwan further in the international community.

With its 18.6 percent of the seats (75 out of 403 members) the DPP will not be able to block major KMT initiatives, but can attempt to make up for its numerically weaker position in the National Assembly by judiciously selecting the most important issues and concentrate on presenting its arguments clearly and forcefully, thus gaining broader support among the public.

China Relations

US Official warns China against use of force

In the beginning of December 1991, Mr. **James Lilley**, former U.S. ambassador to China and the newly-nominated U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense, warned China to refrain from threatening to use force against Taiwan. The PRC has continued with threats to use force if Taiwan doesn't "reunify" with China in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Lilley was quoted as promising that the United States, whose military power was proven during the Gulf War, would follow through on its policy that the "cross Taiwan Straits" problem should be settled peacefully. He added that military threats by China were unrealistic.

Ironically, Taipei's Foreign Minister Fredrick Ch'ien, concerned that the remarks would bolster the pro-independence sentiments on the island, shortsightedly attempted to downplay Mr. Lilley's statement, saying these might be the "personal views" of the former ambassador.

Historical Studies show China's claim inconsistent

While both the Kuomintang authorities in Taipei and the Communist ones in Peking claim that Taiwan is a "province" of China, two historical studies show that this is a relatively recent invention, designed to bolster the respective ideological positions of the Nationalists and Communists.

An earlier study — Frank Hsiao and Lawrence Sullivan: "*The Chinese Communist party and the Status of Taiwan, 1928 - 1943*" (Published in **Pacific Affairs**, vol. 52, no. 3, Fall 1979) — already showed from Chinese historical documents that during the period indicated, the Chinese Communist Party considered Taiwan to be a separate political entity (under Japanese occupation) which should receive independence. This was also stated by Mao Tse-tung in an interview with Edgar Snow ("*Red Star over China*", p. 110). The authors concluded that it was Chiang Kai-shek's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan at the 1943 Cairo Conference, which led the Communists to lay a counter-claim.

A more recent study in German — Jörg-Meinhard Rudolph: “Die Kommunistische Partei Chinas und Taiwan, 1921-1981” — covered a longer period of history, and showed from Chinese Communist Party documents that as late as May 1945, the Chinese considered Taiwan to be a separate country. The first time the documents referred to Taiwan as a “province” was in February 1946.

It must be remembered that at the time the Communists were in control of only part of the mainland, and had just intensified their struggle against the Nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek for control over all of China. In the years 1946-49, the Chinese policy towards Taiwan itself (as distinguished from the Nationalist control over it) was fuzzy at best. The clearest policy line was the “Self-administration” principle devised after the “February 28” incident of 1947. Even this, though, was considered “instant noodle” policy, and not a well-thought-out policy line.



President Lee Teng-hui: "Hé..., I like to paint big paintings (of China) better than small paintings (of Taiwan) !!!"

The Chinese position vis-à-vis Taiwan significantly hardened to its present rigid policy in 1950, when Chiang Kai-shek declared his “Republic of China” on Taiwan, and started to vow to “recover the mainland.” This forced the Chinese into their counter-claim to “liberate Taiwan.”

The conclusion is that the claim by both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists that “Taiwan has always been part of China” is simply untrue. In fact, the principle of “One China, one Taiwan” was consistently supported by the Chinese Communists for many years.

“February 28” Revisited

Committee Presents Draft Report

In *Taiwan Communiqué* No.49, we reported that the Executive Yuan in December 1990 appointed a committee of scholars to write a report on the “February 28 incident” of 1947 — when between 12,000 and 20,000 native Taiwanese, including many professionals, mayors, doctors, lawyers, and university students, lost their lives when Chiang Kai-shek sent troops from the Chinese mainland to crack down on Taiwanese protests against corruption and repression by the newly-arriving mainlander regime.

Until very recently, the events of 1947 were a taboo subject on Taiwan. In 1987 the democratic opposition of the DPP and the Presbyterian Church started to push the Kuomintang authorities to stop covering up the facts, and to let the truth be known. It wasn’t until 1990 that the Nationalists finally decided — albeit reluctantly — to open their records.

A preliminary report on the incident was completed on December 7, 1991. It was written by five scholars from the Academia Sinica, National Taiwan University, Normal and Chung Hsing University. Mr. **Lai Che-hang** of the Academia Sinica was the chief writer. The researchers were also given access to archives in the Presidential Palace and the Academia Sinica, which so far had been off-limits to researchers.

Another book on the February 28 incident was published in November 1991 by the Documentation Center of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly. The 686-page document contains interviews with some 350 eyewitnesses and surviving families of victims of the incident.

The Executive Yuan report attempts to answer several key questions, such as what triggered the incident, the involvement of the military, and who were responsible for the massacre of large numbers of civilians.

On the following pages is a summary, based on an article published in issue No. 249 of *The Journalist*, a Taipei-based news magazine.

Citing various sources from historical documents, the report points out that “the incident began as a popular protest against the repressive measures of the KMT au-

thorities after they took over Taiwan at the end of World War II. Initially, there were no leaders and there was no organization. After the protest spread all over the island, local leaders saw the opportunity to demand political changes, which created tension with Governor Chen Yi's provincial government and escalated the conflict."

Governor Chen Yi considered the popular protest to be a "rebellion." In a letter to Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking, he stated "it was a planned and organized rebellion against the government and was instigated by the Communists, local leaders and hoodlums. The perpetrators have to be punished severely." He asked for "two divisions of well equipped and trained troops to be sent to Taiwan to quell the rebellion."

The report points out that this letter gave the clue why so many young Taiwanese elite were arrested and executed following the incident and in its aftermath.

Even the military intelligence "*Chung Tung Chu*", beginning on 1 March 1947, dispatched telegrams daily to Nanking to urge that three divisions of troops be sent to Taiwan to quell the "rebellion." On March 7, a military division sailed for Taiwan.

Was it justified to send the troops to quell the "rebellion" ? The report quoted a report written by Minister of Defense General Pai Chung-hsi on March 19. "There were only a small number of people directly involved in the protests and petitions, about 2,000. There was no need to send another division of troops to Taiwan as reinforcement." The report points out that the KMT authorities miscalculated the extent of the resistance in Taiwan.

During the period March 21 to May 16, when most of the killings took place, the report said that "military discipline completely broke down and the troops engaged in massacre, looting and robbery."

Finally, the report finds that **Chen Yi**, the first governor of Taiwan in 1947, General Ko Yuan-fen of the Garrison Command, and former president Chiang Kai-shek and General Peng Meng-chi could not be absolved of responsibility for the incident.

The report pointed to General **Ko Yuan-fen** as bearing the major responsibility for the atrocities during the purge because "he would rather see 99 innocent lives sacrificed to make sure that the guilty one did not escape the punishment." General

Peng Meng-chi was responsible for the killing of some 2,500 civilians between 2 and 13 March 1947 in Kaohsiung, receiving the nickname "*Butcher of Kaohsiung.*"

Generalissimo **Chiang Kai-shek** was responsible because he decided to send troops to Taiwan without consulting the Central Standing Committee of the Kuomintang and ignored the warnings from the American ambassador. His subsequent promotion of Peng Meng-chi to the position of the chief of Taiwan Garrison Command showed that he supported General Peng's use of force against civilians.

Compensation: The families of Taiwanese victims of the February 28 incident were never compensated, but the families of mainlanders — mostly civil servants and teachers — who died and were wounded in the incident were compensated according to a decree issued on March 21, 1947 soon after the troops suppressed the demonstrations.

The report said "the families of deceased were given 200,000 yuan, seriously wounded 50,000 yuan, lightly wounded 5,000 yuan." Compensation for the loss of property included 10,000 yuan respectively for a set of winter and summer clothes, 20,000 yuan for a set of bedding."

The report cited an example of a government official in Chia-yi, who asked compensation for a list of 71 items of personal effects including cooking utensils, a lamp, milk powder, vitamin pills to the value of 200,650 yuan.

Prison Report

Authorities arrest WUFI chairman George Chang

Dr. (George) Chang Tsang-hung (55), chairman of **World United Formosans for Independence** (WUFI), was arrested at Taipei international airport on 7 December 1991, after he flew in from Tokyo and intended to clear Immigration and Customs with Japanese papers.

Dr. Chang is the most prominent leader of the movement for a free, democratic,

and independent Taiwan. This goal is strongly opposed by the Kuomintang authorities in Taipei, who still maintain an outdated claim to legitimacy as government of all of China, and call themselves "Republic of China."

Dr. Chang has been the driving force behind the overseas independence movement for more than two decades. He served as president of WUFI from 1973 to 1987, and was elected again in 1991. He was returning to Taiwan after 30 years in exile in the United States. However, he had been put on the wanted list by the KMT authorities, who consider WUFI a seditious organization. But the threats of arrest and imprisonment have not stopped him and other leaders from returning to Taiwan.

His return was an important part of a campaign launched by the WUFI leadership in the summer of 1990 to move the central headquarters back to Taiwan before the end of 1991. In this way, WUFI wanted to lend its support to the democratisation process, and join with the democratic opposition to speed up an open discussion on the future international status of the island.

WUFI was founded in 1971 through a merger of overseas Taiwanese groups set up in the 1960s in Japan, the United States, Canada and Europe. Its objective is to establish a sovereign, independent state of Taiwan with a democratic multi-party political system by peaceful means.

Dr. Chang is a former professor of chemical engineering at Cooper Union in New York, where he taught for 20 years before he resigned in 1987 to work full time for WUFI. He went to the United States for advanced studies after graduating from National Taiwan University, and received a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Rice University in Houston, Texas in 1966.

Dr. Chang is the fourth WUFI leader to be arrested this year. Dr. **Kuo Pei-hung** and Professor **Li Ying-yuan**, chairman and vice chairman of the U.S. chapter of WUFI were arrested in August and September. Dr. **Wang Kang-lu**, secretary-general of WUFI was arrested in mid-October 1991. They all have been charged with "illegal entry into Taiwan" and "sedition" under the infamous Article 100 of the Criminal Code, an outdated Statute dating from the 1940s period when the Kuomintang authorities still ruled the Chinese mainland, and were engaged in a civil war with the Chinese Communists.

Taiwan Communiqué urges the Taipei authorities to release Dr. George Chang and the arrested opposition members immediately. Their advocacy of Taiwan

independence is an integral part of political freedom and freedom of speech as guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Taipei authorities should allow a full and open discussion of the issue of Taiwan independence. It is the most rational and reasonable solution to the island's diplomatic isolation and would be in the best interest of the people of the island.

*Allegations against Dr. Chang that he engaged in or advocated violence should be immediately dismissed out of hand. Dr. Chang has always placed great emphasis on peaceful means to achieve the movement's political goals. The Taiwan independence movement has been remarkably free of violence. This in spite of the systematic repression perpetrated by the Kuomintang authorities over the past four decades, which during certain periods was comparable to the present repressive system in Burma, or the lack of democracy of the *Apartheid* system in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s.*

“Taitu Five” sentences handed down

On 3 December 1991, the High Court in Taipei sentenced four young persons to prison terms ranging from 10 months to two years. They were arrested in May 1991 on “sedition” charges for their advocacy of a free, democratic and independent Taiwan (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 50, pp. 15-16, and no. 51, pp. 13-15). The May arrests led to demonstrations in Taipei, culminating in a large-scale protest on 20 May, drawing some 20,000 people.

Two of the defendants received the heaviest sentences: Mr. **Chen Cheng-jan** and Ms. **Wang Hsui-hui**. Mr. Chen (33), is a graduate of National Taiwan University and a Ph.D.-candidate at UCLA. He is specializing in historical sociology, and was making a study of the history of Taiwan. Mr. Chen is also the owner of a typesetting firm. Ms. Wang (33), is a social worker and a member of the Presbyterian Church, who volunteers for an organization that helps political prisoners.

Mr. **Lin Yin-fu** (31), also known under his tribal name **Masao Nikar**, was sentenced to one year and six months. He is an Ami tribal evangelist and graduate of the Yushan Theological College in Hualien, and is the current director of the Presbyterian Church's Fisherman's Service Center in Kaohsiung (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 52, pp. 23).

Another person, Mr. **An Cheng-kuan** (24), also an evangelist for the Presbyterian Church and a graduate of Yushan Theological College, was given a ten months' sus-

pending sentence. The fifth person in the case, Tsing Hwa University graduate student **Liao Wen-cheng**, was acquitted “due to lack of evidence” although it is more likely that the Court dealt with him more leniently because of the widespread student demonstrations in support of him.



"Taitu Five" before High Court Appearance.

The five had originally been charged under the outdated “Statute for the Punishment of Sedition”, which was repealed by President Lee Teng-hui on 22 May 1991 — partially due to the protests over the arrest of the five. They were subsequently charged under the equally-outdated **Article 100** of the Criminal Code on charges of “conspiring to commit sedition” for their alleged contacts with an elderly Japan-based oppositionist, Mr. Shih Ming. Defense lawyers for the four sentenced persons said they would appeal the verdict.

Economic / Environmental Report

Taipei into the 21st Century: Ugly duckling ?

by Spenser W. Havlik

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After criticizing pro-government newspapers for lauding KMT reports about livability in Taipei when the city only received a 60% rating — comparable to crime-infested Atlanta, Detroit, Washington DC and New York or growth-drugged “non-cities” like Houston, Los Angeles or Denver — professor Havlik proposes his “Ten Commandments” for a livable Taipei:

“With the Taiwanese compassion for people and the landscape and with the Oriental ingenuity and work ethic, the task of pulling Taipei out of its obviously troubled condition is within reach. If environmental health and urban livability were goals here and truly achieved, the undertaking would serve as a world model desperately needed by the rapidly developing nations.

The technology is currently available and the ideas have already been put in place elsewhere for the tasks that await real action, not just promises. Consider the following goals worthy of a great, livable city with some examples of urban success stories in parentheses:

1. Clean, safe, drinkable water at the faucet or water tap in homes/schools/offices everywhere in Taipei (Athens).
2. Pedestrian-safe, pedestrian-priority streets and sidewalks. The ubiquitous motorcycle and private car should be replaced by skywalks, multimode transit and efficient high speed, clean electric rail (Hong Kong).
3. Convert Taipei’s waterways and rivers into exciting commercial and recreational corridors by cleaning up the present cesspools of human sewage and raw urban wastes (Melbourne or Bangkok).
4. Accelerate comprehensive solid waste management with source recycling, outlaw non-recyclables and substitute resource recovery for the toxic, expensive and archaic incineration ideas currently proposed by the EPA and others. Littering and floodplain dumping should be strictly forbidden (Singapore).

5. Land use designation and zoning to preserve urban parks, open space for recreation, wildlife, water recharge and esthetics (San Francisco or Portland).
6. Immediate restoration of clean air, dust suppression and noise control to provide a healthy, quiet urban atmosphere (Sydney or Singapore).
7. Preservation of cultural heritage — especially residential architecture and unique religious and public buildings where rapid speculative development threatens historic architecture or long-standing land uses (Muang Boran in Bangkok or Gamla Stan in Stockholm).
8. Create a unique sense of place or signature which is uniquely Taipei or Taiwan. Through landscape and architectural guidelines an urban landscape could be created over time in which the business community, government and citizens alike would take civic pride (Hong Kong, Tokyo, Paris, London).
9. Pioneer in urban energy efficiency with great savings to utility customers, TAIPOWER and Taiwan as a whole. Gradually substitute renewable energy sources which are abundant in Taiwan (solar, wind, biomass, tidal) for the expensive and inefficient (on life cycle costing) fossil fuels and risky nuclear. Taipei could provide a world capital success story of energy conservation for heating and cooling buildings, running transportation systems, retrofit and in new structures of fully automated “smart” buildings.
10. Accelerate a city-wide or island-wide environmental education action program at every age level. Prizes and other cash incentives should be created for schools, businesses and organizations that meet or exceed specific objectives of reducing driving, litter control, pesticide reduction or pollution controls. Awards should also be provided for environmentally safe products which result from “clean” manufacture or production. Restoration of wildlife, forest habitat, coastline cleanup and improved natural hazard protection should receive national or world-wide recognition.

Without action in many of these areas, the economic miracle becomes a myth of shattered promises and environmental chaos. Economic growth cannot be built on a broken environment. ***But with progress in most of the ten areas listed, no one can call Taipei the “ugly duckling of Asia.” Instead, she can be the shining emerald of the Orient in the 21st Century.***